

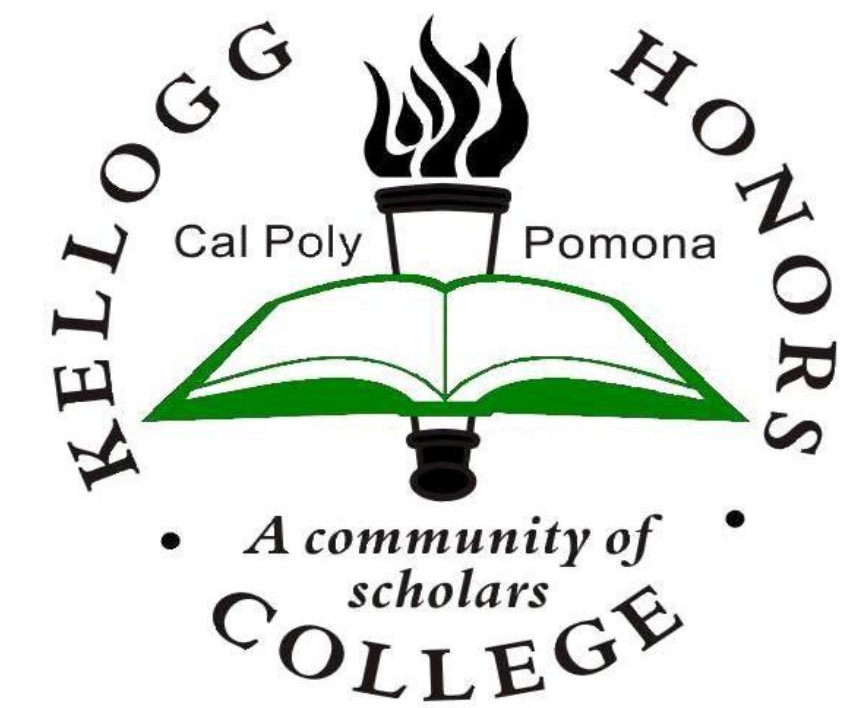
# Incorporating Implicit Bias Training in Residence Life



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Kellogg Honors College Capstone Project



| Implicit Association Results – Start of Quarter   |   |
|---|---|
| Students (22)   | Professional Staff (6)  |
| <b>Ability:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong automatic preference for Abled over Disabled Persons: 8</li> <li>- Moderate automatic preference for Abled over Disabled Persons: 7</li> <li>- Slight automatic preference for Abled over Disabled Persons: 2</li> <li>- Moderate automatic preference for Disabled over Abled Persons: 1</li> <li>- Slight Automatic preference for Disabled over Abled Persons: 2</li> <li>- No automatic preference: 2</li> </ul>  | <b>Ability:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong automatic preference for Abled over Disabled Persons: 1</li> <li>- Moderate automatic preference for Abled over Disabled Persons: 2</li> <li>- Slight automatic preference for Abled over Disabled Persons: 2</li> <li>- No automatic preference: 1</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Skin Tone:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moderate automatic preference for Light Skinned over Dark Skinned People: 5</li> <li>- Slight automatic preference for Light Skinned over Dark Skinned People: 6</li> <li>- Strong automatic preference for Dark Skinned over Light Skinned People: 1</li> <li>- Moderate automatic preference for Dark Skinned over Light Skinned People: 1</li> <li>- Slight automatic preference for Dark Skinned over Light Skinned People: 4</li> <li>- No automatic preference: 5</li> </ul>   | <b>Skin Tone:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moderate automatic preference for Light Skinned over Dark Skinned people: 1</li> <li>- Slight automatic preference for Light Skinned over Dark Skinned people: 2</li> <li>- Slight automatic preference for Dark Skinned over Light Skinned people: 1</li> <li>- No automatic preference: 2</li> </ul>     |
| <b>Race:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong automatic preference for European Americans over African Americans: 3</li> <li>- Moderate automatic preference for European Americans over African Americans: 2</li> <li>- Slight automatic preference for European Americans over African Americans: 3</li> <li>- Strong automatic preference for African Americans over European Americans: 2</li> <li>- Moderate automatic preference for African Americans over European Americans: 4</li> <li>- Slight automatic preference for African Americans over European Americans: 4</li> <li>- No automatic preference: 4</li> </ul> | <b>Race:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Slight automatic preference for European Americans over African Americans: 2</li> <li>- Moderate automatic preference for African Americans over European Americans: 1</li> <li>- Slight automatic preference for African Americans over European Americans: 2</li> <li>- No automatic preference: 1</li> </ul> |

**Abstract**

Implicit biases are unconscious attitudes or stereotypes people hold that affect our interactions, decisions, and actions. Residence life staff has the potential to have a significant impact on students through their decisions, such as evictions and other disciplinary action, which are affected by implicit biases. Because of their daily interactions with diverse groups of students, this project aimed to reduce implicit biases in residence life staff and implement bias-reduction into student leader training. This project used the Implicit Association Test for ability, skin-tone, and race to measure implicit biases in residence life staff. Throughout the quarter, participants were provided with readings, techniques, and games meant to reduce implicit bias. Implicit bias was measured at the start of the project using the Implicit Association Test, then measured again at the end of the project to observe any reduction in overall bias amongst residence life staff, including resident advisors and professional staff members. Based on overall reduction in implicit biases, bias-reduction was implemented into student leader training for the 2018-2019 school year.



