



A resource for designing diversity statements

Dickinson

**PEPEL SHAW CENTER
FOR RACE & ETHNICITY**

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Presentation Content

- 1) Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) at Dickinson
- 2) An Introduction to Diversity Statements
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**1) Diversity, Equity &
Inclusion @ Dickinson
College**

1.1 DEI @ Dickinson College



Dickinson's Inclusivity Strategic Plan identifies faculty diversity as a campus priority.

Goal #3 of Dickinson's Inclusivity Strategic Plan is to "*Cultivate a diverse campus community that is reflective of the broader world.*"

One of the key objectives within this goal is to "Attract and retain a diverse faculty" (Obj. 3.2) which includes the desire to **"Build a greater recruitment reach to foster a more diverse applicant pool in order to identify the best qualified candidates to move us towards an inclusive campus."**

Hiring faculty with awareness, knowledge, and skills to create inclusive learning environments advances this goal.

(https://www.dickinson.edu/download/downloads/id/11253/inclusivity_strategic_plan.pdf)

1.2 DEI @ Dickinson College



Dickinson's Faculty Personnel Committee (FPC) has established inclusion as a priority for faculty.

The Teaching section of the "How to Write a PAS" document posted on the Faculty Personnel Committee's (FPC) website encourages personnel to address the following: ***"Also mention, here or in other sections as appropriate, any efforts to enhance inclusivity and/or diversity in the classroom, the major, and/or at Dickinson."***

https://www.dickinson.edu/download/downloads/id/6923/how_to_write_a_professional_activites_statement.pdf

According to the *Academic Handbook*, "Work that supports diversity and inclusivity within the College through recruitment, retention, and mentoring of colleagues and students is highly valued" (4-8).

1.3 DEI @ Dickinson College



Dickinson has engaged in various forms of capacity-building for faculty around DEI concerns including the following:

- Facilitating workshops on inclusive pedagogy, syllabus design, responding to cultural conflicts, and having difficult dialogue in the classroom.
- Hosting annual skill-building opportunities including RAISE training and Faith Zone Training.
- Offering consultancies on DEI topics during the Syllabus & Course Design Collaboratory.
- Requiring search committees to attend a training session on best practices and implicit bias hosted by Human Resource Services.
- Providing departments opportunities to complete the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI).



Overviewing the potential impact of Diversity Statements complements these efforts.

1.4 DEI @ Dickinson College



Dickinson empowers individual academic departments to decide when and how to implement, evaluate, and weigh DEI aspects of departmental searches.

Because of disciplinary differences it is a best practice for there to be some departmental and disciplinary variance in how departments approach diversity statements.

Academic departments that decide to include diversity statements in their searches perform the following:

- Defining the expectations for content and format.
- Determining how they will evaluate the content in relation to their departmental mission.
- Choosing how they will weigh the statement in relation to other aspects of candidate applications.

2) An Introduction to Diversity Statements

2.1 An introduction to Diversity Statements

- Academic searches commonly require applicants to submit a combination of the following: cover letter, curriculum vitae, teaching philosophy, evidence of teaching excellence, research statement, writing sample, and/or professional references.
- As U.S. colleges and universities have become more strategic about integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion into their mission and values diversity statements have also emerged as a potential tool for recruiting job candidates.

As Stewart and Valian (2018) note:

“Increasingly, departments ask applicants to submit a statement about their past contributions to diversity and their anticipated contribution at the institution to which they are applying...These statements may help committees identify both some faculty who have little or no interest or commitment to diversity and some with a past track record of mentoring or contributing to institutional change that might matter to the department” (185).

Example (A)

I have long been committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. Throughout my education, I have been particularly mindful of barriers faced by women and underrepresented people of color in the sciences. While a graduate student, I participated in my university's K-12 outreach program to engage female high school students in science for three years. Through this program, I volunteered to work with a student for 10 weeks each summer, and met with each student regularly, under the guidance of my advisor. I worked hard to give each student a positive and welcoming experience in science. Several of these students have been co-authors on published papers.

At my current institution, as an assistant professor, I was faculty advisor for the Women-In-Bio Sciences group. I also actively recruited and mentored two female students during the summer as part of our national organization's distributed mentors program.

As a professor, I am interested in working with the campus to expand this kind of "lab-based" outreach to K-12 educators from low performing, majority-minority middle schools, so they can help ignite the interest of their students in science. With help from the campus, I will recruit an educator each year to work for the summer on research in my lab, expose them to new ideas and developments in my research area, and encourage them to bring some of these into their curriculum. I would also work to engage other faculty in science as part of their NSF Broad participation in their research grant proposals.

