**Guidance When Evaluating Diversity Statements**

It may help to review the following article to continue to help keep in mind mitigation of bias when evaluating applicants and looking at ways to work toward retention of faculty and staff based on the department’s diversity and inclusive excellence commitment: <https://www.chronicle.com/article/How-Serious-Are-You-About/243684?cid=wcontentgrid_article_bottom>

Specific to advice for *reading* diversity statements:

**Tie-Breaker or Framework?**

Because a diversity statement is a relatively new requirement in the standard application package, the committee should decide whether this statement is read as an *add-on* to established components (such as cover letter, curriculum vitae, teaching statement, and research plan). If so, it is typically used as a tie-breaker. Ideally, it should be read as a framework that contextualizes other documents. Committees that read the diversity statement *first*, tend to maintain a more inclusive pool of candidates at each stage of the search. *Specifically, what can we learn from reading the diversity statement that informs our understanding of other achievements?*

**Identity or Practice?**

If the diversity statement is used as a framework document, the committee should provide a strong prompt (and perhaps assign their department’s inclusive excellence plan as required reading), so that an applicant understands the purpose of the statement, the expectations of its readers, and the goals of the campus. Otherwise, the committee will struggle with evaluating highly autobiographical stories against dryly theoretical visions of diversity. It is an indisputable fact that diverse students feel validated in their academic goals by diverse faculty and staff who model these attainments. However, personal identity does not necessarily equate to professional practice. *Specifically, what can we learn from reading the diversity statement that tells us about the applicant’s practice of inclusive excellence in teaching, research, and service?*

**Assumption or Lesson?**

At an R2 institution, it takes intentional effort from each committee member to check assumptions underlying early decisions to eliminate applicants, especially if an applicant belongs to a group underrepresented at UCCS. Faculty and staff who are experienced peer reviewers may default to traditional hiring practices that yield traditional hiring outcomes. Because inclusive excellence is not the status quo, we need to be intentional about how we arrive at individual votes or group consensus.  *Specifically, what can I learn from reading the diversity statement that teaches me something about my own assumptions on diversity, equity, excellence, and inclusion?*

*Source: Created by Corinna Rohse, PhD, Student Academic Success Center, University of Colorado Boulder*

**Example Rubric to assess candidate contributions to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:**

*Knowledge about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*

**1-2**

* Little expressed knowledge of, or experience with, dimensions of diversity that result from different identities. Defines diversity only in terms of different areas of study or different nationalities but doesn't discuss gender or ethnicity/race. Discusses diversity in vague terms, such as "diversity is important for science." May state having had little experience with these issues because of lack of exposure, but then not provide any evidence of having informed themselves. Or may discount the importance of diversity.
* Little demonstrated understanding of demographic data related to diversity in higher education or in their discipline. May use vague statements such as "the field of History definitely needs more women."
* Seems uncomfortable discussing diversity-related issues. May state that he or she "just hasn't had much of a chance to think about these issues yet."
* Seems not to be aware of or understand the personal challenges that underrepresented individuals face in academia or feel any personal responsibility for helping to eliminate barriers. For example, may state that it's better not to have outreach or affinity groups aimed at underrepresented individuals because it keeps them separate from everyone else, or will make them feel less valued.

**3**

* Individuals receiving a rating of "3" in the "Knowledge" dimension will likely show aspects of both "1-2" and"4-5" ratings. For example, they may express little understanding of demographic data related to diversity and have less experience and interest in dimensions of diversity but show a strong understanding of challenges faced by individuals who are underrepresented and the need to eliminate barriers, and be comfortable discussing diversity-related issues.

**4-5**

* Clear knowledge of, experience with, and interest in dimensions of diversity that result from different identities, such as ethnic, socioeconomic, racial, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and cultural differences. This understanding can result from personal experiences as well as an investment in learning about the experiences of those with identities different from their own.
* Is aware of demographic data related to diversity in higher education. Discusses the underrepresentation of many groups and the consequences for higher education or for the discipline.
* Comfort discussing diversity-related issues (including distinctions and connections between diversity, equity, and inclusion), both in writing and in a job talk session and one-on-one meetings with students, staff, and faculty.
* Understands the challenges faced by underrepresented individuals, and the need for all students, staff and faculty to work to identify and eliminate barriers to their full and equitable participation and advancement.
* Discusses diversity, equity, and inclusion as core values that every staff and faculty member should actively contribute to advancing.

*Track Record in Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*

**1-2**

* Participated in no specific activities, or only one or two limited activities (limited in terms of time, investment, or role).
* Only mentions activities that are already the expectation of employees as evidence of commitment and involvement (for example, "I always invite and welcome students from all backgrounds to participate in my research lab, and in fact have mentored several women." Mentoring women scientists may be an important part of an established track record but it would be less significant if it were one of the only activities undertaken and it wasn't clear that the candidate actively conducted outreach to encourage women to join the lab.
* Descriptions of activities are brief, vague, or describe being involved only peripherally. Or the only activities were oriented toward informing oneself (for example, attended a workshop at a conference).

**3**

* May have participated extensively in a single activity. Less clear that there is an established track record.
* Limited participation at the periphery in numerous activities, or participation in only one area.
* Membership in a student or professional organization that supports underrepresented individuals
* For faculty in describing mentoring of underrepresented students, mentions specific strategies used for effective mentoring, or awareness of the barriers underrepresented students face and how to incorporate the ideas into their mentoring

**4-5**

* Describes multiple activities in depth, with detailed information about both their role in the activities and the outcomes.
* Consistent track record that spans multiple years (for example, applicants for assistant professor positions can describe activities undertaken or participated in as an undergraduate, graduate student and postdoctoral scholar)
* Roles taken were significant and appropriate for career stage (e.g., a candidate who is already an assistant professor may have developed and tested pedagogy for an inclusive classroom and learning environment, while a current graduate student may have volunteered for an extended period of time for an organization or group that seeks to increase the representation of underrepresented groups in science).
* Organized or spoken at workshops or other events (depending on career stage) aimed at increasing others' understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion as one aspect of their track record.
* Served as a leader in a student or professional organization that supports underrepresented individuals

*Plans for Advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*

**1-2**

* Vague or no statements about what they would do at UCCS if hired. May even feel doing so would be the responsibility of someone else.
* Describes only activities that are already the expectation of UCCS employees (mentoring, treating all students and employees the same regardless of background, etc.).
* States that would be happy to "help out" but seems to expect the University or department to invite or assign them to activities.

**3**

* Mentions plans or ideas but more is expected for their career stage. Plans or ideas lacking in detail or clear purpose (for example, if "outreach" is proposed, who is the specific target, what is the type of engagement, and what are the expected outcomes? What are the specific roles and responsibilities of the staff or faculty member?

**4-5**

* Clear and detailed ideas for what existing programs they would get involved with and what new ideas they have for advancing equity and inclusion at UCCS and within their field, through their research, or through their teaching. Level of proposed involvement commensurate with career level (for example, a new assistant professor may plan to undertake one major activity within the department over the first couple of years, conduct outreach to hire a diverse group of students to work in their lab, seek to mentor several underrepresented students, and co-chair a subcommittee or lead a workshop for a national conference. A new tenured faculty member would be expected to have more department, campus-wide, and national impact, including leadership).
* Intends to be a strong advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion within the department/school/college and also their field.
* References activities already taking place at UCCS and in the field, and how additional or new activities would advance equity and inclusion.
* Addresses multiple areas of need (for example, hiring climate, conferences, the classroom, etc.).

*Source: Office for Faculty Equity & Welfare, University of California Berkley, August 2018.*