| Implicit Association Results – End of Quarter   |   |
|---|---|
| Students (22)   | Professional Staff (6)  |
| <b>Ability:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong automatic preference for Abled over Disabled Persons: 5</li> <li>- Moderate automatic preference for Abled over Disabled Persons: 3</li> <li>- Slight automatic preference for Abled over Disabled Persons: 8</li> <li>- Strong automatic preference for Disabled over Abled Persons: 1</li> <li>- Moderate automatic preference for Disabled over Abled Persons: 1</li> <li>- Slight Automatic preference for Disabled over Abled Persons: 1</li> <li>- No automatic preference: 3</li> </ul>  | <b>Ability:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong automatic preference for Abled over Disabled Persons: 1</li> <li>- Moderate automatic preference for Abled over Disabled Persons: 2</li> <li>- Slight automatic preference for Abled over Disabled Persons: 1</li> <li>- No automatic preference: 2</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Skin Tone:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moderate automatic preference for Light Skinned over Dark Skinned People: 3</li> <li>- Slight automatic preference for Light Skinned over Dark Skinned People: 5</li> <li>- Strong automatic preference for Dark Skinned over Light Skinned People: 2</li> <li>- Moderate automatic preference for Dark Skinned over Light Skinned People: 2</li> <li>- Slight automatic preference for Dark Skinned over Light Skinned People: 5</li> <li>- No automatic preference: 5</li> </ul>   | <b>Skin Tone:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Slight automatic preference for Dark Skinned over Light Skinned People: 2</li> <li>- Moderate automatic preference for Light Skinned over Dark Skinned People: 1</li> <li>- Slight automatic preference for Light Skinned over Dark Skinned People: 2</li> <li>- No automatic preference: 1</li> </ul>     |
| <b>Race:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong automatic preference for European Americans over African Americans: 1</li> <li>- Moderate automatic preference for European Americans over African Americans: 3</li> <li>- Slight automatic preference for European Americans over African Americans: 7</li> <li>- Strong automatic preference for African Americans over European Americans: 2</li> <li>- Moderate automatic preference for African Americans over European Americans: 3</li> <li>- Slight automatic preference for African Americans over European Americans: 4</li> <li>- No automatic preference: 2</li> </ul> | <b>Race:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Slight automatic preference for African Americans over European Americans: 3</li> <li>- Moderate automatic preference for European Americans over African Americans: 1</li> <li>- Slight automatic preference for European Americans over African Americans: 1</li> <li>- No automatic preference: 1</li> </ul> |

**Recommendations**

While the Implicit Association Test may not be considered the most accurate measure of whether certain biases exist, it is interesting to note differences in IAT results among student leaders and professional staff members from the start of the quarter to the end of the quarter.

This being said, some recommendations university housing services on our campus could consider implementing are:

- Annual incorporation of implicit bias training in Student Leader Training during summer
- Incorporate Implicit bias role playing in behind closed doors activities
- EX: Rather than sending people to one specific room, set up a series of rooms with different names on the door tags to see if they accurately identify the room with an actual incident or if their perceptions of the name on the door tag alters their effectiveness)
- Offer resident surveys to see how well residents feel that residence life staff and resident advisors help make them feel like they belong
- Encourage more gender neutral door decorations, bulletin boards, etc.
- Perform evaluations before, after, and 3 months after student leader training to ensure that implicit bias training is being maintained
- Have professional staff aggregate and analyze data regarding incidents:
- EX: How many incidents were filed in \_\_ month? How many were of a certain race/gender? Consider this data and determine if residence life needs to re-evaluate training on incidents and documenting residents.

**Limitations**

- Time constraints of having this project occur only over a 10-week span limited the scope and the impact of the research.
- Project may have been more effective being done from the start of the academic year to the end of the academic year.
- Group of students and professional staff members participating in this project were limited to only residence life on our campus, and only about half of the Resident Advisors and half of Professional Staff.
- Implicit bias training was incorporated during the 2018 – 2019 Student Leader Training following this project, but there is no certainty of its annual implementation, impacting its overall effectiveness on reducing bias and improving residents’ feeling of belonging.

**Conclusion**

Beyond implicit bias being an important issue overall, considering implicit bias is important in residence life staff specifically because of the large impact they have in over 2,400 residents’ first experiences on a college campus. This number will only grow with new housing developments, and it will be increasingly difficult to reach out to all residents and provide them with equal experiences in housing when there are a larger number of students and while housing is working on restructuring.

Learning about implicit bias will help residence life staff create a more fair environment and a more equal experience for all residents. It is important for Resident Advisors especially because it will positively impact performance in their positions with knowledge and awareness of their own biases. We all come into this experience with different backgrounds, views, and perceptions of our surroundings. With implicit bias training, despite our backgrounds, we will be better able to come into the position more open-minded to the people we work with and our residents. Through training, residence life can ensure that biases will have as little an impact as possible on our ability to serve as student leaders.

Implicit bias is also especially important for residence life professional staff because many people with previous diversity training are unaware of their implicit biases because they do not feel a need for specific training in this area. It is necessary for people in leadership positions to recognize and acknowledge their own biases in order to begin combating them. Additionally, student leaders indicated in surveys for this project that they would like to be more educated on biases and their impact on them and their ability to best serve as student leaders.

Through implicit bias training, there can be more fairness and equity in many aspects of residence life, including, but not limited to, conduct, hiring of new student leaders, and interactions with resident.