Implicit Bias & Privilege

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Implicit Bias

• **Explicit Bias (Conscious):** Prejudices are directly and publicly displayed.

• **Implicit Bias (Unconscious):** Prejudices can exist in a person’s mind and behaviors without their awareness.
Measuring Implicit Bias

Joshua Correll’s Video Game Studies

• Participants are told to push one button to shoot armed targets and another button to not shoot unarmed targets.

• Participants are less likely to shoot armed white targets and are more likely to shoot an unarmed black target.


Measuring Implicit Bias

- IAT (Implicit Association Test)
- Categorize images and words by pressing one of two keys
- Pairings (gay/good; gay/bad) switch halfway through test
- Your reaction time and types of errors can indicate the presence of implicit bias
Implicit Bias in the Justice System

- Defendants who are more stereotypically African-American are **twice as likely to receive death sentences**

- Cases where defendants are a different race than white victims are **tried more harshly**

- Juries do not only make conscious decisions and are often influenced by implicit biases.
Implicit Bias in the Job Market

- Clear Racial inequality in the job market
- White names receive 50% more call backs from resumes
- African Americans on average need 8 more years of experience to be hired over white applicants
- African Americans are twice as likely to be unemployed
What this Means for Engineering

- Biased opinions discourage minorities
- Women and Minorities
- Countries with less bias are more apt to have equal numbers of women and men in engineering fields
- Influence in employers' hiring decision
Addressing Implicit Bias

• Subconscious behavior

• Several methods to avoid bias in industry

• Knowledge

• Be the change you want to see!!
Implicit Bias $\rightarrow$ Privilege

Implicit bias generally results in a preference for dominant group members and creates privilege for people in those groups.
Privilege

• A special right, advantage or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group of people

• A bag full of tools

• Often hard to acknowledge one's own privilege
Effects of Privilege

• Think back to a situation where you felt out of place

• Most are privileged in such a way that they don't have to feel this lack of comfort on a daily basis
Examples of Privilege

Male Privilege:
• Odds of being hired for a job when competing against female applicants is skewed in favor of the male
• Far less likely to face sexual harassment at work than female colleagues
• Males have the privilege of being unaware of male privilege
More Examples of Privilege

White Privilege:
- Can take a job with an affirmative action employer without co-workers suspecting that they got it because of their race
- Can be sure of finding people who would be willing to talk with and advise the person about their next steps professionally

There are many more privileges that are related to the person's religion, wealth, and sexual identity.
Why is Diversity in Engineering Important?

- Diverse groups are more productive
- Diverse perspectives create safer & better products
- Considering diversity creates innovations
How Can We Eliminate the Effect of Privilege?

- Realize where privilege exists and take steps to lessen its effects
- Create a welcoming environment
- Help everyone reach their goals
- Expand your horizons
- Work to diversify your applicant pool
Recap: Bias and Privilege can have Dangerous Ramifications

- Engineering groups that lack diversity often make products that are dangerous for other groups
  - Heart valves and air bags that are dangerous for women and children

- Law enforcement and the justice system is biased against African Americans
  - African American Defendants more likely to receive death penalties
  - Police officers are more likely to shoot African Americans suspects

- Awareness and action can decrease the effects of privilege and bias