

Mitigating Unconscious Bias in the Search Process

Session 1: Preparing to Launch a Search

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AGENDA

- What is unconscious bias?
- Developing position descriptions with an EDIB lens
 - Dos and Don'ts of Diversity Statements
- Reducing bias in decision-making processes
- Strategies for creating a deep and diverse candidate pool
- ~~HR Processes specific to your institution~~



What is Unconscious Bias?

How does it impact recruitment?

Also called “implicit bias,” an unconscious bias is a prejudice we have or an assumption that we make about another person or group based on common cultural stereotypes, rather than on a thoughtful judgment.

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What is Unconscious Bias?

How does it impact recruitment?

Stereotype: a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.

(Oxford Dictionary)

Biases Can Be:

- Explicit: Deliberate thought
 - Implicit: Unconscious
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Cognitive Psychology research shows

- Most people intend to be fair AND we all have unconscious biases
- We naturally like some people more; we tend to like those more like us; we help those “like us”
- These biases influence our evaluations of others and their work

Hiring

- In virtually every study, males were more likely to be hired than women; whites were more likely to be hired than people of color—**and the gender and ethnicity of the interviewer or evaluator did not change the outcome.**
 - Having an “ideal” candidate increases the risk of activating unconscious bias.
 - Evaluators rated verbal skills lower if told an African American wrote a text than if they were told a white person wrote it, and gave higher ratings when told a man wrote it than when told a woman wrote it.
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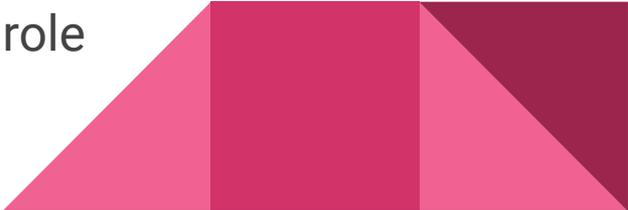
- In a review of job performance, evaluators rated the same job performance lower if told it was performed by a woman.
- A 2000 study of hidden gender bias in hiring for symphony orchestras conducted by Cecilia Rouse, an associate professor at Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, found, using data from the audition records, "that blind auditions increased the probability that a woman would advance from preliminary rounds by 50 percent."



Mitigating unconscious bias in the Search Process

1. Reflect on your biases, beliefs, and presumptions
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Acknowledge Limiting Beliefs, Biases and Presumptions

- Increasing diversity compromises quality
 - Racially and ethnically diverse candidates are hard to find/don't exist
 - The organization is not ready for diverse candidates
 - Highly qualified candidates won't want to work here
 - Top candidates can only come from top/certain institutions
 - Our recruitment practices are already unbiased
 - Efforts to increase recruitment of historically underrepresented groups is reverse discrimination
 - Recruiting people from historically underrepresented groups will resolve our EDIB issues
 - We know all the people in the field qualified for this role
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Mitigating unconscious bias in the Search Process

2. Rethink job
descriptions



Developing Position Descriptions with an EDIB Lens

Common Challenges/Risks

- Articulating skills and responsibilities without connection to outcomes
- Replicating the historical nature of the role
- High qualifications that are not truly necessary for or indicators of success in the role
- Failure to mention or even connect equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging to the role or departmental goals
- Diversity Statements used as sole measure of commitment to EDIB

**Developing Position Descriptions
with an EDIB Lens**

Mitigating Strategies



Developing Position Descriptions with an EDIB Lens

Risks	Mitigating Strategies
Articulating skills and responsibilities without connection to outcomes	Focus on what you want the person in the role to accomplish/outcomes in addition to tasks (e.g. increase recruitment and retention of students from groups that have been historically underrepresented in animation)

Developing Position Descriptions with an EDIB Lens

Risks	Mitigating Strategies
<p>Replicating the historical nature of the role</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● As much as possible, try not to simply recruit to fill the exact area of expertise, discipline, or job portfolio that a previous colleague performed● Consider the future goals and current needs of the department and make data informed decisions.● What are promising practices or trends in the field that can be advanced or addressed through the role?

Developing Position Descriptions with an EDIB Lens

Risks	Mitigating Strategies
<p>High qualifications that are not truly necessary for or indicators of success in the role</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Correlate each qualification to the function and outcomes of the role to determine relevance/necessity● Allow for multiple ways that candidates might demonstrate qualifications● Evaluate how minimum qualifications might prohibit consideration of experience, quality of work, quantity of work, and non-traditional paths

Developing Position Descriptions with an EDIB Lens

Risks	Mitigating Strategies
<p>Failure to mention or even connect equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging to the role or departmental goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Articulate the importance of diversity and inclusion in tangible ways• Include your unit's Diversity & Inclusion Statement/Lead with your commitment to diversity• Connect the outcomes and expectations for the role with EDIB goals

Developing Position Descriptions with an EDIB Lens

Risks	Mitigating Strategies
Ambiguous language and jargon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rather than rely on language like expert, excellence, professionalism, etc. use more descriptive and inclusive alternatives that demonstrate the abilities and skills that are looking for• Avoid use of acronyms and jargon that may not be known or used by non-traditional candidates or people outside of your department



Do's and Don'ts of Diversity Statements

Do's and Don'ts of Diversity Statement

- Do make your departmental commitment to EDIB visible to applicants
- Do not use a candidate's written diversity statement as the sole measure for demonstrating their commitment to EDIB
 - Develop thoughtful interview questions instead
- Do not request a diversity statement if your department doesn't have a statement and or related EDIB goals
- Do consider that requesting such a statement without visible, meaningful work may be a flag to equity-minded candidates



Additional Strategies for Reducing Bias

Before finalizing the position description, discuss..

