Do I understand Unconscious Bias?

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Bias

...is ordinary, mostly unintentional, but costly.

...can be reduced, but takes effort.
What is Unconscious Bias?

- Definition - Social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness.

- Almost everybody has it!

- Stems from our tendency to make associations to help us organize our social world.

- Scientific evidence shows that implicit bias pervasively influences hiring, evaluation, selection of leaders, and daily interactions.

(1) Banaji MR, Bazerman MH, Chugh D. How unethical are you? Harv Bus Review 2003;81:56-64
A more diverse workplace isn’t just something that feels right. Years of research has shown that more diverse workplaces are more innovative and thus perform better than those that aren’t.

**Diversity is a competitive advantage.**

Companies with higher proportions of women board directors **outperform others by 53%**.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47%</td>
<td>Students are women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46%</td>
<td>Residents are women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38%</td>
<td>Full-time faculty are women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>Full professors are women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22%</td>
<td>Tenured professors are women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24%</td>
<td>Division chiefs are women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Department chairs are women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>Senior associate/vice deans are women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16%</td>
<td>Deans are women</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Retrieved from [https://www.aamc.org/members/gwims/statistics/#tables](https://www.aamc.org/members/gwims/statistics/#tables)
Differences in U.S. Medical School Faculty Job Satisfaction by Gender

Female faculty perceived less equal opportunity for P&T, less consistency in application of P&T criteria

Female faculty are less satisfied with salary/compensation

Everyone has biases; it's part of being human. It's important not to be ashamed of this basic fact.

**YOU are biased.**

(So am I.)

**It matters.**

**SO - HOW DO I FIND OUT MY UNCONSCIOUS BIASES?**
Implicit Association Test (IAT)

- Studies involving IAT receive most support for theory of unconscious bias in general
- Consistently demonstrated
- Men > women, whites > blacks, males = Science & females = Liberal Arts, youth and physically able preferred.
- Often completely incompatible with our conscious values
- We invite you to try it!


IMPLICIT BIAS TEST DATA

- Strong automatic association of Male with Career and Female with Family: 24%
- Moderate automatic association of Male with Career and Female with Family: 32%
- Slight automatic association of Male with Career and Female with Family: 20%
- Little to no automatic preference between gender and family or career: 17%
- Slight automatic association of Male with Family and Female with Career: 4%
- Moderate automatic association of Male with Family and Female with Career: 2%
- Strong automatic association of Male with Family and Female with Career: 0.3%
How does UB affect institutional diversity?

- Data we receive from others are biased.
- We act out our individual unconscious biases with regard to multiple factors.
- Affects everyone, regardless of gender, race/ethnicity
- Affects evaluation, hiring, selection of leaders
HOW CAN WE REDUCE UNCONSCIOUS BIASES?
What DOESN’T Work

• “Ignore it.”
• “Don’t think about it.”
• “I’m an objective person.”

When we ignore “everyday incidents of bias” climates suffer

• Suppressing biased thoughts ➔ cognitive rebound

• Trying to “be objective” can *increase* biases
Institutional Strategies

Assessment

Awareness

Community

Professional Development

Advocacy
ASSESSMENT

Policy/practice review & revision
- Faculty Mentoring
- Workload equity/service
- Family-leave/Eldercare
- Accommodations for disability, illness, accidents
- Work-life balance
- Internal award processes
- Recruiting/Hiring/Evaluation
Best Practices in Hiring

Active Recruiting

Search Committee Commitment & Diversity

Job Descriptions,

Mindful Candidate Evaluation

Host Effective Visit
- Set clear and objective criteria for evaluation
- DON’T SHIFT standards
- Ensure adequate time for thoughtful review
- Agree upon ground rules for discussion, including how group will handle conflict
- Ensure minimal distractions during deliberations
- Don’t rank immediately
- Insist on evidence - don’t let unsubstantiated statements go unnoted or unacknowledged
- Discuss potential unintended biases/provide training to committee members
Unconscious bias, evaluation and recruitment

Affects evaluations, recruitment and choice of leaders

Demonstrated in:
- Recommendation letters
- Proportion in candidate pool
- Selection of those to interview

Awareness

Assessment outcomes should be shared WIDELY

Bias education facilitates understanding of needs

Equity allies are important
  ◦ STRIDE
  ◦ Women’s Leadership Institutes
Faculty Professional Development

Mentoring / Coaching
- Formal & informal
- Networks are better than “forced” relationships

Beyond Teaching
- Research/Writing
- Leadership skills
- Work-life satisfaction
- Career planning

*Academics benefit from professional development across the career trajectory.*
Advocacy

It takes a village...to raise an academic.

Reach DOWN while leaning in!

◦ Even the brightest, most talented people benefit from the support of strong advocates, sponsors, and good colleagues
Create Unbiased Habits

Habits of the mind can be changed.

Awareness + Motivation + Practice = New Habits

Recognize Bias
When Does it Happen? What cues might aggravate it?

Identify New Response

Identify Cues to Trigger New Response

"Assumed female colleague wanted to lead student advising committee."

That felt embarrassing, awkward.

Don’t assume others’ interests, ask.

Less Biased Response in Future
Challenge Bias When You See It

model equity norms
 reduces others’ biases
 cues for control
 supports targets
Summary

✓ Unconscious bias is well documented, pervasive.
✓ Unconscious bias replicates the social hierarchy. Unconscious bias influences our behavior.
✓ A more diverse leadership and faculty results in better decision making.
✓ Unconscious bias can be effectively reduced.
To Inclusion...and Beyond!

Changing What's Possible