



Oregon State
University

Introduction to the OSU Search Advocate Program

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What is a Search Advocate?

Neutral external process advisor who:

- ✓ Advocates for diversity/inclusive excellence
- ✓ Attends to equity, validity, and rigor
- ✓ Encourages proactive evidence-based strategies to mitigate implicit bias
- ✓ Recommends practices/process enhancements to enhance equity, validity, and diversity
- ✓ Asks questions to help committee members recognize and test their thinking



Search Advocate Values

Integrity – being honest and trustworthy; aligning actions to values

Collaboration – working together towards a common goal

Curiosity – letting go of certainty; seeking to understand the unfamiliar and resist the rush to judgment

Empathy – imagining what another might be thinking or feeling without imposing one's own perspective.

Equity – ensuring that each person has what they need to succeed; addressing continued barriers to a level playing field

Inclusion – showing value for each person and respect for their differences, supporting full participation and ensuring that all are able to reach their potential

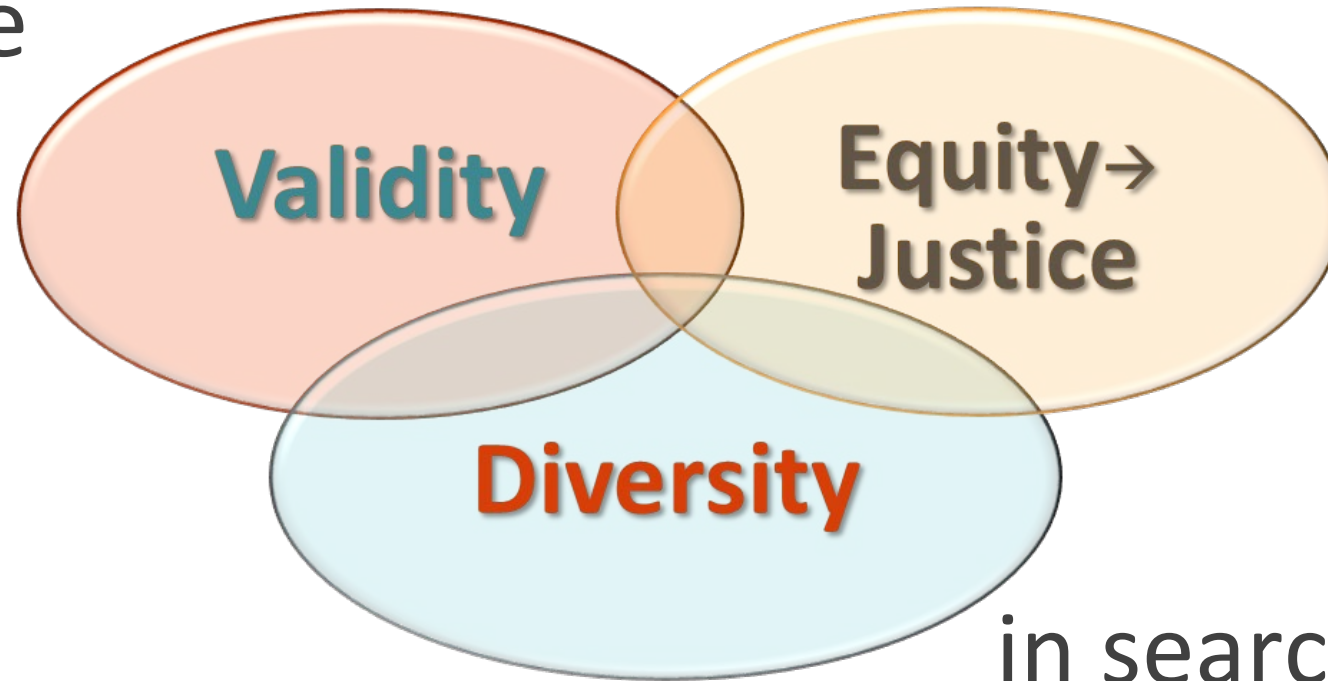
Hospitality – welcoming others with respect, regard, and sensitivity to their needs and desires

