

# Diversity and Equity in Promotion and Tenure

## TASK FORCE ON DEVELOPING DIVERSITY AND EQUITY TRAINING FOR TENURE AND PROMOTION

Alejandro Dominguez, Grainger

Eboni Zemani-Gallaher, Education

Gio Guerra Perez, OVCDEI

Wendy Heller, LAS

Isabel Molina, LAS

Yoon Pak, Education

Eva Pomerantz, LAS

Amy Santos, Office of the Provost

Andy Suarez, LAS



UNIVERSITY OF  
**ILLINOIS**  
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# Welcome

- Amy Santos, Associate Provost for Faculty Development
- Jonathan Ebel, Professor and Head, Religion
- Mardia Bishop, Director of Public Speaking Instruction and Teaching Associate Professor, [mjbishop@Illinois.edu](mailto:mjbishop@Illinois.edu)



# Introduction: Workshop Goals

- Examine and broaden our definition of “excellence”
- Foster awareness of our schemas and biases that lead to cumulative advantages and disadvantages
- Encourage a more thoughtful approach to evaluation in promotion and tenure process



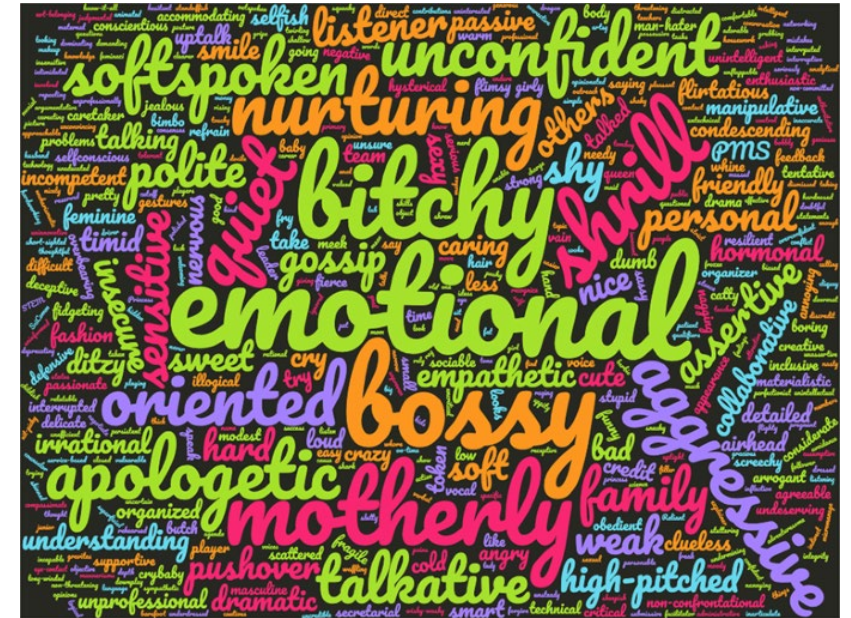
# How Do You Define “Excellence”?

- Key in the promotion and tenure process, is deciding whether a candidate meets the criteria for excellence
- How do **you** define excellence in this context?
- What three terms are central in your definition?

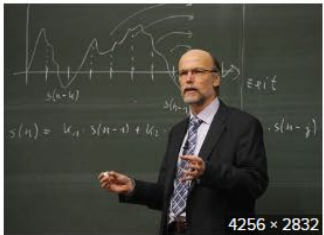


# Schemas

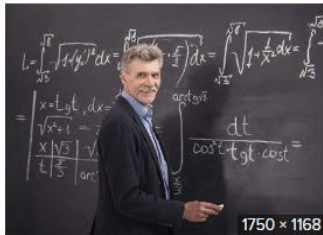
- Schemas are mental frameworks or preconceived ideas of some aspect of the world (e.g., women professors).
- Shaped by personal experience as well as cultural messages.
- We **all** rely on schemas for efficient and effective judgments and decisions.
- But schemas can lead to **bias**.



