

Regarding the two motions proposed by Doreen Kimura, would it be possible to see an example of an advertisement which she feels is "Discriminatory", specifically one to which her Motion 1 would result in a censoring? I could not work out what this Motion was aimed at.

Fred Kingdom
McGill Vision Research Unit

Does this include place of residence?

Dr. B. Galef
McMaster University

I agree with the Motions.

Elzbieta Slawinski
University of Calgary

Dr. Kimura's views are exactly my own views in these matters. Within my own institution and elsewhere I have often argued that exclusionary clauses in employment advertisements are inappropriate in an academic context. In my opinion, even apparently benign statements such as "...applications from women and other minority groups are encouraged..." are interpreted by many potential applicants as code for "Males need not apply." The operating principle for filling academic positions ought to be simply this: use criteria relevant to the job to be filled and then offer the position to the best-qualified applicant. Given the published aims of BBCS, it seems to me that our duty in this matter is clear. I endorse both the motions advanced by Dr. Kimura. I intend to vote for them and encourage others to do so as well.

Mark. R. Cole
University of Western Ontario

This note is in response to Dr. Kimura's proposal that BBCS not circulate advertising that is discriminatory in nature. Before we are in a position to vote on this issue, the definition of discriminatory must be made clearer.

- Canadian Immigration laws require that we advertise initially for Canadians. Is that discriminatory?

- What about fellowships or other grants offered to researchers under a certain age (the age 35 often appears)?

Neither of these bears on the candidate's candidate to do the job well.

I am sympathetic with Dr. Kimura's intent. No person with any pride wants his or her accomplishments to be diminished by the claim that he or she was able to achieve them only by benefiting from discrimination. However, I think the details (and possible exceptions) should be spelled out in the motion itself, to avoid any uncertainty about what we are voting for, and to avoid later disagreement as to whether a particular announcement may have violated the motion.

Albert S. Bregman
McGill University

I am fully supportive of both of the motions Doreen has proposed. The first motion was, of course, prompted by the actions of Wilfrid Laurier's Psychology Department this past year. Quite frankly, I believe that what Wilfrid Laurier's Psychology Department did is both indefensible and immoral. Unfortunately, CSBBCS can not stop institutions like Wilfrid Laurier from engaging in discriminatory hiring practices. However, we can refuse to allow our organization to be used as a vehicle for such practices by refusing to carry discriminatory advertising. We certainly would not carry an ad if it said "we will only consider men" or "we will only consider whites". Why should we make an exception if a different group is made the target of discrimination?

With respect to the second motion, what we have here is the shame of a government organization promoting a nation-wide sexist hiring policy. By way of defence, proponents of such hiring policies will point to the fact that men still outnumber women in science, asking you to draw the conclusion that such a state of affairs could not have arisen if women were not being discriminated against. All the available data, however, (i.e., I refer to materials that Doreen and others such as Grant Brown have written concerning university hiring) indicate that this state of affairs has nothing to do with discrimination but rather everything to do with individual choices. Indeed, hiring data from across the country clearly indicate that female academics have about twice the probability of being hired as male academics have and this state of affairs has existed for two decades now. What NSERC has done, therefore, goes far beyond simple sex discrimination in their own backyard (which is what Wilfrid Laurier has done). What they have done is to create an illegitimate and sexist social-engineering program, one which is threatening to destroy a whole generation of young male academics and, by doing so, undermining the validity of the entire scientific enterprise in Canada. We may not be able to stop them either, however, we can certainly make it clear that our organization does not support sexist hiring policies no matter what group is sponsoring them.

Stephen J. Lupker
University of Western Ontario

A learned society is, in the correct sense of the phrase, a special-interest group. Our special interest is promoting the discovery and dissemination of knowledge about animal and human behaviour, and its biological substrate. The first question BBCS members will ask about Doreen Kimura's motions is: are they within the mandate of our special-interest group? If the motions do not directly concern our interests, regardless of how they are regarded by society in general, BBCS members would probably agree that they are beyond our mandate.

In order to achieve its interest, which is to promote the discovery and dissemination of knowledge, BBCS is quite legitimately concerned with the adequate and equitable distribution of public (i.e. government) funding for research and for researchers. No one would question the legitimacy of BBCS's interest in the terms of reference of a NSERC research grant committee, nor BBCS's interest in the level of funding for scientific research in general. These examples show how a direct interest by BBCS in the terms and conditions of Canadian government research funding is clearly within our mandate.

