

Benefits of Ensuring Gender Equity

Why is gender equity desirable, above and beyond fairness?

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- **Equity increases the likelihood of innovations in ideas, policies, research, teaching, and scholarship.**
 - Innovations arise from diverse groups of people with diverse perspectives. It is not that people reason differently as a function of their sex or race, but that they will have somewhat different interests and experiences which in turn give rise to different ideas. A diverse group increases the likelihood of a range of solutions.
 - Example: the development within the discipline of psychology of new areas as women and underrepresented minorities entered the field.
 - Example: "Mixed-gender teams produced the most frequently cited patents—with citation rates that were 26 to 42 percent higher than the norm."
 - The acceptance of innovations is more likely among a diverse group of people.
 - Teams are increasingly frequent and their papers receive more citations.
 - Groups have a "collective intelligence" that is positively correlated with average social sensitivity in the group, equality of turn-taking, and proportion of females.

- **Equity increases the range and size of the candidate pool, thus maximizing the chances of hiring and promoting the best faculty or staff.**
 - The larger the pool, the greater the choice and the higher the likelihood of finding well-qualified candidates.
 - Women job candidates may be slightly more talented than men, given their difficulties in accumulating advantage.

- **By modeling diversity in the professoriate and in senior levels in the professions, equity demonstrates to women and underrepresented minorities that they have a future – a good future – in academia and the professions.**
 - If they do not have a future, why are we educating them?
 - Aspirants do not need to see people exactly like them in senior positions and among the faculty. But the presence of a variety of social groups in positions of authority should have two effects.
 - First, diversity suggests that there is room for the aspirant: where there is a lot of variety it is plausible to think that there is room for more.
 - Second, and relatedly, diversity will make the role of, say, scientist or surgeon or successful business person one which is not sex- or race-specific. It will thus make it easier for everyone to make accurate judgments of the qualifications and value of non-traditional applicants for positions.

- **Within colleges and universities, successful careers on the part of PhD graduates redound to the credit of the supervisor and the school. Schools become known in part through the quality of the students they educate. Every PhD who is lost is an investment that is not paying off. Supervisors' ideas are spread in part through the people they educate.**
- **Gender equity in salary, promotion, and access to resources maximizes the number of people who will receive the power and resources they need in order to do their best work. Gender equity reduces the possibility that some people are prospering at the expense of others.**
- **Equity problems are a window on institutional effectiveness. Solving an equity problem can lead to better conditions and greater productivity – for everyone.**
 - Women and minorities, as groups, have less power in institutions than do white men, as a group. Women and underrepresented minorities act as a proxy for those with less institutional power. Without policies that ensure equal access, resources and facilities will flow to those who have the most power in the institution. Without policies that track the progress of different groups within the institution, it is impossible to know whether resources and facilities are being distributed evenly.
 - *Example:* a discovery that women in an institution receive computer support more slowly than men can lead to a rational and systematic way of handling *all* computer help requests.
 - *Example:* the discovery that women receive less information than do men about how to succeed can lead to the discovery that chairs and heads do not nominate faculty and staff for awards and prizes, do not publicize their faculty's accomplishments, and, more generally, do not see faculty or staff development as one of their most important responsibilities. Attention to women's faculty development can lead to improved development procedures across the board.
 - *Example:* the difficulty of determining how long women stay in the rank of associate professor (or its equivalent) can lead to the discovery that the institution has no effective way of monitoring overall faculty progress and thus no way of determining how to ensure faculty creativity and productivity.
- **Within colleges and universities, a diverse faculty gives students a head start in learning how to appreciate and interact with a range of authority figures.**
 - Students will graduate into working in a diverse world. The mental flexibility that is necessary for success in a diverse world will be developed in part through experiences with a diverse student body and in part through experiences with a diverse group of faculty and administrators.
- **Equity creates a stronger and more viable institution via a reputation for fairness.**
 - Demonstrations of fairness, and concern for fairness, build loyalty from within, attract interest from outside, and increase the attractiveness of the institution to underrepresented groups.

References

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Authors' abstract: Psychologists have repeatedly shown that a single statistical factor—often called “general intelligence”—emerges from the correlations among people’s performance on a wide variety of cognitive tasks. But no one has systematically examined whether a similar kind of “collective intelligence” exists for groups of people. In two studies with 699 people, working in groups of two to five, we find converging evidence of a general collective intelligence factor that explains a group’s performance on a wide variety of tasks. This “c factor” is not strongly correlated with the average or maximum individual intelligence of group members but is correlated with the average social sensitivity of group members, the equality in distribution of conversational turn-taking, and the proportion of females in the group.
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Authors' abstract: We have used 19.9 million papers over 5 decades and 2.1 million patents to demonstrate that teams increasingly dominate solo authors in the production of knowledge. Research is increasingly done in teams across nearly all fields. Teams typically produce more frequently cited research than individuals do, and this advantage has been increasing over time. Teams now also produce the exceptionally high impact research, even where that distinction was once the domain of solo authors. These results are detailed for sciences and engineering, social sciences, arts and humanities, and patents, suggesting that the process of knowledge creation has fundamentally changed.