



Faculty Recruitment - Best Practices: Searching for Excellence

Presenters today:

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National Science Foundation ADVANCE-IT 1409472



UNIVERSITY *of* DELAWARE

UD ADVANCE in partnership with:



W I S E L I

Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute
University of Wisconsin-Madison



Read the words (not the colors)

YELLOW BLUE ORANGE
BLACK RED GREEN
PURPLE YELLOW RED
ORANGE GREEN BLACK
BLUE RED PURPLE
GREEN BLUE ORANGE



Now read the colors (not the words)

Look at the chart and say the **COLOR** not the word

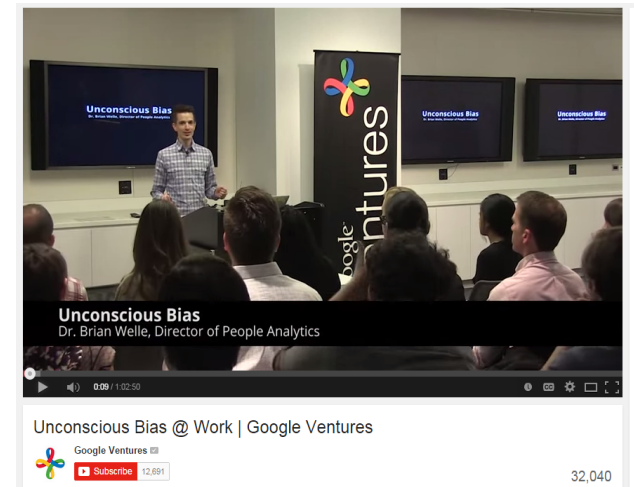
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Search Committees

Faculty hiring is one of the most important things we do. It's not easy to do well.

- NSF knows it (e.g., ADVANCE)
- Our peer universities know it (e.g., UW, UMich)
- Major companies know it (e.g., Google, Facebook)
- We know it



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLjFTHTgEVU>



Today's Plan

Identify a few key pitfalls

Learn best practices

***Help ensure we hire best faculty we possibly can
...excellent scholars, teachers, leaders***



Spoiler Alert!

Four Main Points

- Excellence and diversity are both important – and not mutually exclusive.
- Our departments are not as diverse as they could be
- One big reason is pervasive implicit bias
- Search committees can minimize the impact implicit bias and improve diversity...Specific suggestions on how to do this



We know why excellence is important. But what about diversity?

- The right thing to do (?)
- Competitive advantage
- Increases creativity, innovation, new ideas
- Can better serve a diverse society
- Larger pool of talent to draw from
- More jobs for our students
- Opportunity to distinguish UD

Some types of diversity

Intellectual

- Expertise
- Disciplines
 - School

Social

- Gender
 - Age
 - Race
 - Religion
 - Ethnicity
- Political orientation
- Sexual orientation
 - Marital status
 - Physical ability



Excellence *is* diversity.

How can we improve our diversity?

One way is through faculty hiring.



Search Committee & Building a Candidate Pool



Search Committee Best Practices

- Include women and members of underrepresented groups on search committees; plan meetings when all can attend.
- Make sure everyone gets a say – have an agenda for each meeting, keep strict time limits.
- Take careful minutes – keep a record of decisions.
- Committee members should bring their opinions on candidates in writing to meetings (more on this later).



Active Recruitment: Deepening the Pool

Recruitment is a long-term, active process:

- **Invite** qualified women and people of color to apply.
- Consider hiring opportunities in areas beyond those defined by the search.

Contact potential candidates even before they are actively seeking positions:

- Contact colleagues at a broad range of institutions to identify potential candidates. Ask specifically about URM and women. Get to know them – invite them to give a colloquium or seminar.
- Attend conferences with the goal of identifying and meeting potential candidates – follow up by inviting suitable candidates to apply.
- Use seminar visits to other institutions to ask about, and possibly meet, potential candidates, and report back to your department.



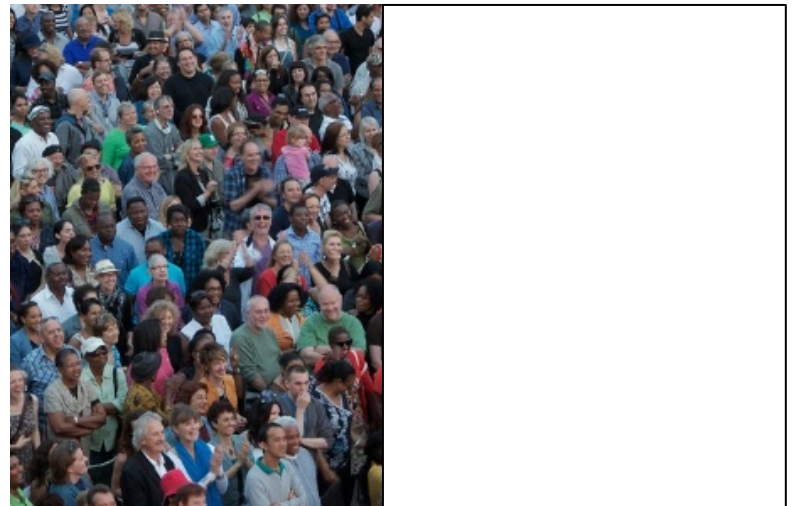
Active recruitment should occur continuously, and by all members of the faculty!



