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

SEARCHING FOR EXCELLENCE AND DIVERSITY: A WORKSHOP FOR SEARCH COMMITTEES EVALUATION OF SESSION FOR CROSS-COLLEGE UNITS (1A) PRESENTED SEPTEMBER 18, 2014

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Introduction

This report describes the results of a survey evaluating the workshop, "Searching for Excellence and Diversity: A Workshop for Search Committees." The workshop was held on September 18, 2014 and was conducted by Eve Fine, WISELI Researcher and Curriculum Developer; and Amy Wendt, Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering and Co-Director of WISELI; Michael Bernard-Donals, Professor of English and Jewish Studies and Vice Provost for Faculty and Staff Programs.

The purpose of the survey is to assess three areas related to the workshop: the perceived value or usefulness of different components from the perspectives of the participants, the ways in which participants anticipate using the information and materials provided in the workshop, and suggestions from participants about future workshop planning and implementation.

Methods

The attached survey (see Appendix) was deployed on September 18, 2014 to a list of 21 workshop attendees. The survey population included all registered workshop attendees who signed an informed consent agreement. One reminder email was sent on September 30; the survey was closed on October 6.

For tables displaying quantitative data, we include both the percentage and the number of respondents to each item. For open-ended items, we report all responses provided for each question, coded and presented according to theme. Some responses have been edited for grammar, typographic errors, and to maintain the anonymity of the respondents or others. Furthermore, the respondents may have addressed multiple points or concerns in their open-ended answers, which were then grouped thematically. Therefore, the number of comments is not reflective of the number of people who responded to any given item.

Respondent Information

Out of 21 invitees, 18 people responded to this survey for a response rate of 86%. We asked respondents to share their title or role on campus, and their role on the search committee or in the search process.

Survey respondents' roles included faculty members and staff members (Table 1). Five respondents did not include a campus position.

	% (n)
Faculty member	69% (9)
Staff member	31% (4)
Total	100% (13)

Table 1: Campus position by percentage and frequency, *n*=13.

Survey respondents identified a range of responsibilities on search committees or in the search process, including committee member, committee chair, and administrative staff support (Table 2). Five respondents did not include their role on the search committee.

	% (n)
Member of search committee	62% (8)
Search committee chair	15% (2)
Administrative and resource support	23% (3)
Total	100% (13)

Table 2: Role on search committee by percentage and frequency, *n*=13.

When asked, most respondents indicated that they found out about the workshop through marketing emails, their department chair or the search committee chair, and their colleagues (Table 3). Some respondents noted more than one source of information about the workshop.

	% (n)
From the search committee or department chair	29% (4)
From a dean or other administrator	7% (1)
From a colleague or peer	21% (3)
Marketing or other email message	29% (4)
Attendance required	7% (1)
Other	7% (1)
Total	100% (14)

Table 3: Source of workshop information by percentage and frequency, *n*=12.

Results

Overall Workshop and Individual Component Ratings

We asked respondents to provide an overall rating of the workshop's usefulness, to rate the value of specific workshop components, and to provide comments about the workshop's components. The response choices for the item assessing the workshop's usefulness included ***Not at all Useful*** (assigned a value of 1), ***Somewhat Useful*** (2), and ***Very Useful*** (3). The response choices for the items about the individual workshop components included ***Not at all Valuable*** (assigned a value of 1), ***Somewhat Valuable*** (2), and ***Very Valuable*** (3). The item assessing individual workshop components also included an ***NA*** response choice, which was analyzed as missing data.

Respondents rated the overall workshop as ***Somewhat Useful*** or ***Very Useful*** (Table 4), and most of the workshop components as ***Somewhat Valuable*** or ***Very Valuable*** (Table 5).

	% (n)	Mean *(SD)*
Not at all Useful (1)	0% (0)	2.56 (0.51)
Somewhat Useful (2)	44% (7)	
Very Useful (3)	56% (9)	
Total	100% (16)	

Table 4: Overall workshop rating by percentage, frequency, and mean, *n*=16.

Respondents rated the workshop components addressing active recruitment strategies and evaluating the pool of applicants as the most valuable (Table 5).