Notable features of this statement:

- Articulates awareness of *underrepresentation in the discipline.*
- Describes specific examples of *mentoring, advising, and recruitment work.*
- Connects these interests and actions to *teaching and scholarship.*

2.2 An introduction to Diversity Statements

There is no single template for crafting Diversity Statements. A 2019 study outlined three primary areas covered in diversity statements including the following:

- 1) Scholarly understanding of barriers
- 2) Contributions to the discipline
- 3) Engagement experience

2.3 Scholarly understanding of barriers

Potential to contribute to higher education through the scholarly understanding of barriers facing women, domestic racial/ethnic minorities, students with disabilities, and other members of groups underrepresented in higher education, as may be evidenced by life experiences and educational background. *Underrepresented status may vary by discipline and/or institution.*

Examples include but are not limited to:

- Ability to articulate the barriers facing specific groups in fields where they are underrepresented;
- Attendance (undergraduate or graduate) at a minority serving institution;
- Participation in higher education pipeline programs such as Summer Research Opportunity Programs or McNair Scholars;
- Significant academic achievement in the face of barriers such as economic, social, or educational disadvantage.
- Commitment to allyhood through learning about structural inequities demonstrated by, for example, extensive reading or focused coursework, or participation in professional development programs or institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

2.4 Contributions to the discipline

A record of academic service to advance equitable access to higher education for groups in fields where they are underrepresented (e.g., women, racial/ethnic minorities, first-generation college students, student veterans).

2.5 Engagement experience

Demonstrated engagement with historically underserved populations, and bringing this experience to the scholarship, teaching, and learning mission of the university. This commitment may be reflected by leadership or active participation in:

- Departmental or institutional committees, task force groups, or other workgroups.
- Local or national service related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access, such as through professional societies and organizations.
- Scholarship, practice, or policy efforts to advance diversity, equity, inclusion or social justice for historically underrepresented or marginalized groups (at the campus, local community, state, or national levels).
- Other community engagement or outreach activities relevant to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and access, such as volunteer activities, consulting, or advising.
- A record of leadership or significant experience performing public service addressing the needs of our increasingly diverse society.

3) Common Themes & Features

3.1 Examining common themes & features

- “The Promise of Diversity Statements: Insights and a Framework Developed from Faculty Applications” (Sylvester, Sánchez-Parkinson, Yettaw, and Chavous, 2019) is one of the first scholarly analyses of faculty diversity statements.
- The authors analyzed 39 diversity statements from a consented sample of 150 academics representing multiple disciplines in 2016-17.
- Participants were provided with guidance on writing the statements including examples of different efforts that could count.
- The authors identified seven common themes found within the sample.

3.2 Common Themes: *Personal expressions of DEI-related interests & goals*

1) Valuing and understanding DEI

Applicants' asserted support for advancing DEI goals (e.g., promoting inclusive environments, acknowledging and leveraging diverse perspectives) and the rationale or basis of these goals based on their understanding of DEI issues (e.g., awareness/understanding around the nature of social inequalities, their impacts and manifestations).

2) Personal background and experiences

Applicants' descriptions of their personal identities and backgrounds, as well as direct experiences (e.g., area of residence, work, program participation, or education) and indirect experiences related to their backgrounds. In most instances, when applicants included discussion of their personal backgrounds they also articulated how their background experiences shaped their perspectives on, approach to, or actions around DEI.

3.3 Common Themes: *Personal expressions of DEI-related interests & goals*

3) Skill building and personal growth

Applicants' described efforts to develop competencies and knowledge around DEI that could be integrated into their teaching, scholarship, engagement, and/or personal behavior as a faculty member. Development could be achieved through formal activities (e.g., trainings, workshops, or other structured initiatives) or informal efforts (e.g., interactions with individuals from diverse backgrounds that shaped their thinking or behavior, reading articles or books).

3.4 Common Themes: *Domains of action/efforts related to DEI*

4) Teaching

Applicants' described efforts for advancing DEI within instructional practice and classroom spaces and were articulated within three spheres:

1) curricula, 2) pedagogical practice, and 3) classroom climate.

5) Mentorship

Applicants' approaches to mentoring students from minoritized or underrepresented groups that extended beyond the classroom setting.

This could include individual/one-on-one or group efforts and could reflect activities within formal programs or informal activities.

Some applicants also noted the value in serving as a role model, particularly those who saw themselves as representing historically marginalized populations in academia.

