Creating an Inclusive Institution: Recruiting and Retaining the Faculty we Need

Abigail Stewart
University of Michigan

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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/Inclusion

Problems in judging merit

Exclusionary practices
How do we “create inclusion”? 

- Access is precondition to inclusion
- Fair judgments of merit are precondition for access
  - Structural issues affect who applies/has access
    - Differential information
    - Differential preparation
    - Culturally-shared schemas
“Access” in faculty inclusion?

- Differential access to information and professional socialization
  - Types of institutions of prior training
    - Campus-wide and departmental resources
  - Experience and qualities of mentors (time in field, their training, size of labs/doctoral programs, style)
Obstacles to access in faculty recruitment

- 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

Practices to increase access in faculty recruitment

- Transparency about information needed
  - Detail about precisely what the cover letter and other statements should cover
  - Detail about how to choose evidence of your own best work
  - Detailed information about the process of virtual interviews, ideally including questions to ask
  - Detailed information about the process of on-campus interviews
Access linked to merit via judgment

- Assessments of “merit” hinge on accuracy of judgment
- Academy requires many judgments of merit
  - Many informal judgments
  - Formal, consequential judgments
    - Of students in course of education
    - Of particular work (papers, books, grant proposals)
    - 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
Influence of schemas can be reduced

- 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
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
  - 25% of the institutions produced 71-86% of the faculty
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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 postdoctoral 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: Focus on the context

- 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

Our judgments can be improved: focus on the context

- 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

- In group process
  - Diversity in group membership
  - Enough time
  - Explicit process for correcting inaccuracies
Creating Inclusion

- First expand access, then increase support for success and retention
- Capacity for fair judgments within institution
- Others’ expectations (implicit biases)
  - Patronizing feedback vs. “wise” feedback
  - Avoid stereotype threat
    - About performance
    - About potential racism/sexism/homophobia, etc.
- Sense of belonging
Focus on practices: some enhance access

- Development of fuller information and careful distribution of it 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
Practices that enhance inclusion

Capacity for fair judgments
- Practices that increase likelihood

Others’ expectations (implicit biases)
- Patronizing feedback vs. “wise” feedback
- Absence of stereotype threat

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
Practices re feedback: “wise” mentoring

- Black and White students both reported enhanced identification with skills and careers, when mentors:
  - Provide critical feedback, and at the same time:
    - Invoke high standards
    - Express confidence student can meet them
  - Create faculty mentoring that is “wise”

At institutional level: Many programmatic efforts

- **Recruitment**
  - STRIDE Committee (peer education of search committees)

- **Retention and Promotion**
  - Appointment and education of chairs
  - Launch committees for new faculty**
  - More mindful faculty development programs at transitions

- **Climate**
  - Networks to ADVANCE Women Scientists & Engineers, Faculty of Color, Single Faculty, Single Parents, LGBT Faculty
  - Program to encourage faculty change projects
  - CRLT Theater Program

- **Leadership**
  - Faculty leadership development programs
Launch committees

- Launch committees provide support and guidance to new junior faculty from the time of hire until the end of the first year.

- Each committee consists of the following members:
  - Senior faculty member in the department
  - Department chair
  - Senior faculty member from outside the department
  - ADVANCE-trained faculty facilitator
  - New junior faculty member

- Committees use list to focus on:
  - Teaching, mentoring students
  - Getting research moving
  - Integration into the university
  - Service expectations
  - Work-life integration
Making changes stick

- **Use data**
  - Institutional data can tell you where your problems are most acute
  - Social science research can offer guidance about possible practices to adopt
  - Assess the impact of the practices and change as you go

- **Focus on practices**
  - Then create policies that institutionalize 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