	Not at all Valuable (1) % (n)	Somewhat Valuable (2) % (n)	Very Valuable (3) % (n)	NA % (n)	Mean *(SD)*
Introduction (Wendt)	0% (0)	63% (10)	37% (6)	0% (0)	2.38 (0.50)
Run an Effective and Efficient Search Committee (Fine)	0% (0)	37% (6)	63% (10)	0% (0)	2.63 (0.50)
Actively Recruit an Excellent and Diverse Pool of Candidates (Fine, Bernard-Donals)	0% (0)	25% (4)	75% (12)	0% (0)	2.75 (0.45)
Evaluating the Pool of Applicants (Wendt)	0% (0)	31% (5)	69% (11)	0% (0)	2.69 (0.48)
Ensure a Fair and Thorough Review of Candidates (Fine)	0% (0)	37% (6)	63% (10)	0% (0)	2.63 (0.50)
Group Discussions	6% (1)	37% (6)	57% (9)	0% (0)	2.50 (0.63)

Table 5: Workshop component ratings by percentage, frequency, and mean, *n*=16.

We also invited respondents to provide comments about the ratings they assigned to particular components. Seven respondents provided additional information, as shown below and grouped by theme.

General Comments
- I enjoyed the case studies showing bias, but I think it would help to have them punctuated with recommendations for avoiding bias. In other words, present a bias that has been scientifically documented, then recommend a way to avoid that specific bias. The more general ideas afterward are good as well.
- I was surprised that some folks don't know about the mandated criminal background check, but then, I work in administration and remember what precipitated that...
- This was excellent -- Eve Fine has a great reputation in my unit and now I know why! BELOW on workshop actions -- we sent the PVL to diverse places – a colleague took the WISELI workshop and employed what you covered.

Consider Adapting Time Allocation
- There were some nuggets of very useful information, but the workshop was MUCH too long. This needs to be condensed down to an hour.
- I think the literature on bias is really important for people to know about, but the presentation of that element was not very focused and was a bit long-winded.
- At times felt a little rush because we had such great group discussion.
- I would have liked more time to discuss methods others in the group used.

Overall Workshop Recommendation

When asked, the majority of respondents reported that they would recommend the workshop to others (Table 6).

	% (n)
Yes	87% (13)
No	13% (2)
Total	100% (15)

Table 6: Would/would not recommend workshop to others
by percentage and frequency, *n*=15.

When asked why or why not, three respondents provided additional information. Comments from those who said they **would** recommend the workshop, included:
- There is much to learn about bias.
- Although none of the information was entirely new, it is important to refresh our skills periodically. I also learned about some initiatives on campus that I hadn't been aware of previously.

Comments from those who said they **would not** recommend the workshop, included:
- I am mixed on it. Many of the things discussed were things we already do.

Implementation of Materials and Information

We then asked respondents to indicate what actions they had already taken or planned to do regarding searches due to their participation in the workshop (Table 7). The actions that most respondents planned to do included discussing or establishing ground rules for the committee, sharing information about biases and assumptions with others, and using the resources provided by the Provost's office.

	Plan to Do % (n)
Consider the membership of the search committee and adjust accordingly.	28% (5)
Consult with the workshop presenters or others on campus about conducting an effective search process.	11% (2)
Discuss and/or establish ground rules for the search committee (e.g., about decision-making, attendance, expectations).	78% (14)
Publicize the position in different venues (compared to previous searches).	44% (8)
Use networking and other means to recruit a diverse pool of candidates.	50% (9)
Use "Recruiting Resources" on WISELI's website.	33% (6)
Use resources in the HR Recruitment Toolkit.	33% (6)
Use resources provided by the Provost's Faculty Diversity Initiative (Strategic Pipeline and Recruitment Fund).	61% (11)
Distribute the brochure, "Reviewing Applicants: Research on Bias and Assumptions," to others.	28% (5)
Share information about biases and assumptions with others.	78% (14)
Develop and prioritize specific criteria for evaluation of candidates.	56% (10)
Spend more time reviewing applications.	44% (8)
Rely on advice/resources in WISELI's Guidebook for Search Committees.	50% (9)
Refer another person to this workshop.	56% (10)

Table 7. Respondent actions planned by percentage and frequency, *n*=18.

Four respondents shared additional activities that they planned to do. These comments included:

- Make a special effort when attending conferences to form connections with early career investigators who may be future candidates.

- For future PVLs I will take note of diversity language in the individualized portion of the description.
- Our committee met first after the applications were submitted; however, a different committee prepared the PD and advertising and used many of the approaches recommended.
- Share what I have learned with school search committees who may not get a chance to attend this workshop. I will try to implement the best I can these practices with all types of searches, not just faculty.
- Criteria is most important to me.