Respect – honoring, admiring, esteeming, treating others with courtesy and dignity yet not being silenced

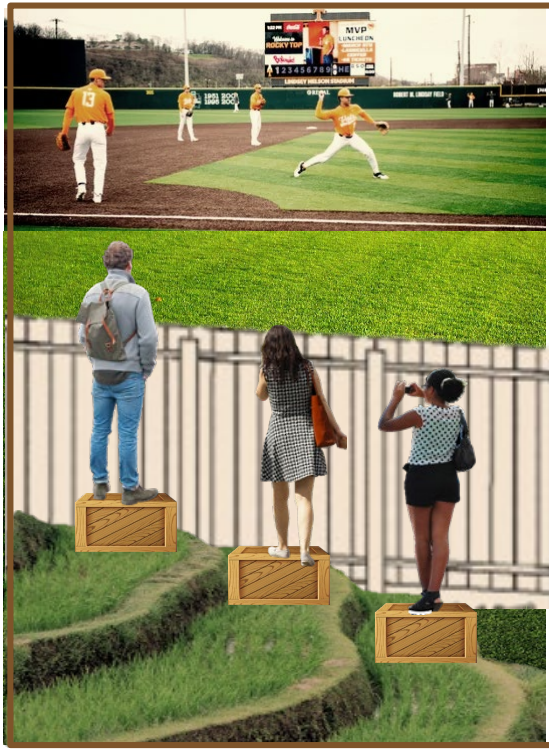


Search Advocate Mission

Enhance



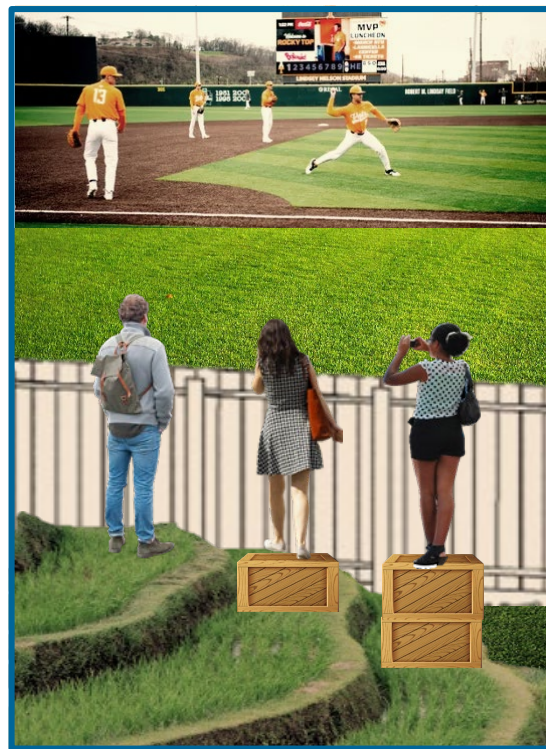
in search & selection



Fairness*

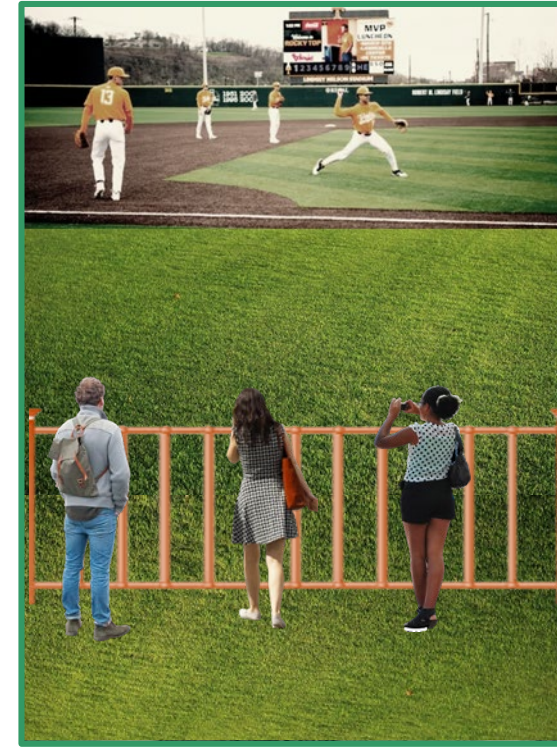
Assumption is that everyone will benefit from the same supports – they are being treated equally.

