



# UNCONSCIOUS BIAS & FACULTY RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

**A BRIEF PRIMER COURTESY OF *THE OFFICE OF  
DIVERSITY AFFAIRS***

## 1) DEFINITION OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

## 2) EVIDENCE THAT UNCONSCIOUS BIAS EXISTS

## 3) NEGATIVE IMPACTS IN HIRING

- WOMEN
- RACIAL/ETHNIC MINORITIES

## 4) HOW TO MITIGATE UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- ADVERTISING
- BEFORE THE INTERVIEW PROCESS
- DURING THE INTERVIEW PROCESS



# Unconscious Bias

**Definition:** Unconscious bias occurs when an individual's subconscious prejudicial beliefs or unrecognized stereotypes about individual attributes, such as ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, age, and sexual orientation, result in an automatic and unconscious reaction and/or behavior.

Source: Santry H., MD, MSa, Wren S., MDb,c, The Role of Unconscious Bias in Surgical Care and Outcomes. Surgical Clinics of North America. 2012. 92(1); 137

# Evidence of Unconscious Bias

## Steinpreis, Anders, & Ritzke (1999)

- 238 academic psychologists given CVs from early and late career to rate if they would hire applicant/award candidate tenure
- CV had the name of a male or female



- Male and female participants **more likely to hire male applicant**
- Participants **four times more likely to write comments of concern for female tenure candidates** than male ones

## Trix & Psenka (2003)

- 312 **recommendation letters for medical school faculty** from 1992 to 1995 by large US Medical Schools



### Female letters

- Shorter
- More likely to contain gender terms
- More likely to include statements raising doubt

#### Source:

- 1) Steinpreis, R.E., Anders, K.A.; Ritzke, D. (1999). The impact of gender on the review of the curricula vitae of job applicants and tenure candidates: A national empirical study. *Sex Roles*, 41,7/8, 509-528
- 2) Trix F., Psenka C. (2003). Exploring the color of glass: letters of recommendation for female and male medical faculty. *Discourse and Society*: 14(2): 191-220
- 3) Corrice A., Unconscious Bias in Faculty and Leadership Recruitment: A Literature Review. *Analysis in Brief*. 2009. 9(2); <https://www.aamc.org/download/102364/data/aibvol9no2.pdf>

# Evidence of Unconscious Bias

## King, Madera, Hebl & Knight (2006)

- 155 white males viewed a fictitious resumes of **Asian-American, Mexican-American, African-American or Caucasian males**
- Resumes were either high or low quality
- Asked to do overall rating and a rating on sustainability for high vs low status jobs



- Overall, **African-American targets were rated the least positively** and **Asian-American targets were rated most positively**
- **Asian-American targets rated most suitable** for high-status jobs, **Mexican American targets rated least-suitable** for high-status jobs
- **Mexican-American targets rated most suitable for low-status jobs** while **Caucasian targets rated least suitable for low-status jobs**

## Bertrand & Mullainathan (2003)

- Sent **fictitious resumes** in response to ads in newspapers
- Researchers assigned equal number of traditionally **black names** or traditionally **white names**



- **White names had 50% greater chance** of a callback
- **Higher quality resumes** elicited **30% callbacks for whites**, and **9% more callbacks for blacks**
- **Equal Opportunity Employers discriminated just as much** as other employers

Source:

- 1) King, E.B., Madera, J.M., Hebl, M.R., Knight, J.L. and Mendoza, S.A. (2006). What's in a name? A multiracial investigation of the role of occupational stereotypes in selection decisions, Journal of Applied Social Psychology, Vol. 36 No. 5, pp. 1145-59.
- 2) Bertrand, Marianne, and Sendhil Mullainathan (2003), Enjoying the quiet life? Corporate governance and managerial preferences. Journal of Political Economy 111(5): 1043-1075.
- 3) Corrice A., Unconscious Bias in Faculty and Leadership Recruitment: A Literature Review. Analysis in Brief. 2009. 9(2); <https://www.aamc.org/download/102364/data/aibvol9no2.pdf>

# Evidence of Unconscious Bias

## Implicit association test (IAT)

Measures beliefs and attitudes that people may be unwilling or unable to report  
The IAT may show that you have an implicit attitude that you did not know about

