



# *Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship*

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31 October 2022

Sharon Hodgson  
Dean, Ivey Business School  
Western University  
1255 Western Road  
London, ON N6G 0N1

Dear Dean Hodgson,

I am writing as president of the Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship (SAFS), an organization of university faculty members and others dedicated to the defense of academic freedom and the merit principle in higher education. (For further information, see our website at [www.safs.ca](http://www.safs.ca).)

The Ivey Business School at Western University is seeking to fill three tenure-track positions, one in Management Science and two in Business, Economics and Public Policy. According to the advertisements, the management appointment is restricted to women scholars and the public policy appointments are restricted to women and members of designated races.

Reserving academic positions for members of specific races or ethnicities is a violation of the merit principle, the principle that academic decisions should be made on academic grounds only. By requiring candidates for

academic appointments to possess certain non-academic characteristics, the Ivey Business School will disadvantage promising scholars for no reason related to their academic accomplishments, abilities or promise. Excluding meritorious candidates cannot be a sound way to achieve academic excellence.

Taking group membership into account when hiring has the effect of harming individual scholars because others may see them in stereotypical ways and wrongly undervalue their work. In addition, because scholars want to be valued for the quality of their research, their teaching, and their contributions to intellectual life, asking them to apply on the basis of their sex, race or other identity forces them to suppress their dignity or forgo applying. Finally, recruitment based on a non-academic criterion undermines respect for the ideal of dispassionate inquiry, as summoning people by sex or race tends to confuse scholarship with advocacy and to create consensus around dogma.

Because restricting positions on non-academic grounds is wrongfully discriminatory, doing so cannot serve to create a fair and equitable university. This normalizing of identity characteristics is bound to have long-lasting, unwelcome consequences, not only because it suggests that a candidate's appearance or identity is a significant indicator of his or her promise as a scholar, but because it institutionalizes practices that have led to some of the worst outcomes in human history. Good intentions alone are never enough to exonerate such discreditable practices.

We respectfully request that you respond to our letter. With your permission, we will post your response along with this letter on our website.

Sincerely,



Mark Mercer, PhD  
President, Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship (SAFS)  
1801 Chestnut Street  
Halifax, NS B3H 3T7  
president@safs.ca  
<http://www.safs.ca/>  
Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/safs.ca/>

Professor of Philosophy  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
sergechestnut@gmail.com  
<http://professormarkmercer.ca/>

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