

Closing the Gender Wage Gap Consultation

Ryerson University Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
Division Submission

This submission provides information and makes suggestions to the Gender Wage Gap Strategy Steering Committee (the Committee). Ryerson University's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) division recently conducted a literature review to identify barriers faced by diverse faculty in the Academy. Most of the literature focuses on the persistent barriers, embedded throughout structures, that impact women, as well as Aboriginal and visible minority/racialized women more specifically. Therefore, this literature provides insights relevant to addressing the Gender Wage Gap (the Gap). Suggestions to address the inequities that perpetuate the Gap are also evidence based.



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Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the Ontario government strategy to address the Gender Wage Gap. The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) division at Ryerson University welcomes the opportunity to provide information and suggestions.

To start, we want to be clear about our perspective on this issue. As the Committee's consultation document indicates, the Gap is a symptom of the, "underlying problem of labour market and workforce inequality." Therefore, the goal is not to eliminate the gap, but to identify and eliminate the systemic barriers that have resulted in lower pay for occupations that are mostly filled by women; underrepresentation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), compared to the representation of women in the population; higher representation of women in precarious employment; limited opportunities for career advancement; and undervaluing of women because of stereotypes and biases based on gender. Once these barriers are removed, there will be more equitable opportunities in the workforce and the Gap should close. The terms equitable and equal opportunities are used to reflect the view that people do not have to be treated the same to be treated fairly.

The education sector has an important role to play in addressing systemic barriers. By integrating EDI into learning, we can help to create a more inclusive environment, and contribute to citizenship building. However, systemic barriers exist in this sector as it does in other sectors. Decades of initiatives and legislation have had limited impact within the Academy, particularly in STEM disciplines. The solution

Research on the Gender Wage Gap



The attached reference list includes academic research, primarily in Microeconomics, that has explored the Gap. Here are some of the findings.

- The Gap is typically defined as the difference in pay between men and women when all other attributes are the same.
- Based on the above definition, research shows the Gap has narrowed in the last 20-40 years with the establishment of minimum wages, with more women in the workforce, as more women have obtained university degrees, with more women working full time for longer periods, and with more women in unionized jobs.
- While human capital factors such as hours worked, years of experience and occupational segregation are used to "explain" the Gap; more recent research suggests that these factors may also reflect gender based discrimination.
- Even when attributes/human capital factors are accounted for, the research consistently finds an unexplained gap.
- There is also a considerable amount of research that has focused on differences between men and women when negotiating salary.



is not necessarily, or not only, more legislation and enforcement. Initiatives to address the Gap should focus on incentives to motivate educational institutions and other public and private sector organizations to change.

While much of the information presented in this submission focuses on women generally, there is also research that provides evidence of the additional challenges faced by Aboriginal women, women with disabilities, LGBTQ women, transgender individuals, women who are new to Canada and visible minority/racialized women (the term racialized will be used hereafter) that contribute significantly to the Gap.

Attempts to Eliminate the Gap between Men and Women Faculty at Canadian Universities

Many universities have recognized that there is a wage gap between men and women faculty and have attempted to address it, including the University of British Columbia, the University of Victoria, the University of Calgary, McGill University; and in Ontario, the University of Western Ontario, University of Guelph, the University of Waterloo, McMaster University, the University of Toronto, York University, Queen's University and Ryerson University. Some universities have put in place mechanisms to close the Gap on an individual basis, while others have provided across-the-board increases for women faculty. However, these attempts to address the Gap, by increasing salaries for some or all women faculty, have not eliminated it. Many universities have found that the Gap has persisted. Some, such as the University of Western Ontario and Ryerson University have included ongoing processes in their faculty collective agreements. Many universities are now conducting analyses on a cyclical basis. There has not been a significant effort to identify and remove the underlying systemic barriers as yet.

Most of the research on the Gap in salaries between men and women faculty accounts for this disparity, in part, because of salary differences based on field of study. This rationale reflects the market bias towards fields that have had, and for the most part continue to have, a higher representation of male faculty such as in STEM, Law and Business disciplines. The Committee asks how women can be encouraged to pursue careers in STEM and other fields and jobs where they are underrepresented compared to their representation in the population. However, when looking at solutions, we have to consider that these differences in career choices, correlated to race, gender, place of birth, etc. are not necessarily something to overcome, but define us in ways that are important to who we are, our world views and values. Part of the solution to interest more women in careers in STEM and other fields where they are underrepresented involves making significant changes within those fields. At the same time, solutions must also be identified to address the historic undervaluing of academic disciplines where more women have a higher representation.

