Fostering a Diverse Faculty: Reducing Bias in the Search Process

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ABOUT WISELI

- 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
WHY PROVIDE EDUCATION FOR FACULTY SEARCH COMMITTEES?

- Faculty members receive little education about the search process
- A faculty search is costly (time and money)
- Provides an opportunity to achieve campus goals of diversifying the faculty
STAGES OF THE FACULTY SEARCH PROCESS

- Committee Formation and Committee Processes
- Recruitment of Candidates
- Evaluation of Candidates
  - Bias Awareness
  - Bias Reduction
- Interview Processes
- Closing the Deal
RUN AN EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT SEARCH COMMITTEE
Search Committee Processes

- Composition of the search committee
  - Choose a chair who is committed to diversity
  - Build a diverse search committee

- Establishment of expectations and ground rules
  - Attendance, decision-making, confidentiality
  - Know the laws, university policies
  - Role of the search committee and its members

- Discussion of diversity

- Creation of the position description
  - Avoid biased language
  - “Sell” the department and university
  - Carefully craft a statement about the importance of diversity to the department
  - Decide on and prioritize review criteria
ACTIVELY RECRUIT AN EXCELLENT AND DIVERSE POOL OF CANDIDATES
Actively Recruit

- **Short Term Recruiting**
  - Placing advertisements
  - Word-of-mouth/networking
  - Professional organizations/special groups or caucuses
  - Grant or fellowship programs targeting underrepresented scholars

- **Long Term Recruiting**
  - Conferences
  - Invited speaker series within a department
  - Department alumni from underrepresented groups
RAISE AWARENESS OF UNCONSCIOUS ASSUMPTIONS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON EVALUATION OF APPLICANTS
A substantial body of evidence demonstrates that most people—men and women—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.
Most of us routinely rely on unconscious assumptions even though we intend to be fair and believe that we are fair.

The human brain works by categorizing people, objects, and events around us. This allows us to quickly and efficiently organize and retrieve information.

BUT! This process is not infallible.
Stereotypes about men?
Stereotypes about women?
Stereotypes about scientists?
Men are *agentic*: decisive, strong, competitive, ambitious, independent, willing to take risks

Women are *communal*: nurturing, nice, gentle, supportive, sympathetic, dependent

These stereotypes lead to *expectancy bias* and assumptions of *occupational role congruity*

*Prescriptive norms*: how women and men should and should not be

*Social penalties* for violating prescriptive gender norms

### Racial/Ethnic Stereotypes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>African-Americans¹</th>
<th>Chinese²</th>
<th>Latinos³</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athletic</td>
<td>Disciplined</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhythmic</td>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>Have many children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low in intelligence</td>
<td>Loyal to family ties</td>
<td>Illegal immigrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazy</td>
<td>Scientifically minded</td>
<td>Dark-skinned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Business oriented</td>
<td>Uneducated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loud</td>
<td>Strong values</td>
<td>Family-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal</td>
<td>Clever</td>
<td>Lazy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostile</td>
<td>Serious</td>
<td>Day laborers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignorant</td>
<td>Determined</td>
<td>Unintelligent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Logical</td>
<td>Loud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wise</td>
<td>Gangsters</td>
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Randomized, controlled studies (“Goldberg” design)

- Give a randomized group of evaluators a piece of work (e.g., CV/résumé, grant application, job application, research article) with a gender, racial, or other indicator of group membership
- Compare evaluations

Real life studies

- Evaluate actual résumés/curriculum vitae, job performance, letters of recommendations, etc.
Evaluation of Curriculum Vitae

- Curriculum vitae of an actual applicant evaluated by 238 academic psychologists (118 male, 120 female)
  - One CV – Junior level (assistant professor)
  - One CV – Senior level (tenurable)

- Randomly assigned male or female name to each CV
  - Karen Miller vs. Brian Miller

- Measure strength of teaching, research, service activities. Indicate likeliness to hire candidate