- What unconscious or structural biases might be embedded in your criteria
- How could qualified candidates be eliminated from the pool based on your criteria? (e.g. does classical training eliminate candidates with non-traditional music training)
- How you'll know that a candidate meets the qualifications
- What qualifications are most important and why
 - Decide how you'll hold the Search Committee accountable for prioritizing them
- What will be your strategies for creating a deep pool of applicants

Strategies for creating a deep and diverse candidate pool

- Commit to the work required to create a diverse pool
 - The odds of hiring a woman were 79 times greater if there were at least two women in the finalist pool; the odds of hiring a person of color were 194 times greater.
- Set realistic timelines that allow for meaningful outreach and extend them in your pool is not diverse
- Find & leverage identity-conscious recruitment platforms
 - <https://www.blackinfilm.com/>
 - <https://blackswho.design/about>
 - <http://sistersincinema.com/>
 - <https://www.printmag.com/post/resources-for-hiring-and-celebrating-black-tale>
- Find out where other schools recruit, rinse and repeat!

Resources for Black Creatives: <https://blogs.colum.edu/careercenter/2021/02/17/resources-for-black-creatives/>

If There's Only One Woman in Your Candidate Pool, There's Statistically No Chance She'll Be Hired,

<https://hbr.org/2016/04/if-theres-only-one-woman-in-your-candidate-pool-theres-statistically-no-chance-shell-be-hired>

Strategies for creating a deep and diverse candidate pool

- Go beyond your network (especially if it isn't diverse)
- Attend/present at conferences and programs hosted by Black, Latinx, Asian, Indigenous, and LGBTQ serving organizations
 - National Association of Latinos in Film
 - International Association of Blacks in Dance
- Make sure that everyone committee members commits to getting the word out. No passive recruiting!
- Be a great place to work for women and people from historically underrepresented groups

Q&A from Session 1

Q: How will we know that our candidate pool is diverse?

A: While a diverse candidate pool is our goal, what is also important is the process and practices that you engage to create one.

From a practical standpoint, HR may track and/or provide hiring managers with data about their pool. Since hiring someone on the basis of identify is not legal, the core strategy must be to demonstrate meaningful attention to reaching a diverse pool.

If you have **not** taken intentional steps to create a diverse applicant pool, there is cause for engaging in discussion taking them in order to ensure an equitable and successful search..

- Have you marketed broadly including via identity-centered platforms and associations? Which ones?
- Are your criteria and qualifications limiting for individuals who've been historically excluded from opportunities?
- Have all candidates received consistent and thoughtful consideration?
- Have your committee consistently used the evaluation tools for all candidates?

The answers to these questions speak to whether or not the work is being done to recruit and evaluate your pool equitably.

Q&A from Session 1

Q: What if candidates express concern about moving to the South?

A: Share what you and others (including non-natives) appreciate about this community. And use any specific concerns (e.g. climate for LGBTQ ppl) to help plan campus visits and introductions. (e.g. Ask people if there is an office on campus they'd like to engage during their visit)

Q: Is it okay to review candidates LinkedIn profile?

A: While reviewing candidates profiles may seem like an easy way to learn about the identities of candidates, it can also increase bias towards them and other candidates. Profiles give you access to information that may not be available about all candidates. Not to mention that any practice/tool engaged for one candidate should be used for all of them. Reviewing LinkedIn profiles for all candidates will significantly increase the workload for search committee members.

Q: What if I don't believe my unity is ready to become more diverse?

A: It's okay to honor your feeling and experience by deciding if you are willing and able to serve on a search committee which will require you to manage your biases and triggers.

Q&A from Session 1

Q: How can I be honest about our shortcomings related to EDIB?

A: It is not advised to mislead candidates into believing that your team/department/organization is perfect. Ultimately, candidates need information to help them make the best decision for themselves. While it is not appropriate to air grievances, candidates may appreciate knowing learning about some of your efforts to improve culture and advance EDIB.

References & Resources

Addressing Implicit Bias in the Hiring Process

<https://www.nais.org/magazine/independent-school/fall-2018/addressing-implicit-bias-in-the-hiring-process/>

Beasley MA, Fischer MJ. **Why they leave: The impact of stereotype threat on the attrition of women and minorities from science, math and engineering majors. Social Psychology of Education.**

Beyond Bias & Barriers: Fulfilling the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering, The National Academies, 2006

Greenwald, Anthony G. (2011) "Implicit Bias: New Forms of the American Dilemma & the New Science of Discrimination" National Multicultural Conference.



References & Resources

Harvard University, Implicit Association Test, <https://implicit.harvard.edu>

Job Description Template <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/job-description-template>

Perspectives: Exploring Unconscious Bias with Howard Ross

<https://www.capitalone.com/about/newsroom/howard-ross/>

<https://biasinterrupters.org/wp-content/uploads/Identifying-Bias-in-Hiring-Worksheet-with-citations.pdf>

Resources for Black Creatives: <https://blogs.colum.edu/careercenter/2021/02/17/resources-for-black-creatives/>

If There's Only One Woman in Your Candidate Pool, There's Statistically No Chance She'll Be Hired,

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feedback

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdPiwRqrlsrV29NkAml9VCMXtm7a_WMF1X_FBwROmwjwU6qTQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

Up Next

Session 2: Evaluating Candidates | TBA

- Tools and practices for ranking/evaluating candidates
- Developing strong interview questions with an EDIB lens