Excerpt from *Faculty Diversity* by Joann Moody

COGNITIVE ERRORS THAT CONTAMINATE ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS AND BLOCK FACULTY DIVERSITY

Regarding our job candidates, I just don't think Mercedes--would be a good fit. Honestly, I can't see any of us having a beer with her at the corner pub. While it would be terrific to have a teacher and researcher who is Mexican American, we need to find someone who is a better fit. - An anonymous member of a faculty search committee

For the first four minutes of Todd's job talk, I noticed that he was shaking in his boots. We certainly don't need a high-maintenance, low-confidence kind of guy around here. No way. - Another anonymous member of the committee

The ideal ... of the doctor as a dispassionate and rational actor is misguided. As ... cognitive psychologists have shown, when people are confronted with uncertainty-the situation of every doctor attempting to diagnose a patient-they are susceptible to unconscious emotions and personal biases, and are more likely to make cognitive errors. - Harvard Medical Professor Jerome Groopman, 2007, p. 41

Across the country, I am amazed to find that evaluation committees try very, very hard to <u>read the minds</u> of various candidates they are considering (for instance I'm sure she won't accept our job offer because her partner is still in a post-doc in L.A. Have no doubt: she'll turn us down). - Gilda Barabino, Georgia Tech and Emory University Biomedical Engineering Professor and also Associate Chair for Graduate Studies, conversation with Prof. Barabino, 2011

Every day at colleges, universities, professional schools, research insti-tutes, and government labs, we find evaluation and decision-making processes underway. Those doing the evaluations will usually be reaching important decisions about students, staff, colleagues and pro-spective colleagues, and others. Yet we are learning, from the research of cognitive scientists, that many of the selection and evaluation processes we undertake on a daily basis are alarmingly "contaminated," despite our good intentions. The contaminants-generically termed "cogni-tive shortcuts and errors"-are present as we gather and sort through information, interpret it, and reach decisions about the following: can-didates for jobs, tenure/promotion, and contract renewals; applications for grants; nominations for awards and leadership posts; and colleagues' and students' professional and academic performance, mastery of new concepts and skills, publications, exhibits, and other demonstrations of mastery and creativity.

During these cognitive processes, most of us *unwittingly* commit a variety of errors and automatically take shortcuts. A chronic one, regularly showing up in our personal and professional lives, is the confusion between causation and correlation. Who among us is immune from that error? Unfortunately, there are many more confusions and traps. If we are rushed and distracted, then cognitive errors and shortcuts demonstrably multiply. When those involved in evaluation and decision-making are not coached and not given opportunities to be thorough, deliberate, and self-correcting, then dysfunction results and unsound conclusions are reached about colleagues as well as prospective colleagues and potential award recipients.

Cognitive errors, intensified by organizational dysfunctions, can of course bring about the unfair measurement and evaluation of *anyone* included in the selection process. But I will suggest here and in other chapters that these errors have disproportionately damaging effects on under-represented women in predominantly male fields (whom I will abbreviate as URW) as well as especially damaging impacts on members of colonized, non-immigrant groups (NIs). The errors-usually made quickly and automatically-result in the under-valuing and frequent rejection of URW and NIs and therefore inadvertently block campuses' and schools' progress on diversifying their faculty ranks. A very serious roadblock needs to be removed.

Setting the Stage

Before continuing, it's important for the reader to know how I will be using the term non-immigrant (NI). I mean the term, discussed in detail in Chapter 3, to include five groups: African Americans, Mexican Amer-icans, American Indians, Puerto Rican Americans, and Native Hawai-ians. These non-immigrant groups were incorporated into this country through force (enslaving, conquering, possessing, dispossessing, denigrating). By contrast, immigrant groups were not subject to such force: they arrived through their own volition.

Who exactly are the fortunate immigrant groups who exercised the choice to settle here, despite encountering hardships and struggles? Immigrant groups include: the dominant European Americans; Asian Americans with their several subgroups, some of whom are now regarded in the United States as "honorary-whites"; newcomers from Africa, the Caribbean, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and so on; and recent and non-so-recent arrivals from South and Central America, some of whom are also regarded as "honorary whites" (Lopez, 2006a; Wu, 2002; and a dozen other scholars). Immigrant groups are motivated by choice and ambition. They are usually accompanied by and aided in establishing their new lives by other newcomers-newcomers who share some of their habits and values because they in fact have also come from the *same* village or area in the old world.

In this first chapter, I will focus on thirteen cognitive errors that show up repeatedly in academe. These have serious consequences for URW and NI groups. In Chapter 2, I will delve deeply into two additional and highly significant errors: negative bias/stereotyping and positive bias/stereotyping, which also have serious consequences for URW and NI groups. Further, in almost every chapter of this book including this first one, I will outline dysfunctional practices that exacerbate the frequency and severity of the fifteen cognitive errors (such as rushing and overload-ing evaluation and decision-making committees or failing to adequately prepare, assist, and then monitor those involved in the processes).

Finally, I will suggest ways to end these organizational bad practices as well as to reduce the cognitive errors and shortcuts committed by individuals, in usually innocent and unknowing ways. (For more on this subject see Moody, 2010, *Rising Above Cognitive Errors.)*

An Overview of Cognitive Errors

Consider diagnoses of medical disorders. In examining and interact-ing with patients and reviewing lab results, practitioners must be able to resist predictable and preventable errors, including first impressions; rushing to judgment; bias based on gender or group membership; and failing to factor in atypical symptoms and instead selectively choosing data that confirm one's original hunches (see Groopman, *How Doctors Think;* 2007; also Dawson and Arkes, 1987; Redelmeier, 2005; Bond, 2004; Croskerry, 2003).

Likewise, behavioral economists and legal and cognitive experts (such as Sunstein, Thaler, Kahneman, Greenwald, Krieger) have iden-tified shortcuts and biases that corrupt "rational" thinking, the esti-mate of probabilities, and sound decision-making and investing. Who is susceptible to these shortcuts and to what economists Robert Shiller and George Akerlof call "animal spirits" in their book by the same name (2009)? Lawyers, judges, juries, investors (big and small), professional financial managers, Federal Reserve Bank directors, philosophers, campus presidents, and, of course, the general public. As one example, how one chooses to frame a problem can easily shut down open-minded exploration and foreclose certain solutions. Anchoring (i.e., fierce adherence to one's first impression) will corrupt deliberations as will a number of other predictable cognitive errors.

Recognizing the prevalence and danger of cognitive errors, several law and medical schools have begun coaching their students and resi-dents to form self-correction habits and to routinely rely on safeguard protocols, reminders, and checklists (Gawande, *The Checklist Mani-festo,* 2009). Likewise senior decision-makers at colleges, universities, and professional schools-as well as their gate-keeping bodies

such as search committees-are receiving instruction in cognitive errors and in structural ways to minimize the errors and improve peer review. Such instruction of individuals and committees plus larger organizational changes are *long overdue.*

Thirteen Cognitive Errors

I will begin the discussion of cognitive errors by focusing first on *the tendency to rely on first impressions.* I will then examine in turn twelve other errors that evaluation and decision-making committees are capable of recognizing and rising above—when they are appropriately coached, assisted, and monitored.

1. First Impressions

Probably most of us are perennially reminding ourselves to stop judg-ing a book by its cover. Unless we remain on guard, we will unfairly make conclusions about a candidate or applicant or new acquaintance in a matter of seconds, based on whether their dress or cologne or pos-ture or laughter or something else pleases or displeases us. Our own personal values and preferences (and, of course, our learned stereotypes about certain groups, which I will consider in Chapter 2} can inordi-nately influence us to make fast and unexamined assumptions and even decisions about a person's worth or appeal.

