

# Searching for Excellence

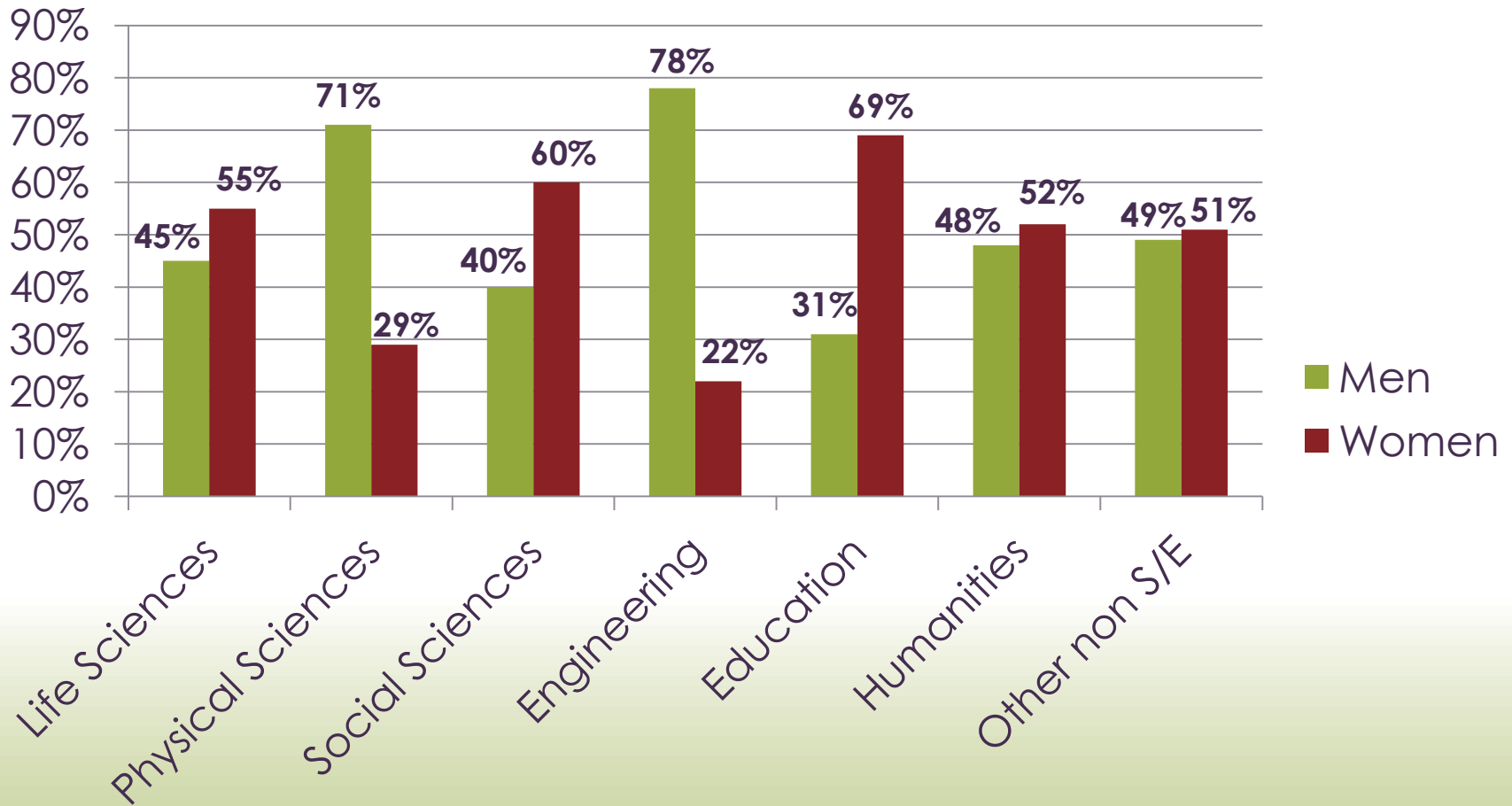
**Equipping search committee  
members to achieve a successful  
outcome.**

# To be an effective/efficient search committee member:

- Be aware of the institutional context.
- Understand unconscious bias.
- Use effective AND efficient search practices.

