

Breaking the Bias Habit: Promoting Racial Equity in Hiring

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April 19, 2016

STAGES OF THE 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

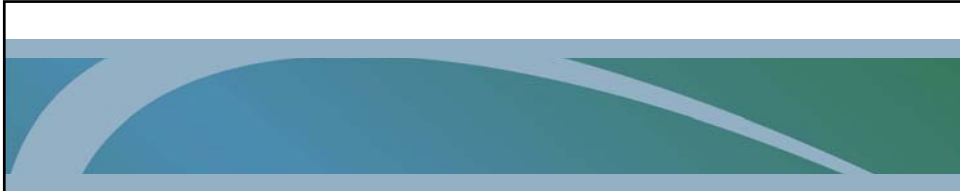
- Composition of the search committee
 - Choose a chair who is committed to diversity
 - Build a diverse search committee
- Establishment of expectations and ground rules
 - Attendance, decision-making, confidentiality
 - Know the laws, university policies
 - Role of the search committee and its members
- 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

What is “Unconscious Bias”?

- 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

What is “Unconscious Bias”? (Cont’d)

- 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?

Gender Stereotypes

- 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

Works of multiple authors over 30 years: e.g., Ben 1974; Broverman 2010; Eagly 2002, 2003, 2007; Heilman 1984, 1995, 2001, 2004, 2007

Common Racial/Ethnic Stereotypes

African Americans ¹	Asian Americans ²	Latinos ²	Whites ²
Athletic	Intelligent	Poor	High status
Rhythmic	Bad drivers	Have many children	Rich
Low in intelligence	Good at math	Illegal immigrants	Intelligent
Lazy	Nerdy	Dark-skinned	Arrogant
Poor	Shy	Uneducated	Privileged
Loud	Skinny	Family-oriented	Blond
Criminal	Small eyes	Lazy	Racist
Hostile	Education	Day laborers	All-American
Ignorant	Quiet	Unintelligent	Ignorant
		Loud	
		Gangsters	

1. Devine and Elliot, 1995

2. Ghavami and Peplau., 2015

Evaluation of Résumés - Racial Bias

“It’s hard to be the golden boy when you’re neither a boy nor golden.”

- Native American female faculty member
Elliott et al. (2010). *Acad Med* 25(4): 675-9.

Evaluation of Résumés 1 - 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 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 *not* more likely to be called back (8%, not statistically significant.)

Bertrand and Mullainathan 2004. “Are Emily and Greg more employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A field experiment on labor market discrimination.” *American Economic Review* 94: 991-1013.

Evaluation of Résumés - Racial Bias

"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?"

- African American senior female faculty member

Pololi et al. (2010). *JGIM* 25(12): 1363-9.

Evaluation of Résumés 2 - Racial Bias

Evaluating applicants of various races and ethnicities for higher- and lower-status jobs

- Identical résumés assigned a male name that reflected the following racial/ethnic identities:
 - White, Asian, Hispanic, and Black
- 155 White male participants evaluated a résumé
 - Answering a set of 16 questions about the applicant
 - Rated the individual's suitability for 12 different occupations (7 higher-status and 5 lower-status occupations)

King et al. 2006. "What's in a name? A multiracial investigation of the role of occupational stereotypes in selection decisions." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 36(5): 1145-1159.

Evaluation of Résumés 2 - Racial Bias

Higher status occupations

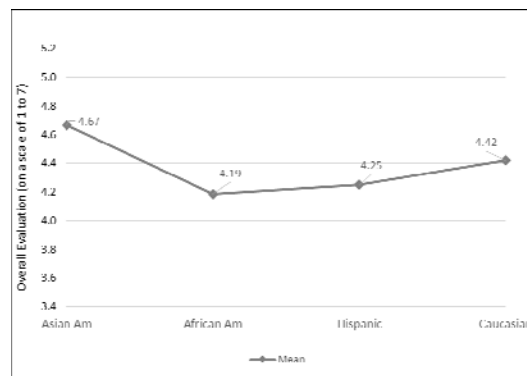
Architect
Chemist
Computer Programmer
Engineer
Physician
Judge
Pilot

