



Office of the Provost

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Vice Provost for Faculty

## MEMORANDUM

To: Deans and Department Chairs  
CC: Eve Higginbotham, Vice Dean, for Inclusion and Diversity PSOM  
From: Anita L. Allen, Vice Provost for Faculty  
Date: April 30, 2020  
Subject: Latent Bias and Non-Discrimination Training for Faculty Search Committees and Search Advisors

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As you know, the University has required latent bias training for faculty members involved in searches since the 2017 Update on the *Faculty Diversity Action Plan*. [https://almanac.upenn.edu/uploads/media/032117-full-supplement-Faculty Inclusion Report.pdf](https://almanac.upenn.edu/uploads/media/032117-full-supplement-Faculty%20Inclusion%20Report.pdf). (“[S]chools will be asked to evaluate their use of Diversity Search Advisors and to certify that members of search committees have been educated on current research regarding implicit bias and discrimination in hiring.”)

Since the 2017 update, a number of questions have arisen regarding bias education that we thought it worth clarifying.

1. *Duration and frequency of bias training.* The language of the update was meant to underscore the importance of dissemination of meaningful, interesting education around latent bias. We recommend that at least once every three years faculty members participate in a professional workshop or seminar of at least one hour that provides an overview of bias research and anti-discrimination policies. It is not necessary that bias education be repeated every year. Bias education should not be approached as a “check the box” cursory requirement. Bias education should never be limited to, for example, a fifteen-minute presentation.
2. *Bias training offerings.* My office hosts four open training sessions every academic year in the fall. Two of these are open to all interested faculty members, and two are for new Diversity Search Advisors. Subject to her schedule, Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Lubna Mian is also willing to come to interested Schools and Departments and provide a review. There are also a number of preeminent academics and good commercial vendors who can provide an overview of the bias literature suitable for faculty at a reasonable fee, and if you have questions, you can contact Lubna Mian in my office ([mian@upenn.edu](mailto:mian@upenn.edu)).

3. *PSOM OID.* Within the Perelman School of Medicine (PSOM), Dr. Eve Higginbotham's Office of Inclusion and Diversity offers both virtual and in person unconscious bias sessions which are two hours in length. Recognizing the schedules of busy clinicians, PSOM it is also recommended that a discussion of at least 30 minutes with the assigned Diversity Search Advisor occur at the inception of each search to ensure that all members of the Committee receive the same information.
4. *Content of bias training.* Bias training should be substantive and interactive, with time to ask questions, elicit discussion, and include participatory exercises or demonstrations. While there is a breadth of relevant content for faculty searches, there should be an overview of the research on stereotyping in multiple dimensions, studies and applications in the academic context, and a review of corrective strategies.
5. *Faculty members who are not Search Advisors or Committee members.* While not mandatory, we strongly recommend that Schools periodically offer all standing faculty members the opportunity to participate in latent bias and non-discrimination training.
6. *Online delivery.* Given the COVID-19 pandemic, it may be necessary to deliver content remotely. The University will offer fall 2020 sessions online as needed.