Initial recruitment is crucial

If you don't have an excellent, diverse group of candidates in the initial pool, you'll be missing a lot of excellent candidates.

Nothing else you do during the search can make up for that.





The Impact of Cognitive Shortcuts



How Doctors Think by Jerome Groopman, MD

A forest ranger in his 40s arrived at the ER with chest pain. The ER doctor diagnosed a strained muscle and sent the patient home.

Later that night the ranger returned to the ER, this time with a full-blown heart attack.

Why was there a misdiagnosis?

The patient was neither old nor overweight, two risk factors for heart disease.

The doctor based his diagnosis on implicit assumptions – one way to sort among multiple possibilities especially when under TIME pressure, as in and ER.



Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People

Mahzarin R. Banaji & Anthony G. Greenwald

Carla Kaplan

- Yale English Professor, late 20s, AND talented quilter
- Badly cut hand – slit from mid-palm to wrist: rushed to Yale-New Haven Hospital by boyfriend
- Boyfriend impressed on the resident physician that quilting was important to her, he was worried about fine motor control. Dr. “expressed confidence that all would be well if they could just “stitch it up quickly.””
- Student volunteer recognized her and exclaimed: “Professor Kaplan! What are you doing here?” Doctor stopped in his tracks. “Professor?” he asked. “You’re a professor at Yale?” Within seconds she was being escorted by gurney to the surgery department and the best hand surgeon in Connecticut was called in. The team worked for hours to restore her hand to perfection.
- *“Intergroup discrimination is less and less likely to involve explicit acts of aggression toward the out-group and more likely to involve everyday acts of helping the in-group.”*

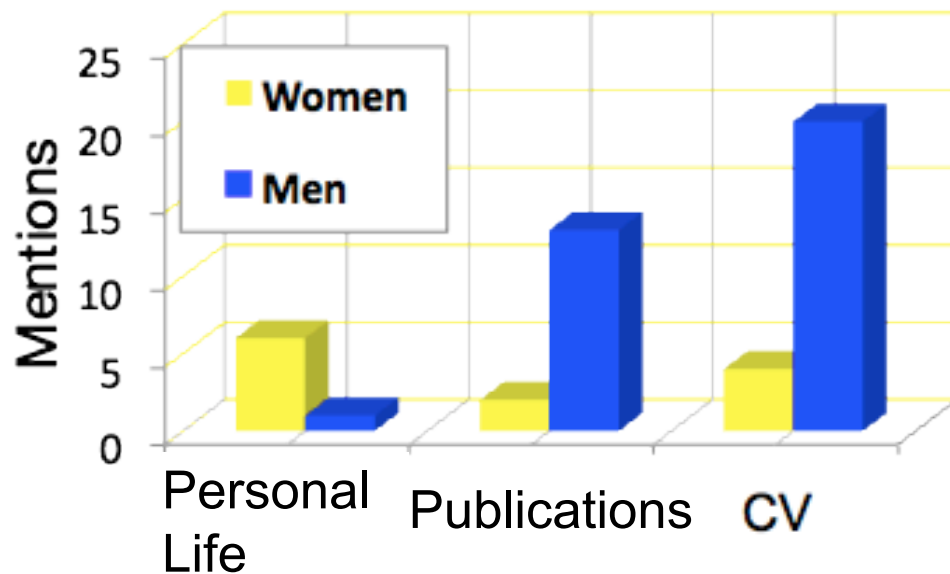


What does this have to
do with faculty recruitment?



Letters of Recommendation

Successful Medical School Faculty Applicants



Letters for women:

- Shorter
- “Mary” instead of “Dr. Smith”
- Greater focus on **teaching, personal life**
- More “doubt raisers,” such as: “It’s amazing how much she’s accomplished” and “It appears her health is stable.”

Letters for men:

- Longer
- “Dr. Smith” instead of “Larry”
- More references to **publications and research**

Trix, F. & Psenka, C. (2003) *Discourse & Society*, 14(2); 191-220.



Letters of Recommendation: Psychology Faculty Positions

- 624 letters of recommendation studied (46% of applicants women)
- Women described as “communal”: *affectionate, helpful, tactful, agreeable*
- Men described as “agentic”: *assertive, confident, ambitious, independent*

Greater proportion of **communal** characteristics—**lower hireability**.
Greater proportion of agentic characteristics—not related to hireability.

Summary: Women described as communal, thus less hireable.



Swedish Medical Research Council Postdoc:

Authors noticed:

46% of applicants were women (114 total).

