


On Hiring and Diversity This Week

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Many colleges and universities want to attract a more diverse work force and foster greater inclusivity in their faculty and administrative ranks, but don't know how. *The Chronicle* wants to help, so we've recast the weekly On Hiring newsletter and we're sharing stories, news, and data from around the web aimed at helping hiring managers and recruiters make better, more informed decisions about diversity hiring at their institutions and across higher education generally. Here are some highlights from the weekly newsletter. If you'd like to receive the new and improved On Hiring and Diversity newsletter, [sign up](#) here.

Study Shows That Age Discrimination Is Widespread

A report published by the San Francisco Federal Reserve Bank says that older job applicants, especially women, get fewer interviews than younger applicants. Economists from the University of California at Irvine and Tulane University submitted 40,000 fictitious résumés to 13,000 online ads for low-skilled jobs in several categories (administrative, janitorial, retail, and security) and found that across the board, response rates sank as age went up, Kathleen Pender, a columnist for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, writes. Women fared worse than men, she notes: For example, female applicants ages 64 to 66 got about half as many callbacks for administrative jobs as those ages 29-31, Ms. Pender writes. While older men got fewer callbacks than their younger counterparts, too, the difference was less profound than it was for women. The economists are unsure why women bear the brunt of age discrimination in hiring, but they've got a theory: Women are often judged on their looks, and such judgments get harsher with age, they told Ms. Pender. The report comes as the proportion of Americans 65 and older is expected to swell and as seniors may need to work well into their golden years just to get by. Unfortunately, unless more is done to counter age discrimination, that may not be an option, the authors conclude.

Female Hirers Favor Gay Applicants

According to a study by British researchers, women are more inclined to hire homosexual job seekers over equally qualified heterosexual candidates, an article on Phys Org reports. Interestingly, if the hirer is a man, the reverse is true: Male participants preferred straight applicants over gay applicants and viewed the former as more competent, the article notes.

[Mind the Class Pay Gap](#)

According to a [report](#) by the British government, people from working-class backgrounds are paid, on average, 6,800 pounds, or about \$8,400, less annually than their peers from upper-class families, Steven Erlanger reports in *The New York Times*. While factors like education and experience may partly explain the disparity, it's worth noting that British people from blue-collar families who have the same job title, education, and experience as their more privileged counterparts still get, on average, 2,242 pounds, or about \$2,800, less a year, writes Mr. Erlanger, who is the newspaper's London bureau chief. Notably, the gap is worse for working-class women and minorities than it is for working-class men, he adds.

Brits, apparently, aren't the only socioeconomic snobs. A [study](#) of fictitious résumés that was recently featured in the [Harvard Business Review](#) found that male law students from affluent backgrounds were far more likely to get callbacks for coveted internships at top law firms in the U.S. than all other applicants combined. Surprisingly, the privileged female applicants had no such luck — they actually got fewer callbacks than their lower-class peers, the researchers explain in the article. The reason? A follow-up study revealed that the firms saw the affluent women as potential “flight risks” who might put family first and “leave for less time-intensive areas of legal practice” or “leave paid employment entirely,” the researchers conclude.

[New Study Shows There's Bias Against Black Natural Hair](#)

New evidence reveals that many people are biased against black women who wear their hair naturally, NPR News reports. The “Good Hair Study,” conducted by the Perception Institute, invited thousands of participants to take a word-association test while looking at photos of black women with smooth and textured hairstyles, says Karen Grigsby Bates, a Los Angeles-based correspondent for NPR. It turns out most of the participants, regardless of their race or gender, harbored some bias against textured hair, though white women generally held more negative views — rating textured hair as “less beautiful,” “less sexy/attractive,” and “less professional than smooth hair,” she notes. The study also found that black women were twice as likely as white women to feel compelled to straighten their hair for work, Ms. Bates says.

[How to Respond to an Inappropriate Comment at Work](#)

If a colleague makes a racist or sexist comment toward a co-worker, should you speak up or stay mum? There could be penalties to objecting, depending on where you rank in the pecking order, Joan Williams, head of the Center for WorkLife Law at UC Hastings College of the Law, and Alexander Czopp, director of the Center for Cross-Cultural Research at Western Washington University, say in an article in the *Harvard Business Review*. But there are costs to saying nothing, too, Ms. Williams is quick to add: “If you don't speak up, you're signaling that this is OK.” Before confronting someone, consider how they'll react, she suggests. If you do say something, give the person the benefit of the doubt, Ms. Williams and Mr. Czopp say. Calling someone a “racist” or “sexist,” might anger them, they warn. Better to explain how the comment made you feel, so the person will be inclined to listen, they conclude.

[Job Discrimination and Ableism in Plain Print](#)

Is your academic job posting biased against people with disabilities? If it lists unnecessary physical criteria for the job, you're probably deterring disabled people from applying and you might be violating the Americans With Disabilities Act, [David M. Perry](#) explains in an article on *Al Jazeera America*.

Have a suggestion for the newsletter or a tip or story idea to share? Send it to me at gabriela.montell@chronicle.com or [@GabrielaMontell](https://twitter.com/GabrielaMontell).

