**Gender and Diversity Advocate report**

Roy Wagner, May 22 2022

Over the last few months, as Gender and Diversity Advocate, I have been collecting the results of various departmental processes concerning Wellbeing, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (WIDE) issues. My sources were the Gender Action Plan, the Schulleitung’s report on the departmental evaluation, the employee survey, the ASST survey, documents prepared by ASST, GESSWho! and SWiSH, the professorial diversity workshops, and the WIDE group meetings.

In this document I include:

(1) A review of the implementation of the Gender Action Plan

(2) An overview of current activities, future plans, and issues that need further discussion

(3) Suggestions for teachers, professors, teaching committees, sections/clusters and the head of the department

(4) Comments about diversity myths and observations on the professorial workshops (from Jamie Gloor) and a general discussion of diversity

1. **Gender Action Plan implementation (Implemented, partly implemented, not implemented)**

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| GAP measure | Implementation | Future steps |
| **Appointment of tenure/tenure-track women professors** |  |  |
| 5 new appointments (3 ETH+, Ethics, technology Society and Disability and health technology in society) to result in recruiting at least 3 women. With subsequent retirements, the department should have 1/3 women professors by 2031. | One ETH+ moved to D-MAVT (Tilley), the disability position was postponed. 4 women recruited in remaining 3 searches (Hofer, Zimmerman, Boenig-Liptsin and Mazouz), Mazouz @ Landeplatz Wingert.Hofer retired due to family reasons and an alternative job offer. | Disability and health technology in society is planned for ca. 2028. |
| Direct hiring of women | The process spanned an unreasonable amount of time due to Covid and the decision to make in-person presentation. Two candidates made it through the entire process, and one endorsed by the department. | Discussions in the professorial diversity workshop and DA suggest amendments for future direct hiring processes |
| Profile papers should verify that a sufficient number of excellent women candidates is available | Implemented successfully |  |
| Department head and contact person of appointment committees should proactively contact women candidates (as described in a written guide), and explain GESS gender strategy to search committees.  | Implemented, except for the written guide. | See recruitment measures below. |

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| **Other measures** |  |  |
| Exit survey of women leaving the department to investigate causes for gender imbalance | Implemented over 10/20-6/21. Results not analyzed due to low number of responses. | To be re-implemented and extended in the context of future surveys (see below) |
| Annual round table to discuss gender and structural discrimination issues | Implemented only once so far, results were not integrated into policy interventions | To be re-implemented from 2022-2023 and results included in overall information gathering (see below) |
| Formation of a contact point for discrimination and harassment | Implemented as Help!Point; very, very few cases, probably due to lack of awareness and/or trust | Measures to increase visibility will include a new website, posters and info-screens |
| The department will examine the range of courses with regard to gender and consider better incorporation of gender aspects in curriculum | Not implemented, except in SWiSH’s gender and science lecture series | List of diversity related courses will be available online as of HS 2022. Further suggestions to UKs and teachers below. |
| Adoption of the inclusive language guidelines | Implemented successfully, as far as I can see. |  |
| In cases of maternity leaves, clear arrangements should be made for specifying research involvement during the leave and gradual reintegration | No information is available on actual implementation | Charlotte Meisner in contact with HR, may proactively contact staff going on leave to verify implementation |
| Supplement GESS course evaluation questionnaire with inclusion questions | Respect question implemented as planned; results were highly positive (and so deemed uninformative). Revised diversity and inclusion questions approved by SiP UK in 2021. | New questions to be implemented as of academic year 22-23 (no course evaluation in 21-22) |
| Annual review of GAP implementation at beginning of academic year | One partial report in 2020 | Regular reports will follow |

1. **Present activities and future plans to improve Wellbeing, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (WIDE)**

Professorial appointment committees

The diversity unit of the ETH is trying to initiate a process for more inclusive professorial appointment processes. Various measures in that direction were discussed in various contexts in the department. Since search committees are not under the jurisdiction of the department, we can only recommend measures. I will meet with GESS representatives of appointment committees and suggest best practices and resources, which the committees will be free to endorse or ignore.