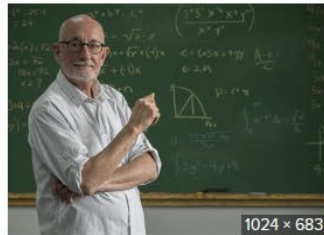
Characterization of women who publicly communicate their STEM work. Larger words appeared more frequently. (McKinnon & O’Connell, 2020)



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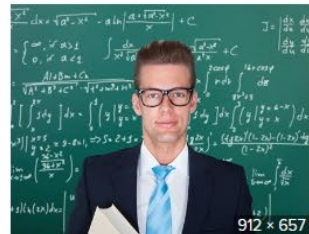
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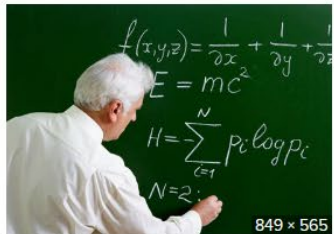
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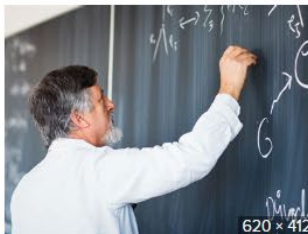
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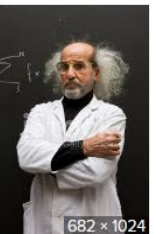
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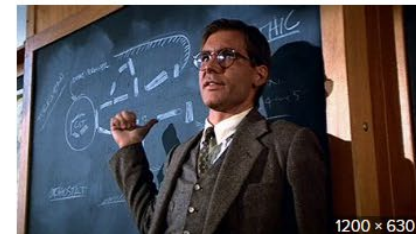
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# Schemas Shape our Definition of “Excellence” Leading to Bias

- Definition of excellence based on schema of a “successful faculty,” which is a **white male**
- Shapes interpretation of candidates’ records, as well as letter writers’ evaluations and weight given to them
- Influences early opportunities, recognition, and burdens, leading to **cumulative** (dis)advantage





# Are We Asking You to Lower Your Standards?

- No, we are **broadening**, rather than lowering, the bar
- There are **diverse** forms of excellence, which is fundamental to innovative discovery and solutions
- **Want to ensure our blind spots do not undermine how we perceive excellence or its potential**



# Is Ignoring Race, Ethnicity, Sexuality, or Gender a Solution?

- Ignoring race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender can be problematic
  - Makes it difficult to correct for biases and inequities
  - Results in not seeing cumulative (dis)advantage
  - Can perpetuate discrimination
- Being conscious of race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender is constructive



# Two Cases: Assistant to Associate

- Based on several actual cases from social and behavioral as well as physical and biological sciences
  - Jada Jackson: Black woman
  - Scott Cole: White man
- Condensed to foster discussion about key issues



# Key Considerations as We Go Through the Cases

- Think about issues you and your colleague(s) would consider in evaluating each case
- **Not** making promotion and tenure decisions
- Two cases are not in competition

# Research Summary

## Context Information

Faculty successfully promoted in similar departments in the last 5 years generally have 11 to 16 articles.

## Jada Jackson

### ARTICLES

11 empirical articles in peer-reviewed journals

- Co-author with former PhD supervisor on 3 articles (1 medium and 2 high impact)
- Lead (e.g., first, last, or corresponding) author (with graduate students) on 3 articles (1 low and 2 medium impact)
- Co-author with collaborator of similar rank, with co-author always lead author on 5 articles (2 low, 1 medium, and 2 high impact)

### GRANTS

\$400,000 3-year NSF grant on which she is the Co-PI with collaborator of similar rank as PI

### PRESENTATIONS

- 1 invited department colloquium or seminar at a Big Ten University
- 2 presentations as part of symposia at major conferences in her field

What strengths and weaknesses are evident in each record?

How would you and your colleagues evaluate the impact of the research of each of the candidates?

What would you and your colleagues make of the co-authorship on publications and grants?

## Scott Cole

### ARTICLES

10 empirical articles in peer-reviewed journals

- Co-author with former PhD supervisor on 4 articles (2 medium and 2 high impact)
- Lead (e.g., first, last, or corresponding) author (with graduate students) on 6 articles (1 low, 3 medium, and 2 high impact)

### GRANTS

\$500,000 3-year NIH grant on which he is the single PI

### PRESENTATIONS

- 8 invited department colloquia or seminars at Big Ten Universities
- 4 presentations as part of symposia at major conferences in his field

# Documented Differences in Research and Presentations

- Research conducted by women and people of color often considered less “mainstream” and rigorous
- Women are lead author less often
- Faculty of color invited to give talks less often
- Women work the same amount of time as men but spend less time on research and more time on service and mentoring



# External Letters for Jackson

## Context Information

The overall tone of both sets of letter ranges from mildly to extremely positive.