Kimura's motions are about university-level science faculty appointments, mostly federally funded. Thus they deal directly with the distribution of public funding for scientific research, and so they are clearly relevant to BBCS's special interest. There is nothing unseemly, or forward, or untoward, in BBCS expressing a public opinion on the points made by Kimura's motions, because they are very clearly related to this learned society's special interest.

Kimura's first motion asks BBCS to not distribute job advertisements that contain discriminatory restrictions that "are irrelevant to the position being advertised." The restrictions under discussion, as BBCS members know, are those that have turned up in recent job postings that state either a preference or an absolute requirement that the candidate belong to a socially or genetically

defined sub-group of the human species, for example, being either an aboriginal or a woman. Her second motion is to have BBCS object publicly to the federally-funded University Faculty Awards, which are restricted to women.

BBCS has a legitimate special interest in supporting government policies that encourage the people who are most likely to discover new knowledge and disseminate it well. Science faculty are appointed and promoted through a combination of oral performance (informal conversations, interviews and job or other talks), written work (refereed or other publications), written evaluation of research and teaching competence by mentors, colleagues or teachers, and even written or oral exam performance. No serious contributor to this debate can reasonably argue that there are other criteria more likely to predict accomplishment in science than some combination of the ones that have been exhaustively listed here.

While the criteria listed above are imperfect, and we know that they are always employed by imperfect people, there are no other criteria that relate to the ability to create and disseminate scientific knowledge. Restrictions placed on the number of people who can be evaluated according to the criteria described above can only reduce the effectiveness of the selection. If a selection pool is limited to aboriginals, the number of people even minimally eligible to fill a position will drop drastically. If a selection pool is limited to women, the sample size will drop by about one-half. The effects of restricting sample size on personnel selection are not debatable. When you reduce the size of a sample, you reduce the range of measured abilities in the sample. Scientific ability is no exception. A reduced sample size will therefore reduce the maximum scientific ability that can be expected to be found in the sample. It is highly probable that the best candidate in a restricted sample will be worse on any measurable characteristic than the best candidate in an unrestricted sample.

Therefore it is in BBCS's best interest that the widest available pool of scientific talent be considered when selecting science faculty members at Canadian universities, so it is also in BBCS's best interest to oppose policies that restrict the range of candidates that can be supported in these positions with either federal or provincial funds. Without venturing for a moment outside of reasoning drawn from the disciplines of sampling theory and personnel selection, BBCS members would be well advised to actively oppose restrictions on the sampling pool available to fill Canadian faculty positions in science, and therefore to support both of Kimura's motions.

Opponents of Kimura's motions might argue that the purpose of the restrictions is to ultimately expand an "identity" applicant pool by providing an exclusive lure, as it were, for many people identified as members of a distinct group who are favoured by the restriction but who otherwise might not have decided to pursue careers in science. If the lure of a faculty position is to be made available only to women, or to aboriginals, rather than to any qualified person, then knowledge about these restricted faculty positions may indeed increase the number of candidates from the particularly favoured group who apply for them. But why might someone in this group succeed in winning the position? Because he or she is, to put it metaphorically, a bigish frog from a smallish pond. Although the size of the sub-population may expand, it is still smaller than the unrestricted population size, and the same sampling-theory principles apply: the best of a larger sample will, high probability, be better than the best from a smaller sample. The best that can be expected from a restricted appointment is worse than the best that can be expected from an unrestricted one.

From a special-interest point of view, which I have adopted exclusively so far, BBCS is not well served by restricting the applicant pool for Canadian science faculty appointments. Clearly these restrictions were intended to favor someone or some group, and indeed they do. They favor people who define themselves as members of other special-interest groups: for example, aboriginals or women, or perhaps more to the point, recent aboriginal science graduates with advanced degrees or recent women graduates with advanced degrees.