The calls for application, however, are under the department’s jurisdiction. Unclear calls are biased towards applicants with local connections and those coming from similar institutions, as they are more like to successfully “read between the lines”. Moreover, vague criteria allow committee members to make criteria up as they go along in a biased manner. Another element missing from current appointment processes is a discussion of applicant’s potential contribution to WIDE issues. I therefore propose the following measures:

* Calls for applications should be as clear as possible concerning expectations, requirements and evaluation criteria, without over-specifying the profiles to the extent of diminishing the applicant pool. In addition, terms like “research statement” and “academic age” should be clearly explained. To keep the official call short, detailed information can be provided in a linked webpage.
* Applicants should be asked to submit a *WIDE statement*. A Well-being, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (WIDE) statement is a one page document that explains the applicant’s potential contribution to the WIDE-ness of the GESS department. It should explain how the applicant's background, personal experiences and/or professional experience will support departmental WIDE-ness in contexts of mentoring, teaching, research and/or departmental culture.
* A guide concerning appointment committees should be created, and include measures for proactively contacting women candidates, as stipulated by the GAP.

The WIDE group

The WIDE group is a voluntary and open group for discussing the department’s WIDE issue and initiating action. It is coordinated by Charlotte Meisner (20% FTE) and Roy Wagner (the department’s GDA).

* For the next academic year, we hope to set up a regular core of members representing the various sections of the department, who will commit to participate in regular monthly meetings. The group will continue to be open to everyone on a voluntary, ad-hoc basis.
* The GDA will initiate annual reviews of their work by the ETH diversity unit.
* A budget framework for WIDE related activities is being negotiated. However, each expense will have to be approved individually by the relevant authorities (administration, DA or DK).

The Help!Point

The Help!Point has recruited some new members: in addition to two members from the administrative and technical staff, a post-doc as well as a professor are now part of the H!P. People seeking advice can decide for themselves who to contact. Furthermore, the H!P is rethinking internal procedures and revises posters, website, mission-statement, flyers, communication with ASST etc.

WIDE information gathering

Currently, there are several efforts to collect WIDE related information: the employee survey, the ASST survey, the GESSWho! Survey, WIDE related questions in GESS course evaluation questionnaire, and the exit survey. Further sources of information include an annual round table, the report of the Help!Point and informal aperos/lunches with the GDA. Future plans include

* Setting up a working group to streamline the surveys and decide on their periodicity.
* Considering a diversity entry survey, which will include closed questions on personal identity and/or an open diversity statement (to be coordinated with KdL initiative).
* Allocating resources to implement and meta-analyze the various surveys.

Inclusive decision making and inclusive culture

In 2004, the DK consisted of 50% professors and 50% non-professors (lecturers, scientific staff, students, administration and others). Over the years the share of non-professors went down as low as 32%, and today it stands at 41%.

* The department should decide on fixed ratio brackets for the composition of the DK.
* Further measures for improving inclusive decision making and inclusive culture are proposed in the suggestions to the head of the department and professors.

Working conditions

The duration of work contracts has been signaled as a major stress factor by scientific staff. The department has rules about the duration of employment contracts, but these rules are hard to enforce. Other issues include doctoral student salaries, the enforcement of GAP recommendations on maternity leave (see GAP report above), issues of work/life balance and wellbeing, and support for staff with children.

* Administrators are now required to report to Stefan Karlen contracts of less than 18 months (duration of first PhD contract) in order to verify compliance.
* Charlotte Meisner will work with HR to guarantee implementation of measures on maternity leave.
* Professors should clarify their expectations concerning working hours (41 weekly hours per FTE according to ETH policy) and concerning email exchange outside working hours (e.g. ban on non-urgent emails outside working hours, or not expecting people to read and/or respond to emails outside working hours).
* ASST is developing some best practice suggestion following up on their wellbeing survey
* In 2022-2023, the GDA or WIDE will try to poll working parents to check needs beyond available ETH support.
* ASST is initiating discussions on doctoral student salaries.

