# Actualizing Racial Equity throughout the Faculty Hiring Process

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# AGENDA

❏   Framing Whiteness in Higher Education & Faculty Hiring

❏   Part I – Three Areas of Whiteness in Faculty Hiring: Niceness, Fit, and Hierarchical Networks

❏   Breakout Activity #1

❏   Part II – Strategies and Solutions in Faculty Hiring

❏   Breakout Activity #2

# Whiteness

# History of Higher Education

Elite White Universities in the United States of America:

- Built on stolen Indigenous lands (paperson, 2017)
- Built on the labor of Black slaves (Wilder, 2013)
- Built to train and serve elite White men (paperson, 2017; Wilder, 2013)

Over time, elite White men defined the type of work valued and the evaluation of said work (Gonzales, 2018)

# Whiteness

At historically white serving institutions, whiteness is the dominant logic that normalizes systemic racism (Cabrera, 2019).

### Whiteness allowes ...

1. People to ignore naming the contours of systemic racism, avoid identifying with a racialized experience or racially minoritized group, and minimize the history of racism in U.S. society (Leonardo, 2009)

### Whiteness protects ...

1. White people from confronting their racial biases (Cabrera et al., 2017; Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017)

### Whiteness as culture ...

1. Fosters White cultural ideologies that maintain language, cultural practices, traditions and perceptions of knowledge that maintain racial inequities (Gusa, 2010)

# Whiteness in Faculty Hiring

## Composition of Committee

Search chairs are often senior, white men (O'Meara et al., 2020)
Lack of racial diversity leads to homogenous group think (Bilimoria & Buch, 2010)

## Job Description and Recruitment

Calls for general positions are not race-neutral (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017)
Passive outreach strategies (Liera, 2020b; O'Meara et al., 2020)

## Evaluations of CVs and Interviews

Favoring CVs from candidates presumed to be white and men (Eaton et al., 2020; Kang et al., 2016)
Relying on individual preferences when evaluating candidates (White-Lewis, 2020)

## Decision-Making

Selectively applying gendered (Rivera, 2017) and racialized (Liera & Hernandez, 2021) criteria to eliminate diverse candidates

"Faculty hiring at White-serving institutions does not have to be explicitly racist to exclude racially minoritized groups" Liera, 2020a, p. 1957

Strategies and Solutions

Niceness

Whiteness

Fit

Networks

Strategies and Solutions

Strategies and Solutions

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# Niceness

# Niceness

Niceness is a core component of whiteness (Aleman, 2009; Castagno, 2014)

Niceness normalizes talking about race, White privilege, and equity as not being nice (Liera, 2020; Villarreal et al., 2019)

Niceness encourages *indirect* questioning of inequitable, race-neutral solutions, and loose accountability for racially unequal actions (Liera, 2020a; 2020b; Liera & Hernandez, 2021)

# Niceness in Faculty Hiring

**1**

## Whiteness and Culture

Niceness reinforces racial hierarchies by restricting the cognitive and emotive expressions of equity advocates (Liera, 2020a)

**2**

## Whiteness and Power

Legitimizing racial equity work in search committees (Liera, 2020b)

Decoupling racial equity policy from racial equity practice (Liera & Hernandez, 2021)

# Racialized Decoupling: Selectively Applying Hiring Criteria

"[Albert was] kind of undermining [Esperanza], to kind of get the candidate [he wanted]. We all have our favorites and we all advocate for our favorites. But I don't like that kind of sneakiness. Like that, undermining, or holding information back and implying that [Esperanza] was bad at teaching, to make us go with a different candidate."

