



Chair's 201-4

Hiring, Best Practices:
Interview and Beyond

Topics

- Unconscious Biases
- Interview/s: Seminars, meetings with individual faculty, social gatherings
- Provision of materials
- Space and equipment
- Group wisdom?

Unconscious Biases

Bias cannot be avoided. We just can't help ourselves. Research shows that we apply different standards when we compare men and women and people of different ethnicities and appearance. While explicit discrimination certainly exists, perhaps the more arduous task is to eliminate our implicit biases — **the ones we don't even realize we have**.

After all, if you were making a decision about hiring someone or giving an employee a raise, wouldn't you like to be fair? Don't you think you should carry out your evaluation using only criteria that actually matter?

[A lot of us think we can make evaluations based on quality alone](#). But the research suggests otherwise. In fact, you can test yourself to uncover your own implicit biases at [Project Implicit: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/](https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/). If you take that test, you might conclude that you, too, are affected by your culture in ways that lead you to evaluate men and women and different racial groups differently

Quotes from Curt Rice – Science in
Balance



e.g. Sexism in orchestras

Over the past several decades, orchestras have started changing the way they hire musicians. One of these changes was designed to eliminate bias against women.

It would be hard to deny that there was such a bias in the composition of orchestras. As late as 1970, the top five orchestras in the U.S. had fewer than 5% women. It wasn't until 1980 that any of these top orchestras had 10% female musicians. But by 1997, they were up to 25% and today some of them are well into the 30s. What is the source of this change? Have they added jobs? Have they focused on work that appeals to women?

The size of a major orchestra is quite stable; they all have around 100 musicians. Furthermore, the types of jobs do not change. For example, the increase in the number of women cannot be attributed to a redistribution giving the orchestra fewer bassists — traditionally played by men — and more harpists — where more women are found.

In the 1970s and 1980s, orchestras began using blind auditions. **Candidates are situated on a stage behind a screen to play for a jury that cannot see them. In some orchestras, blind auditions are used just for the preliminary selection while others use it all the way to the end, until a hiring decision is made.**

Even when the screen is only used for the preliminary round, it has a powerful impact; [researchers](#)¹ have determined that this step alone makes it 50% more likely that a woman will advance to the finals. And, indeed, the screen has also been demonstrated to be the source of a surge in the number of women being offered positions.

¹Orchestrating Impartiality: The Impact of "Blind" Auditions on Female Musicians

[Claudia Goldin](#), [Cecilia Rouse](#)

NBER Working Paper No. 5903

Issued in January 1997

There is no way to interview a faculty candidate behind a screen so how does the information help?

Everyone is made aware of the likelihood that they have biases. This consciousness reduces the degree to which decisions will be based on those biases.

Interviews

You are trying to recruit as much as
interview!

Interview: Information about diversity you may gather during interviews

You may

- Ask all interviewees the same question about their past or future commitment to diversity. For example, what have you done/would you like to do to foster diversity in the classroom? In your department? On campus? In a syllabus? How have you/would you increase opportunities for diverse students OR
- What do you think about UCR's commitment to diversity?



Interview: What you can not ask

<http://affirmativeaction.ucr.edu/ucrinterviewquestions.pdf>

- It is unlawful under the Equal Employment Opportunity laws and regulations to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental disability, medical condition, veteran status, military service, parenthood, and any other characteristic protected by law. As such, **care must be taken to avoid questions that enquire about these characteristics.**
- To ensure non-discrimination during the interviewing process, search committee members may **NOT** ask questions that are not job related; nor should they seek irrelevant, nonessential or discriminatory information. Occasionally, a candidate may volunteer personal information such as age, pregnancy, and family status. Once learned, this information may not be used for evaluating the candidate.
- While it is appropriate to make a candidate feel comfortable right before, during and after an interview, search committee members should avoid making casual conversation that touches on topics that can be potentially discriminatory **or construed as such** in an interview context.

Interview: Most likely questions you might innocently ask to make conversation (or be helpful) where provision of answers could provide the basis for discrimination

- What a nice name. Where does it come from?
- Do you have any children? How old are they?
- What does your spouse/partner do for a living?

Interview

- Number of interviews: Most cluster hires will require more than one
- Number of seminars/talks/classroom lectures? The more you see, the less likely you will make snap judgments on the basis of, for example, a cloned background (an unconscious positive bias) or a difficult accent (a negative bias, conscious or otherwise).
- Meetings with faculty: Make sure that faculty who are more likely to ask an inappropriate question are paired with others who can finesse the situation
- Social interactions: People relax more at someone's house and you gain a better feel for how they will interact with the group in future and vice versa. They see a typical faculty member's house and get some idea of the lifestyle possible in Riverside. This may not always be possible for a variety of reasons. Dinners – choose your hosts carefully. This gets more difficult as we all tire of interviewing, but we need enthusiastic, positive people!



Provision of Materials:



- Background on everyone's research (in department or cluster)
- Information about Riverside and surrounding areas (mountains, skiing, hiking, beaches, deserts, symphony, ballet etc)
- Information about local real estate and the mortgage origination program
- Information about local schools and daycare
- Information about family friendly policies at [UCR](http://academicpersonnel.ucr.edu/family_friendly_programs/)http://academicpersonnel.ucr.edu/family_friendly_programs/

Space and equipment etc

- Cluster-hiring will make this part **much more complicated**, especially in the laboratory sciences. Even for the first interview, at which time you may only be a candidate home department, you should have identified some space and be knowledgeable about appropriate equipment/animal space/regulations appropriate to the individual's research before the first visit. It would also be wise to ask the candidate for a list of equipment needs/time on equipment needs/animal housing numbers ahead of the visit so that you know whether the hire is viable/viable with input from other sources.



Group wisdom

