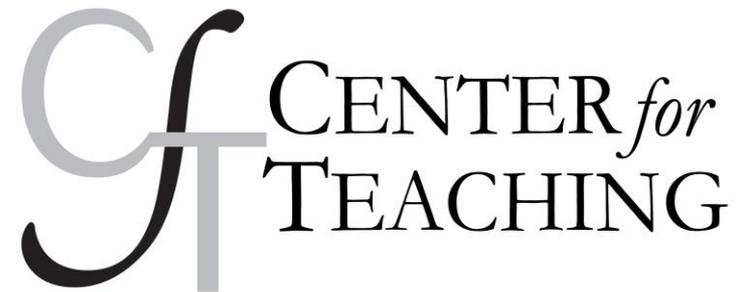


# Writing A Diversity Statement

Ransford Pinto

*Assistant Director for Graduate Programs  
Senior Lecturer Leadership, Policy, & Organization*



# Elements of an Academic Job Application

- ❑ Cover Letter
- ❑ CV
- ❑ Letters of Recommendation
- ❑ Teaching Statement
- ❑ Research Statement
- ❑ **Diversity Statement**



Demonstrate your commitment to fostering diversity.

Find out how with the new CFT teaching guide:  
Developing and Writing a Diversity Statement.

# Requests for a Diversity Statement in Job Ads

**California State University (Public Minority-Serving Institution, Assistant Professor of Sociology):**

**Candidate statement on commitment to inclusive excellence:**

This statement provides the candidate's unique perspective on their past and present contributions to and future aspirations for promoting diversity, inclusion, and social justice in their professional careers. We are particularly interested in discussion of your experiences, successes, and challenges in teaching and mentoring students from a diverse student population. The purpose of this statement is to help the department identify candidates who have professional experience, intellectual commitments, and/or willingness to engage in activities that could help CSUF contribute to its mission in these areas. (approximately one to two pages, single-spaced)

## DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The Francis School is dedicated to enhancing the education and life experience of students aged 5-18 regardless of gender, race, religion, gender identity, or other demographic mark. Here at the Francis school, we believe in engaging students in cultural activities from an early age, allowing them to explore the world around them. With a multilingual staff and a rotating set of language classes, students will have the opportunity to receive not only a well-rounded education, but also learn life skills that will prove invaluable in the global economy. We aim to exceed public education standards at each grade level in all subjects, and have stringent experience and performance requirements for all our teaching staff.

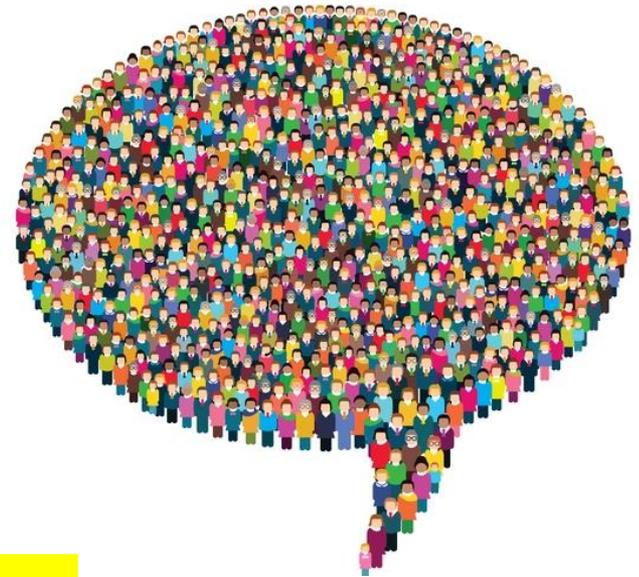
We have a set of core values which each student memorizes as part of our curriculum. This includes respect, diligence, honesty, and curiosity. Each one of our core values is integrated fully into our curriculum. For example, our critical reading initiatives mandate a rotating list of classics and modern authors writing about topics relating to politics, theology, gender identity, drama, and comedy. Presentation skills are honed in small groups, and classes are designed around an open forum type of discussion. We believe that such engagement encourages active learning instead of passive notetaking.

