WISELI'S WORKSHOPS FOR SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIRS: EVALUATION REPORT

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Background

The Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute (WISELI), located on the UW-Madison campus, is supported by a five-year ADVANCE grant from the National Science Foundation. In the original proposal application for this grant, the authors described their vision:

> Our *vision* is to transform UW-Madison into an inclusive community where—irrespective of gender, race, or cultural background—all individuals are valued and encouraged to learn, teach, collaborate, explore, and share ideas. In accordance with the goals of ADVANCE, this proposal focuses on gender diversity in science and engineering…the *anticipated impact*…is to transform UW-Madison into an on-going living laboratory which will promote gender equity for women in science and engineering and *provide methods and analyses* to measure *intermediate indicators* of success. A National Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute (WISELI) will be established as a visible, campus-wide entity, endorsed by top-level administrators. WISELI itself will be part of the project design and will centralize collected data, monitor the success of the proposed efforts, implement a longitudinal data system, and ensure dissemination of best practices.

Further, they note that WISELI's long-term goal was to have the gender of the faculty, chairs, and deans reflect the gender of the student body.[1]

Although not in the original proposal, WISELI's Principal Investigators, staff and Leadership Team focused on the "search process" as one avenue to achieve both intermediate and long-term goals of the grant. To wit, they created a working group with representatives from various areas on campus to develop a workshop series entitled, "Searching for Excellence and Diversity: A Workshop for Faculty Search Committee Chairs." Through a process of script development, a series of meetings were created to help search committee chairs run effective and efficient search committees, recruit excellent and diverse applicants, and conduct fair and thorough reviews of candidates. This working group hoped that by providing search committee chairs with tools to broaden searches and raise awareness about implicit biases brought to the review process, the diversity of candidate pools for faculty and administration positions would be increased.[2]

Structure of the Workshops for Search Committee Chairs

This workshop series for chairs of search committees was developed in conjunction with the Provost's office, Office of Human Resources, and the Equity and Diversity Resource Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Initially, the three-part workshop was structured to trace the progression of search committee work. In the first meeting, designed to occur before the initial meeting of the search committee, chairs were to be introduced to strategies for running efficient meetings, gaining participation of all committee members, and building a diverse pool. At a second meeting, ideally before the application deadline, chairs are to share their search results and discuss what strategies were successful in their experiences. In this meeting, they also planned to discuss methods to ensure candidate files receive an equitable and through review.

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[1] http://www.wiseli.engr.wisc.edu, original proposal to the NSF, February 2001
[2] http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/initiatives/hiring/training_hiring.html

Finally, a third meeting was to be arranged prior to the finalization of candidate interview lists. At the final session, search committee chairs were to discuss balancing efficiency and interviewing broadly, recruitment during the interview process, and the design of interview questions.

To complement the workshop, WISELI also developed a guidebook entitled, "Searching for Excellence and Diversity: A Guide for Search Committee Chairs." Distributed to all workshop participants, the guide discusses the five essential elements of a successful search. These include: 1) running an effective and efficient search committee, 2) actively recruiting an excellent and diverse pool of candidates, 3) raising awareness of unconscious assumptions and their influence on candidate evaluation, 4) ensuring a fair and thorough review of candidates, and 5) developing and implementing an effective interview process. The guidebook elements reinforce the workshop content and also provide additional resources and suggestions that search chairs can implement in their committees. [3]

To accommodate the varied needs and schedules of different search committees, departments, and institutional units on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus, WISELI developed several modified workshop formats. Single, two-hour workshops were tailored for the College of Engineering and Medical School search chairs, and were offered at various times and locations on campus. A number of University-wide workshops in the single-session format were also held. A two-session version of the workshop was designed for the College of Letters and Science. The first two-hour session was scheduled to coincide with the early phases of search committee work while the second occurred late in the search process. The first session covered elements one through three, while the second discussed elements four and five along with feedback on best practices. Different WISELI staff and other campus administrators and faculty facilitated these sessions in their various formats.

Workshop Participation

Since the inception of this initiative, 167 faculty, academic staff, and administrators have participated in the WISELI search workshops. Of these, fourteen attended pilot workshops[4] organized in the summer of 2003, while all other participants attended the formal workshop(s) begun in spring 2004. While the workshop series was designed for search committee chairs, participation was open to others involved in the search process including department chairs, search committee members, and administrative support staff. Eighty-two percent of the participants hold faculty appointments, a fact which suggests that the majority have served as search committee chairs or members, or both.

The group of past workshop participants represents at least 69 departments and several administrative units from across the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. The distribution of faculty participants across institutional units is summarized in Table 1.

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[3] http://wiseli.engr.wisc.edu/initiatives/hiring/SearchBook.pdf
[4] Pilot workshop members were not asked to participate in the formal program evaluation reported here, thus pilot participants are excluded from the count of participants elsewhere in this report unless otherwise noted.

Table 1.
Search Workshop faculty participants, by UW-Madison School or College[5]

School or College	Faculty participants	% of faculty
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences	14	5.2
College of Engineering	21	11.6
College of Letters and Science	51	6.3
Medical School	31	8.8
School of Pharmacy	5	17.8
School of Veterinary Medicine	4	7.6
Total	127	7.4

An alternate classification of participants, by scholarly division, is presented in Table 2. The concentration of faculty participants in the physical and biological sciences and their major institutional units – the College of Engineering, Veterinary School, and Schools of Medicine and Pharmacy – reflects WISELI's focus on transforming the institutional culture to advance the participation of women in science and engineering fields.

