Search Committees: Minimizing the Role of Unconscious Bias

What is unconscious bias?

- Social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside of their own consciousness\(^1\)
- Everyone has it - stems from our tendency to organize our social worlds by categorizing
- Pervasively influences hiring, evaluation, selection of candidates and even daily interactions in favor of men, whites, youth, and physically able\(^2\)

What can you do?

- Deepen the pool
  - Women and minorities are judged most fairly when they make up at least 30% of the candidate pool\(^3\)
- Take steps to reduce/eliminate bias
  - Allow sufficient time for evaluating and hiring\(^4\)
  - Use structured criteria and decision processes\(^5\)
  - Know the relevant research\(^6\)
- Become aware of your own biases and take the Implicit Association Test at [https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/)
- See the AAMC’s E-Learning Seminar on unconscious bias in the search & recruitment process at: [http://www.aamc.org/opi/leadership/training.htm](http://www.aamc.org/opi/leadership/training.htm)
- Check out the Gender Bias Learning Project and play Gender Bias Bingo at: [http://www.genderbiasbingo.com/games.html](http://www.genderbiasbingo.com/games.html)
- See the evaluation, hiring, and unconscious bias sections of our website at [http://advance.arizona.edu/resources.cfm](http://advance.arizona.edu/resources.cfm) for more tips and resources

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\(^1\) Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Valian, 1998; 1999
\(^3\) Heilman, 1980; Sackett et al, 1991; Valian, 1998
\(^4\) Martell, 1991; Blair & Banaji, 1996
\(^5\) Martell & Guzzo, 1991
\(^6\) Moskowitz et al, 1999