Creating an Inclusive Culture at Work—A View from Psychology
Academic institutions claim to represent core social values

- Search for truth
- Freedom to pursue all ideas
- Respect for knowledge and expertise
- Valuing of creativity and innovation
- Commitment to merit
- Access/Inclusiveness

- Problems in judging merit
- Exclusionary practices
Creating inclusion

• Access is precondition for merit; fair judgments of merit are precondition for access
  • Structural issues affect who applies/has access
    • Differential information
    • Differential preparation
    • Culturally-shared schemas
Access (part of inclusion) linked to merit via judgment

- Merit hinges on accuracy of judgment
- Academy requires many judgments of merit
  - Many informal judgments
  - Formal, consequential judgments
    - Of particular work (papers, books, grant proposals)
    - Of students in course of education
    - Of scholars over course of career
Judgments of merit are intrinsically complicated

- Early on, include an element of forecast
  - Admission of students (to college, to major, to graduate school, etc.)
  - Hiring of faculty
  - Tenure and promotion of faculty

- Forecasts always include uncertainty
  - Weather
  - Earthquakes
  - Elections
  - Athletic competitions
  - Feelings
Two threats to the validity of our forecasts

- Fundamental attribution error
  - Incomplete information
  - Overvaluing of some information
    - Attribution to person rather than situation
      - GPA vs. information about leniency of grading
  - Just World/Blaming the Victim

- Tendency to attribute success and failure to person

- Reliance on group based schemas/"implicit biases"
  - Resume studies demonstrate reliance on these schemas in hiring, salary setting, promotion
  - Applies to gender, race, sexuality and parental status
  - Some research on fellowships and grant applications
  - Leadership outcomes
Probably cannot totally remove the influence of schemas

- Screens help with musical auditions
- “Blind review” may help (but so many internal cues make this difficult)
  - Evidence people search for cues even when blind
- More information does help
  - “individuating” information reduces reliance on schemas
  - schemas still have an effect
Many other irrelevant factors influence judgment: Halo effects

- Halo effects
  - Appearance/likeability affects other judgments
  - One performance influences judgments of others
  - Influence of own mood
Reliance on proxies for excellence: prestige (special case of halo)

- Prestige of institution predicted fate of resubmitted papers
- Structure of faculty hiring networks
  - 461 doctoral departments in North America (history, computer science, and business)
  - 19,000 faculty in those departments
    - 86% had received doctorate at one of the sample departments
    - 25% of the institutions produced 71-86% of the faculty
    - Top 10 institutions produce 1.6 to 3 times more faculty than the next 10, etc.
  - Only 9-14% of faculty are placed at institutions more prestigious than their degree


Reliance on proxies for excellence: networks

- Networks play an important role in scholarly circles
- Homophily: “similarity breeds connection”
  - Affects nature of networks
    - Women have more women in their networks
    - Men have more men

Evaluation of fellowship applications: Gender

“...the success rate of female scientists applying for postdoctoral fellowships at the [Swedish Medical Research Council] during the 1990s has been less than half that of male applicants.”

Women applying for a post-doctoral fellowship had to be 2.5 times more productive to receive the same reviewer rating as the average male applicant.

“Friendship bonus”: applicants affiliated with a committee member rated higher. Friendship and Gender had similar size effects.

Similar findings:
- USA/GAO report on Peer Review in Federal Agency Grant Selection (1994)
- European Molecular Biology Organization Reports (2001)

Persistent impact of “nepotism” in peer review (homophily? proxy for excellence?)

• 10 years later estimated impact of gender and reviewer affiliation on research grants in Medicine
  • Gender no longer significant after practices altered
  • Reviewer affiliation equally significant

Belief in our own expertise at decision-making

• Tetlock study of expert political pundits’ predictions
  • Worse than chance
  • Specialists worse than non-specialists
  • Resisted admitting wrong

• Kahneman
  • Experts rely on (“fast”) intuition more than “slow” (deliberate) process and have high confidence
  • Intuition is reliable when based on
    • An environment that is regular and predictable (a “high-validity” environment)
    • Opportunity for prolonged practice
  • Fields differ
    • Compare Anesthesiology vs Radiology

Some internal factors help some

- Recognition of uncertainty
- Commitment to consider role of situation in producing outcomes
  - Access to resources (human, time, and material)
  - Accumulation of advantage and disadvantage
- Examination of own process of developing opinions
  - Acknowledgment of irrelevant reactions/interpretations
  - Explicit consideration of alternative interpretations
  - Search for evidence to help decide
- Lower confidence in judgments

Our judgments can be improved

- Some situational factors help
  - Comparative pool (haloes very likely when no comparisons)
  - Enough information
  - Avoidance of “evidence” that is likely to include bias
  - Avoidance of proxies for excellence

- Some situational constraints help
  - Establishment a priori of detailed criteria that can be observed
  - Reliance on specific evidence in judging each criterion
  - Avoidance of halos, intuition, and global judgments
  - Disciplined evaluation of criteria across individuals
  - If a group process
    - Diversity in group membership
    - Enough time
    - Explicit process for correcting inaccuracies

Can adopt practices that enhance equal access

- Development of fuller information and careful distribution of it
  - For admissions
  - For applications for all positions (more careful directions to applicants)

- Education of faculty about the importance of adopting careful practices to enhance fair judgment
  - Assess practices that may introduce biases
  - Include more reliance on good evidence

- Adoption of practices that enhance fair judgment
  - One thing leads to another: bystander education
Creating Inclusion

- Once have access, success depends on additional factors
  - Capacity for fair judgments within institution
    - Practices that increase likelihood
  - Others’ expectations (implicit biases)
    - Patronizing feedback vs. “wise” feedback
    - Absence of stereotype threat
      - About performance
      - About potential racism/sexism/homophobia, etc.
  - Sense of belonging
Practices that Create Inclusion

Capacity for fair judgments
• Practices that increase likelihood

Others’ expectations (implicit biases)
• Patronizing feedback vs. “wise” feedback
• Absence of stereotype threat
  • About performance
  • About potential racism/sexism/homophobia, etc.

Sense of belonging

• Adopt fair evaluation practices
  • Explicit transparent criteria
  • Multiple performance opportunities

• Educate faculty and graduate students on how to give wise feedback and danger of patronization
• Reduce ambient cues of not belonging

• Increase ambient cues linking success with people with many different social identities’
• Normalize anxiety about performance
Optimal feedback: “wise” mentoring

- Black and White students both reported enhanced identification with skills and careers, when mentors:
  - Provide critical feedback, and at same time:
    - Invoke high standards
    - Express confidence student can meet them

Cohen, Steele & Ross, 1999
Making Changes Stick

• Focus on policies and practices.
• Adopt changes widely, provide educational and informational support widely and quickly.

• Increase chances of living up to academic ideals and having institutions that reflect them