### Letter 1

Dr. Jackson has what is considered a large number of publications—above the norm for the field. Moreover, these papers provide novel and important insight about . . . They will certainly move the field forward. However, Dr. Jackson is not typically the lead author. In fact, if one ignores her work with her PhD advisor, Dr. Jackson is the lead author on only 5 out of 10 of the peer reviewed papers, which is a pretty slim publication record. In her narrative, Dr. Jackson indicates that her role in the team was the development of the conceptual framework motivating the research and that she played a major role in the design of the research. If this was the case, why is she never the lead author on her collaborative work?

### Letter 2

Dr. Jackson's work will change how the field thinks about . . . It could lead to a major shift in our approach to . . . Dr. Jackson's model of . . . is sure to be a catalyst for innovative work in the years to come in a variety of areas . . . One conceivable concern about Dr. Jackson's record is that most of her publications are in what are considered second tier journals. This is because she is doing innovative work that has not yet made it into what is considered "mainstream" by the "old guard." Her work is certainly important as well as methodologically rigorous.

- What would you and your colleagues take away from the letters?
- Would the letters change your evaluation of the case?

### Letter 3

Dr. Jackson's publication record is good. Her research shows . . . which provides a richer understanding of . . . Dr. Jackson also nicely pulls together various theoretical perspectives in her work. In addition, in her effort to understand people of color, who have been ignored until now, she is significantly advancing the field. I am reluctant to say that her record is "excellent" or "outstanding" because I would have liked to see her be a little more aggressive in terms of first authorship on more papers. That said, given her record, I expect she would pass through the rigors of tenure in my department. It is clear she works hard and will thus make useful contributions to the field.

### Letter 4

Although Dr. Jackson's work as a whole is conceptually grounded and demonstrates methodological rigor, it is out of the mainstream. Thus, the findings while interesting are unlikely to have a substantial impact. And, even if one was to see her work as a major mover in the field, it is of concern that she is not often the lead author.

### Letter 5

I wonder about the real quality of the work given that although there are some high impact journals, none of the journals are considered core in our field. In fact, Dr. Jackson's research focus on minorities represents a deviation from the important focus of the field on basic mechanisms of change. She is examining only a small slice of the American population.

# External Letters for Cole

## Letter 1

To balance all the positives, I would like to point out that Dr. Cole has only one paper in the premier journal of our field, with most of his publications appearing in what are considered workhorse journals. This says to me “solid research” which is good, but one would hope for a few more significant publications from someone who is a leader in the field. However, I am confident in stating that Dr. Cole’s work is influential, with implications that extend beyond his specialty subfield. I have high regard for his work and continued potential. From his CV, I see that he has received funding from the NIH – this is significant and makes up for my qualms about the lack of articles in premier journals. I am also impressed by the active leadership role he has taken in organizing workshops for his area.

## Letter 2

Dr. Cole was the first to point out that . . . The fact that . . . is a beautiful proposal to resolve this problem. In another paper, he suggests . . . These ideas are very attractive in that they require minimal additions to the standard model to solve the difficult problem of . . . This is a great idea. In another line of research, Cole is working on . . . Cole’s work is impressive. Among other contributions, he spearheaded research into . . . His analytic calculations are quite simply genius. Although he is not as productive of some of his peers, I am not worried because his work is innovative.

## Letter 3

Professor Cole is a very engaging, talented young researcher. His research interests span a broad range of issues related to . . . While Professor Cole may not be as prolific as some of his peers, the quality of his contributions is extremely high. His papers exhibit brilliance and ingenuity. His results inspire confidence, and many of them will have a lasting impact on the field. I have no doubt that Professor Cole will continue to generate scholarly achievements of the highest level and that his work will contribute to international recognition of the University of Illinois in the field of . . .

## Letter 4

Dr. Cole is not particularly productive, and there could be some concerns about the quality of some of the journals he publishes in. However, he comes from an excellent lab and thus is conceptually and empirically skilled which shows up in his work. His paper on . . . is an excellent demonstration of . . . which is likely to move the field forward once it gets the attention it should. I have discussed research with Dr. Cole at a few conferences and the discussions have moved my own thinking forward.

