Searching for Excellence & Diversity®
Implementing workshops for faculty search committees

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About WISELI

WISELI – Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute

- Research institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Mission: Advancing and promoting women in academic Science, Technology, Mathematics and Medicine (STEMM) – focus on faculty
- Broader goals – fostering a diverse faculty body
- Funding: NSF ADVANCE, NIH, Campus support
Introduction

Searching for Excellence & Diversity®: Workshops for Search Committee

Guiding Principles

- Research Based
- Peer Training
- Active Learning
- Practical Information
- Accountability

Content

1. Run an effective and efficient search committee
2. Actively recruit an excellent and diverse applicant pool
3. Raise awareness of unconscious bias and assumptions and their influence on evaluation of candidates
4. Ensure a fair and thorough review of candidates
5. Develop and implement an effective interview process
6. Close the deal – successfully hire selected candidate

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Discussion

Why do you think it is important to develop a diverse faculty, or a diverse workforce?
Introduction: Benefits of Diversity

- Diverse working groups are more productive, creative and innovative than homogeneous groups
Introduction: Benefits of Diversity

Diverse groups engage in a higher level of critical analysis than do homogenous groups

Introduction: Benefits of Diversity

- Diverse scholars and professionals can invigorate and expand disciplines and fields
  - New approaches to teaching
  - New research questions
  - New perspectives and interpretations
  - New concerns
Introduction: Commitment vs. Results

- Despite broad commitment to the goal of diversity, why are results less than satisfactory
  - Lack of training/education on the hiring process
  - Influence of unconscious bias and assumptions
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Introduction

Searching for Excellence & Diversity®:
Workshops for Search Committee

Formats

1. Short presentations, small group discussion, large group Q&A
2. Series of two 2-hour workshops
3. One 2.5 or 4 hour workshop
4. Multi-department/multi-college workshops
5. Workshops for one department or one search committee
Overview

1. What is “unconscious bias”?
2. How might unconscious biases influence evaluation of faculty candidates?
3. How can a search committee minimize the influence of bias?
What is unconscious bias?

- A substantial body of evidence demonstrates that most people hold unconscious biases about groups of people.
- Depending on the discipline, unconscious biases can also be referred to as:
  - Schemas
  - Stereotypes
  - Mental models
  - Cognitive shortcuts
  - Statistical discrimination
  - Implicit associations
  - Spontaneous trait inference
  - System 1 thinking

The tendency of our minds to apply characteristics of groups (real or imagined) to our judgments about individual group members.
What is unconscious bias?

Most of us routinely rely on unconscious assumptions even though we intend to be fair and believe that we are fair.

Human brain works by categorizing people, objects and events around us -- this allows us to quickly and efficiently organize and retrieve information.

But – when evaluating people we can be led astray by our tendency to categorize people – and we tend to do so on the following dimensions:

- Race/Ethnicity, Sex, and Age.
How is the research on bias and prejudice conducted?

- **Blind, randomized trials**
  - Give each group of evaluators pictures, words, or applications with a racial or gender indicator
  - Compare evaluations

- **Real life studies**
  - Evaluate actual resumés/curriculum vitae, job performance, letters of recommendations, call backs for interviews, etc.
Examples of Research on Unconscious Bias

- **Estimating height**

- **Judging Athleticism**

- **Evaluating Verbal skills**
  When asked to rate the quality of verbal skills indicated by a short text, evaluators rated the skills lower if they were told an African American wrote the text than if a they were told a white person wrote it, and rated verbal skills higher when told that a woman wrote it than when told a man wrote it. Biernat and Manis. (1994).
Unconscious bias in the search process

- Applications/CVs/Résumés
- Reference Letters
- Job interviews
Curriculum vitae for positions in academic psychology


- 238 academic psychologists (118 male, 120 female) evaluated an actual cv randomly assigned a male or female name (Karen or Brian Miller).
  - One cv – at time of job application (jr-level)
  - One cv – at time of early tenure (sr-level)

Entry level – academic psychologists move likely to hire male applicants and gave men higher ratings for:
  - Research
  - Teaching
  - Service

Senior-level - Academic psychologists were equally likely to tenure men and women candidates, but were four-times more likely to include cautionary comments on cv’s with a female name
Applications for lab manager


- 127 science faculty (men and women) rated application materials for an entry level position as a lab manager; applications randomly assigned a male or female name.

- Rated male applicant as more competent and hireable than the female applicant.

- Selected a higher starting salary for the male applicant.

- Reported more willingness to offer career mentoring to the male applicant.
Evaluating résumés with African American- or white-sounding names


- Resumes sent to a variety of employers advertising openings in local newspapers in Chicago and Boston.
- Randomly assigned “white-sounding” or “African American-sounding” names to résumés.
- Applicants with “white-sounding” names were 50% more likely to be called back to interview for positions.
- For “white-sounding” names, applicants with better qualifications were 27% more likely to be called back. For “African American-sounding names,” applicants with better qualifications were only 8%* more likely to be called back.

