**Forwarded conversation**  
Subject: **RE: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics & Statistics, female applicants only**  
------------------------  
  
From: **Steve Taylor** <[steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz](mailto:steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz)>  
Date: Sun, May 15, 2016 at 5:24 PM  
To: David Joseph Balding <[david.balding@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:david.balding@unimelb.edu.au)>, "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>

Pretty sure an ad like that would be illegal in NZ.

Would a transgender person be considered?  i.e. is the applicant required to have breasts, or must the applicant not have a penis?

**From:** [owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au) [mailto:[owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)] **On Behalf Of**David Joseph Balding  
**Sent:** Saturday, 14 May 2016 3:28p  
**To:** [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)  
**Subject:** JOB: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics & Statistics, female applicants only  
**Importance:** High

The School of Mathematics & Statistics at the University of Melbourne is advertising three continuing academic positions at levels B, C or D, one each in pure mathematics, applied mathematics and statistics, the latter covering mathematical and applied statistics, including statistical genomics, stochastic modelling and probability theory.

Female applicants only.  Closing Date July 31.

For further information and application details please see:

<https://careers.pageuppeople.com/422/ci/en/job/887973/lecturersenior-lecturerassociate-professor-in-pure-mathematics-applied-mathematics-statistics-3-positions>

David Balding

Centre for Systems Genomics ([sysgenmelb.org](http://sysgenmelb.org/))

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[dbalding@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:dbalding@unimelb.edu.au)

<https://sites.google.com/site/baldingstatisticalgenetics/home>

----------  
From: <[megan@pledger.gen.nz](mailto:megan@pledger.gen.nz)>  
Date: Sun, May 15, 2016 at 5:58 PM  
To: Steve Taylor <[steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz](mailto:steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz)>  
Cc: David Joseph Balding <[david.balding@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:david.balding@unimelb.edu.au)>, [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)  
  
  
My sixth form biology classes were long ago but I seem to recall that men have breasts.  
  
Quoting Steve Taylor <[steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz](mailto:steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz)>:

Pretty sure an ad like that would be illegal in NZ.  
  
Would a transgender person be considered?  i.e. is the applicant required to have breasts, or must the applicant not have a penis?  
  
  
From: [owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au) [mailto:[owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)] On Behalf Of David Joseph Balding  
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<https://careers.pageuppeople.com/422/ci/en/job/887973/lecturersenior-lecturerassociate-professor-in-pure-mathematics-applied-mathematics-statistics-3-positions>  
  
  
David Balding  
Centre for Systems Genomics ([sysgenmelb.org](http://sysgenmelb.org/)<<http://sysgenmelb.org/>>)  
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ph [+613 8344 3730](tel:%2B613%208344%203730) internal 43730  
mob [+614 6652 0579](tel:%2B614%206652%200579)  
  
[dbalding@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:dbalding@unimelb.edu.au)<mailto:[dbalding@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:dbalding@unimelb.edu.au)>  
  
<https://sites.google.com/site/baldingstatisticalgenetics/home>

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FOR INFORMATION ABOUT "ANZSTAT", INCLUDING UNSUBSCRIBING, PLEASE VISIT <http://www.maths.uq.edu.au/anzstat/>  
  
----------  
From: **Bob Durrant** <[bobd@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:bobd@waikato.ac.nz)>  
Date: Sun, May 15, 2016 at 5:58 PM  
To: Steve Taylor <[steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz](mailto:steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz)>, David Joseph Balding <[david.balding@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:david.balding@unimelb.edu.au)>, "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>  
  
  
It looks like it is very likely illegal in NZ under HRA 1993 and ERA 2000 to put out a similar ad in NZ.  
However my understanding is it could be legal in NZ to discriminate on grounds of misogyny - unless one could show that is basically the same as discriminating on one of the grounds covered explicitly by these acts.  
So Steve, I guess you could still be ruled out (irrespective of biological equipment) if a NZ uni wanted to use affirmative action in some way to recruit from the same under-represented group?  
  
On 16/05/2016 9:24 a.m., Steve Taylor wrote:

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required to have breasts, or must the applicant not have a penis?  
  
  
  
  
  
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[mailto:[owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)] \*On Behalf Of \*David Joseph Balding  
\*Sent:\* Saturday, 14 May 2016 3:28p  
\*To:\* [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)  
\*Subject:\* JOB: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics &  
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Schools of BioSciences and Maths & Stats  
  
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mob [+614 6652 0579](tel:%2B614%206652%200579)  
  
  
  
[dbalding@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:dbalding@unimelb.edu.au) <mailto:[dbalding@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:dbalding@unimelb.edu.au)>  
  
  
  
<https://sites.google.com/site/baldingstatisticalgenetics/home>

--   
Dr. Robert (Bob) Durrant, Senior Lecturer.  
  
Room G.3.30,  
Department of Mathematics & Statistics,  
University of Waikato,  
Private Bag 3105,  
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New Zealand  
  
e: [bobd@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:bobd@waikato.ac.nz)  
w: <http://www.stats.waikato.ac.nz/~bobd/>  
t: [+64 (0)7 838 4466 x8334](tel:%2B64%20%280%297%20838%204466%20x8334)  
f: [+64 (0)7 838 4155](tel:%2B64%20%280%297%20838%204155)

----------  
From: **Allen Cheng** <[allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au)>  
Date: Sun, May 15, 2016 at 6:08 PM  
To: Bob Durrant <[bobd@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:bobd@waikato.ac.nz)>, Steve Taylor <[steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz](mailto:steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz)>, David Joseph Balding <[david.balding@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:david.balding@unimelb.edu.au)>, "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>  
  
  
In Victoria section 12 of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 has an exemption:  
A person may take a special measure for the purpose of promoting or realising substantive equality for members of a group with a particular attribute.  
  
The examples provided are  
1. A company operates in an industry in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are under-represented. The company develops a training program to increase employment opportunities in the company for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.  
2 A swimming pool that is located in an area with a significant Muslim population holds women-only swimming sessions to enable Muslim women who cannot swim in mixed company to use the pool.  
3 A person establishes a counselling service to provide counselling for gay men and lesbians who are victims of family violence, and whose needs are not met by general family violence counselling services.

----------  
From: **Richard Gerlach** <[richard.gerlach@sydney.edu.au](mailto:richard.gerlach@sydney.edu.au)>  
Date: Sun, May 15, 2016 at 7:15 PM  
To: Steve Taylor <[steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz](mailto:steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz)>, David Joseph Balding <[david.balding@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:david.balding@unimelb.edu.au)>, "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>  
  
  
How Orwellian that the Equal Opportunity Act is cited to support  such ineqity and discrimination  
  
PROFESSOR RICHARD GERLACH, PhD, A.Stat., ISI elected member  
Professor in Business Analytics  
Discipline of Business Analytics | Business School  
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T [+61 2 9351 3944](tel:%2B61%202%209351%203944)  | F [+61 2 9351 6409](tel:%2B61%202%209351%206409)  | M [+61 409 717 351](tel:%2B61%20409%20717%20351)  
E [richard.gerlach@sydney.edu.au](mailto:richard.gerlach@sydney.edu.au)  | W [http://sydney.edu.au](http://sydney.edu.au/)  
W <http://www.sydney.edu.au/business/staff/richardg>  
You can check out my papers and citations here:  
<https://scholar.google.com.au/citations?user=f7bgy-EAAAAJ&hl=en>  
\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
From: [owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au) [[owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)] on behalf of Steve Taylor [[steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz](mailto:steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz)]  
Sent: Monday, May 16, 2016 7:24 AM  
To: David Joseph Balding; [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)  
Subject: RE: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics & Statistics, female applicants only  
  
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mob [+614 6652 0579](tel:%2B614%206652%200579)  
  
[dbalding@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:dbalding@unimelb.edu.au)<mailto:[dbalding@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:dbalding@unimelb.edu.au)>  
  
<https://sites.google.com/site/baldingstatisticalgenetics/home>

----------  
From: **Duncan Hedderley** <[Duncan.Hedderley@plantandfood.co.nz](mailto:Duncan.Hedderley@plantandfood.co.nz)>  
Date: Sun, May 15, 2016 at 7:27 PM  
To: Richard Gerlach <[richard.gerlach@sydney.edu.au](mailto:richard.gerlach@sydney.edu.au)>, "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>  
  
  
>How Orwellian that the Equal Opportunity Act is cited to support  such ineqity and discrimination  
  
Er, I think it was exemptions to the EOA which were being cited.  
Largely they seemed sensible exceptions  (and as a general principle, I think it's good not to apply general principles too generally).  
  