* or *equality*



Equity

Individuals are given different supports to make it possible for them to have equal access—they are being treated equitably.

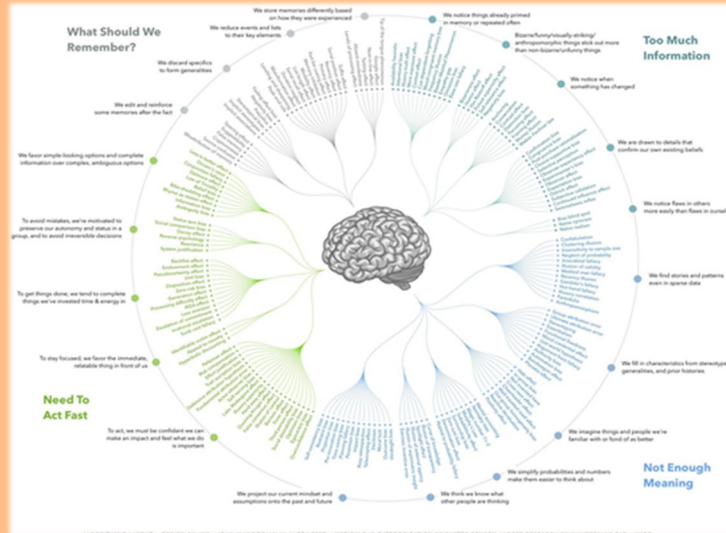


Justice

All three can see now without supports or accommodations since the cause of the inequity is addressed; the systemic barriers are removed.

Structural Bias - Societal

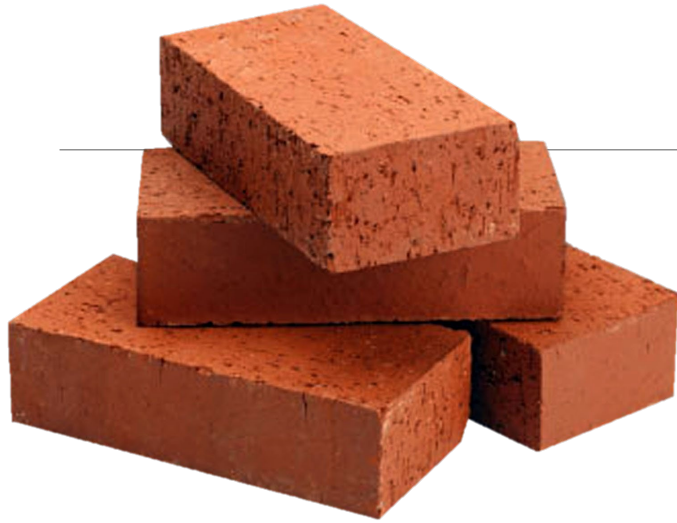
Cognitive Bias – Individual, non-conscious



Structural Bias – Institutional/Disciplinary



Implicit Bias develops within a societal and institutional context



Program Considerations

Training – robust interactive learning experience commensurate with the complexity of the goal

