

Diversity Statement

"Only by drawing the best talent from every sector of society can we achieve the scholarly and educational excellence to which we aspire." —Christopher L. Eisgruber, Princeton University president.

Personal diversity statements permit the applicant to demonstrate commitments and capacities that could contribute to the institution's efforts around diversity, inclusion and equity through research, teaching, service, mentoring, and/or advising.

Requiring a personal diversity statement can signal the institution or department's support of diversity and inclusion goals in terms of campus climate, hiring, and scholarship. It can also signal that creating a welcome academic environment is a shared responsibility.

The Diversity Statement

While some schools do not require personal diversity statements, some schools give individual departments the option to consider including one as part of a comprehensive and transparent evaluation of candidate qualifications.

Critics of diversity statements express concern that evaluation of the statement will serve as a political indicator and potentially restricting academic freedom. Critics also note that the preferred executions of diversity and inclusion goals are still under debate, e.g. *color-blind vs. multicultural methods, general vs. race/gender-specific methods*, etc.

- However, more and more faculty job postings are asking for diversity statements in addition to teaching and research statements.
- For example, Cornell and UCLA have made Diversity Statements a requirement for all faculty applications (including tenure and promotion portfolios)
- Supporters of diversity statements say these statements are intended to ensure that scholars with minority identities receive credit for invisible labor such as mentoring and service.
- Departments may choose to require or suggest that applicants address diversity, equity, and inclusion values within existing application materials or in a separate statement.
- These statements encourage all scholars to engage with diversity and inclusion goals and to consider ways to contribute.

Golash-Boza (2016) says that while some search committee members may just gloss over what you have written, you should still craft a strong statement for those faculty members who do care about diversity and inclusion.

So, how do you write an effective diversity statement? For example, if you are a job candidate who cares about diversity and equity, how do you convey that commitment to a search committee?

The Effective Diversity Statement

Golash-Boza suggests to focus on three things:

1. Write about specific things you have done to help students from underrepresented backgrounds succeed.
2. Highlight any programs for underrepresented students you've participated in.
3. Write about your commitment to working toward achieving equity and enhancing diversity.

The Effective Diversity Statement

“Candidates who submitted strong statements wrote about their experiences teaching first-generation college students, their involvement with LGBTQ student groups, their experiences teaching in inner-city high schools and their awareness of how systemic inequalities affect students’ ability to excel in certain areas. Applicants mentioned their teaching and activism and highlighted their commitment to diversity and equity in higher education”

The Effective Diversity Statement

The following are prompts currently in use in higher education.

"This department is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive academic community. We encourage applications from individuals whose backgrounds or interests align with this commitment. Candidates are welcome to include a brief, separate statement in this regard in their application."

"A description of how the applicant would contribute to the development of a diverse and inclusive [learning/working] community through their [teaching, research, and/or service] should be included in the personal statement."

"This department strives to create and strengthen an inclusive, respectful, and intellectually challenging environment that embraces difference in the pursuit of knowledge. The diversity statement should describe how your background and experiences demonstrate your commitment and ability to engage with issues of diversity and inclusion, and should also discuss how those values might be reflected should you join our community."

Best Practices and Sample Prompts

For more guidelines about how to write a Diversity statement:

<https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/blogs.cornell.edu/dist/8/6767/files/2018/08/Appendix-I-Request-for-Diversity-statement-1izep7w.pdf>

Best Practices and Sample Prompts

Teaching Portfolio

What is a teaching portfolio and why

- It is also known as a Teaching Dossier. Basically, it is a record of your compiled teaching experiences or your accomplishments as a teacher including which courses you have taught.
- It can be used as an instrument to describe yourself as a teacher
- It is typically used during the job search period
- It can be used as promotion and tenure document
- It can be used for applications for teaching awards



It should be:

- Selective. It is not an exhaustive compilation of all documents and materials
- It should be intentionally designed: It is more than a simple collection of documents.
- It should be reflective: This is an opportunity for you to critically engage where you have been, where you are and where you want to be.
- It should reflect the needs of the institution that you are applying for.

Representative vs exhaustive

Kaplan (2007) recommends to organize your items into three categories:

- 1. Materials from oneself (reflective statements, descriptions of course responsibilities, syllabi, assignments)
- 2. Materials from others (statements from colleagues, advisers, directors who have reviewed teaching materials, student evaluations, letters from students or alumni, honors or recognition)
- 3. Products of good teaching (student essays or creative work, a record of students who have succeeded the field, evidence of supervision of these).

Graduate student portfolios

Depending of the school, the requirements vary. Some might require just a list of courses taught, or a reflective statement. Some others require more specific items like a proposed syllabi for certain types of courses student evaluations, demonstration of commitment to undergraduate research, etc.

The sooner you start thinking of your portfolio, the more opportunities you will have to create and collect materials that represent your teaching accomplishments.

When and how should I get started?

You can start collecting materials at any point. Many of you already have been teaching or have begun teaching undergraduate courses. While you might not have materials to collect the first semester, start by simply saving relevant documents, lesson plans, activities. Later it will be easier for you to locate these materials, selecting the ones that best represent your teaching.

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