BBCS' direct interest in promoting the creation and dissemination of scientific knowledge has been expropriated by other special-interest groups that have more influence within the cabinet and the government: groups that claim to promote the interests of aboriginals and of women. These groups have pressed their claim for government patronage (for that is what these restrictive appointments really are) on the grounds that they represent powerful groups of voters, or that they are in a position to influence powerful groups of voters, and that these voters want more government largesse. And they are probably right: there are certainly more women, and probably more aboriginals, in Canada than there are neuroscientists and research psychologists. The other special-interest groups have succeeded in shutting down part of the open meritocracy of science in favor of the patronage politics of identity. The fact that identity politics interest groups have successfully diverted scientific support funds to their own purpose is no reason that BBCS has to like it, or acquiesce quietly to it. I urge BBCS members to support both of Kimura's motions, because the first step in correcting some other group's political power play is to have your own interest group complain publicly about it. If you don't do that, no one will ever know that anything is wrong.

Don C. Donderi
McGill University, Montreal

In my opinion, NOT distributing ads such as this one would be a grave disservice to the membership! I am disappointed (but not surprised) that there are those in our organization who believe that employment equity requires debate, and of course I respect their right to express their opinions. Congratulations to the University of Toronto, Division of Life Sciences, and to NSERC for taking a proactive stance on this issue.

Margaret Crossley
University of Saskatchewan

NSERCC has really put us in a difficult moral situation with their "Women and aboriginals only" University Faculty Awards. We are asked to seek applicants based on their sex and race alone, and to exclude all others (males who are non-aboriginals) no matter what their achievements and qualities. Today, I was asked by my own university to serve on a search committee that openly excluded my own sex and racial group from the search. This is like asking a Jew to serve on a committee to find non-Jews because Jews are over-represented. Should we also exclude high IQ candidates because they are overrepresented at Universities? I took an uncomfortable moral stand that I would refuse to serve on a committee that encouraged, indeed sponsored with valuable University resources, blatant sex and race discrimination. I am comfortable with, indeed welcome, programs that encourage all applicants, and ensure representation of different groups in society. But this program is wrong, and corrodes our belief in the quality of our Universities. I support Doreen Kimura's proposal. We should make it clear that we encourage inclusiveness, but this program is clearly immoral. Even if we lose money in the short-term, we have to take a stand.

John Yeomans
University of Toronto

I lend my strongest support to both motions proposed by Doreen Kimura. In so doing, I reaffirm the principle that academic appointments should be decided on the basis of excellence alone, not on any political considerations or, worse, on the gender of the applicant.

Those of us familiar with the university systems in some European countries know the devastating consequences of permitting political considerations to intervene in academic decisions.

As it happens, I have an outstanding Ph.D. student who will be on the job market this fall. He is truly exceptional: he has published as first author in distinguished journals such as Psychological Bulletin and JEP. His list of publications is likely to be in the double-digits. He has won a prestigious Killam Doctoral Fellowship. But he is ruled out as an applicant from the Scarborough job or, for that matter, from last year's Wilfrid Laurier's job because of his sex. This is totally unacceptable, and contrary to the best interests of Canadian scientific and academic endeavours.

Vince Di Lollo
University of British Columbia

Just a couple of comments about the Kimura motions.

Re: motion 1:

"That BBCS will not forward via email, or otherwise distribute, job advertisements that are discriminatory in nature. "Discriminatory" is here defined as specifying characteristics which are irrelevant to the position being advertised. Further, that BBCS will announce this principle by its usual avenues of communication."

I believe that the current disclaimer that precedes all job adverts circulated to bbc's members achieves the goal of disseminating the appropriate information re: job openings without compromising bbc's interest in promoting scientific excellence. nevertheless, it seems that with some minor rewording of the disclaimer bbc's could state explicitly its opposition to discriminatory practices.

Re: motion 2:

"That BBCS make a formal statement to NSERC, declaring its opposition to the exclusionary nature of the University Faculty Awards, which are currently restricted to women."

If this motion passes I believe that it would be beneficial to make it clear that the intention is to open up these awards, rather than to eliminate them altogether. It would be extremely unfortunate to lose the additional hirings that these awards afford.

Alan Kingstone
University of British Columbia

I would like to make two comments on Doreen Kimura's motions.

