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ABSTRACT

   The National Academy of Public Administration's Board of Trustees recently adopted social equity as the fourth pillar of public administration. Human resource management (HRM) courses are situated to increase the public affairs graduate curriculum's emphasis on social equity, because these courses already give attention to related concepts such as due process, discrimination, sexual harassment, and work-life policies. The challenge is to directly apply this pillar in the HRM curriculum by strengthening students' exposure to formal and informal personnel policies and practices that promote or impede social equity. Drawing on our teaching experiences, we describe how HRM professors can enhance their students' social equity competencies by incorporating the use of informal "HR dialogues" in their courses. These dialogues allow students to develop managerial competencies to handle the real-world social equity tensions and resistance they are likely to encounter.

   Issues of equity and justice are fundamental concerns of public administrators. Public administrators face the constant challenge of ensuring equity in governance (Akram, 2004), and in certain respects the field of public administration has moved slowly in applying principles of justice. In fact, equity or fairness in public services was the last established "pillar" of the field—and it still remains secondary in emphasis behind economy, effectiveness, and efficiency.[1] Although the National Academy of Public Administration is not the decisive voice of the discipline—nor does such a decisive voice exist—this respected organization's adoption of social equity elevates its importance to our profession.

   Social equity is generally identified as a post-1960s concern of public administration. As H. George Frederickson notes, "It was during the 1960s that it

became increasingly evident that the results of governmental policy and the work of public administrators implementing those policies were much better for some citizens than for others" (Frederickson, 2005). In 1974, *Public Administration Review* published a symposium on "Social Equity and Public Administration." This symposium helped build social equity theory, citing social equity as 1) the basis for a just, democratic society; 2) an influence on the behavior of organizational man; 3) the legal basis for distributing public services; 4) the practical basis for distributing public services; 5) operationalized in compound federalism; and 6) a challenge for research and analysis (Frederickson, 1990, 229). In February 2000, the National Academy of Public Administration's Board of Trustees authorized the establishment of a Standing Panel on Social Equity. This panel defined social equity as "[t]he fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract, and the fair and equitable distribution of public services, and implementation of public policy, and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy" (National Academy of Public Administration, 2000).

It is important to assess how well we are educating our students about this fourth pillar of public administration. What do we teach MPA students about social equity? More importantly, what training to practice social equity do they receive in our programs? It stands to reason that we want our students to become equipped to understand and practice social equity in their jobs as public servants. But what formal training do our students receive to do so? This article suggests that the human resource management (HRM) area is one logical place to expand our focus on social equity by offering specific suggestions to educate students on the formal and informal social equity practices related to human resources.

Gooden and Myers (2004) co-edited a symposium on social equity in public affairs education in the April 2004 volume of the *Journal of Public Affairs Education*. As part of his response to that volume, David Rosenbloom (July 2005) asked for an explanation for "the advantages, if any, of applying the term social equity to standard, longstanding subject matter in MPA education" (249). Rosenbloom's question is an important one, as it essentially asks about social equity's added value in our curricula.

Our response parallels the sentiments of Svara and Brunet (2004) when they state

> A commitment to social equity prompts one to analyze and explore the activist limits of equal protection, whereas the absence of this commitment might cause one to tolerate instances of inequality out of concern that remedies might not pass the equal protection test. Although Rosenbloom is concerned that social equity will be "muddled when it is treated as a pillar built of sometimes incompatible concerns and concepts," an opposing view is that it is stronger because it is based on considering and balancing multiple forms of analysis reflecting the four dimensions [efficiency, economy, effectiveness and equity] (255).

Our central response to Rosenbloom's question is that applying social equity into MPA education—specifically in the HRM area—offers the opportunity to 1) introduce students to the concept of social equity; 2) provide an opportunity for them to analyze common formal and informal HRM practices through the concept of social equity; and 3) provide students with the tools and resources they need to actively apply the social equity pillar in their future professional work. The latter purpose is of particular importance. Ultimately, professors in HRM courses can integrate social equity for each HRM component by ensuring that their students understand how the formal context promotes or discourages social equity and how the informal "HR dialogues" promote or discourage social equity. In each instance, students need to carefully consider the role of the public sector manager.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: A PROMISING TRAINING GROUND
    The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) is the accrediting body for graduate programs in public affairs and administration. The *Standards for Professional Master's Degree Programs in Public Affairs, Policy, and Administration* are proposed by its Standards Committee and adopted by NASPAA. The curriculum components are designed to produce professionals capable of intelligent, creative analysis and communication and action in public service (NASPAA, 2005). Although NASPAA does not require specific courses, it does identify common curriculum components. As Table 1 shows, HRM is a key component in the management of public sector organizations.
    Issues of social equity should permeate the entire public affairs curriculum (Wooldridge, 1998). This is especially true for HRM courses. Social equity issues are not exclusive to personnel management, but they do have a historical tie there. According to the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), "[t]hese issues were front-and-center in the early years of affirmative action and were reflected in public administration practices such as hiring and promotion, the selecting of contractors and bidders, and the like" (2000).
    In their textbook, Shafritz and Russell (2002) identify three qualities of social equity:

> All public administrators have an obvious obligation to advance social equity. However this obligation can be legitimately and honorably interpreted in several ways. First is the obligation to administer the laws they work under in a fair manner.
>   The second way of interpreting obligations to advance social equity is to feel bound to proactively further the cause—to seek to hire and advance a varied workforce. The attitude requires a specific approach: It is not enough to go out and find qualified minorities. You must go out, find them, and then qualify them.

The third aspect to advancing social equity is best illustrated by a story. In 1963 George C. Wallace, then governor of Alabama, dramatically stood in the doorway of the University of Alabama to prevent the entry of black students and the desegregation of the university. It was a major media event. Wallace, backed up by the Alabama National Guard, stood waiting at his designated chalk mark on the pavement wearing his TV network microphone. As was arranged, the deputy U.S. attorney general, Nicholas Katzenbach, backed up by 3,000 federal troops, ordered Wallace to allow a black student, Vivian Malone, to enter. After a longwinded speech about federal encroachment on state's rights, Wallace stepped aside and Katzenbach escorted Malone to the university cafeteria.

Table 1. Public Administration Core Curriculum Areas

NASPAA Common Curriculum Components

4.21 Common Curriculum Components. The common curriculum components shall enhance the student's values, knowledge, and skills to act ethically and effectively:

In the Management of Public Service Organizations, the components of which include:
- Human resources
- Budgeting and financial processes
- Information management, technology applications and policy

In the Application of Quantitative and Qualitative Techniques of Analysis, the components of which include:
- Policy and program formulation, implementation and evaluation
- Decision-making and problem-solving

With an Understanding of the Public Policy and Organizational Environment, the components of which include:
- Political and legal institutions and processes
- Economic and social institutions and processes
- Organization and management concepts and behavior

These area requirements do not prescribe specific courses. Neither do they imply that equal time should be spent on each area or that courses must all be offered by the public affairs, public policy or public administration programs.

Source: NASPAA, 2005

This incident is a famous aspect of the Civil Rights Movement. Journalist Jacob Weisberg in his "In Defense of Government" adds an element to this well known story that shows government at its best. After Malone entered the cafeteria, she got her tray of food and sat alone. Almost immediately some white female students joined her. They sought to befriend her, as they would any new student. According to Weisberg, "That's the most powerful part of the story because it is about a change that good government inspired but could not force." Then, as now, government can go only so far in forcing social equity. But there is no limit to the amount of inspiration it can provide to encourage people to do the right, decent, and honorable thing. This encouragement has a name. It is called moral leadership (10-11).

Each of these three qualities of social equity is directly related to HRM. First, public administrators must administer the laws fairly. Second, public administrators should proactively hire a diverse workforce. Finally, public administrators should provide moral leadership to the fulfillment of social equity. At the crux of each of these normative qualities is the eminence of government workers. Human resource management essentially forms the base of social equity in public administration. Personnel and personnel policies matter. As Frank Thompson (1991) states,

Personnel policies lay the ground rules for position determination—the creation and allocation of formal roles within agencies (e.g., job design and classification). They shape human-resource flows—recruitment, promotion, transfer, demotion, removal. They specify an approach to performance appraisal—processes through which managers acquire and interpret information concerning the activities of subordinates. They seek to motivate subordinates to behave in certain ways through regulation, the establishment of incentive systems, and socialization that instills certain knowledge, perceptions, skills, and values" (vii).

The human resource management area already has the most activity in connection with social equity. It provides a natural focal point upon which to increase the integration of social equity into public administrators' professional training. In their analysis of social equity coverage in public administration textbooks, Svara and Brunet (2004) found "the most attention is given to procedural social equity concerns, including due process, discrimination, and equal employment opportunity" (104).

