

In Dialogue with Anne S. Meyer



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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Recruitment, bias selection, selection criteria, financial need, task allocation, gender bias, consent, living document

EXCERPTS

“ There's one section where you talk about recruiting students; about how you try to go to diverse, different departments. I think it'd be interesting also to consider, how could you avoid bias in selection of members? When students apply; how stringent your selection criteria are. How do you choose who the best people are?...You're recruiting younger ages of people, right? There's already going to be differences in people from more privileged backgrounds that have a more impressive CV, more lab experience, that kind of thing. If choosing only people that have the most lab experience, maybe you're picking for people that didn't have to go home and help their family run their store every summer.”

“Make funding available so that these people who are in these situations would be eligible. We could help them connect to these funding or support groups. What I'd love to see from my team in the future is, can we get a free space in campus housing? Can we get a stipend for the summer or something like that? Right? Because otherwise students that have higher financial need are going to have to have a side job, or have just a job, and not do iGEM.”



“Where you talk about how work is open to all team members to learn new skills, this is fantastic. What the committee has found over the years. And these are pretty informal findings, but definitely a trend, is that task allocation seems to be, in certain categories, pretty gender biased. And if you look at, for example, we had this exclusivity last year, where people can tell what activities they worked on, and color code those cells by gender, and we found that, wet lab was pretty 50/50, you know, male, female, but then policy and human practice was 95% female.”

“Last year, we helped headquarters bolster their iGEM Code of Conduct, where most of what our advice was, at that point, was to add more examples of specific activities [of prohibited behavior], because we'd heard from previous students in the competition that something bad had happened to them and they weren't sure if it was considered to be harassment. Therefore, they didn't report it. Didn't know what to do. This is for example, stuff like, people taking pictures of them against their consent or following them, not leaving them alone”

“I'm excited that you guys are doing this Code of Conduct, it's a document that will be a living document for the future years and to help with recruitment.”