Our classes are small and highly diverse, boasting students from over 50 countries, and we are always looking to grow our family. Student with special needs are also encouraged to apply, and we have a state-of-the-art facility dedicated to helping these students find their own niche and support groups. We encourage students to mingle and meet each other by mixing classes every five months. Students will experience an immersive, innovative, and highly engaging learning environment dedicated to opening their minds and hearts to the world.

# Requests for a Diversity Statement in Job Ads

**St. Mary's College of Maryland**  
(public liberal arts college,  
faculty posting in Psychology):

Applicants should submit a statement explaining how their teaching at the College will contribute to a culture of inclusion and campus diversity.



# Requests for a Diversity Statement in Job Ads

**Denison University** (private liberal arts university in Ohio, faculty posting in Anthropology):

A description of how the applicant would contribute to the development of a diverse and inclusive learning community at Denison through teaching, research, and/or service.

## DIVERSITY STATEMENT

If you asked me six years ago, I wouldn't have known what graduate school was, nor what it was designed to do. In fact, I wasn't even sure I wanted to go to college. In my small agricultural town with a population of just over 5,000 people, it was the type of place where family-owned farms and tiny storefronts shaped and defined the community. These types of jobs were passed down throughout the generations, and everyone knew everyone else. My original goal was to take over my parents' farm as soon as I was able to, and I expected to do so as soon as I got my high school diploma. It took one piece of legislation to change all that, and fueled in me a passion for law and policy.

The summer before I was expected to graduate, a piece of legislation was passed that required chicken coops to be constructed in a certain shape fitting different dimensions than what we, and everyone else in the town, possessed. Lawmakers cited the importance of animal welfare in creating the new legislation, but upon performing a few simple calculations, we discovered that the legislation actually decreased each chicken's living space by over 27%. The legislation was a result of lobbying by various chicken suppliers who bought their livestock from farms like ours, who hoped to decrease supply and thus raise prices by forcing farmers to cull their stock. The unfairness of the entire process made me determined to study how these policies are made, and do my part to make a change.

My goal is to represent the interests of my community in the congresses and courts of the country, to ensure that laws are working for the interests of the people and not for the interests of the corporations. In these times, agriculture is already a difficult field to make a living in, and small farming communities like the one I call home are some of the most vulnerable to changes in legislation simply because these are little education and representation on the matter. I hope to attend graduate school in the field of political science because I believe that it will build upon my existing knowledge of the political process and legislation, enabling me to pursue my career and personal goals of obtaining justice for my community now and in the future.

# Why are Universities Asking for Diversity Statements?

To verify that an applicant has a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in their work within higher education, which may include:

- ❑ Scholarship
- ❑ Teaching
- ❑ Service
- ❑ Mentoring
- ❑ Advising
- ❑ Collegiality

**Q:** What would you like to see in a diversity statement from a job applicant?



**A:** “I would like to see something that honestly reflects the applicant’s true experience. If

someone were to write – ‘I’ve been in environments that have not been very visibly diverse, and it is relatively recent that I have become aware of how important diversity and inclusivity are to fostering student success’ –that would blow me away. I would be really impressed by someone able to be transparent about the process and their eagerness to continue growing, because we are all a work in progress when it comes to addressing equity and inclusion.”

– Melissa Thomas Hunt, Vice Provost for Inclusive Excellence at Vanderbilt University

# What a Diversity Statement is NOT

- ❑ It is not an intimate description of your identity markers- tell *your* story your way. Disclosure is a choice.
- ❑ It is not a place for blasé statements or inauthenticity- it is a critically reflective piece.
- ❑ It is not about sentiment- it is about **ACTION.**

# What Goes in a Diversity Statement?

## **Personal Beliefs, Identity, & Commitments**

- Personal beliefs
- Interpersonal communication styles
- Intercultural competencies
- Experiences in diverse settings, cultures
- How your thinking has evolved
- Personal attributes, identity