The Committee's consultation paper asks if some groups are more affected by the Gap than others. The recent research related to faculty would indicate that the answer is 'yes.' A recent Canadian study of faculty salaries shows that Aboriginal women faculty and women faculty from a variety of racialized groups earn substantially less than their male counterparts. Aboriginal men faculty members and male faculty from racialized groups earn less than white male faculty, but more than women faculty from



the same group (Li, 2012). Consistent with the research on faculty salaries, there is other evidence in research to suggest that women in the Canadian workforce, who also belong to other equity seeking groups, are more affected by the Gap (TD Economics, 2015). Solutions, therefore, must address inequalities and systemic barriers for all marginalized groups, otherwise the Gap between men and women will persist.

Barriers Identified in Academic Literature

One of the questions the Committee asks in the consultation paper is about the reasons why women and men do not pursue employment in jobs where their gender is not represented to the same extent as in the population. The reasons are tied to systemic barriers, some of which have been identified by the EDI division at Ryerson University through a review of the literature. Following is an outline of some of our findings from the literature review, with some additional commentary and references specifically related to the Gender Wage Gap. The literature explores issues related to university faculty, which provides a microcosm for understanding issues that impact other professions and perhaps the workforce more generally. The full reference list from the literature review is included at the end of this document, followed by a list of additional references for this submission.

Different Interests and Perspectives

The literature suggests that the Academy values particular kinds of knowledge and established ways of creating knowledge and making that knowledge known. Many existing faculty who come from higher status groups, such as white men, consider conventional perspectives and approaches to teaching and research to be the only legitimate ways to conduct academic work (Henry & Tator, 2009; Murata, 2006; Turner, Gonzalez & Wong, 2011).

Women researchers and researchers from other cultures may infuse their experiences into their research and papers. LGBTQ women and racialized women faculty may also bring critical perspectives to their research from feminist theory, queer theory and critical race feminism (Berry, 2006; Fine, 2000; LaSala, Jenkins, Fredriksen-Goldsen & Wheeler, 2008; Rich, 2000). This knowledge and understanding, may be subject to criticism by faculty who believe that more established approaches, for example theory driven or experimental approaches, are the only valid ways to generate knowledge (LaSala, Jenkins, Fredriksen-Goldsen & Wheeler, 2008; Murata, 2006; Rich, 2000; Turner, Gonzalez & Wong, 2011).

In addition, if the research challenges established canons in the field, it may not be accepted in top tier journals. For example, faculty publishing in what are considered traditionally male fields, such as Philosophy, may find they cannot publish articles in top tier journals with a feminist voice or perspective (Haslanger, 2008). They may have to consider publishing in feminist journals that may not be as highly regarded in their discipline. This can create barriers to tenure and promotion for faculty from historically underrepresented groups. A 2015 report on gender inequality at the Anderson School of Management, UCLA, found similar issues. The study found that there was an institutional bias that favoured quantitative disciplines and research over more qualitative or interdisciplinary disciplines in which women are more represented. This bias limited the prospects of women being hired as faculty and their career progress once hired.



The perspectives and approaches to academic work in Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. were established within patriarchal societies, with their associated values and structures. Women and others who did not play a role in creating most academic institutions are sometimes asked to change who they are, what they know and what they value in order to be included and to succeed in these organizations. On the other hand, the literature also suggests that when women, and others who have been underrepresented in the Academy, are able to bring their perspectives and understanding to academic work, it enhances the work. For example, as more women scientists became involved in clinical research, questions were raised about why female cells and animals were not included in that research. In a 2014 article by Janine Clayton and Francis Collins in *Nature*, which discusses sex balance of cells, animals and people in clinical research, they point out that the National Institute of Health (NIH) acknowledged that the exclusion of women in clinical research was, “bad for women and bad for science” (Clayton & Collins, 2014, p. 282). Since the NIH mandated the inclusion of women in the clinical research they fund, there have been many new medical insights, such as the differential effect medication can have on men and women and different doses required.

When identifying solutions, we often look to women who have succeeded in breaking through the barriers in particular fields as role models. However, these women may have adopted attitudes and behaviours typically associated with men in order to get ahead. This is not to say that having role models isn't a good thing. In fact, having increasing representation of women in STEM is very important to encourage more women to enter the field. However, we shouldn't rely too much on the experiences and attributes of these women to guide other women who may be interested in careers in fields where women are underrepresented. The focus should be on making the environment more inclusive of differences. In addition, we often base advice for success on the behaviours that make men successful. This approach may dissuade some women who do not want to adopt these behaviours, and this advice does not always work for women because women's behaviours are often judged based on stereotypes, as discussed in the following section.