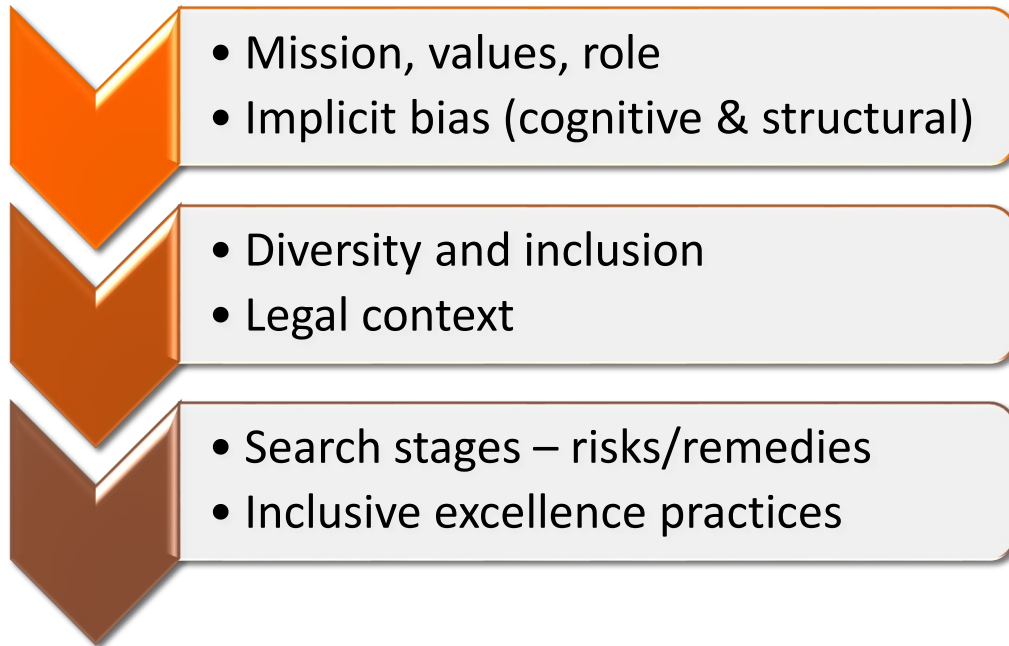
Shared governance – Explicitly affirm/support shared governance

Relationships – maintain collaboration with stakeholders including academic faculty, faculty senate, employees of color, leadership, administrative units, relevant programs

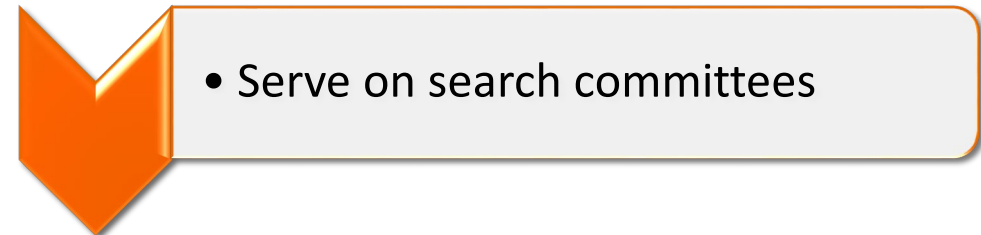
Community of practice – advocates learn together, discuss challenges and share effective approaches in a confidential environment

Developing Search Advocates

Workshop series



Applied Learning



Continuing Education



Search Advocate Approach



Flexible – no “one-size-fits-all” requirements;
Work with current practice, responsive to feedback

Facilitative – not the “HR police”

Proactive – discuss risks and strategies *before* issues arise

System 2 over System 1 thinking – favor slower analytical thinking
(System 2) to reduce cognitive bias

Evidence – examine evidence that supports and contradicts conclusions;
question assumptions

Processes, not people – strategies are non-blaming, non-judgmental

What might a similar role look like?

P&T Process Consultant or Proponent

Purpose - Support integrity and validity of the P&T process

Location - Consultant should have sufficient distance from the academic unit to have no other stake in the outcome; not limited by disciplinary norms, power dynamics, or working relationships



Initiate conversation with P&T committees *before* dossier review begins

- current/past practice
- criteria, risks of implicit cognitive and structural bias
- strategies to mitigate these risks

Serve as neutral process resources – ask and answer questions, offer tools

What might a similar role look like?

P&T Process Consultant or Proponent

Preparation - Thoroughly grounded in:

- Mechanisms of implicit cognitive and structural bias
- Specific bias risks in P&T process – assumptions and practices that can have unintended exclusive consequences
- Current institutional P&T process requirements
- Facilitative questioning strategies
- Bias mitigation tools tailored to P&T review

Continuing education – Maintain alignment with program practices and improvements





DISCUSSION AND QUESTIONS