

## EDI Committee Meeting

17 November, 2-4 pm

**Present:** Francesco Caselli (FC, Chair), Gilat Levy (GL), Nava Ashraf (NA), Maitreesh Ghatak (MG), Dimitra Petropoulou (DP), Lorna Severn (LS),

**In attendance:** Andy Wilson (AW), Ronny Razin (RR, in attendance for item 1)

**Apologies:** Rachael Meager

### **1. Definition and identification of candidates with protected characteristics for Junior Recruitment (JR) purposes.**

RR sought the Committee's advice on an operational definition of protected characteristics to be used by the Junior Recruitment Committee. He particularly sought guidance as to the scope to be given to the "race" category. He also sought advice on how to identify candidates with protected characteristics.

AW reminded the EDI Committee that the first and the most important criterion for all applicants is the quality mark, which all have to pass.

Committee members voiced frustration with the paucity of information available to identify whether candidates are carriers of protected characteristics. This meant that only gender was reasonably reliably observed and targeted. Information on race was spotty, particularly as many applicants do not tick any race-related box in Head-Hunter. For all other protected characteristics, the information was even poorer.

In light of these difficulties the Committee recommended that the recruitment Committee uses a pragmatic and flexible approach in trying to gather information about candidates. It also recommended that the any 'Non-White' candidates be treated as having a protected characteristic. In order to make some progress on gathering information, albeit historic, on candidate's race the Committee discussed using software which assigns individuals probabilities of belonging to different ethnic groups on the basis of their name. NA undertook to explore this.

### **1.2. Status of paper on discrimination/quotas – further steps**

FC took stock of the October Department meeting. He felt that the presentation of the paper on discrimination as well as the data on the progress of female candidates through the recruitment process had been very well received and had been instrumental in creating a positive and supportive atmosphere around the policy of EDI targets in Junior Recruitment. He thanked the colleagues who had been particularly engaged in this work: GL, MG, NA, and RM.

He enquired whether the working group could finalise their paper and present it at the next Department meeting; GL gave an affirmative answer. The forthcoming presentation would include the career progression of the rejected applicants, who the JR Committee had considered 'unattainable.'

One of the suggestions to obtain this data was to approach the previous chairs of the JR Committee and ask them whether they had kept any records of the interviews and why they had decided not to give offers. FC undertook to do this. There was further discussion about extending the analysis in various directions.

### **2.3. PSS-faculty relations: next steps**

FC reported that he had covered this topic at the Department meeting and in his Michaelmas Term HoD message. In particular he had reported on the survey of PSS staff run by LS and presented at the previous EDI Committee meeting, and encouraged colleagues to adopt a stance of mutual and open appreciation when colleagues are cooperative and pleasant to work with. He sought the EDI Committee's advice on any further steps that should be undertaken in this area.

LS confirmed receiving positive feedback from her colleagues on the induction sessions with the new faculty, which everybody considered a success.

NA's suggested establishing a discussion/reading group on the topic of behavioural management, communications, and power; there is a lot of literature on these topics. The EDI Committee supported this idea.

The Committee also discussed the possibility of conducting a departmental-level survey, which could include EDI-related questions. AW referred the Committee to the PULSE survey, the result of which would come out on 5<sup>th</sup> December. However, the PULSE survey does not include MRes and PhD students. However, LSE has two standard student surveys: satisfaction and evaluation of teaching performance. MG said that there was a recent anonymous survey of the students, the primary focus of which was mental health.

It was decided for the moment to wait the outcome of the existing surveys and reconsider an EDI-specific survey at a later date.

### **3.4. Departmental involvement with "Discover Economics"**

FC informed the Committee about the Royal Economic Society (RES)'s initiative, 'Discover Economics'. It aims to introduce economics to secondary school students and change their perception of the subject with the help of undergraduate students – called "ambassadors". The latter give presentations about economics as one of the possible subjects of studies at universities and discuss its attractiveness with GCSE and A-level students. FC & DP argued that this is a very important initiative to improve the diversity of the pipeline of UG students, and sought the Committee's support for the Department to be actively involved in it. GL noted that the role of "ambassadors" could also be done by faculty, and spoke about numerous visits to secondary schools by colleagues.

FC also described an initiative in progress whereby career advisors from several schools in disadvantaged areas would be invited to the LSE for presentations about Economics as a feasible area of study for their pupils.