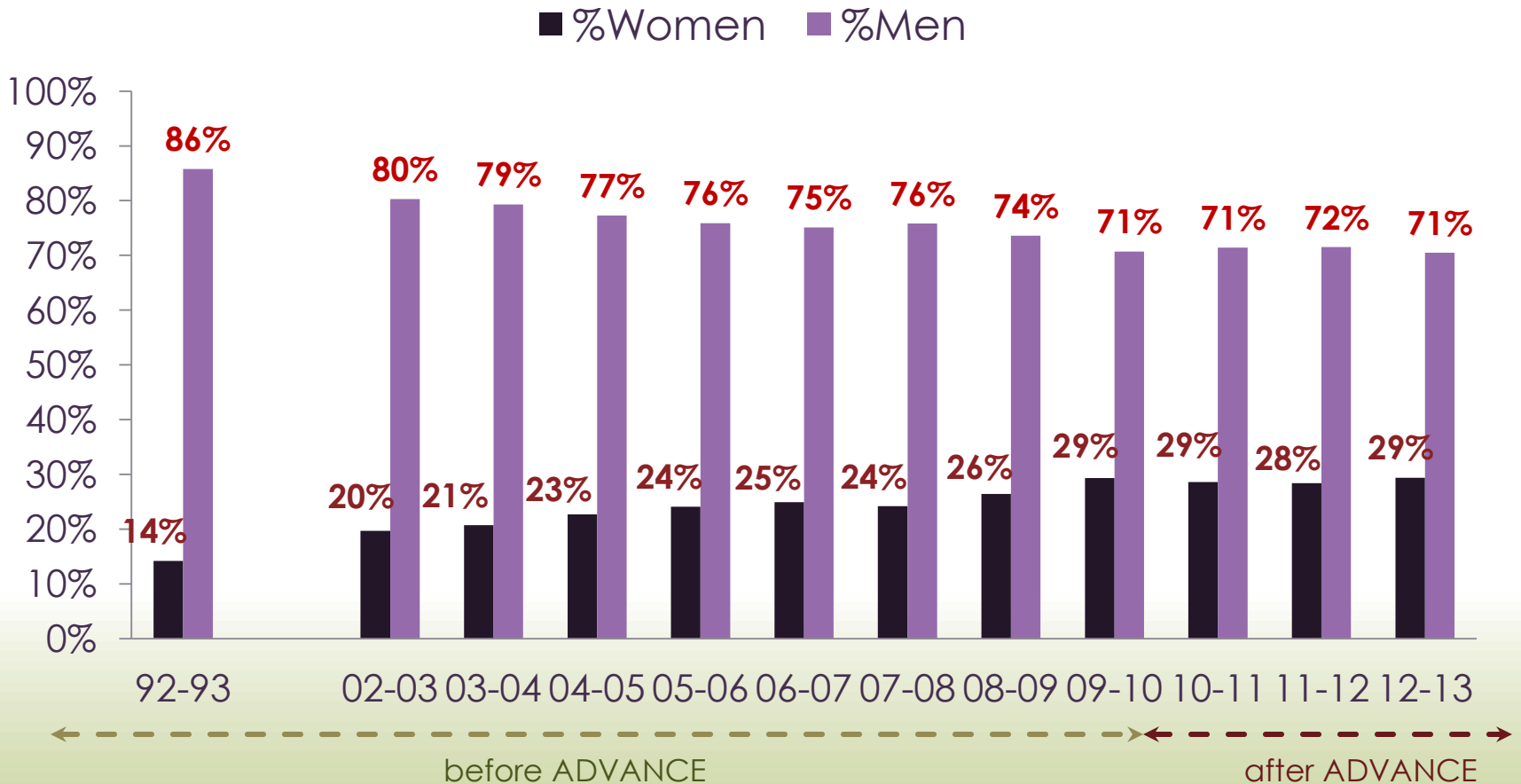
# The institutional context

# Doctoral recipients by gender - 2011



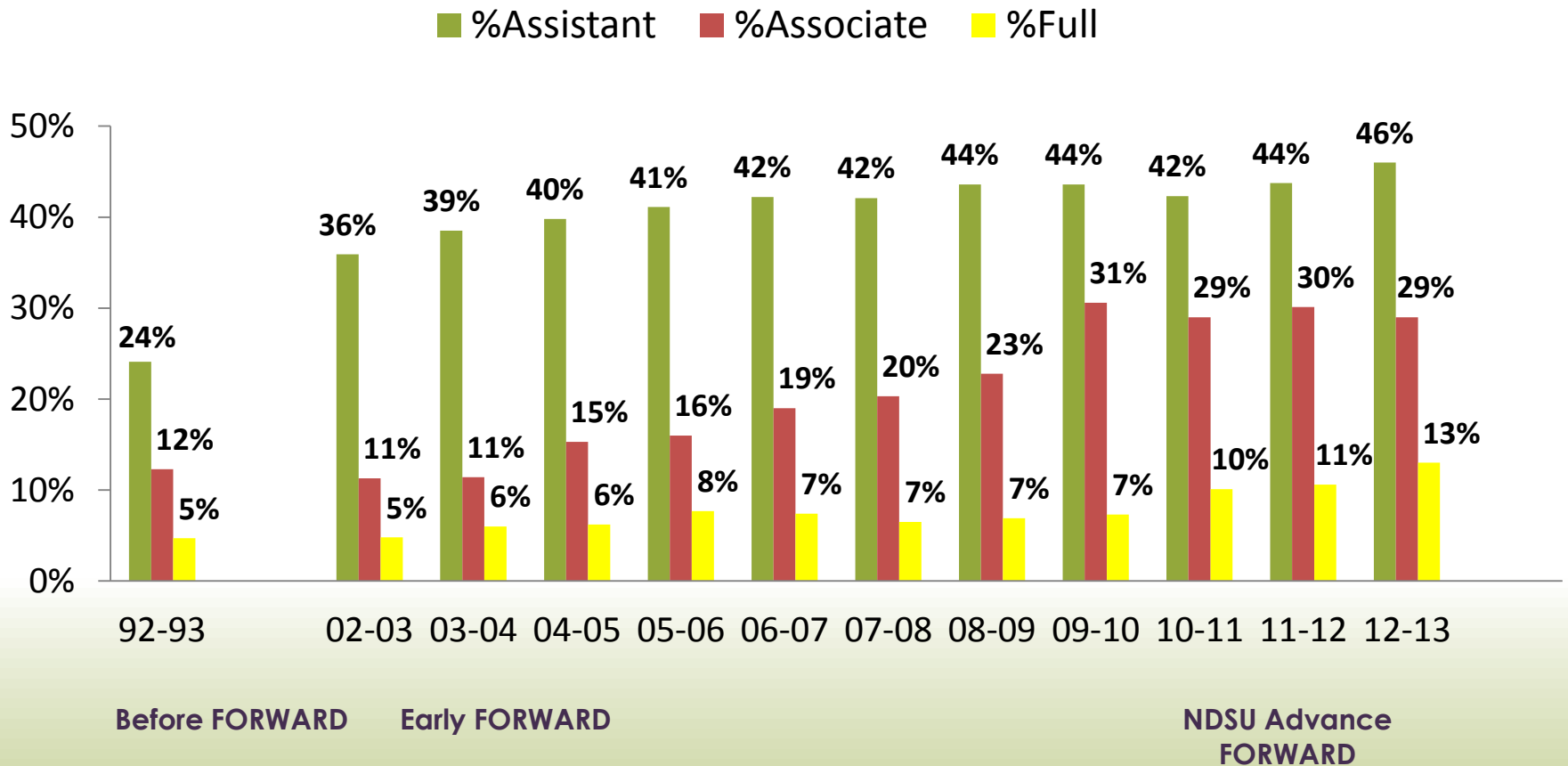
