

regulatory approaches? Are consciousness-raising and procedural-accountability measures more than symbolic gestures?

MODERATOR: GREGORY MITCHELL
School of Law, University of Virginia

JAMIE BARDEN
Department of Psychology, Howard University

ELIZABETH LEVY PALUCK
Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies,
Harvard University

PHILIP E. TETLOCK
Haas School of Business, University of California, Berkeley

SATURDAY, APRIL 18

9 a.m.-Noon (Break 10:30 a.m.)

Panel III Dealing with Uncertainty: How Should Researchers and Courts Proceed?

Are current legislative responses to workplace discrimination adequate? Does current legislation place too great an emphasis on individualized litigation and too little emphasis on structural solutions and human capital development? What role should laboratory experiments, field studies, econometric studies and social experiments play in research on workplace discrimination and its remedies? How should existing general social science research be used in litigation and policy formulation? What incentives or regulatory measures can be put in place to avoid needless expert battles and ensure candor on the part of expert witnesses?

MODERATOR: PHILIP E. TETLOCK
Haas School of Business, University of California, Berkeley

EUGENE BORGIDA
Department of Psychology, University of Minnesota

GLENN LOURY
Department of Economics, Brown University

GREGORY MITCHELL
School of Law, University of Virginia

SARAH TURNER
Department of Economics, University of Virginia

CHRIS WINSHIP
Department of Sociology, Harvard University

12 p.m. Noon

Lunch

The John M. Olin Conference



combating
WORKPLACE
discrimination



UNIVERSITY of
VIRGINIA
SCHOOL OF LAW

April 17 & 18, 2009

Caplin Pavilion



Combating Workplace Discrimination

After 50 years of legal and regulatory efforts to promote equal opportunity in workplaces, social scientists still do not agree on what measures work to combat employment discrimination. Scholars offer many opinions on “best practices,” but surprisingly little evidence supports many of these opinions.

Business consultants promote a variety of diversity training programs that companies often purchase to demonstrate a commitment to diversity, yet we know little about what components of which programs make managers evidence-based judges of talent and performance and impede the operation of stereotypes and prejudice in personnel assessments. Economists often assure us that competitive markets create sufficient incentives for firms to hire, promote and fire based on marginal contributions to productivity, but we know little about how powerful and transparent the incentives need to be for rational expectations about marginal productivity gains to outweigh expectations arising from an applicant’s group membership.

Sociologists often assure us that companies need to centralize and formalize their responsibility structures to overcome bias and ensure diversity gains, but we know little about the costs and benefits of doing so. Social psychologists may warn us about unconscious biases, but we know little about how strong institutional norms and market incentives need to be to counterbalance those biases so that we can avoid errors of under- and over-correction. Legislators, government agencies, courts and lawyers often seize on the latest assertions from the different disciplines without realizing how tentative those assertions really are, raising the very real prospect

that tremendous costs will be imposed on organizations and workers without any real gains for historically disadvantaged groups.

We can advance knowledge about how to combat workplace discrimination effectively by determining which of the many competing assertions about the incidence, causes and cures of workplace discrimination are supported by sound evidence.

The 2009 Olin Conference at the University of Virginia will bring together leading scholars from economics, law, political science, psychology, sociology and statistics to synthesize what we know about what works — and what doesn’t — in fighting workplace discrimination. Participants will also discuss how to communicate those best practices to organizations, courts and policymakers.

FRIDAY, APRIL 17

9 a.m.-Noon (Break 10:30 a.m.)

Panel I Sources and Mechanisms of Discrimination: Theory and Evidence

What are the sources and mechanisms of workplace discrimination? What are the sources and mechanisms of racial and gender disparities within the workplace other than discrimination?

MODERATOR: CHRIS WINSHIP

Department of Sociology, Harvard University

ROBERTO FERNANDEZ

Sloan School of Management, M.I.T.

ELIZABETH GORMAN

Department of Sociology, University of Virginia

BRIAN NOSEK

Department of Psychology, University of Virginia

TROND PETERSEN

Department of Sociology, University of California, Berkeley

LAUREN RIVERA

Department of Sociology, Harvard University

1:30-5 p.m. (Break 3 p.m.)

Panel II Regulation of the Workplace: Theory and Evidence

What are effective psychological and organizational checks on stereotyping and prejudice? What are the risks of over- and under-correction associated with different