



HEC Paris and environmental leadership – What needs to change!

The degradation of the environment, the depletion of natural resources, the growth of inequalities, the increasing complexity of our western societies and the associated loss of meaning, the rise of various risks... everything calls for an overhaul of business and the current production-consumption system. While engineering schools seem to have taken on their role in recent years through the development of decarbonation technologies, the major business schools are struggling to move away from the training of managers in traditional ways, who are then free to go and work in the field of the ecological transition or to keep doing "business as usual". On the contrary, HEC Paris must train a generation of managers capable of transforming their companies, and of implementing business models compatible with a habitable world and a peaceful society. So that companies do not think in terms of growth and profits, but in terms of resilience and needs.

Faced with the challenges of redefining sustainable and fair strategies for all companies, new economic models, new investment and valuation criteria, new modes of governance and value sharing, means of mobilizing employees, more robust supply chains are needed. For that, professors must upend all their courses and question the theoretical foundations of economics, marketing, finance, and so on. Our association calls for a multiplicity of approaches and theories in courses, so that in classes, we do not only learn how financial markets or transnational firms work, but how they came to work this way and how we can change them.

Students also need more courses (during one semester at least) on energy and ecology as a science: some kind of scientific knowledge is fundamental for efficient management in the Anthropocene. But social sciences (sociology, psychology...) should also have more importance in the curriculum.

Beyond the academic life, HEC Paris also has the power and the responsibility to promote impactful careers, so that students know that big financial institutions and consulting firms are not the only places where managers are needed. We believe that giving more visibility to alternative career paths can provoke long-lasting change in the corporate world.

Our school finally needs to be coherent and promote on campus the sustainable way of life it advocates for, though, for instance less waste, less meat at the cafeteria, or energy savings.

Business schools have an immense power to act, which implies an equivalent responsibility. HEC Paris in particular, because of the rank it occupies and that its students will occupy later on. The future of the school is at stake: our school can benefit from these disruptions to become a world leader on sustainable and social issues.

- The Esp'R Association