Writing a Diversity Statement for Academic Jobs

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Territorial Acknowledgement

• We acknowledge with respect the Muscogee-Creek Peoples upon who traditional territory the University of Georgia stands.
Today’s Outcomes

By the end of the session, you will be able to:

• Describe what academic diversity statements are and are not.
• Reflect on how your own identity and experience informs how you have contributed to diversity and inclusivity efforts.
• Align your experience with diversity to your ongoing involvement in these efforts (now and in the future).
Diversity – what is it?

Northcentral University Diversity Wheel

https://www.ncu.edu/about-ncu/diversity/diversity-wheel#gref

Organizational Dimensions
- Functional Level/Conference
  - General, Jurisdictional, Central, Annual, District, Local
- Geographic Location

Internal Dimensions
- Age/Generation
- Gender
- Personal Habits
- Income
- Leadership Role
  - SPRC Chair, Layleader, etc.

External Dimensions
- Status
  - Bishop, DS, GS, DCM, etc.
- Marital Status
- Race
- Sexual Orientation
- Recreational Habits
- Boards and Agencies
  - UMW, GBGM, GCCR, etc.

Personality
- Group Affiliation
  - UMW, Caucus, choir, youth group, etc.
- Appearance
- Ethnicity
- Physical/Mental Ability
- Religion and Spirituality

Educational Background
- Work Experience
- Work Location

Clergy or Laity

https://www.gcorr.org/diversity-wheel/
Inclusivity – what is it?

- “Providing a welcoming, respective, supportive, valued environment for all.”
  Dr. Marian Higgins College of Ed, UGA
Equity – what is it?

• “Inclusion is facilitating opportunities for full participation and contribution of all people. Equity is intentionally providing access and distributing resources that allow everyone the opportunity for inclusion.” Shonte Wallace, OID, UGA
What is the Diversity Statement?

• Sometimes also referred to as a description of your “Contributions to Diversity” or an “Equity/Inclusivity Statement.”

• Describes how you will contribute to advancing diversity and related concerns through your research, teaching, and/or service.
What is it?

• According to the University of California at San Diego, “the purpose of the statement is to identify candidates who have professional skills, experience and/or willingness to engage in activities that would enhance campus diversity and equity efforts” (emphasis added).

• In general, these statements are an opportunity for applicants to explain to a search committee the distinct experiences and commitment they bring to the table.
What it is NOT:

• Necessarily focused only on teaching and classroom experiences
• Mere description of observed differences across individuals and groups
• Story of your own difference
• Personal philosophy of diversity
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• Necessarily focused only on teaching and classroom experiences
• Mere description of observed differences across individuals and groups
• Story of your own difference
• Personal philosophy of diversity
Unless...

• Can be tied to your teaching, research, or service using concrete examples
  • Not: “I love people of all backgrounds”
  • Instead: “Since students have a variety of learning preferences, I use a mix of classroom activities and assignments like...”
Personal Stories: I’m Diverse

• Not: “I am from an underrepresented group so I understand the need for diversity.”

• Instead: “My experience as a member of an underrepresented group has helped me build a toolkit for mentoring students who face similar challenges based on their identity.”
Personal Stories: Not Diverse

• Not: “I grew up in a homogeneous neighborhood, so I am not experienced with diversity”

• But: “Because I had little experience with cultures outside of my own, I seek opportunities to learn from others with different perspectives on a variety of topics”
When might I need it?

• In application to:
  • Faculty positions of all types
  • Fellowships, grants, and other awards
  • Promotion to tenure
Separate Statement

• One page, single spaced (unless otherwise specified)
• Name, [statement on diversity/ personal statement], centered at top
• First-person
• Introduction, example(s) of how principles applied in practice, conclusion
• Self-reflective
Implicit Ask

• Read between the lines of the job application.
Cover Letter

• Highlight your fit with the institution and its mission
• Use the last paragraph to connect your research and teaching to issues of diversity and inclusion, other aspects of the institution’s mission or local community, outreach and service opportunities, student body
• Don’t overstate the connection/fit by listing teaching strategies, outreach ideas, etc. but instead connect these commitments with concrete examples or motivations that link to things you’ve done/experiences you’ve had
Teaching Philosophy Statement

• Articulate your general approach to the classroom combined with concrete strategies/activities

• Diversity in the classroom means:
  • knowing your students
  • addressing their individual needs
  • creating an inclusive environment where all students can learn

• What are some ways that you achieve these goals? [Office hours, particular assignments or activities, establishing shared space]
candidates who possess the ability to reach broad world and United States history, familiarity with aspects of digital humanities as related to pedagogy and teacher. Since this position requires working with a broad group of history educators, a commitment to participating in the university's community engagement initiatives is desired. Intercultural competence with diverse groups in teaching, research, and service.

A C.V., letter of interest, writing sample, three letters of recommendation, and a completed application, available at facultyopportunities/applicationforms.html. The letter of interest must address teaching approaches, experience in K-12 history education, as well as research.

Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science
Dyson College of Arts and Sciences
Pace University

The Department of Political Science within the Dyson College of Arts and Sciences at Pace University invites applications for an anticipated faculty position at the assistant professor level (tenure-track) to begin September, 2016. The position is located at the University’s New York City campus in lower Manhattan.

Applicants should have an earned Ph.D. or the equivalent in Political Science or related field. Preference will be given to candidates having graduate training and experience in quantitative methods, and whose interests engage questions linked to community-based activism, advocacy organizations, and/or social justice issues.

Submit application at http://apply.interfolio.com/32770 with cover letter, curriculum vitae, statement of teaching and research, published article or dissertation chapter), and three confidential letters of recommendation. Review of applications will begin immediately.

Diversifying the student body, faculty, administration, staff and curriculum is at the heart of our mission and vision for Smith. Equity accommodation in the application process for individuals with disabilities and encourage applicants to request needed accommodation, including, but not limited to: age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religions, sexual orientation, and veteran status.

Located in one of the largest binational communities in the world, The University of Texas at El Paso is unique among research institutions. UTEP enrolls more than 23,000 students, a majority of whom are Hispanic and many who are the first in their families to attend college. Ranked among the Top 10 universities in the nation by Washington Monthly magazine and for improving student social mobility, UTEP is dedicated to becoming the first national research university serving a 21st-century student demographic.
No Ask – but may still be relevant

- What are neighboring communities like, relative to institution?
- What is the demographic composition of the student body?
- Is diversity explicitly noted in institution’s mission or values statement?
- Is it part of your own scholarly identity?
How to Start

• Your “Ah Ha” moment (may be life long)
  • Was there a significant event or moment in your life when your awareness regarding inequality and difference was enhanced?

• Articulate and Define
  • What is your own philosophy or values regarding diversity and higher education?
  • What are your definitions of diversity, inclusivity, and equity?
Brainstorm

• In what ways have you sought or might you seek to advance equity, access, inclusion through
  • Teaching
  • Research
  • Service
Consider the Institute

• What are its stated values regarding diversity

• Whom does it serve and what is indicated about the climate

• What kinds of activities does the institution carry out already