Stereotypes and Biases

Stereotypes are barriers because they involve making assumptions about individuals that are not based on their actual abilities, but instead are based on their association with a group. For example, the assumption that someone is good or bad at math based on race, or a good or bad leader based on gender.

Assumptions based on stereotypes can be expressed overtly or they can impact decisions and assessments of individuals through what are referred to as unconscious, inherent or implicit biases. These are biases that influence judgment and decision-making without individuals being aware of it. There are a considerable number of studies, mostly in Psychology, that provide evidence of how these biases can impact the assessment of an individual's capabilities. For example, in a recent study, *Science Faculty's Subtle Gender Biases Favor Male Students* (Moss-Racusin, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham, & Handelsman, 2012) faculty members assessed the qualifications of male candidates for a laboratory manager position as significantly better than those of female candidates, despite the fact that the researchers designed the applications to be equivalent. This study and many others like it provide evidence of how biases can impact the evaluation of the work of diverse faculty, particularly women,



and particularly in jobs where they are underrepresented such as STEM (Ewing, Stukas & Sheehan, 2003; Gonzalez & Harris, 2012; Harlow, 2003; Kardia & Wright, 2004; Sprague & Massoni, 2005).

The literature indicates that scholarship and expertise are often tied to qualities perceived to be associated with masculinity, such as competitiveness and aggressiveness, and are not usually connected with qualities perceived to be associated with femininity, such as nurturing and expressing emotion. This can make it more difficult for women who bring these characteristics to their research/writing to have their work recognized as quality academic work (Brandon, 2006; Clark, 2006; Gonzalez & Harris, 2012). There is also research that suggests similar biases related to women in leadership roles and other professions where they are underrepresented (Ely, Ibarra and Kolb, 2011).

Another important aspect of how stereotypes function is that they impact how behaviour is interpreted. Research into student evaluations of faculty show that women faculty who appear unemotional are rated lower than men who display the same trait (Lazos, 2012; Moody, 2012). The research suggests that women are judged negatively both for reflecting female stereotypes (because those characteristics are not associated with scholarship and expertise), as well as not reflecting those stereotypes. For example, a study (Bowles, Babcock & Lai, 2007) about negotiating salary found that there were social consequences to negotiating a higher salary for women that could outweigh any economic benefits. *Inside Higher Education* published an [article](#) in 2014, which confirms that this research finding does play out in the real world, when the publication related the story of a woman whose offer of a faculty position at a college was withdrawn after she attempted to negotiate.

It is clear from the evidence that stereotypes and biases result in discrimination, whether directly, indirectly or implicitly, and are significant barriers to the progress of equity seeking groups. The Committee's consultation paper asks what changes can be made to laws and organizational policies to help prevent discrimination, and how societal attitudes can be changed. A January, 2016 [article](#) in the *Harvard Business Review*, discusses recent research (Dobbin, Schrage & Kalev, 2015), which suggests that legal approaches and policies may actually function more to protect organizations from liability rather than changing attitudes and behaviour. For example, the article discusses a 2011 U.S. Supreme Court Class Action case on gender discrimination that was successfully defended by Walmart by using the fact that the company had an anti-discrimination policy. Legislative matters are often addressed by organizational lawyers and some organizations worry that discussing and addressing systemic barriers could make them vulnerable to human rights complaints.

One way to help change societal attitudes is to provide education and awareness about diversity, although research suggests that the focus should be on future generations who will enter the workforce because employer training can sometimes lead to increased resistance to diversity initiatives (Dobbin, Schrage & Kalev, 2015). Similarly, Dr. Derald Wing Sue, a counselling psychology scholar, talked about educating the next generation when he spoke at Ryerson University in 2015, because, he argued, it is too late to change the attitudes of people who have stereotypes and biases deeply ingrained. Educational institutions have an important role to play in building the equity, diversity and inclusion skills of the future workforce. The literature suggests that increasing the diversity of faculty, teachers, staff and students in educational institutions is critical for those organizations to be able to create the curriculum, pedagogy and services required for citizenship building for a pluralistic society. However,



these institutions must address their own barriers to diversity so that they become inclusive spaces for diverse faculty, teachers, staff and students.

Conflict between Realities of Today and Expectations of the Past

Career timelines in academia create challenges for individuals, particularly women, who want to pursue fast-track academic careers in the sciences without forgoing childbirth and child-rearing.

