Searching for Excellence & Diversity:
A workshop for the University of Minnesota – Duluth Medical School – Dean Search

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Overview

- Introduction
- Running an Effective and Efficient Search
- Recruiting an Excellent & Diverse Applicant Pool
- Evaluating Applicants – the potential role of unconscious bias
- Ensuring a fair and thorough review – minimizing the role of unconscious bias
- Conducting an effective interview process
- Closing the deal – hiring selected candidate
Recruiting Resources

http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/recruitingresources.php

- Diverse Issues in Higher Education
- AISES – American Indian Science and Engineering Society: *Winds of Change*
- SACNAS
- AAIP – Assn. Of American Indian Physicians
- ELAM – Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine
- Office of Minority Health
Recruiting Resources

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- Other institutions with a focus on rural health, Native American health
- Other individuals active in fostering diversity in academic medicine and/or rural health, Native American health
- Local leaders/advocates.
Reviewing Applicants: Understanding and Minimizing the Influence of Unconscious 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

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.
Unconscious bias in the search process

- Applications/CVs/Résumés
- Reference Letters
- Job interviews

- 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.

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Evaluation of Curriculum Vitae and Résumés

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

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.
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
Letters of Recommendation


- 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
Minimizing Bias and Assumptions

What to do **before** conducting evaluations:

- Develop and prioritize criteria prior to evaluating applicants.
  

  - What credentials and skills are you seeking?
  - What types of experience will be valued?
  - What leadership skills and styles are you seeking?
  - What application materials and interview questions will enable you to access candidates strengths and weaknesses in areas such as:
    - Clinical/research/teaching skills and abilities
    - Interpersonal skills and abilities
    - Leadership style
    - Negotiating skills

  - Which of these criteria (or others) will matter most? How will you evaluate candidates with strengths in some areas/weaknesses in others?
Minimizing Bias and Assumptions

What to do while conducting evaluations:


- Stop periodically to evaluate your criteria and their application.

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?
Reviewing Applicants

Research on Bias and Assumptions

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

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