# Cultivating a Bias-Free Workplace

Presented by
IMA Leadership Academy

Molly G. Brown, CMA, CPA

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The Association of
Accountants and
Financial Professionals
in Business

# Webinar Features and CPE Credit

**Q&A**    Asking Questions

Participant Quick Guide

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## Certification

### Criteria for Partial Credit Option 1

○ Minutes to Watch: 50

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○ Minutes to Watch: 75

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# Moderator

**Amy J. Pilcher, Ph.D., CMA**

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# Presenter

**Molly G. Brown, CMA, CPA**

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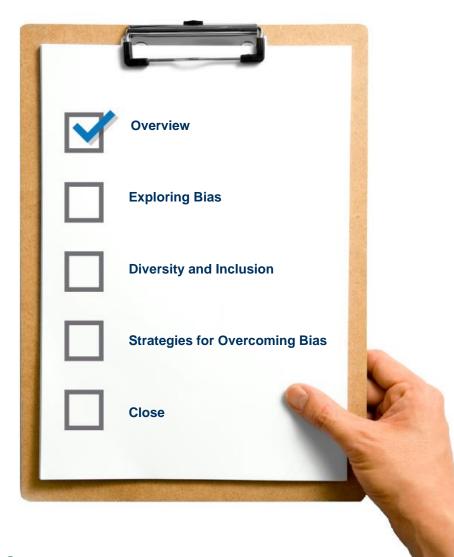
College of Business

# Molly Brown's Biography

- Following a career in the retail sector, and later as an auditor for the Commonwealth of Virginia, Molly Brown, CPA, CMA has been on the accounting faculty of her alma mater, James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, since 2002.  In 2014, she was appointed Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs for the College of Business. In her current role, she oversees professional development programming, prospective student engagement, and student support for the college.

- She has been a professional ethics instructor for the Virginia Association of Public Accountants, an essay scorer for the CPA exam, and is a contributor and reviewer for several financial and management accounting textbooks. In 2013, she was a CMA Exam silver medalist.

- Molly enjoys serving on non-profit boards in her community and directing JMU's Semester in Antwerp, Belgium program, In her free time, she and her husband like to relax at their cottage on Lake Erie in western New York.

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# Course Goal and Agenda

The **goal of this course** is to increase awareness of different factors that generate various biases in the workplace and to uncover personal and organizational strategies for reducing workplace bias.

✔ **Overview**

☐ **Exploring Bias**

☐ **Diversity and Inclusion**

☐ **Strategies for Overcoming Bias**

☐ **Close**

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# Learning Objectives

**After this session, attendees will be able to:**

**DEFINE** bias and identify cognitive factors that impact biases.

**DESCRIBE** unconscious bias.

**EXPLAIN** the value of diversity and inclusion.

**RECOGNIZE** bias and its affects in the workplace.

**DISCUSS** strategies for overcoming biases.
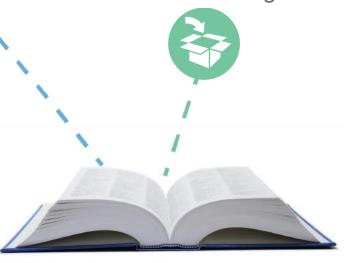
EXPLORING BIAS

# Definitions

## Stereotype

- Generalizations made regarding a particular group.

- Can be positive or negative.

- Typically learned through influential exposure with parents, peers, and others, as well as through mass media.

## Bias

A particular tendency or inclination, especially one that prevents impartial consideration of a question.

Source: See Bibliography [4,18]

# Examples of Stereotypes

- Star athletes are not very intelligent.

  - **Men should always be the ones to take out the trash.**

- Millennials are entitled, lazy, and self-centered.

  - **Girls are only interested in appearances.**

- Women are genetically unable to code as well as men.

  - **Baby boomers struggle with technology.**

- Teenagers are disrespectful rebels.