INCREASING STUDENT EXPOSURE TO SOCIAL EQUITY THROUGH FORMAL AND INFORMAL PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

HRM refers to the comprehensive set of managerial activities and tasks concerned with developing and maintaining a qualified workforce—human resourc-

es—in ways that contribute to organizational effectiveness (DeNisi and Griffin, 2001). HRM components include job analysis, human resource planning, recruitment, placement, performance appraisal, compensation, training and development, organizational justice, and collective bargaining. Each component is shaped by formal and informal personnel policies and practices. By formal, we mean technical and legal policies. By informal, we mean what happens in reality. It is common for HRM textbooks (and courses) to discuss the former. It is less common to discuss the latter, *especially in terms of social equity.* This reality is characterized by conversations we call informal "HR dialogues" that affect all aspects of personnel. These are the behind-closed-doors conversations that occur throughout each component of personnel management. These dialogues include verbal and nonverbal actions that can greatly affect personnel practices but are not routinely monitored.

Such dialogues are often complex and discomforting. As one external reviewer noted, "Discussions of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and disability in organizations are usually emotionally charged as each individual brings a unique set of feelings, beliefs, experiences and motivations.... We must provide students (and ourselves) with the frameworks and practices of having these difficult conversations in class to ensure adequate preparation for the workplace and community." As with efficiency and effectiveness, there may not be one best way to promote social equity, but clearly some decisions and practices are more equitable than others. We used personnel textbooks, literature, federal policy and initiatives, and our own instructional and selection committee experiences to guide the suggestions formulated in this article. However, this article is not intended to offer a systematic assessment of HR textbooks, government resources, federal policy, or HR dialogues. Rather, we describe our use of these dialogues to illustrate how public affairs educators can enhance the social equity focus of their HRM courses. As stated earlier, multiple aspects of human resource management are commonly covered in public affairs programs. For illustrative purposes in this discussion, we limit our discussion to three: job analysis, employee recruitment, and employee selection.

Job Analysis

Job analysis is the process of recording information about the tasks (job elements) an employee performs. It results in a job description: a written statement of the employee's responsibilities, duties, and qualifications. Typically, the information described and recorded include the purposes of a job, major duties or activities required of job holders, conditions under which the job is performed, and the competencies (i.e., skills, knowledge, abilities, education, experience) an employee needs to perform the position's duties at a satisfactory level (Jackson and Schuler, 2002).

Social Equity Lesson #1. Job analysis is shaped by a fluid legal context that is directly related to social equity elasticity. Executive orders, laws passed by the

legislative body, and court decisions all affect the widening or constricting of social equity. In one of the landmark Equal Employment Opportunity law cases, *Griggs v. Duke Power*, Willie Griggs was an applicant for a job as a coal handler. The Duke Power Company required its coal handlers to be high school graduates, but "Griggs claimed this requirement was illegally discriminatory because it wasn't related to success on the job and because it resulted in more blacks than whites being rejected for these jobs" (Dresser, 1997, 43). The 1971 *Griggs* decision is a clear example of how public employment laws can promote social equity: "For the first time, an employer would have to prove in court that its personnel practices were valid and job-related if the numbers showed that minorities were not succeeding in the same proportions of minorities" (Nigro and Nigro, 2000, 33). Federal support of employment policies designed to promote social equity has declined since the 1980s, from which time "Presidents Reagan and Bush declared that remedial hiring ratios were a form of reverse discrimination...both also expressed their commitment to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and 'color blind' personnel policies" (Nigro and Nigro, 2000, 36). Although the 1991 Civil Rights Act was a shift away from employment policies of the 1960s and 70s designed to promote social equity, it remains a key component of human resource management.

As a current example, Title 41, Section 60, in the Office of Federal Contract Compliance in the U.S. Department of Labor's Code of Federal Regulations details the purposes of affirmative action and encourages public sector agencies to implement affirmative action programs beyond formal requirements.