3.5 Common Themes: *Domains of action/effort related to DEI*

6) Research/scholarship

Contributions that advanced efforts to broaden knowledge and understanding around DEI issues, often utilizing theoretical/conceptual frameworks related to DEI (e.g., focused on historically minoritized populations, the illumination of cultural processes, or issues of inequality).

Some applicants also described contributions to the development of positive DEI practice in research (e.g., moving DEI scholarship into the public realm, building diverse research teams).

7) Engagement/service

Applicants' efforts to advance DEI outside the classroom and included plans that had been implemented or proposed for their new faculty role. These commitments often manifested as:

- a) engagement with organizations or programs that were DEI-focused or identity-based, on campus, in discipline/professional societies, or in other community spaces, and
- b) active promotion of policies and practices that advance DEI.

4) Tools for designing & evaluating diversity statements

4.1 Key steps for incorporating Diversity statements into faculty searches

Once departments decide to include diversity statements in their searches, they should consider the following steps:

- Researching and comparing different examples of statements.
- Drawing on these examples to select the most salient criteria for their department and discipline.
- Designing a clear and simple guide outlining the required elements, including content categories and length, for candidates.
- Integrating the requirement into position announcements with a link to the guide.
- Crafting a general rubric that includes evaluation for the statement or creating a rubric for the diversity statement specifically.

4.2 Integrating diversity statements into position announcements

Below are examples of requests for diversity statements from a variety of job ads:

Example 1:

- Emory University is committed to student and faculty diversity, equity, and inclusion. **In the diversity statement, applicants should reflect upon their experience and vision regarding the teaching and mentorship of students from diverse backgrounds.** (Emory Univ., Faculty Position, July 10, 2019, chroniclevitea.com)

Example 2:

- To be in a better position to serve a fast growing and highly diverse student body, and to fulfill the University's commitment to promoting diversity, inclusiveness, and excellence on our campus, **we actively seek candidates with demonstrated experience working with, teaching or mentoring students from underrepresented communities.** (San Diego State Univ., Faculty Position, July 17, 2019, chroniclevitea.com)

4.3 Integrating diversity statements into position announcements

Example 3:

The required [Diversity Statement] should be no longer than 2 pages and should discuss how the candidate would help achieve Angelo State University's goal to attract and graduate more women, Hispanic, and students from other under-represented groups. (Angelo State, Faculty Position, Engineering)

Example 4:

In addition to the materials noted above, **applicants should also submit a one-page diversity statement that discusses past or future contributions to inclusive excellence in the areas of research, teaching and/or outreach.** (U. Mass. Amherst, Faculty Position, July 22, 2019, chroniclevitea.com).

(Source: University of Delaware Advance Institute <https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/sites.udel.edu/dist/4/648/files/2019/07/The-Use-of-Diversity-Statements-in-Faculty-Hiring-7.29.19.pdf>)

4.4. Sharing diversity statement content with applicants

- Departments should specify the desired content and length for diversity statements in the announcement.
- They should also create a straightforward guide for candidates for reference since some candidates might be unfamiliar with diversity statements.
- The following example, adapted from UCLA's faculty search committee materials offers an example for content and structure:

Example of an applicant's guide for writing a diversity statement

TEACHING

- Conscious efforts to include course materials from diverse authors on course syllabi.
- Pedagogical techniques that serve different learning and engagement styles.
- Experiences facilitating effective dialogue about social, cultural, and/or political issues in classroom settings
- Experience teaching students who are underrepresented, for example:
 - Teaching at a minority-serving institution.
 - Record of success advising and/or mentoring students from underrepresented populations in your discipline, department, and/or institution.
 - Experience accommodating the needs of students with disabilities.

RESEARCH

Research contributions to understanding the barriers facing underrepresented populations in academic disciplines, for example:

- Studying patterns of participation and advancement of populations in fields where they are underrepresented.
- Studying socio-cultural issues confronting underrepresented students in college preparation curricula.
- Evaluating programs, curricula, and teaching strategies designed to enhance participation of underrepresented students in higher education.

Example of an applicant's guide for writing a diversity statement

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

Engagement in activity designed to remove barriers and to increase participation by groups historically underrepresented in higher education:

- Participation in academic preparation, outreach, or tutoring.
- Participation in recruitment and retention activities.
- Service as an advisor to programs such as Women in Science and Engineering.

