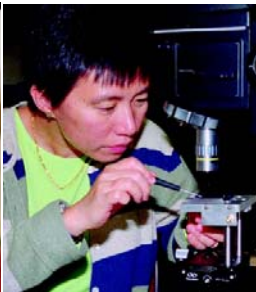


Best Practices in Hiring: Women and Minorities in Science at UNC-CH

Laurie McNeil

Dept. of Physics and Astronomy
UNC-CH

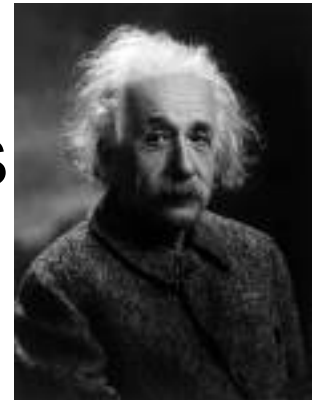


Gender schemas

We unconsciously assign certain psychological traits to males and females



We assign certain traits to occupations



We see what we expect

Men and women estimated heights of people from photographs

- Men consistently estimated to be taller despite photos matched for height



We make assumptions

Men and women identified leader in photo of group seated around a table



- Single sex group (male or female)
 - Person at head of table identified as leader
- Mixed group, male at head
 - Same result
- Mixed group, female at head
 - Male sitting elsewhere identified as leader

We shift our criteria

Men and women chose candidates for stereotypically male job requiring education and experience

- Gender not identified:
 - 76% chose more educated
 - 48% said education more important
- Male more educated
 - same result
- Female more educated
 - 43% chose her
 - 22% said education more important



We apply criteria unequally

Reviews of applicants for a biomedical postdoctoral fellowship

- Scientific competence, relevance of proposed research, quality of methodology
- “Impact factor” calculated from number of publications, citations, journal prestige
 - Women had impact factors 2.5 higher than males with same rating



We give “benefit of doubt” unequally

Men and women rated competence of people working in a male-dominated field

- CV stated person had received favorable performance review
 - Males and females rated equally competent
- CV stated performance review had not yet been completed
 - Females rated significantly less competent than males

We write letters differently

Letters written for successful candidates for medical faculty positions

- Letters for men averaged 10% longer and were 4x as likely to be very long (multiple pages)
- Letters for women were twice as likely to have “doubt raisers”
 - hedges, potentially negative statements, faint praise, unexplained comments, irrelevancies
- Letters for women were 50% more likely to have “grindstone adjectives” emphasizing effort rather than ability
 - “Hardworking, conscientious, dependable, meticulous, thorough, diligent, dedicated, careful”

Bella Abzug's opinion

“Our struggle today is not to have a female Einstein get appointed as an assistant professor. It is for a woman schlemiel to get as quickly promoted as a male schlemiel.”



An outstanding candidate will have many characteristics

He or she will be: accomplished, brilliant, broadly educated, careful, creative, dedicated, enterprising, forceful, a good communicator, helpful, independent, insightful, persistent, personable, productive, a team player, trustworthy, a world-class thinker

An outstanding candidate will have many characteristics

- ❑ Independent
- ❑ Creative
- ❑ Insightful
- ❑ Enterprising
- ❑ Accomplished
- ❑ Brilliant
- ❑ Forceful
- ❑ World-class thinker
- ❑ Productive



- ❖ Team player
- ❖ Helpful
- ❖ Good communicator
- ❖ Personable
- ❖ Dedicated
- ❖ Persistent
- ❖ Careful
- ❖ Broadly educated
- ❖ Trustworthy



The Boy Scout Law

A Scout is:

- Trustworthy
- Loyal
- Helpful
- Friendly
- Courteous
- Kind
- Obedient
- Cheerful
- Thrifty
- Brave
- Clean
- Reverent



Stages of the search process

- Advertising
- Soliciting applications
- Evaluating applications
- Selecting candidates to interview
- Interviewing
- Choosing among the candidates

Advertising

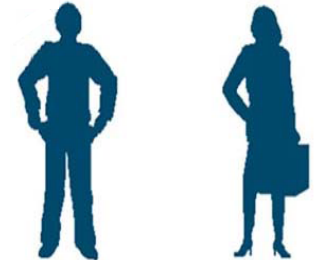
- Broader ads generate a broader pool of candidates
 - More likely to have candidates from underrepresented groups
- Attract candidates from non-traditional career paths
 - Industry, national labs

Soliciting applications

- Advertising is not enough
 - Be a *search* committee, not an “envelope-opening committee”
- Contact leaders in the field and ask about suitable candidates
 - Contact them and invite them to apply
- Ask specifically about members of underrepresented groups
 - We tend to think first of people who “look like us”

Evaluating applications

- Establish specific criteria for all applicants
 - Apply criteria equally
- Be explicit about how candidates meet criteria
 - Don't just see what you expect
- Read letters with potential unintended bias in mind



Selecting candidates to interview

- Don't rush to vote
 - Discuss specific merits of candidates
- Take a second look at members of underrepresented groups
- Don't speak for the candidates
 - Dual career couples
 - Cultural differences

Interviewing

- Do not ask improper questions
 - Be familiar with the EEO list
- Establish a set of questions to be asked of all candidates
- Convey information without asking
 - Maternity leave, partner hiring, ...
- Provide contact with members of underrepresented groups
 - In your department or related one
- Provide contact with young faculty & students

Choosing among the candidates

- Be explicit about how each meets criteria
 - “I know it when I see it”
- Give benefit of doubt equally to all
 - Potential vs. achievement
- Consider what special qualities a candidate brings
 - Mentor/role model, organizational skills, unique experience...

Further reading and resources

The Hunter College Gender Equity Project:
<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/genderequity/>

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