20% of awardees were female.

Took the case to court, acquired access to applications. Assigned applicants “Impact Score” based upon publication record.

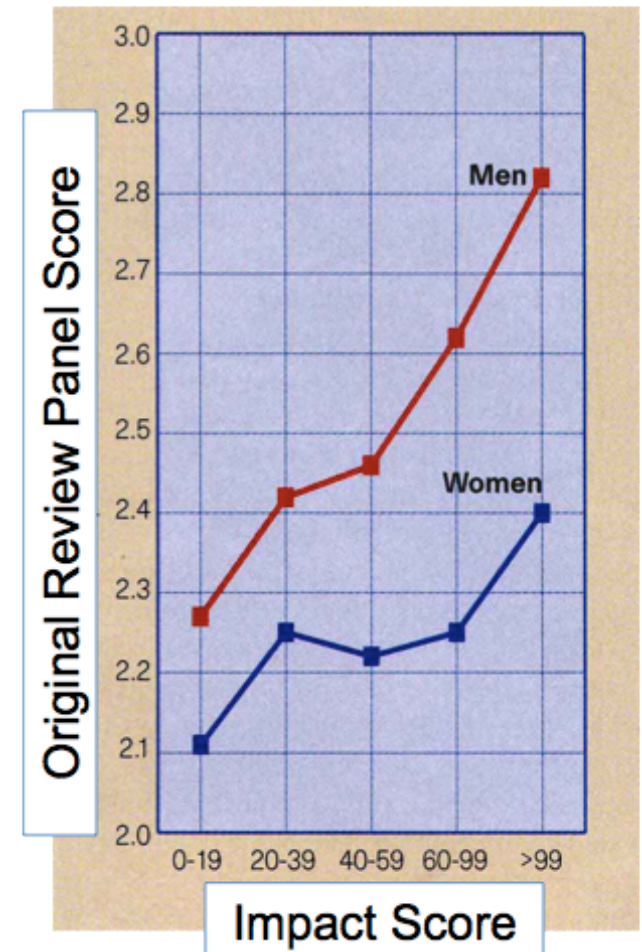
Results

Males: linear relationship (suggests original review panel used objective criteria).

Females: nonlinear relationship, and lower original score.

Summary

Women had to be **2.5 times** as productive as men to be ranked the same.





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And, for men and women:

Affiliation with a member of the review panel gave a comparable advantage.

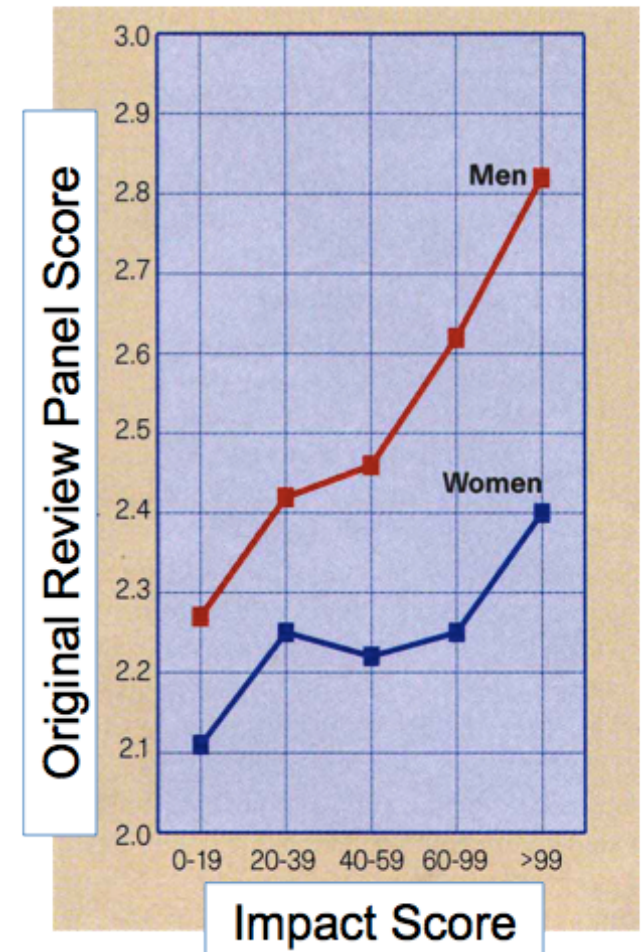




Table Discussion

How does what we've talked about so far impact your department?

- Are you actively recruiting?
- What would you like to change about your departmental searches?