First, I have never seen a study that indicates discrimination against women in hiring by departments of psychology in Canada in the past decade or more. Every study I have seen, and one that I was involved in conducting (over 20 years ago, actually) showed that women were hired in at least the same proportion as their numbers in the applicant pool, and frequently in higher proportions. The fact that women are outnumbered by men in psychology faculty positions is partly due to their relatively recent entry into the field as students, partly to their choice of specialties and career tracks other than university teaching, and partly to their valuing activities and commitments -- child care, moving to where their spouses, "partners", or families are, etc. -- that restrict their availability and mobility for faculty positions. In any case, there seems to be no demonstrated discrimination that would call for remedies that contravene the basic principle of academic hiring, that of basing it on merit.

Although I for one do not object to indicating an advertised desire to enlarge or broaden the pool of applicants, it would be ethically appropriate for academic publications to reject job ads that

indicate sexist or racist hiring criteria -- i.e., selection procedure that use these demographic characteristics or at the most blatant worst, restrict the applicant pool to only stated demographic groups.

This also applies to the NSERC women-only support program, for the same reasons.

One additional word, related to student support. According to data collected by the CCDP -- i.e., the chairs of Canadian psychology departments -- the sex distribution of students getting advanced degrees in psychology rose from about 80 women to 40 men in 1993 to 110 vs. 45 in 1998. Women outnumbered men in 1998 in every specialty within psychology, including neuropsychology and neuroscience, except learning where they were equal (and very few). The trend has been upward for women and just about stable for men.

In view of all of these data, what possible rationale is there for preferential treatment allotted to female students or job applicants in psychology? I strongly support Doreen's motions.

Peter Suedfeld
University of British Columbia

Having just served this year on the UFA committee I can offer the following comments.

I became aware of a number of matters about which I was previously misinformed or uninformed and having gone through the process made me feel that the process was fair.

I was not aware, for example, that the awards are made to the University and not to the faculty member.

The committee looked favourable on cases in which

- the candidate had already been awarded or recommended for an NSERC operating grant with a high rating
- a search had taken place for a regular tenure track position (no advantage given to specifying a UFA position)
- a firm unconditional offer to a tenure track position had been made
- the salary offer was at least competitive
- the importance of enhancing opportunities for research were recognized
- the percentage of undergraduate enrolled in the department was high
- the department had no female faculty members or very few

The feature of all this that I liked was that the search and selection could and should be done without reference to sex. The award can be sought by the University after the fact.

Jane Stewart
Concordia University

Given that our aim is the creation and distribution of scientific knowledge in psychology, should we be opposed to hiring or granting practices that selectively favour demographic sub-groups? Most of the postings so far have supported that stance, arguing that our aims are best served by hiring/granting practices that always favour the strongest candidate, regardless of demographic variables. As food for thought, here are some counterarguments.

1. Demographic characteristics may play a role in the distribution of scientific knowledge. Part of the rationale for paying professors to be both research scientists and teachers is that students

benefit from being taught by active researchers. This benefit is presumably partly a matter of the professor being up-to-date in his or her field (although non-researcher teachers can keep up with the literature if they chose) and largely a matter of the professor modelling scientific inquiry. Students may be more influenced by models with whom they identify, and demographic factors may affect the extent to which students identify with professors. Encouraging and supporting students from demographic subgroups currently under-represented in science may be effective both in terms of distributing science to those students and in terms of increasing the likelihood that they eventually become scientists themselves. Thus, in the long term, favouring applicants from under-represented demographic groups might contribute to the core scientific missions of creating and distributing scientific knowledge.

2. Part of the moral justification for always favouring the applicant with the strongest track record, regardless of demographic variables, is that doing so is "fair." That belief rests on the assumption that all applicants start out on a level playing field, and that there is a linear relationship, constant across demographic subgroups, between effort/ability and success. From this point of view, the reason there are so few aboriginal scientists, for example, is that aboriginal individuals rarely make the effort and/or have the inherent ability to be scientists. A related argument is that most members of under-represented groups simply "choose" not to become scientists (which is in turn related to arguments such as that most street people simply choose to be homeless, etc.). These are complex and difficult issues, but it seems very likely to me that long-term systematic oppression and impoverishment has played a substantial role in the under-representation of some demographic subgroups in science.

