Health Research Alliance Members Meeting

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Effective Approaches to Increase Diversity and Inclusion in the Biomedical Research Workforce

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Factors that Impact Racial Diversity of Biomedical Research Workforce

- Leaky pipeline from K to 12 through undergraduate and graduate school, i.e. persistent "opportunity gaps"

- ***Bias in selection criteria and processes in academic programs, research institutes, and grant-making programs***

Goals

- To increase your awareness of implicit bias and its impact on decision-making

- To highlight the impact of implicit bias in review and selection processes

- To offer strategies to create more inclusive and equitable grant-making processes

What is Implicit Bias? (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013)

Attitudes or stereotypes about social identity groups (racial, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) that affect our understanding, actions and decisions in an unconscious manner –

- Activated involuntarily without individual's awareness or intentional control
- Negative implicit biases are usually about marginalized groups

Research on Implicit Bias (Banaji & Greenwald, 2013)

- Implicit Association Test (IAT) – measures strength of association between 2 categories, e.g. race (Black or White) and attributes (positive or negative)

- Research online with tens of thousands of participants for more than 2 decades

What Is Known about Implicit Bias
(Banaji & Greenwald, 2013)

- All of us have biases – sometimes *explicit,* more often *implicit*
  - Most Whites in US have implicit negative biases towards Bls
  - Most U.S. men have implicit negative biases towards women
- *Implicit biases* are better predictor of behavior than *explicit biases – Our unconscious is often running the show!*
- We are most vulnerable to inflicting implicit bias in *ambiguous* situations or when we are *stressed* or *fatigued*

Why Do We Have Implicit Biases?

■ *Cognitive shortcuts or schemas* help human brain to organize world and manage tremendous input of information

■ *Reflection of societal biases* -- "Thumbprint of the culture on our minds" (Banaji, 2010)

Implicit Bias in Selection

John Dovidio's work on "aversive racism" and hiring (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000)

Selection Biases

- Stereotypes (positive and negative)
  - Perceptions of competence or incompetence.
- Assumptions & Expectations
  - Making judgments based on fulfillment/lack of fulfillment of stereotypes; Using incomplete information.
- Double standards
  - Greater skepticism of accomplishments/potential for underrepresented candidates.
- Cloning
  - Wanting candidates like yourself or previous grantees. Undervaluing unfamiliar research. Focusing on "fit" rather than research-relevant expertise and experience.
- Euphemisms
  - "He's a rock star!" without concrete evidence.

Bias in Academic Hiring

- Letters of recommendation for male candidates are longer and contain more positive descriptors than ones written for female candidates (Madera et al., 2009; Schmader et al., 2007; Trix & Psenka, 2003)

- Male job candidates are preferred to female candidates with the same background and qualifications (Corinne et al., 2012; Steinpres et al., 1999)

- Women and African Americans are underrepresented in fields where raw, innate talent or "brilliance" is thought to be required (Leslie et al., 2015)

How to Interrupt Implicit Bias in Selection

- Recognize the impact of implicit bias – intentional, proactive approach

- Diverse review panels!

- Orient _recommenders_ and _reviewers_ to bias

- Develop clear, specific criteria (written rubric or checklist) to reduce subjectivity

- Foster deliberate, effortful ratings/discussions that include explanation of reasons

- Don't misuse proxies, e.g. institutional rank as proxy for candidate's record/potential

- Address systemic biases that limit experiences of racially minoritized faculty, e.g. quality of mentoring, support in proposal development

- Collect data – What's diversity throughout application pipeline? Where is problem?

Final Thoughts

■ Diversity and _inclusion_ – Strategies to support inclusion, e.g. networks of researchers, convenings where needs of minoritized scholars are addressed

■ Institutional context – How diverse, inclusive and equitable is grantmaking organization?

Resources

- Google "Project Implicit" to take Implicit Association Test

- Reports, activities and videos at Kirwan Institute. Go to kirwaninstitute.osu.edu and search "implicit".

- Banaji, M.R. & Greenwald, A.G. (2013). _Blindspot: Hidden biases of good people._ New York: Bantam.

Thank you!!!

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