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Inclusive Hiring

Avoiding Pitfalls in the Hiring Process

Faculty Search Committee Discussion
September 21, 2022

Introduction

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University Initiative: Inclusive Hiring Guidelines for Faculty and Staff

A collaborative 2022-2023 initiative to develop inclusive hiring (onboarding /retention) guidelines and resources for Search Committees to promote:

- Consistent, inclusive “best practices” across the University
- Annual training and resource development
- Gain awareness of common blind spots in hiring process and ways to avoid
- **Feedback opportunities during guideline development**

Purpose of Today

A Supplemental Conversation

- Serve as an immediate resource as formal guideline development continues
- Facilitate the enthusiastic training requests from Stetson's academic deans and leaders
- Invite your general feedback to help inform our ongoing work (brief survey to follow)



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Stetson's Commitment

Equity: To assure broad understanding of Stetson's goals for providing an inclusive environment: **concentrating on training opportunities for more inclusive searches**, stressing the evolution into being a more open and respectful community, and adopting best practices in ways to promote equitable policies and practices within and throughout our campuses.

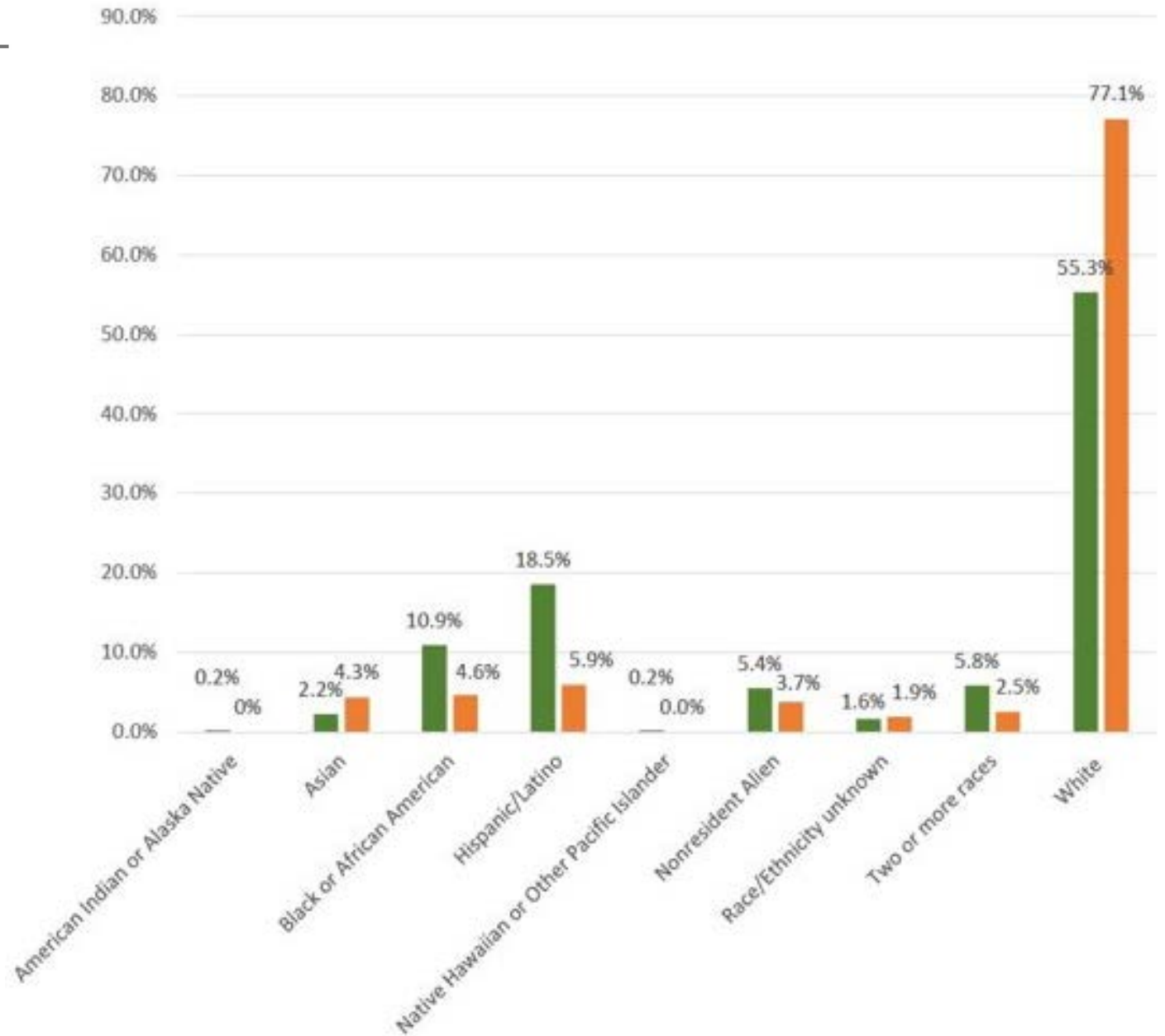
Roll Ahead Strategic Plan, 2019

**Demographic Comparison, Students vs. Faculty,
Academic Year 2021-22**

Last Updated: 12 September 2022

■ Students % ■ Faculty %

**Faculty vs. Students Comparison, 2021-22
By Ethnicity (DeLand Campus)**

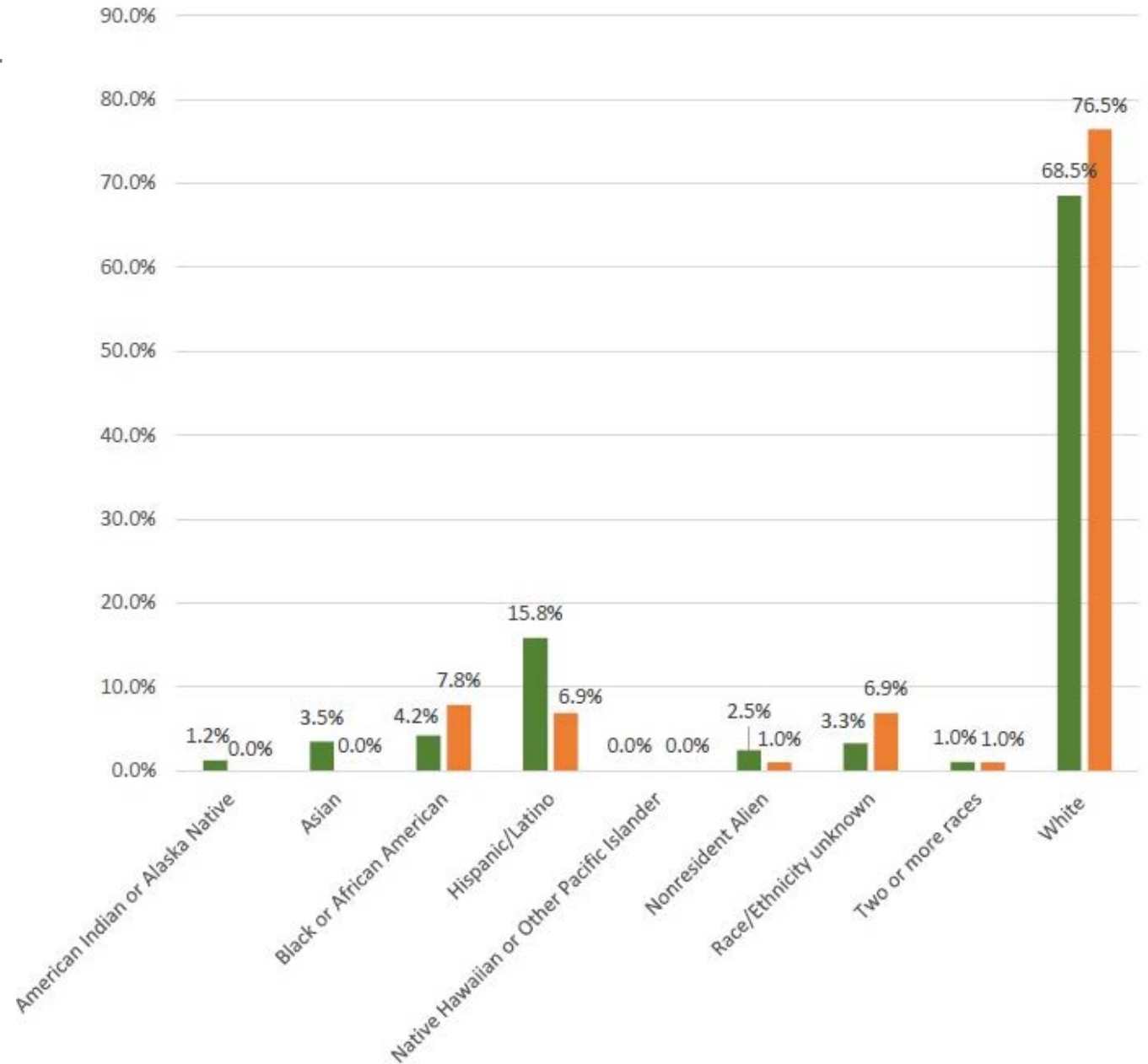


**Demographic Comparison, Students vs. Faculty,
Academic Year 2021-22**

Last Updated: 12 September 2022

**Faculty vs. Students Comparison, 2021-22
By Ethnicity (Law Campus)**

■ Students % ■ Faculty %



Discussion Outline

1. Key Concepts & Definitions
2. Key Hiring Steps, Common Pitfalls & Removing Barriers
3. Brief Scenario Discussions
4. Q&A

Discussion Goals and Outcomes

Goal 1: Discuss both self and group awareness of unconscious /implicit bias

- **Outcome:** Search committees take proactive steps to avoid common forms of bias and conditions that most often lead to bias

Goal 2: Discuss a few common pitfalls during hiring process and the associated best practices and resources.

- **Outcome:** Know appropriate language to use (recruit to hire)

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Key Definitions and Concepts



Dimensions of Diversity

Primary

Age
Race
Physical Abilities
Mental Abilities
Ethnicity
Gender
Sexual Orientation
Native Language
Other

Secondary

Education
Socioeconomic Status
Marital Status
Military Experience
Religious Beliefs
Geographic Location
Nationality
Citizenship Status
Political Views
Appearance & Body Type
Other

Workplace

Organizational
Occupation
Job Level
Job Classification
Department
Work Location
Work Shift
Skills
Years with Organization
Management Status
Other

Style

Leadership Style
Work Habits
Performance Expectations
Personality Type
Communication Style
Body Language
Flexible/Structured
Personal Space
Competition/Cooperation
Other

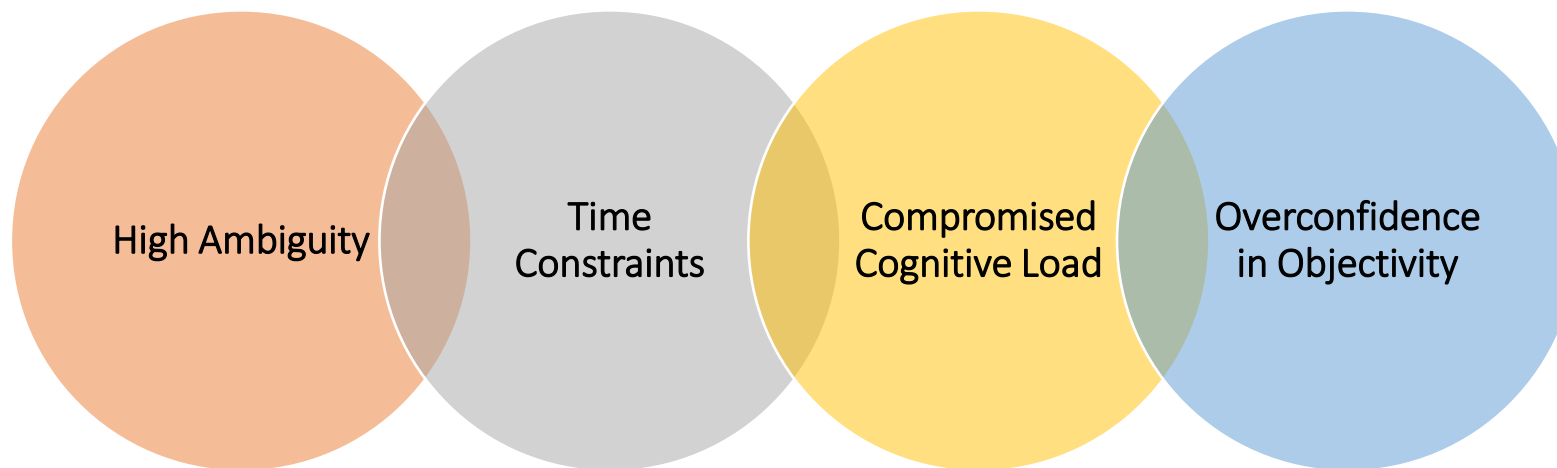
Bias A learned assumption, belief, or attitude accumulated through life experiences and exposure to various stereotypes.

Unconscious/Implicit Bias

Unconscious attitudes and stereotypes we hold about groups of people that influence our actions and real-world behaviors; implicit social cognition

- Mental Schemas and Shortcuts – automatic mental processes
- Includes both favorable and unfavorable associations

Common conditions that often increase implicitly biased decision-making:



Common Types of Bias in Hiring

1. Affinity Bias – We tend to favor people like ourselves
2. Confirmation Bias – We use new information to confirm our existing beliefs and assumptions
3. Conformity Bias – We conform to the group (committee) opinion to avoid conflict or going against the grain, or due to "fatigue"
4. Halo Bias – Our general impression of a candidate overly influences our assessment of their actual abilities

There are other common types. See "Resources" slide.

Overview: Common Barriers to Faculty Diversity

1. The pipeline (or “pathway”) challenge
2. Outdated faculty recruitment and retention practices
3. Perceived incompatibility of diversity and academic excellence
4. Resistance to broadening (or modernizing) traditional or outdated definitions of qualifications

Barriers Removed

Equality



The assumption is that **everyone benefits from the same supports**. This is equal treatment.

Equity



Everyone gets the supports they need (this is the concept of "affirmative action"), thus producing equity.

Justice



All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because **the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed**. The systemic barrier has been removed.

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Key Hiring Steps, Common Pitfalls &
Removing Barriers



Hiring Steps – Key Highlights

Search Committee
Formation &
Framework

Position
Description &
Announcement/Ad

Screening & Early
Interviews

Interview
Questions

Campus Visits

Candidate
Engagement

Candidate
Assessment &
Committee
Dialogues

Search Committee Formation/Framework

Common Pitfalls

- Seeking committee members who are already overcommitted
- Forming the committee after key hiring steps have already occurred
- Beginning process without outlining key goals or "direction"
- Assuming one person (underrepresented identity) to be the "diversity person"

Best Practices

- Include members from variety of departments/areas/constituency groups
- All members should have a focus/attention to DEI
- Include diversity of thought, departments, experience & connect to position
- First meeting – establishing an understanding, voice of all
- Decorum – agree to turn off phones/laptops, show respect
 - Committee Charge and Confidentiality Agreement, Balance of power
 - Charge: Incorporate commitment to inclusion for all members

Kick-Off Charge letter

- The written charge should establish the expectations of the committee's role and should entail the following points:
- A. Description of position to be filled and its role within the University (position description and minimum qualifications included).
- B. The task of the committee (e.g. interview and recommend a ranked group of finalists to the hiring executive), and their responsibility to attend all meetings, interviews, etc.
- C. Any specific limits of search (e.g., internal only, Florida, regional, national, etc.).
- D. Preferred date by which an appointment can be made.
- E. The role the hiring executive wishes to take in the process as well as others who will interview the finalists (e.g., President, Provost, Vice Presidents/Deans individually or collectively, open sessions for faculty and/or staff, student groups, etc.)
- F. Financial resources available (out-of-town travel, lodging expenses, meals, on campus facilities and refreshments, etc.)

Position Description & Announcement/Ad

Common Pitfalls

- Using previous job descriptions with limited updates and biased language
 - "Join our fun, young department. Up and coming. Fresh ideas"
 - "Campus is a quick 5 min walk to a bustling downtown"
 - Use terms such as: She/he. Aggressive. Chairman. Nurturing. Caring.
- Chronicle only. Have we explored all areas to announce this position?
- Ad written to reflect qualities of vacating employee

Position Description & Announcement (con't)

Best Practices

- Join a team of vibrant individuals. Demonstrated experience. Critical thinker. Successful candidate. Professional. Courteous
- Accessible to a bustling downtown
- Evaluate job description to remove outdated language/responsibilities
 - Reminder: "Intent" is not the issue. The goal is to evaluate "impact".
- Use personal networks, associations, HBCU/HSI/TCU lists of graduates, including affinity organizations, and contribute/participate in meaningful ways long-term
- Create an exciting ad; include "EEO employer who values diversity at all levels"

Early Screening and Interviews

Be careful with “Culture Fit” talk

- Coded language for: “How are you like us?”
- Allows for groupthink in interviews/search committee formation

Give every applicant the same visibility and review

- Combat “In Group,” “Out Group” mentality

Be careful with Performance Attribution

- PEOPLE “LIKE US” OR DOMINANT IDENTITIES ARE JUDGED ON POTENTIAL
- PEOPLE “NOT LIKE US” OR MARGINALIZED IDENTITIES ARE JUDGED ON PERFORMANCE
- No experience? Candidate will crush it anyway! vs. No experience? Candidate not ready
- Skilled vs lucky
- Made a mistake? It could happen to anyone! vs. Made a mistake? Candidate really blew it!

Performance based not Personal Attributes

---Capabilities and skills needed for the position, easier to evaluate candidate

Interview Questions

- Refer to list of potential interview questions and what to look for
- Provide a structured interview
 - Eliminates potentially illegal questions and provides defense
 - Consistent and systematic
- **Two guidelines to follow:**
 - Only ask questions that relate to the candidate's ability to perform the job as described.
 - Do not ask an applicant any question you would not also ask of any other applicant regardless of sex, age, marital status, disability, etc.

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Sample Interview Questions and Evaluating Responses

What do you know about our university? Provide your top-line analysis.

Look for: Initiative, analytical ability, values, confidence, mission understanding

Walk us through the first 5 things you would do if given this position, or another version is, what would be the top 5 things on your “to do” list in your first month at Stetson?

Look for: Strategic thinking, prioritization skills, execution style

What 3-5 things do you need to be successful in this role? What are the deal-killers?

Look for: Culture fit, expectations, work style

What motivated you to apply for this position?

Look for: Knowledge of Stetson, gives insight into motivation

Tell me about one of your proudest moments at work.

Look for: Drive, personal motivators, preferred work style

When did you realize this would be your career?

Look for: Fit between the candidate’s values and the culture of Stetson, work ethic, motivations, etc.

How have you gone about making your research relevant to communities outside of the university?

Look for: Candidate engagement with the larger community

What is your teaching philosophy?

Look for: There is no right or wrong answer, except to show that the candidate takes teaching seriously and has given it some thought

If we were to come into your classroom, what would we see? What do you do that is unusual or particularly effective?

Look for: Engagement of students

What strengths do you bring to the University, and particularly our department, if you were to be hired?

Look for: Collegiality, working well with people, good rapport with students, offer technical expertise, research, etc.

Talk about a time you had to overcome major obstacles.

Look for: Past performance indicators and thought processes

Share a time you were surprised by what was said about you. What did you learn and how did you approach it?

Look for: Relationships and communication style

Please give an example of how you have incorporated inclusive pedagogy in your teachings?

Look for: An understanding of the importance of an inclusive curriculum, incorporated into practice

Campus Visit

- Structured agenda
- Assign host/liaison
- Ask about dietary restrictions for meals
- Announce modality of campus tour
- Informative and thorough
- Consistent
 - Internal candidates vs External candidates
 - Known candidates
 - Complete interview rubric same day and independently; submit to Chair or designee, not the group/committee

Candidate Engagement

- Consistency is important
- Instructions for next steps should include process and communications liaison (arrive home safely, any receipts, follow-up questions)
- Experience and impression builder

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Group Scenarios and Breakouts



Scenario 1

The Dean of the college and the faculty search co-chairs posted a tenure-track Assistant Professor position on September 1. They posted the position on their discipline's top faculty interest database, including direct outreach to some potential candidates within the database. Due to zero advertisement funds, they also posted on multiple free social media accounts and other online platforms.

They received 12 applications and scheduled the first search committee meeting for October 3 to discuss each candidate and select those for the first wave of virtual interviews.

During this first meeting, the co-chairs share that while they are pleased with the number of applicants, there are some concerns about the lack of diversity among the applicant pool.

Questions:

1. Thoughts on the process so far? Strengths and weaknesses?
2. How would you address the co-chairs' diversity concerns? Next steps?

Scenario 2

Alice Chang is a candidate for an Assistant Professor position in the Theology Department and has recently completed an on-campus interview. The committee, which is comprised of Theology faculty members, and other faculty from various departments in the College. Overall, the committee believes the interview went well. Let's listen in to a conversation occurring between two of the committee members from the day.

Econ faculty 1 - "I really liked her. I think she engaged our students really well and she seemed to connect with them."

Theology faculty 1 - "Yeah, I really liked her too. She surprised me, to be honest, with how well she *actually* engaged with the students. Not at all what I expected."

Econ faculty 1 - "What do you mean? What were you expecting? If you didn't think she was going to be a good fit, why did you even invite her to campus?"

Theology faculty 1 - "Well, come on. You know. We have to bring in a diverse set of candidates and she did have the minimum qualifications, so she made the cut. But yes, I was wondering whether or not she would gel with us. We can be a rough crowd and you know, sometimes Asians can be quiet and submissive. She wasn't like that AT ALL. In fact, she was quite the opposite and was definitely more aggressive. In fact, now that I say this out loud, she is kind of like some of our "other" more vocal and headstrong faculty. Hmm."

Econ faculty 1 - "Well, I have to run" and quickly scurries off.

Questions:

1. Anything concerning about statements made in this conversation between 2 colleagues?
2. Should either have asked more specific questions about what the other said?
3. What should Econ faculty do?
4. Does tenure play a role in possible outcomes to this exchange?

Optional Resources – Unconscious Bias



Common Types of Bias – Psychology Today

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/thoughts-thinking/201809/12-common-biases-affect-how-we-make-everyday-decisions>

UCLA

UCLA Implicit Bias Video Series

<https://equity.ucla.edu/know/implicit-bias/>



Project Implicit®

Implicit Association Test

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/aboutus.html>

Resources – Search Committee Tools/Manager's Toolbox

<https://www.stetson.edu/administration/human-resources/managers.php>

- Committee Charge and Confidentiality Tool
- Interview Questions and Guidelines for Lawful Pre-Employment Questions

Key Takeaways

1. Actively question our biases/mental shortcuts and enact measures to combat biased decision-making – both as individuals and among the larger group
2. For the best “fit”, we should aim to recruit people who share a similar vision and goals. It’s important to understand the difference between this and bias – just because someone has similarities to us, doesn’t mean they’re the best addition to the organization.
3. Commitment to Excellence - Finding the most qualified candidates to help move the organization forward is always a top priority. We seek to foster an excellent teaching and impactful learning environment that significantly strengthens student engagement, scholarship and success.
4. Hiring for excellence requires us to evaluate candidates on many levels, including academic credentials, service to their school and/or communities, areas of interest and expertise, leadership, association and teamwork, passion and commitment, and the ability to contribute to the mission of the university and student success.

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