Lower Status occupations

Construction Worker
Custodian
Kitchen staff worker
Public transit employee
Repairman

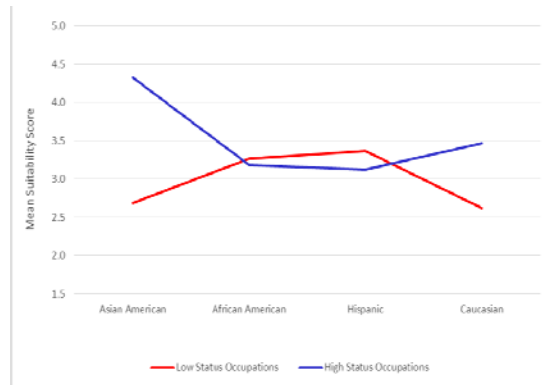
Evaluation of Résumés 2 - Racial Bias

- Evaluation of résumés significantly influenced by applicant's race/ethnicity
- Asian Americans applicants rated most positively
- African American applicants rated least positively



Evaluation of Résumés 2 - Racial Bias

- Race/ethnicity influences judgments about status
- Asian American and White applicants rated most suitable for high status jobs
- Hispanic and African American applicants rated most suitable for low status jobs



Evaluation of Résumés - Racial Bias

"I was on call and one of the nurses interrupted me and said, 'Oh, go to room such and such, the sheets need to be changed.' ... Making the assumption that if I am African-American, I'm here to clean the beds."

- African American female faculty member

Pololi et al. (2010). *JGIM* 25(12): 1363-9.

Case Study: Department of Biology

A Biology search committee is choosing between two candidate finalists for a joint appointment with chemistry. Both candidates have had campus interviews.

Department/university demographics: majority white male; women, black, Hispanic and Native Americans are underrepresented.

Alec Burton



Tamaria Powell



Case Study: The Search Committee

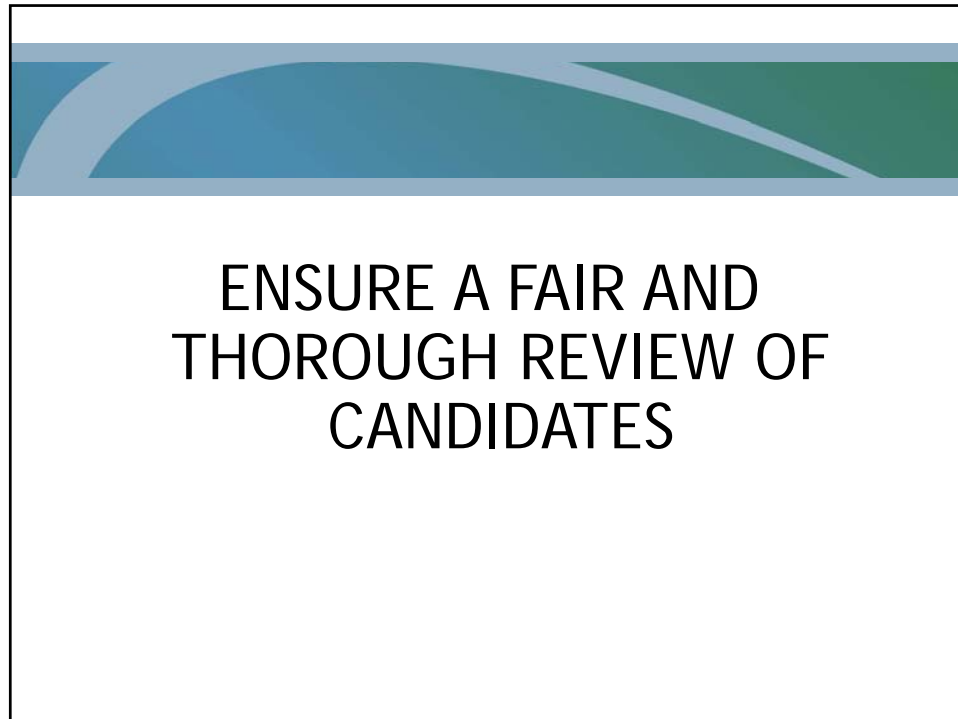


Case Study: Questions for discussion

- What flaws did you observe in the review process?
- What biases did you observe?
- How could the current situation be corrected?
- How could you modify the process to avoid this situation in the future?

