Implicit bias refers to bias in judgment that operates without intentional control and typically without conscious awareness. The targets of implicit bias are generally groups toward which prejudice used to be socially normative and acceptable but now is not. Thus, bias against bullies is explicit rather than implicit, while there is strong evidence of implicit bias against women, LGBT individuals, and non-whites in a variety of different contexts. While awareness of implicit bias has yet to reach either the general public or mainstream psychology (e.g., Wikipedia’s history of psychology timeline makes no mention), those engaged in either scholarship or activism concerning prejudice and inclusion are increasingly seeing implicit bias as a vital part of their work.

Thus far, most research (and policy recommendations) has focused on the criminal justice system (both police and judges/juries) and health care services, but there is a growing awareness that implicit bias is also playing a role in hiring decisions, including at universities. Notably, this bias is evident across academic departments, including in the sciences, where one might be tempted to believe that applications are more likely to be evaluated objectively. As just one example, Moss-Racusin, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham & Handelsman (2012) found that

In a randomized double-blind study (n=127), science faculty from research-intensive universities rated the application materials of a student who was randomly assigned either a male or female name for a laboratory manager position. Faculty participants rated the male applicant as significantly more competent and hireable than the (identical) female applicant. These participants also selected a higher starting salary and offered more career mentoring to the male applicant. The gender of the faculty participants did not affect responses, such that female and male faculty were equally likely to exhibit bias against the female student.

Based on studies in other contexts, there is also reason to believe that similar implicit bias is likely to be evident in a classroom context given that instructors typically evaluate student work under time constraints, a condition known to be conducive to the manifestation of implicit biases (Bertrand, et al., 2005). Unfortunately, such research in higher education is currently lacking, perhaps because scholars are reluctant to shine a light on themselves and their peers.

Whatever the barriers might be, the University of Illinois is starting to take some important first steps to both build awareness of how implicit bias operates and develop conditions to minimize its harmful effects. Several clinical/community faculty and graduate students have been involved in these efforts, summarized below.

---

Hiring

The University has created a new initiative to support the hiring of more diverse faculty. DRIVE (Diversity Realized at Illinois Through Visioning Excellence)\(^2\) not only helps search committees understand the different ways bias can inadvertently seep in but also guides the committees in the current best practices to avoid such bias. While articles and videos are available for all those who are interested, the DRIVE committee members, which includes Clinical-Community faculty member, Wendy Heller, work directly with academic units and search committees to institute the essential elements of a fair faculty search\(^3\). Clinical/community grad student Yara Mekawi is also involved. The only graduate student on the DRIVE committee, Yara has been gathering data regarding student enrollment and faculty hires and working with Menah Pratt Clark, the director of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Access, Wendy, and the rest of the DRIVE committee to create more effective recruitment and retention policy. After just 2 years, it is still too early to evaluate DRIVE’s effectiveness, but Wendy, Yara, and new clinical/community faculty member Nathan Todd will be conducting research to see whether DRIVE’s initiatives make a difference over the next few years in the number of faculty from diverse groups who are ranked as finalists in searches, who receive offers, or who are hired.

In the Classroom

Though not focused explicitly on bias, chemistry instructor Gretchen M. Adams, one of this year’s Distinguished Teacher-Scholars, has been coordinating monthly workshops all year to emphasize the importance of classroom diversity and develop strategies for improving recruitment, retention, and long-term success of underrepresented undergraduate students. The monthly group includes both academic and support staff from all over campus, including Psychology Associate Head for Undergraduate Studies, Robert Wicksberg, Introduction to Psychology coordinator, Lisa Travis, and me\(^4\). At this point, we are still learning and brainstorming, but we hope to be able to take some concrete steps as early as the next academic year.

Social Life

For many, the handful of racist and sexist social media posts from several students following Chancellor Phyllis M. Wise’s announcement last year that classes would continue as scheduled, despite the extreme cold, were a salient reminder that the University of Illinois campus is not as inclusive or as tolerant as we might wish it to be. Though a town-hall meeting was organized (and attended by several hundred students), there was a general consensus that such dialogue needed to continue, not so much because of the comments directed at the chancellor but because there was a general sense that such views were regularly expressed on campus (usually toward under-represented students), not only via social media but in the residence halls and classrooms. Evidence to support this sense has been provided by U of I researchers Stacy Harwood and Ruby Mendenhall in several articles.

To promote such dialogue, Inclusive Illinois has organized a series of lectures and campus conversations on diversity. Notably, the first lecture (and several workshops for campus faculty and staff), by Arup mechanical engineer, Erin McConahey, focused specifically on unconscious bias. To support this work and to promote discussion and dialog, McConahey and her colleagues have developed a glossy deck of cards\(^5\) that summarize the key empirical findings about implicit bias. Future speakers will include Terrell Strayhorn, Derald Wing Sue, U of I’s own Stacy Harwood, Anita Hill, and Karen McDonald.

