

THE CAROLINA POSTDOCTORAL PROGRAM
FOR FACULTY DIVERSITY

How to Write a Meaningful Contributions to Diversity Statement

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Goals of the Workshop

Discuss the **purpose of a diversity statement** from a program or employer perspective;

Offer participants a **guided self-reflective process** with writing prompts to help you draft a meaningful statement that communicates your understanding, experience, and/or commitment to diversity and inclusion; and

Define **key terms**.



By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

Articulate your personal commitment and contributions to cultural diversity, pluralism and individual or institutional diversity;

Formulate a meaningful diversity statement (working draft) for a fellowship or job application; and

Understand the difference between diversity & inclusion, and the importance of both in the workplace.



What is the difference between diversity and inclusion?



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Definitions

Diversity
Diversity is the range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, national origin, and political beliefs.

Inclusion
Inclusion is active involvement and empowerment, policies and practices, that demonstrate the inherent worth and dignity of all people. An inclusive organization promotes and sustains a sense of belonging; it values and practices respect for the talent, beliefs, different backgrounds and perspectives of its members.

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Diversity is **who we are**. Inclusion is **what we do**.

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Inclusion is the **deliberate act** of creating a welcoming environment where everyone can thrive and succeed.



What are the benefits of diverse, inclusive workforce?



Diversity in Science: Why It Is Essential for Excellence

When we have to work with people who are not like ourselves, we tend to **prepare more thoroughly and work harder** to marshal our arguments, and we do better work as a result.

Diversity is beneficial for teams precisely because we react differently to people who are different from us.

If the end goal is excellence, diversity is an essential ingredient.

Katherine K. Phillips (2014)



Diversity and the College Experience

Interactions with people different from ourselves **increase our knowledge base**. Research consistently shows that we learn more from people who are different from us than we do from people who are similar to us.

Diversity **promotes creative thinking**. Diversity expands your capacity for viewing issues or problems from multiple perspectives, angles, and vantage points.

Diversity **enhances self-awareness**. Learning from people whose backgrounds and experiences differ from your own sharpens your self-knowledge and self-insight by allowing you to compare and contrast your life experiences with others whose life experiences differ sharply from your own.

Diversity **enriches learning** when students are encouraged to share their multiple perspectives and worldviews in the classroom.

Aaron Thompson (2014)



Purpose of a Contributions to Diversity Statement

- ❑ Provides a search committee with an understanding of an applicant's background and experiences as it relates to diversity & inclusion.
- ❑ Permits a search committee to assess the qualification of an applicant on the contributions he/she could make in a department or organization, and field of study.
- ❑ Communicates applicant's commitment to advancing cultural diversity, pluralism, and inclusive practices.



Where to start???



First Step: Self Reflection

- ❑ What has been your own experience as it relates to diversity? Have you benefited from a diversity program or pipeline initiative?
- ❑ What has been your experience working with diverse populations?
- ❑ Over the course of your education and training, how have you supported diversity and/or inclusion?
- ❑ How have you infused diversity into your research, teaching or pedagogy?
- ❑ What service have you done that has involved diverse populations?
- ❑ Have you served as a mentor to diverse student populations?
- ❑ Do you engage in community-based research that permits you to partner or work closely with diverse populations?



Writing Prompt 1: Formative Experience

1. Identify a formative or pivotal experience that has informed, influenced or shaped your thinking on diversity?
2. Describe what you learned from the experience or the value of a new perspective.
3. Discuss specifically how this experience has influenced your choices and actions:
 - Career, research, teaching, mentoring, leadership or service.

Take 10-15 minutes to jot down your thoughts and ideas



Second Step: Do Your Research

- ❑ What are the organization's mission, values or goals as it relates to diversity?
- ❑ What is distinctive about the department and what do they communicate about diversity?
- ❑ What would you say are the department's core values, beliefs and norms?
- ❑ Has there been a recent event or incident that has shed light on the organizational climate or culture?



Writing Prompt 2: Organizational Culture and Values

1. What are the organization's mission, values or goals as it relates to diversity?
2. How would you describe their core values, beliefs, and norms?

Take 5 minutes to jot down your thoughts and ideas



Broader Impacts Plan

As researchers, we often focus on the "intellectual merit" of our work and the potential to advance knowledge and encompasses the scientific research proposal.

However, "broader impacts" deals with the potential to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired societal outcomes, such as:

- full participation of women, persons with disabilities, and underrepresented minorities in STEM;
- improved education and educator development at any level;
- increased public scientific literacy and public engagement with science and technology;
- improved well-being of ALL individuals in society;
- development of a diverse, globally competitive workforce;
- increased partnerships between academia, industry, and others;
- improved national security;
- increased economic competitiveness of the United States; and
- enhanced infrastructure for research and education.



Writing Prompt 3: Meaningful Contributions to Diversity (Broader Impacts)

1. What leadership will you provide to a department and/or organization in advancing full participation of women, persons with disabilities and underrepresented minorities?
2. How do you plan to mentor, support or collaborate with diverse populations?
3. If teaching, how would you incorporate diversity into classroom or curriculum?
4. Through your research, what are your proposed **broader impacts**?

Take 10-15 minutes to jot down your thoughts and ideas



Final Step: Tell Your Story

- **Communicate a meaningful connection** by knowing and understanding the organizational culture and its values.
- **Be you.** Don't embellish or try to conceal who you are or your experiences related to diversity.
- Avoid overly clever literary devices, instead **start your essay with a pivotal or formative experience** that has shaped who you are or your viewpoint.
- **Be specific.** Write about specific actions you've taken (and future plans) to support or advance diversity.

If you have overcome obstacles to get where you are, point those out. If in contrast, you are privileged, acknowledge that... Either way, use your story to explain how you can empathize with students who confront challenges on their way to achieving their educational goals.

Tanya Golash-Boza, PhD. "How to write and effective diversity statement," Inside Higher Ed, June 2016



QUESTIONS?