(Goulden, Mason & Frasch, 2011, pg. 156)

As with many professions, the expectations of faculty were established at a time when there was little diversity in the occupation and, therefore, those expectations reflect what was considered reasonable for a fairly homogeneous and privileged few (Henry & Tator, 2009). Demanding faculty workload responsibilities related to teaching, research and service could be met within that context (NAS, NAE & NIM Committee, 2007). Similarly, the different attitudes in some cultures related to eldercare and taking care of people who are not relatives, was not an issue when individuals from those cultures were rarely present in the Academy.

To some extent, the challenges faced by faculty who are members of groups that have only recently come into the Academy, and other professions, have been accommodated through expanded laws, policies, and benefit and leave provisions. However, there are still limitations in terms of what types of responsibilities and activities are covered under these provisions, and how far they go in relieving the tensions between personal circumstances and professional responsibilities. Recent research indicates that despite changes to accommodate family responsibilities over the past decades, female scientists and engineers who are married and have children continue to be less successful than their male counterparts in their academic careers. Men who are married and have children do not appear to have the same negative impact on their careers (Goulden, Mason & Frasch, 2011).

Recognizing excellence in different forms, assessing quality of work using criteria other than time in the job or hours of work, and supporting employee personal and professional goals and responsibilities are all changes that are necessary to address this barrier. Fortunately, there is research available to help bring about these changes, including numerous studies that provide evidence of the positive benefits of work/life balance on productivity, quality of work and organizational performance, as well as studies that show the negative consequences of overwork (International Labor Office, 2012). Ryerson University's EDI division provided a number of suggestions related to hours of work, leaves of absence and flexible work arrangements in its submission on changes to the Ontario *Employment Standards Act*.

Conclusion: The Myth of a Meritocracy

...faith in the meritocracy is in the heart of how inequality is reproduced.

(Van den Brink & Benschop, 2012, pg. 507)

The idea of a meritocracy in the Academy suggests that those scholars who are most deserving are the ones who are recognized for excellence and advance their careers. Measures of excellence such as citation indices, peer review and productivity are accepted as objective and bias free (Van den Brink &



Benschop, 2012). However, this is not reality, as our review of the literature has shown, and there is more and more research with similar findings coming out all the time.

Human Rights, Pay Equity, Employment Equity and other similar legislation has had some impact, but as discussed, the research shows that legislation and policies can have a negative impact on advancing equity, diversity and inclusion as well. They can create a liability focus to EDI programs with resistance and backlash.

However, there are some organizations that have made significant advances and who are moving beyond rhetoric to make diversity a reality. Organizations, such as Ryerson University, which have been recognized as one of Canada's Top Diversity Employers, showcase a wide variety of strategies and initiatives to increase their diversity, with many focusing on identifying and removing underlying barriers to equal opportunity. Little of what they are doing is required by legislation. More often, the motivation for change is tied to the "business case" for diversity in a variety of forms. This suggests the importance of financial, competitive, organizational performance, and reputational incentives.

As the Committee consultation document indicates, there isn't a single solution that will address the Gap and underlying barriers to equal opportunity. The issues are too complex and initiatives may need to be tailored to specific organizations and sectors. Therefore, the solution is not to mandate what needs to be done, but to provide the motivation and skills for organizations to figure out what they need to do. The EDI division of Ryerson University suggests that the primary strategy the Ontario Government should employ to create equal opportunities, and thereby address the Gender Wage Gap, is to use its financial resources to provide incentives and rewards for organizations to increase their diversity across occupations and levels. This may include providing funding, taxation, and similar incentives tied to diversity.

A simple example of how this strategy has been employed at Ryerson, as well as in a number of banks, is that we ask law firms, who want to be considered for contract work with the university, to provide information about the diversity of their articling students, lawyers and partners. The aggregate data they provide informs our decisions about which firms we will use for contract work. Unlike the Federal Contractors' Employment Equity program, decisions are based on results. How organizations achieve the results is up to them.

Educational institutions should be a priority for incentives to increase diversity, so they are better able to assist with developing the skills necessary for citizens and leaders in a diverse society, including government leaders.

This strategy is a win-win for everyone. Increasing diversity on an ongoing basis will require identifying and removing barriers and that will benefit equity seeking groups, including women. In addition, it will improve organization and economic performance, as evidenced from numerous studies that show the potential benefits – if managed well - of a diverse workforce in terms of problem solving, innovation and quality.

We trust that this information and our suggestions will be helpful to your work. Please contact us if you would like to have a more detailed discussion about any aspect of this submission or if you have

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follow up questions. If you would like to contact us, please call or email Tamar Myers, Director, Strategic Planning, Assessment and Special Projects, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Ryerson University at 416-979-5000 ext. 7974, tmyers@ryerson.ca.



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