

Worksheet: Statement on Diversity

What is your own philosophy regarding diversity in higher education? You should be able to articulate this clearly and concisely, but you do not need to write it out explicitly in your statement. Instead, tell a compelling story about your experience with diversity and the ways in which you might draw on that experience in your work at the institution to which you are applying. Use specific, concrete examples that demonstrate how you apply what you have learned in your interactions with others, and how it affects your learning, teaching, and scholarship, as well as your professional, public, or community service currently and moving forward. Importantly, what you write should show that you have given deep thought to what diversity is, from your perspective, and how it matters in your life and your work.

Where to Begin?

Take a moment to answer the following questions.

1. Think about a time in your life when you became more aware of your own or someone else's difference from others and how that difference matters. Consider the following in recounting this story.

Where were you?

Who else was involved?

What happened?

How did you and/or the others who were involved react and why?

2. Reflection: how did the event or moment above change you, if at all?

Drafting Your Statement

Note: this is just one approach you might take, as a way of getting started. This approach may be most useful to individuals for whom thinking about diversity may be less familiar.

1. Start by telling the reader *something about who you are*. You might name an important identity or identities, or your role within your family, or something that makes you personally unique.
2. Next, tell the story you described in the preceding exercise, linking it to the identity/ies you name above. This tells the reader *something about where you have been* as it relates to your experience of your own or others' difference.
3. Now, note *something about the institution* and *something about the other people there* with whom you will interact, and whether it emphasizes or mutes your difference as you have described. Consider some of the reasons why the institution might ask for a diversity statement (hint: review institutional mission and values, diversity statement, demographics, etc.).
4. Finally, tell how the story you shared may relate to your interactions with the institution to which you are applying or the people there, using very specific, concrete examples related to your learning, teaching, research, and/or service and leadership.

Put all of these pieces together, and you've got a rough draft of a diversity statement. Be sure to ask your peers, faculty, and/or advisers to review the statement and then revise accordingly until you have a compelling, coherent, and concise narrative (typically one full page, single-spaced).