We can minimize the impact of cognitive shortcuts by using:

Best Practices for Fair Evaluation of Candidates



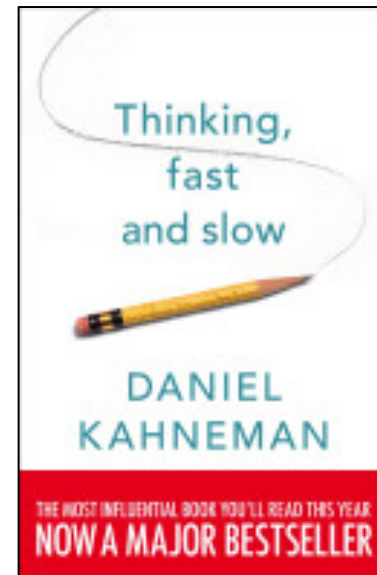
Kahneman: System 1 vs. System 2

“The workings of the mind [can be described] as an uneasy interaction between two fictitious characters: the automatic System 1 and the effortful System 2.”

“System 1 is designed to jump to conclusions from little evidence – and it is not designed to know the size of its jumps.”

“The attentive System 2 is who we think we are. System 2 articulates judgments and makes choices, but often endorses or rationalizes ideas and feelings that were generated by System 1.”

“Often we make mistakes because we (our System 2) do not know any better.”





Best Practices for Faculty Searches

- “The way to block errors that originate in [unconscious bias] is simple in principle: recognize the signs that you are in a cognitive minefield, slow down, and ask for reinforcement from System 2... Unfortunately, this sensible procedure is least likely to be applied when it is needed most.”
 - Daniel Kahneman, Nobel Laureate in Economics, *Thinking Fast and Slow*
- Best practices for faculty searches maximize the engagement of “System 2” and minimize both the unconscious influence of “System 1” and common cognitive errors that unintentionally, and often unknowingly, influence decisions.



Rubrics : Numerical Evaluations of Candidates

- Use numerical scores to minimize the impact of implicit bias.
- Search committee should:
 - Identify no more than 6 categories for numerical evaluation
 - Establish an agreed-upon rubric based on the categories
 - Use the rubric to evaluate candidates
- Search committee members should NOT have access to other's scores until they have completed their own evaluation

Sample evaluation rubric available at www.udel.edu/advance



Optimize conditions for evaluation

- **Minimize distractions** (e.g., exhaustion, hunger, time pressure, competing activities). Distractions increase the probability of unconsciously defaulting to intuitive, and often unjustified, conclusions.
- **Randomize** the order of candidate applications for each reviewer
- **Structure** your internal evaluation to maximize comparisons
 - Do I think candidate X is likely to be a better hire than candidate Y?
Do my scores reflect this?
 - Joint comparisons minimize probability of error relative to isolated single evaluations
- **Include** diverse candidates in the short list. Research shows including two women in a finalist pool increases the probability that one will be chosen more than simple probability (i.e. $1/5$ to $>2/5$).



Generating the Short List: Three common pitfalls of group decisions

1) Confirmation Bias

- “The standard practice of open discussion gives too much weight to the opinions of those who speak early and assertively, causing others to line up behind them.”
- Every evaluator should write and submit in advance a brief summary of their position and rationale for prioritizing their top choice

2) Availability bias

- For example, opinions are skewed negatively by inability to think of a “sufficient” number of positive examples
- Are you asking for the same number of positive and negative examples for each candidate?

3) Unconscious shifts of evaluation criteria

- Evaluation criteria can unconsciously shift to justify a system 1 response.
- Verify that you are evaluating candidates against the criteria you set in advance.



The interview

Interviews are important to long-term recruitment. How you impress candidates influences UD's reputation.

Evidence shows that successful recruiting requires demonstrating a welcoming environment. Be organized and thoughtful.

- Be a good host. Have a *faculty member* serve as point person during the interview process, including the planning.
- Schedule candidates to meet faculty from other departments who may have related research or resettlement interests.
- Identify key faculty/representatives to meet with candidates to provide information about the university and community.
- Make available information about local key industries, recreational activities, fine arts, area schools and childcare options.



Comparing the Candidates and Making a Recommendation

Three common pitfalls of group decisions...

1) Confirmation Bias

- Every evaluator should write and submit in advance a brief summary of their position and rationale for prioritizing their top choice

2) Availability bias

3) Unconscious shifts of evaluation criteria



The Department Meeting

Three common pitfalls of group decisions...

Be prepared – all members of the search committee should be present, well informed and prepared to explain their reasoning.



“I can’t tell you how many times I have reviewed searches in which the people – predominantly women and minority-group members – were not hired, because they didn’t “fit.”

A. Stacy, Prof. Chemistry, Assoc. Vice Provost for Faculty Equity, UC Berkeley



From the Provost's Office

- Provost wants to see a list of finalists with descriptions of pros and cons of each (details on why they were or were not chosen).
- Include original ad and finalists' CVs.

We are told following these steps will minimize delays in getting your offer approved.



Closing the Deal

- Don't lose the thread. You are not finished when you turn over the recommendation to the chair or dean. Keep updated on the progress of the offer. Keep in touch with the candidate. ***Follow up.***
- **Support your candidate's negotiating for success!**
- If the search does not result in a hire -- keep records and follow up on interesting candidates. If they were competitive today they may well be interested and competitive tomorrow. Things change.



