



# Infusing Psychological Need Support into Faculty Search Processes: Broadening the Search Experiment Results

## Self Determination Theory

Project TRACS uses self-determination theory (SDT) as the organizing framework for the selection and testing of our initiatives.

A self-determined environment supports the (universal) psychological needs of **relatedness, autonomy and competence** (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

The theory suggests, and empirical data support, that when these three basic needs of relatedness, autonomy, and competence are satisfied, job satisfaction improves, organizational trust and loyalty increase, and creativity, motivation and performance thrive (Deci & Ryan, 2000).



**To Consider: What are some search-related strategies you have used to broaden the pool of applicants?**

## Construct Definitions

- Autonomy**
  - the experience of acting with a sense of choice and volition and fully embracing one's actions.
- Competence**
  - the belief that one has the ability to influence and master important outcomes
- Relatedness**
  - the experience of having satisfying and supportive social relationships and connections



## Methods

**A Broadening the Search Experiment** was designed and predicted to:

- 1) **enhance competence of the search committee by delivering concrete strategies for conducting a broad search**
- 2) **enhance autonomy of the search committee by illustrating how unconscious bias can undermine decision making**
- 3) **enhance relatedness of the job finalists by meeting a faculty Family Advocate to discuss work-life integration.**

**Participants:** *A randomized field experiment*, blocked by college, was conducted with all 23 STEM searches in one academic year (experimental searches n=14).

### Procedure

- Randomly selected searches were contacted and invited to participate. No search declined. Search committee members participated in a personalized 60 minute session with the PI and were given search toolkit materials.
- The University Family Advocate met with 108 candidates over 9 months in 15 – 30 minute meetings; candidates were contacted by email prior to the meeting and assured the meeting was “confidential and independent from the search.” They were all provided with the FA brochure and bullet point list of work-life support programs at MSU.

### Quantitative and Qualitative Measures

- Data was collected via a “Broadening the Search Record Survey” sent out and completed by Deans, Search Chairs, or Department Heads.
- Data were collected via semi-structured phone interviews with a convenience sample of 7 job candidates who declined the offer to join a STEM department. In 20-30 min interviews they were asked how they viewed meeting with the Family Advocate.

**To Consider: How to address the worry of “reverse gender discrimination” when just 50% of the hires were women?**

## Results

**Quantitative Results:** T-test analyses and odds ratio analyses found that compared to searches in the control condition, searches in the experimental condition:

- Phone interviewed significantly more women ( $M=3.93$  vs  $1.0$ ;  $t(21) = 2.88, p < .01, d=1.26$ ).
- On-campus interviewed a significantly greater proportion of women ( $t(21) = 2.12, p < .05, d=0.95$ ).
- Experimental searches were **3.21** times more likely to make an offer to a woman candidate ( $d=0.91$ ), and these women candidates were **14 times** more likely to accept the offer in the experimental condition ( $d=.50$ ).

**Qualitative Results:** transcripts were analyzed by independent coders using NVivo 10. Evidence showed candidates on the whole viewed the meeting with the Family Advocate as a positive experience.

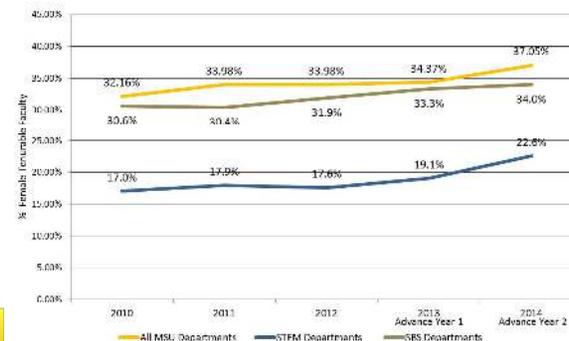
“Knowing that [the FA] had spoken and worked with people, and seen people in XX department that had gone through the process...and were supported as well, was actually really meaningful to me. Because I went to plenty of interviews where, you know, there were no women with children, and there was no talk of it...”

“And really what [my conversation with the FA] did was put it on my RADAR for things I should be asking about at all the other places that I [interviewed].”

“I think it [the FA meeting] was really good, although it wasn't really relevant”

“...had I pursued [the offer]... I was glad there was someone I could contact who could help [my partner] find positions outside the university.”

**5-Year Change in % Female Tenurable Faculty at MSU**



**SUMMARY:** Results suggest that the faculty search experiment was highly effective in broadening the participation of women faculty and led to an **equal percent (50%)** of men and women hired in STEM/SBS. In total: **18** of the new hires made in 2012-13 in STEM/SBS were women.