## Letter 5

Dr. Cole hits all the check boxes-- important research coming out of his lab published in good journals, an NIH grant, and taking the lead to organize workshops in his area. Dr. Cole is clearly getting his ideas out there. Although not incredibly prolific, Dr. Cole’s record is what we expect of someone coming up for tenure and bodes well for his future success.

- **What would you and your colleagues take away from the letters?**
- **Would the letters change your evaluation of the case?**
- **How would you and your colleagues interpret the letter writers’ discussion of Dr. Cole’s lower than average productivity?**



# Documented Differences in Letters

Women, People of Color	White Men
<b>Emphasis on effort</b> Motivated, hardworking, puts her nose to the grindstone, gives it her all, keeps at it	<b>Emphasis on intelligence and accomplishments</b> Brilliant, genius, talented, contributions of research
<b>Doubt raisers</b> Hedges, faint praise, irrelevant information	<b>Standout adjectives</b> Outstanding, excellent
<b>Minimal assurances</b> 2.5 times more likely than ringing endorsements (e.g., “she is the best for the job”)	<b>Reference research and publications more</b>
<b>Mention personal life</b> 7 times more likely	<b>Longer</b> By 16%

# Teaching Summary

## Context Information

3 courses per year— either 2 undergrad and 1 grad course or 3 undergrad courses

## Jada Jackson

Undergrad intro course almost every semester (100-150 students)

- US Minority Cultures Gen Ed requirement
- Developed course
- Ratings in below-average to average range

1 upper-level undergrad course every year (40 students)

- Developed course
- Course ratings initially in below-average range but in average range last 2 times

2 grad-level courses, each taught once (8 students)

- Course ratings in high-average range

What strengths and weaknesses are evident in each teaching record?

How do the teaching loads of these two candidates compare?

Are the course ratings comparable? Why? Or why not?

What kind of biases enter into teaching evaluations?

## Scott Cole

Co-teaches undergrad intro course every semester (100-150 students)

- Teaches first half of each semester
- Ratings for his half in average range

1 upper-level undergrad course every year (25 students)

- Ratings vary from year to year between average and high-average

1 grad-level course every year (8-12 students)

- Ratings in average to high-average range

# Service Summary

## Jada Jackson

- Member of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee for the major organization of her field
- Member of steering committee for organization in her field focused on research among underrepresented and marginalized groups
- Member of department Curriculum committee (Chair of subcommittee on reviewing courses for diversity, equity, and inclusion)
- Member of department Graduate Studies and Financial Aid committee
- Member of college Public Engagement committee

What strengths and weaknesses are evident in each service record?

How do the service loads of these two candidates compare?

How should we weigh service into our overall evaluation of each case?

## Scott Cole

- Member of department Colloquia committee
- Member of department Graduate Admissions committee
- Organized 2 workshops in subfield

# Documented Differences in Teaching and Service

Teaching	Service
Students rate women instructors lower than men, even when their teaching practices are the same.	Women and people of color do more service.
Black and Asian faculty members evaluated less positively than White faculty, especially by White male students.	Faculty of color spend more time on mentoring and diversity related work than do White faculty.
Student evaluations with simple numeric ratings of overall quality biased against women in general, and Black, Asian, and foreign-born instructors of all genders.	Women engage in less prestigious, more time-consuming, or “token” service; asked more often to engage in less promotable or career-advancing tasks.

e.g., Antonio, 2002; Baez, 2000; Bavishi et al., 2010; Boring et al., 2016; Boysen, 2015; MacNeill et al., 2015; O’Meara , 2016; O’Meara et al., 2021; Uttl et al., 2017; Reid, 2010; Stark & Hawkins, 2011; Weiman, 2015; Wood et al., 2015

# Wrap Up

- When evaluating promotion and tenure candidates
  - Broaden your definition of “excellence”
  - Consider how your own biases and those of others may be influential
- Continue addressing these issues
- This is a first step to a less-biased, more equitable process



# Where Do We Go from Here?

What is one thing you personally can do to work against your own biases in the promotion and tenure process?

What is one thing your unit or the University needs to do to address bias and inequities in the promotion and tenure process?

