**Limit the Impact of Unconscious Biases in MSBA’s Hiring Process!**

Everyone has unconscious biases, which interfere with decision-making, particularly in the areas requiring subjective determinations. Our good intentions are not enough to prevent biases from affecting the hiring process. Let’s work together to interrupt our own unconscious biases so that we select the most qualified candidate for this position!

1. **Be aware of your biases** to limit the extent to which your biases contaminate this hiring process. Take one or more of the Implicit Association tests at [www.projectimplicit.org](http://www.projectimplicit.org).
2. **No one is “color blind” or “gender blind.”** [Research](http://groups.psych.northwestern.edu/spcl/documents/colorblind_final_000.pdf) demonstrates that believing you are “color/gender blind” actually makes you more biased. Acknowledge people’s differences and work to ensure those differences aren’t impacting you in decision-making.
3. **Recognize the need to be fair in this hiring process.** [Studies](http://povertylaw.org/sites/default/files/images/clearinghouse-review/free/implicit-bias.pdf) show that intentionally activating the part of your brain that seeks to be fair helps reduce bias.
4. **Find commonalities with others to interrupt your own biases.** [Research](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9780470672532.wbepp041/abstract;jsessionid=9094B7DF92328723A2B68FD77EB5C85D.f03t01?deniedAccessCustomisedMessage=&userIsAuthenticated=false) shows that when you deliberately seek out areas of commonality with others, you will exhibit less bias.
5. **Do not allow first impressions to dominate your decision.** Unconscious biases exert strong influences on our first impressions, “gut instincts”, and intuition. Keep an open mind throughout the interview despite any impressions you formulated based on a candidate’s resume or your first impressions.
6. **Take notes and use them to evaluate candidates at the completion of all interviews.** This can reduce the extent to which our minds resort to biased shortcuts when sorting through information.
7. **Take your time when making hiring decisions.** Bias is more prone to contaminate decisions when we’re stressed, tired, and rushed because our minds resort to (usually biased) shortcuts.

**Remind yourself how your biases cloud your thinking:**

* 1. We tend to gravitate toward people who are similar to us. (Affinity bias)
  2. We pay more attention to information that proves our preconceived beliefs and to disregard information that is contradictory. (Confirmation bias)
  3. We tend to default to the candidate that fits our preconceived image of that particular role. (e.g. men as leaders and women in support roles) (Availability bias)

**Keep your biases in check! Ask yourself:**

1. What do I base my decision on? Am I backing it up with facts and specific examples?
2. Would I say that about this person if they were a different gender, race, etc.?
3. Am I making judgments about someone based on their different personality type/work style/etc. or am I focused on their work results?
4. Am I using language that is highly subjective, like “aggressive”? If a highly subjective adjective is used, am I backing it up with facts and specific examples?