Searching for Excellence & Diversity

An evidence-based approach to training search committees
Why focus on hiring?

- Gatekeeping role of search committees
- Shapes the “complexion” of the faculty for years to come
- Obvious disparities for women in science and engineering

- Hiring is NOT the only important thing to think about as we diversify our workplaces (e.g., climate, leadership, equity)—but it is an important place to start!
Teach faculty how to run effective searches

Principles of adult education

Tenets favoring diffusion of innovation and institutional change

Introduce research on biases and assumptions

Present evidence-based strategies

Searching for Excellence and Diversity – Workshops for faculty search committees
Five Essential Elements of a Successful Search

- Run an effective and efficient search committee
- Actively recruit an excellent and diverse pool of candidates
- Raise awareness of unconscious assumptions and their influence on evaluation of candidates
- Ensure a fair and thorough review of candidates
- Develop and implement an effective interview process
Raise awareness of unconscious assumptions and their influence on evaluation of candidates

- What is “unconscious bias”?  
- How might unconscious biases affect the search process?  
- How can a search committee overcome these tendencies?

*Show them the data*
What is “unconscious bias”

- Unconscious bias and assumptions
- Schemas
- Stereotyping
- Cognitive shortcuts
- Statistical discrimination
- Implicit associations

The tendency of our minds to judge *individuals* based on characteristics (real or imagined) of *groups*
Unconscious bias in the search process

- Applications/CVs/Résumés
- Reference Letters
- Evaluation of Leadership/Competence
Unconscious bias in the search process: Applications/CVs/Résumés

- 238 academic psychologists sent a curricula vitae with either male or female name
  - Entry level: more likely to vote to hire man, more likely to indicate man had adequate teaching, research, and service experience
  - High level: no gender differences
  - No differences between male and female evaluators
  - More write-in comments for women

Steinpreis, Anders, and Ritzke 1999
Unconscious bias in the search process: Reference Letters

- 312 letters of recommendation for medical faculty hired at a large U.S. medical school
- Women’s letters compared to men’s more often:
  - Were shorter
  - Offered *minimal assurance*
  - Used *gender terms*
  - Contained *doubt raisers*
  - Used *stereotypic adjectives*
  - Used *grindstone adjectives*
  - Used fewer *standout adjectives*
  - Contained less *scientific terminology*

Trix and Psenka 2003
Top 3 semantic realms following the possessive for men and for women
Interventions in at least one randomized, controlled study that mitigate bias in evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Example of study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least 25% women in the pool being evaluated</td>
<td>Heilman ME. Organ Behav Hum Perf 1980; 26: 386-395, 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction to try to avoid prejudice in evaluation</td>
<td>Blair IV, Banaji MR. J Pers Soc Psychol 70:1142-1163, 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing the value of credentials before any applicant is seen to avoid “redefining” merit</td>
<td>Uhlmann and Cohen, Amer Psychol Assoc 16:474-480, 2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Success?

- Run approximately 17 sessions for over 90 individuals per year

Evaluation results:

- ~60% of attendees report being "attentive to possible biases implicit in the criteria used to review candidates"
- ~60% of attendees report "sharing information about research on biases and assumptions with their search committees"
- 90% of attendees reported feeling "prepared to address diversity hiring assumptions" after participating in the workshop
Percent Female, Offers Made to Assistant Professors
Biological & Physical Sciences

NOTE: "Trained" departments sent at least one faculty member to a WISELI hiring workshop or meeting.
New Hires' Satisfaction* With the Hiring Process
Biological & Physical Sciences

* Agree Strongly to the item "I was satisfied with the hiring process overall."
New Ladder Faculty in SMPH by Any Workshop Attendance, 2002 - 2007

![Bar chart showing the percent female in participating and non-participating departments from 2004 to 2006. The chart indicates that the percentage of female faculty is significantly higher in participating departments compared to non-participating departments. The p-value is less than 0.10, suggesting a statistically significant difference.]

- Participating Depts 2004-2006: N = 15
- Non-Participating Depts 2004-2006: N = 11

P < 0.10, chi²
New Ladder Faculty in SMPH by Workshops Attended, 2002 - 2007

- 0 Workshop: N = 11
- 1 Workshop: N = 11
- 2+ Workshops: N = 4

P < .05, Chi²
Effects of Hiring Workshop Participation
"The Climate for Faculty of Color in My Department is Good"

% Agree Strongly or Somewhat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2006</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Hiring Participation</td>
<td>N = 152</td>
<td>P &lt; .10</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Participation</td>
<td>N = 1601</td>
<td>NS</td>
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</table>
Effects of Hiring Workshop Participation Dept Climate
"The Climate for Women in My Department is Good"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Agree Strongly or Somewhat</th>
<th>Hiring Participation</th>
<th>No Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N = 152</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 1601</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Bar Chart" /></td>
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</table>

NS indicates non-significant difference.
Summary and Conclusions

- Searching for Excellence and Diversity is filling a previously unmet need to train search committees.
- We have some evidence of its effectiveness.
- The element most well received and perhaps most transformative is the section that provides some “bias literacy” to participants.