In the meantime, several campus conversations have been planned, the first one (for graduate and professional students) to take place on March 30\(^{th}\). The conversation for undergraduates, which I will moderate, will take place the following day, with the conversation for campus administrators and senior leadership the day after that. While the details are still being planned, the general goal is to bring conversations

\(^{2}\text{http://diversity.illinois.edu/DRIVE.html}\\
^{3}\text{http://diversity.illinois.edu/SupportingDocs/DRIVE/Essential%20Elements%20of%20a%20Successful%20Search.pdf}\\
^{4}\text{For those who don’t know, I coordinate the teaching of abnormal psychology and also teach courses on race and ethnicity, theories of psychotherapy, and restorative justice.}\\
^{5}\text{The cards can be purchased at https://www.abdi-ecommerce10.com/swe/c-21-diversityinclusion.aspx}
about diversity, including those about racism, sexism and sexual violence, and the Chief, out into the open, not to vent or point fingers but to learn about each other’s experiences and opinions and, in so doing, build community.

Such dialogues have never been more essential. Even as empirical data show that implicit bias is pervasive, consistent, and robust, the last decade has seen the rise of the so-called “colorblind” ideology (Apfelbaum, Norton, & Sommers, 2012). This philosophy asserts that the most moral and effective response to racial inequities is to “not see color,” that is, to treat all people the same, regardless of their race or ethnicity. Although originally coined to describe views toward race, one can similarly talk about gender-blindness, class-blindness, etc.

While appearing on the surface to be just, colorblindness and other forms of identity-blindness actually serves to deny the reality of U.S. life. Notably, the negative effects of colorblindness on both those endorsing the ideology and on members of racial minority groups are well-documented. For example, Burkard and Knox (2004) found that psychotherapists’ level of color-blindness was inversely related to their capacity for empathy with black clients, but not white clients, while Plaut, Thomas, & Goren (2009) found that dominant-group members’ colorblindness had a negative impact on their work colleagues’ psychological engagement with the job.

There is no reason to believe that the university context would function differently. If we want to have an inclusive campus, we need to find ways to engage as many students and staff as possible without either alienating or tokenizing them. We also need to be willing to do the difficult work of understanding our own biases. Below are some restorative questions that are less likely to be heard as blame and more likely to lead to connection and engagement. They are the ones I will invite the undergraduate students to engage on March 31st but they are applicable to anyone.

1. What has been your experience with diversity/prejudice/bias/inclusion?

2. What do you think the university/department/organization/group is doing well in regard to diversity/inclusion? What are you personally doing well?

3. What do you think the university/department/organization/group can do better in regard to diversity/inclusion? What do you think you personally can do better?

4. What commitments are you personally willing to make to make this campus/department/organization more inclusive? What kind of support do you need in order to follow through?

References
J o n a t h a n  B y s t r y n s k i

Hello! My name is Jon Bystrynski and I’m excited to be joining the Clinical/Community division at UIUC. I worked at the NC School of Science and Mathematics after getting my undergraduate degree from Ursinus College. I’m mainly interested in how systems respond and communicate when handling sexual violence. I love scuba diving, cooking Italian food, and the music of Prince.

M e g a n  D a v i s

Hi! My name is Megan Davis and I’m very excited to be starting my first year in the Clinical/Community program! I recently graduated from the University of Chicago, where I studied psychology and biology and first developed my interest in psychology research. After college, I spent two years at the University of Maryland and the National Institute of Mental Health working on a longitudinal study of children at risk for anxiety disorders. I am looking forward to continuing to pursue my interest in clinical research and practice here at Illinois. Working with Wendy Heller, I am interested in studying the interactions of cognitions and emotions in the risk for and experience of psychopathology. I am also looking forward to exploring Urbana/Champaign, enjoying extreme Midwest seasons, and watching the Bears lose on local TV!

J e s s i c a  F i t t s

Hi! My name is Jessie Fitts and I’m from a suburb outside of Boston. I recently graduated from Williams College with a double major in Psychology and Biology. Here, I’m very excited to be working with Mark Aber and Nicole Allen on the Access initiative. In general, I’m interested in the development, implementation, and evaluation of community-based interventions, particularly in low-resource or international settings. Outside of school, I like to cook and eat and work on not killing all the plants I just bought for my new apartment.
**Camarin Meno**

Håfa Adai (“Hello” in the indigenous Chamorro language of Guam)! My name is Camarin Meno, and I’m from the U.S. territory of Guam, a rural Pacific Island community in the Western Pacific region of Micronesia. I recently completed my M.S. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Guam, where I also completed my undergraduate degree in Psychology. Being accepted into UIUC’s program is an incredible honor and privilege. At UIUC, I hope to begin crafting a research program that promotes the unique perspectives, interests, and overall welfare of marginalized groups, such as the Chamorro people of Guam, and translating such research into practice. I also hope to build lasting friendships over the next few years here in Champaign-Urbana!

