Financing Higher Education

Centralizing Conversations on a Decentralized Campus: How Talk Through Implicit Bias in Scholarship Awarding

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CALS Lunch and Learn
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Before we get started…
Agenda & Aspirations

- Land Acknowledgement
- Ground Rules
- Primary Concern
- Implicit Bias
- Actions
- Closing

- Gain a deeper understand of yourself & your own identities
- Consider how your identities influence your interactions in difference spaces
- Learn from others
Land Acknowledgment

The University of Wisconsin-Madison occupies ancestral Ho-Chunk land, a place their nation has called Teejop since time immemorial.

In an 1832 treaty, the Ho-Chunk were forced to cede this territory.

Decades of ethnic cleansing followed when both the federal and state government repeatedly, but unsuccessfully, sought to forcibly remove the Ho-Chunk from Wisconsin.

This history of colonization informs our shared future of collaboration and innovation.

Today, UW-Madison respects the inherent sovereignty of the Ho-Chunk Nation, along with the eleven other First Nations of Wisconsin.
Land Acknowledgement
Ground Rules
Primary Concern

- White students receive a disproportionate amount of private scholarships compared to their Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) peers.

Disproportionate Awarding by Race/Ethnicity Nationally

- **White Students**
  - 62% of the population
  - 69% of the scholarship recipients

- **BIPOC Students**
  - 38% of the population
  - 30% of the scholarship recipients

Kantrowitz, 2011
Primary Concern

- Scholarships provide students with financial support for higher education.

College Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity Nationally

**White Students**
- 35% of adults age 25 or higher

**BIPOC Students**
- 17% of adults age 25 or higher
- Twice as much loan debt

Mishory et al., 2019
Considering Implicit Bias

- **Implicit bias** encompasses the views or stereotypes affecting people’s actions and decisions outside of their conscious awareness (Scoffone & Williams, 2020). These preferences impact socialization, interpreting unfamiliar information, and decision-making (Kantrowitz, 2011).

- **Everyone** has implicit bias, but not everyone is aware of how their biases impact how they move through life.

- Implicit Association Tests administered to over 2 million people between July 2000 and May 2006 indicated that over 70% of White people favor **White people on a subconscious level** (Nosek et al., 2007).
Considering Intention

• I assume everyone has biases...
• I assume that these biases could impact processes...
• I assume that people want to understand and address their biases...
• I assume that people want to address systemic inequality...
• I assume good intentions...
• I assume small adjustments can have larger impacts...
• I assume this is a journey...
How could implicit bias show up in scholarship administration?

- **Names on applications** that are White-sounding are more likely to receive a response (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004).
- **Test scores** as a proxy for merit favor White students who have average scores that are 33% higher than BIPOC students (Jaschik, 2017).
- **Participation in co-curricular activities** privileges White applicants who frequently have greater time and resources (Meier et al., 2018).
- **Recruitment** for scholarships disadvantages BIPOC students who are less likely to participate in informal networks with White administrators (Scoffone & Williams, 2020).
What numbers are we talking about?

- > 4,500 Scholarships Recipients
- > 100 Scholarship Administrators
- > $27M Awarded to Students

APIR, 2020
Sample Practices

- **Georgia Tech**
  - GTU’s training includes staff norming, regional contexts, and evaluation rubrics. Introduction of external considerations such as: time constraints, hunger, fatigue, and low-effort cognitive processing (Scoffone & Williams, 2020).

- **University of Maryland**
  - Reviewers have adapted an employment bias training which informs how White male applicants are typically judged more favorably. The information shared is intended to supply a framework of cultural awareness, consciousness, and positionality for people to consider when they evaluate scholarship applications (Slay, 2020).

- **National Scholarship Providers Association:**
  [https://www.scholarshipproviders.org/](https://www.scholarshipproviders.org/)
What can we do?

Implicit Bias Website
- Introduce Implicit Bias Concept
- Provides Awareness of Impacts
- Establishes internal and external resources

Holistic Training Modules
- Adapted from campus resources on reducing bias in employment evaluations
- Discusses rubrics as an approach to reduce bias
- Encourages taking an implicit association test to provide a baseline of implicit bias

Campus Scholarship Meeting
- Annual meeting for scholarship administrators in July
- Lists best practices as an agenda item
- Increases awareness and communication on implicit bias through a topic on the agenda each year

https://financialaid.wisc.edu/types-of-aid/scholarships/inclusive-practices/

https://wiseli.wisc.edu/workshops/bbh-inclusive-campus/
How did we get people to listen and discuss?

- We had a plan! We had goals!
- **Introduce the concept:** Lunch and Learns, Tagging into Existing Meetings, Partner with People outside of your office
- **Ask the Experts:** Researchers can be accessible and it never hurts to reach out and inquire.
- **Set-up bite-size work:** Do you have someone who likes to do website design? Could a student take this on as a project? Awareness + training is a successful combination!
- **Share, Adapt, Grow:** We’re all in this journey together!
So what were those goals?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes on Implicit Bias</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Short-term</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implicit Bias Website</td>
<td>I</td>
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<td>Evaluation Rubrics</td>
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<td>Application Field Review</td>
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<td>Onboarding Training Modules</td>
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"I"=Introduced; "R"=reinforced and opportunity to practice; "M"=Full integration and understanding
Timeline for Goals and Outcomes

- **Short-term (1 yr)** – Increased awareness through the usage of the implicit bias website.

- **Medium-term (2-3 yrs)** – Conscious awareness of bias allows for incorporating rubrics in evaluations, removing biased language from scholarship applications, and more intentional recruitment for scholarships.

- **Long-term (3+ yrs)** – Half of all schools or colleges incorporate implicit bias training into scholarship administration and individuals are more aware of implicit bias as it relates to their non-scholarship work.
# Theoretical Framework

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<tr>
<th>Critical Race Theory</th>
<th>Intersectionality</th>
<th>Transition Theory</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• American institutions are inherently racist</td>
<td>• Intersecting identities may lead towards multiple types of discrimination</td>
<td>• Transitions are understood and defined by an individual through coping strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Individual biases allow for an inequitable status quo</td>
<td>• Individuals gravitate towards providing access to people who are similar</td>
<td>• BIPOC students may be excluded from networks critical to scholarship awarding</td>
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<td>• White gatekeepers benefit from privilege</td>
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Ladson-Billings, 1998  
Crenshaw, 1989  
Schlossberg et al., 1995
Questions to ponder...

• How does implicit bias impact my decision-making?
• Where can I find additional resources on implicit bias?
• How do I contribute to inclusive best practices in my work?
• When I find myself tired and going into auto-pilot, how do I work against that?
• What can I do to contribute to more equitable outcomes for all students?
Questions
&
Thank you!

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References