For instance, you might hear a powerful gate-keeper observe: *Well, that ponytail and those blue jeans clinched it for me, as soon as I saw him walk towards us. Clearly, that applicant is disrespecting us and still thinks he's in graduate school. Responding to the same candidate at the same moment in time, a second person might observe: I got a kick out of the ponytail and jeans. I bet he'd be a sharp person for our emergency-room team.* Both of these rapid-fire assumptions could be fuel for sloppy decision-making about the applicant.

2. Elitism

This error involves feeling superior or wanting to feel superior. Elitism (commonly known as snobbery) could take the form of downgrading on the basis of the candidate's undergraduate or doctoral campus, regional accent, dress, jewelry, social class, ethnic background, and so on (Moody, *Rising,* 2010; Padilla and Chavez, 1995). A search com-mittee member might complain: *She's* so *very Southern-I'm not sure I can stand that syrupy accent. These folks always sound illiterate to me.* Or conversely, giving extra points on the basis of the candidate's alma mater, accent, dress, or other items can be a manifestation of elitism. An evaluation committee member might observe about a candidate: *Isn't it nice to hear his English accent. Always sounds classy. He would be a wonderful choice for our fellowship.*

Other examples of elitism are easy to find: Fearing that a NI colleague from a stigmatized group will somehow lessen the quality and stand-ing of the department, a committee member might say: *Well, shouldn't we always ask if a particular hire like Dewayne is likely to bolster our place in the business school ratings wars? I think that's okay. I mean, Dewayne's scholarship is a bit out of the mainstream and could weaken us.* Another similar example might be: *Are we sure Ricardo will be productive enough to keep up with our publishing standards? I'm not so sure.*

Elitism can, of course, prompt a committee member to feel validated because the candidate will bring some extra snob appeal. *I think Les's doctorate from Princeton* is *just the kind of boost in prestige that we could use around here. I see no reason why we can't take that degree at face value and forego the so-called 'weighing' of what Les has done at Princeton with what the other candidates have accomplished at their hard-scrabble places. To me, that's an awful waste of our time.*

3. Raising the Bar

This error involves raising requirements for a job or an award *during* the very process of evaluation. The raising is usually felt to be necessary because of the decision-maker's realization that the candidate is a mem-ber of a suspect group regarded as inferior (such as URW in science fields and Nls in almost every field). You may hear:

Say, don't we need more writing samples from Latorya? I know we asked for only three law review articles or other compositions from applicants. OK, hers are solid. But I'd feel better, to tell you the truth, if we had a few more in this particular case. I just want to be sure she's really qualified. I have to admit I'm uneasy for some reason.

A second instance: Another committee member agrees and says, *Well, I wish Latorya had a doctorate from the Ivy League or maybe Berkeley. Can't we informally decide right now that Latorya and other candi-dates have to possess those credentials? I think we can.*

My point is that "raising the bar" is unfair and yet unwittingly done in evaluations. Unfortunately, power-holders don't stop to ponder why they may be uncomfortable and why they desire both more evidence and more qualifications for one candidate but not for another. Perhaps group membership is implicated.

4. Premature Ranking/Digging In

All too often, evaluators at every kind of educational institution rush to give numerical preferences to the applicants they are considering. I often wonder if this haste-to-rank brings relief to evaluators and falsely assures them that they have now *escaped* both personal subjectivity and embarrassing vulnerability to cognitive errors. Perhaps they finally feel they have achieved objectivity and fairness. Ranking, after all, gets you "a number" and that guarantees objectivity, doesn't it? Embracing such *false precision* is unfortunately what many of us indulge in.

The superficial rush to rank candidates leads evaluators to prema-turely state their position *(he's clearly number one);* close their minds to new evidence; and then defend their stated position to the death. Rather than developing a pool of acceptable and qualified candidates and then comparing, contrasting, and mulling over candidates' different strengths with one's colleagues, some evaluators prefer to simplify their task and go for the simple numbers.