Interview with Sheen
- Equity Advocate
- White woman
- Tenured faculty

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# Segregating Committee Roles: Racialized Agency

"Albert told the committee that even if Gloria could not make the meeting, they should not push it to accommodate her schedule. Yet when Miles, a White man, was not able to make a meeting, Albert took the time to get on the telephone with him to debrief him and note his input on faculty candidates. According to Sheena, Gloria "did email [her input on the search proceedings and candidates]. Absolutely she emailed stuff. But I don't think they read it." Moreover, Albert, Miles, and John did not seriously consider her recommendations during meetings. In an interview, Sheena expressed that Gloria being off-campus was a reason why her recommendations were not seriously considered: "I think [Albert] really didn't quite listen or [Miles] didn't quite listen because she wasn't physically present."

Interview with Sheen
-   Equity Advocate
-   White woman
-   Tenured faculty

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# Fit

# Fit in Candidate Selection and Hiring

**Person-Job Fit**

**Person-Organization Fit**

**General Employability**

**Idiosyncratic Preferences**

1 **Matching of candidate characteristics with the job and/or organization**

2 **Explicit measurement of those characteristics**

3 **Moderate to strong consensus between raters**

White-Lewis, D. K. (2020). The facade of fit in faculty search processes. The Journal of Higher Education, 91(6), 833-857.

|  | Normative Selection Model | Faculty Selection Model |
|---|---|---|
| **Stage 1** | **Person-Job Fit**<br>Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA's) for minimal qualifications | **Person-Job Fit:**<br>Subject expertise agreement<br><br>**Idiosyncratic Preferences:**<br>Research impact, funding, and DEI |
| **Stage 2** | **Person-Organization Fit**<br>Values to determine org suitability | **Person-Organization Fit:**<br>Subject expertise alignment<br><br>**Idiosyncratic Preferences:**<br>Status maximization + risk assessments<br><br>**Unique Dept. Criterion:**<br>   - Recruitability<br>   - Dept politics<br>   - Replication |

# Subject-Expertise Alignment as Person-Job Fit

There was one extremely good woman who's Korean, and who's won all sorts of prizes and everything. If the search had been open, she would've [progressed further]. She doesn't 100% tick the diversity box, but pretty much because she's a woman, and she's Asian. And she had these wonderful research proposals. But it wasn't comparative. And our colleagues said, "But look, she doesn't fit what's on the post." And we have to say, "Well, I'm afraid that's the case. And I'm very sorry we can't have her, but for this position, she doesn't fit the bill."

Dr. Singleton - Humanities

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# Research Impact as Idiosyncratic

It really was pretty narrow. But it was on a big subject: immigration. Which wasn't his only subject, he had a lot of other papers. He was interested in immigrant incorporation into [U.S.] … [historical event] had resulted in a bunch of immigrants being drafted into the army, as opposed to being left in their home communities, which were usually ethnic communities. So he had the names of people…like who they had married, so they could get the ethnicity from that. He was able to tell who married in their ethnic group. So that was his research…and that was really cool, but it was also very narrow.

Dr. Barry - Social Sciences

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# Weighing DEI as Idiosyncratic



