

“Unconscious bias refers to social stereotypes about certain demographics or groups of people that individuals form outside of their own conscious awareness.”

– The American Association of Medical Colleges

<https://www.aamc.org/download/102364/data/aibv019no2.pdf>

The Office of Faculty Affairs & Faculty Development



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The mission of the Office of Faculty Affairs & Faculty Development is to provide support to the School of Medicine faculty, particularly in the areas of career advancement, faculty development, professional satisfaction, faculty mentoring and faculty diversity and inclusion.

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Unconscious Biases and Assumptions



THE OFFICE OF FACULTY AFFAIRS & FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Examples of Assumptions or Biases in Academic Job-Related Contexts

“Latino faculty may also face difficulty marketing themselves as a formidable colleague and professor due to perceptions that they are the affirmative action hires.”
(Verdugo, 2003).

“Past research suggests how discrimination may contaminate hiring decisions even when applicants have demonstrated that they are qualified.”
(Phelan et al.)

“Gender stereotypes can prompt bias in evaluative judgments of women even when these women have proved themselves to be successful and demonstrated their competence.”
(Heilman et al.)

“If faculty express gender biases, we are not suggesting that these biases are intentional or stem from a conscious desire to impede the progress of women in science.”
(Moss-Racusin et al.)

Helpful Tips for Search Committees

- Recognize personal biases and prejudices that might influence hiring and promotion decisions.
- Educate committees on bias and assumptions.
- Use clear job descriptions.
- Create transparent policies and procedures.
- Develop criteria for evaluating candidates and apply them consistently.
- Include individuals with different perspectives on hiring and personnel committees.
- Make sure policies are modeled and reinforced by leadership.
- Be aware of how the style or origin of reference might bias against females or ethnic minorities.
- When hiring, review the final pool of applicants for diversity.
- Do not use informal methods of hiring exclusively.

Resources

- AAMC E-Learning Seminar: What You Don’t Know: The Science of Unconscious Bias and What To Do About it in the Search and Recruitment Process
https://www.aamc.org/members/leadership/catalog/178420/unconscious_bias.html
- AAMC Video Presentation: Exploring Unconscious Bias in Academic Medicine
<https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/diversity/learningseries/346528/howardrossinterview.html>
- Project Implicit at Harvard
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>
- Association of American Indian Physicians
www.AAIP.org
- National Hispanic Medical Association
www.Nhmamd.org
- National Medical Association
www.nmanet.org

References

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- J. E. Phelan et al. Psychology of Women Quarterly 32(2008).
- M.E. Heilman et al. J Appl Psychol 2004; 89(3):416-427.
- Verdugo, R. R. (2003). Discrimination and Merit in Higher Education: The Hispanic Professoriate. In L. Jones & J. Castellanos (Eds.), The Majority in the Minority: Retaining Latina/o Faculty, Administrators, and Students in the 21st Century (pp. 241-254). Sterling, VA: Stylus Books.
- Virginia Tech - Advance VT: www.advance.vt.edu