Here is one illustration of premature ranking and digging in: *Well, I don't want to waste time here in summarizing each candidate's strengths and weaknesses, as the dean suggested. That seems to me just a useless writing exercise proposed by our dean, an overzealous former English professor. I've got enough evidence to make up my mind about who should be number one, number two, and number three. I just hope we can hire number one and not be stuck with the others.*

Another illustration: *Let's go through the categories we're using and assign points to each of the serious candidates for this job. I totally trust everyone here so you don't have to give me subtle and compli-cated reasons for your actions. With this straight-forward, no nonsense approach, we can quickly add up the points and we've got a decision on our first choice-all in twenty-five minutes or less. I'm a big believer in mathematical, objective approaches to these decisions.*

Rushing to rank is a mistake because it obviates engagement with col-leagues in these cognitively beneficial tasks: higher-order thinking, sift-ing through and interpreting evidence, comparing and contrasting, and "weighing" the importance of different items of evidence on the table.

Rushing to rank easily fades into *rushing to judgment.* Admittedly, this rushing to judgment *could* stand on its own as a cognitive error. But in this publication? I have not treated it this way.

5. The Longing to Clone

The longing to clone (reproduce yourself or your clan: as nearly as you can) appears in the search process when committee members under- value a candidate's educational credentials and career trajectory simply because they are not the same as most of those on the evaluation com-mittee. You might hear a committee member ask: *Hey, have we ever chosen anyone with a doctorate from the University of Southwestern Nevada? We don't know anything about that place. No one here ever went to that school, did they? No way.* Or you might hear during ten-ure-review deliberations: *I am dubious about this woman's seriousness as a researcher. Her dropping out for several years to raise little kids--*

this is not a confidence-builder in my book. Alarm bells are going off in my head. None of the rest of us ever had such leaves-it's a dangerous move, no matter what your gender.

In another instance of cloning, a committee member seeks candidates who resemble a colleague who has retired or died. You might hear: *I can't believe that Tony has been gone for three years now. He was the perfect colleague and tax expert. Isn't it time we found someone just like him?* '

While the sentiment about missing Tony's presence is understandable, the danger comes when the committee constructs a very narrow net in order to find a Tony-like replacement and recreate the past. Casting a narrow net can do a disservice to the growth and evolution of the school and will shrink the number of qualified candidates who might be given serious consideration.

6. Good Fit/Bad Fit

Increasingly, gate-keeping individuals and committees ponder and worry whether a job candidate would be a "good fit" or "bad fit" for their department. It is, of course, necessary for a candidate to be able to meet the agreed-on needs of the department, the students, the institu-tion, and perhaps the community. Further, candidates being seriously scrutinized should possess the professional qualifications and competen-cies listed in the position description. But these elements are usually not what is meant by "fit." Instead "fit" is often stretched to mean: "Will I feel comfortable and culturally at ease with this new hire? Or will I have to spend energy to learn some new ways to relate to this person? Will we have to do a lot of hand-holding with this colleague? Who has the time?"

In other words, the longing to clone and to remain intact as a mono- culture within the department may be prompting the complaint that the candidate "just won't fit with us." The same longing to clone can appear in tenure reviews when the candidate is faulted for not being sufficiently collegial. In fact, the American Association of University Professors has begun to warn campuses to resist the slippery use of "collegial" as the reason for denying tenure and/or promotion. The vague term and concept seem to lie in the eyes of the beholder and the power-holder. All of us should be on guard against rampant subjectivity when the question is posed: "Is this a good fit?" The weighing of good fit and bad fit should be done very carefully and with the presence of abundant evidence and details, rather than opinions and personal leanings. I often remark to my consulting clients that I will be pleased if they come to *intensely worry* about how their evaluation committees are handling the good fit/bad fit discussion. Such worry, I hope, will prompt leaders to provide and require more preparation of evaluation committees as well as to issue warnings and reminders about treacherous short cuts to avoid, such as rushing superficially through the weighing of "fit." Far too often, com-mittees fail to be on guard. Far too often, they use "good fit/bad fit" as what I would call a "trump card" in the evaluation process.

