Interrupting Bias:
Feedback, Due Diligence, and Reference Checks

A Checklist for Success

Courtesy of Siri Chilazi, Research Fellow at the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard Kennedy School

Ensure the feedback you receive or provide is SMART:

- ✓ **Specific:** Based on specific, behavioral examples (not personality)
- ✓ **Measurable:** Tied to results and/or achievements
- ✓ **Achievable:** Based on a consistent, fair, and objective standard
- ✓ **Realistic:** Incorporates examples of impact
- ✓ **Timely:** Reasonably recent (more time leaves more room for bias!)

Look out for "blurring" words and comments:

- Could a word be interpreted differently by different people?
- Is a comment stereotypical?
- Does a comment seem out of place when applied to another person?
- Is a comment primarily about personality?
- Is a comment a generalization?

When you hear blurring comments, dig deeper, with questions like:

- What does _____ mean to you?
- Can you share an example?
- What's your definition of _____?
- What do you see as the impact of _____?
- How could we measure that?
- Can you explain how that is different from [another candidate]?