Structural Transformation to Achieve Gender Equality in Science

Aarhus University

Practice-based Guidelines: experiences and results from the Action Plans

Engaging Leadership

Brussels
December 3, 2015
A Dynamic Model for Engaging Scientific Organisations in Gender Equality Structural Transformation (source: Kalpazidou Schmidt 2015)
Engaging leaders and policy makers

Policy paper: Gender Equality at Aarhus University – Status and Challenges
The report contributes with empirical inputs to Aarhus University’s current work on the development of a new Gender Equality Policy with the aim to in the best suitable way address female researchers under-representation in academia.

Task Force: More Women in Research
In December 2014 the Minister for Higher Education and Science set up a Task Force for More Women in Research. The Task Force, based also on the work of STAGES, presented its action-oriented recommendations in May 2015 at a conference in Copenhagen.
Challenging the notion of the gender blind organisation among the university leaders

Evanthia K. Schmidt

New and Persistent Gender Equality Challenges In Academia

Mathias Wullum Nielsen

NATURE

Make academic job advertisements fair to all

It is well known that women are under-representation senior science and research positions. This is true even in Denmark, which has long been considered one of the most advanced societies when it comes to gender equality. Although studies of sexism in science often focus on explicit bias, invisible barriers are often influential, as well.

One of the key factors which may contribute to this phenomenon is the type of job advertisements. The nature of the job advertisement may influence the number of applicants who apply. For instance, if the advertisement mentions that a position is open to both men and women, more men than women are likely to apply. However, if the advertisement explicitly mentions that the position is reserved for men or women, then the gender balance is likely to be reversed.

A recent study conducted by Mathias Wullum Nielsen from Aarhus University and the Danish Centre for Studies in Research and Research Policy found that men are more likely to apply for positions that are advertised as open to only men, while women are more likely to apply for positions advertised as open to only women. This suggests that the type of job advertisement can have a significant impact on the gender balance of applicants.

The study also found that the gender balance of applicants is affected by the wording of the job advertisement. For instance, advertisements that use words like “man” or “woman” are more likely to attract applicants of the same gender. Therefore, it is important to use gender-neutral language in job advertisements to promote gender equality in the science and research fields.

Related stories

- Generosity helps gender equality policies achieve more
- Judge by actions, not words
- Science has no place in sexism

Most recent updates

- Resilient to the world’s challenges, the human brain is vital in the science (21 November 2015)
- The 2016 Nobel Peace Prize announcement (20 November 2015)
- Awards for outstanding scientists announced (17 November 2015)

Conclusion

The study highlights the importance of promoting gender equality in the science and research fields. By adopting gender-neutral language in job advertisements, institutions can attract a more diverse pool of applicants, which can lead to a more equitable and prosperous future for science and research.

Aarhus University

The Danish Centre for Studies in Research and Research Policy

Evanthia K. Schmidt
Challenging the idea that affirmative actions are not needed in Denmark

(putting pressure to leadership)
Suggestions on how to better involve leadership in GE

- **Involve leadership from the beginning in the planning** and implementation of actions

- **Provide evidence** - start presenting the data/comparisons to European data

- **Take into consideration the context** - adapt to the features of the organisation - may move beyond the gender argument (frame issues for example in terms of innovation, competitiveness, excellence, scientific impact)

- **Involve and motivate leadership** as to think about gender aspects in the organisation - facilitate the process of considering the problem and identifying solutions

- **Identify the leaders** to involve more directly in the Action Plan

- **Establish mutually beneficial relations** with relevant internal structures
Suggestions on how to better involve leadership in GE

- **Redesign and adapt the Action Plan** to support internal policies and initiatives
- **Act as an internal centre of expertise** on gender equality for the leadership
- **Use different operational approaches** and raising awareness actions revealing structural and cultural problems (internal/external visibility)
- **Set up strategies and involve managers in the sustainability** of actions (mentoring programmes, career advice schemes, etc.)
- **Gain internal legitimacy** through **external support** (mobilise external stakeholders)
- **Build relations and partnerships** with external institutions and groups - involve external experts
Thank you for your attention!

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