> *Purpose.* (1) An affirmative action program is a management tool designed to ensure equal employment opportunity. A central premise underlying affirmative action is that, absent discrimination, over time a contractor's workforce, generally, will reflect the gender, racial and ethnic profile of the labor pools from which the contractor recruits and selects. Affirmative action programs contain a diagnostic component which includes a number of quantitative analyses designed to evaluate the composition of the workforce of the contractor and compare it to the composition of the relevant labor pools. Affirmative action programs also include action-oriented programs. If women and minorities are not being employed at a rate to be expected given their availability in the relevant labor pool, the contractor's affirmative action program includes specific practical steps designed to address this underutilization. Effective affirmative action programs also include internal auditing and reporting systems as a means of measuring the contractor's progress toward achieving the workforce that would be expected in the absence of discrimination.

(2) An affirmative action program also ensures equal employment opportunity by institutionalizing the contractor's commitment to equality in every aspect of the employment process. Therefore, as part of its affirmative action program, a contractor monitors and examines its employment decisions and compensation systems to evaluate the impact of those systems on women and minorities.

(3) An affirmative action program is, thus, more than a paperwork exercise. An affirmative action program includes those policies, practices, and procedures that the contractor implements to ensure that all qualified applicants and employees are receiving an equal opportunity for recruitment, selection, advancement, and every other term and privilege associated with employment. Affirmative action, ideally, is a part of the way the contractor regularly conducts its business. OFCCP has found that when an affirmative action program is approached from this perspective, as a powerful management tool, there is a positive correlation between the presence of affirmative action and the absence of discrimination.

Affirmative action obligations. The use of selection procedures which have been validated pursuant to these guidelines does not relieve users of any obligations they may have to undertake affirmative action to assure equal employment opportunity. Nothing in these guidelines is intended to preclude the use of lawful selection procedures which assist in remedying the effects of prior discriminatory practices, or the achievement of affirmative action objectives.

Encouragement of voluntary affirmative action programs. These guidelines are also intended to encourage the adoption and implementation of voluntary affirmative action programs by users who have no obligation under Federal law to adopt them; but are not intended to impose any new obligations in that regard. The agencies issuing and endorsing these guidelines endorse for all private employers and reaffirm for all governmental employers the Equal Employment Opportunity Coordinating Council's ``Policy Statement on Affirmative Action Programs for State and Local Government Agencies" (41 FR 38814, September 13, 1976 and (41 CFR 60-2.10 and 41 CFR 60-2.17, November 13, 2000).

Formal requirements of job analysis are shaped by the current landscape of social equity. Human resource management students should critically analyze subtle and not-so-subtle changes in public employment policy for their effect on

social equity. What do these formal changes mean for social equity? How do governmental agencies communicate their commitment to social equity? How can our students assess formal social equity dimensions of job descriptions? A primary way is to have students perform a social equity analysis of job descriptions. Does the job description contain a statement regarding its equal employment opportunity policy? Does it contain a reasonable accommodation statement? Where are these statements placed within the job description? Overall, after reading the job description, what impression would a job applicant have about this agency's commitment to social equity? What are the social equity implications of the specific enumerated job qualifications (knowledge, skills, and abilities)?

Job analysis is also influenced by informal HR dialogues. The following is an example of a social equity HR dialogue surrounding qualification requirements for a fiscal technician position (see Table 2). The issue in this scenario is the agency's commitment to abiding by the qualifications listed in the position. Although the position description allows applicants with a college degree or four

Table 2. HR Social Equity Dialogue: Job Analysis Scenario

Freda (manager): We've received 18 applications for our fiscal technician position. I hope you've each had a moment to look over these applications. I'd like to leave our meeting today with an agreement on the candidates we'd like to bring in for an interview.

Maria: Yes, I've looked at these and I noticed that five of the applicants do not have a college degree.

Carlos: Our job ad clearly states that a candidate should have a four-year college degree or 4 years of related experience. The applicants who do not have a college degree have related experience.

Maria: Well, I wouldn't say this beyond this room, but I think--in this day and time—it would be a mistake to hire someone without the degree. We've received applications from several people who have a degree, so I think it's only practical that we focus our energies on this group.

Carlos: I have a real problem with that. Just look at our ad.

Maria: Carlos, I know you haven't been with our agency that long, but generally we try to hire people with a degree. We had to advertise the position that way to get it approved through HR. In practice, we try to hire people with degrees.

Freda: We need to look at all of the applications. But, Maria has a point. We do tend to hire people with degrees. When we're reviewing the applications, if someone without a degree really stands out, we can consider bringing that person in for an interview. Now, let's turn our attention to selecting the specific individuals we'd like to interview.

years of related work experience to apply, the HR dialogue captures the organization's practice of preferring individuals with a college degree. This scenario raises several social equity concerns. How do the norms and practices of this agency compare with the specific language contained in the job description? What are the social equity implications of these differences? Older applicants, minority applicants, and individuals who live in or are from low-income families may be disproportionately affected. How could the manager handle this situation more effectively? If public managers wish to integrate social equity into areas where it has previously been ignored, what challenges will they face? How can they overcome these challenges?