Table 2.
Search Workshop faculty participants, by division[6]

Division	Faculty participants	% of faculty
Physical Sciences	31	6.7
Biological Sciences	55	7.2
Social Studies	21	3.5
Humanities	19	5.0
Total	126	5.7

The gender of workshop participants is detailed in Table 3. About 28% of faculty participants were female, as compared to 37% amongst the group of all participants. The faculty gender distribution is consistent with the representation of women on the UW-Madison faculty overall (27%) and the expected gender distribution (about 25% female), taking into account the concentration of faculty participants in the physical and biological sciences. The greater number of female participants among non-faculty is consistent with the higher representation of women in non-faculty positions on the UW-Madison campus.[7]

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[5] School and College faculty data from the *2004-2005 Data Digest*; faculty counts include only pay-rolled employees (i.e., excludes faculty with zero-dollar appointments or who are paid wholly through administrative appointments).
[6] Uses WISELI-defined divisional categories; divisional faculty data from the 2004 *Annual Report of ADVANCE program for University of Wisconsin-Madison* (Institutional data, Table 1). Faculty counts include faculty with zero-dollar appointments or who are paid wholly through administrative appointments.
[7] http://wiscinfo.doit.wisc.edu/DataDigest/DataDigest2004-2005.pdf

Table 3.
Search Workshop participants, by gender

	Male		Female	
	N	*%*	N	*%*
Faculty participants	91	71.7	36	28.3
All participants	97	63.0	57	37.0

Workshop participants' faculty and leadership titles are presented in Table 4. The majority of participants hold appointments as full professors. As compared to junior faculty, full professors are more frequently involved in hiring decisions and tend to fulfill leadership roles in the hiring process. Thus, this skew in participation is consistent with WISELI's emphasis on training search committee chairs. About 20% of faculty participants were serving as chair of their department and three participants occupy campus leadership positions.

Table 4.
Search Workshop faculty participants, by title

Title	N	*%*
Assistant Professor	2	1.6
Associate Professor	29	23.0
Professor	95	75.4
Department Chair	26	20.5
Dean or Chancellor (all ranks)	3	2.4

Overall, participation in the first two years of search workshop tends to suggest WISELI was successful in reaching its target audience: faculty members involved in hiring decisions, especially those in the biological and physical sciences. Furthermore, the wide representation of faculty members from different departments – at least one individual from 60% of physical and biological science departments went through the training – supports the conclusion that the reach of the workshops was broad.

Evaluation Methods and Results

Method 1: Immediate Evaluations of the Workshops

At the conclusion of the workshop meetings, participants were asked to evaluate their experience by completing a paper or online survey at the close of the session (see Appendix A for a copy of this survey). In particular, we sought feedback on the value of each topic covered, other topics the participants wanted covered, suggestions from the workshop participants, and how WISELI might improve the workshop experience in the future.

Respondents

Sixty-five of the 153 participants who were asked to complete an evaluation survey did so, yielding a response rate of 42%. The demographic characteristics of respondents are summarized in Tables 5 and 6. Comparing the self-reported campus titles of respondents to those of all

workshop participants suggests that respondents are reasonably similar to the overall population.[8] About 75% of respondents reported a faculty title, while 82% of workshop participants were identified as faculty members. Similarly, 27% of respondents identified their campus role as including a leadership position (i.e., department chair, section head, dean) as compared to 19% of participants overall who were identified as such. While it is plausible that non-faculty, leaders, and other participant groups could be over (or under-) represented amongst survey respondents, the distribution of campus titles suggests that the two groups are similar.

Table 5.
Reported title or campus role, all respondents

	N	%
Faculty member	47	74.6
Administrative	11	17.5
Other	5	7.9
Leadership position	17	27.0

Table 6.
Reported role on search committee, all respondents

	N	%
Search committee chair	35	54.7
Search committee member	17	26.6
Administrative	8	12.5
Department chair	5	7.8

Quantitative Results

Respondents were asked to rate the value of each workshop component on a scale from one to three, with one representing *not at all valuable*, two representing *somewhat valuable*, and three representing *highly valuable*. Space was also provided for respondents to detail additional comments for each item, although this was seldom utilized. The distributions of responses to the scaled items are summarized in Tables 7a to 7g.

Table 7a.
Evaluation of "Introduction" workshop component, response distribution[9]

	N	%
1 – Not at all valuable	0	0.0
2 – Somewhat valuable	23.5	36.2
3 – Very valuable	32.5	52.5
Did not respond	5	13.9

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[8] Different methods were used to identify the characteristics of workshop participants as compared to survey respondents. Participants' campus titles were identified through a campus directory. Survey respondents were asked to self-identify their campus role in an open-ended response.
[9] The higher non-response rate for the "Introduction" and "Run an Effective and Efficient Search Committee" components owes to multiple session workshops. Several respondents indicated that they were unable to recall early workshop components and were thus unable to assign a rating.

Table 7b.
Evaluation of "Run an Effective and Efficient Search Committee" workshop component, response distribution

	N	%
1 – Not at all valuable	2	3.1
2 – Somewhat valuable	21.5	33.1
3 – Very valuable	36.5	56.2
Did not respond	5	7.7

Table 7c.
Evaluation of "Actively Recruit a Diverse and Excellent Pool" workshop component, response distribution

	N	%
1 – Not at all valuable	1	1.6
2 – Somewhat valuable	23.5	36.2
3 – Very valuable	37.5	57.7
Did not respond	3	4.6

Table 7d.
Evaluation of "Raise Awareness of Unconscious Assumptions and their Influence" workshop component, response distribution

	N	%
1 – Not at all valuable	1	1.6
2 – Somewhat valuable	11.5	17.7
3 – Very valuable	49.5	76.2
Did not respond	3	4.6

Table 7e.
Evaluation of "Ensure a Fair and Through Review of Candidates" workshop component, response distribution

	N	%
1 – Not at all valuable	0	0.0
2 – Somewhat valuable	24.5	33.7
3 – Very valuable	37.5	57.7
Did not respond	3	4.6

Table 7f.
Evaluation of "Develop and Implement an Effective Interview Process" workshop component, response distribution

	N	%
1 – Not at all valuable	2	3.1
2 – Somewhat valuable	23	35.4
3 – Very valuable	38	58.4
Did not respond	2	3.1

Table 7g.
Evaluation of "Close the Deal Successfully" workshop component, response distribution[10]

	N	%
1 – Not at all valuable	1	3.3
2 – Somewhat valuable	10	33.3
3 – Very valuable	17	56.7
Did not respond	2	6.7

Overall, responses tend to suggest that the vast majority of workshop participants found all workshop elements *somewhat* or *very valuable*. No more than two individuals (about 3% of respondents) assigned any one component the lowest rating of *not at all valuable*. The "Raise Awareness of Unconscious Assumptions and Their Influence" component received higher ratings than any other component, with 76.2% of respondents rating it *highly valuable*. For all other workshop components, ratings were highly similar falling between 2.57 and 2.60 (see Table 8).

Table 8.
Average evaluation of workshop components, rank ordered

	Mean
Raise Awareness of Unconscious Assumptions and their Influence	2.78
Ensure a Fair and Thorough Review of Candidates	2.60
Actively Recruit a Diverse and Excellent Pool	2.59
Run an Effective and Efficient Search Committee	2.58
Introduction	2.58
Develop and Implement and Effective Interview Process	2.57
Close the Deal Successfully	2.57

We also asked respondents to provide an overall rating for the workshop, using a one to three scale. Here one represented *not at all useful*, two represented *somewhat useful*, and three represented *very useful*. Responses to this item are summarized in Table 9. A majority of

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[10] This component included in some workshops. Where this component was excluded, respondents were not asked to evaluate it. Thirty respondents are included in the total sample population for this item.

respondents indicated that the workshop, overall, was very useful and none asserted that it was of no use. The mean response for this item was 2.62.

Table 9.
Overall evaluation of the Search Committee Workshop,
response distribution

	N	%
1 – Not at all useful	0	0.0
2 – Somewhat useful	19.5	30.0
3 – Very useful	42.5	65.4
Did not respond	3	4.6

Finally, we also asked respondents whether or not they would recommend the search workshop to others. Responses were recorded as either *yes* or *no* and space was provided for individuals to comment on their answers. The distribution of binary responses is summarized in Table 10 and open-ended comments have been incorporated into a discussion of qualitative themes, below.

Table 10.
Willingness to recommend the Workshop to others,
response distribution

	N	%
Yes, would recommend	58	89.2
No, would not recommend	0	0.0
Did not respond	7	10.8

Again, responses suggest a high perception of the workshop experience. The vast majority of respondents (89.2%) indicated that they would recommend the workshop to others. No individuals said they would not recommend the workshop.

Taken together, responses to this portion of the survey evidence that many or most workshop participants would likely rate their workshop experience as *somewhat* to *very useful or valuable*. These responses also suggest that the "Raise Awareness of Unconscious Assumptions and their Influence" workshop component is generally perceived to be the best aspect of the workshop. Other workshop components are often viewed as similarly useful, but are not viewed as highly as the Assumptions component.

Qualitative Results

In an effort to enrich the scaled portions of the survey, we incorporated multiple open-ended questions. These provided respondents an opportunity to comment on any of the workshop components, their overall experience, and how we might improve the workshop in the future. Responses to the various open-ended items were similar in content and tended to cluster into two types: evaluations of the most valuable aspects of the workshop and suggestions for improving the workshops in the future. For this analysis, open-ended responses have been grouped along these two dimensions and coded into thematic clusters.

Respondents' evaluations of the most valuable aspects of the workshop revealed nine predominant themes:

➢ *Recognition of unconscious bias and assumptions* – The most common theme in respondents' remarks (35%[11]) was that the workshop raised awareness of unconscious biases and assumptions and how this might affect the search.
  o "Everyone brings a perception/bias to the search committee."
  o "Avoiding bias in looking at applications"
  o "Raised awareness of biases"

➢ *Ways to improve the search and interview processes* – Many respondents (28%) suggested that the workshop provided useful suggestions and strategies to improve the search and interview processes.
  o "Effective strategies to diversify applicant pool"
  o "Better interviewing strategies"
  o "*Very* helpful advice regarding recruiting strategies"
  o "Having members of search committee ask same set of questions to all applicants"

➢ *Legal and procedural aspects of the search process* – Many respondents (27%) indicated that the workshop improved their understanding of the legal and procedural aspects of the search process.
  o "Better technical understanding of open meetings law and other formal requirements"
  o "A clearer idea of the legal aspects of the search"
  o "Emphasis on confidentiality"

➢ *Overview and design of the search process* – Respondents often (20%) noted that the workshop's attention to the 'broad picture' of the search process was valuable and could be applied in their capacity on the Search Committee.
  o "So key to be thoughtful well ahead of time about structure and process"
  o "How to design a search process"

➢ *Attentiveness to communication* – Some respondents (15%) indicated that the workshop raised their awareness of the importance of communication in the search process.
  o "Be more proactive at comm[unicating]"
  o "Importance of phone interviews/direct contacts"
  o "Communicate frequently and quickly with candidates"

➢ *Resources for assistance on and off campus* – Some respondents (13%) remarked that the workshop increased their awareness of diversity and recruiting resources available both on and off campus.
  o "Much better awareness of UW resources for recruiting"
  o "Accessing diversity information (need to)"

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[11] Response ratios for qualitative items are out of respondents who provided at least one qualitative comment (N=60).

- ➢ *Inter-departmental networking and feedback* – Some respondents (12%) commented that the workshop's small-group discussions provided a venue for networking and receiving feedback on search strategies from faculty in different departments.
    - o "It was nice to share experiences with other search committees"
    - o "How other departments run their hiring committee (from table disc[ussion])"
    - o "Enjoyed discussion[s] with diverse faculty"

- ➢ *Workshop guidebook* – A few respondents (10%) remarked that they felt the "Searching for Excellence and Diversity: A Guide for Search Committee Chairs" guidebook was a useful resource.
    - o "The red book will be a good resource – thanks"
    - o "Thank you for the updated, comprehensive workbook"

- ➢ *Better understanding of diversity* – Respondents seldom (7%) noted that the workshop had helped them to better understand and/or explain to others the significance and meaning of diversity in hiring.
    - o "New ways to communicate/explain the importance of diversity"
    - o "Better awareness of what is meant by searching for diversity and better ways to explain that we do not trade quality for diversity"

Fewer respondents provided feedback on how WISELI might improve the search workshops in the future, than discussed the most valuable aspects of the workshop. Nonetheless, a number of emergent themes can be identified in these responses. Respondents made six primary suggestions on how the workshops might be improved or implemented differently in the future.

