**Office for Equity and Diversity**

**Identifying & Challenging Implicit Bias in Staff Searches**

**BEST PRACTICES**

**Recognize Short Cuts**

***Consider if you have ever used – or witnessed the use of - these common short cuts when making hiring decisions.***

• **Cloning:** Giving preference to an applicant with similar interests, background, or attributes to either oneself or others in the department.

• **Snap Judgments:** Making quick decisions about an applicant, either negatively or positively. Often made without sufficient evidence or by focusing on minor issues.

**• Good Fit/Bad Fit:** Privileging the applicant one feels would “fit well” within your department; often code for how comfortable other faculty and graduate students would feel with this person. Consider that if an applicant would be the only (or close to only) graduate student who is also a person of color, woman, GLBTQ-identified and/or person with a disability, how likely it might be for their “fit” in the department to be questioned.

• **Negative Stereotypes:** The research/scholarship and background of underrepresented applicants (people of color, women, and/or those who are GLBTQ identified and/or have a disability) are unfairly scrutinized, with a presumption of incompetence; may be seen as having “an agenda” others don’t.

• **Positive Stereotypes:** Competency is assumed for applicants from dominant groups (those who are white, male, heterosexual, and/or not disabled).

**• Elitist Behavior or “Raising-the-Bar”:**  Uneven expectations based on an applicant’s social identities (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, disability).

**• Wishful Thinking:** Working from an assumption that racism, sexism, and other forms of bias no longer exist; sometimes comes across as “I don’t see race.”

Adapted from Joann Moody, *Rising Above Cognitive Errors: Guidelines to Improve Faculty Searches, Evaluations and Decision-Making* (2010)

**Be Strategic about Minimizing Implicit Bias**

• **Replace your self-image** as an objective person with recognition and acceptance that you are subject to the influence of bias and assumptions.

• **Model this self-image** for other members of the Committee; be open about it.

• **Diversify your Admissions Committee**. Rotate members off and on. Offer and/or require implicit bias training for all members.

• **Counter stereotyping when it happens**; ask others to be more specific about what they mean (“why is she not a good fit?”).

• **Reach a critical mass** – increase the proportion of women, people of color, and people with disabilities in the applicant pool.

• **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 (who do we keep in? vs. who do we throw out?).

• **Stop periodically** to evaluate your criteria and their implementation.

• **Hold yourself and each member of the search committee accountable** for conducting fair and equitable evaluations and for basing decisions on concrete information gathered from applicants’ records and interviews – rather than on vague assertions or assumptions.

**Actively Recruit a Diverse and Excellent Pool of Candidates**

• **Expand your applicant pool**; put resources and effort into recruiting diverse candidates

• **Be proactive in the search committee about the importance of diversity**; get buy-in from the Dean and/or Department Chair and send this message to everyone on the committee

***•* Consider bringing up implicit bias and dangerous short cuts with your committee**; think about how you might educate on Best Practices

• **Be up front about your decision-making process as a group**; consider setting ground rules or grounding assumptions at the beginning

• **Consider interviewing more than one candidate** from an underrepresented group (e.g., more than one candidate of color)

• **Send emails to network listservs** (within disciplines); women’s groups; GLBTQ groups; caucuses for people of color

• **Network with your colleagues** – tell them you’re looking for good candidates

• **Invite PhDs at national conferences in to your department**, so they know about you

• **Take a long term approach** – always be recruiting

• **Ask leaders in various communities** to help you with names

• **Short term recruiting**: place advertisements

• **Review your conferences & speakers** - who do you bring in to your department to guest lecture?

Adapted from *Searching for Excellence & Diversity®: Workshops for Faculty Search Committees Recruiting and Hiring Faculty*

WISELI: Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute

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