If the search succeeds, you're still not done!

When completing your short list, think about how the candidate can be mentored to success.

Do not make a decision, then drop out and move on to other things.

Choosing your own colleagues -- choosing the faculty to represent your department -- is a major time commitment. It is also a privilege and an important responsibility. Good luck with your searches!

www.udel.edu/advance



Extra slides below



Research Studies: Bias in Evaluation

- Psychology professors prefer 2:1 to hire “Brian” over “Karen,” even when the application packages are identical. Employers also prefer to hire “Brendan” over “Jamal.”

(Steinpreis, Anders, and Ritzke (1999) *Sex Roles*, 41, 509)
(Bertrand, et al., MIT Dept. Economics Working Paper No. 03-)

- “Blind” auditions increased the percentage (25-46%) of women winning orchestral jobs and increased the probability that women would advance out of preliminary rounds.

(Goldin and Rouse (2000) *The American Economic Review*, 90, 4, 715-741)

- Double-blind review of journal articles yields 7.9% increase in proportion of papers with a female first author.

(Budden, et al., *TRENDS in Ecology and Evolution* Vol.23 No. 1)



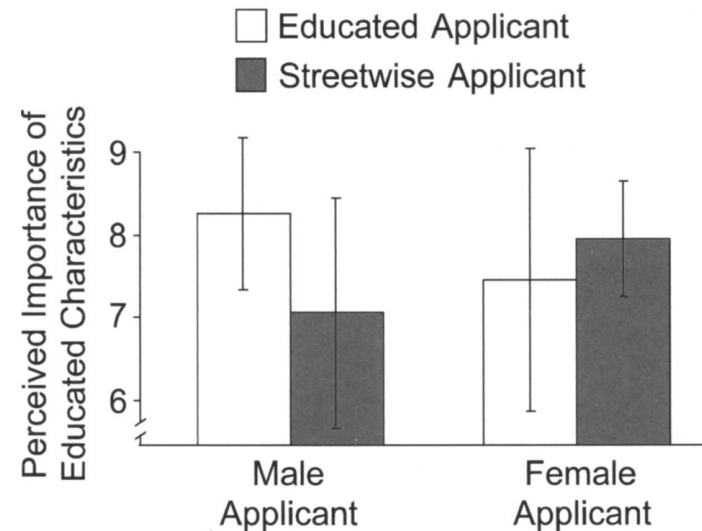
Police Chief



Heather Fong served as San Francisco's chief of police, 2004-2009.
(Source: Wikimedia commons)

- Participants asked to evaluate candidates for police chief
- Male vs. female name
- Educated vs. streetwise

Participants unconsciously shifted their evaluation criteria—favoring education or experience—to justify hiring the male candidate.





Do Small Biases Really Matter?

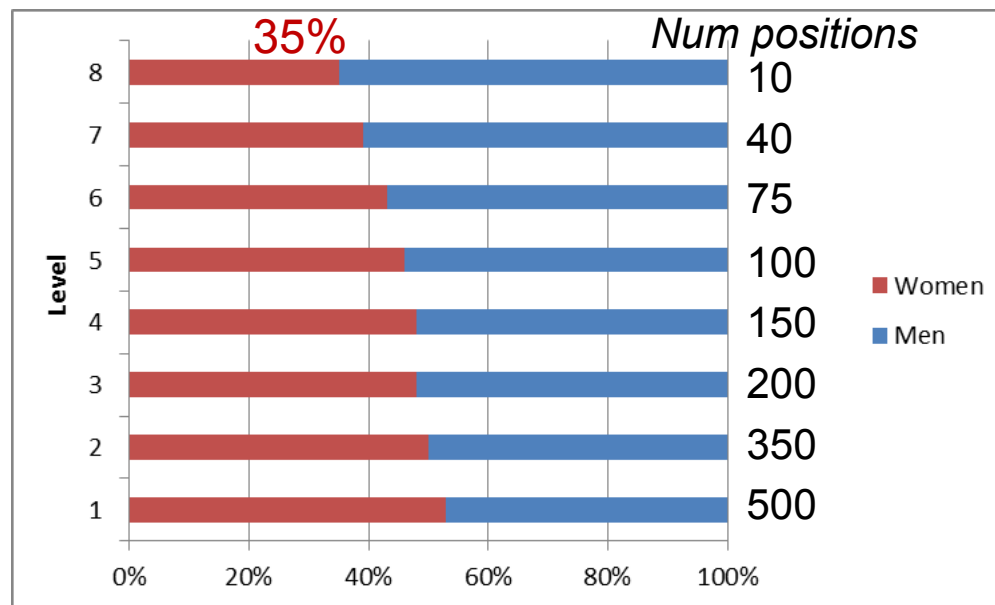
Deeply ingrained in the culture of academic science is the assumption that merit, as revealed by the purportedly objective process of peer review, determines the distribution of status, rewards, and opportunities.

