

Advancing gender equality at SAGE universities: University of Brescia's case study

Does your university provide **training courses on female leadership**? Does your institution have an **Interdepartmental Centre on Gender Studies** or include a **6-ECTS course on Theories and politics of equality** in its curriculum? These are just some of the initiatives in place at the University of Brescia (UNIBS).

After more than 2 years of work setting and implementing a Gender Equality Plan (GEP) under the framework of the SAGE (Systemic Action for Gender Equality) project, UNIBS has achieved significant results. UNIBS' main accomplishments are:

1. In 2015 neither the Senate nor the Board of Directors included a woman. In addition, out of 8 heads, none was led by a woman. In early 2019, 18% of Senate members and 33% of Board members are women. Moreover, one woman has been elected as head of the Department of Economics.
2. Numbers are not everything but are important to monitor some changes. UNIBS has now committed to monitor gender proportion in selection committees of new assistant professors, the first stage of academic career.
3. UNIBS has recently equipped with a confidential counsellor to tackle and prevent direct and indirect gender-based discrimination, as well as mobbing.

What else? In addition to the delivery of focus groups to collect qualitative data on employees' needs and aspirations, new policies and actions have been established thanks to the GEP:

- Recommendations for meetings to be held between 10.00 - 16.00 or for two weeks' notice to be given for meetings, in order to be sensible employees with parental/caring obligations and responsibilities;
- Efforts to enhance collaborative exchanges with other Universities on equality issues through the Erasmus+ programme;
- Public lectures and/or seminars for students on gender equality and diversity to raise awareness;
- Recommendation to ensure gender balance in research teams, as well as active participation in submitting proposals to external funders on gender and diversity.

What is next? SAGE Project will end in August 2019. Till then, UNIBS is organizing a winter school on women in society and science for academic and administrative staff, as well as for students. A training on unconscious bias will follow in May 2019. In addition, UNIBS will continue working on the integration of sex/gender analysis into its curriculum: a new course on Gender & Technology is expected to start at the Department of Business Engineering next academic year.

The SAGE team is also working with the senior management to review and gender proofing the University Statute and the integration of gender dimension into research is still in UNIBS agenda.