Recruitment

Recruitment is the process of attracting individuals in a timely manner, in sufficient numbers, and with appropriate qualifications to apply for jobs within an organization. It is specifically the set of activities and processes used to *legally* obtain a sufficient number of the right people at the right place and time so that the people and the organization can select each other in their own best short-run and long-run interests (Schuler and Huber, 1997). It is the process of developing a pool of qualified applicants who are interested in working for the organization and from which the organization might reasonably select the best individual or individuals to hire for employment (DeNisi and Griffin, 2001). Recruitment has a direct relationship to social equity, because it is the initial step in placing more employees from protected groups in government jobs (Klingner and Nalbandian, 1993, 142). For example, using the aforementioned lens of Shafritz and Russell's (2002) three qualities of social equity, how can public managers advance the second quality to aggressively "seek to hire and advance a varied workforce" within their agencies?

Writing in 1944, J. Donald Kingsley developed the concept of "representative bureaucracy," which asserts that all social groups have a right to participate in their governing institutions. This concept has been expanded to hold that the bureaucracies should reflect the demographic composition of the general public (Kranz, 1976; Meier and Nigro, 1976; Riccucci and Saidel, 1997; Dolan 2000; Dolan 2002), so that the preferences of a heterogeneous population will be represented in organizational decisionmaking (Riccucci and Saidel, 1997). Public administrators should be alerted to seek out opportunities when turnovers, growth, the need for new competencies, and other circumstances can allow for currently underrepresented populations to be recruited, promoted, or developed to fill these anticipated vacancies.

Social Equity Lesson #2. Courses designed to enhance HRM competencies and to integrate social equity concepts would certainly stress the need for employers to generate and use innovative recruitment methods and locales. The disparate impact of high-tech job postings and recruitment methods, such as Web-based or

Internet strategies, on ethnic/racial/religious minorities, individuals with dis-
abilities, and low-income individuals must be assessed. Traditional recruitment
practices that involve reliance on "word-of-mouth and employee referral network-
ing; the use of executive search and referral firms in which affirmative action/
EEO requirement were not always made known" (Riccucci, 2002, 69) also serve
as institutional barriers for some currently underrepresented groups. For some
groups, nontraditional recruitment approaches such as religious organizations,
social associations, and recreational outlets can be effective for reaching currently
underrepresented groups.

Our MPA programs should familiarize students with formal social equity ini-
tiatives that are currently in place in governmental agencies. Nigro and Nigro's
textbook, *The New Public Personnel Administration* (2000) offers a useful example

Table 3. OPM's Hispanic Employment Initiative

An example of minority-oriented recruitment is provided by OPM's Hispanic
Employment Initiatives, which include helping to implement Executive Order 12900,
the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. In
addition to issuing guidance on recruiting strategies for Hispanic students, OPM
works with federal agencies to identify job opportunities and institutions that offer
training and educational opportunities that prepare Hispanic students to qualify for
those jobs. Other OPM initiatives in this area are:

* Providing employment information to students, faculty, and the Hispanic commu-
  nity by sponsoring Employment Information (Touch Screen) Computer Kiosks
  and placing them in Hispanic-serving institutions.

* Expanding the Presidential Management Intern (PMI) recruitment program to
  include visiting more institutions that are graduating significant numbers of His-
  panics.

* Providing assistance in coordinating the placements with federal agencies of His-
  panic students under the National Internship Program of the Hispanice Associa-
  tion of Colleges and Universities (HACU). HACU interns are college students
  with grade point averages of 3.0 or better who work in federal agencies for 10
  weeks over the summer.

* Using the flexibilities available under the federal Student Employment Program
  to bring Hispanic students into federal occupations where there are shortages
  of qualified applicants, as well as all other occupations.

* Developing mentoring programs to encourage and support young Hispanics'
  educational development and career progress.

* Encourage participation of Hispanics in agency career development programs,
  including intergovernmental rotational assignments for senior executives,
  management, and professional/technical occupations (U.S. Office of Personnel
  Management, 1997a).