As one illustration, you may hear: *Well, I think Mercedes doesn't deserve tenure. We've lived with her long enough to know that she's really very, very different from the rest of us. Sure, she can do the job and do it rather well. But to be blunt, she's just not the kind of person I like to spend time with, especially socially. She's never going to become a soccer mom in this town, if you know what I mean. We can do better.* Another example: *Timothy will stick out in our department, as I'm sure everyone here senses. Won't he be hard to relate to? He is so clearly a New York City kind of a person. He's just too different from the rest of us. We've got a bad fit here, I think. On the other hand, Jerry would be great for us. He can hit the ground running and will be able to read our minds -- well, at least most of the time. That's the beauty of his coming here. He'll fit right into everything, very fast. He's just like us---that's the long and short of it.*

7. Provincialism

Closely related to cloning, this error means undervaluing something outside your own provin ce, circle, or clan. Several comprehensive stud-ies have shown that evaluation committees often tend to trust only those letters of recommendation or external review that are written by people they personally know

(Sagaria, 2002) or who are in certain respected networks. This could be termed an "affiliation bonus" (Wenneras and Wold, 1997).

You might hear a committee member disclose: *Listen, I'm uneasy because I have never met this referee. I have a gut feeling that we shouldn't give his letter much credence. I just have no confidence in what is being said.* In effect, the committee member is announcing: "I trust only those from my own clan or network."

Another example: *Here's a funny, old-fashioned letter. I'm not sure we should really believe all these superlatives. The author writes what could only be termed a 'very peculiar' external review letter. Yes, yes, I know we have debated whether we should give external referees more guidelines. Maybe we should. But anyway, I have the distinct feeling that this particular author wouldn't be able to follow our guidelines. She's clearly living in an earlier century.*

8. Extraneous Myths and Assumptions (Including "Psychoanalyzing" the Candidate)

Personal opinions and misinformation should be suspect during eval-uations. So too should second guessing, mind-reading, or what I prefer to call "psychoanalyzing the candidate." Here are several illustrations of misinformation and of psychoanalysis.

•*Sally is bound to be unhappy with our harsh winters and our family-centered town. I'm certain of that.*

•*Really, there are no qualified women or minorities for us to hire. I wish there were. The pool is bone dry* (paraphrased from Smith, 1996).

•*No one from Georgia Tech would want to come here. I know some of those folks. I'm positive about that.*

•*Minorities like Tonya will be receiving a dozen early career awards in the next year or two, After all, we're now in the decade of "Let's celebrate the minority scientist." So I say we by-pass Tonya because she'll be getting plenty of prestigious recognition from other folks.*

•*Zack will find it too rural here. I wish we had cosmopolitan and diverse neighborhoods for him, but we don't.*

•*This candidate will turn down our offer in an instant. Our measly salary will insult this finance whiz. Let's not set ourselves up for rejection.*

•*This candidate will not be satisfied with a small medical school like ours, no matter what she said. I can only see her thriving at a huge research university.*

•*Her husband has a great job in New Jersey. So put two and two together. This candidate won't accept an offer from us. We're too far away.*

•*Ricardo is playing us for a fool. What I mean is this: he can't be serious about coming to our campus. He's just adding us to his list of eager suitors. Under-represented minorities like Ricardo get a hundred job offers. We don't have a chance, and we should face up to that painful fact* (paraphrased from Smith, 1996).

•*I worry that this campus can't provide Yolanda with a Puerto Rican-American faculty mentor. She deserves a mentor who has the same ethnic background. She needs that kind of person to help her learn the ropes and understand what she's up against here. It would be a disservice to bring her in when we are empty-handed in this area. It just wouldn't be in her best interest.*

9. Wishful Thinking; Rhetoric not Evidence

By wishful thinking, I mean not only holding to a notion in spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary but also casually allowing this notion to cloud one's cognitive processes. A common form of wishful thinking is this: insisting that America and its colleges, universities, and professional schools operate as a *meritocracy* where whom you know and what status and privileges you start with are immaterial.

An illustration: *There is absolutely no subjectivity or favoritism involved when we seek merit and excellence in candidates. We should be proud that all of our grant winners have cultural anthropology doc-torates from Yale and Texas. After all, they're the best and the brightest in my book.*

Another instance of wishful, non-critical thinking occurs when someone insists that they (or the committee) are color-blind and gender-blind and therefore there is no need for them to be more careful than usual in their deliberations. *Listen, I don't really see gender or race in people. Really, I don't. It doesn't matter to me whether a job candidate is black, white, green, polka dot, or purple. Really, it doesn't. I don't see why you're asking me, of all people, to bend over backwards to recruit more and more minority candidates. Give me a break.*

In my other publications, I discuss how the gender-blind and color- blind assertion is almost always a self-serving, disingenuous rhetorical plea by a *majority* person (for non-majorities to make such an assertion would be absurd). With this plea, the majority person seems to be claiming some sort of political innocence and otherworldly infallibility as well as disclaiming any responsibility for past or current discrimination and devaluation of women and minorities. Further, the gender-blind and color-blind assertion deliberately calls into question the wisdom of trying to identify and perhaps hire women and non-immigrants. Faculty search committees should deal with this line of resistance *before* they commence their work. Otherwise, the assertion at certain points can confuse and even unravel the committee's efforts to diversify its departmental faculty. A number of scholars agree with Penn State Professor Frances Rains that the color-blind assertion attempts to "trivialize the substance and weight of the intertwined histories of Whites and people of color" (1999 p. 93), histories intertwined in the U.S. since the beginning of English settlements in the 17th century (also see Dahl; 2001; Fair, 1997; Guinier and Torres, 2000; Takaki, 1993; Gaertner and Dovidio, 1986; Moody, "Rising," 2010). While *on the surface* the color-blind, gender-blind assertion may sound admirable, it usually plays out as a disingenuous and trivializing stance that, I maintain, can slow down actual diversify-ing at schools and campuses.

Finally, wishful thinking can also be illustrated when a group of eval-uators is satisfied with the mere uttering of one individual's opinions and hunches-and does not insist on evidence and verifiable facts. Perhaps the evaluation committee members don't wish to or feel they can't take the time to do the required digging and hard work that must precede the consideration and weighing of evidence. Accepting opinions and wishful thinking are so much easier.

Ironically, most of the cognitive errors being discussed in this book could be characterized as what happens when time-consuming digging for evidence and then careful sifting through it are in fact *abandoned.* Instead, decision-makers unfortunately allow short-cut stating of opin-ions, personal likes and dislikes, and standard stereotypes to thrive.

10.   Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

Some experts would prefer to call this error "channeling," which has been described as structuring our interaction with someone so that we can receive information congruent with our assumptions or so that we can avoid information incongruent with our assumptions. If you have high expectations for someone, you may unthinkingly set up situations- sometimes called *priming*-so that person is likely to be spotlighted in a positive way and earn extra points. Or conversely, if you have low expectations for someone, you can easily set up situations so that these low expectations will be confirmed (Nahavandi and Malekzadeh, 1999).

An example of self-fulfilling prophecy might unfold in this way. You believe the job candidate coming for an interview tomorrow is head and shoulders above all the other candidates. Consequently, you ask one of your most senior and well-informed colleagues to meet the candidate at the airport. Primed by this colleague, the candidate will be better prepared than other candidates for issues he or she will face in the upcom-ing interviews and evaluation process.

Yet another illustration of self-fulfilling prophecy might occur in a sit-uation like this: the committee has chosen three candidates to interview. In your judgment as chair of the committee, two candidates look more attractive on paper than the third. Based on your reading of the files, you decide to place personal phone calls to the two you regard as stronger, to answer their questions. But you ask the *department secretary* to call the third one. It shouldn't be surprising if the third candidate doesn't do as well as the others during the visit. Although this slighting of one applicant is probably unintentional, the slighting can activate the self--fulfilling prophecy.