**Nickholas Grant**

Bienvenue!!! My name is Nickholas Grant. I was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. I went to Louisiana State University where I received my undergraduate degree in Psychology. My current research interest are studying school, family, and community efforts in order to enhance prevention and intervention services for perpetrators and victims of violence, specifically children with high levels of externalizing behavior. For as personal interest, I love to workout, play any type of sports (if interested let me know), and spending time with great friends (COHORT 2014!!!). I am looking forward to starting my graduate career as well as starting a new chapter of my life at UIUC. #AnythingIsPossible

**Faaiza Khan**

Hello! My name is Faaiza Khan. I am originally from Karachi, Pakistan but have had the opportunity to live in three other countries, including Sri Lanka, England, and now America. As such, I have been exposed to multiple socio-cultural settings and hope to bring this experience with me to UIUC. Most recently, I have lived in Ithaca, NY and attended Cornell University, earning a B.A. in Psychology. While at Cornell, I worked in the Automaticity Lab where I soon became interested in the interplay of cognition and emotion in psychopathology, particularly with anxiety disorders. I hope to pursue and refine this interest further at UIUC as well as make a new life for myself here!
Alumni Corner

Joseph Gone received a Guggenheim fellowship for this past April. The press release announcing the Fellows can be found here: http://www.gf.org/system/assets/0000/5044/PressRelease2014.original.pdf?1397059345

The description of his fellowship project can be found here: http://www.gf.org/fellows/17587-joseph-p-gone

Regina Langhout has been appointed as the Provost of Oakes College at UC Santa Cruz. Her responsibilities include setting the academic mission of the college, which is "Communicating Diversity for a Just Society." She is also a co-PI on a newly awarded $2.8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education. She and researchers at the University of Minnesota, City University of New York, University of Georgia, University of Illinois at Chicago, and University of Memphis will be researching how community-engaged opportunities affect the persistence and retention of first generation college students.

Matthew Lee was granted tenure & promotion to Associate Professor at James Madison University last Spring 2014, and he was profiled in Diversity magazine as their Spectrum “Professor of the Month” a few months ago.

Melissa Milanak is no longer a post doc but faculty now. Her official titles are: Associate Director of Continuing Education, Department of Psychiatry Faculty Instructor, Sleep & Anxiety Treatment & Research Program (SATRP) Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences

Mona Robbins (formerly Taylor) is currently an Assistant Professor at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center (UTSW) in the Department of Psychiatry where she will be working with the Comprehensive Sickle Cell Disease Program with adult patients.

Kudos & Awards

Emily Dworkin won the Sarah Mangelsdorf award and the Herman Eisen award.

Sima Finy won the Jeffrey I. and Lisa Livovich Award.

Posts


Three people check into a hotel.

They pay $30 to the manager and go to their room.

The manager suddenly remembers that the room rate is $25 and gives $5 to the bellboy to return to the people.

On the way to the room the bellboy reasons that $5 would be difficult to share among three people so he pockets $2 and gives $1 to each person.

Now each person paid $10 and got back $1.

So they paid $9 each, totalling $27. The bellboy has $2, totalling $29.

Where is the missing $1?

Complete the fifth circle with the correct dots.

http://www.brainbashers.com/showpuzzles.asp?formpost=Y&field=ctop10a&page=1&puzzletext=A
http://www.brainbashers.com/showanswer.asp?ref=ZDMN
We have to be careful what we are adding together.

Originally, they paid $30, they each received back $1, they now have only paid $27.
Of this $27, $25 went to the manager for the room and $2 went to the bellboy.

At each stage, a new dot starts at the top, and then goes either clockwise, or counter-clockwise.
The Clinical/Community Psychology Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is a Clinical Science program designed to train scholarly and scientifically oriented researchers and professionals with a variety of interests.

Our program is committed to excellence in scientific clinical training and to using clinical science as the foundation for designing, implementing, and evaluating assessment and intervention procedures. Our educational philosophy emphasizes a creative, scholarly, and socially responsible approach to clinical and community psychology. Our mission is to produce graduates who assume leadership roles and contribute to the discipline and to society.

Alma Mater at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

The Department of Psychology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has a long-standing reputation for excellence. From its inception in 1904, the department has distinguished itself with outstanding faculty, research programs, and the best and brightest graduate students.

Consistently named one of the top five graduate programs in the country, the department nurtures an environment of collaborative and independent research and outstanding scholarship. The organization of our department, the variety of divisions, and the strength of our faculty allow students the opportunity to explore their interests across the discipline and alongside some of the finest minds in the country.

At the University of Illinois we provide the resources, the network, and the experience for mature young scholars to become committed professionals who make unique contributions to the field of psychology.

Whatever your professional interests and goals, you'll find an environment of excellence in which to pursue them and a community of dedicated and experienced collaborators to assist you in the Department of Psychology at the University of Illinois.