Source: Nigro and Nigro, *The New Public Personnel Administration*, 2000, 90-91

of the formal relationship between social equity and recruitment through the Office of Personnel Management's Hispanic Employment Initiative (Table 3). Students in our HRM courses should acquire competencies in recruitment practices designed to promote social equity. One such way is to have students engage in group projects that require direct involvement with governmental agencies to propose similar employment recruitment initiatives for underrepresented groups. This allows students to take a social equity HRM concept (hiring a more diverse workforce) and apply it in a practical setting (working with a governmental agency to understand their diversity needs) with a real-world application (developing an agency-specific social equity proposal).

Our students also should become competent in the informal HR dialogues that affect social equity and recruitment. The HR dialogue recruitment scenario contained in Table 4 displays a common tension between efficiency and equity that emerges in the recruitment area. In performing an analysis of the recruitment scenario, students can assess the social equity implications of these dialogues. For example, Kevin, the manager, conveys an important message about the agency's values. This is a direct application of the tension of the public administration pillars. In this scenario, the manager's clear message is that efficiency—filling the application quickly—is more important than equity.

Kevin also conveys a value statement on how employees should spend their time. Engaging in social equity activities would distract from other, more important job tasks. As the manager, Kevin's comments convey a concrete statement on social equity. He is not opposed to it, but fundamentally views it as distractive. His comments suggest that promoting social equity in recruitment should be an individual employee activity rather than an agency-wide activity. William, an employee, tries to advance the public administration social equity pillar, but receives little support from either his coworkers or his supervisor. What implications does this have? What message does an organization send when social equity efforts are individually driven rather than agency driven? How is William viewed? What risks does William take? What are the tradeoffs if William continues to push the issue?

Jack also makes an important value statement. In his view, the agency should not engage in strategies specifically designed to recruit minorities as a first step. Rather, this should be a secondary consideration. Jack and Jennifer appear neutral at first. They weigh in only after receiving cues from the manager, Kevin. A social equity analysis of this scenario raises many important questions. A follow-up assignment could require students to rewrite this dialogue displaying a stronger agency value of social equity, using insights from representative bureaucracy.

Selection

Selection is the process of gathering legally defensible information about job applicants in order to determine who should be hired for a long- or short-term po-

sition (Schuler and Huber, 1997). The selection process is concerned with identifying the best candidate or candidates for jobs from the pool of qualified applicants developed during the recruiting process (DeNisi and Griffin, 2001).

Social Equity: Lesson #3. Professional public affairs programs should ensure that students are competent in formal, federal guidelines for employee selection. One excellent, practitioner-oriented resource is *The Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection,* which provides a set of principles for determining proper test use and selection procedures, covering topics such as test fairness and adverse impact. Easily accessible from the Office of Personnel Management's Web site, these guidelines incorporate a single set of principles designed to assist employers, la-

Table 4. HR Social Equity Dialogue: Recruitment Scenario

Kevin (manager): Well, we need to think about how we want to advertise our position. Typically, we post these positions on our agency's Web site, and the state DOL's website. We'll also advertise this in the employment section of our local newspaper.

William: Yes, this sounds good. Perhaps we also should consider advertising our position in minority communities a bit more. There's the Minority Tribune [weekly newspaper with a readership base of African-Americans] and we could also submit our posting to several listservs that have an excellent link to minority communities. There are three that come to my mind, right off hand.

Jennifer and Jack: [on recruitment committee, but remain quiet; body language suggests indifference and slight disengagement]

Kevin: [looks around at the committee] I agree, William, those are all good ideas. But, we also need to consider our overall budget and where we can get the most bang for our buck. And, we need to think about the overall workload involved. One of us will need to make sure all of these postings go out. And, I'm sure we all agree we need to fill this position quickly.

William: Well, the electronic venues I'm thinking of are free or involve minimal costs. It's just a matter of getting the information out.

Kevin: Sure, I'm not opposed to that at all. It seems like you've got some good leads there. So, you—and for that matter—any of us can forward this announcement to any group we'd like. How does that sound?

Jennifer: Yes, that sounds good to me.

Jack: Yes, we could try this and see where it gets us. Then, If we don't get a good group of applicants, we can consider advertising more broadly.

William: [disappointed] OK.

Kevin: Great. Well, I think that about wraps up our meeting for today.