<http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/sed/2011/>

# NDSU tenure-line faculty by gender\*



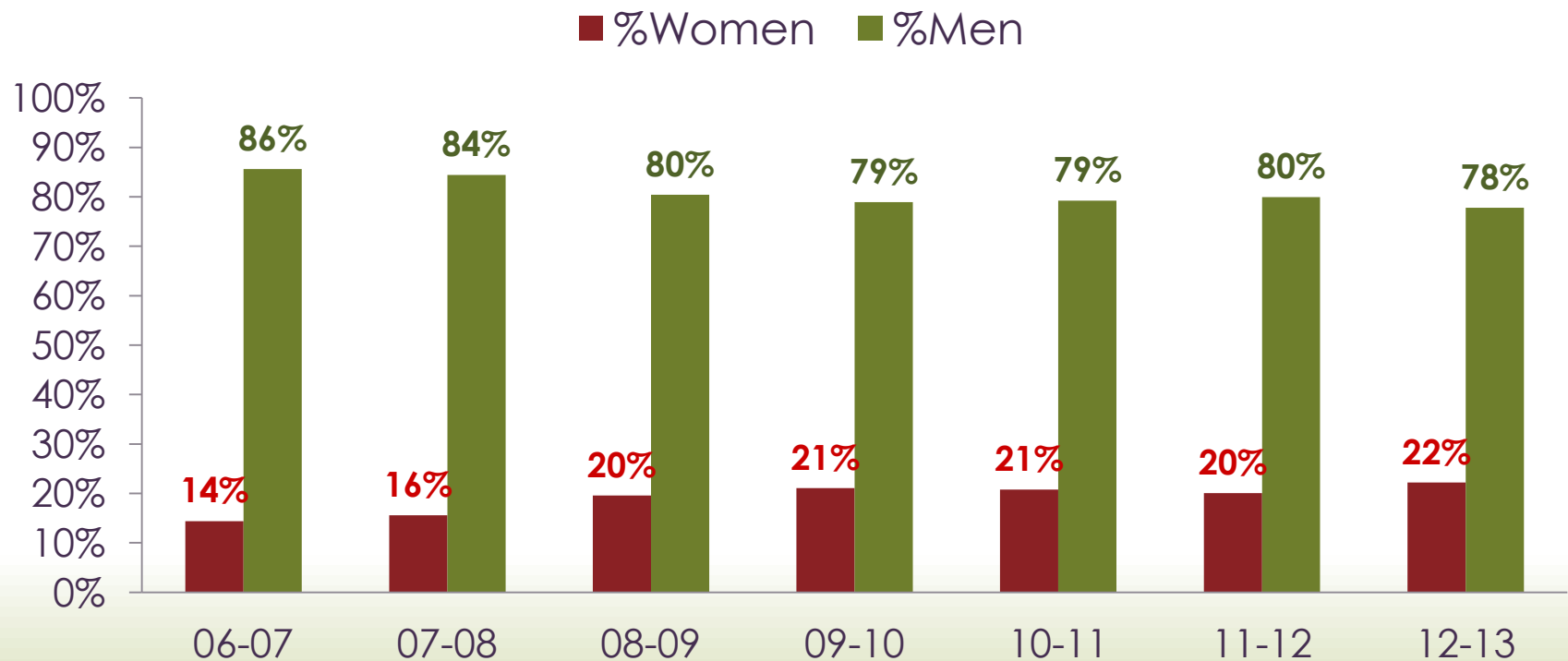
\*Full-time administrators are not included.