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY AND PUBLIC SERVICE

Participation in service that applies up-to-date knowledge to problems, issues, and concerns of groups historically underrepresented in higher education:

- Engagement in seminars, conferences, or institutes that address the concerns of underrepresented populations.
- Presentations for underrepresented communities
- Honors, awards, and other forms of special recognition such as commendations from local or national groups or societies representing underserved communities
- The application of theory to real-world economic, social, and community development problems.

4.5 Assessing Diversity Statements

Just as no single template exists for diversity statements there is no single criteria for assessing statements. Some potential areas to consider:

- A record of leadership or significant experience teaching and mentoring undergraduate and graduate students from broadly diverse demographic and social backgrounds, including students from groups that have been historically underrepresented in higher education.
- Capacity to pedagogically address and respond to the learning needs of students from diverse backgrounds.
- How the scholarship has the potential to serve the needs of groups that have been historically underserved by academic research.

4.6 Assessing Diversity Statements

Just as no single template exists for diversity statements there is no single criteria for assessing statements. Some potential areas to consider:

- How the research interests focus on underserved populations and understanding issues of social inequalities.
- How the academic research brings to bear the critical perspectives that come from the scholarly understanding of the experiences of groups historically underrepresented in higher education or underserved by academic research generally.
- How the research contributes to understanding the barriers facing members of groups who have been historically underrepresented in specific fields in higher education.

4.7 Example of an evaluative rubric

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, ENGLISH, INTERVIEW RUBRIC

Applicant's Name:

Evaluator's Name:

Rankings: I=Inadequate; A=Adequate; G=Good; E=Excellent; U=Unable to assess

	I	A	G	E	U
1. Potential for scholarly impact					
2. Proof of teaching excellence					
3. Understanding of the liberal arts undergraduate learning model					
4. Evidence of commitment to diversity, equity, & inclusion					
5. Demonstrated engagement in professional development					
6. Ability to contribute to the department's climate and priorities					
7. Interest in contributing to the Dickinson College community					

5) Perceived Benefits & Limitations

5.1 Perceived Benefits

- Diversity statements allow faculty applicants to describe their DEI skills and competencies, which are critical to meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse academic community.
- Attaches needed visibility and prestige to DEI work and reinforces the notion that these efforts should be the responsibility of all faculty, not just those from historically underrepresented or minoritized backgrounds.
- Provides a formal way for applicants to document and articulate “invisible labor,” mentoring, advising, and support efforts work with students that often goes unnoticed.
- Helps applicants understand diversity commitments as skills and assets that individuals bring to the faculty role.

5.2 Perceived Limitations

Some critics of diversity statements have shared concerns including the following:

- Diversity statements might feel like an ideological or political litmus test.
- The lack of a standard definition of what constitutes diversity.
- Concerns that scholars might contort certain activities to appear more impactful.

5.3 Things to consider

Four counterpoints:

- 1) Substantial evidence illustrates how strongly bias informs job searches in multiple areas such as professional pedigree and perceived quality (e.g., where candidates completed their education, the prestige of their references) and various gender and racial biases, prior to the appearance of diversity statements.
- 2) Critics sometimes presuppose that because institutions lack a singular definition of equity, diversity, and inclusion it may cause confusion. However, it is more practical and equitable for individual departments to define these in the more local context of their disciplines.
- 3) When academic departments requesting diversity statements are clear about the desired content and format, candidates will have clarity regarding what activities address the criteria appropriately.
- 4) Diversity statements are best understood as *one* of several elements that committees would consider. There is no credible evidence suggesting committees have made them more salient than publications, teaching philosophies, or other more common components of faculty applications in the selection of candidates.

6) Resources & References

6.1 Diversity Statement Design Resources

Academic departments and search committee chairs should craft the format best suited to their search. Numerous institutions and publications offer practical guides on writing statements for applicants that might inform departments and search committees. They are encouraged to review the following:

University of California, Davis:

<https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/guidelines-writing-diversity-statement>

Vanderbilt University (Center for Teaching):

<https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/developing-and-writing-a-diversity-statement/>

University of Chicago:

<https://grad.uchicago.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/DiversityStatementPresentation.pdf>

6.2 Diversity Statement Design Resources

University of Pennsylvania (Career Services):

<https://careerservices.upenn.edu/application-materials-for-the-faculty-job-search/diversity-statements-for-faculty-job-applications/>

UNC Chapel Hill:

<https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/diversity-statements/>

**“The Effective Diversity Statement” (Tanya Golash-Boza)
published in *Inside Higher Education***

<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2016/06/10/how-write-effective-diversity-statement-essay>

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