

Writing a Diversity Statement for the Academic Job Market

Presented by the UK Working Group on Ethics, Equity,
Inclusion, and Justice in the Mathematical Sciences (EEIJMS)
<https://sites.google.com/view/uk-eeijms>



Workshop Co-Organizers

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Agenda

- **Context for the Work:** Vocabulary and Institutional Contexts
- **Diversity Statements as Part of Job Applications:** Goals and Purpose
- **Reflection Questions:** The Start of the Writing Process
- **Structure of a Diversity Statement:** Creating an Outline
- **Pitfalls:** Things to Avoid
- **Case Studies:** Comparing and Critiquing Sample Statements

10-Minute Statement Review

Get feedback on your statement draft! Members of the EEIJMS working group will review draft diversity statements and provide brief feedback to help you improve.

To request a 10-minute review of your diversity statement, email Cindy Jong at cindy.jong@uky.edu with your statement and CV.

Please allow at least one week to receive feedback. Reviews will be available throughout the Fall 2022 semester, and you do not have to attend the workshop to request a 10-minute diversity statement review.

Reflection Questions

1. How do you incorporate diverse perspectives into your classroom materials and methodologies and/or in your own research and writing?
2. What methods do you use to embrace students' diverse perspectives?
3. How has your personal background prepared you to address equity related issues? If you address your personal identity, make sure you discuss how it intersects with your contributions to equity in higher education.
4. What methods do you use when managing classroom and interpersonal interactions on topics related to diversity and inequities?

5. What work are you doing toward equity and structural justice in and out of the classroom?
6. How do you address the aspects of classroom climate?
7. What experiences have you had that shape how you understand and work for inclusion?

Case Studies

Example 1

I have long been committed to diversity, and recognize the barriers faced by women and other minorities in engaging in science. In high school, I was one of the very few female students participating in mathematics, chemistry and physics olympiads. During undergraduate studies, there were still few female peers or professors in mathematics. We communicated little with others in and out of class and even did not know each other. To overcome this, I developed a discussion group that encouraged all the female undergraduates in our major to share their experience and discuss academic problems each week. To further promote support for female students, I co-organized a mentor program in the department that invited faculty members to share career advices in science.

In the summer vacations of 2009 and 2010, I participated in volunteer teaching at primary schools in the poorest area of #####. There was a huge financial burden for most families. Children were not able to receive basic education due to the shortage of teachers and lack of materials. I organized a volunteer group consisting of undergraduates from diverse majors and made teaching arrangements for summer and winter vacations. I believe equal opportunity is extremely important and every student is unique in their own way. I strive to create an open, inclusive, and equal environment in which every student has the opportunity to flourish.

At my current university, I was the instructor for an introductory ##### course in Winter 2014 which targeted undergraduates in economics, physical science and social science. I have taken an active role to promote diversity in classroom. One effective way I found is to encourage students to engage in peer discussion. Students learned from each other and gained an appreciation for the diversity they bring to table. As an instructor, my role is to create and manage an inclusive classroom so that every student feels comfortable to participate in discussion. To achieve this goal, I usually chose a discussion topic that interested as many students as possible. I believe that a diverse and cooperative environment in higher education can prepare students to become better professionals.

Looking forward to my role as a new professor, I intend to serve as a mentor and advisor inspiring students from underrepresented groups to pursue more higher-level math courses, and to increase their confidence that they can succeed in the academic goals. I will pursue NSF funds to actively recruit and train minority graduate students in my area, and to provide mentoring for both female and minority students to encourage them in academic careers, which is an important part of NSF Broadening Participation in my research grant proposals. I will also actively recruit and retain students from underrepresented groups through summer programs at University X, such as the Summer Bridge Program. As a member of the Graduate Admissions Committee, I will strive to recruit and retain a diverse student body during the graduate admissions. Moreover, I will continue to incorporate diversity into my teaching materials and methods. It is my hope that students with diverse backgrounds can find their voices in class, and my diverse background allows me the sensitivity I need to relate to them. Thus everyone contributes to discussion, which in turn boosts self-confidence. I believe I can contribute to my students' personal growth and motivate them to achieve their educational goals.

Example 2

As a Latino immigrant who lived in X, Y, and the United States, I am sensitive to the challenges that ethnic minorities face in academia. Thus, over the last years I have become determined to act towards creating an environment that is more inviting towards underrepresented minorities, women, and socioeconomically underprivileged students which I will expand as a Professor.

As a postdoc at NN, I am closely working with Professor Z on these fronts. Together with Prof. Z, the university's Division of Equity and Inclusion, and the Chicana Latino Student Development Office, we have created a counseling program called "From Day One". This program organizes a support structure for Latino undergraduate students to help them apprehend the entire academic process by talking directly to Latino graduate students, postdocs and perhaps ultimately professors (we are currently seeking their participation). We all hold office hours where students discuss their personal and academic struggles. The issues they bring up range from their undocumented status, gang family members, limited finances, sexual orientation, to questions about physics and math. Secondly, sparked by recent political events, I collaborate with Professor Z in lobbying for protection of undocumented students at the university.

As a faculty member at University A Campus, I would propose the following activities in pursuit of a more diverse academic body:

- As a research mentor, I would embrace and welcome Latino, African American, gay, and women students and postdocs into my group.
- I would create support programs for Latino undergraduate students in STEM, inviting fellow Latino faculty, postdocs, and graduate students to offer guidance and support to upcoming undergraduate students. Furthermore, together with women and other minority groups represented in the Physics faculty, I would push to create a widespread support structure for STEM students.
- Being close to the border, at UAC I would create outreach programs at Community Colleges and High Schools with high Latino representation, arranging visits from within the Physics Department (myself and other Latino members) to these locations, and discuss their needs, struggles and propose plans for improvements and solutions.
- I would reach out to the Undocumented Student Services Center at UAC and offer guidance, counseling and support to the students.
- I would continue to help Professor Z draft UA-wide legislation to protect undocumented students from possible federal action – an issue critical at the UAC campus due to its proximity to the border.

In conclusion, I believe academia must strive to expand diversity with a more inclusive approach – welcoming and embracing different socioeconomic, ethnic, gender groups, etc. – and create a broader pool of thought processes and worldviews. UC San Diego's commitment to this idea resonates with my desire and responsibility to contribute as a Latino scientist, educator, and activist.