- Evaluators were asked to send materials back to researchers along with their ratings

Evaluation of Curriculum Vitae

- For entry-level CV: Academic psychologists were more likely to hire “male” applicant and gave “male” applicant higher ratings for research, teaching and service
  - Male and female evaluators were equally likely to favor hiring the “male” applicant

- For higher-level CV: Academic psychologists were equally likely to hire/tenure the “male” and “female” applicants
  - BUT! Returned materials had four times as many cautionary comments written in the margins for the “female” CV compared to the “male” CV

Evaluation of Résumés - Racial Bias

- Resumes sent to a variety of employers advertising openings in local newspapers in Chicago and Boston

- Bank of resumes randomly assigned “white-sounding” or “African American-sounding” names

- Applicants with “white-sounding” names were more likely to be called back to interview for positions

- For “white-sounding” names, applicants with better qualifications were more likely to be called back. For “African American-sounding” names, applicants with better qualifications were not more likely to be called back

“I sent my resume for something and when I showed up someone said to me, ‘Your resume didn’t look black.’ Can you imagine someone saying that?”

- URM female, senior faculty member

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

- Letters for women vs. men:
  - Shorter
  - Offered “minimal assurance”
  - More gendered terms
  - Contained more “doubt raisers”
  - Four times more reference to personal lives
  - Fewer “standout adjectives”
  - More “grindstone adjectives”

Letters of Recommendation (cont’d)

- Semantic realms following the possessive (e.g., “her training”)

Letters of Recommendation (cont’d)

- Semantic realms following the possessive (e.g., “her training”)

ENSURE A FAIR AND THOROUGH REVIEW OF CANDIDATES
Strategies for Minimizing Unconscious Bias

- 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 committees

  - Social tuning/increased motivation to respond without bias
    

  - Counterstereotype imaging
    

- Critical mass—increase the proportion of women and minorities in the applicant pool

Bias Reduction Strategies (cont’d)

- Develop and prioritize criteria prior to evaluating applicants

- Spend sufficient time and attention evaluating each application

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

- Use inclusion rather than exclusion decision-making processes

- Stop periodically to evaluate your criteria and their implementation
Hold yourself and each member of the search committee responsible for conducting fair and equitable evaluations and for basing decisions on concrete information gathered from candidates’ records and interviews—rather than on vague assertions or assumptions about promise/potential.

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?”


_Bias Reduction Strategies (cont’d)_
DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AN EFFECTIVE INTERVIEW PROCESS
On-Campus Interviews

Two key aims of the on-campus interview:

- Allow the hiring department to determine whether the candidate possesses the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes to be successful at your university

  AND.....

- Allow the candidate to determine whether your university offers the opportunities, facilities, colleagues and other attributes necessary for his/her successful employment

Keep both of these aims in mind!!!
On-Campus Interviews (cont’d)

- **PLAN for an effective interview process**
  - Make sure all interviewers are aware of inappropriate questions
  - Develop interview questions that will evaluate candidate’s entire record; consider asking different interviewers to discuss different aspects of the position rather than all interviewers asking the same set of questions
  - Personalize the visit/universal design
  - Provide candidates with a knowledgeable source of information about the university/community from someone NOT INVOLVED with the search
  - Develop and share an information packet

- **DURING the visit**
  - Ensure candidates are treated fairly and with respect
  - Inappropriate questions are inappropriate in both formal and informal settings!

- **AFTER the visit**
  - Review materials on unconscious bias to ensure assumptions have not influences your final evaluation of the candidates
CLOSE THE DEAL:
SUCCESSFULLY HIRE YOUR SELECTED CANDIDATE
Close the Deal

- Timeliness
- Maintain Communication
- Dual Career Issues / Timeliness
- Negotiation of Start-Up Packages
- Return Visit?

