

**WGS. 101 INTRO TO WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES FALL 2014**  
**SESSION #22- IN-CLASS WRITING**

**AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND GENDER EQUALITY**  
**WRITE FOR ABOUT FIVE MINUTES**

Use the back of this exercise or a separate page to write your answer.

A large financial services company with branches in Chicago, New York and Los Angeles analyzes its employment profile and finds that it has only 2% female representation (“utilization analysis”) in top managerial positions, which typically require an MBA and significant experience. Analysis of population distribution and education trends reveals that the company could easily have 25% female representation (“availability analysis”) in these top positions. The company sets a 5 year placement goal of “full utilization” for women in these positions at 25% and creates a plan to help meet this goal.

The Affirmative Action plan includes proactive hiring strategies such as advertising open positions to organizations supporting women in business and financial services, visually portraying the company as diverse in gender, racial, ethnic and age representation, encouraging female internship applicants from MBA programs, and networking with female leaders and mentors in the corporate world.

When a top management position comes open (with qualifications of an MBA and ten years of management experience in the financial sector), the search committee reviews the pool of over a hundred applicants, and interviews six candidates (two women, four men). The committee selects two final candidates, one male and one female. Both candidates have earned MBAs from prestigious schools, have ten years management experience in the field, and have excellent recommendations from supervisors. After a second round of interviews, the search committee deems them equally qualified. Then, under the Affirmative Action plan, the company offers the open position to the female candidate, who then accepts the job.

The company informs the male candidate in a letter that, although he was not chosen for this position, his resume will be kept on file should another opening occur. The male candidate decides to sue the company on the basis of “reverse discrimination”; he claims that one’s sex should play no role in hiring decisions. Furthermore, in an interview with the press, he states that that he personally is not sexist so he should not have to miss a lucrative job opportunity because of the “sins of the past.”

Who do you side with in this case--the company or the male candidate? What issues about Affirmative Action are raised by this case?

**Note:** Since employment decisions are confidential, the only ones who know that gender preference played a role in this hiring are the members of the search committee. Neither applicant knows if preferential hiring was used in deciding upon the successful job candidate.

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