# NDSU women tenure-line faculty by rank\*



\*Full-time administrators are not included.

# NDSU tenure-line STEM faculty by gender\*

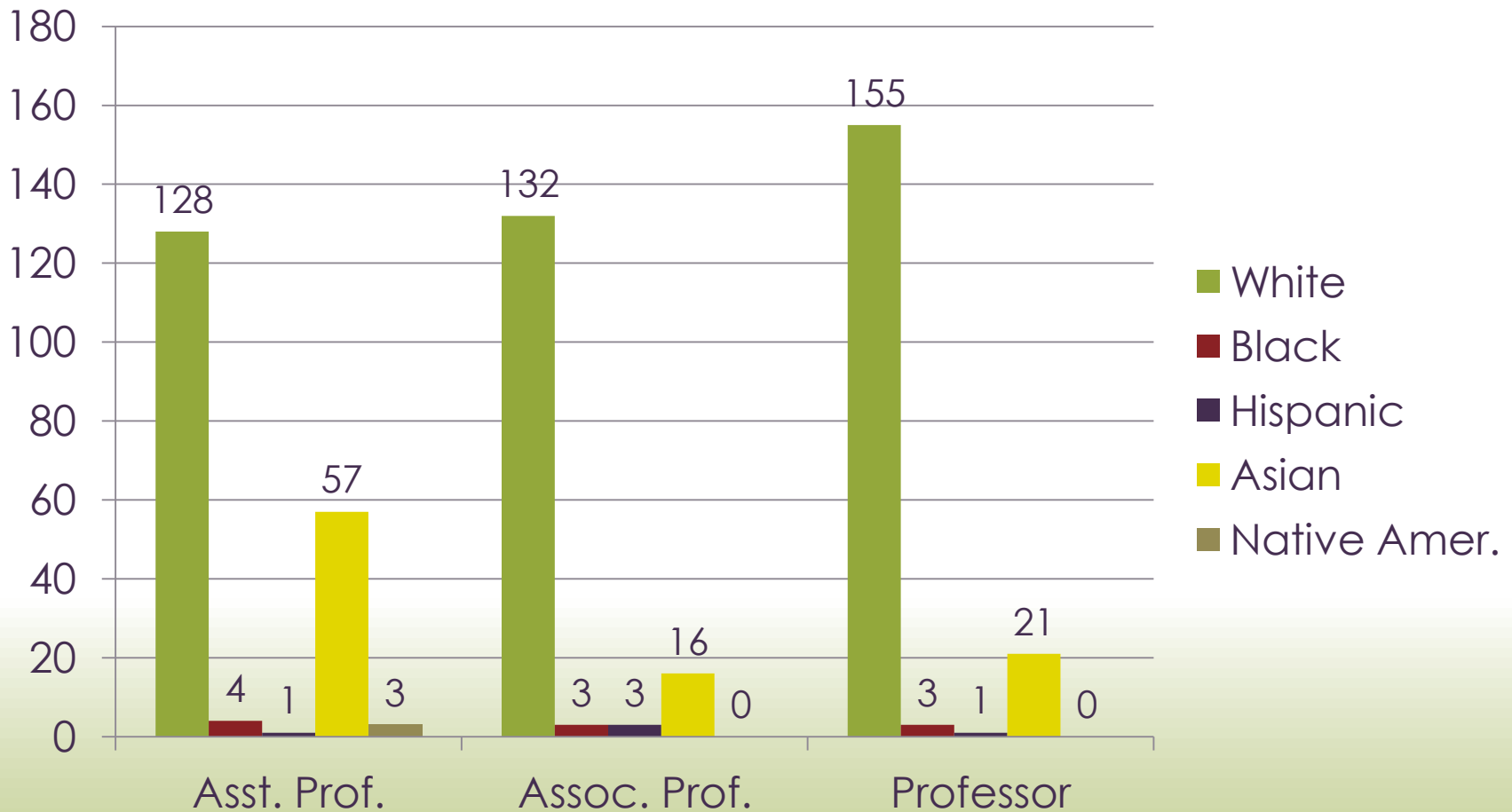


Early FORWARD

NDSU Advance  
FORWARD

\*Full-time administrators are not included.

# NDSU tenure-line faculty by race/ethnicity & rank\* (#s)



\*2011-12 data



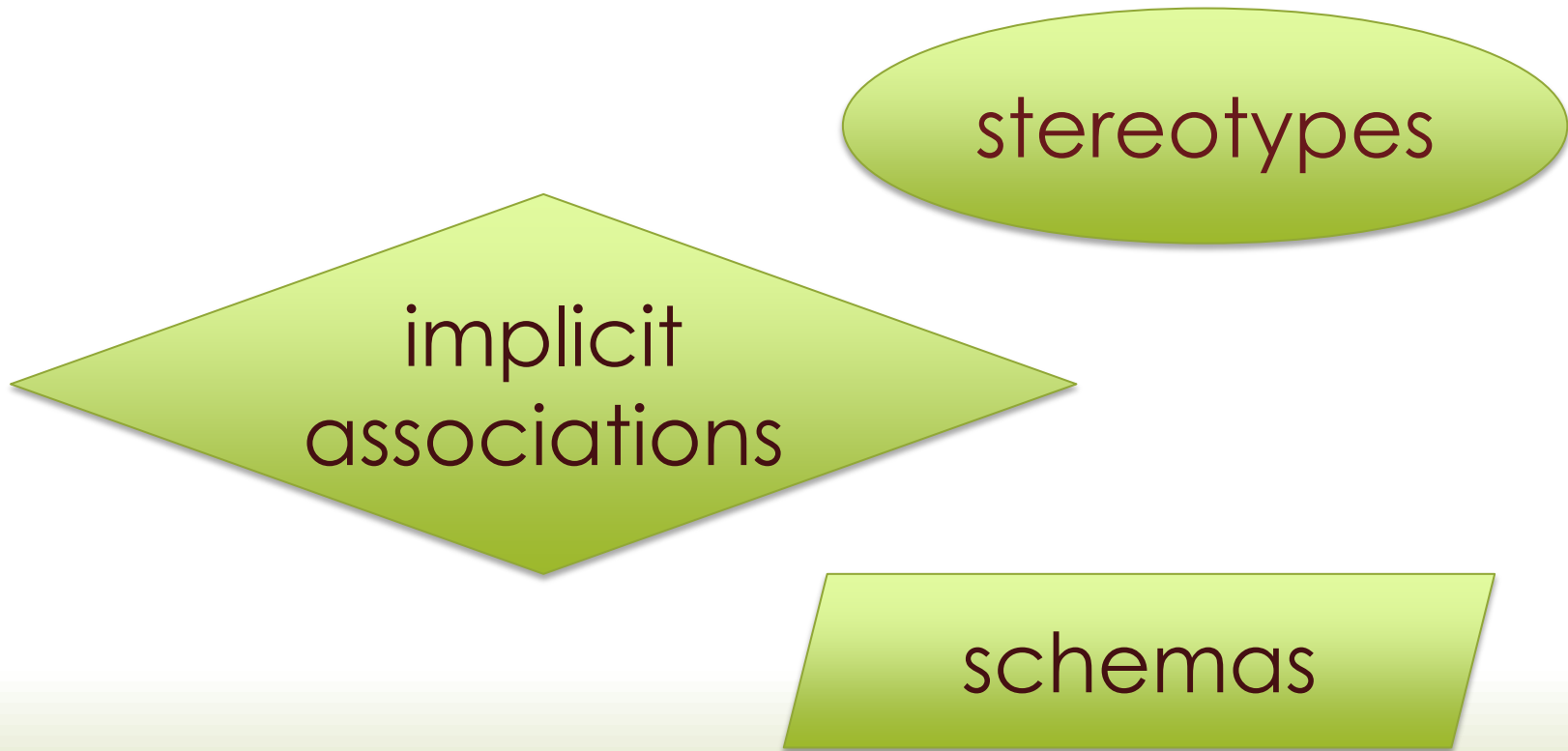
**Data show  
limited gender and  
ethnic/racial representation  
among NDSU faculty.**

# Why pay attention to diversity among our faculty?

- Broadens the “marketplace of ideas.”
- Enriches students’ educational experience, provides role models, and prepares them for the future.
- Contributes to innovation and productivity.
- Addresses our legal and ethical responsibility to be more inclusive.

# Unconscious bias

also known as



# Whatever the name, they are

implicit or unconscious assumptions that **influence** our judgments . . .

sometimes about physical or social characteristics associated with race or ethnicity, gender, disability, and sexual orientation

**OR**

about certain job descriptions, academic institutions, and fields of study.

“Even the most well-intentioned person unwittingly allows unconscious thoughts and feelings to influence apparently objective decisions.”

Mahzarin R. Banaji

# Unconscious bias is more likely to operate where there is:

- Ambiguity (including lack of information)
- Stress from competing tasks
- Time pressure
- Lack of critical mass

# Some typical (and unwitting) cognitive errors

- Stereotypes (negative AND positive)
- Raising the bar/shifting the standards
- First impressions
- Assumptions/"psychoanalyzing" the candidate"



# Some typical (and unwitting) cognitive errors

- Self-fulfilling prophecy
- Seizing a pretext
- Premature ranking/digging in
- Momentum of the group

# Cognitive Errors Worksheet

# Overcoming cognitive errors

- Constant self-correction.
- Ground rules & checklist to regulate the process.
- Use of a matrix or other visual to focus on qualifications.
- No overloading or rushing.
- Frequent insistence on “show me the evidence” during the search process.

# Minimize unconscious bias by

- Increasing the **numbers of applicants from underrepresented groups**.
- **Consciously** working to minimize the influence of biases and assumptions.
- Applying evaluation criteria **consistently**.
- Spending **sufficient time** to evaluate each applicant's **complete application**.
- Being able to **defend every decision** to continue or eliminate an applicant.
- Periodically **evaluating judgments** to see if bias has influenced a decision.

## In short, remember . . .

- Biases are often unintentional.
- We **all** make assumptions.
- Decisions made quickly are more susceptible to unconscious bias.
- Acknowledgement of unconscious bias can help overcome it.

# Effective and efficient search practices

# Faculty search-related policies

**All employment decisions are subject to equal opportunity/  
non-discrimination laws, regulations and policies**

- **103:** Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Policy on the Announcement of Position Openings
- **103.1:** Recruitment for Executive/ Administrative/ Managerial, Academic Staff and Other Non-Banded Positions
- **104:** Recruitment Period for Position Announcements
- **112:** Pre-Employment and Current Employee Criminal Record Disclosure
- **304:** Academic Staff and Executive/Administrative Positions— Procedures for filling
- **339:** Policy on Communication Proficiency
  - Include student on search committee.
  - Include “effective oral and written communication skills” as minimum qualification.

# NDSU Policy 103.2.1 – interim or part-time appointments for faculty/executive/administrative positions

Any interim **or**  $\leq$  .5 FTE appointment that includes a change in title or compensation must be announced internally

- for 10-working days and
- with opportunities for individuals to learn about and apply for the position.

Department must provide documentation to R/CO:

- the announcement and
- review of applications.



# Challenges in the search process:

- Recruiting for excellence.
- Committing the time required.
- Managing/organizing paperwork.
- Addressing unconscious bias.
- Dealing with committee dynamics:
  - motivating members
  - reaching agreement or consensus.

# Search committee members - roles and responsibilities:

- Develop a climate of trust and respect with other committee colleagues.
- Attend all search committee meetings; be prepared.
- Recruit **actively**.
- Read all application materials carefully.
- Use *advertised* qualifications for screening.
- Keep in mind the impact of **unconscious bias** throughout the search process:
  - as you recruit
  - as you review applications
  - as you conduct interviews
  - as you make hiring recommendations

# Steps in the search process:

1. Develop the position description/ qualifications.
2. Recruit applicants – actively.
3. Screen applicants
  - Review applicant CVs and other application materials.
  - Check references.
4. Interview top applicants.
5. Recommend applicant for hire.

# 1. Position description and qualifications

- Consider the position description the foundation for the search.
  - *Review with the future in mind; no same-old, same-old.*
  - *Check postings for similar positions.*
  - *Know the market; design qualifications with the market in mind.*
- Include **all** qualifications/characteristics to be used in screening.

- Use broad descriptions of scholarship, experience, and disciplinary background (specificity works against diversification).
- Label as “preferred” qualifications that are not absolutely required” (maintain flexibility).
- Include *required* EO/AA statement **AND** consider adding:
  - “NDSU is an NSF ADVANCE Institution” and/or
  - “Women and other traditionally underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply.”

# Consider including qualifications such as:

- Evidence of ability to work effectively with a diversity of students and colleagues: both women and men and individuals from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

**OR**

- Ability to interact and collaborate effectively with a diversity of colleagues and students.

**OR**

- Other options that may be specific to your discipline:
  - curricular innovation re: diversity,
  - experience teaching diversity-related courses,
  - research dealing with aspects of diversity.

## 2. Recruitment – the basics

- Effective recruitment is **proactive**.
- **Personal contact** is the most effective recruitment strategy.
- Effective recruitment is **labor intensive**.
- The best applicants may be people who are **not looking** for a position.

# Recruitment strategies to attract high-caliber and diverse applicants:

- Expect **all** search committee members to **actively** recruit applicants.
- **Use personal contacts.**
- Distribute position announcements widely.
- Use on-line forums.
- **Share position information** wherever possible.
- Use resources that target underrepresented groups including individuals with disabilities.
- Attend graduate student presentations at conferences.



- Recruit at conferences that target professionals from traditionally underrepresented groups (TUGs)
- Contact colleges whose students are primarily from TUGs
- Seek personal referrals from
  - former students/alumni in your field
  - colleagues at other institutions.

Don't buy the myths about lack of applicants from underrepresented groups.

See **Recruitment/Advertising Resources** at

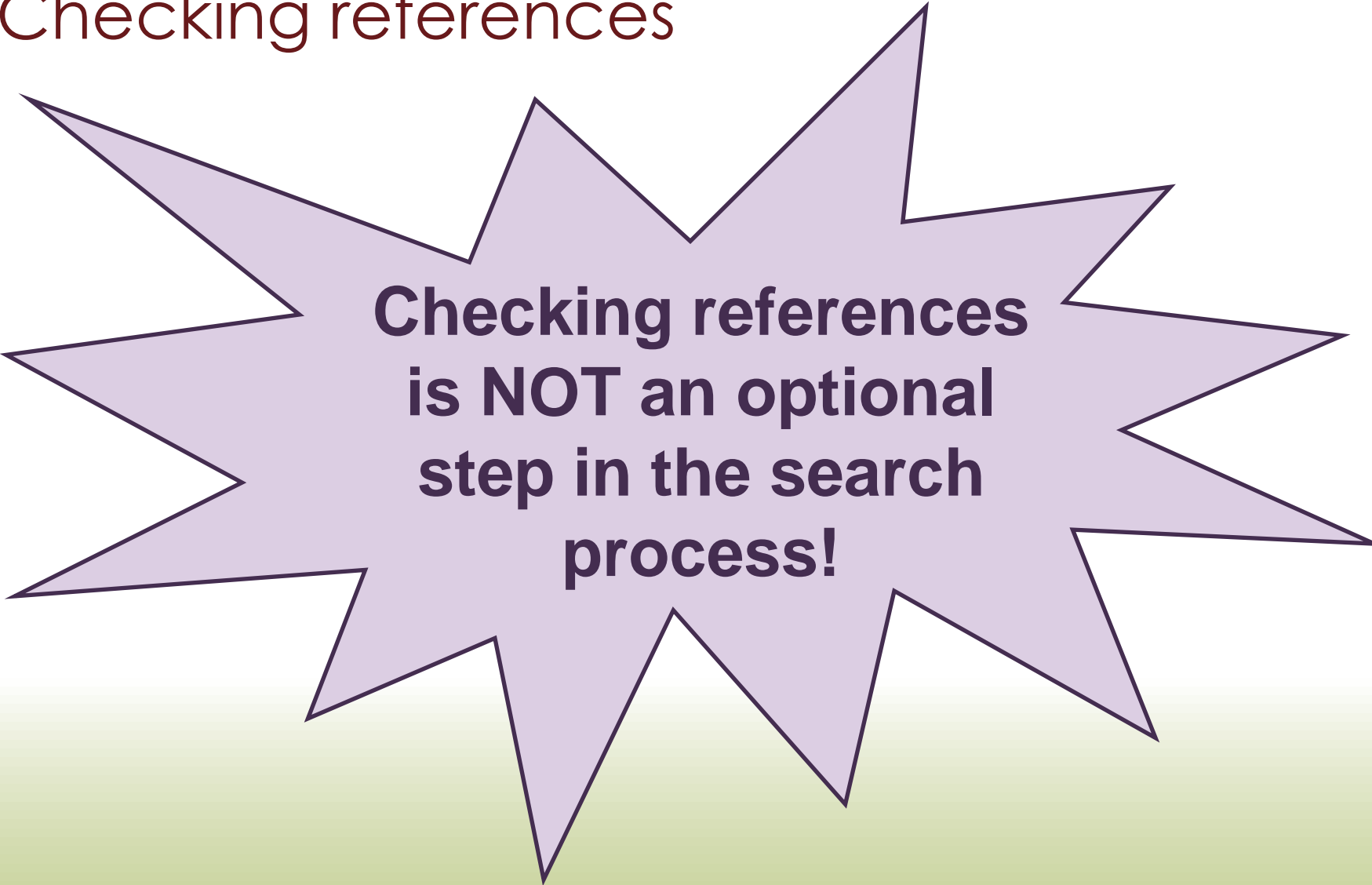
[http://www.ndsu.edu/diversity/equity/recruitment\\_and\\_hiring/](http://www.ndsu.edu/diversity/equity/recruitment_and_hiring/)

# 3. Screening

- Develop a **systematic** way to review applicants based on the **advertised qualifications**.
- Record reasons for nonselection as they are identified – don't wait until the end of the process.
- Ask a committee member to be the recorder during committee discussions.

**REMEMBER:** The best predictor of future performance is past behavior.

# Checking references



**Checking references  
is NOT an optional  
step in the search  
process!**

## Collecting reference information:

- Letters of reference for all applicants? Only semi-finalists?
- Standard letter or “tailored” letter?
- Letters vs. phone reference checking?
- Named referees **and** nonnamed referees.
- Timing – when to do the reference checks?

## Customizing reference checks:

- Identify areas for which more information is needed based on advertised qualifications.
- Develop behaviorally oriented questions.
- Keep notes about who was contacted and summarize the information.

# Effective phone reference checks:

- Focus questions on characteristics that are *clearly* related to the position.
- Listen carefully and ask follow-up questions.
- Keep the questions open-ended.
- Let silence be okay.

See Reference Checking Guidelines:

<http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/diversity/ReferenceCheckingGuidelines.pdf>

## 4. Interviewing – two objectives:

- Collect additional and necessary information about the applicant – usually in person,

**AND**

- Market the position, your department and college, NDSU, and the F-M community.

# Planning an effective interview

- Use position description/qualifications as basis for interview questions.
- Structure the interview:
  - Start with rapport building questions.
  - Use open-ended questions (avoid yes/no questions).
  - Ask for behavioral examples.
  - Control the interview.
  - Allow silence.
  - Seek contrary evidence.
- Be consistent but not rigid!
- Review appropriate interview behavior together as a committee, see:  
[http://www.ndsu.edu/diversity/equity/recruitment\\_and\\_hiring/](http://www.ndsu.edu/diversity/equity/recruitment_and_hiring/)

What do you most like to teach?

OR

What would you like to

**What courses have you most enjoyed teaching?**

## **Developing Interview Questions**

**What interactions have you had with business and industry professionals in different settings? What issues have you encountered in those situations?**

**Tell us about any collaborative research you have been involved in.**



# Enhancing the overall interview experience

- Be consistent with all interviewees.
- Organize well; be upbeat.
- Be sure all candidates meet some people who share important personal and social characteristics.
- Actively market the position: your department, college, NDSU, and the community.

# NOTE:

## North Dakota open records law

All records related to a search process are open records under ND law including:

- All official documents associated with the search including application materials, reference letters or reference information, interview reports.
- **BUT ALSO**, personal notes you take about applicants as you review materials, do reference checks or interviews and make recommendations for hiring ***as long as they exist***.

## 5. Recommending an offer

- Develop **evidence-based** recommendations – using the advertised qualifications - to offer or not to offer.
- Attempt to achieve committee consensus about recommendations.

# Case Study

## After the hire . . .

- Follow-up regularly to help with the transition and to address any concerns – both formally and informally.
- Encourage participation in university's mentoring program and other professional development opportunities.
- Point out new employee information, see: <http://www.ndsu.edu/hr/onboarding/>

# Resources for the search:

- *Reviewing Applicants (brochure)*

*This and other resources can be found on the FORWARD web page:*

<http://www.ndsu.edu/forward/resources>

- Resources at NDSU for Work-Life Satisfaction

This brochure describes NDSU policies that support work-life satisfaction

<http://www.ndsu.edu/hr/empltoolbox/>

- Resources/guidelines for recruitment, screening, and interviewing

[http://www.ndsu.edu/diversity/equity/recruitment\\_and\\_hiring/](http://www.ndsu.edu/diversity/equity/recruitment_and_hiring/)

# Questions??

Contact:

Angela Bachman, Assistant for Faculty Searches, Office of the Provost, at 231-7150

**OR**

Office for Diversity, Equity, and Global Outreach at 231-7708

# Acknowledgments

- STRIDE, University of Michigan  
(Strategies and Tactics for Recruiting to Improve Diversity and Excellence)
- WISELI, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
(Women in Science and Engineering Leadership Institute)
- Angela Bachman, Assistant for Faculty Searches  
(NDSU Office of the Provost)