Take the implicit bias test:

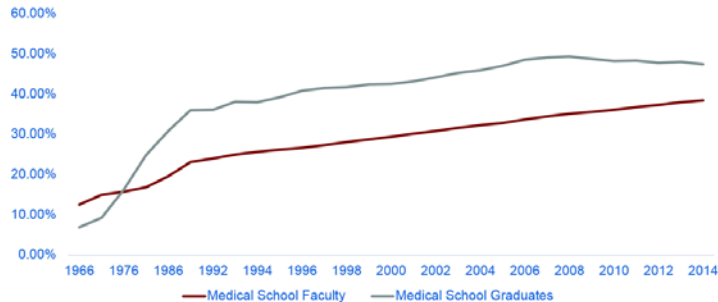
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>



# % of Women in Academic Medicine versus Leadership Positions

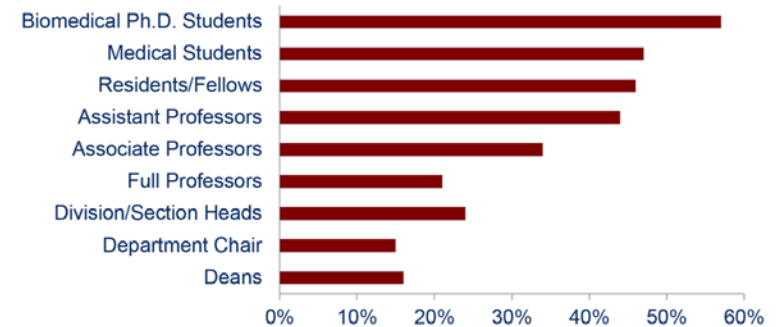
## Women in Academic Medicine: Some Progress, But Gap Persists

Percentage of Female Medical School Graduates and Full-Time Faculty Members, 1965-2014



## Women in Leadership Positions

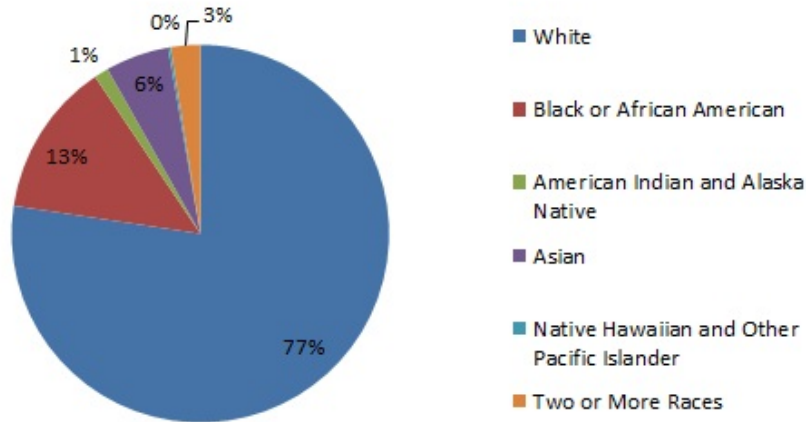
Representation of Women at Various Levels of Academic Medicine



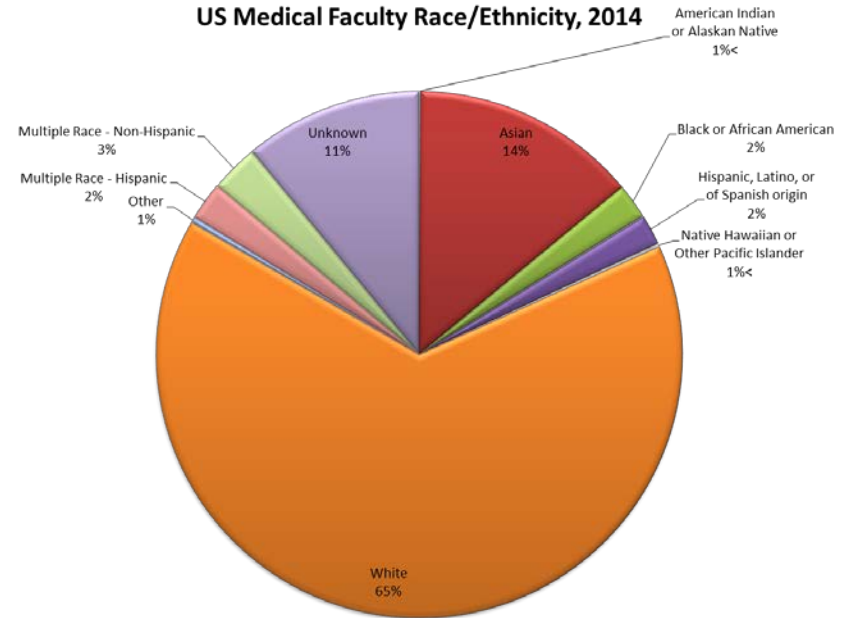
Source: AAMC. Unconscious Bias: What to do About it in the Search and Recruitment Process. A Research Presentation for Search Committees in Academic Medicine.