. . . Research, however, has shown that gender colors evaluation of scientific and engineering accomplishment and thus affects the opportunities and rewards that women receive. In the intense competition for academic standing, even small differences in advantage can accumulate . . . and create large differences . . .

Valian, *Why so Slow: The Advancement of Women*, MIT Press, 1999



Do Small Biases Really Matter?



- Simulated promotion through a company; promote from within only
- Normally distributed performance scores, with small bump for men (accounting for just 1% of variance)
- **Small effects add up!**

Martell, R., Lane, D., and Emrich, C. 1996. Male-female differences: A computer simulation. *American Psychologist*, 157-158, February.

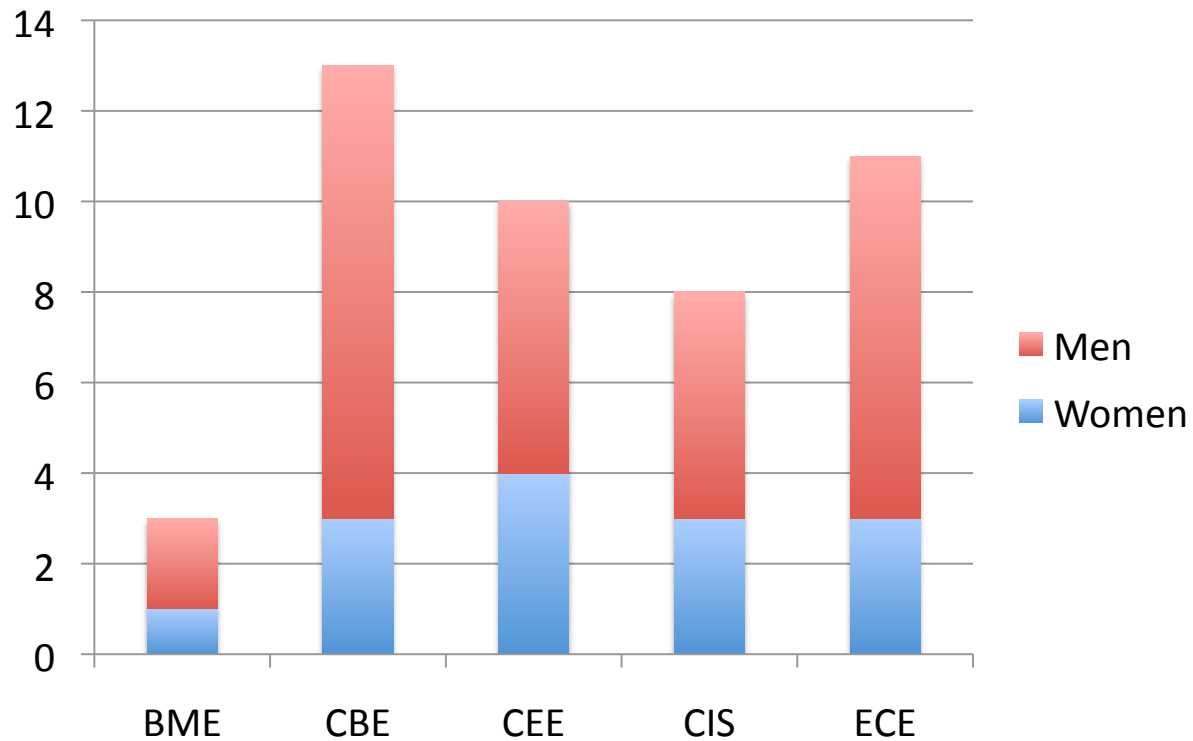


UD Data:

Hiring in your departments, last ten years



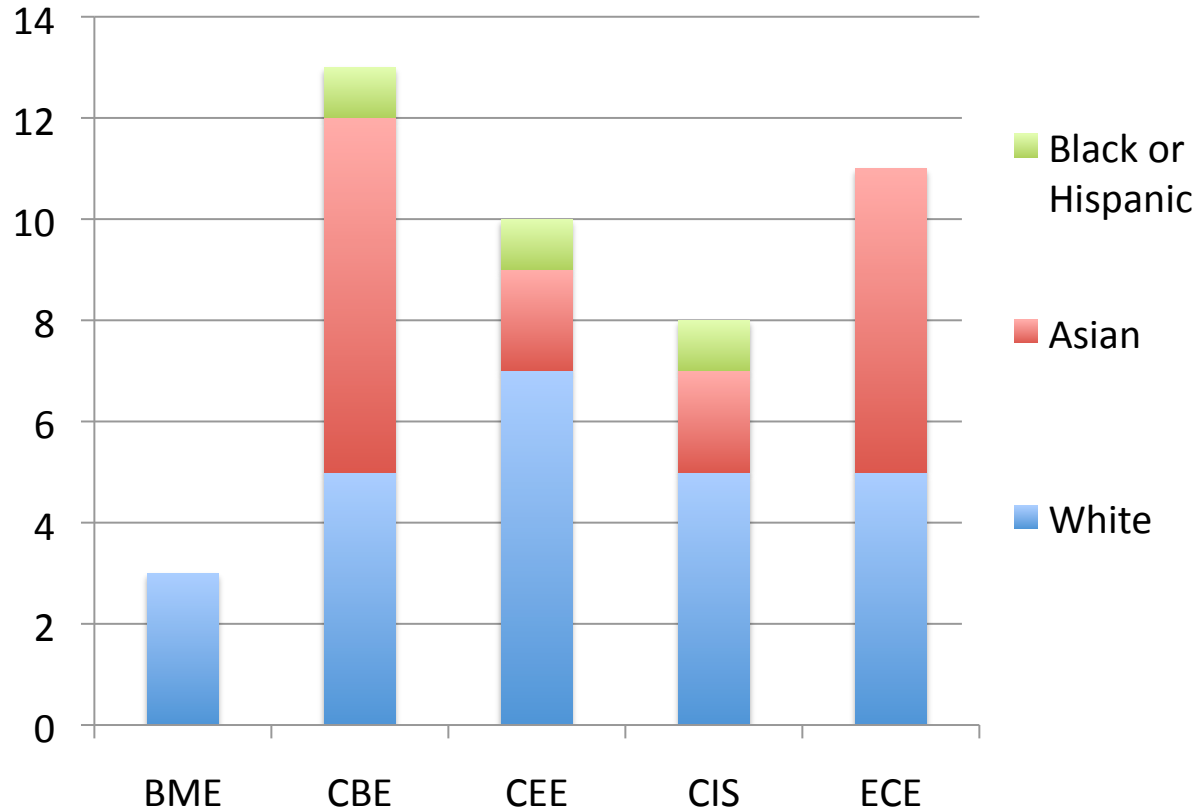
T/TT Hires, 2005-2014 Engineering departments that are hiring Gender



Total: 14 Women, 31 Men



T/TT Hires, 2005-2014 (Engineering depts.) Race/Ethnicity



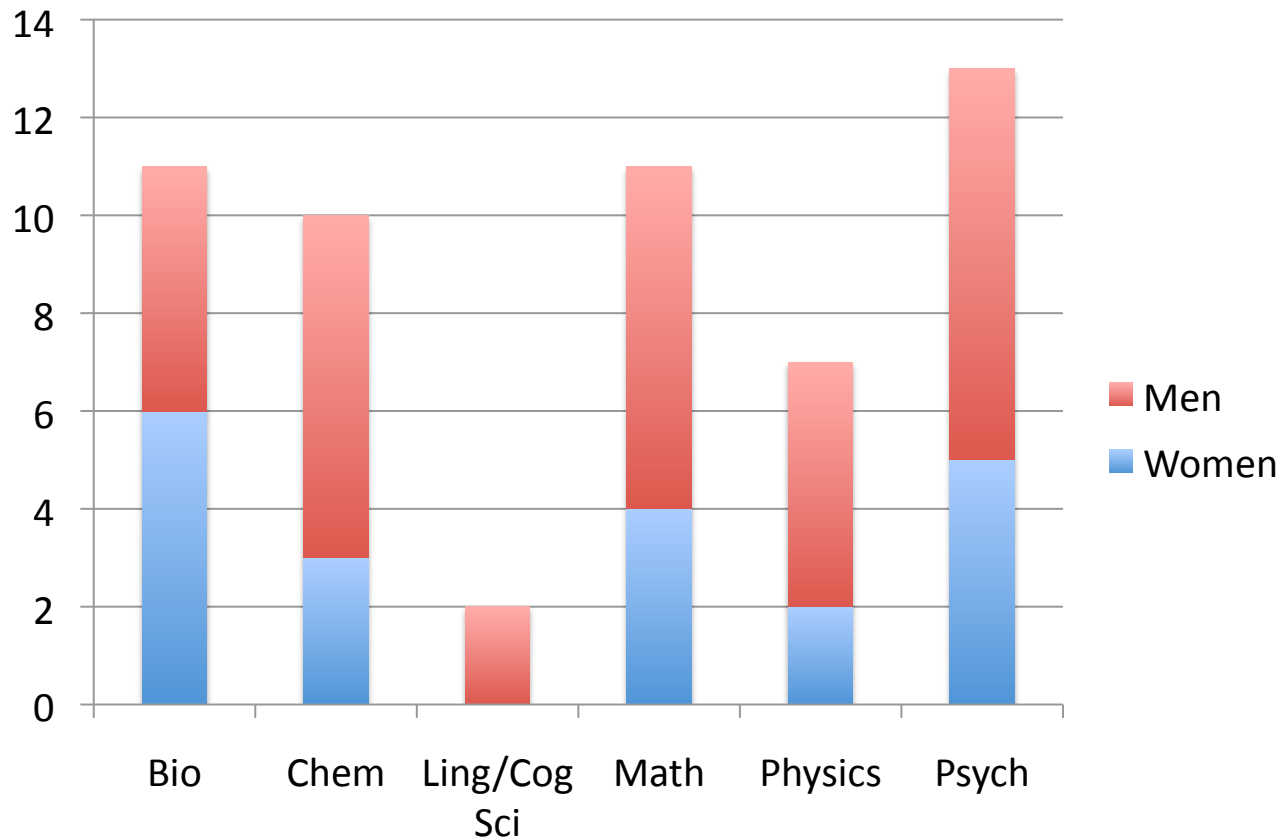
Total: 25 White, 17 Asian, 3 Black or Hispanic