Source: Schmitt and Chan, 1988, 171.

bor organizations, employment agencies, and licensing and certification boards to comply with requirements of federal law prohibiting employment practices that discriminate on grounds of race, color, religion, sex, and national origin. They are designed to provide a framework for determining the proper use of tests and other selection procedures (Office of Personnel Management, n.d.)

The assessment applied by public employers usually involves some combination of the following: minimum qualifications requirement; evaluations of training, education, and experience; written tests of knowledge and analytic skills; job performance tests and simulations; oral examinations by individual examiners or boards; background checks or investigations; and medical and physical examinations (Nigro and Nigro, 2000, 97-98). Although public employment searches often use a combination of these methods, the job interview remains an important part of the process. Most organizations will not hire an applicant without an interview because they believe it provides them the opportunity to observe an applicant's appearance and interpersonal skills and to ask questions not adequately covered on the application (Klingner and Nalbadian, 159).

Figure 1. Representation of Various Influences on Interview Decisions
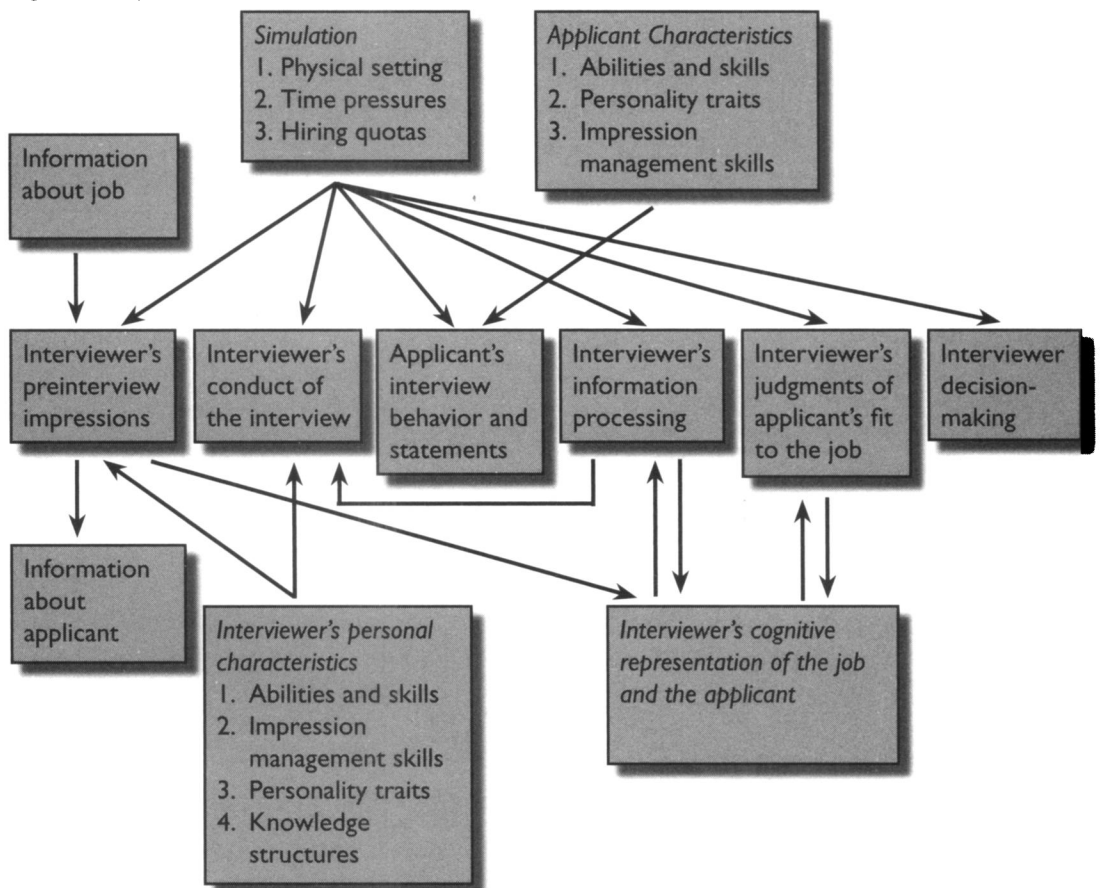
Perhaps most relevant to social equity analysis, the body of research focused on interviews seems to be oriented toward the discovery of what irrelevant constructs are measured in the interview. Schmitt and Chan (1988) contend that the interview decision comes out of the complex interplay among the situation and the characteristics and behavior of both interviewer and interviewee (Figure 1). Race (Parsons and Liden, 1984), gender (Hitt and Barr, 1989), physical attractiveness (Pingitore, Dugoni, Tindale, and Spring, 1994) and age (Avolio and Barrett, 1987) have all been related to interviewer judgments. The two most important considerations to increase interview reliability and validity are to rely upon the use of multiple independent interviewers and to ask the applicants a similar set of structured or semi-structured questions (Schmitt and Chan, 1988). The situational interview is one particular development that avoids some of the pitfalls of conventional interviewing (Stohr-Gilmore et al., 1990). In particular, the situational interview structure avoids the possibility of including discriminatory questions that are unrelated to job performance (Hays and Kearney, 1990, 100).

