

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOSTERING A GENDER BALANCED UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

Dutch academia is lacking women at the top. In 2017, 19.3%¹ of full professors were female; the target of 28% by the end of 2015 for top-scale NWO institutes employees is still far from reach.²

Analysis of the tenure track policies of Dutch universities³ shows that female tenure trackers are significantly less satisfied with the tenure track path than male tenure-trackers. The most frequent feedback by the tenure-trackers is that pregnancy policies are insufficient and that the diminished productivity of women during and after pregnancy is taken far too little into account. Women have a specific need for flexibility that often is not offered or offered to too little extent.³

TU Delft has taken this into consideration and installed recently a new tenure track policy which allows extensions for pregnancy and parental leave during the tenure track. Actions such as the installation of a diversity and inclusion team⁴ have been shown to have great effect in increasing the number of female students and staff in natural sciences.

Another issue which influences the career path of female staff is known to be implicit bias. For example a recent study⁵ showed that student evaluations are gender-biased, with the bias being largest for junior teachers – which may have a big negative impact on women's progression into academic careers. The article gives this as a contributing factor for women not choosing for an academic career after their PhD. The gender bias is substantially larger for courses with math-related content, which suggests that students question the competence of female teachers in particular for math-related subjects.

We propose the following structural policy changes for academic institutions in the Netherlands:

We propose that Dutch universities incorporate TU Delft's regulations regarding maternity / parental leave. Further, that they install department and university wide diversity and inclusion teams to monitor and advise on relevant issues related to gender and gender bias. Last, we recommend to create a flexible and inclusive probation and working environment and standardised career paths.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. GENERAL

1.1 **Install a Diversity & Inclusion Team (DIT) at university and department level to monitor hiring, promotions and issues related to gender bias, creating awareness or providing information regarding rights etc.**⁴

The departmental DIT is closely working and reporting to HR and the university-wide DIT. It can offer professional advice, create awareness and spot where things go wrong.

2. SELECTION

2.1 **Short-lists of candidates for open positions include (30-50)% of qualified female candidates.**⁶

Implementation at department level and monitored by HR or the DIT.

2.2 **Include the DIT when hiring.**

Ensures that all candidates have been given the same fair chance and procedures followed.⁷

3. PROBATION

3.1 Flexible Tenure Track contracts.

Offer flexibility in extensions due to maternity/ parental or sick leave and part-time work during the tenure track period.⁸ Offer healthy individuals “back to work” plans regarding teaching, organizational and supervising tasks after e.g. a pregnancy or other long-term leave.

3.2 Evaluate procedures for implicit bias.

Examples of potential implicit bias include: counting calendar years when evaluating performance instead of fte years; counting output instead of growth rate; using tools for evaluation without correcting for possible gender bias.⁵

3.3 Separate tenure decision from promotion.

The decision about the tenure should be separated from the promotion decision.⁹

4. TENURED: WORK ENVIRONMENT AND CAREER

4.1 Flexible working hours.

Offer the possibility to work part-time for some pre-defined period in order to be able to include e.g. nurturing tasks with work.

4.2 Standardised career path.

Qualification for promotion should be initiated by HR (through appropriate scientific committees) as a first step on fixed intervals (e.g. every 6 years) rather than expecting that group leaders or candidates initiate this procedure. Should promotion criteria not be fulfilled, a clear explanation of the reasons should be offered.

4.3 Add diversity to management teams.

Expanding the seniority level of committees may result to a bigger representation and involvement of women in academic life.

ENDORSEMENTS

European Women in Mathematics – The Netherlands, Executive Board

Prof. dr. Frank van der Duyn Schouten, Chair of the Wiskunderaad*

Prof. dr. S.M. Verduyn Lunel, Chair of the Dutch Platform for Mathematics (PWN)

Prof. dr. Jan Wiegerinck, Chair of the Koninklijk Wiskundig Genootschap (KWG)

Dutch Network of Women Professors, Board

Delft Women in Science Network, Board

Female Faculty Network Twente, Board

Women in Science Network Eindhoven, Board

* MESSAGE FROM THE WISKUNDERAAD

On behalf of the Board of Mathematics (Wiskunderaad), chair Frank van der Duyn Schouten would like to endorse the document titled “POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOSTERING A GENDER BALANCED UNIVERSITY”.

The Board of Mathematics is of the opinion that the recommendations fit well within the actions defined in the Deltaplan voor de Nederlandse Wiskunde:

“Deltaplan Action 9. Verhoging van aantal vrouwelijke wiskundigen

De extra middelen voor het Deltaplan bieden een uitgelezen kans om het aantal vrouwen in de vaste staf te verhogen. De Wiskunderaad roept de clusters, de decanen en de instituten op om voor ten minste 20% van de nieuwe posities vrouwen te selecteren. PWN organiseert samen met de instituten trainingen gericht op de toename van diversiteit en vraagt de organisatoren van het NMC (Actie 10) ten minste 25% vrouwelijke sprekers uit te nodigen.”

¹ Monitor vrouwelijke hoogleraren 2017, LNVH.

² <https://www.nwo.nl/en/policies/gender+diversity>

³ ir. van Gool P.J.R., prof.dr. Demerouti E., and dr. Rispens S., “Rapport Onderzoek naar het Tenure Track Beleid van de Nederlandse Universiteiten” in opdracht van Landelijk Netwerk Vrouwelijke Hoogleraren (LNVH), 2013.

⁴ For inspiring actions, The University of Cologne may offer some insights, having gone from 15% to 28% of female scientists in 10 years and enjoying 52% of female graduates (42% of female PhD graduates) in Mathematics and Physics.

https://www.portal.uni-koeln.de/gender_diversity11.html?&L=1

⁵ Mengel, Saueremann and Zölitz, “Gender Bias in Teaching Evaluations”, Journal of European Economics Association, 2017. The sample of about 20k evaluations was from Maastricht University.

⁶ E.g. Prof. Cornelissen’s (UU) 10-step plan:

<https://www.uu.nl/en/news/gunther-cornelissen-wins-westerdijk-award>

⁷ This system is implemented in The University of Cologne with excellent results.

⁸ In 2017, Delft University of Technology introduced new tenure track contracts of 8 years in total, where extension is granted in case of maternity leave up to 1 year and parental leave up to 6 months.

⁹ The policy of separating the decision for tenure from the decision for promotion to the Assoc. Prof. level is implemented in some but not all Dutch universities. This separation can lower the performance pressure.