  - **Americans are arrogant and impatient.**
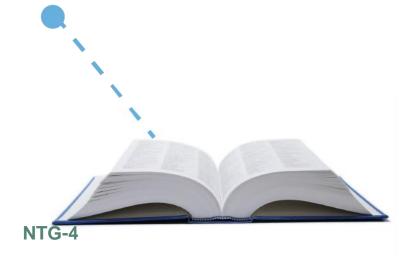
- Gen X-ers are negative cynics.

# Unconscious Bias Defined

Refers to the **attitudes** or **stereotypes** that **affect our decisions in an unconscious manner**. These **biases**, which encompass favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and **without an individual's awareness or intentional control**.

# 10 Bias Patterns

1 Selective attention

2 Diagnosis bias

3 Pattern recognition

4 Value attribution

5 Confirmation bias

6 Priming

7 Commitment confirmation

8 Stereotype threat

9 Anchoring bias

10 Group think

Source: See Bibliography [1,4,10,24]

# Examples of Bias in the Workplace

## 2004

Researchers found it took **50%** more résumés from people with traditionally African-American names to get a callback than from people with traditionally European names.

## 2012

When YouTube first launched its app for Apple's iOS, **5%-10%** of videos appeared upside down because the engineers had unconsciously optimized the app for right-handed users.

## 2014

A blogger shocks Google by pointing out that **77%** of the previous year's Doodles were for men.

Source: See Bibliography [11]

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# Common Bias "Traps" in the Workplace



INTERVIEWING
AND HIRING

PERFORMANCE
REVIEWS

COACHING
AND DEVELOPMENT

DAY-TO-DAY
INTERACTIONS

Source: See Bibliography [3]

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# Common Workplace Bias Triggers



TASK



GROUP BELONGING



LACK OF CLARITY



EMOTION

Source: See Bibliography [11]

# Poll Question #1

In which of the following areas have you observed most commonly triggering bias in your workplace?

(select all that apply)

a) Task
b) Group belonging
c) Lack of clarity
d) Emotion
e) None of these

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# Poll Question #1 Results

# What Biases Thrive in Accounting?

**1** AMBIGUITY

**2** ATTACHMENT

**3** APPROVAL

Source: See Bibliography [14]

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DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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# Diversity and Inclusion

## Diversity
The understanding and recognition of individual differences and identities.

## Inclusion
The act of being included within a group or structure while retaining one's own unique identity.

**In simple terms, diversity is the mix; inclusion is getting the mix to work well together.**

Source: See Bibliography [29]

# Benefits of Diversity



**1** Increased adaptability

**2** Better customer service

**3** Greater innovation

**4** Easier recruitment and retention

Source: See Bibliography [3,18]

# Poll Question #2

In what areas have you observed the highest benefit of diversity in your or another organization? (select all that apply)

a)  Increased adaptability
b)  Better customer service
c)  Greater innovation
d)  Easier recruitment and retention
e)  I have not observed the benefits of diversity in any of these areas



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# Poll Question #2 Results

# Diversity and Financial Performance

**McKinsey & Company research shows that:**

- Gender and ethnic diversity are clearly correlated with profitability.

- Gender diversity on executive teams is strongly correlated with profitability and value creation.

Despite these strong benefits, **more progress** on **gender and ethnic diversity** is needed.

Source: See Bibliography [15]

# Diversity and Financial Accounting

*"Finance leaders are hiring from nontraditional areas and investing in both conventional and unconventional programs and workshops to prepare digitally agile and well-rounded teams for the future."*

Source: See Bibliography [19]

# Four Global Mega-Trends



Diversity of
**TALENT**

**4**

Diversity of
**MARKETS**

**1**

Diversity of
**IDEAS**

**3**

Diversity of
**CUSTOMERS**

**2**

Source: See Bibliography [6]

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**NTG-9**

# Traits of Inclusive Leaders

**COLLABORATION**
because a diverse-thinking team is greater than the sum of its parts.

**COMMITMENT**
because staying the course is hard.

**CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE**
because not everyone sees the world through the same cultural lens.

**COURAGE**
because talking about imperfections involves personal risk-taking.

**CURIOSITY**
because different ideas and experiences enable growth.

**COGNIZANCE**
because bias is a leader's Achilles' heel.

Source: See Bibliography [6]

# Poll Question #3

Of the six attributes of inclusive leaders, which is one that you would most like to work on improving in yourself?

a) Commitment
b) Courage
c) Cognizance
d) Curiosity
e) Cultural intelligence
f) Collaboration

# Poll Question #3 Results

STRATEGIES FOR
OVERCOMING BIAS

# Actions to Reduce Personal Biases

EXPLORE

DISCUSS

MAINTAIN

REFLECT

COMMIT

CONFRONT

ENGAGE

## In the workplace

- Declare your intentions

- Provide positive images

- Fight negative bias with positive words and images

- Use clear and nonbiased language

Source: See Bibliography [2,18]

# Actions to Reduce Organizational Bias

RECRUITMENT

TRAINING

POLICY

AWARENESS

BEHAVIOR

NTG-14

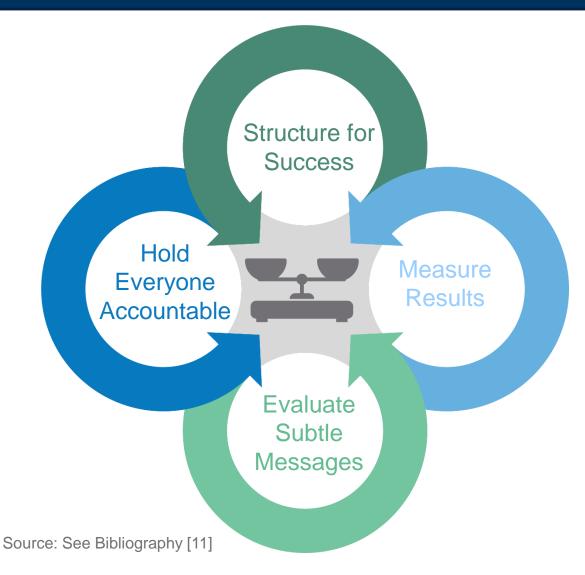# Tips to Reduce Bias in Organizations

- **ARTICULATE** goals for diversity and **COMMUNICATE** the benefits and risks of inclusiveness

- **DISTRIBUTE** a discrimination policy

- **CONDUCT** discrimination policy training

- **ANALYZE** the diversity in both employment ranks and customer base

- **CALCULATE** the monetary gains foreseen as a result of diversity

- **TIE** rewards and compensation to success in diversifying the company

- **FACILITATE** employees learning more about each other

- **CREATE** worker councils or caucus groups

- **ENCOURAGE** reports of bias and **TAKE** appropriate action

# Google's Four-Pronged Approach to Bias



Structure for Success

Hold Everyone Accountable

Measure Results

Evaluate Subtle Messages

Source: See Bibliography [11]

**NTG-15**

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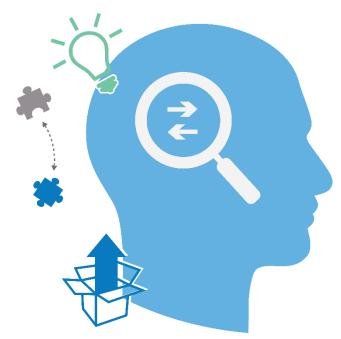
# Using Design Thinking to Combat Bias

## Design thinking

- "Human-centered problem-solving"
- Identify areas that may create bias outcomes
- Determining what design/structure/situational changes can be made to counteract these biases.
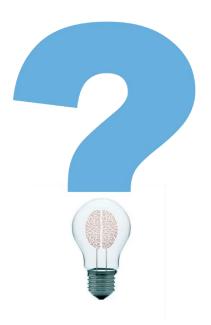
Source: See Bibliography [13]

# Poll Question #4

Have you ever used design thinking in any aspects of your work?

a) No, I have no experience with design thinking.

b) I have no experience with design thinking, but I'm familiar with the approach.

c) Yes, I have used design thinking in my work.

# Poll Question #4 Results

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# Principles and Benefits of Design Thinking

## Guiding Principles

- Empathy
- Exploration
- Experimentation

## Benefits

- Grounded in employee experience
- Guided by facts and information
- Creates customized solutions
- Iterative and user-validated

Source: See Bibliography [13]

# Design Thinking Applied to Gender Bias

**EXPLORE**
employees' experiences to
understand biases in play

**IDENTIFY**
the impacts of implicit bias on
women's experiences and outcomes

**IDEATE**
solutions with women employees to
reduce the impacts of implicit biases

**TEST**
prototyped solutions through
pilot programs

**EVALUATE**
impact and refine solutions

Source: See Bibliography [13]

# Guidelines for Implementation

**1** Start small

**2** Engage diverse perspectives

**3** Give people a safe way to share information

**4** Collect and monitor data

**5** Be transparent with results

Source: See Bibliography [13]

# Using Artificial Intelligence in HR

## IN RECRUITING

Filter out gender-biased language in job descriptions.

Spot potential candidates by analyzing social media footprints and published points of views.

## IN SUCCESSION PLANNING

Combat halo/horns effect, similarity bias, and threat bias.

Analyze success profiles and spot internal candidates who are close matches.

## IN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Combat recency effect and contrast effect.

Automatically going through feedback comments to get actionable insights.

## IN LEARNING

Combat confirmation bias, anchoring bias, and mere exposure effect.

Learning facilitated by virtual personal assistants.

Source: See Bibliography [7]

# COSO's Professional Judgment Process

**1** **DEFINE** the problem and **IDENTIFY** fundamental objectives

**2** **CONSIDER** alternatives

**3** **GATHER** and **EVALUATE** information

**4** **REACH** a conclusion

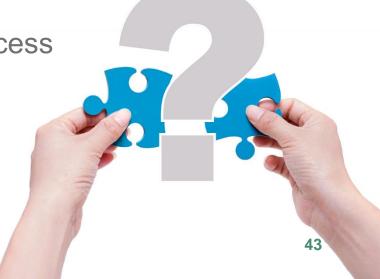**5** **ARTICULATE** and **DOCUMENT** your rationale

Source: See Bibliography [14]

# Poll Question #5

Of the strategies and approaches to combatting bias that we have covered in this section, which is most helpful for your situation?

a) Actions to reduce personal bias
b) Google's four-pronged approach
c) Using design thinking
d) Using artificial intelligence
e) COSO's Professional Judgment Process

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# Poll Question #5 Results

CLOSE

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# Topics Covered

BIAS

STEREOTYPES

**UNCONSCIOUS** BIAS

BIAS PATTERNS

COMMON BIAS "TRAPS"

COMMON BIAS TRIGGERS

DIVERSITY

**INCLUSION**

DIVERSITY AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

GLOBAL MEGA-TRENDS

TRAITS OF INCLUSIVE LEADERS

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# More Topics Covered

GOOGLE'S FOUR-
PRONGED APPROACH

DESIGN THINKING

**EXPLORE**

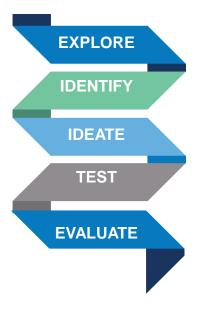**IDENTIFY**

**IDEATE**

**TEST**

**EVALUATE**

ACTIONS TO
REDUCE
PERSONAL BIAS

COSO'S
PROFESSIONAL
JUDGMENT
PROCESS

1 2 3 4 5

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# 3 – 2 – 1 Action Plan

**3** Things you learned or were reminded of in this course

**2** Actions you want to take

**1** Action you want to take immediately

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# Questions & Answers

*Use the* **Q & A Panel** *to send your questions to our panelists.*

**Molly Brown, CMA, CPA**
**Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs**
**Director, Semester in Antwerp**
James Madison University College of Business

**Amy J. Pilcher, Ph.D., CMA**
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# Thank You to Our Featured Presenter!

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  or

- Click the link in your post-event email

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