Case Study: Cast of characters





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

Uhlmann and Cohen 2007. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*.

- Diversify your search committees

- Social tuning/increased motivation to respond without bias
- Counterstereotype imaging

Lowery, Hardin and Sinclair 2001. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.
Blair, Ma and Lenton 2001. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

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

Heilman 1980. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*; van Ommeren et al. 2005. *Psychological Reports*.

Bias Reduction Strategies (cont'd)

- Develop and prioritize criteria prior to evaluating applicants
Uhlmann and Cohen 2005. *Psychological Science*.
- Spend sufficient time and attention evaluating each application
Martell 1991. *Applied Social Psychology*.
- Focus on each applicant as an individual and evaluate the entire application package
Heilman 1984. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*; Tosi and Einbender 1985. *Academy of Management Journal*; Brauer and Er-ratif 2011. *Experimental Social Psychology*.
- Use inclusion rather than exclusion decision-making processes
Hugenberg et al. 2006. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.
- Stop periodically to evaluate your criteria and their implementation

Bias Reduction Strategies (cont'd)

- 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
Foschi 1996. *Social Psychology Quarterly*; Dobbs and Crano 2001. *Social Psychology Quarterly*.
- 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?”



DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AN EFFECTIVE INTERVIEW PROCESS

On-Campus Interviews

Two key aims of the on-campus interview:

- Allow the hiring unit to determine whether the candidate possesses the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes to be successful in the position

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 influenced your final evaluation of the candidates

Effects of Accent

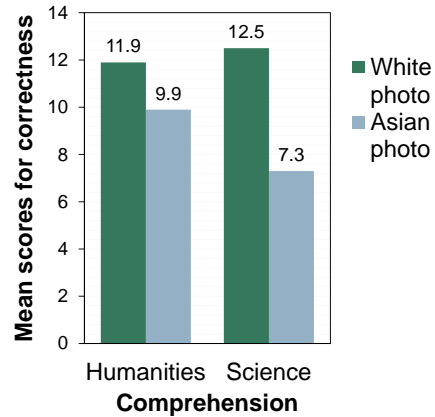
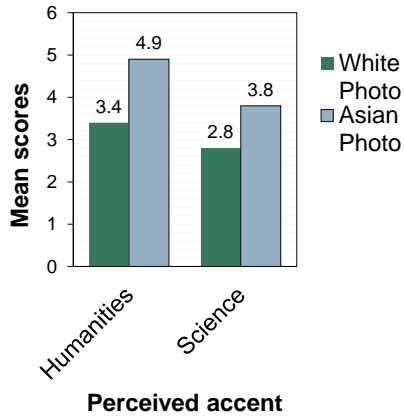


- Students listened to a 450-word recorded essay read by Standard American English speaker
- Random assignment to topic (science or humanities)
- Random assignment to image of speaker - Asian or White face



Rubin 1992. "Nonlanguage factors affecting undergraduates' judgments of nonnative English-speaking teaching assistants. *Research in Higher Education* 33(4): 511-531.

Habits of mind cause perceptual distortion that could impact communication



**CLOSE THE DEAL:
SUCCESSFULLY HIRE YOUR
SELECTED CANDIDATE**

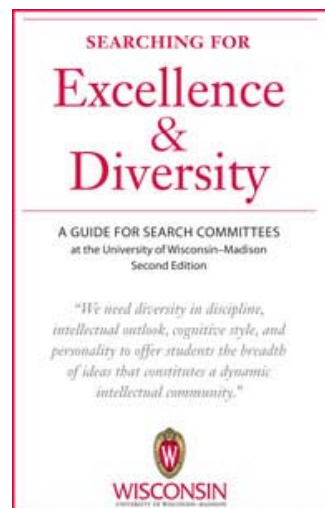
Close the Deal

- Timeliness
- Maintain communication
- Negotiation of resources (computer, space, start date, etc.)
- Return visit?

**Ensure the Success of Your
Chosen Candidate!!!**



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



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