Duncan  
  
The contents of this e-mail are confidential and may be subject to legal privilege.  
 If you are not the intended recipient you must not use, disseminate, distribute or  
 reproduce all or any part of this e-mail or attachments.  If you have received this  
 e-mail in error, please notify the sender and delete all material pertaining to this  
 e-mail.  Any opinion or views expressed in this e-mail are those of the individual  
 sender and may not represent those of The New Zealand Institute for Plant and  
 Food Research Limited.

----------  
From: **Giles David Adams** <[gilesdavidadams@gmail.com](mailto:gilesdavidadams@gmail.com)>  
Date: Sun, May 15, 2016 at 7:36 PM  
To: Duncan Hedderley <[Duncan.Hedderley@plantandfood.co.nz](mailto:Duncan.Hedderley@plantandfood.co.nz)>  
Cc: Anzstat <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>, Richard Gerlach <[richard.gerlach@sydney.edu.au](mailto:richard.gerlach@sydney.edu.au)>

This all boils down to opinions on affirmative action. I know some people have issues with it, but in the fight against centuries of ingrained inequality it is at worst a necessary evil.

The question about gender identity is a separate one, and an argument could be made that the advertisement fails to consider gender-neutral and gender-diverse people. However, one would hope that "female applicants" would be interpreted as "applicants who identify as female".

Giles

----------  
From: **Peter Geelan-Small** <[peter.geelan-small@sydney.edu.au](mailto:peter.geelan-small@sydney.edu.au)>  
Date: Sun, May 15, 2016 at 7:39 PM  
To: "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>  
  
  
G’day, Everyone.  
  
Even if we have equal opportunity legislation that makes it illegal to discriminate against people on certain grounds, it’s pretty clear, I think, positive discrimination is necessary to ensure equal opportunity in some cases - and gender is a clear-cut case.  
  
Regards,  
  
Peter Geelan-Small  
  
  
  
  
From:  <[owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)> on behalf of Duncan Hedderley <[Duncan.Hedderley@plantandfood.co.nz](mailto:Duncan.Hedderley@plantandfood.co.nz)>  
Date:  Monday, 16 May 2016 at 09:27 AM  
To:  Richard Gerlach <[richard.gerlach@sydney.edu.au](mailto:richard.gerlach@sydney.edu.au)>, "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>  
Subject:  RE: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics & Statistics, female applicants only

----------  
From: **Geoffrey Brent** <[geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au](mailto:geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au)>  
Date: Sun, May 15, 2016 at 7:48 PM  
To: Steve Taylor <[steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz](mailto:steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz)>  
Cc: "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>

The ad indicates that the positions are advertised "pursuant to a Special Measure under Section 12 (1) of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)". I'm not a lawyer, but on skimming the relevant law, it looks as if the ad is compliant; the point of 12(1) is to promote substantive equality, e.g. for a field where members of a particular group are underrepresented due to systemic inequalities.  
  
Re. your second question: under Victorian state law and Australian federal law, it's illegal to discriminate against transgender people (with exemptions for religious organisations not relevant to this case).   
  
Re. your last sentence: you might want to think about how the first bit might sound to a woman who's had a mastectomy.   
  
As for the second half, presence or absence of a penis is not isomorphic to legal status of a transgender woman.  
  
Cheers - Geoffrey  
  
**Dr. Geoffrey Brent**

*Assistant Director (a/g)*

Business Statistics Methodology |  Methodology Division |  **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

**(P)**[**(03) 9615 7685**](tel:%2803%29%209615%207685)**(M) 0422 65 35 26**

**(E)**[**geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au**](mailto:geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au)**(W)**[**www.abs.gov.au**](http://www.abs.gov.au/)

The [ABS Privacy Policy](http://www.abs.gov.au/privacy) outlines how the ABS will handle any personal information that you provide to us.  
  
Steve Taylor ---16/05/2016 07:25:46 AM---Pretty sure an ad like that would be illegal in NZ. Would a transgender person be considered?  i.e.  
  
From: Steve Taylor <[steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz](mailto:steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz)>  
To: David Joseph Balding <[david.balding@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:david.balding@unimelb.edu.au)>, "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>,   
Date: 16/05/2016 07:25 AM  
Subject: RE: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics & Statistics, female applicants only  
Sent by: [owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)

----------  
From: **Peter Taylor** <[taylorpg@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:taylorpg@unimelb.edu.au)>  
Date: Sun, May 15, 2016 at 7:50 PM  
To: "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>, Peter Taylor <[P.Taylor@ms.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:P.Taylor@ms.unimelb.edu.au)>

Dear all,

As a staff member (and an ex-Head) in the School of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of Melbourne, I'm perfectly prepared to speak up in support of this.

The rationale and the legal justification for advertising the positions as women-only is explained in the advertisement itself:

`The University plan seeks to increase the diversity of the workforce and the representation of women in areas they have been traditionally under-represented. Consistent with this, the School of Mathematics and Statistics is seeking to increase the representation of women in the academic workforce across mathematical disciplines. Pursuant to a Special Measure under Section 12 (1) of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic), the School is seeking to lift the representation of women and therefore will only consider applications from suitably qualified female candidates for these three positions.'

For a whole range of reasons, the School is not as effective as it would be if it had a better gender balance across its academic staff. The usual first measures, such as requiring gender balance on appointment committees and trying to get gender balance in shortlists haven't worked. But the School is serious about tackling this issue, which has led to the advertised positions.

A mailing list such as ANZstat is not the place for a detailed debate about affirmative action, - I'd be happy to have that face-to-face if anyone is in town - but members can be assured that these measures were not taken lightly and were taken for the right reasons.

Best wishes,

Peter

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**From:** [owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au) [<mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au>] **On Behalf Of**David Joseph Balding  
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David Balding

Centre for Systems Genomics ([sysgenmelb.org](http://sysgenmelb.org/))

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[dbalding@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:dbalding@unimelb.edu.au)

--

Professor Peter G Taylor,

Department of Mathematics and Statistics,

University of Melbourne, Vic 3010,

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PH: [+61 3 8344 6045](tel:%2B61%203%208344%206045)

Fax: [+61 3 8344 4599](tel:%2B61%203%208344%204599)

email: [p.taylor@ms.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:p.taylor@ms.unimelb.edu.au)

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From: **Geoffrey Brent** <[geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au](mailto:geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au)>  
Date: Sun, May 15, 2016 at 7:58 PM  
To: [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)

Addendum: it looks as if New Zealand does in fact have similar provisions for affirmative action to redress systematic inequality. See New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, section 19(2) and Human Rights Act 1993, section 73:   
  
<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1990/0109/latest/DLM225519.html>  
<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1993/0082/latest/DLM304672.html>  
  
Cheers - Geoffrey  
  
**Dr. Geoffrey Brent**

*Assistant Director (a/g)*

Business Statistics Methodology |  Methodology Division |  **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

**(P)**[**(03) 9615 7685**](tel:%2803%29%209615%207685)**(M) 0422 65 35 26**

**(E)**[**geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au**](mailto:geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au)**(W)**[**www.abs.gov.au**](http://www.abs.gov.au/)

The [ABS Privacy Policy](http://www.abs.gov.au/privacy) outlines how the ABS will handle any personal information that you provide to us.  
  
Geoffrey Brent ---16/05/2016 09:49:51 AM---The ad indicates that the positions are advertised "pursuant to a Special Measure under Section 12 (  
  
From: Geoffrey Brent <[geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au](mailto:geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au)>  
To: Steve Taylor <[steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz](mailto:steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz)>,   
Cc: "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>  
Date: 16/05/2016 09:49 AM  
Subject: RE: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics & Statistics, female applicants only  
Sent by: [owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)

The ad indicates that the positions are advertised "pursuant to a Special Measure under Section 12 (1) of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)". I'm not a lawyer, but on skimming the relevant law, it looks as if the ad is compliant; the point of 12(1) is to promote substantive equality, e.g. for a field where members of a particular group are underrepresented due to systemic inequalities.  
  
Re. your second question: under Victorian state law and Australian federal law, it's illegal to discriminate against transgender people (with exemptions for religious organisations not relevant to this case).   
  
Re. your last sentence: you might want to think about how the first bit might sound to a woman who's had a mastectomy.   
  
As for the second half, presence or absence of a penis is not isomorphic to legal status of a transgender woman.  
  
Cheers - Geoffrey  
 **Dr. Geoffrey Brent**

*Assistant Director (a/g)*

Business Statistics Methodology |  Methodology Division |  **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

**(P)**[**(03) 9615 7685**](tel:%2803%29%209615%207685)**(M) 0422 65 35 26**

**(E)**[**geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au**](mailto:geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au)**(W)**[**www.abs.gov.au**](http://www.abs.gov.au/)

The [ABS Privacy Policy](http://www.abs.gov.au/privacy) outlines how the ABS will handle any personal information that you provide to us.  
  
Steve Taylor ---16/05/2016 07:25:46 AM---Pretty sure an ad like that would be illegal in NZ. Would a transgender person be considered?  i.e.  
  
From: Steve Taylor <[steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz](mailto:steve.taylor@aut.ac.nz)>  
To: David Joseph Balding <[david.balding@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:david.balding@unimelb.edu.au)>, "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>,   
Date: 16/05/2016 07:25 AM  
Subject: RE: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics & Statistics, female applicants only  
Sent by: [owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)

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From: **John Maindonald** <[john.maindonald@anu.edu.au](mailto:john.maindonald@anu.edu.au)>  
Date: Sun, May 15, 2016 at 8:04 PM  
To: Giles David Adams <[gilesdavidadams@gmail.com](mailto:gilesdavidadams@gmail.com)>  
Cc: Duncan Hedderley <[Duncan.Hedderley@plantandfood.co.nz](mailto:Duncan.Hedderley@plantandfood.co.nz)>, "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au) ([anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au))" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>, Richard Gerlach <[richard.gerlach@sydney.edu.au](mailto:richard.gerlach@sydney.edu.au)>

We are getting ourselves tied in knots because the categories that

have been traditionally used in Western society do not fit the demands

of a society that has started to attend to the issues of those that are not

accommodated, or are not well accommodated, by those traditional

categories.  There are no easy answers.

Reading Rebecca Stott’s “Darwin’s Ghosts”, I have been struck by the

extent to which most of those who were in some sense (mostly a very

weak sense) Darwin’s predecessors were oddballs in the Greek or

Islamic or Christian societies in which they lived.  The sorts of troubles

that they experienced are not totally beyond the realms of experience

of modern scientists, but they are generally much less severe.  A few

individuals get highly lauded and honoured.  The intellectual realm

has proved much easier to deal with than the realm of physical and

emotional being.

On the face of it, some non-Western societies may have done a much

better job of addressing such issues.  Samoa and the Samoan diaspora

have acknowledge the Fa'afafine as a third-gender people.

John Maindonald             email: [john.maindonald@anu.edu.au](mailto:john.maindonald@anu.edu.au)

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From: **Carmel Woods** <[Carmel.Woods@plantandfood.co.nz](mailto:Carmel.Woods@plantandfood.co.nz)>  
Date: Mon, May 16, 2016 at 7:39 PM  
To: Peter Taylor <[taylorpg@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:taylorpg@unimelb.edu.au)>, "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>

Presumably they are specifying ‘female applicants only’ as a way of trying to increase the number of females applying for the job. But I wonder if this will actually have the desired effect?

As a female, I’d personally feel uncomfortable applying for a position that was for female applicants only. I’d be worried that if I did land the job my colleagues would look down on me as only having got the job because no males were allowed to apply.

Carmel

**From:** [owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au) [mailto:[owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)] **On Behalf Of**Peter Taylor  
**Sent:** Monday, 16 May 2016 11:50 a.m.  
**To:** [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au); Peter Taylor  
**Subject:** Fwd: RE: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics & Statistics, female applicants only

Dear all,

As a staff member (and an ex-Head) in the School of Mathematics and Statistics at the University of Melbourne, I'm perfectly prepared to speak up in support of this.

The rationale and the legal justification for advertising the positions as women-only is explained in the advertisement itself:

`The University plan seeks to increase the diversity of the workforce and the representation of women in areas they have been traditionally under-represented. Consistent with this, the School of Mathematics and Statistics is seeking to increase the representation of women in the academic workforce across mathematical disciplines. Pursuant to a Special Measure under Section 12 (1) of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic), the School is seeking to lift the representation of women and therefore will only consider applications from suitably qualified female candidates for these three positions.'

For a whole range of reasons, the School is not as effective as it would be if it had a better gender balance across its academic staff. The usual first measures, such as requiring gender balance on appointment committees and trying to get gender balance in shortlists haven't worked. But the School is serious about tackling this issue, which has led to the advertised positions.

A mailing list such as ANZstat is not the place for a detailed debate about affirmative action, - I'd be happy to have that face-to-face if anyone is in town - but members can be assured that these measures were not taken lightly and were taken for the right reasons.

Best wishes,

Peter

Pretty sure an ad like that would be illegal in NZ.

Would a transgender person be considered?  i.e. is the applicant required to have breasts, or must the applicant not have a penis?

**From:** [owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au) [<mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au>] **On Behalf Of**David Joseph Balding  
**Sent:** Saturday, 14 May 2016 3:28p  
**To:** [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)  
**Subject:** JOB: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics & Statistics, female applicants only  
**Importance:** High

The School of Mathematics & Statistics at the University of Melbourne is advertising three continuing academic positions at levels B, C or D, one each in pure mathematics, applied mathematics and statistics, the latter covering mathematical and applied statistics, including statistical genomics, stochastic modelling and probability theory.

Female applicants only.  Closing Date July 31.

For further information and application details please see:

<https://careers.pageuppeople.com/422/ci/en/job/887973/lecturersenior-lecturerassociate-professor-in-pure-mathematics-applied-mathematics-statistics-3-positions>

David Balding

Centre for Systems Genomics ([sysgenmelb.org](http://sysgenmelb.org/))

Schools of BioSciences and Maths & Stats

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ph +613 8344 3730 internal 43730

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[dbalding@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:dbalding@unimelb.edu.au)

--

Professor Peter G Taylor,

Department of Mathematics and Statistics,

University of Melbourne, Vic 3010,

Australia.

PH: [+61 3 8344 6045](tel:%2B61%203%208344%206045)

Fax: [+61 3 8344 4599](tel:%2B61%203%208344%204599)

email: [p.taylor@ms.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:p.taylor@ms.unimelb.edu.au)

|  |
| --- |
| The contents of this e-mail are confidential and may be subject to legal privilege.  If you are not the intended recipient you must not use, disseminate, distribute or  reproduce all or any part of this e-mail or attachments. If you have received this  e-mail in error, please notify the sender and delete all material pertaining to this  e-mail. Any opinion or views expressed in this e-mail are those of the individual  sender and may not represent those of The New Zealand Institute for Plant and  Food Research Limited. |

----------  
From: **Dana Pascovici** <[dana.pascovici@gmail.com](mailto:dana.pascovici@gmail.com)>  
Date: Mon, May 16, 2016 at 7:49 PM  
To: Carmel Woods <[Carmel.Woods@plantandfood.co.nz](mailto:Carmel.Woods@plantandfood.co.nz)>  
Cc: Peter Taylor <[taylorpg@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:taylorpg@unimelb.edu.au)>, "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>

Could not agree more - as a female myself I find it at best bizarre and at worst insulting.

Good luck with their goals; it is not always that the end justifies the means.

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From: **Ian Marschner** <[ian.marschner@mq.edu.au](mailto:ian.marschner@mq.edu.au)>  
Date: Mon, May 16, 2016 at 8:02 PM  
To: Dana Pascovici <[dana.pascovici@gmail.com](mailto:dana.pascovici@gmail.com)>, Carmel Woods <[Carmel.Woods@plantandfood.co.nz](mailto:Carmel.Woods@plantandfood.co.nz)>  
Cc: Peter Taylor <[taylorpg@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:taylorpg@unimelb.edu.au)>, "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>

They are making a genuine and well-intentioned attempt to address a problem and I suggest that we leave them to get on with it and see if it works.

Regards

Ian

**From:** [owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au) <[owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)> on behalf of Dana Pascovici <[dana.pascovici@gmail.com](mailto:dana.pascovici@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 17 May 2016 9:49:08 AM  
**To:** Carmel Woods  
**Cc:** Peter Taylor; [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)  
**Subject:** Re: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics & Statistics, female applicants only

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From: **Patricia Solomon** <[patty.solomon@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:patty.solomon@adelaide.edu.au)>  
Date: Mon, May 16, 2016 at 8:13 PM  
To: Dana Pascovici <[dana.pascovici@gmail.com](mailto:dana.pascovici@gmail.com)>  
Cc: Carmel Woods <[Carmel.Woods@plantandfood.co.nz](mailto:Carmel.Woods@plantandfood.co.nz)>, Peter Taylor <[taylorpg@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:taylorpg@unimelb.edu.au)>, "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>

Dear Peter and ANZstat readers,

I think this is an excellent initiative from the University of Melbourne and wish them every success.

Best wishes,

Patty

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Professor Patty Solomon

Statistics

School of Mathematical Sciences

The University of Adelaide

Adelaide SA 5005  AUSTRALIA

Phone:  [+61 883133033](tel:%2B61%20883133033)  Fax:  [+61 883133696](tel:%2B61%20883133696)

Email: [patty.solomon@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:patty.solomon@adelaide.edu.au)

<http://www.maths.adelaide.edu.au/patty.solomon>

CRICOS Provider Number 00123M  
IMPORTANT: This message may contain confidential or legally privileged information.  If you think it was sent to you by mistake,  please delete all copies and advise the sender.  For the purposes of the SPAM Act 2003, this email is authorised by the University of Adelaide.

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From: **Peta Forder** <[peta.forder@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:peta.forder@newcastle.edu.au)>  
Date: Mon, May 16, 2016 at 8:31 PM  
To: "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>

Damned if they do, damned if they don’t.

Looks like they identified an issue of inequality and are trying to proactively remedy that.  Better than not doing anything about it.

Time will tell if this is an effective and/or worthwhile recruitment strategy.  I doubt they would continue the employment of an applicant if they simply could not the job, regardless of gender.

Regards

Peta

**From:** [owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au) [mailto:[owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)] **On Behalf Of**Dana Pascovici  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 17 May 2016 9:49 AM  
**To:** Carmel Woods  
**Cc:** Peter Taylor; [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)  
**Subject:** Re: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics & Statistics, female applicants only

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From: **Carole Lunny** <[carole.lunny@monash.edu](mailto:carole.lunny@monash.edu)>  
Date: Mon, May 16, 2016 at 8:57 PM  
To: "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>

Affirmative action programs are meant to break down barriers, both visible and invisible, to level the playing field, and to make sure everyone is given an equal break.

They are not meant to guarantee equal results -- but instead proceed on the common-sense notion that if equality of opportunity were a reality, aboriginal people, women, people with disabilities and other groups facing discrimination would be fairly represented in the university's work force, which is obviously not the case.

**Why are women underrepresented in the sciences at the university level?**

Leaving aside the fact that we live in a patriarchal society, there has been a cultural stereotype that boys are better than girls in math.

Most people associate science and math fields with “male” and humanities and arts fields with “female,” according to research

examined in this report. Implicit bias is common, even among individuals who actively reject these stereotypes. This bias not only

affects individuals’ attitudes toward others but may also influence girls’ and women’s likelihood of cultivating their own interest in math

and science. Taking the implicit bias test at [https://implicit.harvard.edu](https://implicit.harvard.edu/) can help people identify and understand their biases so that

they can work to compensate for them.

Not only are people more likely to associate math and science with men than with women, people often hold negative opinions of

women in “masculine” positions, like scientists or engineers.

Research profiled in this report shows that people judge women to be less competent than men in “male” jobs unless they are clearly

successful in their work. When a woman is clearly competent in a “masculine” job, she is considered to be less likable. Because both

likability and competence are needed for success in the workplace, women in science fields can find themselves in a double bind. If

women and men in science and engineering know that this bias exists, they can work to interrupt the unconscious thought processes

that lead to it. It may also help women specifically to know that if they encounter social disapproval in their role as a computer scientist

or physicist, it is likely not personal and there are ways to counteract it.

**What can universities do?**

Universities can attract more female science faculty if they improve departmental culture to promote the integration of female faculty.

Research described in this report provides evidence that women are less satisfied with the academic workplace and more likely to

leave it earlier in their careers than their male counterparts are. University administrators can recruit and retain more

women by implementing mentoring programs and effective work-life policies for all faculty members.

To diversify the science fields we must take a hard look at the stereotypes and biases that still pervade our culture. Encouraging more girls and women to enter these vital fields will require careful attention to the environment

in our universities and workplaces and throughout our culture.

Carole

<https://www.aauw.org/-So-Few-Women-in-Science-Technology-Engineering-and-mathematics.pdf>

--

**Carole Lunny, MPH**

**PhD Student**

Australasian Cochrane Centre  
Department of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine

School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine

Monash University

The Alfred Centre

549 St Kilda Road

Melbourne VIC 3004

Phone: [+61 3 9903 0410](tel:%2B61%203%209903%200410)  
Email: [carole.lunny@monash.edu](mailto:carole.lunny@monash.edu)

SPHPM BlogSPHPM FacebookSPHPM TwitterSPHPM YouTube

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From: **Carole Lunny** <[carole.lunny@monash.edu](mailto:carole.lunny@monash.edu)>  
Date: Mon, May 16, 2016 at 9:12 PM  
To: "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>

The link I sent is not working so here is the citation, and the proper link:.

Catherine Hill, Ph.D. Christianne Corbett Andresse St. Rose, Ed.D.Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. AAUW 2010. <http://www.aauw.org/research/why-so-few/>

Carole

Monash University

The Alfred Centre

549 St Kilda Road

Melbourne VIC 3004

Phone: [+61 3 9903 0410](tel:%2B61%203%209903%200410)  
Email: [carole.lunny@monash.edu](mailto:carole.lunny@monash.edu)

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From: **Geoffrey Brent** <[geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au](mailto:geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au)>  
Date: Tue, May 17, 2016 at 12:06 AM  
To: [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)

Approaching from a statistical perspective:  
  
If I was running a sample survey, I would strive to ensure that the design, sampling, and collection processes were appropriate to give a representative sample of the population of interest\*. In the best of all possible worlds, that's where it would end.  
  
But if I looked at the resulting data and found that e.g. 60% of my respondents were male, from a population where the balance should be approximately 50-50, then clearly my efforts have not been enough; somewhere along the way, systematic bias has crept in, leading to undercoverage.  
  
If I ignore that bias the resulting estimates are going to be very poor. There's no perfect method for addressing that problem, but most professional statisticians in that situation would attempt an undercoverage correction of one sort or another. It wouldn't be adequate to stand on "I did the best I could to ensure a fair sample, never mind that I didn't get one".  
  
We have abundant evidence that academic pathways are skewed in favour of male candidates. A quick search on "bias academia resume" will find empirical measurements of these effects in both formal 'gatekeeper' processes (e.g. CVs with male names likely to be rated more favourably than identical CVs with female names) and informal processes (professors are more likely to make time for a short-notice meeting with a prospective grad student if the request has a "white male" name attached).   
  
In statistical terms, we *know*our selection method has bias; do we choose to correct for that, or not?  
  
Affirmative action is a messy solution (and if I've understood correctly, not the first option that U. Melbourne explored) but sometimes a messy solution is better than none.  
  
\*Simplifying here, to avoid tangents about stratified sampling and other fancy design methods...  
  
Cheers - Geoffrey  
  
**Dr. Geoffrey Brent**

*Assistant Director (a/g)*

Business Statistics Methodology |  Methodology Division |  **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

**(P)**[**(03) 9615 7685**](tel:%2803%29%209615%207685)**(M) 0422 65 35 26**

**(E)**[**geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au**](mailto:geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au)**(W)**[**www.abs.gov.au**](http://www.abs.gov.au/)

The [ABS Privacy Policy](http://www.abs.gov.au/privacy) outlines how the ABS will handle any personal information that you provide to us.  
  
Carole Lunny ---17/05/2016 10:58:16 AM---Affirmative action programs are meant to break down barriers, both visible and invisible, to level t  
  
From: Carole Lunny <[carole.lunny@monash.edu](mailto:carole.lunny@monash.edu)>  
To: "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>,   
Date: 17/05/2016 10:58 AM  
Subject: Re: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics & Statistics, female applicants only  
Sent by: [owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)

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On 17 May 2016 at 10:31, Peta Forder <[peta.forder@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:peta.forder@newcastle.edu.au)> wrote:

----------  
From: **Berwin A Turlach** <[Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com](mailto:Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com)>  
Date: Tue, May 17, 2016 at 6:29 AM  
To: Carole Lunny <[carole.lunny@monash.edu](mailto:carole.lunny@monash.edu)>  
Cc: "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>  
  
  
On Tue, 17 May 2016 10:57:21 +1000  
Carole Lunny <[carole.lunny@monash.edu](mailto:carole.lunny@monash.edu)> wrote:  
  
> Affirmative action programs are meant to break down barriers, both  
> visible and invisible, to level the playing field, and to make sure  
> everyone is given an equal break.  
  
Not wanting to wade into the debate of effectiveness of affirmative  
action programs, but:  
  
> They are not meant to guarantee equal results -- but instead proceed  
> on the common-sense notion that if equality of opportunity were a  
> reality [...] groups facing discrimination would be fairly represented  
> in the university's work force, which is obviously not the case.  
  
What does "fairly represented" mean?  That their proportion reflects  
the proportion of applicants for the type of position/field?  Or that  
their proportion reflects the proportion in some population?  If so,  
which one (Victorian, Australia, Australian, World, G8 countries,  
Australasian,...)?  
  
Actually, if the latter, then it would not be a common-sense notion  
but rather an indication of a somewhat disturbing (but unfortunately  
not uncommon) level of innumeracy, in particular utter unfamiliarity  
with phenomena such as Simpson's paradox.  
  
> [...] Taking the implicit bias test at  [https://implicit.harvard.edu](https://implicit.harvard.edu/)  
> can help people identify and understand their biases so that they can  
> work to compensate for them.  
  
I was intrigued and visited.  What a hoot. :)  
  
I decided to take the one about preference for light skinned people  
over dark skinned people.  Over 40+ pictures they train you to press as  
fast as possible a key when you see either a good word or a light  
skinned person and to press another key when you see a bad word or a  
dark skinned person.  Then they put good words and dark skinned persons  
together and bad words and light skinned people together and repeat.  
In the end they say:  
  
        Your data suggest a strong automatic preference for Light  
        Skinned People compared to Dark Skinned People.  
  
With the explanation (my emphasis added):  
  
        The interpretation is described as 'automatic preference for  
        Light Skinned People' if you responded \*faster\* when Light  
        Skinned faces and Good words were classified with the same key  
        than when Dark Skinned faces and Good words were classified  
        with the same key. Depending on the magnitude of your result,  
        your automatic preference may be described as 'slight',  
        'moderate', 'strong', or 'little to no preference'.  
  
Well, doh, you first trained my motor memory for a certain association  
and then you are surprised that I am slower (or make errors) when you  
switch?  My car has the indicator control on the right, the wipers  
on the left, and that is what I am used to.  Any idea how often I  
activate the wipers when I drive my friend's Peugot and I actually want  
to activate the indicator?  And when it eventually clicks that I have  
different controls and have to concentrate to do the right thing, how  
many (milli) seconds more it takes me to actually activate the  
indicator.  I wonder that that tells me about my biases regarding car  
manufacturers. :)  
  
Speaking of rigging a test to find the bias that you want to show.  I  
wonder whether I should spend some more time on their side and try  
some of their other "tests" to see that they are similarly rigged.  
  
Cheers,  
  
        Berwin

----------  
From: <[megan@pledger.gen.nz](mailto:megan@pledger.gen.nz)>  
Date: Tue, May 17, 2016 at 5:24 PM  
To: Berwin A Turlach <[Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com](mailto:Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com)>  
Cc: [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)  
  
  
  
Quoting Berwin A Turlach <[Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com](mailto:Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com)>:

On Tue, 17 May 2016 10:57:21 +1000  
Carole Lunny <[carole.lunny@monash.edu](mailto:carole.lunny@monash.edu)> wrote:

Affirmative action programs are meant to break down barriers, both  
visible and invisible, to level the playing field, and to make sure  
everyone is given an equal break.

Not wanting to wade into the debate of effectiveness of affirmative  
action programs, but:

They are not meant to guarantee equal results -- but instead proceed  
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reality [...] groups facing discrimination would be fairly represented  
in the university's work force, which is obviously not the case.

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the proportion of applicants for the type of position/field?  Or that  
their proportion reflects the proportion in some population?  If so,  
which one (Victorian, Australia, Australian, World, G8 countries,  
Australasian,...)?

Perhaps the proportion of women in other Australian statistics departments.  Or the proportion of women in other department's upper level Australian statistics courses.  
  
If the department is losing talented female statistics students to other courses because the students don't think statistics is for people like them then it would make economic sense to employ female role models.

----------  
From: **Allen Cheng** <[allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au)>  
Date: Wed, May 18, 2016 at 9:59 AM  
To: [megan@pledger.gen.nz](mailto:megan@pledger.gen.nz), Berwin A Turlach <[Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com](mailto:Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com)>  
Cc: [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)  
  
  
This has been in the news. They report that only 9% of maths professors in Australia are female, and maths has the lowest female representation of all fields.   
  
<http://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2016-05-18/melbourne-university-opens-up-jobs-to-women-applicants-only/7426704>  
  
Slightly different to figures reported here.   
<http://www.sciencegenderequity.org.au/gender-equity-in-stem/>  
  
A. 

----------  
From: **Alexander Dokumentov** <[alexander.dokumentov@gmail.com](mailto:alexander.dokumentov@gmail.com)>  
Date: Wed, May 18, 2016 at 8:50 PM  
To: Allen Cheng <[allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au)>  
Cc: [megan@pledger.gen.nz](mailto:megan@pledger.gen.nz), Berwin A Turlach <[Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com](mailto:Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com)>, [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)

0% maths professors in Australia are aboriginal. This is the real problem which has to be solved.

On the other hand both problems (with aboriginal maths professors and female maths professors) could be easily solved if Melbourne University advertised the positions as "aboriginal female only". Opening such "combined" positions could also be more cost effective as such opening would not require separate positions for "female maths professors" and for "aboriginal maths professors".

A.

----------  
From: **Nazim Khan** <[nazim.khan@uwa.edu.au](mailto:nazim.khan@uwa.edu.au)>  
Date: Wed, May 18, 2016 at 9:04 PM  
To: Alexander Dokumentov <[alexander.dokumentov@gmail.com](mailto:alexander.dokumentov@gmail.com)>, Allen Cheng <[allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au)>  
Cc: "[megan@pledger.gen.nz](mailto:megan@pledger.gen.nz)" <[megan@pledger.gen.nz](mailto:megan@pledger.gen.nz)>, Berwin A Turlach <[Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com](mailto:Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com)>, "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>

What % male professors are Indigenous? That is, what % professors are Indigenous?

**R Nazim Khan**

**--------------------------------------------------------------**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

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**T**[+61 8 6488 3378](tel:%2B61%208%206488%203378)  •  **E**[nazim.khan@uwa.edu.au](mailto:nazim.khan@uwa.edu.au) • W <http://www.maths.uwa.edu.au/~nazim>

**From:** [owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au) [mailto:[owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)] **On Behalf Of**Alexander Dokumentov  
**Sent:** Thursday, 19 May 2016 8:50 AM  
**To:** Allen Cheng <[allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au)>  
**Cc:** [megan@pledger.gen.nz](mailto:megan@pledger.gen.nz); Berwin A Turlach <[Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com](mailto:Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com)>; [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)  
**Subject:** Re: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics & Statistics, female applicants only

0% maths professors in Australia are aboriginal. This is the real problem which has to be solved.

----------  
From: **Starick, Luke** <[Luke.Starick@nielsen.com](mailto:Luke.Starick@nielsen.com)>  
Date: Wed, May 18, 2016 at 9:05 PM  
To: Alexander Dokumentov <[alexander.dokumentov@gmail.com](mailto:alexander.dokumentov@gmail.com)>, Allen Cheng <[allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au)>  
Cc: "[megan@pledger.gen.nz](mailto:megan@pledger.gen.nz)" <[megan@pledger.gen.nz](mailto:megan@pledger.gen.nz)>, Berwin A Turlach <[Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com](mailto:Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com)>, "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>

Women are over 50% of the population. If the mathematics and statistics is not able to attract such a large group, it risks not developing its full potential.

As a man, if I was a candidate for this position (I’m not) I would be disappointed personally that I couldn’t apply. But that’s a much smaller group than the potentially large group of females that could be attracted to the industry. I would expect that there are still a number of positions that suitably qualified men could apply for.

**From:** [owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au) [mailto:[owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)] **On Behalf Of**Alexander Dokumentov  
**Sent:** Thursday, 19 May 2016 10:50 AM  
**To:** Allen Cheng  
**Cc:** [megan@pledger.gen.nz](mailto:megan@pledger.gen.nz); Berwin A Turlach; [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)  
**Subject:** Re: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics & Statistics, female applicants only

0% maths professors in Australia are aboriginal. This is the real problem which has to be solved.

----------  
From: **Bob Durrant** <[bobd@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:bobd@waikato.ac.nz)>  
Date: Wed, May 18, 2016 at 9:05 PM  
To: Alexander Dokumentov <[alexander.dokumentov@gmail.com](mailto:alexander.dokumentov@gmail.com)>, Allen Cheng <[allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au)>  
Cc: [megan@pledger.gen.nz](mailto:megan@pledger.gen.nz), Berwin A Turlach <[Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com](mailto:Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com)>, [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)  
  
  
On 19/05/2016 12:50 p.m., Alexander Dokumentov wrote:

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problem which has to be solved.  
On the other hand both problems (with aboriginal maths professors and  
female maths professors) could be easily solved if Melbourne University  
advertised the positions as "aboriginal female only". Opening such  
"combined" positions could also be more cost effective as such opening  
would not require separate positions for "female maths professors" and  
for "aboriginal maths professors".  
  
A.

But then non-aboriginal females will still be under-represented in the population of maths professors. It is true one can optimize for \*appearing\* to solve the underlying inequity issue in this way, but if one is serious about making genuine progress addressing inequity issues then it isn't the way to go.  
To see this, let's go further and add some more disadvantaged groups our candidate must belong to: one physically-disabled, partially-sighted, aboriginal female maths professor might "tick 4 boxes" for HR, but they are still only one person, with one vote at faculty boards, one seat on hiring committees, etc. So such "combined positions" really don't tackle fundamental roots of the problem.  
  
--   
Dr. Robert (Bob) Durrant, Senior Lecturer.  
  
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Department of Mathematics & Statistics,  
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Private Bag 3105,  
Hamilton 3240  
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e: [bobd@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:bobd@waikato.ac.nz)  
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f: [+64 (0)7 838 4155](tel:%2B64%20%280%297%20838%204155)

----------  
From: **James Jansson** <[jamesjansson@gmail.com](mailto:jamesjansson@gmail.com)>  
Date: Wed, May 18, 2016 at 9:06 PM  
To: "Starick, Luke" <[Luke.Starick@nielsen.com](mailto:Luke.Starick@nielsen.com)>  
Cc: Alexander Dokumentov <[alexander.dokumentov@gmail.com](mailto:alexander.dokumentov@gmail.com)>, Allen Cheng <[allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au)>, "[megan@pledger.gen.nz](mailto:megan@pledger.gen.nz)" <[megan@pledger.gen.nz](mailto:megan@pledger.gen.nz)>, Berwin A Turlach <[Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com](mailto:Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com)>, "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>

As a man who may be eligible for such a position, I am happy that I know upfront that equal opportunity is going to be applied and not considered deeper into the process without informing me.

----------  
From: **Chris Lloyd** <[C.Lloyd@mbs.edu](mailto:C.Lloyd@mbs.edu)>  
Date: Wed, May 18, 2016 at 9:10 PM  
To: Giles David Adams <[gilesdavidadams@gmail.com](mailto:gilesdavidadams@gmail.com)>, Duncan Hedderley <[Duncan.Hedderley@plantandfood.co.nz](mailto:Duncan.Hedderley@plantandfood.co.nz)>  
Cc: Anzstat <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>, Richard Gerlach <[richard.gerlach@sydney.edu.au](mailto:richard.gerlach@sydney.edu.au)>

I think you surely meant “at best” a necessary evil.

Professor Chris J. Lloyd

Professor of Management (Statistics)

Melbourne Business School

**From:** [owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au) [mailto:[owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)] **On Behalf Of**Giles David Adams  
**Sent:** Monday, 16 May 2016 9:36 AM  
**To:** Duncan Hedderley  
**Cc:** Anzstat; Richard Gerlach  
**Subject:** RE: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics & Statistics, female applicants only

This all boils down to opinions on affirmative action. I know some people have issues with it, but in the fight against centuries of ingrained inequality it is at worst a necessary evil.

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From: **Michael Luke Walker** <[walkerm1@student.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:walkerm1@student.unimelb.edu.au)>  
Date: Wed, May 18, 2016 at 9:11 PM  
To: "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>

What percent of applicants are aboriginal and/or female?

Michael Walker

Centre for Systems Genomics  
School of BioSciences  
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[+61 3 9035 8916](tel:%2B61%203%209035%208916)

[www.inouyelab.org](http://www.inouyelab.org/)

----------  
From: **Geoffrey Brent** <[geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au](mailto:geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au)>  
Date: Wed, May 18, 2016 at 9:17 PM  
To: [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)

How would that be "more cost effective"? It's not as if UM are creating extra positions solely for the sake of hiring women to sit around doing nothing; they have positions that need to be filled, and they're taking steps to ensure that some of the people who fill those positions are women. It doesn't change the total number of positions.  
  
(Style guide: in the Australian context, "Aboriginal" is capitalised for the same reasons as "Irish", "Catholic", or "First Fleet".)  
  
Cheers - Geoffrey  
  
**Dr. Geoffrey Brent**

*Assistant Director (a/g)*

Business Statistics Methodology |  Methodology Division |  **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

**(P)**[**(03) 9615 7685**](tel:%2803%29%209615%207685)**(M) 0422 65 35 26**

**(E)**[**geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au**](mailto:geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au)**(W)**[**www.abs.gov.au**](http://www.abs.gov.au/)

The [ABS Privacy Policy](http://www.abs.gov.au/privacy) outlines how the ABS will handle any personal information that you provide to us.  
  
Alexander Dokumentov ---19/05/2016 10:50:51 AM---0% maths professors in Australia are aboriginal. This is the real problem which has to be solved.  
  
From: Alexander Dokumentov <[alexander.dokumentov@gmail.com](mailto:alexander.dokumentov@gmail.com)>  
To: Allen Cheng <[allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au)>,   
Cc: [megan@pledger.gen.nz](mailto:megan@pledger.gen.nz), Berwin A Turlach <[Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com](mailto:Berwin.Turlach@gmail.com)>, [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)  
Date: 19/05/2016 10:50 AM  
Subject: Re: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics & Statistics, female applicants only  
Sent by: [owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)

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On the other hand both problems (with aboriginal maths professors and female maths professors) could be easily solved if Melbourne University advertised the positions as "aboriginal female only". Opening such "combined" positions could also be more cost effective as such opening would not require separate positions for "female maths professors" and for "aboriginal maths professors".  
  
A.  
  
  
On Wed, May 18, 2016 at 11:59 PM, Allen Cheng <[allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:allen.cheng@med.monash.edu.au)> wrote:

----------  
From: **Geoffrey Brent** <[geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au](mailto:geoffrey.brent@abs.gov.au)>  
Date: Wed, May 18, 2016 at 11:11 PM  
To: "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>

That's an important question, as long as it's not used as a cop-out. When an employer gets few or no applications from women (or other underrepresented groups), there's a tendency to throw one's hands up in the air and say "it's beyond our control, we can't hire them if they don't apply" rather than looking a little deeper: *why*didn't they apply, and which of those factors can we influence? The answer is rarely as simple as just "women just don't want to do this kind of work"; from my experience at ABS I can confirm that there are plenty of women who are interested in maths-stats work and good at it.   
  
Cheers - Geoffrey  
  
**Dr. Geoffrey Brent**

*Assistant Director (a/g)*

Business Statistics Methodology |  Methodology Division |  **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

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The [ABS Privacy Policy](http://www.abs.gov.au/privacy) outlines how the ABS will handle any personal information that you provide to us.  
  
Michael Luke Walker ---19/05/2016 11:13:45 AM---What percent of applicants are aboriginal and/or female? Michael Walker  
  
From: Michael Luke Walker <[walkerm1@student.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:walkerm1@student.unimelb.edu.au)>  
To: "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>,   
Date: 19/05/2016 11:13 AM  
Subject: Re: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics & Statistics, female applicants only  
Sent by: [owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:owner-anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)

What percent of applicants are aboriginal and/or female?  
  
Michael Walker  
  
Centre for Systems Genomics  
School of BioSciences  
University of Melbourne  
  
[+61 3 9035 8916](tel:%2B61%203%209035%208916)  
[www.inouyelab.org](http://www.inouyelab.org/)  
  
On Thu, May 19, 2016 at 11:04 AM, Nazim Khan <[nazim.khan@uwa.edu.au](mailto:nazim.khan@uwa.edu.au)> wrote:

----------  
From: **Michael Luke Walker** <[walkerm1@student.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:walkerm1@student.unimelb.edu.au)>  
Date: Thu, May 19, 2016 at 12:13 AM  
To: "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>

Agreed, my concern was precisely locating the problem.  
  
Michael

----------  
From: **Walt Davis** <[walterd@uow.edu.au](mailto:walterd@uow.edu.au)>  
Date: Thu, May 19, 2016 at 4:49 AM  
To: "[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)" <[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>

I haven’t had time to digest all of the messages over the last few days on this discussion so apologies if these issues have been covered.

1.       It is useful to distinguish between “diversity” and “equity.”  A given discipline might have an 80/20 M/F split in terms of doctorates awarded over the last X years, suggesting that there might be “equity” if 20% of junior academic hires over the last X years were women.  However one would not necessarily describe that scenario as “diverse” and “diversity” might have benefits to a school, faculty, university, community.

2.       On the other hand, in such a scenario, it would be quite difficult for any university, much less most/all universities, to hire women 50% of the time without significantly lowering quality standards, at least in terms of the indicators of quality that can be determined prior to hiring.  Years ago in the US, and probably still today, there was concern that about 10% of university students were African-American but only a very small percentage of the faculty were (I don’t recall the percentage).  There were suggestions that the faculty proportion and the student proportion should be better balanced. It was of course pointed out that only about 4% of PhDs awarded over the last several years were awarded to African-Americans (if memory serves).  That itself might be an indicator of inequity but once you’re at the stage of hiring new faculty, how can 10% of new hires be African-American when the available pool of recent PhDs is only 4% African-American … much less hiring an even larger proportion to bring up the University-wide percentage to 10%?

3.       The AAUW report linked earlier is interesting.  It’s based on the US and starts looking at STEM disciplines starting in high school.  Some highlights …

Figure 3 shows “advanced placement” tests taken in STEM subjects.  AP tests are for “advanced” high school students and, depending on university guidelines, allow students to receive credit/pass out of introductory university classes in these topics.  Girls are nearly half the test-takers in Calculus AB (lowest-level), a bit behind in chemistry, a bit ahead in environmental science and way ahead in biology.  It’s only in the physics and computer science tests where boys form the large majority.

Figure 4 then looks at the intent of first year uni students to major in STEM fields.  So, at least among advanced high school students, girls seemed just as interested in the STEM disciplines.  Figure 4 is all 1st year students (a sample from).   Female interest outpaces male interest in the biological/agricultural sciences.  It is about 2/3 of the male interest for the physical and mathematical sciences … but nobody’s interested in those so it doesn’t matter much.  Combine those three categories and women are more likely to intend to major in those subjects.  Males take a small lead when computer science is added.  Then you get to engineering 14.5% of males express an intent but only 2.5% of females.  So all told, it’s 29.3% of male students and just 15.1% of female students but that’s almost entirely engineering.

Figure 6 looks at bachelor degrees awarded.  Women are 60% in bio/ag and 51% in chemistry.  Note, I believe about 60-65% of uni students in the US are female so 51% isn’t quite parity. Women receive 45% in maths and 41% in earth/atmo/ocean sciences.  Alas it’s just 20% in physics, engineering and comp science.  Comp science is particularly interesting as it was at 36% in 1986, fell to 27% in 1996 and is 20% in 2006.  I would guess there are a lot more comp sci majors these days and it might be interesting to look at international vs. domestic students.

Figure 7 gives the number of bachelor degrees awarded by gender in the STEM disciplines.  The total gap is 50,000 more towards men.  That gap is almost entirely computer science and engineering.  That is about 78,000 for men (over half of the STEM degrees awarded to men) to about 28,000 for women (1/3 of the total).

Figure 9 looks at doctorates and the gaps are much larger here.  Women are awarded about 50% of doctorates in bio/ag and 30-35% in earth, chem and maths.  But again, the biggest gaps are engineering and comp sci.

I don’t know how well Australia mirrors the US but in the US, through the undergraduate level, the under-representation of women in STEM is pretty much really just under-representation in comp sci and engineering … not maths, not bio, not chem.  It may be counter-productive to lump all STEM disciplines together as the problem is heavily concentrated in just those two.  There would seem to still be plenty of room for improvement for doctorates in maths although again it would be interesting to separate international and domestic students.

The original link to the study didn’t work for me,  this goes to the full report: <http://www.aauw.org/files/2013/02/Why-So-Few-Women-in-Science-Technology-Engineering-and-Mathematics.pdf>

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----------  
From: **Alex Fun** <[quickling@gmail.com](mailto:quickling@gmail.com)>  
Date: Thu, May 19, 2016 at 5:51 AM  
To: Walt Davis <[walterd@uow.edu.au](mailto:walterd@uow.edu.au)>  
Cc: [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)

I feel that this discussion only makes sense with respect to some "objective functions".

People who disagree with this decision seem to have in mind an objective of universities producing the best possible research (in terms of what? Citations? Impact?)

On the other hand, if the aim is equal opportunity, that is, for more women to produce good research, maybe not the best possible research, but good research nonetheless, then in my opinion this decision should go some way in redressing a clear lack of opportunity.

----------  
From: **Lan Kelly** <[lankelly@internode.on.net](mailto:lankelly@internode.on.net)>  
Date: Thu, May 19, 2016 at 6:02 AM  
To: Alex Fun <[quickling@gmail.com](mailto:quickling@gmail.com)>, Walt Davis <[walterd@uow.edu.au](mailto:walterd@uow.edu.au)>  
Cc: [anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)

 I find this extremely offensive:  
  
...for more women to produce good research, **maybe not the best possible research**, but good research nonetheless,..  
  
Here's a hypothetical question, who would you employ?  
  
A middle aged woman who wants to work part-time to balance work and family, including a husband who is working long hours  
  
versus  
  
a thirty year old male who is willing to work unpaid overtime.  
  
No need to reply! Is it a coincidence that Julia Gillard and Julie Bishop are childless?

----- Original Message -----

**From:**

"Alex Fun" <[quickling@gmail.com](mailto:quickling@gmail.com)>

**To:**

"Walt Davis" <[walterd@uow.edu.au](mailto:walterd@uow.edu.au)>

**Cc:**

<[anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au](mailto:anzstat@lists.uq.edu.au)>

**Sent:**

Thu, 19 May 2016 19:51:44 +1000

**Subject:**

RE: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics & Statistics, female applicants only

I feel that this discussion only makes sense with respect to some "objective functions".

People who disagree with this decision seem to have in mind an objective of universities producing the best possible research (in terms of what? Citations? Impact?)

On the other hand, if the aim is equal opportunity, that is, for more women to produce good research, maybe not the best possible research, but good research nonetheless, then in my opinion this decision should go some way in redressing a clear lack of opportunity.

On 19 May 2016 6:58 pm, "Walt Davis" <[walterd@uow.edu.au](mailto:walterd@uowedu.au)> wrote:

I haven’t had time to digest all of the messages over the last few days on this discussion so apologies if these issues have been covered.

1.       It is useful to distinguish between “diversity” and “equity.”  A given discipline might have an 80/20 M/F split in terms of doctorates awarded over the last X years, suggesting that there might be “equity” if 20% of junior academic hires over the last X years were women.  However one would not necessarily describe that scenario as “diverse” and “diversity” might have benefits to a school, faculty, university, community.

2.       On the other hand, in such a scenario, it would be quite difficult for any university, much less most/all universities, to hire women 50% of the time without significantly lowering quality standards, at least in terms of the indicators of quality that can be determined prior to hiring.  Years ago in the US, and probably still today, there was concern that about 10% of university students were African-American but only a very small percentage of the faculty were (I don’t recall the percentage).  There were suggestions that the faculty proportion and the student proportion should be better balanced. It was of course pointed out that only about 4% of PhDs awarded over the last several years were awarded to African-Americans (if memory serves).  That itself might be an indicator of inequity but once you’re at the stage of hiring new faculty, how can 10% of new hires be African-American when the available pool of recent PhDs is only 4% African-American … much less hiring an even larger proportion to bring up the University-wide percentage to 10%?

3.       The AAUW report linked earlier is interesting.  It’s based on the US and starts looking at STEM disciplines starting in high school.  Some highlights …

Figure 3 shows “advanced placement” tests taken in STEM subjects.  AP tests are for “advanced” high school students and, depending on university guidelines, allow students to receive credit/pass out of introductory university classes in these topics.  Girls are nearly half the test-takers in Calculus AB (lowest-level), a bit behind in chemistry, a bit ahead in environmental science and way ahead in biology.  It’s only in the physics and computer science tests where boys form the large majority.

Figure 4 then looks at the intent of first year uni students to major in STEM fields.  So, at least among advanced high school students, girls seemed just as interested in the STEM disciplines.  Figure 4 is all 1st year students (a sample from).   Female interest outpaces male interest in the biological/agricultural sciences.  It is about 2/3 of the male interest for the physical and mathematical sciences … but nobody’s interested in those so it doesn’t matter much.  Combine those three categories and women are more likely to intend to major in those subjects.  Males take a small lead when computer science is added.  Then you get to engineering 14.5% of males express an intent but only 2.5% of females.  So all told, it’s 29.3% of male students and just 15.1% of female students but that’s almost entirely engineering.

Figure 6 looks at bachelor degrees awarded.  Women are 60% in bio/ag and 51% in chemistry.  Note, I believe about 60-65% of uni students in the US are female so 51% isn’t quite parity. Women receive 45% in maths and 41% in earth/atmo/ocean sciences.  Alas it’s just 20% in physics, engineering and comp science.  Comp science is particularly interesting as it was at 36% in 1986, fell to 27% in 1996 and is 20% in 2006.  I would guess there are a lot more comp sci majors these days and it might be interesting to look at international vs. domestic students.

Figure 7 gives the number of bachelor degrees awarded by gender in the STEM disciplines.  The total gap is 50,000 more towards men.  That gap is almost entirely computer science and engineering.  That is about 78,000 for men (over half of the STEM degrees awarded to men) to about 28,000 for women (1/3 of the total).

Figure 9 looks at doctorates and the gaps are much larger here.  Women are awarded about 50% of doctorates in bio/ag and 30-35% in earth, chem and maths.  But again, the biggest gaps are engineering and comp sci.

I don’t know how well Australia mirrors the US but in the US, through the undergraduate level, the under-representation of women in STEM is pretty much really just under-representation in comp sci and engineering … not maths, not bio, not chem.  It may be counter-productive to lump all STEM disciplines together as the problem is heavily concentrated in just those two.  There would seem to still be plenty of room for improvement for doctorates in maths although again it would be interesting to separate international and domestic students.

The original link to the study didn’t work for me,  this goes to the full report: <http://www.aauw.org/files/2013/02/Why-So-Few-Women-in-Science-Technology-Engineering-and-Mathematics.pdf>

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I remember reading in The Economist some years ago – and can’t find the actual article  - that in unequal societies like Turkey female pupils are roughly equal to male pupils in language but substantially lower in math. In Scandinavia females outperform males in languages and are equal in math but, despite the equality, female pupils there also preferred language related studies to math related studies.

I don’t know where that fits into this debate but even with equal ability, fewer women choose STEM than men.

Christoph Schnelle

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**To:**Alex Fun <[quickling@gmail.com](mailto:quickling@gmail.com)>, Walt Davis <[walterd@uow.edu.au](mailto:walterd@uow.edu.au)>  
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Are you thinking of this paper which I'm pretty sure was mentioned in the Economist (or maybe it was the Economist Espresso) last month? Either way it might be of interest.

Stoet G, Bailey DH, Moore AM, Geary DC (2016) Countries with Higher Levels of Gender Equality Show Larger National Sex Differences in Mathematics Anxiety and Relatively Lower Parental Mathematics Valuation for Girls. PLoS ONE 11(4): e0153857. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0153857

Abstract:

Despite international advancements in gender equality across a variety of societal domains, the underrepresentation of girls and women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) related fields persists. In this study, we explored the possibility that the sex difference in mathematics anxiety contributes to this disparity. More specifically, we tested a number of predictions from the prominent gender stratification model, which is the leading psychological theory of cross-national patterns of sex differences in mathematics anxiety and performance. To this end, we analyzed data from 761,655 15-year old students across 68 nations who participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Most importantly and contra predictions, we showed that economically developed and more gender equal countries have a lower overall level of mathematics anxiety, and yet a larger national sex difference in mathematics anxiety relative to less developed countries. Further, although relatively more mothers work in STEM fields in more developed countries, these parents valued, on average, mathematical competence more in their sons than their daughters. The proportion of mothers working in STEM was unrelated to sex differences in mathematics anxiety or performance. We propose that the gender stratification model fails to account for these national patterns and that an alternative model is needed. In the discussion, we suggest how an interaction between socio-cultural values and sex-specific psychological traits can better explain these patterns. We also discuss implications for policies aiming to increase girls’ STEM participation.

cheers,

Cam.

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From: **Max Moldovan** <[max.moldovan@gmail.com](mailto:max.moldovan@gmail.com)>  
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Being the top University, UniMelb just happened to get in the focus for this issue, but there are interesting things happening in "less prominent" Universities, mostly behind the scene. Here is the clause to the essential SELECTION CRITERIA for the position recently advertised by University of South Australia (the "add" is attached):

Eligibility of appointment is restricted to persons who:

• Have had casual academic employment experience within the past twelve (12) months plus no continuing employment within UniSA during the previous three (3) years; or

• Have other relevant work experience for the work activity to be undertaken; or

• Are enrolled as a student and the work required is generally related to the degree course being undertaken.]

Why not to name this specific person when "advertised"? I think we should accept that equal opportunities (and often fairness, in general) is quite a flexible concept some universities and the Union can adjust to fit their business.

Maybe this is legal according to the equivalent of South Australian Equal Opportunity Act, I am not a layer - just found this point corresponding to the discussion.

Kind regards

Max Moldovan

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From: **Chris Howden** <[chris@trickysolutions.com.au](mailto:chris@trickysolutions.com.au)>  
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I think Walters point of there being a difference between “diversity” and “equity” is a good one.

Of course we want equity, if 30% of a group graduates with a PhD and want work then we want systems in place to ensure 30% find work.

But do we actually want to ensure that each and every group represents 50%? Doesn’t really make sense does it? Some groups might be drawn to certain disciplines more than others and what’s wrong with that? Maybe just as long as we ensure that all people get equal treatment and opportunity, especially if they happen to be a minority in that discipline, then one could infer the diversity, whatever it is, is acceptable?

So the interesting question then becomes “how exactly does one measure if a minority is getting equal treatment and opportunity”?? And that brings us back to ensuring equity?

Chris Howden B.Sc. (Hons) GStat.

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*“Discovery consists of seeing what everybody has seen…and thinking what nobody has thought” - Albert Szent-Gyorgyi*

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**Subject:** RE: University of Melbourne, School of Mathematics & Statistics, female applicants only

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Hello all  
  
Can I make some comments from a non-academic but professional perspective:

* Australia has a significant problem in the numbers of mathematical sciences graduates that we are producing.  Compared with countries such as the UK, New Zealand, Canada and the US which have not too dissimilar educational and university systems, we produce less than half as many per capita.  As an employer of statisticians I see this on a regular basis and as an observer of our community I see it.
* The poor funding of many mathematical departments in our universities is in part because they have less students. Hence there is both self-interest and community interest in improving this situation.
* We, the mathematical sciences community must try to do something about this.  Indeed, it is a central part of the recently released Decadal Plan.  It is not enough to highlight the problem and say that *someone*should fix it, *we*should work to fix it.
* It is difficult to ignore the fact that for one significant sector of our community - women - the mathematical sciences are not performing well.  If we raised the participation of women in the mathematical sciences to that of men our problems would be well on the way to being addressed.  There are likely to be other groups as well, but this one stands out and it is large.
* Academics are appointed with a purpose and that is to serve the university and their discipline.  I don't believe that contribution is simply measured by research - the academics role is multifaceted with teaching, scholarship, leadership, mentoring and being an example also being important.
* The deficiency of women role models in mathematical science departments is understandably an issue in recruiting women students to our areas.   The problem is not as bad as it used to be, but I can understand that it needs to be addressed and it is arguable that every year it is delayed is unfair to the students who might otherwise be exposed to these role models.
* Hence I can understand the reasons behind the University of Melbourne decision, and knowing at least some of the individuals involved, I believe that it would not have been a decision lightly made.  I personally feel that it should be given our support as a pragmatic step towards a goal that we should all have.
* It is not the only step that needs to be taken to achieve both equity and greater participation in the mathematical sciences.  We need to be doing much more to get the message out that mathematics is worth doing.
* That will create more jobs for mathematics as well, I believe in greater numbers than these three positions in Melbourne.  While I can sympathise with those who feel excluded from applying for the Melbourne jobs, the decision makers have to look at the bigger picture and the decision is in some ways not different from those decising which disciplines to offer them in.

Finally, this discussionhas become somewhat emotive.  Can I suggest that we all calm down and respect the good intentions of all involved.

Regards  
John Henstridge

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Thanks John for you well reasoned analysis

From my own experience I know that having women on staff helps attract and retain female Maths students and show them that maths is a viable career. If to get these role models there need to be targeted appointments then so be it  
  
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* The deficiency of women role models in mathematical science departments is understandably an issue in recruiting women students to our areas.

What kind of role model is she going to be by obtaining her position such "unusual" way? Is it a position of a professor of maths or a professor of politics?

Regards,

Alex