



# Evidence Based Factors that Undermine Departmental Climate and Staff Performance

Dean of Faculties & ADVANCE LEAD Program  
Effectively Leading Staff Workshop

# Why are we talking about staff?

- High employee attrition (which have high costs in terms of loss of institutional knowledge and opportunity cost to hire a new employee)
- Low employee morale and mental well-being
  - Fueled by uncertainty
- Reduced work flow

- Alleyne, 2004; Bielby, 2000; Constantine & Sue, 2007; Rowe, 1990

- Less desirable roles are treated less desirably (Ingram, 2006)
  - Monetarily, prestige, respect, etc.
- Value judgement of the person (Fuller, 2003)
  - In higher education organizations, often associated with education and rank

**Implicit bias is a largely unconscious negative evaluation or association that gets incorporated into one's mental representation of a particular concept (person, group, place, event, object, idea, value, etc.)**

# Examples Implicit Bias



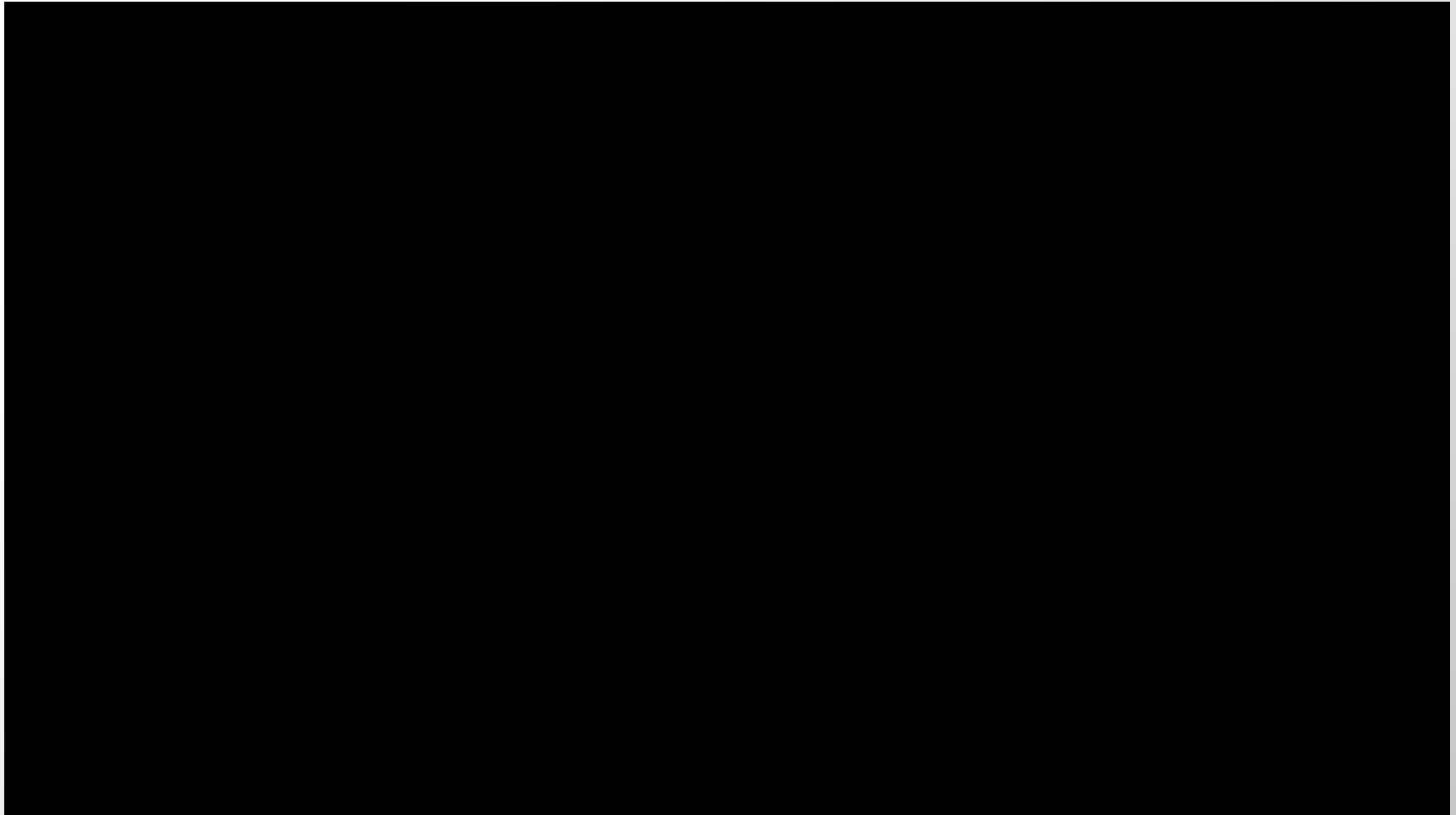
**MEDICINE**  
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- Medical school interviews (Redelmeier & Baxter, 2009)
- Orchestra (C. Goldin & C. Rouse, 2000)
- Letters of recommendation (Trix & Psenka, 2003)
- Hiring (Race) (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004)
- Hiring (Gender) (Moss-Racusin, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham & Handelsman, 2012)
- Compensation in sciences (DesRoches, Zinner, Rao, Iezzoni & Campbell, 2010)
- Physician Diagnosis (Green, Carney, et al., 2007)
- Radiologist study (Drew, Vo & Wolfe, 2013)





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One of the ways that implicit bias is manifested is through microaggressions



- Microaggressions are:
  - Intentional and unintentional
  - Brief and common interactions (verbal, behavior, or environmental) indignities
  - Communicate hostile, derogatory, negative messages, invalidations, and insults
  - Directed to an individual or group based on a marginal social status

- Derald Wing Sue, 2010

- Can be based on any number of identity characteristics, including race, gender, country of origin, sexual orientation, etc.
- *Often times happen with the perpetrator unaware that an indignity was deployed*

-Hunter, 2011; Sue, 2010



Perpetrated by those who  
believe they are treating  
people equally

-Hunter, 2011; Sue, 2010

- **Microinsult**
  - Verbal remarks, rude behavior, insensitivity to demean identity
- **Microinvalidation**
  - Exclude or negate thoughts, feelings or the reality of a marginalized group
- **Microassault**
  - Insult with the intent of hurting the victim

- Sue, 2007

During the past year, have you been in a situation in your department/unit where someone:

- Put you down or was condescending to you
- Paid little attention to you or showed little interest in your opinion
- Doubted your judgement on a matter over which you have responsibility
- Interrupted or spoke over you
- Did not consult you in reference to a decision you should have been involved

## Intersection with data on Race and Sex

Within the last five years, have you experienced any job-related discrimination at A&M on the basis of:

### Staff

Race: 11%

Sex: 7%

### Management Staff:

Race: 8%

Sex: 11%

- End of the year banquet in the college to recognize the “hard work of the college,” but invitation not extended to staff members
- Backhanded compliment:  
“You do that task really well for a \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Not knowing the names of the staff members in and around your unit
- Interrupting staff members and not allowing them to complete their thought

-Young, Anderson & Steward, 2015; Sue, 2010

- Invisibility:
  - Fail to acknowledge or even say ‘hello’ when you see a staff member
  - Fail to listen to a staff member who has an idea or contribution for the greater good
  - Feigning insincere concern for staff members

-Young, Anderson & Steward, 2015; Sue, 2010





“We went to the alumni council meeting which are a majority white people. [The leader] introduced all of the leadership staff, listing all of their awards, accolades and responsibilities. When it was my turn he just pointed and said ‘that’s Jasmin.’ Nothing else. I was humiliated in front of all of those alumni.”

-Jasmin (Black, woman staff member)

“He [white administrator] is also one of the people where I can say something and everybody will be like ‘well, I don’t know what you mean,’ and then there will be a white person there that he respects more that apparently serves as my interpreter, and he’s like ‘well, you know I think what Angela is trying to say, you have to look at it from her point of view.’ Then all of a sudden he [white administrator] is like ‘oh yeah.’ So that person gets to legitimize me as, you know, a thinking person.”

-Angela (Black, woman staff member)

“Like, for example, sometimes there’s a lot of silencing, so like I’ve been in meetings where white guys can ramble on and on and say whatever they want to say. Sometimes, if I want to talk, people try to silence me before I’ve even gotten going. They try to tell me, ‘you know we’ve got to be cognizant of the time.’ Like sometimes people can be very dismissive and then I have to push back against that, which makes me kind of seem like a pushy person.”

- Angela (Black, woman staff member)



Why do these persist? Why  
are things like this not  
simply reported?

- Positional power differential
- Educational power differential
- *At will* employment status

- Discomfort citing indignity
  - Fear of retribution
  - Fear of creating discord in the office
  - Discomfort engaging in a discussion of race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.
  - Unwillingness to expend the emotional energy
  - History indicates nothing will change and effort will be in vain

“I can’t explain it, but it’s very subtle. ‘Let’s create the illusion [of diversity].’ I look at the diversity initiatives and I know the university has made a lot of progress. [...] Some departments do a very good job of fairness, equity, and then other do a terrible job. But nobody hears about it. It’s almost like there's a deaf ear and if you try to bring attention to it, what you get told is ‘Anita, you know, well, we’re making progress, and you just have to bear with this.’”

-Anita (Black, woman staff member)



In fact there was one very specific allegation of harassment that I'm familiar with that we brought to the attention of whoever headed up the campus police, and they just refused to deal with it. And it's kind of at that point that I began to think this isn't the best place for me.

-William (Black, male staff member)

## Harley Davidson Example

- Building ownership of the projects among staff
- Level the playing field – equals not peers
- Empower/trust
- Keep staff informed
- Treat staff like adults – respectful and straightforward

-Strauss & Glick, 2013



**It's 4:30 am and I am at work.**



**THANK YOU!**