One critically important component of the selection process is the informal HR dialogue that occurs when selecting the final candidate. Klinger and Nalbadian (1993) include a case study that captures important behind-the-scenes HR dialogue that ultimately impacts candidate selection (Table 5). This scenario raises important questions regarding the role of politics in employee selection and what the statement "best qualified candidate" really means. A typical application of this scenario is to have students decide whom to hire and to provide a justification of their reasoning. An important extension of the students' hiring decision is to consider the social equity implications if multiple candidates with similar backgrounds are always or nearly always hired. Ultimately, it is an organization's cumulative pattern of hiring decisions that alters or fails to alter the advancement of social equity in the public sector workforce.

CONCLUSION

What competencies will students gain from engaging in formal and informal social equity analysis in HRM courses? First, they increase their formal knowledge of personnel practices. For example, we have found when sharing the OPM's Hispanic Employment Initiative in our classes that many students are not aware of the initiative. A few even express surprise, thinking that such an initiative would be illegal. It is important that HRM courses provide a clear sense of the legal guidelines and the vast opportunities to formally include social equity in their managerial actions. Second, through the use of informal HR dialogues, students develop managerial competencies to handle the real-world social equity tensions and resistance they are likely to encounter. These competencies allow future managers to become better equipped to structure, manage, and influence such dialogues. Taken together, schools of public administration and public affairs will better prepare students to breathe agency life into the fourth pillar of

Table 5. HR Social Equity Dialogue: Employee Selection Scenario

Brenda: Well, I don't know about you two, but in my book this John Simpson seems to have enough experience to handle the job. I need someone who can take over the internal operations of the agency while we get this new program off the ground. But what really impressed me is his commitment to the policy direction we're headed in.

Mary: You know I admire your judgment, Brenda, but does he really have the skill to pull off the job? We know Don Johnson is doing a fine job now as a division director. He already knows the ropes around here, and I think he's ready for a bigger job. Besides, it's about time we get another minority into this sacred secretarial hut!

Brenda: Hold on, Mary. You know I supported our affirmative action program. I gave you a boost some time ago, I remember.

Mary: Now wait a minute! Let's not dredge up the history on that one. You know very well I was qualified for this job. This is now, and Don's qualified.

Brenda: Mary, Don may be able to do the job; I'm not as convinced as you, but this Simpson is on target when it comes to supporting the philosophy behind the new program. And the more I think about it, the more I need that commitment to make this thing go. There's a lot at stake in making the program a success. Don's pretty hardheaded when it comes to seeing us turn this agency into what he feels is a soft-hearted bunch of social workers.

Larry: Look folks, I hate to complicate things for you, but the governor's been getting pressure to find a spot for Jim Massington.

Mary: Jim who? I've never heard of him.

Brenda: Well, I have. He worked pretty hard in the governor's last campaign, didn't he?

Mary: Oh no! I can see it coming.

Larry: Don't get excited. Just give the guy some consideration. Brenda, you know the governor went out on a limb with the legislature to give you the chance to experiment with this new program, and he may need a favor here.

Mary: I just don't like the politics in all this.

Brenda: Look Larry, I want to help, but I need someone who is committed to this program.

Mary: And I think we'd better get someone who can manage the internal operations of this agency.

Larry: Well, I think you ought to look at Masington's application. You know that's all the governor is asking.

Brenda: Thanks, Larry. I want to think about this. Mary, let's get together on this tomorrow afternoon.

Mary: Politics!

Source: Klingner and Nalbandian 1993, 164-65.

public administration and to better implement the concept of social equity in their work as public administrators.

NOTE

1. See National Academy of Public Administration, *Strategic Plan,* Spring 2005.

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