- ➢ *More best practices and ways to implement the message* – The most frequent suggestion, made by 12% of respondents, was that the workshop incorporate more "best practices" and focus more on how to actually implement diversity in the search process.
    - o *"*Seeking diversity candidates – methods used successfully"
    - o "More direction in how to solicit best candidates"
    - o "Where to recruit diverse groups – what's been successful"
    - o "I think I expected deeper discussion/specific resources on 'diversity'"

- ➢ *Rebalance discussion of search process* – Ten percent of respondents suggested that the discussion of the search process and procedures be rebalanced in future workshops. Suggestions were mixed with regards to the direction of the rebalancing: two respondents suggested that this portion of the workshop be truncated, while four suggested that we expand the discussion.
    - o "Stick to diversity, not search in general"
    - o "Much focus on search process that I probably would have found more helpful when I was initially asked to chair the committee"
    - o "More discussion on how to organize the search process"
    - o "[More on] specific 'rules' to legally apply"

➢ *Expand participation in the workshops* – Some respondents (10%) remarked that they felt more faculty should participate in the workshops, with one even suggesting that the workshops should become permanently institutionalized.
  o "Members of hiring committees should be encouraged to attend"
  o "Offer [the workshop] to more than just search committee chairs"
  o "I'd definitely recommend that this [workshop] become permanent, standard UW operating procedure"

➢ *Allocate more time to the workshop* – Eight percent of respondents suggested that there was not enough time to fully delve into the workshop issues and that this shortage of time hindered discussion. Some suggested that the workshop be extended to a longer time format.
  o "Time was too short for some of the discussions"
  o "Activities [were] so short that [it] reduced effectiveness"
  o "We do need more time to fully cover all of this [material]"
  o "I wonder if a series of 2-3 workshops, each dealing with a stage of the process, might be more productive"

➢ *Incorporate more discussions and peer interactions into the workshop* – Many respondents noted that the small-group discussions were a highly valuable aspect of the workshop. Five percent suggested that future workshops incorporate more discussion and peer-interactions.
  o "Keep as much interaction as possible"
  o "More group discussions"

➢ *Include more discussion of diversity* – Respondents seldom (3%) suggested that the workshop more explicitly address what diversity means and how it relates to the search process.
  o "[Include a] definition of diversity"

Summary

Taken together, responses to the workshop survey provide useful feedback on participants' experiences. Both the quantitative and qualitative results indicate the workshop's focus on raising awareness of inherent biases and their influence on the evaluation of applicants was found to be the most valuable aspect by many participants. This suggests that the research-based approach WISELI took to the topic was highly successful.

The themes raised in qualitative comments also tend to support several other conclusions. While many respondents asserted that they found the workshop's suggestions on how to revise the search and interview processes to promote diversity to be helpful, others also commented that they would like to see more practical suggestions and best practices for diversifying the applicant pool incorporated into the workshop. A similar contrast was found in respondents' evaluation of the search process and procedures elements. Some indicated that they found the emphasis on the legal procedures and formal aspects of search committee work very useful. Others, however,

noted that they were already familiar with this material and suggested it might be better directed at new search committee chairs.

Several comments regarding the workshop structure could also be taken into account when designing future workshops. A few individuals noted that the training could be more effective if allotted more time, perhaps over several themed sessions. This suggests that on-going evaluation efforts should be aimed at comparing the experiences and outcomes of the different workshop formats that WISELI has already devised and implemented.

A few comments also supported expanded workshop participation, particularly to include search committee members. This suggestion should be weighed against evidence that identification as a search committee member is negatively correlated with respondents' overall evaluation of the workshop.[12] It is plausible that search committee members may find the workshop focus misaligned with their search committee role.

Method 2: Follow-up Survey to Assess Impact of the Search Workshops

In an effort to evaluate what, if any, substantive impact the search committee training has had on hiring practices, we administered an electronic survey to past workshop participants (see Appendix B for a copy of this survey). This survey asked respondents to report how, if at all, the training they had received had changed the process and outcome of a post-workshop search. In particular, we were interested in identifying how participants had changed their behaviors during the recruitment, applicant screening, and interview stages of the search.

Respondents

A request to complete the electronic survey instrument was sent by email to 116 participants who had completed the search workshop through November 2005. Response to the request was low, with only 29 persons completing the survey. Of these, six were excluded because the respondents indicated that they had not participated in a search since completing the workshop.[13] The overall response rate was thus approximately 20% (see Table 11).

Table 11.
Follow-up Survey Response Rate

	N
Past workshop participants	116
Responses	29
Excluded responses	6
Total response rate	*19.8%*

The demographic characteristics of respondents are similar to the sample population as a whole. The distribution of genders, titles/ranks, and UW-Madison school or college affiliation among respondents is consistent with the group of past workshop participants as a whole. Considering

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[12] Identification as a search committee member is negatively correlated with both mean rating of all workshop components ($\rho=-0.15$) and overall rating ($\rho=-0.23$). Identification as a search committee chair was positively correlated with both measures ($\rho=0.20$ and $\rho=0.06$).

[13] A number of individuals who received the survey replied separately and requested that the survey be sent again once they had completed a search (spring 2006).

other characteristics, some types of workshop participants may be over- or under-represented among respondents. Both the most and least recent workshop participants more often returned a valid survey than other workshop cohorts (26% and 40%, respectively, versus 16% for all others). Participants who had been trained in an individual workshop session infrequently responded to the survey as compared to group workshop participants (5% vs. 23% total response).

Given the low response and the relatively small initial sample population, it is necessary to proceed cautiously in interpreting the survey data. As noted, while the general characteristics of the respondents are consistent with the overall population of past workshop participants, there may be some systematic variation in survey responses. To address this possibility, the general themes identified here are verified within the over- and under-represented groups wherever possible.

Before proceeding to ask respondents to evaluate their post-workshop search experience, we asked them to describe the characteristics of the candidate being sought. Most indicated that they were searching for a faculty member (86%), most commonly at the junior or all levels (50% and 23%, respectively) and rarely at the senior level (9%). The remaining searches were described as seeking administrators (14%). The majority of searches required a PhD as a minimum qualification (67%), while some required a health sciences advanced degree (MD, PharmD, or DVM required by 29% of searches).

Implementing Workshop Strategies

We asked respondents to evaluate the impact of their search workshop training in a variety of ways. First, we asked respondents to indicate whether they had undertaken any of the Workshop's suggested actions to improve hiring practices. A list of 17 action items, any of which could be checked, followed the question: *"Which of the following did you do as a result of participating in the search workshop(s)?"* The distribution of responses is presented in Figures 1a to 1c.

Responses to this question suggest that the search workshops were most effective in motivating changes in the recruitment/pool building and applicant evaluation/interview phases of search committee work. A majority of respondents affirmed that they had undertaken suggested strategies to enlarge and increase the diversity of the candidate pool as well as ways to reduce the impact of implicit biases on candidate evaluation. This tends to suggest that search committees may tend to be unaware of these strategies, which can be readily translated from training to implementation (see Figures 1a and 1b).

These responses also suggest that the search workshops were least effective at encouraging changes in the composition of search committees, the method and tenor of search committee meetings, and the criteria used to evaluate applicants and candidates. This might suggest that these strategies were already incorporated into search committee practices prior to workshop training or participants encountered obstacles to implementing these strategies (see Figure 1c).

Figure 1a.
Changes in search committee behavior attributable to workshop training, self-reports of past participants: most common responses.
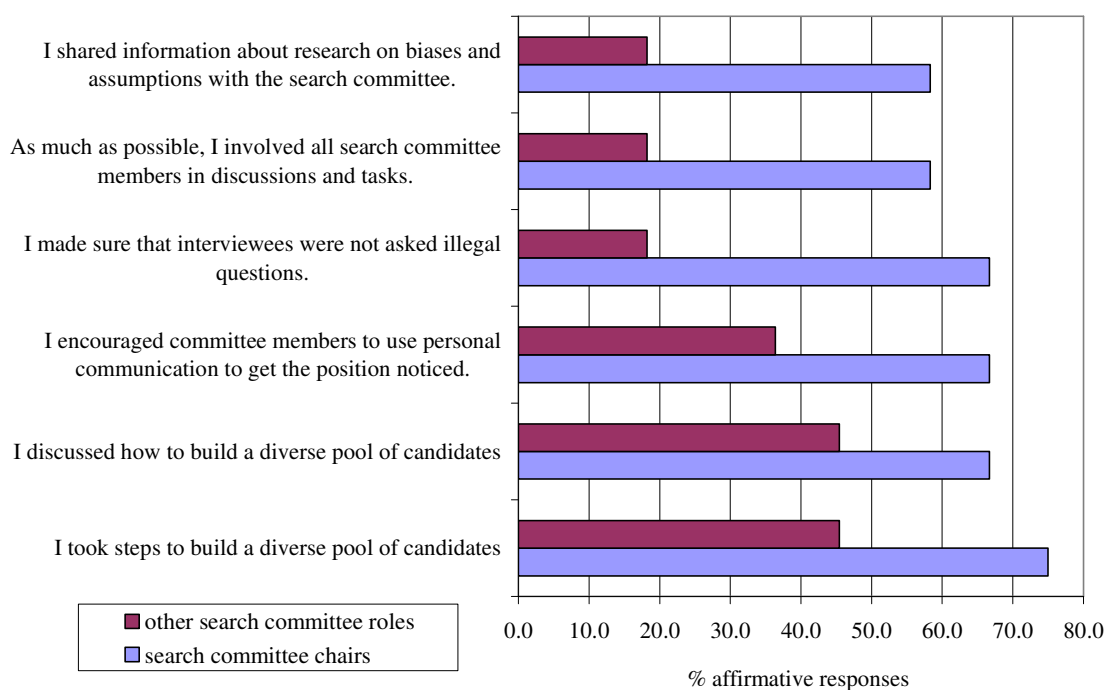

Figure 1b.
Changes in search committee behavior attributable to workshop training, self-reports of past participants: common responses.
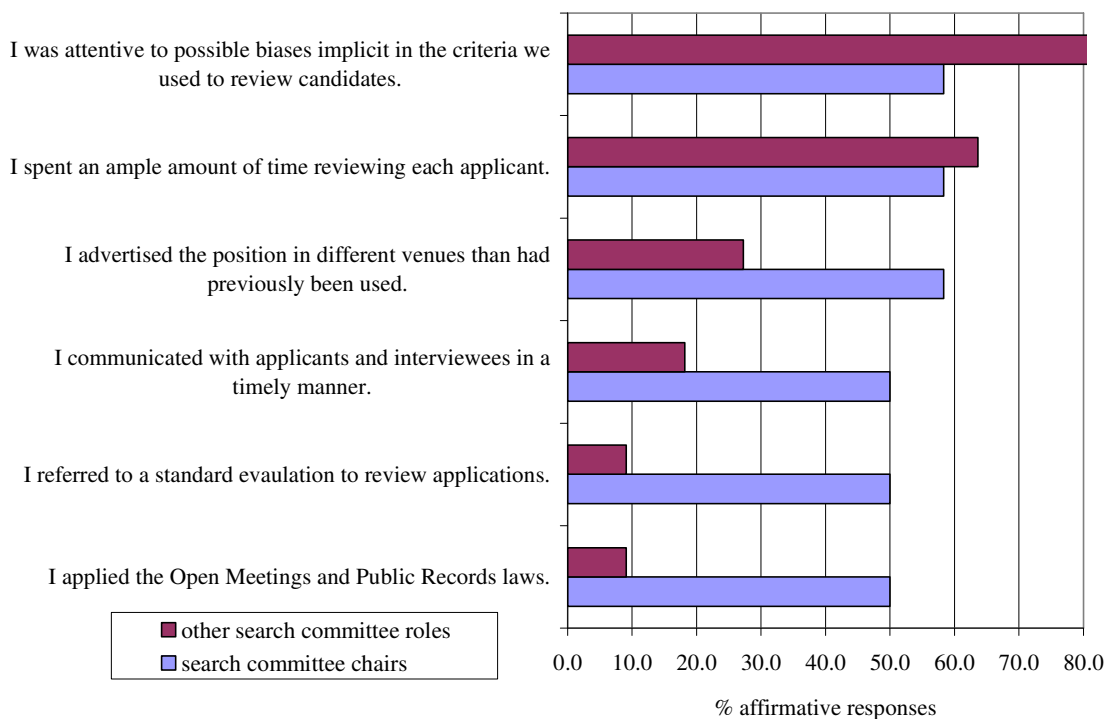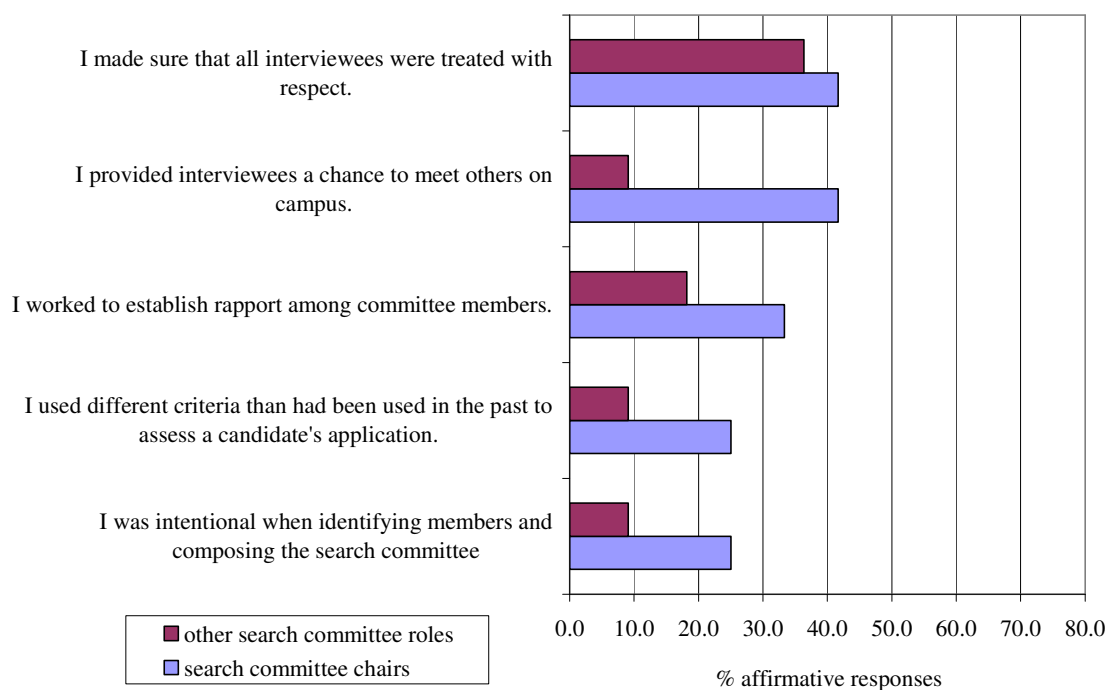
Figure 1c.
Changes in search committee behavior attributable to workshop training, self-reports of past participants; least common responses.

Differences in responses between search committee chairs and others imply that search chairs may be more likely to implement workshop strategies. This finding is consistent with the leadership role of the search committee chair and tends to affirm the efficacy of WISELI's emphasis on training search committee chairs.

Broad Impact

Second, we asked respondents to describe in their own words how, if at all, their post-workshop search experience differed from previous experiences. In particular, several questions asked respondents to discuss how their training had impacted several aspects of the search and its outcomes, as well as the overall process. Considered together, responses were suggestive of several themes.

Many respondents attributed changes in their behavior vis-à-vis the search committee to participation in the workshop. The changes they perceived are summarized below and illustrated using quotations culled from survey responses.

> ➢ *More attention to diversity in the search process, generally* – More than a third of respondents (35%) indicated that the workshop had raised their awareness of diversity issues, had helped them to better articulate the benefits of diversity, or had focused their attention on addressing implicit biases in the search process.
> > o "I was better able to articulate the position that 'best' encompasses many attributes besides research prowess – including the ways in which an applicant

could 'stretch' or 'challenge' the department and could recruit and retain under-represented classes of students."
- o "The workshop was very helpful in putting the issue of diversity on the agenda. It helped that several committee members also attended the workshop."

➢ *Revised methods of candidate evaluation* – Again, more than one-third of respondents (35%) reported that the search committee had altered the candidate evaluation procedures so as to minimize the impact of implicit biases and that this change had resulted from their workshop training.
- o "A more thorough evaluation process was used."
- o "This workshop made me more aware of the biases which exist in the interview process. I kept this concept in mind when reviewing the applications and interviewing the candidates."

➢ *Proactive recruitment* – Some respondents (22%) described how their search committee had taken steps suggested in the workshop to proactively recruit a larger and more diverse pool of candidates.
- o "[The committee] advertis[ed] in journals and on web sites which would assist in resulting in a more diverse candidate pool."
- o "Proactive recruitment to enhance diversity of the pool."

➢ *Changed composition of the search committee* – A few respondents (9%) indicated that they had made efforts to change the composition of the search committee to broaden faculty participation.
- o "The people who served on the search committee were more diverse in science background and gender than some."
- o "Screening was in the hands of a full committee as opposed to a few dept. members."

➢ *Qualifications for the position revised* – A few respondents (9%) stated that because of the workshop training, the required qualifications for the position were changed.
- o "We added a statement in the qualifications, indicating that the candidate should be active in promoting diversity within the profession."

➢ *No behavior changes* – Some respondents (13%) attributed no behavioral changes to their workshop participation.
- o "Not different; we have always looked for the best person."
- o "We had most of the suggestions already in place [before the workshop]."

Other respondents highlighted how the search workshop had changed their attitudes and knowledge with regards to diversity in hiring and the search process more generally. These reported changes highlight three attitudinal and knowledge impacts of the workshop.

➢ *Attitudes towards and knowledge about diversity-* – The approximately one-third of respondents (35%) who indicated that their behaviors had become more attuned to addressing diversity and bias issues also typically described how this change was linked

to the increased knowledge about and concurrent attitude shifts regarding diversity in hiring.
- o "My sensitivities about gender assumptions have been raised. I'm more careful about how I consider potential applicants who may be different [with regards to] diversity."

➢ *More knowledgeable about the search process and campus resources for search committees* – Some respondents (17%) reported that they had gained new insight into the rules, procedures, and legalities for searches and the resources available on the UW-Madison campus to assist search committees.
- o "I was much better informed on how to do a search. In the past, we were told to search, but there was never a guideline to follow. This is the first time in my [more than two decades] here where I actually received some education in the process of chairing a search."
- o "I knew more about the resources and legalities."

➢ *No attitude or knowledge changes* – A few (9%) respondents reported that their attitudes had not changed nor had they gained any new knowledge as a result of their workshop participation.
- o "The workshop added nothing to what I knew before."

Finally, a number of respondents commented on how the behavioral and attitudinal changes they attributed to their workshop training had affected the outcome of their searches. On this point many respondents were decidedly more negative than on others, with many (39%) seemingly describing a frustrating situation in which they had undertaken to revise the search process in hopes of attracting more diverse candidates only to arrive at a similar outcome as 'traditional' searches. Some respondents however indicated that their revised search strategy had resulted in a more diverse (17%) or larger (9%) pool of candidates.

Third, we asked respondents to indicate what common assumptions about diversity in hiring they had encountered in their post-workshop search committee experience and to evaluate whether or not the workshop had provided them with tools to address these assumptions. We provided a list of eight common assumptions and asked, *"Which of the following assumptions did you feel were either implicit or explicit in the process of working with your search committee?"* Common responses to this question are summarized in Figure 2.

Nearly all respondents (96%) indicated that in their post-workshop search experience they had encountered the assumption that all department hiring decisions are based solely on merit. Some also indicated that they had encountered assumptions that efforts at diversity in hiring are thwarted by the lack of diverse candidates rather than search strategies (26%) and that standards should not be 'lowered' in order to allow for diversity in hiring (13%). No more than one individual reported encountering any of the other five assumptions on our list.

Comparing the responses of search committee chairs to individuals who played other roles reveals that chairs were more likely to report encountering assumptions about diversity in hiring. This might tend to suggest that search committee chairs are more perceptive with regards to the

assumptions prevalent among search committee members or that such assumptions are more likely to be revealed to a chair. In either case, this suggests that search committee chairs may tend to be better placed to address and dispel these common assumptions about diversity in hiring.

Figure 2.
Most commonly encountered assumptions about diversity in hiring, self-reports of past workshop participants
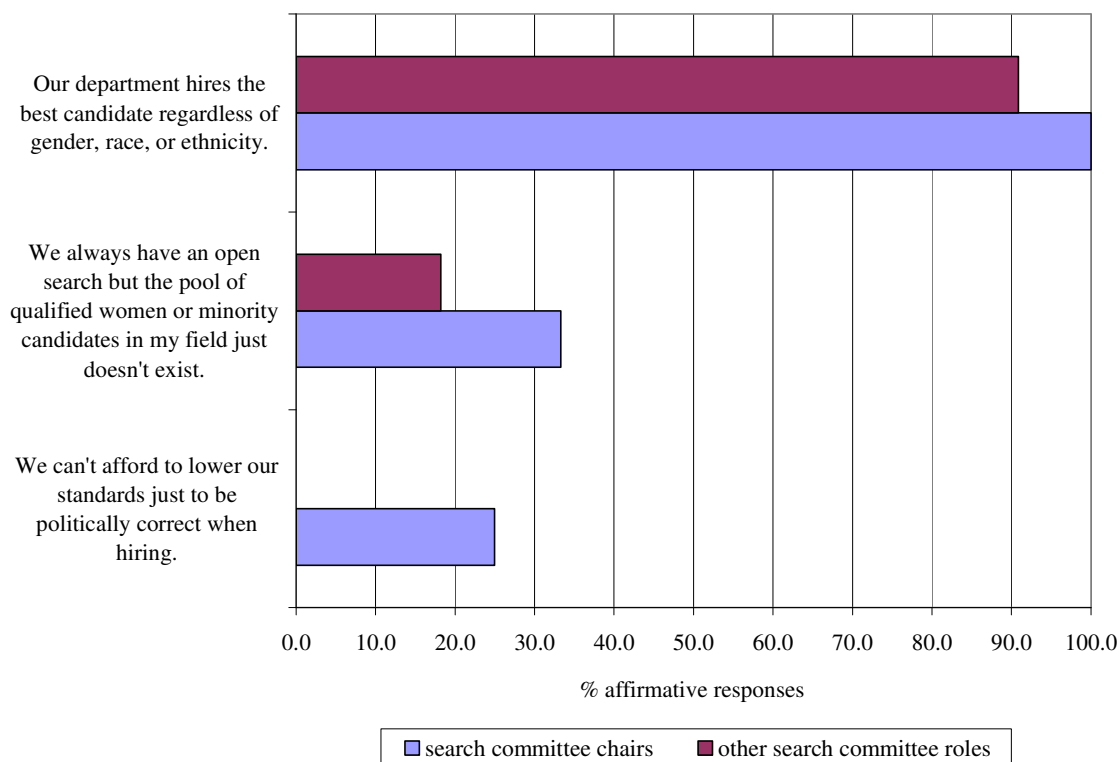
We also asked respondents: *"Did you feel prepared to address these assumptions due to participating in the workshop?"* Nearly all respondents (95.5%) agreed that the workshop had provided tools to address assumptions about diversity in hiring. Agreement was consistent across search committee chairs and other search committee roles. This might indicate that workshop participants found the evidence based training helpful for dispelling common assumptions.

Finally, we asked respondents to evaluate how their workshop training had impacted the search committee experience overall. We asked, *"Overall, do you feel you did a better job in this search process due to participating in the search workshop(s)?"* Many (83%) agreed that their workshop training did positively affect their search committee work. Both search committee chairs and other members indicated a similar level of agreement (see Table 12).

Table 12.
Self-reported improvement in search process as a result
of workshop participation, by all respondents and
search committee chairs

	Agree	
	N	%
All respondents	19	82.6
Search committee chairs	10	83.3

Summary

Overall, the follow-up survey provides valuable feedback that highlights how past participants have utilized the training they received in the search workshop. Many report changes in their behaviors and attitudes in post-workshop search experiences. Nearly three times as many respondents indicated that the workshop raised their awareness of and attentiveness to diversity in the search process than indicated no substantive change in their post-workshop behaviors or attitudes. A majority of respondents agreed that they feel better equipped to address common assumptions about diversity in hiring and that their workshop training had enabled them to conduct a better search than they had in the past.

Despite these changes, many also report few changes in search outcomes. More respondents reported no change in their post-workshop pool than reported a substantive change. One interpretation of this finding is that search committees encounter obstacles in implementing the spectrum of procedural changes suggested in the workshop. That many more respondents reported more behavior and attitudinal changes with regards to diversity generally as compared to recruitment and candidate evaluation specifically tends to support this interpretation. Alternatively this may also suggest that the interventions are only able to affect limited change in the short-term. On-going evaluation efforts should aim to discriminate between these two possible explanations and to identify programmatic modifications that might encourage further, specific changes in search practices.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, three broad conclusions about WISELI's search workshops can be drawn. First, the workshop initiative has been highly successful in accomplishing its goal of raising the awareness about diversity in hiring and the impact of implicit biases on candidate evaluation. The workshops have reached a broad audience, with a special emphasis on science and engineering departments. A large majority of survey respondents indicated that this aspect of the workshop was highly valuable and had a meaningful effect on their post-workshop search committee experience. The evidence-based approach to raising awareness on diversity and bias has been effective in accomplishing a critical aim of the workshop.