Respondent Suggestions and Recommendations

In this section of the evaluation, we asked respondents for their feedback on the workshop and for suggestions about how to improve it in the future. We invited them to share ideas or suggestions that would have improved their experience in the workshop, and whether there were any topics they would have liked addressed in the workshop, but were not. We also asked whether they would recommend the workshop to others, and to explain why or why not.

We first invited respondents to provide ideas or suggestions for that would have improved their experiences in the workshop. Seven respondents provided feedback for this item. The comments included:

- Focus on key points and make the entire thing much shorter.
- Some of the presentations were really just referrals to read the book/guide that was distributed, so I don't feel like I gained much from that. I really would have liked to have done more interactive case studies - i.e., where we are perhaps given letters of rec for male vs. female candidates to look at common problems/differences.
- Organize materials to 'guide' committee members.
- See above. Overall it was very well run and engaging. Thanks for the bagels and coffee. Respondent referred to this comment: "I enjoyed the case studies showing bias, but I think it would help to have them punctuated with recommendations for avoiding bias. In other words, present a bias that has been scientifically documented, then recommend a way to avoid that specific bias. The more general ideas afterward are good as well."
- This should be a mandatory training for HR employees on campus. I feel you would be able to reach more parts of campus.
- Not at this time.

We also asked respondents about topics that they would have liked addressed in the workshop, yet were not. One respondents provided an additional topic area, including:

- How to encourage women not to drop out of the academic track after graduation with a PhD.

General Comments

Finally, we asked respondents to share any other comments they might have about the workshop or their experience overall. Six respondents provided feedback for this item:

- Many parts were quite redundant with the department visits that Molly Carnes does on implicit bias. It wasn't a great use of my time to hear the same info yet again.
- I think most of what was shared could be read in less time so some more interaction or assessments challenging participants' biases would make the face-to-face format more useful.
- The workshop was interesting although not very useful due to the differences in federal and state hiring systems.
- Thanks for your effort!
- Thanks -- the organization was excellent -- content, superb.
- Well done!

Appendix: Survey Instrument

Default Question Block

Searching for Excellence and Diversity:
A Workshop for Search Committees

Thank you!

Please take a few minutes to click on the button below and complete a survey. Results from you and your colleagues are reported in aggregate and are used to improve the workshop and to identify any outcomes from your participation. Thank you, in advance, for the time it takes you to complete this and for your candid feedback. Any questions? Please contact: Christine Pribbenow, (608) 263-4256; cmpribbenow@wisc.edu

Your title or role on campus:

Your role on the search committee or in the search process:

Please rate the value of each of the aspects of the workshop using the scale below (Not at all valuable, Somewhat valuable, Very valuable). Also, feel free to include additional comments.

	Not at all valuable	Somewhat valuable	Very valuable	N/A
Introduction (Wendt)	◉	◉	◉	◉
Run an Effective and Efficient Search Committee (Fine)	◉	◉	◉	◉
Actively Recruit an Excellent and Diverse Pool of Candidates (Fine, Bernard-Donals)	◉	◉	◉	◉
Evaluate the Pool of Applicants (Wendt)	◉	◉	◉	◉
Ensure a Fair and Thorough Review of Candidates (Fine)	◉	◉	◉	◉
Group Discussions	◉	◉	◉	◉

Please use this space for comments about any of the workshop's components:

Which of the following do you plan to do because of attending this workshop?

	Plan to do
Consider the membership of the search committee and adjust accordingly.	☐
Consult the workshop presenters or others on campus about conducting an effective search process.	☐
Discuss and/or establish ground rules for the search committee (e.g., about decision-making, attendance, expectations).	☐
Publicize the position in different venues (compared to previous searches).	☐
Use networking and other means to recruit a diverse pool of candidates.	☐
Use "Recruiting Resources" on WISELI's website.	☐
Use resources in the HR Recruitment Toolkit.	☐
Use resources provided by the Provost's Faculty Diversity Initiative (Strategic Pipeline and Recruitment Fund).	☐
Distribute the	

Please describe other activities you plan to do because of this workshop:

Please provide us with ideas or suggestions that would have improved your experience in this workshop:

What topics did you hope would be covered in this session, yet were not?

Please provide an overall rating for this session.

○ Not at all useful

○ Somewhat useful

○ Very useful

How did you hear about this workshop?

Would you recommend this workshop to others?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Why or why not?

Any other comments?