Professional support for staff

The ASST survey clearly indicated that our scientific staff desires closer mentoring.

* Best practices are proposed in the suggestions for professors below.
* We are evaluating the need and feasibility of buddy systems for doctoral and master students, second mentors for post-docs, and financial support by the department for personnel development.

Diversity and inclusion among students and in the classroom

The GAP decisions on diversity in the curriculum is not implemented, and no policies are in place concerning diversity and inclusion in the classroom, as far as I can tell.

* Suggestions to teachers, professors and teaching committees are specified below.
* The department’s (limited) funds for external teaching can be used to increase diversity in GESS teaching.
* Diversity related courses will be highlighted in the WIDE website as of HS 2022.
* The desirability and feasibility of more formal top-down measures is under discussion.
* The desirability and feasibility of WIDE related scholarships for MA students is under discussion.

Departmental Cohesion and information sharing

Our department’s structure encourages compartmentalization, and this problem was exacerbated by Covid restrictions. In additions, while many useful workshops and services are offered by ETH to staff and students, few people are fully aware of these opportunities.

* ASST, GESSWho! and SWiSH already run regular events and outreach activities, to which we added the departmental apero on May 12.
* Over the summer, a working group will plan a schedule of events for the academic year 2022-2023. These will include an onboarding event for doctoral students and scientific staff, social mixers, and aperos with academic content (e.g. posters, science slam talks).
* Tuesday afternoons is a designated slot for departmental activities (DK and other activities, we expect 1-2 cohesion activities per semester in that slot). To the extent that this is feasible given your employment arrangements, keep this slot free.
* Available ETH resources are included in WIDE newsletters and will be highlighted in the onboarding event.
* The [WIDE website](https://gess.ethz.ch/en/the-department/WIDE.html) will include information, resources and best practice examples.
* Departmental documents should continue to be available also in English as soon as possible.
* Further information sharing options are included in the suggestions to the head of the department.
1. **Suggestions to improve wellbeing, inclusion, diversity and equity:**

The following suggestions emerged from various documents and consultations. Some of them may overlap with measures under development by the ETH Diversity unit, the KdL diversity in teaching working group and the rectorate. When the picture concerning ETH policies becomes clearer, we can discuss whether we wish turn some of these suggestions into departmental policies.

For professors:

* Participate annually in diversity and teaching workshops in whatever format (departmental workshop, workshop offered by ETH, initiate a workshop in own cluster/group)
* Initiate more diversity related courses (the department has some budget for external courses, which can be prioritized for this; application should be a year in advance, contact person: Caroline Holck)
* Convey clear expectations and commitments wrt staff and students ([example on website](https://ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/department-dam/D-GESS%20DAM%20General/Dokumente/wide/Establishing%20a%20Good%20Relationship%20for%20your%20PhD.docx))
* Convey a clear message on work/leisure time (state the required working hours, do not demand answers to emails in evenings and weekends)
* Provide timely feedback and a clear indication of expected response time for emails, written submissions, etc.
* Be conscious of wellbeing issues, and communicate about it; inform students about the support offered by ETH
* Consider adopting a code of conduct for your group ([example on website](https://ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/nadel-dam/documents/NADEL_DEC%20Code%20of%20Conduct_Format_20220324%20%281%29.pdf.pdf))
* Fund professional development activities for your staff (e.g. German courses, mentorship programs)
* Consider producing career events for your team (possibly with alumni)
* Report relevant feedback and best practices to GDA

For teachers:

* Try to diversify your Syllabi (include reading materials by women and other under-represented groups)
* Convey clear expectations and commitments wrt students
* Provide timely feedback and a clear indication of your expected response time for emails, written submissions, etc.
* Establish clear criteria for grading
* Provide preparatory material for exams (sample questions, clear instructions)
* Provide access to graded exams/essays with your comments
* Consider anonymous grading (the rectorate endorses this move)
* Use inclusive language
* Report relevant feedback and best practices to UK

For UKs:

* Initiate more diversity related courses (the department has some budget for external courses, which can be prioritized for this; application should be a year in advance, contact person: Caroline Holck)
* Follow up on and self-evaluate the diversity of courses in the program
* Discuss communication of expectations to students and consider best practices or rules
* Discuss best practices or rules for students’ access to graded exams/essays and detailed feedback
* Discuss policy on anonymous grading (the rectorate endorses this move)
* Consider adopting a code of conduct
* Consider producing career events for the study program (possibly with alumni)
* Report feedback and best practices to GDA

For Sections/clusters:

* Consider adopting a code of conduct
* Consider producing career events for the section/cluster (possibly with alumni)
* Consider producing events for scientific and social exchange in your cluster/section

For head of department:

* Communicate departmental news and processes via newsletters, infoscreens or townhalls
* Consider polls in town halls to canvass departmental Stimmungsbild
* Appoint ad-hoc mixed working groups for discussing specific issues and coming up with recommendations
* Initiate occasional informal lunches/aperos with head of department
1. **General comments on the department and on diversity**

Jamie Gloor has noted the following diversity myths that were reflected by some participants in the professorial diversity workshops.

* Diversity hiring would lower standards: “Organizations do not need not sacrifice talent to gain diversity (or inclusion). But, some conceptions of ‘excellence’ or ‘brilliance’ may be unnecessarily masculine, and are thus biased (e.g., [here](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342151331_Adults_and_Children_Implicitly_Associate_Brilliance_with_Men_More_Than_Women)). So, consider which standards are truly appropriate and necessary for the job.”
* Women are less mobile than men: “Gendered assumptions of mobility or the ‘two-body problem’ (for dual career couples) also reflect negative bias towards women (and often positive bias towards men). Indeed, some research shows that families are no less likely to relocate for work when relocation belongs to the female partner (e.g., [here](https://read.dukeupress.edu/demography/article/51/5/1619/169399/Rethinking-the-Two-Body-Problem-The-Segregation-of?casa_token=UCIdckNcZIgAAAAA:6UaHQrhNuQ7aZLEUbyRT70YsxDOAUzTi1ImQbV9XRBNc80Qlh40lhn5iWHW2jTtmeBrVYZc)).”

I conclude with two additional observations. First, unconscious or conscious bias is not the only issue we face; there are also *structural biases*. People who are systematically disadvantaged will have less access to resources and opportunities than others. When we evaluate an applicant’s excellence potential, we cannot consider their objective achievements in isolation, but should evaluate their achievements relative to their resources and opportunities. A person with a good record of achievements, who had to constantly struggle for resources and inclusion, is potentially as excellent as a person with somewhat better achievements, but who had access to more resources and opportunities.

Finally, some remarks concerning the general notions of diversity and inclusion. Diversity is often measured in terms of identity marker statistics (such as ethnic and cultural background, country of origin, religion, language, gender, sexuality, social class, disability, neurodiversity, etc.). However, diversity need not be measured according to hierarchical lists of such identity markers. Instead, it can be valued and assessed in terms of the following diversity related virtues:

* Diversity enables more perspectives, which can challenge entrenched thought patterns and improve learning, research, mentorship and culture.
* Diversity provides role models for disadvantaged groups and helps staff and students become agents of empowerment.
* Diversity is a (partial) indication of successful efforts to reduce the exclusion of groups that are disadvantaged due to social inequalities and to unconscious, conscious and institutional biases.
* However, a mixed group is not necessarily diverse, as mixed groups may reproduce hierarchies of exclusion. Inclusion is required to allow diverse people to interact equitably and actualize the diversity-related virtues above.