Ensure the Success of Your Chosen Candidate!!!
Delivering These Messages to Faculty Search Committee Members
Workshops for faculty search committees

Guiding principles:
- Research-based
- Peer training
- Active learning
- Practical information
- Accountability

Content: six elements of a successful search
Formats:

- Short presentations, small group discussion, large group Q&A
- Series of two, 2-hour workshops
- One 2.5-hour or 4-hour workshop
- Multi-department/multi-college workshop
- Single department or search committee
- Participation required in some colleges, voluntary in others
- Workshops for other institutions
Reviewing Applicants

Research on Bias and Assumptions

http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/docs/BiasBrochure_3rdEd.pdf

Searching for Excellence & Diversity
A Guide for Search Committees
National Edition

“We need diversity in discipline, intellectual outlook, cognitive style, and personality to offer students the breadth of ideas that constitutes a dynamic intellectual community.”

Eve Fine and Jo Handelsman
WISELI/Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute

http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/docs/SearchBook_US.pdf
Is It Working?
Faculty attendance and experience of workshops

Change in demographics of new hires

Other (positive) outcomes
520 faculty members participated, 2005-2013
93 of 123 departments have participated (~76%)
442 faculty members (85% agreed to participate in our research)
222 faculty members (~50%) completed the evaluation survey
Workshop Evaluation Data

Mean Overall Rating of Workshops, 2005-2013
1=Not at all useful, 2=Somewhat useful, 3=Very useful
Workshop Evaluation Data

Mean ratings of workshop elements, 2005-2013
1=Not at all valuable, 2=Somewhat valuable, 3=Very Valuable

Note: Element 6 was not offered in all years, therefore is not included here
Workshop Evaluation Data

Percent of faculty participants who would recommend the workshop to others
Sample: 62 departments where women faculty are underrepresented
234 faculty from these departments participated in workshops between 2005 and 2012
Examined offers made to women one year after workshop participation
Examined new hires two years after workshop participation
Offers and New Hires, Gender

% Offers and Hires to Women, 2005-2012, in departments with underrepresentation of women faculty

* Chi-square=4.6675, p<.05
Other Positive Outcomes

- Experience of hiring process for faculty candidates
- Departmental climate
New Hire Satisfaction with Hiring Process

New Hires' Satisfaction* With the Hiring Process
Biological & Physical Sciences

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<th>Participating Departments</th>
<th>Non-Participating Departments</th>
</tr>
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* Agree Strongly to the item "I was satisfied with the hiring process overall."
The climate for faculty of color in my department is good

* Significant t-test between minority and majority faculty at $p<.05$.

^ Significant t-test between dept. chairs and all other faculty at $p<.05$. 
Department Climate Awareness

The climate for faculty of color in my department is good

% Agree Strongly or Somewhat

0.0% 20.0% 40.0% 60.0% 80.0% 100.0%

Participated in Hiring Workshop

No Hiring Workshop Participation

2003 2006
Relevant Publications

- Sheridan, Jennifer; Eve Fine; Molly Carnes; Amy Wendt; and Jo Handelsman. 2015. “Searching for Excellence & Diversity Workshop: Improving Faculty Diversity by Educating Faculty Search Committees.” in Personalauswahl in der Wissenschaft (C. Peus et al., eds.) Sprinter-Verlag: Berlin.

- Fine, Eve; Jennifer Sheridan; Molly Carnes; Jo Handelsman; Christine Pribbenow; Julia Savoy; and Amy Wendt. 2014. “Minimizing the Influence of Gender Bias on the Faculty Search Process.” Advances in Gender Research 19: Gender Transformation in the Academy (V Demos et al., eds.). Emerald Group Publishing: Bingley UK. Pp. 267-289.


- Sheridan, Jennifer; Eve Fine; Christine Maidl Pribbenow; Jo Handelsman; Molly Carnes. 2010. “Searching for Excellence & Diversity: Increasing the Hiring of Women Faculty at One Academic Medical Center.” Academic Medicine. 85(6):999-1007.


Thank You!