Solutions to Implicit and Unconscious Bias in Faculty Hiring

- Make diversity a priority at all stages -- philosophically throughout to entire process. Recognize the value of it and internalize it
  - In the job posting
  - Establish and discuss that it is a priority at initial search committee meeting (also listed below)
  - Remind yourselves of it at the beginning of every meeting when you go through and narrow down candidates (also listed below)
  - When you choose which people you phone/skype interview
  - When you choose the people that you invite to campus
  - When you recommend people to the Dean
- Environmental solutions – set yourselves up for success
  - Expand recruiting – target institutions/places that can be a pipeline for women and URM candidates
  - Have diversity on the committee itself (there is a challenge here as there is not a lot of diversity in some fields currently)
  - Have Diversity mentioned and valued in job announcement
  - Do not have rushed timeline – allow time and space
  - Do not overload members of search committee (there is a challenge here if you want diversity on committees)
  - Have a “process person” (voting or non-voting) on the committee to provide some supervision/accountability around Diversity
- Every search committee (could/should) have a session just dedicated to the importance of diversity and on the potential influence of implicit/unconscious bias -- before the search begins
- Also this priority on diversity can be mentioned at the beginning of every search committee meeting
- Develop search criteria in advance – Create a checklist/matrix to keep committee members focused. Use it as a point of reference
  - Include that Diversity is an important criteria – and understand why
  - Include other criteria that academic pedigree, number of publications/limiting the type of publications, belonging to certain networks – and understand why they are important
  - Examples include
    - Ability to attract diverse students
    - Ability to work on teams/collaborate
    - That there is value in research on other aspects of the field other than the typical (e.g. pure science vs. human and behavioral aspects of science)
• How do we intervene? How do we interrupt bias? Answer: Develop a process for checks and balances – a process whereby if search committee members are not honoring the philosophy and criteria that people should feel free to point it out – and to do so without reproach. Idea: It is okay to take a step back from the process and talk about it.
  o “Let’s hang on a moment, take a step back, and think about this…” – slows things down and allows for intervention
  o “Why do you feel that way?” – seek clarification
  o “Can you show me the evidence?” – this can interrupt the committee from accepting opinions and personal assumptions from committee members
• Be aware/be careful of implicit bias and microaggressions during interactions during the search – toward each other and toward the candidates themselves (as you have to sell them on your department/institution too!)
  o Examples of Microaggressions: Interruptions, Exclusion, Marginalization, Forceful language/energy, pressing your agenda on someone else
  o Solutions (Micro-support)
    ▪ Allow all to have a voice and acknowledge each other’s contributions
    ▪ Give full attention to each other – Active Listening Skills
      • Deep listening
      • No interrupting
      • Echo back for clarification and/or respectfully ask questions for clarification
    ▪ Hold each other accountable when we see micro-aggressions -- break the pattern of responding with silence

Resources for Further Exploration:
Implicit and Unconscious Bias in the Hiring of STEM Faculty

• Implicit Association Test (IAT), Project Implicit: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/education.html
• ”The Subtlety of Contemporary Racism: Implications for Intergroup Perceptions, Policies, and Prospects” presenter John F. Dovidio, PhD, Yale University: http://mediasite.cidde.pitt.edu/Mediasite/Play/c3e63028268b4c04b5979d71381006e6
• Diversity Resources at PITT: http://www.hr.pitt.edu/diversity
• “Diversity Toolkit,” Duke University’s Office of Institutional Equity: https://web.duke.edu/equity/toolkit/
• Study: Implicit Bias in Hiring (racial bias);, University of Chicago and MIT: http://www.uh.edu/~adkugler/Bertrand&Mullainathan.pdf
- *Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People*, by Mahzarin Banaji
- *Diversity's Promise for Higher Education: Making It Work*, by Daryl G. Smith
- *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*, by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva