

Identifying and Responding to Bias in Promotion and Tenure Decisions

Cognitive biases—the “mental shortcuts” we all use to help make quick decisions—are different from overt prejudice, but can still be detrimental to members of underrepresented groups. In the promotion and tenure process, these subtle preferences (like a tendency to feel more positively about someone similar to oneself, or a preference for established forms of disciplinary research) can impact BIPOC faculty’s time to tenure and promotion, and ultimately their engagement and retention at universities.

In this EAB-facilitated simulation activity, promotion and tenure committees can practice recognizing these biases in a low-stakes setting. Committee members evaluate a fictional case study of a professor going up for tenure, discuss the biases that can influence tenure decisions, and learn what research tells us about the role of biases in BIPOC and URM faculty retention.

How it Works

- ✓ EAB provides a brief overview of **common sources of bias** and how they impact BIPOC faculty career advancement
- ✓ Attendees participate in a one-hour **EAB-facilitated simulation activity** to practice identifying and responding to biases
- ✓ All participants receive a cognitive bias **reference sheet** and **annotated bibliography** to take home after the session

Partner Intensive Details



Recommended audience is promotion and tenure committee members



90-minute session includes a mix of didactic content and simulation activity



Session is available as both a virtual and in-person workshop

Promotion and Tenure Simulation Workshop

Identifying and Responding to Bias in Promotion and Tenure Decisions

- **Learn about the subtle cognitive biases that influence human decision-making** and can impact BIPOC faculty's time to tenure and career advancement
- **Participate in an EAB-facilitated simulation activity** where promotion and tenure committee members practice evaluating a fictional case study and identifying the role of biases in tenure decisions
- **Identify next steps** to mitigate the impact of common cognitive biases and clarify the promotion and tenure process at your institution



Recommended Audiences:

- Promotion and tenure committee members
- Other individuals involved in faculty evaluation (e.g., annual reviewers)
- Provost or chief academic officer



Ways to Bring This Research to Your Institution:

- A 90-minute session, which includes a mix of didactic content and a facilitated simulation exercise
- Available as either a virtual or in-person session
- Includes an annotated bibliography of published research on bias in promotion and tenure



Related Resources:

- [Instilling Equity and Inclusion in Departmental Practices](#)
- [Diagnose faculty racial inequality with these 8 critical metrics](#)
- [Compendium of Inclusive Tenure and Promotion Policy](#)