Second, the workshop has been partially successful in providing practical, 'implementable' strategies to improve the hiring practices of faculty and administrative search committees. Survey respondents indicated both that they found the workshop's suggested strategies and resources to be a valuable aspect of the workshop and that they sought additional information on best practices for promoting excellence and diversity in hiring. One interpretation of this mixed finding is that the workshop is not adequately tailored to the varied needs of the departments reached. Additional efforts might be aimed at tailoring workshops to the special circumstances of different audiences, for example by utilizing facilitators from related departments or providing supplemental discipline-specific resources on recruiting diverse pools.

Finally, the workshop's effect on short-term hiring outcomes remains unclear. Evidence from the follow-up survey suggests that search committees may encounter obstacles to changing candidate evaluation, and to a lesser degree, recruitment practices. Future workshops should seek to incorporate iterative feedback on what strategies have and have not been successful in overcoming these obstacles. On-going evaluation efforts should be directed towards identifying best practices and under what circumstances they can be expected to be most effective.

Appendix A. WISELI Search Committee Workshops Evaluation Survey

Your title or role on campus: _____

Your role on the search committee: _____

1

Please rate the value of each of the following aspects of the workshop using the scale from 1-3. Also, feel free to include additional comments about the presentation or small-group discussions:

1 Not at all Valuable	2 Somewhat Valuable	3 Very Valuable

Introduction

1	2	3

Comments:

Run an Effective and Efficient Search Committee

1	2	3

Comments:

Actively Recruit a Diverse and Excellent Pool

1	2	3

Comments:

Raise Awareness of Unconscious Assumptions and their Influence

1	2	3

Comments:

Ensure a Fair and Thorough Review of Candidates

1	2	3

Comments:

Develop and Implement an Effective Interview Process

1	2	3

Comments:

Close the Deal Successfully

1	2	3

Comments:

2

    Please identify up to three things that you gained at this workshop and will apply in your role as Chair or as a member of a search committee:

3

    Please provide us with ideas or suggestions that would have improved your experience in this workshop:

4

    What topics did you hope would be covered in this workshop, yet were not?

5

  Please provide an overall rating for this workshop.

Not at all Useful	Somewhat Useful	Very Useful
1	2	3

6

    Would you recommend this workshop to others? Why or why not?

YES   NO

7

    Any other comments?

Appendix B. WISELI Search Committee Workshops Follow-up Survey

---

1

Please indicate the format of the search workshop(s) you attended:

- Individual meeting with facilitator

- One session

- Two sessions

- Three sessions

- Other, please describe:

To answer these next questions, please think about the search process that immediately followed your participation in the search workshop(s).

2

Please identify your role on the search committee or in the search process:

- Search committee chair

- Search committee member

- Department chair

- Search committee support staff

- Department administrator

- Human resources manager

- Other, please describe:

3

Please identify the characteristics of the person you were searching for:

Title:	
Discipline(s):	
Degree(s) needed:	
Other:	

4

Which of the following did you do as a result of participating in the search workshop(s)? *Check all that apply.*

- [ ] I was intentional when identifying members and composing the search committee.

- [ ] I worked to establish rapport among committee members.

- [ ] As much as possible, I involved all search committee members in discussions and tasks.

- [ ] I applied the Open Meetings and Public Records laws.

- [ ] I discussed how to build a diverse pool of candidates.

- [ ] I took steps to build a diverse pool of candidates.

- [ ] I advertised the position in different venues than had previously been used.

- [ ] I encouraged committee members to use personal communication to get the position noticed.

- [ ] I shared information about research on biases and assumptions with the search committee.

- [ ] I referred to a standard evaluation to review applicants.

- [ ] I used different criteria than that used in the past to assess a candidate's application.

- [ ] I spent an ample amount of time reviewing each applicant.

- [ ] I was attentive to possible biases implicit in the criteria we used to review candidates.

▢ I communicated with applicants and interviewees in a timely manner.

▢ I made sure that all interviewees were treated with respect.

▢ I provided interviewees a chance to meet others on campus.

▢ I made sure that interviewees were not asked illegal questions.

▢ Other:

5

Please identify any other things you did differently in this particular search, as compared to past search experiences, due to participating in the workshop(s).

```
[                    ]
```

6

Which of the following assumptions did you feel were either implicit or explicit in the process of working with your search committee? *Check all that apply.*

▢ Our department hires the best candidate regardless of gender, race, or ethnicity.

▢ We always have an open search but the pool of qualified women or minority candidates in my field just doesn't exist.

▢ We have always searched in this way and we are one of the top research universities; changing the way we search might lower the quality of our faculty.

▢ We really don't need to work at identifying women and minorities because they are having their doors beaten down by recruiters.

▢ No minority or women candidate would want to come here because they would not have a critical mass of others like themselves.

▢ We strive to maintain a gender-blind, color-blind meritocracy; therefore it would be unfair to be extra aggressive in our faculty recruitment of women and minorities.

☐ This department has enough diversity represented in the faculty.

☐ We can't afford to lower our standards just to be politically correct when hiring.

7

Did you feel prepared to address these assumptions due to participating in the workshop?

| YES | NO |

Why or why not?

```
```

8

How was this SEARCH PROCESS different, if at all, from ones you have participated in previously?

```
```

9

How was the CANDIDATE POOL different, if at all, from ones you have had previously?

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```

10

How was the SCREENING PROCESS different, if at all, from ones you have participated in previously?

```
[                                    ]
```

11

Overall, do you feel you did a better job in this search process due to participating in the search workshop(s)?

[YES] [NO]

Why or why not?

```
[                                    ]
```

12

Please identify your school or college:

☐ College of Engineering

☐ School of Medicine

☐ College of Agricultural and Life Sciences

☐ College of Letters and Sciences

☐ School of Pharmacy

☐ School of Veterinary Medicine

☐ Other: