



Press release

Creation of the ESSEC Diversity and Performance Chair, in partnership with Air France, Deloitte and L'Oréal

Cergy, 20 July 2007

- **A teaching and research chair formed to improve understanding of corporate diversity and its relation to business performance.**
- **A chair that will draw on the experience of three highly-renowned partners, all firmly committed to issues of multiculturalism and diversity.**

The Diversity and Performance Chair is the tenth to have been created as part of ESSEC's Development Campaign and will welcome its first class of participating students in January 2008. The Chair is being co-run by three full-time ESSEC professors with a range of complementary areas of expertise: **Stefan Gröschl**, Professor of Management and a specialist in managerial diversity; **Junko Takagi**, Professor of Management and a specialist in intercultural management; and **Simon Nyeck**, Professor of Marketing and Academic Director of the ESSEC MBA in Luxury Brand Management.

The creation of this Chair fits in perfectly with the pedagogical mission of ESSEC Business School, which aims to develop innovative management models and train responsible heads of business.

The Chair: a laboratory for research, experimentation and the dissemination of knowledge.

The Chair combines the talents of a number of ESSEC professors and representatives of the corporate world to create a genuine stepping stone between research, diversity management policy, corporate practices, and societal debate on these issues.

The complex and open-ended question of diversity has led to the development of new academic skills and theories. The Chair's mission is to pool together and utilize such expertise linked to diversity management in order to fuel debate and come up with conceptual models for application within companies.

The Chair has set itself a dual objective:

- **The creation of a center of expertise examining:**
 - The various facets of diversity in the context of the workplace (gender-based, ethnic, geographical and cultural diversity, diversity of ages and physical ability, diversity of professions and working cultures) and the perspective of those directly concerned.
 - The stakes of diversity: beyond the respect of existing legal requirements, how can the integration of diversity into management practice generate performance (e.g. raising the responsibility of companies and individuals, creativity, innovation, the reputation of a company).

- **The creation of a highly specialized teaching program** for a class of around 20 students (consisting of class work, case studies, seminars and think-tank sessions) in order to better prepare tomorrow's leaders for the complex situations with which they will have to deal.

Close collaboration with Air France, Deloitte and L'Oréal

ESSEC is proud to be able to join forces with three highly-renowned partners in order to create the Chair and draw upon their considerable experience on complex issues relating to diversity. The variety of organizational cultures in the air transport industry, in chartered accounting and in cosmetics creates a breeding ground for tackling questions concerning diversity that apply to companies in many different ways.

"Whilst the air transport industry is a relatively obvious vector for bringing cultures together, other cultural barriers do exist. We are convinced that a team containing diverse members leads to better performance levels, just as we are certain the companies themselves have a key role to play in advocating a more open attitude to diversity. The ESSEC Diversity and Performance Chair offers companies and society the chance to improve understanding and harmony through diversity", observes **Alain Malka, Head of Human Resources for Air France.**

"Analyzing the stakes and the processes, building new models, rationalizing the tools with which to gauge the situation, spreading the best practices and, in a broader sense, encouraging debate so that, one day, diversity will no longer represent a challenge, seems to us to be a very real and ambitious program, and one to which Deloitte offers its whole-hearted support", explains **Amadou Raimi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Deloitte.**

"We are very proud to be a part of the creation of the ESSEC Diversity and Performance Chair, in partnership with Deloitte and Air France, a project which corresponds directly to the policy firmly in place at L'Oréal for some years now. Our ability to comprehend diversity in all its forms is a major challenge in itself, and one that serves as proof of the lasting impact of a company. We are convinced of the fact that teams of mixed composition are more creative and innovative as a direct result. This Chair presents us with the opportunity to prepare future managers for one of the major issues facing today's society", **Bertrand de Laleu, Head of Human Resources, L'Oréal – Luxury Products Division.**

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