## **Teaching Philosophies & Practices**

- Teaching philosophies – why diversity matters (e.g., Gurin 1999, Milem 2003)
- Teaching approaches, tools – how do you realize inclusion in practice?
- Mentorship
- Publications

## **Research Topics & Practices**

- Disciplinary expertise in difference
- Research collaborations
- Societal benefits of your research

## **Service Experiences/Plans**

- Service to diversity/inclusion/equity initiatives
- Service to programs, departments offering curricular, and topical diversity
- Efforts to create a diverse campus climate
- Support for diverse hiring, promotion
- Future goals for service

## **Non-Academic Experiences**

- Relevant volunteer work
- Relevant past work experience

# What Goes into a Diversity Statement?

As you read your samples, think about the following questions:

1. What claim does the writer make?
2. What evidence/supporting examples do they give, if any?
3. What area of their professional activities are they addressing (e.g. research, teaching, mentoring, service)

# Tips For Writing the Diversity Statement

- ❑ Have you read the university diversity goals?
- ❑ How do you plan to serve a student body that is diverse in a multitude of ways? Consider multiple and overlapping experiences of difference, including race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, SES, age, religion, academic preparedness, dis/ability, gender identity and expression, country of origin, language, and more.
- ❑ Does your research/scholarship directly address issues of diversity, inclusion, or equity? If so, how?
- ❑ Have you participated in any service activities (e.g. university committees, symposiums, workshops, volunteer work in the community) whose goals relate to diversity, inclusion, and equity? If so, describe your experience. What did you accomplish? What did you learn? What skills did you build in the process?
- ❑ Be specific about the "why" and the "how" in your diversity statements.

# Should you Disclose Elements of Your Personal Identity?

- ❑ One study showed less than a quarter of applicants self-disclosed some aspect of their personal identity (Schmaling, Trevino, Lind, Blume, & Baker, 2014).
- ❑ Biases toward African Americans and women influence the evaluation of written application materials (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000; Moss-Racusin, Dovidio, Brescoll, Graham, & Handelsman, 2012).
- ❑ Specifically, when the application is not exceptionally weak or exceptionally strong (Dovidio & Gaertner, 2000).

# Solo Writing Time

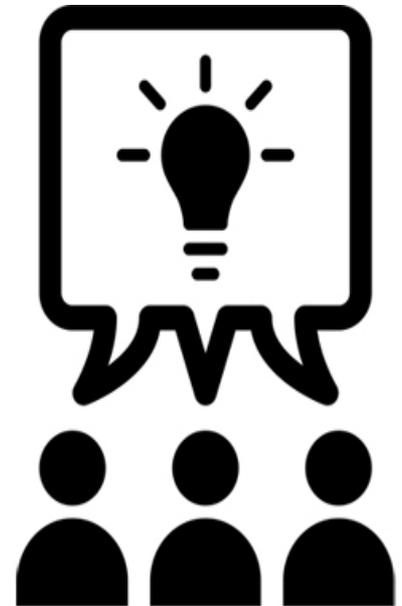
*Begin drafting some segments or a paragraph that could be included in your diversity statement (or, if you came with a draft, consider what we've talked about and edit an existing paragraph).*

## Things to Consider:

1. What is your overarching claim about your engagement with diversity and inclusion, and what context are you addressing (teaching, research, etc.)?
2. What concrete examples might you include as evidence of HOW you're accomplishing this goal?
3. How might you explain WHY this example points towards your goal?

# Group Reflection

- ❑ What was easy about this brief writing exercise? What was difficult?
- ❑ Did the writing exercise highlight any areas you need to spend time thinking about before writing further? Concepts you need to clarify for yourself and your reader?
- ❑ Any questions?



# Thank You!

Do not hesitate to make an appointment with the CFT if you want to get feedback on a draft of your diversity statement, or if you just want to talk about ideas!

To make an appointment, e-mail Juliet Traub: [juliet.g.traub@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:juliet.g.traub@vanderbilt.edu)