EQUALITY          EQUITY
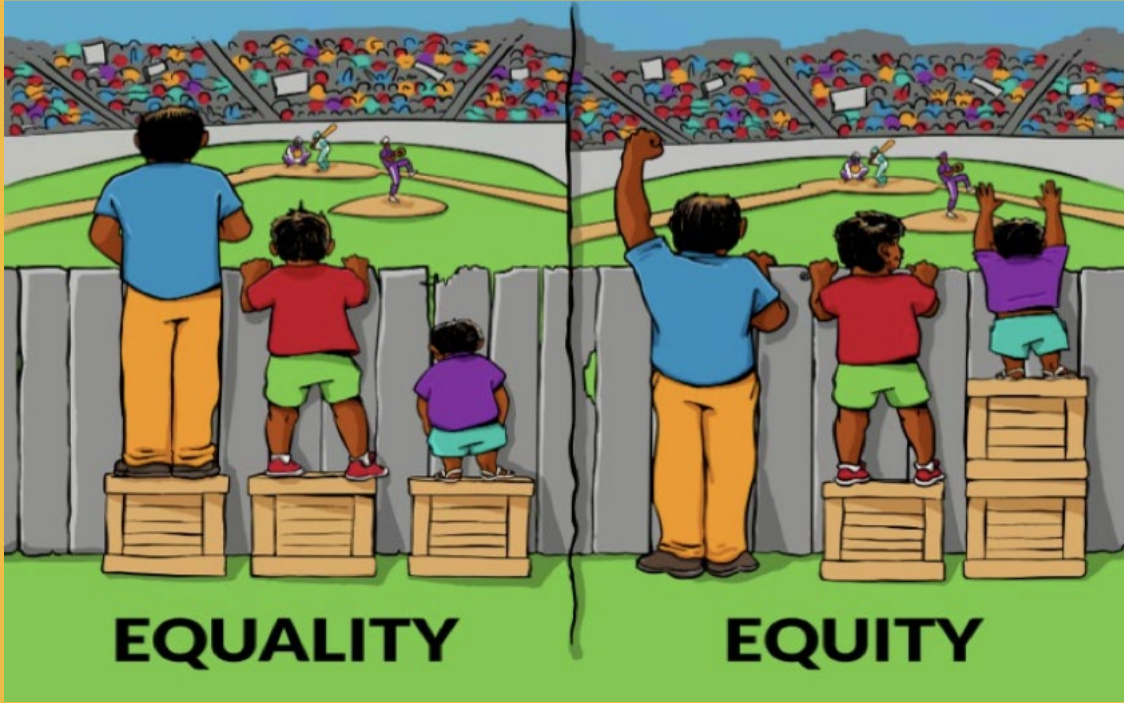
# **Weighing DEI as Idiosyncratic**

"It's not this kid's fault that he's not tall enough to see over this fence. That's one of the things that's really important: ==that every file gets the same kind of evaluation. You start in the same place. You work it, every file, through the same way. Each file's gonna get a half hour, so no matter what you're doing==, you're spending a half hour with every file. But whatever that process is for you, every file is getting it."     Dr. Dixon - Social Sciences

"You're not really allowed to explicitly say 'let me bring in one [extra] person from a URM group.' But you start thinking about, '==maybe the letters for this person have been down graded because someone expects less of them.== With that understanding, [we've] been able to increase the underrepresented fraction in the short-list pool...Like I said, you might be getting bias from the previous inputs

Dr. Charles - Physical Sciences

# Problem with "fit" in faculty hiring

**1** Its application to understanding and justifying hiring decisions is severely overstated, and

**2** It obscures the abundance of idiosyncratic preferences throughout hiring, which perpetuate racial aversion, neutrality, and convenience

"Faculty searches are as much, if not more, about the department and faculty than about the candidates themselves" (White    - Lewis, 2020, p. 851)
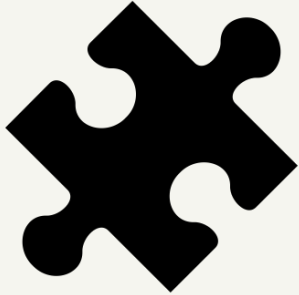
| Research Evaluation | Teaching Evaluation | Awards | Inst Type | Personality | DEI |

**Subfield Alignment / Dept Replication**

More variable and idiosyncratic that erect more barriers for minoritized candidates

**Classic P-E Fit with fewer barriers for minoritized candidates**

Research Productivity: Bendels et al., 2018; Lubienski et al., 2017

Grantsmanship: Ginther et al., 2011; Hoppe et al., 2019

Teaching Evaluations: Kelly & McCann, 2014; Martinez et al., 2017

Personality: Liera & Hernandez, 2022; Rivera, 2017

# Networks

# Networks & Recruitment



## Hierarchical Networks
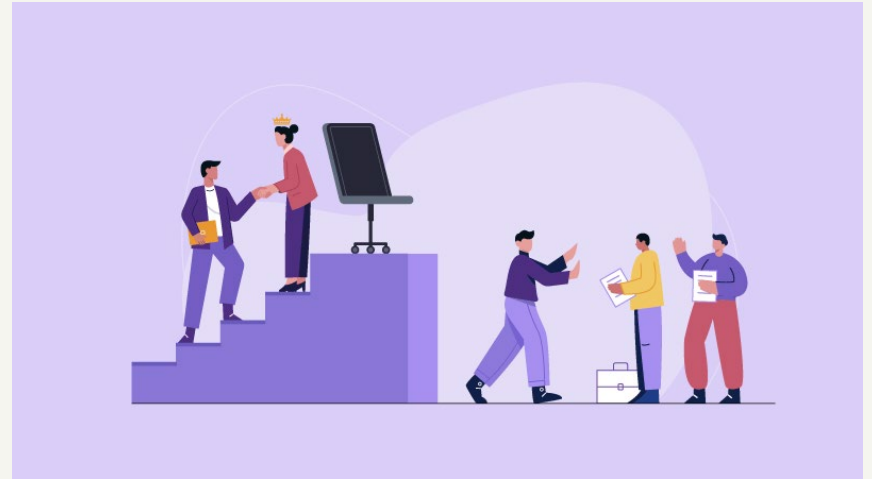


## Academic Inbreeding

# Hierarchical Networks
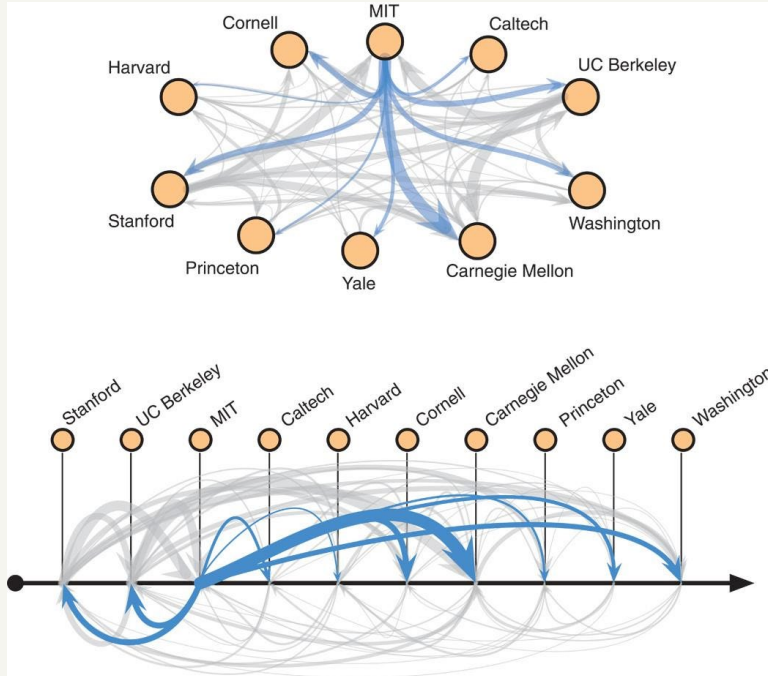


- Studied hiring placement in comp sci, business, and history (n=19,000 faculty)

- Found that faculty hiring reflected a profoundly steep hierarchical prestige network

- "The observed hierarchies are sufficiently steep that attributing their structure to differences in merit alone seem implausible."

# Academic Inbreeding



- The practice of departments and institutions hiring their own graduates

- Associated with lower productivity (Horta et al., 2010; Soler, 2001)

- Becoming better in the United States, but still very prevalent abroad (Kim, 2022)

# Tensions in Networks

**1** Hierarchical prestige networks and academic inbreeding are problems, but there are structural realities as well

**2** "Robustness of research infrastructure and student support varies by institutional type

**3** "Increased institutional prestige leads to increased faculty production, [and] better faculty placement (Clauset et al., 2015)

# Breakout Room Activity

Identifying how whiteness operates in faculty hiring
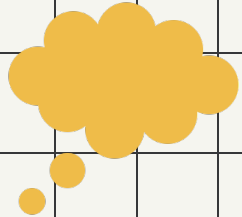
# Ground Rules

1. Be authentic
2. Recognize complexity
3. Reserve judgement on ideas/beliefs
4. Prepare for tolerable discomfort
5. Listen
6. Correct
7. Reflect and be open to change

Adapted from
The Dialogue
Institute

# Using Padlet

**Directions**:

1. Click the link in the chat that will take you to the shared work space

1. Find your group (reminder: there will be more than one breakout group for each category!)

1. To leave a comment, click the ✚ sign underneath the position title

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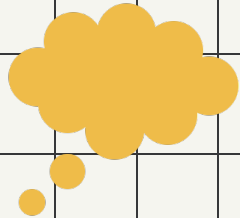
1. You can "upvote" and "downvote" comments and leave replies

# Questions



1. How does Whiteness operate in your office/department? Consider how it operates through power dynamics.

1. What does racial equity in faculty hiring mean to you and to your office/department?

1. Broadly discuss the benefits and challenges networks and institutional type in faculty hiring

1. What research study would help you in your role to advance racial equity in faculty hiring?

# AGENDA

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☒ Part I - Three Areas of Whiteness in Faculty Hiring: Niceness, Fit, and Hierarchical Networks

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# Solutions and Strategies

Centralizing racial equity in faculty hiring

"Equity and equity-mindedness accept that it is whiteness - not the achievement gap - that produces and sustains racial inequality in higher education. [It] requires explicit attention to structural inequality and institutionalized racism and demands system-changing responses."

(Bensimon, 2018)

# Racial Equity

"A social-justice imperative that prioritizes institutional responsibility for transforming organizational practices, policies, and culture to support equality of educational outcomes, in particular by race."

(Posselt, Hernandez, Villarreal, Rodgers, & Irwin, 2020)

# Strategies to Disrupt Whiteness

### Map Whiteness

**Identify how whiteness operates in faculty hiring**

### Legitimize Racial Equity

**Normalize racial equity work**

### Reevaluate distribution of power

**Racial equity work is everyone's responsibility**

### Implement Equity-Checkpoints

**Create accountability throughout search process**

# Decision-Support Tools
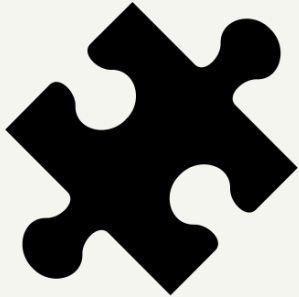
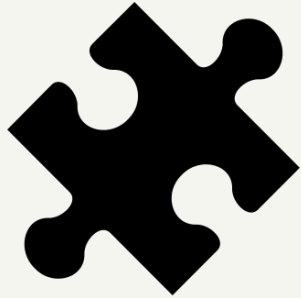| Research Evaluation | Teaching Evaluation | Awards | Inst Type | Personality | DEI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

Subfield Alignment / Dept Replication

Significant push for rubrics in faculty hiring, but scant and even contradictory evidence that they improve selection contexts. Do they matter?

We found that "it depends" – certain conditions facilitated more effective use:
- Conversations around clarity and consistency
- DEI criteria integrated across areas vs single "DEI" score
- Did not mitigate social biases
- No single "nudge" will improve hiring, but they make good things better

# Calibration

**Subfield Alignment / Dept Replication**

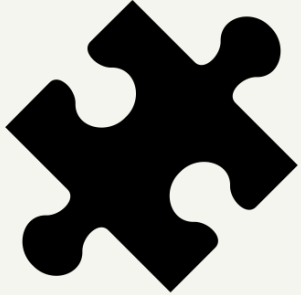| Research Evaluation | Teaching Evaluation | Awards | Inst Type | Personality | DEI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

30   30   26   30   46

"Importantly, we had different rating tendencies. I tended to rate most positively. Devon least so, and Katie and Chatura in the middle. Our average scores are 3.46, 3.03, 3.29, and 3.3 respectively. *This suggests that we should be mindful of people evaluated by Devon and me as they may outsize scores in one direction or another*."