3. Selecting the applicant with the strongest track record is not always as straightforward as one might think. Perceptions of strength are likely influenced by factors other than scientific rigour and potential value. For example, the topic investigated likely influences perceived strength. Topic may sometimes tend to covary with membership in under-represented subgroups (e.g., non-white scientists may tend to be less often interested in topics that currently attract the most interest from publication outlets and granting agencies). Social-psychological processes, such as in-group bias, may also distort perceptions of scientific track records. More generally, data do not speak for themselves.

If the sole aim is to hire and fund those applicants who are most likely to be successful scientists in the current cultural context, then those decisions are probably best made on the basis of track record without regard to demographic variables, because as long as the cultural context holds past success is probably the best available predictor of future success. If, however, we have broader and more long-term aims for the creation and distribution of scientific knowledge, then it may be appropriate to consider demographic variables (among other variables) in making such decisions.

Steve Lindsay
University of Victoria

It would seem to me illogical to vote in favour of discrimination against discrimination. Suppression, censorship and discrimination as a response to anything is surely a dangerous policy. I am in favour of free speech. If people want to advertise for one-legged pastry chefs, then they can do that as far as I am concerned. If us two-legged, not-able-to-cook-worth-a-damn folk want to apply or complain or whatever that is fine too. If we disagree with a POLICY, such as the one that has led to these discriminatory adverts, then I think the best thing to do is to make sure the policy makers are aware of this. The best argument to use would be to point out how the policy in question is not likely to fulfill the policy-makers' AIMS. Of course if we disagree with the aims, then the policy makers are likely to be less swayable.

Laurence R. Harris
York University

Jane Stewart seems to imply that the University Faculty Awards from NSERC are available to men. They are not available to non-aboriginal men, but recently, since the controversy about these awards has been aired, NSERC has stated that they are now available to aboriginals, men and women! This appears to me clearly a ploy to make it appear that they are not exclusionary.

Doreen Kimura
Simon Fraser University

As a graduate student seeking employment, the BBCS ads are one of the few avenues for finding available positions (discriminatory or not). I think BBCS could preface the ads with a stronger statement about being opposed to discriminatory hiring practices.

I think the NSERC University Faculty Awards are an abomination, and run completely contrary to everything that the scientific community stands for. I am completely in favour of employment equity, in its true sense, which is to encourage INCLUSIVE hiring practices based on ability (i.e., the absence of discrimination). The UFA's represent the misguided practice of AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, which is to attempt to rectify potentially discriminatory hiring practices from the past by actively discriminating against groups of people that are 'over-represented' in particular fields. Such action is never justified, as a well-learned expression from kindergarten will remind us : 'Two wrongs do not make a right'. I support completely the motion that BBCS MUST inform NSERC that the UFA program is misguided, and insist that the faculty awards be distributed to new faculty positions on the basis of merit alone.

David Westwood
University of Waterloo

If the amendments succeed, there will be many issues of implementing our policy with NSERCC and with departments that use discriminatory advertising, including here at Toronto. I would be happy to serve on a committee to discuss this issue with parties that may take offense. We need to make it clear that we are not voting against efforts to include and encourage candidates from diverse background, but that we oppose exclusion of candidates and discouragement of candidates on the basis of sex or race.

John Yeomans
University of Toronto

I agree with the view that we would be doing a disservice to the eligible members if we did not distribute advertisements that we judged discriminatory. Thus, while I object to discriminatory practices, I think we should continue to circulate such advertisements. However, we should strengthen the disclaimer to indicate our disapproval (assuming motion #2 is approved). And if #2 is approved, I nominate Doreen to spearhead presentation of the society's views to NSERC, CCDP, etc. Perhaps a recent WFA winner would be willing to join her?

Raymond Klein
Dalhousie University

NEW POSTINGS BELOW THIS LINE

RE MOTION 1: I will vote NO because it does not serve the BBCS community well to fail to distribute legitimate employment advertisements. Whatever caveats/concerns BBCS may wish to attach to advertisements, or communicate to advertisers, is another matter.

RE MOTION 2: I will vote NO because it is tantamount to opting out of a NSERC program that is potentially valuable to many BBCS members (and potential members). Furthermore, the validity of the supporting arguments is not obvious; i.e., 1. that there probably are no systemic inequities affecting women and aboriginals within the BBCS academic community, and 2. regarding women, at least, even if there are inequities, these probably have biological origins.

Jamie Campbell
University of Saskatchewan

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