



The Promise of Diversity Statements: Insights and an Initial Framework Developed from a Faculty Search Process

Ching-Yune C. Sylvester, Laura Sánchez-Parkinson,
Matthew Yettaw, Tabbye Chavous



NATIONAL CENTER FOR
INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Willis, D. (2017). Getting up to speed on diversity. Inside Higher Education. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2017/08/21/how-graduate-students-can-demonstrate-commitment-diversity-job-interviews-essay>

Appendix A

Writing the Personal and Diversity Commitment Statement

This statement should document your commitment to, and personal achievements in, advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion goals within academia and beyond. This can include sustained engagement, service, or leadership to increase access, retention, and success of underrepresented populations in higher education.

Some areas of interest to the program are:

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. 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.

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

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.

Particular consideration will be given to the following:

- A record of leadership or significant experience teaching and mentoring undergraduate and graduate 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. For example:
 - » Development or use of curricula designed to enhance participation of students from groups underserved by higher education;
 - » Engagement in training or professional development activities designed to enhance intercultural or intergroup competencies and skills.
 - » Ability to integrate contemporary issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion into the classroom.
- Ability to create an inclusive learning environment, addressing one or more of the following issues:
 - » How your own and your students' identities (i.e., race, gender, class), background, experience, and levels of privilege affect classroom dynamics;
 - » How diverse perspectives can be integrated into teaching methods and approaches.

If applicable to your research, you may choose to address the following:

- How the scholarship has the potential to serve the needs of groups that have been historically underserved by academic research.
- How the research/research interests focus on underserved populations and understanding issues of social inequalities. For example:
 - » research that addresses issues such as race, gender, diversity, equity, and inclusion;
 - » research that addresses topics such as health disparities, educational access, and achievement, political engagement, economic justice, social mobility, civil and human rights, and similar topics;
 - » artistic expression and cultural production that reflects culturally diverse communities or voices not well represented in the arts and humanities.
- 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. For example,
 - » studying patterns of participation and advancement of women, racial minorities, and other groups in academic fields where they are underrepresented;
 - » evaluating research programs, curricula, and teaching strategies designed to enhance participation of students from groups underserved by higher education.