



## Watch for Unconscious Bias

### What Is Unconscious Bias?

As human beings, we all have bias wired into us. According to research, our brain takes in 11 million pieces of information every second. With so much to process, the brain creates shortcuts to help it be more efficient. These shortcuts are shaped by the individual's background, cultural norms and personal experiences, most often in ways they are not even aware of. This process affects our behavior, attitude, decision-making and treatment of others.

**It is important to be aware of the types of bias that can impact your role as a chapter leader, and also how it can affect how your chapter operates.** You can work hard to eliminate bias from the systems and processes in your chapter, as well as to interrupt bias in the people within the leadership group. It is impossible to remove bias completely because of how the brain works.

### Taking Action on Bias

Here are three ways you can address bias in your committee, region and chapter:

1. **Learn about the types of bias that exist.** Reflect on how they may show up in your systems/processes. Examples include:
  - How and who you recruit
  - Thinking about representation at your events, including speakers, venue and audience
  - How you run your board elections.

Multiple resources are online to learn more, such as [11 Types of Unconscious Bias and How to Interrupt Them](#).

2. **Explore personal bias** using the [Harvard Implicit Association Test](#). This test can show where you may have unexpected automatic preferences and hint at where bias may be influencing you. If you're comfortable doing it, you might choose to share results as a chapter leadership team.
3. **Be honest and realistic.** No one is going to get this right all the time. The important thing is to be aware that bias is going to be present at all times and affecting how you operate. That alone is an important acknowledgment that will help you to interrupt it.

Throughout your journey, if you're not consciously including, you are likely to be unknowingly excluding.