# US Census Demographics Race/Ethnicity versus AAMC Faculty Demographics

## Racial Mix of the United States 2014



## US Medical Faculty Race/Ethnicity, 2014



1- Hispanic or Latino origin represent 17.6%. This data is not separately identified in the chart because Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories

Source: United States Census Bureau

Source: AAMC Faculty Roster 2014



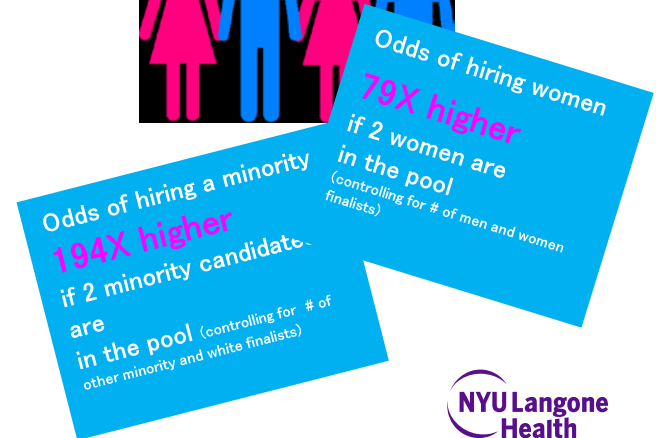
# How to Mitigate Unconscious Bias in the Search and Screening Process

## Advertisements to increase the pool

- Advertisements should provide reasonable notice to minorities and women of positions to be filled to secure a diverse applicant pool
- Contact former students and colleagues underrepresented in medicine for recommendations
- Strive for more than 25% of the applicant pool to be women (Heliman, 1980)
- Advertisements, announcements, and letters requesting recommendations should include Equal Employment Opportunity Statement and Diversity Mission of the Medical Center

If There's Only One Woman in Your Candidate Pool, There's Statistically No Chance She'll Be Hired

Johnson SK, Hekman DR, Chan ET.  
Harvard Business Review April 2016



# How to Mitigate Unconscious Bias in the Search and Screening Process

## Before the interview

- Take and encourage other interviewers to take the Implicit Association Test <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>
- Keep in mind unconscious biases that may exist when reviewing CVs related to:
  - Gender
  - Name
- Keep in mind unconscious biases that may exist when reviewing letters of recommendation

# How to Mitigate Unconscious Bias in the Search and Screening Process

## During the interview

- Include women and persons underrepresented in medicine to assist in the interview process
- Standardize the interview process (Martell & Guzzo, 1991)
  - Candidates should be asked the same questions
  - Utilize standard evaluations for candidates
  - Provide adequate time for interviewees as unconscious biases emerge more readily in time crunches (Martell, 1991; Blair & Banaji, 1996)

# Additional Resources

## TAKE THE IMPLICIT BIAS TEST

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

## VIEW THE AAMC VIDEO, “EXPLORING UNCONSCIOUS BIAS IN AMERICA”:

<https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/diversity/learningseries/346528/howardrossinterview.html>

## VIEW THE AAMC VIDEO, “WHAT YOU DON’T KNOW; THE SCIENCE OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS”:

<https://www.aamc.org/video/t4fnst37/index.htm>

## VIEW THE HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW VIDEO, “WHY SO FEW DIVERSE CANDIDATES ARE HIRED”:

<https://hbr.org/video/4984622531001/why-so-few-diversity-candidates-are-hired>

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