* Not statistically significant
Evaluation of Curriculum Vitae and Résumés

Additional examples

- **Motherhood Bias**

- **Sexual Orientation**

- **Arabic sounding-names**
  Compared call back for job interviews for applicants with Arabic- or Dutch-sounding names

  Compared call backs for job interviews for applicants with Arabic- or Swedish-sounding names

- 312 letters of recommendation for medical faculty **successfully hired** at large U.S. medical school

- Letters for women vs men:
  - Shorter
  - More letters for women with “minimal assurance”
  - More gendered terms in letters for women
  - More letters for women included “doubt raisers”
  - Men more frequently referred to as “researchers” and “colleagues”. Women more frequently referred to as “teachers” and “students”
  - Women – 4X more references to personal lives
  - Women - Fewer *standout adjectives* (“outstanding” “excellent”) and more *grindstone adjectives*. 

Found fewer differences between letters for men and women in comparison to the Trix and Psenka study, but reaffirmed the comparative absence of outstanding adjectives in letters for women.
Job Interviews

- Interviews for a leadership position

- Taped interviews of actors (male and female) performing an agentic or communal script.
- Evaluated interviewee for competence, likeability, hireability.
Assumptions about Gender and Behavior
Multiple authors over 30 years: e.g., Bem, Broverman, Eagly, Heilman Rudman

DESCRIPTIVE: How men and women actually behave

Men (agentic)
- Strong
- Decisive
- Assertive
- Tough
- Authoritative
- Independent

Women (communal)
- Nurturing
- Communal
- Nice
- Supportive
- Helpful
- Sympathetic

"Leader"

PRESCRIPTIVE: How men and women “ought” to behave

Note: Social Penalties for Violating Gender Norms

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Job Interviews

Phelan, Moss-Racusin, and Rudman (Continued)

- Competence: Agentic interviewees rated as more competent than communal interviewees
- Likeability: Agentic men rated more likeable than women; Communal men rated less likeable than women.
- Hireability
  - Agentic interviewees more hireable than communal;
  - No difference in hireability of communal men and women;
  - **Agentic men more hireable than agentic women**

WHY? – SHIFTING CRITERIA

- For agentic men, communal men, communal women – competence weighted most heavily in hiring decisions.
- Agentic women likeability/social skills – a perceived weakness – weighted most heavily in hiring decisions.
Job Interviews - Other Examples

- **Sexual Orientation**

- **Accented English**

- **Weight**

- **Pregnancy**

- **Disability?**
Minimizing Bias and Assumptions

What Not to Do:

- Suppress bias and assumptions from one’s mind (or try to)
  - Studies demonstrating Stereotype Rebound effect
- Relying solely on a presumably “objective” ranking or rating system to reduce bias
Minimizing Bias and Assumptions

What to do before conducting evaluations:

- Replace your self-image as an objective person with recognition and acceptance that you are subject to the influence of bias and assumptions

- Diversify your search committee
  - Social tuning/increased motivation to respond w/o bias
  - Counterstereotype imaging
    Blair, Ma, and Lenton, *J. Personality and Social Psychology*, 2001
  - Critical Mass – increase proportion of women and minorities in the applicant pool
    Heilman, *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 1980; van Ommeren et al., *Psychological Reports*, 2005

- Develop and prioritize criteria prior to evaluating applicants.
Minimizing Bias and Assumptions

What to do while conducting evaluations:

- Spend sufficient time and attention on evaluating each application
- Focus on each applicant as an individual and evaluate their entire application package – information minimizes bias
- Use inclusion rather than exclusion decision-making processes
  Hugenberg et al., J. Personality and Social Psychology, 2006
- Stop periodically to evaluate your criteria and their application
- Accountablility: Be able to defend every decision and hold each member of the search committee responsible for equitably evaluating applicants.
  Foschi, Social Psychology Quarterly, 1996
Minimizing Bias and Assumptions

What to do while conducting evaluations (cont.):

- **Accountability**: hold each member of the search committee responsible for equitably evaluating applicants.
  
  Some examples that should cause you to **pause, consider, and raise questions**:
  
  - I couldn’t care less if the person we hire is black, purple, green, polka-dot, male female or whatever. All I care about is excellence.
  - I know that I am gender-blind and color-blind.
  - I’m not sure how well this candidate will fit here (or in this position).
  - I think he/she is just too soft-spoken for a leadership position.
  - She struck me as too aggressive.
  - I’m not sure why, but I don’t really like this candidate … something just rubs me the wrong way.
  - Is this candidate sufficiently mature? or … past his prime?
  - Will we have a partner hire issue to contend with?
Minimizing Bias and Assumptions

- Replace your self-image as an objective person with recognition and acceptance that you are subject to the influence of bias and assumptions.

- Diversify your search committee.
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    Blair, Ma, and Lenton, *J. Personality and Social Psychology*, 2001

- Hold each member of the search committee responsible for recruiting and equitably evaluating an excellent and diverse applicant pool.

- Critical Mass – increase proportion of women and minorities in the applicant pool.
  Heilman, *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 1980; van Ommeren et al., *Psychological Reports*, 2005
Minimizing Bias and Assumptions

- Develop and prioritize criteria prior to evaluating applicants. 

- Spend sufficient time and attention on evaluating each application. 

- Focus on each applicant as an individual and evaluate the entire application package. 

- Use inclusion rather than exclusion decision-making processes 
  Hugenberg et al., *J. Personality and Social Psychology*, 2006

- Stop periodically to evaluate your criteria and their implementation.