

Inclusive Academic Science: Achieving Diversity and Excellence

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Our sources

ADVANCE institutions
Research and theory in social science

Our experience

- In our own institutions
- Visiting other institutions



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Evaluation

The institutional feature of academic science



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Evaluation

Ubiquitous

- Work (articles, grant proposals, students' products)
- People (admissions, annual review, mid-career review, tenure and promotion)

Consequential and cumulative

- Job, invitation to speak, recognition, influence in field, salary, teaching responsibilities

Subject to error

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Five sources of evaluation error (overview)

1. Belief in one's own objectivity
2. Confidence in one's own expertise
3. Confidence in sufficiency of one's own good intentions
4. Schemas
5. Reliance on proxy measures of excellence

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Five sources of error

1. Belief in one's own objectivity
2. Confidence in one's own expertise
 - Leads to "fast" vs. "slow" judgments
3. Confidence in sufficiency of one's own good intentions

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Five sources of error


4. Schemas: they influence our perceptions, interpretations, and memories

- Objects
- Situations
- People
 - Gender, race-ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, disability, others

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5. Reliance on proxy measures of excellence

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 **HARVARD UNIVERSITY**


To the Search Committee:

Chris Anderson is a brilliant scholar, a superb researcher, and an outstanding theorist. Some evidence of that is the fact that Chris publishes in very high impact journals and already has an *h*-index of 25. Chris's first paper has been cited 327 times. You can't do better.

Sincerely,

Albert Einstein Distinguished University Professor

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 **HARVARD UNIVERSITY** ← Proxy: PhD granting institution; reputation of recommender


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 **HARVARD UNIVERSITY** Proxy: letter of recommendation


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 **HARVARD UNIVERSITY** Proxy: journal impact factor; *h*-index

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Five principles of institutional change (overview)

1. Base plans for change in social science knowledge
2. Focus on policies and practices
3. Examine and amend evaluation procedures
4. Hold people accountable
5. Use universal design to maximize everyone's voice, potential, and contributions

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1. Base plans for change in social science knowledge

Motivate change

- Improve "fairness" and "accuracy" of the judgment process
 - How to create better judgments of job candidates, colleagues, and students
- Create conditions that maximize everyone's performance; develop team science

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2a. Focus on policies and procedures

- Providing information is not enough
- Modifying attitudes is not enough
- Policies and procedures become part of institutional culture rather than reliant on individuals
- Focus on flawed decision-making has wider appeal than focus on bias

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2b. Where to start on policies and procedures?

Options

- Systematic review of policies in place
- Searches
- Wherever institution perceives greatest need

Build out to other evaluation contexts (annual review, third year review, tenure and promotion reviews, awards)

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2c. Example: If start with searches

- Require search committees to learn about underlying issues and helpful practices
- Describe and explain helpful practices
 - Develop clear criteria at the beginning
 - Each person/work is assessed on all criteria
- Motivate helpful practices
 - Avoids drift into "x is so strong on one thing that the lack of other things can be ignored"
 - Avoids personal preferences and unequal influence

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2d. Example: If start with searches

- Provide tools to support careful review

Please indicate which of the following are true for you (check all that apply):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read candidate's CV | <input type="checkbox"/> Met with candidate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read candidate's scholarship | <input type="checkbox"/> Attended lunch or dinner with candidate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read candidate's letters of recommendation | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please explain): |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attended candidate's job talk | _____ |

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2e. Example: If start with searches
• Provide tools to support reflection about criteria

| Please rate the candidate on each of the following: | excellent | good | fair | poor | unable to judge |
|--|-----------|------|------|------|-----------------|
| Potential for (Evidence of) original, creative scholarship | | | | | |
| Potential for (Evidence of) research productivity | | | | | |
| Potential for (Evidence of) research funding | | | | | |
| Potential for (Evidence of) collaboration | | | | | |
| Fit with department's priorities | | | | | |
| Ability to make positive contribution to department's climate | | | | | |
| Potential (Demonstrated ability) to attract and supervise graduate students | | | | | |
| Potential (Demonstrated ability) to teach and supervise undergraduates | | | | | |
| Potential (Demonstrated ability) to be a conscientious university community member | | | | | |

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3a. Examine and amend evaluation procedures

- Be transparent in how evaluations will be conducted
- Adopt explicit practices for assessment
- Avoid rapid decision-making; slow processes down

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3b. Examine and amend evaluation procedures

- Select reviewers based on their expertise and ability to conduct fair review
 - Avoid people who disapprove of a particular *kind* of research
- Have serious discussion of where bias could creep in
 - letters of recommendations
 - teaching evaluations

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3c. Implement improved evaluation practices

- Develop formal policies requiring practices
- Require all review committees to be educated
 - Make them accountable for outcomes

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4a. Hold people accountable for explicit outcomes

- Diverse pool of applicants AND candidates
- More than one reviewer per application
- Clear criteria for evaluation
- Transparency to candidate about criteria
- Selection of reviewers based on expertise and ability to conduct fair review

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4b. Hold people accountable for process

- Respectful treatment of all
- Fair evaluation processes
- Recognition of points where bias possible (teaching evaluations, letters of recommendations)
- Regular review of criteria (e.g., engaged scholarship; digital humanities; qualitative methods)

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4c. Where accountability is easy or hard

Accountability “below” is relatively easy

- Include requirements in job description
- Connect to annual review

Accountability for higher-ups is tricky

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5a. Maximize voices and contributions of all (true inclusion)

- Value difference
- Avoid cues to not belonging
- Develop broader community, sense of belonging
- Launch and mentor thoughtfully
 - Provide information
 - Educate faculty about patronizing vs. wise mentoring

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5b. Include through universal design

Treat everyone equally, in a way that is responsive to difference

- Appreciate difference in coming up with solutions, while aiming for the same solution for everyone
- Take into account variability in human response
- Recognize that people differ, within social groups

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5c. Universal design is good for everyone

What helps women and people of color should help everyone, or at least be neutral for others



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Final thoughts

- How might these ideas be of use in your work?
- The NSF ADVANCE Program’s value

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