

## Appendix D. Statements Indicating a Commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- ✓ **Search committees may want to ask all applicants (or all semi-finalists) to write a statement indicating a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).** Search committees may include this in the initial job ad, or request such a statement after semi-finalists have been identified for the position. Adding something like this to your job ad sends a signal that diversity and inclusion is a core value for your department and college.
  
- ✓ **Requests for these statements should allow for a broad variety of responses.** The statement requires candidates to write about their past and future experiences and activities that demonstrate their commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Responses may vary significantly from one applicant to the next, and that's okay. For example, candidates may be asked to comment on their demonstrated ability to mentor and support students from diverse backgrounds, their experience with different teaching strategies and learning styles, methodological or pedagogical approaches that demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusivity, their experiences mentoring and recruiting students from underrepresented groups, a research agenda that addresses issues that involve or affect diverse groups, and/or their experiences working with underrepresented communities.

This sample wording is used for the Texas A&M ACES Postdoctoral Fellowship Program:

- *“Please provide a 1-3 page statement explaining how your scholarship, teaching, and/or other experiences have demonstrated a commitment to diversity and how that commitment may benefit Texas A&M University.”*

Another variation is based on guidelines from UC-Berkeley:

- *“Please submit a 2-3 page statement on your contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion, including information about your understanding of these issues, your record of activities to date, and your specific plans and goals for advancing equity and inclusion if hired as a Texas A&M faculty member.”*

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- ✓ **Search committees should decide in advance how much weight to assign to a candidate's statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion.**  
Candidates do not need to be a member of an underrepresented group to write a strong statement. A strong statement will include specific and detailed examples. For example, an applicant could write about how they routinely add scholarship from members of underrepresented groups in their courses.
  
- ✓ **Use a rubric to assess the quality of DEI commitment statements.**  
When applicants are required to include a DEI commitment statement with their application materials, search committee members should use a rubric to evaluate how each applicant's commitment to diversity and past and potential contributions to inclusivity align with department, college, and university's stated goals regarding diversity and inclusivity.

Borrowing from guidance provided by UC-Berkeley, the evaluation of DEI commitment statements should consider the following criteria:

- Awareness of and ability to articulate understanding regarding diversity, equity and inclusion broadly conceived, and historical, social, and economic factors that influence the underrepresentation of particular groups in academia, as well as their experiences of inclusion and belonging. Life experience may or may not be an important aspect of this understanding.
- A track record, calibrated to career stage, of engagement and activity on diversity, equity, inclusion, and creation of a respectful community. Demonstration requires specific details about these activities, including goals, strategies, and outcomes, as well as information about the role played. Strong evidence typically consists of multiple examples of action from undergraduate through graduate (and postdoctoral if relevant) studies.
- Specific, concrete goals, plans, and priorities, calibrated to career stage, for engagement on diversity, equity, and inclusion as a potential faculty member at UC Berkeley. Ideally these plans involve an understanding of current programs and initiatives already taking place on campus.

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- ✓ **Keep in mind the differences between a strong statement and a weak statement.** Among other things, relatively strong statements demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the key DEI issues in academia as experienced by members of underrepresented groups, and provide detailed descriptions of activities and plans. In contrast, relatively weak statements tend to demonstrate a simplistic understanding of DEI issues in academia, and provide vague descriptions of activities and plans.
- ✓ **Consider using a minimal score for the DEI commitment statement.** Candidates who do not meet that requirement would not advance forward in the search process. Such a procedure would ensure that candidates have already developed a commitment to DEI, and would avoid the tendency to rationalize a weak case.
- ✓ **Consider the context of each candidate.** Candidates who are at an earlier career stage (i.e. recent PhD graduates) may not have as strong of a track record with DEI work as a candidate who has already been employed as a professor, yet they may still be able to identify some experience in this area, and identify future plans and activities. Candidates from international institutions may look different due to a different context, but may be equally compelling.
- ✓ **Minimize implicit bias in the evaluation of DEI commitment statements.** Search committee members should use the same expectations for all candidates, regardless of whether or not they belong to a particular group, or hold particular viewpoints. Individuals from underrepresented groups should not be scored higher simply because they are from an underrepresented group. In other words, a candidate's demographic characteristics should not be used as the justification for moving that candidate to the next stage of a search. The corollary is also true: candidates from underrepresented groups should not be expected to do more than other candidates in order to get the same rating.
- ✓ **The interview process should also give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to DEI.** Search committees should

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- keep in mind that the job application is not the only opportunity to assess a candidate's commitment to DEI issues. The search committee should consider adding questions that gauge a candidate's interest and knowledge of diversity, equity, and inclusion issues. For example, candidates may be asked to share any experiences they have learning about diversity-related issues; creating inclusive learning environments, mentoring students from underrepresented groups, and/or working with people who have a different background.
- ✓ **For detailed information, take a look at guidance provided to faculty search committees at UC-Berkeley.** <https://ofew.berkeley.edu/recruitment/contributions-diversity/rubric-assessing-candidate-contributions-diversity-equity-and> .