T/TT Hires, 2005-2014

Natural sciences departments that are hiring

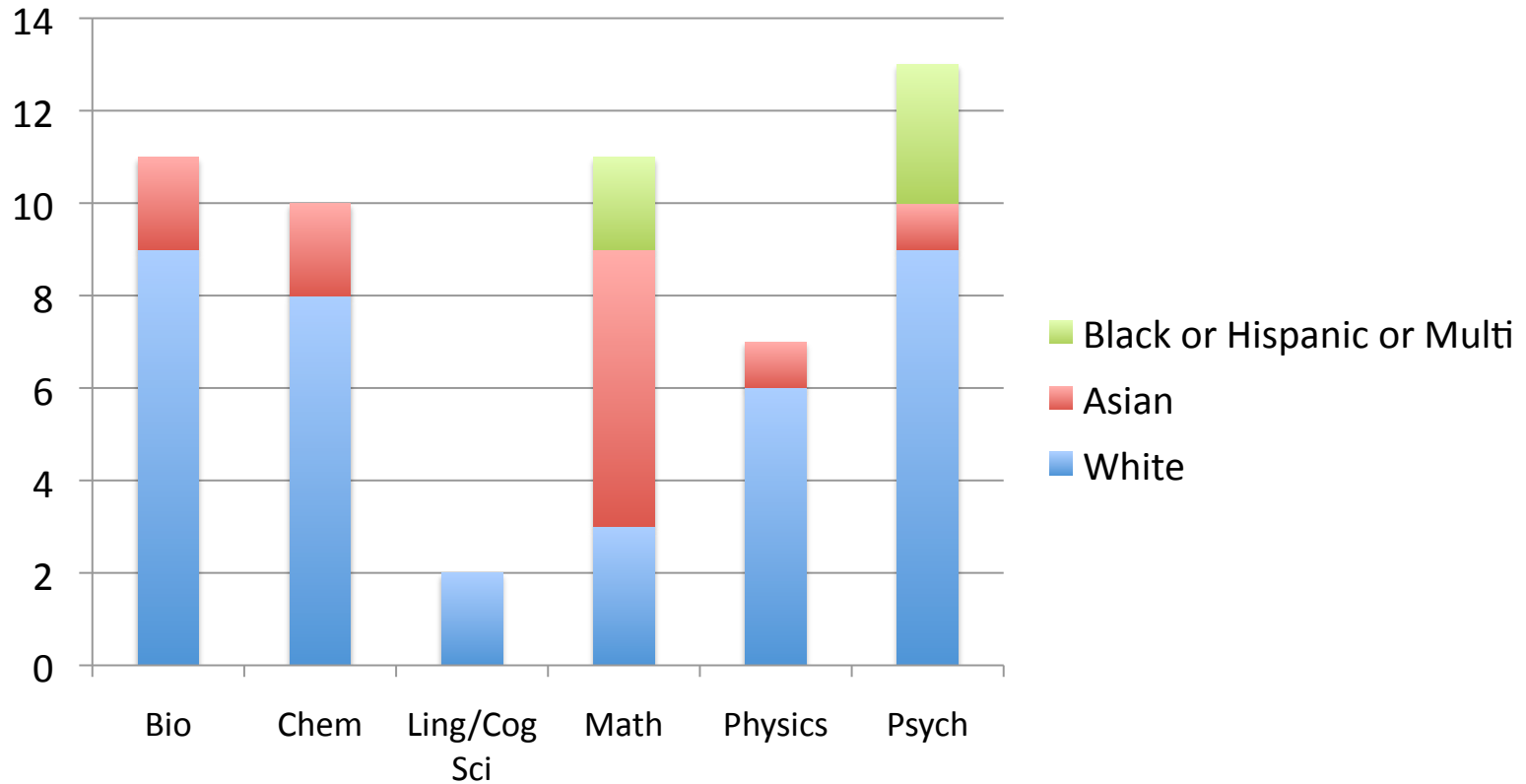
Gender



Total: 20 Women, 34 Men



T/TT Hires, 2005-2014 (Nat. Sci. depts.) Race/Ethnicity



Total: 37 White, 12 Asian, 5 Black or Hispanic or Multi-ethnic