



Daniel R. Page

PH.D., M.Sc., B.C.Sc.(HONS.)

63087 Pineridge Road, Sunnyside, Manitoba, Canada R5R 0H5

<https://drpage.pagewizardgames.com> ✉ drpage@pagewizardgames.com

Dr. David Gerhard, Department Head
Department of Computer Science
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, R3T 5V6

November 26, 2023

Dear Dr. Gerhard,

My name is Daniel Page. I am an alum of the Department of Computer Science at University of Manitoba. I completed both my undergraduate study (2007–2011) and some graduate-level study (2012–2014) there, where I was the President of the Computer Science Students' Association (CSSA) (2009–2011), was involved with Departmental matters as a student such as on the undergraduate curriculum committee (2009–2011, 2012–2014), and taught university courses in the Department from 2012 to 2014. I have a strong decade-plus commitment to STEM education, working with thousands of children promoting STEM education in the earlier half of my career, professionally working in inclusion, and providing excellent university teaching for at least the past decade.

I am concerned about unprecedented hiring practices specifically for the Department, found in two advertisements posted November 2023, labelled “ASSISTANT/ASSOCIATE/PROFESSOR”.

1. Position #34430: “... two professors who identify as women, for Probationary (Tenure-track) or Tenured positions...”
<https://cscan-infocan.ca/job/university-of-manitoba-winnipeg-manitoba-168-assistant-associate-professor-2/>
2. Position #34477: “... one professor for a Probationary (Tenure-track) or Tenured position...”
<https://cscan-infocan.ca/job/university-of-manitoba-winnipeg-manitoba-330-assistant-associate-professor/>

The first advertisement explicitly restricts applicants using the practice of *restricted hiring*. Restricting hiring here excludes qualified academics, including individuals that may not wish to be categorized/ranked by their identity. As noted by the Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship:¹

“...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 rather than for their... identity, having them apply on the basis of non-academic criteria 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 identity tends to confuse scholarship with advocacy and to create consensus around dogma.”

In both job advertisements, it is required of applicants to provide a non-academic statement:

“... statement on your approach to addressing issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion.”

So-called “diversity, inclusion, and equity” (DIE) statements act as ideological litmus tests. Fundamentally, they compel academics to pledge their allegiance to an ideology, as contextually provided by the rest of the advertisements. It would be no different than asking the applicant to provide how they

¹<https://safs.ca/university-of-manitoba-business-school-restricts-two-positions-on-non-academic-grounds/>


would go about giving their commitment to a religion or a political party, which fundamentally means conscientious academics may not be selected nor even apply as a result. This exclusionary mechanism also creates new incentives for individuals to be dishonest, creating a culture of distrust and one where there is a lack of integrity/honesty in academics. This is surely not supportive of creating a culture of dispassionate inquiry, academic freedom, and an institution the general public can trust; one where individuals can explore and understand the world without concern of discipline, reprisal, or termination, for merely carrying out their academic tasks. Furthermore, pledging one's fealty [or how they may] to DIE is not a requirement of an excellent academic in Computer Science.

After exiting the American Mathematical Society (AMS) following thirty years of being a member of the AMS, the computational complexity theory & algorithms researcher Prof. Alexander Barvinok stated aptly² the following about DIE statements:

“With grave concern, I see the growing use of DEI [DIE] statements as a required component for job applications, in particular in mathematical sciences. In my opinion, it has an enormous corrosive effect on the math community and education in this country. Even if one is required to say ‘I passionately believe that water would certainly wet us, as fire would certainly burn’, the routine affirmation of one’s beliefs as a precondition of making a living constitutes compelled speech and corrupts everyone who participates in the performance.”

I am requesting to stop requiring DIE statements and utilizing restricted hiring in job advertisements. Requiring an academic to write a statement about a non-academic ideological goal constitutes a threat to the integrity of academics (including for these positions). I am asking for a response with respect to both job advertisements. With your permission, I will publish the response. As Head, I hope you will be considerate of local alumni and the concerns they have when clear violations of academic principles occur. I also hope you will be willing to offer an explanation to a former colleague of yours at The University of Regina [one that you trusted without hesitation, one that delivered inclusive and high-quality academic courses for all students], for why you are content with The University of Manitoba engaging in exclusionary practices that would exclude myself and other conscientious, principled academics.

Have a beautiful day!



Daniel R. Page
PhD, Computer Science

Theoretical Computer Scientist, Science Educator
PageWizard Games, Learning & Entertainment
63087 Pineridge Road, Sunnyside, Manitoba R5R 0H5
drpage@pagewizardgames.com

Visiting Assistant Professor of Computer Science
Natural Science Division, New College of Florida
5800 Bay Shore Road, Sarasota, Florida 34243-2109

cc:

Brian Mark, PhD, Dean of Science, University of Manitoba

Tracey Peter, PhD, Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs)

Michael Benarroch, PhD, President, University of Manitoba

Robert Thomas, President, Society for Academic Freedom and Scholarship (SAFS)

²<https://doi.org/10.1090/noti2736>