Exploring Impacts of Implicit Bias in Higher Education

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My background

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Overview

• Defining and identifying implicit bias
• Why should we address implicit biases
• Impacts of implicit bias in higher education / advising
• Debiasing
Have We Arrived?
Defining Implicit Bias

**Implicit bias** refers to the *attitudes* or *stereotypes* that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an *unconscious manner*.

**Explicit biases** are those that are held or endorsed on a conscious level (overt prejudice)

Blair, 2002; Rudman, 2004a; Staats & Patton, 2013
Defining Implicit bias

Much of the literature suggests that these biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated unconsciously, involuntarily and/or without one’s awareness or intentional control.

- Kirwan Institute-State of Science, Implicit Bias Review
Defining Implicit Bias

The implicit associations we hold arise outside of conscious awareness; therefore, they do not necessarily align with our declared beliefs or even reflect stances we would explicitly endorse.

- Kirwan Institute-State of Science, Implicit Bias Review
Where do implicit biases come from?

Factors that can influence our implicit orientation:

- Early life experiences
- Media and news programming
- Cultural biases (*passive observations of who occupies valued roles and devalued roles in the community*)
- Yourself

Rudman, 2004
Our minds automatically justify our decisions, blinding us to the true source, or beliefs, behind our decisions. Ultimately, we believe our decisions are consistent with our conscious beliefs, when in fact, our unconscious is running the show.”

Howard Ross, Kirwin Institute, 2008
Mechanism to identify our implicit biases?

In 1995 social psychologists Anthony Greenwald and Mahzarin Banaji proposed the idea that social behavior may not always be under a person’s conscious control.

The Implicit Association Test (IAT) is a sorting task which reveals something about our automatic, non-deliberate, associations.

For more detailed information about the IAT and how it works please visit: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/background/index.jsp
Implicit Association Test (IAT)

- 4.5 million people

- 75% of Whites and Asians demonstrated an implicit bias in favor of Whites compared to Blacks

- 80% (IAT on age bias) demonstrated a negative implicit bias against the elderly
Why try to understand?

• Even the most well-meaning person unwittingly allows unconscious thoughts and feelings to influence seemingly objective decisions.

• Understanding the nuances of implicit bias is critical for addressing the inequities that are byproducts of structural forces.
Why address our implicit biases?

"Biases that we do not acknowledge but that persist, unchallenged, in the recesses of our minds, undoubtedly shape our society."

Rudman, 2004
Visual Impacts

Entertainment media perpetuates stereotypes

Exposure to nonverbal race bias on television can influence individuals’ race associations and attitudes

- Kirwan Institute-State of Science, Implicit Bias Review
TV Show: “What Would You Do?”

Youtube Clip
Biases in Higher Education
Implicit bias can permeate educational settings in several forms, all of which can yield disadvantageous consequences for students of color and other underrepresented populations.

- Kirwan Institute-State of Science, Implicit Bias Review
UCSC Students, Race/Ethnicity

**Undergraduate Students**
by Race/Ethnicity: 15,088
3 Quarter Average: 2013 - 2014

- Two or More: 6%
- African American: 2%
- American Indian: 0.3%
- Asian: 21%
- International: 0.3%
- Latino: 28%
- White: 39%
- Unknown: 3.4%

**California Public High School Students**
by Race/Ethnicity: 422,177
2012 - 2013 CA Department of Education - CALPADS

- Two or More: 2%
- African American: 6%
- American Indian: 0.5%
- Asian: 14%
- Latino: 47%
- White: 30%
- Unknown: 0.5%
UCSC has the **highest percentage** of female faculty in UC system
UCSC Student & Faculty, Gender

Undergraduate Students
by Gender: 15,088
3 Quarter Average: 2013 - 2014

- Women: 52%
- Men: 48%

Faculty
by Gender: 539
July 1, 2013

- Women: 37%
- Men: 63%
UCSC Career Staff Race/Ethnicity

Staff by Race/Ethnicity: 2,458
December 31, 2013

African American: 2%
American Indian: <1%
Asian: 9%
Latino: 21%
White: 67%
Unknown: 1%

California - Labor Force
by Race/Ethnicity: 25,450,185
2008-2012 American Community Survey - Employment Status

Two or More/Some Other Race: 12%
African American: 4%
American Indian: <1%
Asian: 11%
Latino: 26%
White: 47%
UCSC Career Staff, Gender

**Staff**
by Gender: 2,458
December 31, 2013

- Men: 44%
- Women: 56%

**California - Labor Force**
by Gender: 25,450,185
2008-2012 American Community Survey - Employment Status

- Men: 55%
- Women: 45%
UCSC Retention & Graduation Rates
2008-2012 Fall Frosh Cohort by Race/Ethnicity

Fall Frosh  | 2 Year Retention  | 5 Year Retention & Graduation
--- | --- | ---
American Indian | Unknown | White
Asian | Unknown | White
African American | Latino | White
Latino | White | White
American Indian | Unknown | White

Retention Rates:
- American Indian: 65%
- Asian: 76%
- African American: 74%
- Latino: 68%
- White: 76%
- Unknown: 76%
Explicit attitudes can significantly bias our decisions, even when we are sincerely committed to acting in an objective manner.
Teacher/Advisor Expectations of Student Achievement

Many studies have shown that teacher expectations tend to vary based on the demographic characteristics of their students.

- Kirwan Institute-State of Science, Implicit Bias Review
Teacher/Advisor Expectations of Student Achievement

The research asserts that teachers who hold negative prejudiced attitudes "appeared more predisposed to evaluate their ethnic minority students as being less intelligent and having less promising prospects for their school careers."

Van den Bergh, et al., 2010
Teacher/Advisor Expectations of Student Achievement

Teachers hold lower expectations for African American and Latino/a children compared to European American children which can affect student academic performance.

Teachers' referrals and speech patterns (i.e., positive, neutral, and negative speech) differ toward European American students as opposed to African American, Asian, or Latino/a students.

Are you less likely to help and support certain students because you underestimate their intellectual potential?
Debiasing

The holy grail of implicit bias research is to change the underlying associations that form that basis of implicit bias.
Debiasing

While implicit biases are deeply entrenched in the subconscious, researchers generally agree that biases are malleable and that implicit associations may be unlearned.
Debiasing

Debiasing is not a simple task as it involves the construction of new mental associations. **Intention, attention,** and **time** are needed so that new responses are learned well enough to compete with the formerly automatically activated responses.

Devine, 1989
Debiasing

1. Openly acknowledge your biases and directly challenge and refute them
2. Counter-Stereotype Training: Conscious efforts to counter stereotypes can inhibit the activation of automatic associations
3. Intergroup contact: sharing equal status and common goals
4. Education efforts aims at raising awareness of implicit bias
5. Have a sense of accountability

Blair & Banaji, 1996
“Like stretched rubber bands, the associations modified ... likely soon return to their earlier configuration. Such elastic changes can be consequential, but they will require reapplication prior to each occasion on which one wishes them to be in effect.”

Banaji & Greenwald, 2013
Participants noted the importance of advisors who humanized the practice of academic advising.

They highlighted the impact of those who adopted a multifaceted approach to advising (students’ academic, psychological, and social problems are not isolated issues).

Participants emphasized the importance of proactive academic advising (connecting minority students with the resources they need to succeed).

Thank You!

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