# Counterbalancing - Within

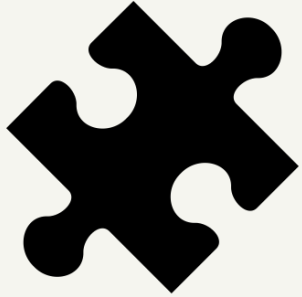| Research Evaluation | Teaching Evaluation | Awards | Inst Type | Personality | DEI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

**Subfield Alignment / Dept Replication**

Masculine defaults in hiring and selection (Cheryan & Markus, 2020)

Counterbalancing within criterion can enhance racial equity on parameters that are meaningful to our departments and institutions

- Use of culturally relevant pedagogy
- Research and grants that support equity-driven research
- Experience mentoring racially minoritized students
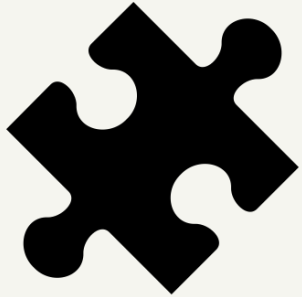- Other possibilities in Liera & Ching, 2019
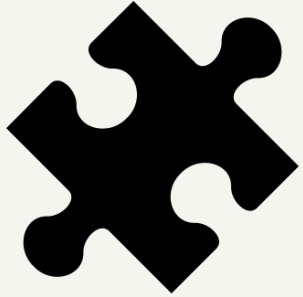
# Counterbalancing - Between

Standard Search



| Research Evaluation | Teaching Evaluation | Awards | Inst Type | Personality | DEI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Mentor Professor Search



| Mentorship | Research Evaluation | Teaching Evaluation | Awards | Inst Type | Personality |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

# Weighing DEI & Holistic Review

| Research Evaluation | Teaching Evaluation | Awards | Inst Type | Personality | DEI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

**1** "All things equal"

**2** Scoring DEI statements

**3** Using DEI statements for holistic review

"…considered all elements of the application and valued treating applicants as unique individuals, they placed those applicants in the context of the opportunities available in their families, neighborhoods, or high schools" (Bastedo et al., 2018, p. 793)

# Solutions in Networks

## Departmental Readiness

- Understand how "ready" departments are to commit to structural practices

- Uses the Community Readiness for Community Change model - ranges "no awareness" to "professionalization" (Edwards et al., 2000)

- UMD AGEP developing departmental readiness measures and tools for departments (Culpepper et al., 2021)
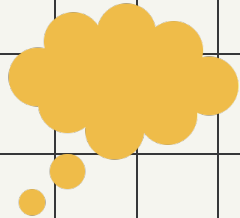
## Value-Added Approach?

- How can we recognize faculty at other institutional types in faculty hiring?

- Stochastic Frontier Analysis of institutional STEM degree productivity (Titus & Eagan, 2016)

- What factors would go into this measure? Is this approach best?

Culpepper, D. et al. (2021). A new efort to diversify faculty: Postdoc-to-tenure track conversion models. Frontiers in Psychology

# Breakout Room Activity

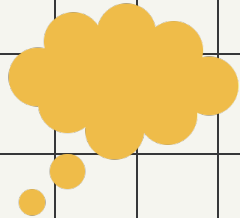Identifying solutions and strategies

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1. You can "upvote" and "downvote" comments and leave replies

# Questions



1. What strategies and solutions do you feel confident about introducing in your unit this year?

1. What strategies and solutions still leave you skeptical? Why?

1. What has worked well in your unit that you would like to share with your group members?

1. How can we ensure that racial equity is everybody's work, rather than a select agentic few?

1. What recruitment tactics have you seen/used to disrupt networks?

# **Thank you!**

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