11. Seizing a Pretext

Seizing a pretext is creating a smoke screen to hide one's real concerns or agenda. By seizing on a pretextual reason, a power-holder can come to the decision desired while keeping hidden or obscure the real reason for the decision.

One example involves assigning excessive weight to something trivial, in order to justify quick dismissal of the candidate. Someone might say: *Raquel seemed so nervous during the first five minutes of her job talk. Why keep her in the running for the administrative position? We don't need a timid mouse to work with.* What this evaluator may be really doing is setting up a superficial and false reason for a thumbs-down verdict.

In another example of seizing a pretext, a tenure and promotion com-mittee decides to "selectively exclude' favorable [teaching]' ratings and focus on the two courses in which a professor had difficulties" and then to use this "contrivance" as a key reason for refusing tenure to the candi-date. Such a deliberate and outrageous smokescreen was uncovered by a judge in a case discussed in *Tenure Denied: Cases of Sex Discrimination in Academia* (American Association of University Women, pp. 56-'57). Pretextual reasons, when they go unchallenged, ensure contaminated results.

12. Assuming Character over Context

Assuming character over context means that a judge does not con-sider the particular context and any extenuating circumstances within that context but instead thinks automatically that an individual's personal characteristics explain her or his behavior. (Some social scientists call this an "attribution" error.)

Here is one example of character over context: A committee member might say, *Well, I didn't like the offhanded way that Walter responded to your question about his most recent public health report, at dinner last night. I mean, is he really serious about this job or not?* Here the committee member ignores the social nature of the dinner setting. Per-haps the candidate thought it would be inappropriate to get into a long discussion of his research since that would be the focus of his two-hour presentation the next day.

Another example of character over context: A committee member hastily concludes, *You know, Sheila didn't seem very lively when I saw her after my 4 p.m. seminar. I don't think we want a low-energy per-son joining our technology-transfer team.* Here the committee person ignores the context that the interview is late in the day after a lengthy series of interviews for the applicant. That context might well have been the explanation for Sheila's behavior.

A third illustration of this particular cognitive error concerns teaching evaluations. Over the years, various personnel and tenure review com-mittees on a campus might have noticed that women and non-immigrant instructors usually earn lower teaching evaluation ratings from stu-dents than do male majority instructors who are usually viewed as the "norm." Despite this familiar pattern, few committee members have ever bothered to check external studies to see if group-bias and gender-bias could help

explain this pattern (they do). Instead, the committees blithely assume that URW and NIs themselves are totally responsible for their lower ranking and should pay the consequences.

13. Momentum of the Group

If most members of an evaluation committee are favoring one candi-date, then it will be more difficult for the remaining members to resist that push towards consensus. The remaining members will have to work harder to get a full hearing for other candidates. Sometimes the struggle doesn't seem to be worth it.

Here is one example: *Okay, this is the last time that I try to call atten-tion to other worthy applicants. Come on, hear me out. Let me go over the strengths and weaknesses, as I see them, of two more promising folks. Hey, listen to me, please.*

The difficulties involved in resisting the group consensus and trying to get the group to extend its deliberations are evident in this example: *Yes, I know we're all exhausted. I know we've spent more time on this stage of the search process that we intended. Nevertheless, I want to make sure we give a full hearing to the only African American in our pool of finalists. Why should he be dismissed quickly when we invested plenty of thought and care in the others? Is he here just for the sake of symbolic value and to reassure our dean that we did indeed try to diver-sify our faculty? Please, hear me out. Please.*

Another example illustrates the power of the group's considerable momentum: *Stop and think, Patrick. Doesn't it make you wonder why all the rest of us are behind Candidate A and you're the only holdout? Are you sure you're not just trying to make some ideological point or be a royal pain? I'm just kidding, of course.*