

Annex II: Manifesto for a more Inclusive and Equitable Economics Department at the Graduate Institute

Geneva, August 2021

Dear Professors,

By suggesting guidelines on equitable hiring, constructive faculty-student interactions, and a collegial seminar culture, we aim to paint a picture of how things can be done better. We are not going to argue here that ‘diversity improves performance’ (though it has often been shown that it does) and use this as a reason to support it. Instead, the argument for diversity is one of mitigating conscious and subconscious biases that are currently unfairly holding back under-represented groups from feeling welcome (in fact, being welcome) and succeeding in the profession. As our background research shows, there is overwhelming evidence of a myriad of heterogeneous constraints that women, people of colour and individuals from less affluent backgrounds are facing when pursuing their career in economics. We believe that fostering diversity in the field is simply the only way to go because lifting these constraints is a basic and non-negotiable human right.

Throughout this discussion, we aim to do justice to the complexity of the issue at hand and appeal to your sense of responsibility. The point is to understand how certain toxic incentive structures and the associated behaviour of individuals (in power) may leave everyone worse off and how we believe this can be mitigated. Do not feel that we believe *you* are the problem. You may or may not be a part of it currently, but more importantly, you can be part of the solution. As an individual in a leadership position, you materially shape the environment. You choose whether you want to give off a sense of intimidation or empowerment - in supervising, in teaching, in interviews or in peer-to-peer interactions. Everyday, this is a choice. And everyday, it may be easier to fall into old patterns, adhere to the behaviour of others or to follow the inner voice demanding the satisfaction of dominating the environment if you can. Maybe this is what you learned, maybe this was your recipe to success or a way to protect yourself. This is human. But it is not how we are going to make progress. Instead, we ask that you become that person who will stand up for others, especially those who rely on you, and actively try to give a voice to those who for a long time did not have one and affirm them on their journey, even if this means sharing or curtailing your spotlight and no matter how different their journey is from yours.

More specifically, we would like to advocate for a patient and self-critical approach to leadership and collegiality. We acknowledge that we may be asking for a lot here. You may be used to doing things a certain way and starting to change that now may entail a considerable amount of fear of ‘doing it wrong’. That is human and we feel you - some of us started this journey very unaware and dismissive of biases as well. However, we ask that you give yourself permission to try because it matters. It is ok to make mistakes. It is ok to try again and to openly communicate with those around you about these struggles (or not). There are so many resources out there and we will show you some of them in the guidelines. Just know that when you question yourself and your actions and start listening to how they impact your environment, not only among those with equal rank but also among juniors, you will realize that you can do things differently and it really matters.

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