



UNIVERSITY *of* DELAWARE



# Faculty Recruitment - Best Practices: Searching for Excellence

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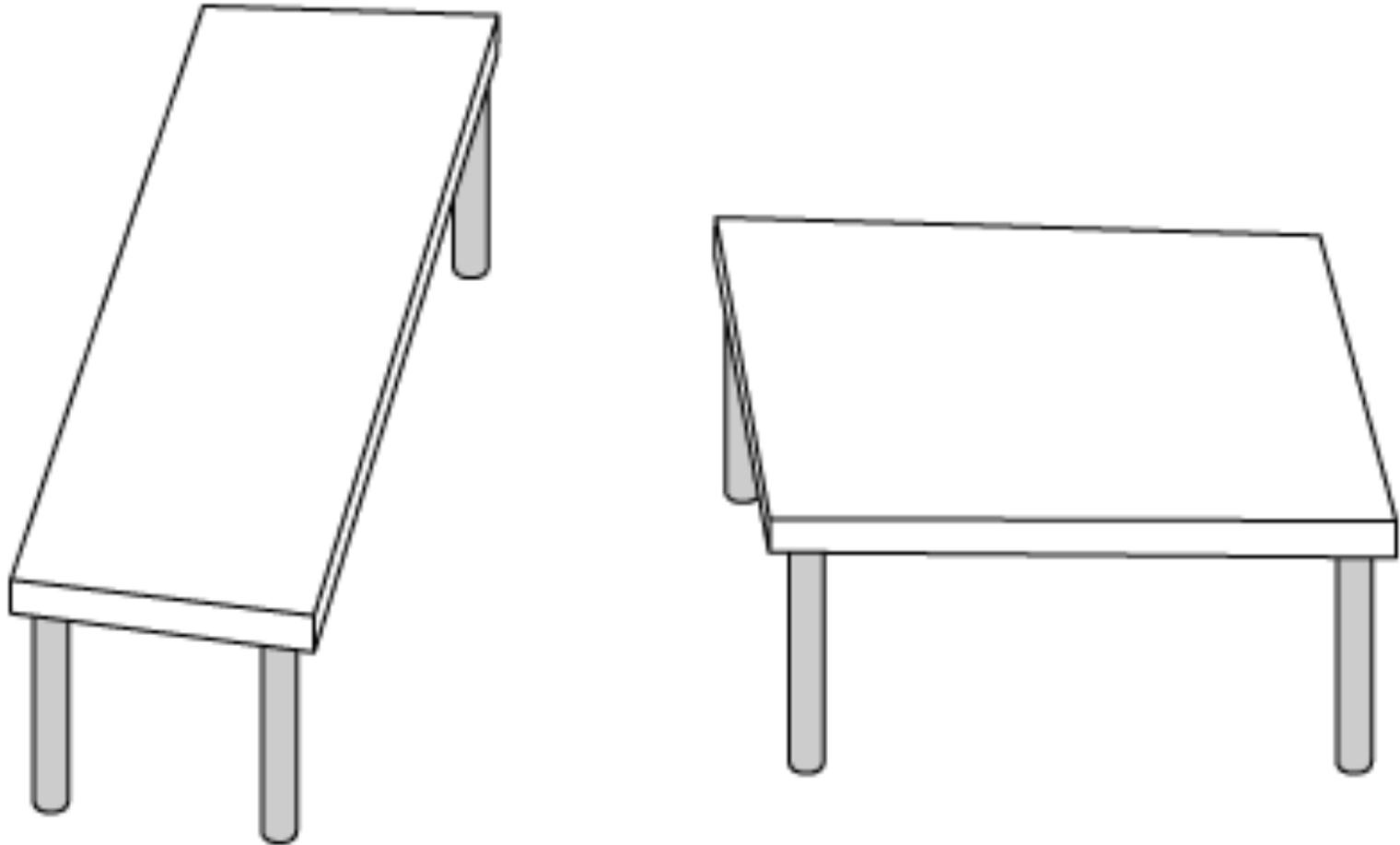
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**NSF ADVANCE PAID 081993 and ADVANCE-IT 1409472**



Which table is longer, which is wider?



## Search Committees

Faculty hiring is one of the most important things we do. It's not easy to do well.

- NSF knows it (e.g., ADVANCE)
- Our peer universities know it (e.g., UW, UMich)
- Major companies know it (e.g., Google, Facebook)
- We know it



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLjFHTgEVU>



## Today's Plan

Identify a few key pitfalls

Learn best practices

***Help ensure we hire best faculty we possibly can  
...excellent scholars, teachers, leaders***



## Four Main Points

- Excellence and diversity are both important – and not mutually exclusive.
- UD is not as diverse as it could be
- One big reason is pervasive implicit bias
- Search committees can minimize the impact implicit bias and improve diversity...Specific suggestions on how to do this



## We know why excellence is important. But what about diversity?

- The right thing to do (?)
- Competitive advantage
- Increases creativity, innovation, new ideas
- Can better serve a diverse society
- Larger pool of talent to draw from
- More jobs for our students
- Opportunity to distinguish UD

### Some types of diversity

#### Intellectual

- Expertise
- Disciplines
- School

#### Social

- Gender
- Age
- Race
- Religion
- Ethnicity
- Political orientation
- Sexual orientation
- Marital status
- Physical ability



Excellence *is* diversity.

How can we improve our diversity?

One way is through faculty hiring.



# Search Committee & Building a Candidate Pool



## Search Committee Best Practices

- Include members of underrepresented groups on search committees; plan meetings when all can attend.
- Make sure everyone gets a say. Have an agenda for each meeting and keep strict time limits.
- Plan a timeline for the search process – and make sure you stick to it.
- Take careful minutes – keep a record of decisions.



## Active Recruitment: Deepening the Pool

### Recruitment is a long-term, active process:

- **Invite** qualified people of color and women to apply.
- Consider hiring opportunities in areas beyond those defined by the search.

### Contact potential candidates even before they are actively seeking positions:

- Contact colleagues at a broad range of institutions to identify potential candidates. Ask specifically about URM and women. Get to know them – invite them to give a colloquium or seminar.
- Attend conferences with the goal of identifying and meeting potential candidates – follow up by inviting suitable candidates to apply.
- Use seminar visits to other institutions to ask about, and possibly meet, potential candidates, and report back to your department.



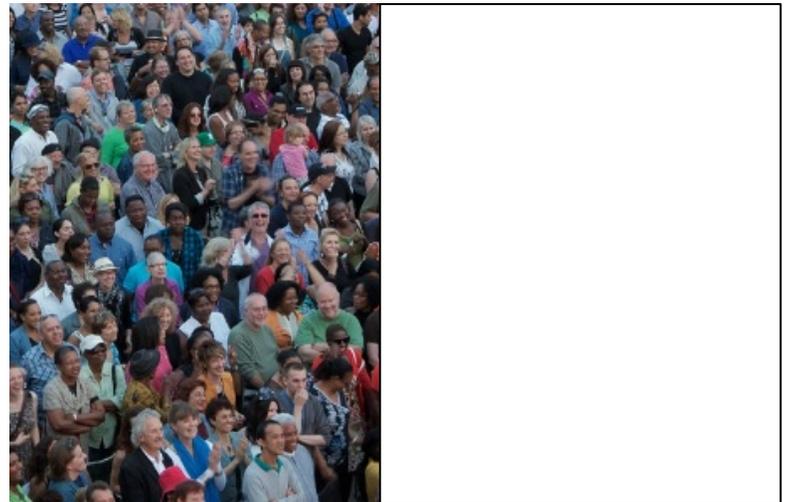
Active recruitment should occur continuously, and by all members of the faculty!



## Initial recruitment is crucial

If you don't have an excellent, diverse group of candidates in the initial pool, you'll be missing a lot of excellent candidates.

Nothing else you do during the search can make up for that.





# The Impact of Cognitive Shortcuts



# *Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People*

Mahzarin R. Banaji & Anthony G. Greenwald

## Carla Kaplan

- Yale English Professor, late 20s, AND talented quilter
- Badly cut hand – slit from mid-palm to wrist: rushed to Yale-New Haven Hospital by boyfriend
- Boyfriend impressed on the resident physician that quilting was important to her, he was worried about fine motor control. Dr. “expressed confidence that all would be well if they could just “stitch it up quickly.””
- Student volunteer recognized her and exclaimed: “Professor Kaplan! What are you doing here?” Doctor stopped in his tracks. “Professor?” he asked. “You’re a professor at Yale?” Within seconds she was being escorted by gurney to the surgery department and the best hand surgeon in Connecticut was called in. The team worked for hours to restore her hand to perfection.
- *“Intergroup discrimination is less and less likely to involve explicit acts of aggression toward the out-group and more likely to involve everyday acts of helping the in-group.”*

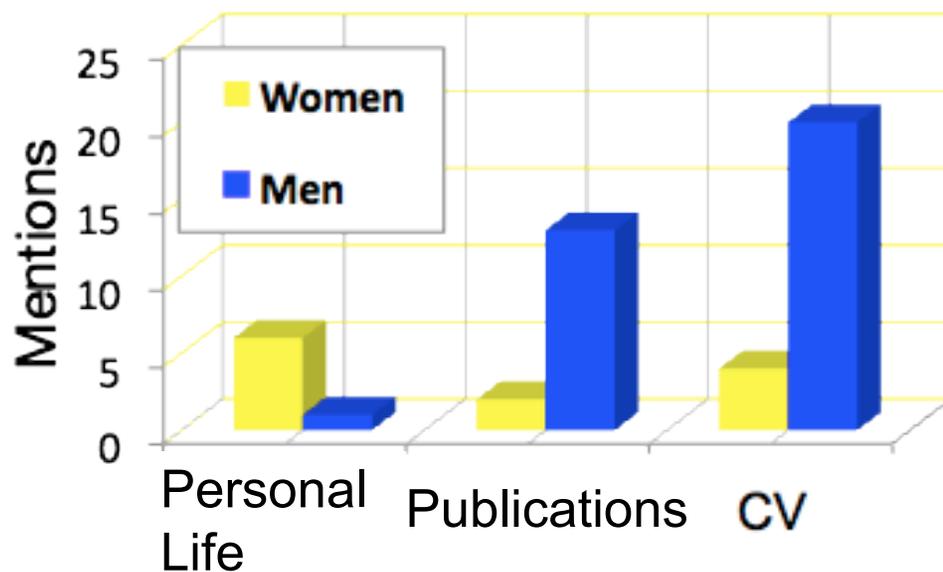


What does this have to  
do with faculty recruitment?



# Letters of Recommendation

## Successful Medical School Faculty Applicants



### Letters for women:

- Shorter
- “Mary” instead of “Dr. Smith”
- Greater focus on **teaching, personal life**
- More “doubt raisers,” such as: “It’s amazing how much she’s accomplished” and “It appears her health is stable.”

### Letters for men:

- Longer
- “Dr. Smith” instead of “Larry”
- More references to **publications and research**

Trix, F. & Psenka, C. (2003) *Discourse & Society*, 14(2); 191-220.



## Letters of Recommendation: Psychology Faculty Positions

- 624 letters of recommendation studied (46% of applicants women)
- Women described as “communal”: *affectionate, helpful, tactful, agreeable*
- Men described as “agentic”: *assertive, confident, ambitious, independent*

Greater proportion of **communal** characteristics—**lower hireability**.  
Greater proportion of agentic characteristics—not related to hireability.

**Summary: Women described as communal, thus less hireable.**



Swedish Medical Research Council Postdoc:

Authors noticed:

46% of applicants were women (114 total).

20% of awardees were female.

Took the case to court, acquired access to applications. Assigned applicants “Impact Score” based upon publication record.

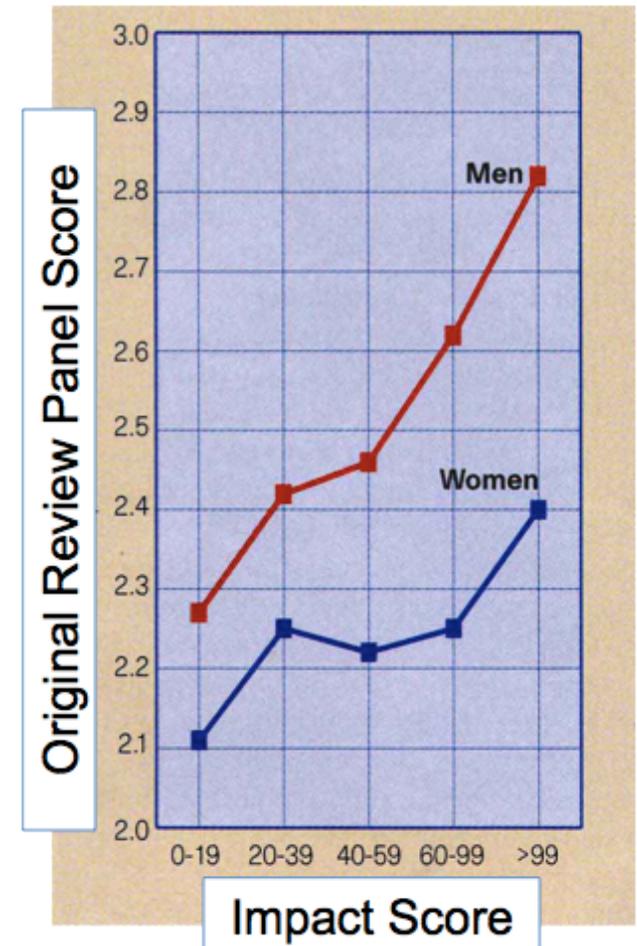
Results

**Males: linear relationship** (suggests original review panel used objective criteria).

**Females: nonlinear relationship**, and lower original score.

Summary

Women had to be **2.5 times** as productive as men to be ranked the same.





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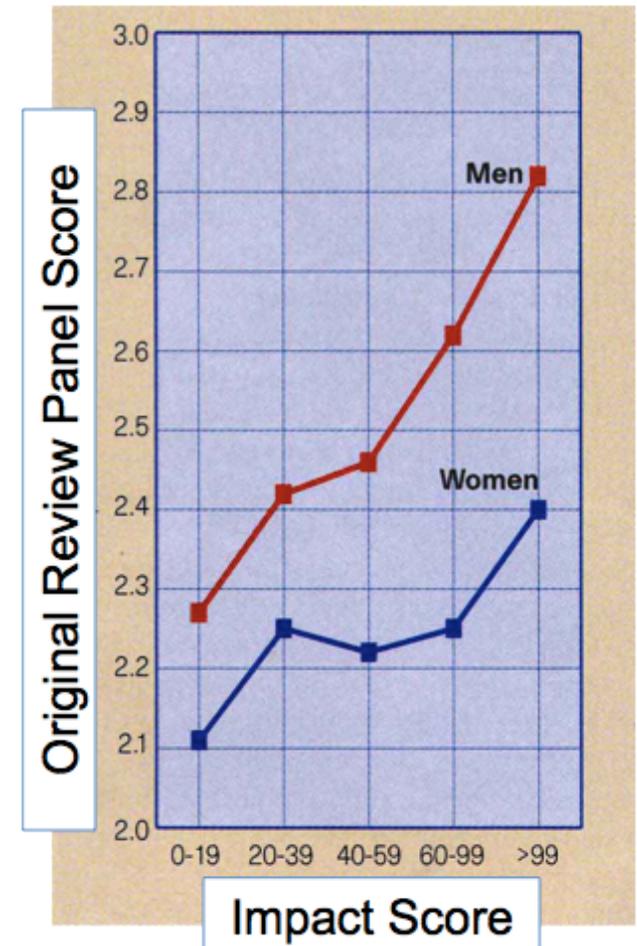
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**Summary**

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**And, for men and women:**

**Affiliation with a member of the review panel gave a comparable advantage.**





We can minimize the impact of cognitive shortcuts by using:

**Best Practices for Fair Evaluation of Candidates**



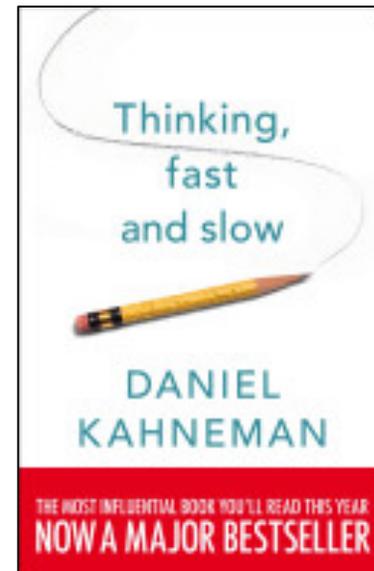
## Kahneman: System 1 vs. System 2

“The workings of the mind [can be described] as an uneasy interaction between two fictitious characters: the automatic System 1 and the effortful System 2.”

**System 1: Fast!** “...jump[s] to conclusions from little evidence – and is not designed to know the size of its jumps.”

**System 2: Slow.** “The attentive System 2 is who we think we are. System 2 articulates judgments and makes choices, but often endorses or rationalizes ideas and feelings that were generated by System 1.”

“Often we make mistakes because we (our System 2) do not know any better.”





## Best Practices for Faculty Searches

The best way to reduce the impact of cognitive shortcuts (system 1)?

“...[R]ecognize the signs that you are in a cognitive minefield, slow down, and ask for reinforcement from System 2...”

- Daniel Kahneman, Nobel Laureate in Economics, *Thinking Fast and Slow*

Research-tested best practices are based on this principle.



## Use Numerical Scores

Search committee should:

- Identify categories to be evaluated (Kahneman recommends no more than six categories).
- Agree upon how to weigh and evaluate the categories.
- Develop and use an evaluation tool to score candidates.

Search committee members should NOT have access to other's scores until they have completed their own evaluation.

Sample evaluation tools available at [www.udel.edu/advance](http://www.udel.edu/advance)



# Evaluation Tool Discussion

University of Michigan ADANCE Candidate Evaluation Tool

This is only a sample! It is designed to be tailored for individual searches.

What do you like?

What would you change?



## Optimize conditions for evaluation

- **Minimize distractions** (e.g., exhaustion, hunger, time pressure, competing activities). Distractions increase the probability of unconsciously defaulting to intuitive, and often unjustified, conclusions.
- **Randomize** the order of candidate applications for each reviewer. Compare candidates while scoring instead of evaluating them individually.
- **Include** diverse candidates in the short list. Research shows including two women in a finalist pool increases the probability that one will be chosen more than simple probability (i.e.  $1/5$  to  $>2/5$ ).



# Generating the Short List: common pitfalls of group decisions

## **Confirmation Bias**

- “The standard practice of open discussion gives too much weight to the opinions of those who speak early and assertively, causing others to line up behind them.”
- Every evaluator should write and submit in advance a brief summary of their position and rationale for prioritizing their top choice

## **Unconscious shifts of evaluation criteria**

- Evaluation criteria can unconsciously shift to justify a system 1 response.
- Verify that you are evaluating candidates against the criteria you set in advance. Refer back to your numerical ratings.



## The interview

Interviews are important to long-term recruitment. How you impress candidates influences UD's reputation. Evidence shows that successful recruiting requires demonstrating a welcoming environment. Be organized and thoughtful.

- Be a good host. Have a *faculty member* serve as point person during the interview process, including the planning.
- Schedule candidates to meet faculty from other departments who may have related research or resettlement interests.
- Identify key faculty/representatives to meet with candidates to provide information about the university and community.
- Make available information about local key industries, recreational activities, fine arts, area schools and childcare options.



## Next Steps

- Search Committee Recommendation
- Departmental Discussion and Vote

Remember the common pitfalls of group decisions... apply best practices.



“I can’t tell you how many times I have reviewed searches in which the people – predominantly women and minority-group members – were not hired, because they didn’t “fit.”

A. Stacy, Prof. Chemistry, Assoc. Vice Provost for Faculty Equity, UC Berkeley



## Closing the Deal

- Don't lose the thread. You are not finished when you turn over the recommendation to the chair or dean. Keep updated on the progress of the offer. Keep in touch with the candidate. ***Follow up.***
- **Support your candidate's negotiating for success!**
- If the search does not result in a hire -- keep records and follow up on interesting candidates. If they were competitive today they may well be interested and competitive tomorrow. Things change.



## If the search succeeds, you're still not done!

When completing your short list, think about how the candidate can be mentored to success.

Do not make a decision, then drop out and move on to other things.

Choosing your own colleagues -- choosing the faculty to represent your department -- is a major time commitment. It is also a privilege and an important responsibility. Good luck with your searches!

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