

Drafting Your Diversity & Inclusion Statement

WHY A strong, personalized diversity & inclusion statement in your syllabus signals that all persons are welcome, valued, and will be included.

For students of color or other minorities, your statement can message: “Your voice matters. You belong here.”

For majority culture students, the statement represents an opportunity to defamiliarize catchphrases and demonstrate the genuine importance and relevance of diversity & inclusion in our community.

Students will read several syllabi in the first week of a semester. If they encounter four or five different inclusion statements, each told from a professor’s unique viewpoint, each keyed to the context of a specific class or discipline, they will have a hard time dismissing these policies as mere formalities, and they will slowly be developing their own vocabularies and mental toolboxes for addressing these critical issues for our time.

SAMPLE 1

I work to treat every person with equal respect, regardless of racial identity, gender identity, physicality, brain chemistry, nationality, political leanings, and religious background. Whoever you are, wherever you’re from, you are fearfully and wonderfully made. God delights in diversity; I do, too. We humans need diverse viewpoints because every viewpoint, on its own, has blind spots. That’s especially true of my own viewpoint as a straight white male in a context where those identities have long been dominant.

If you or someone else in this class is hurt by something I say or do in class, I would like to know about it so that we can work toward a remedy. Because this kind of feedback can be uncomfortable for all involved, I’ll take it however it comes: in public or in private, on the spot or days later, directly from you or indirectly through another student, another professor, or through my department chair (name, email).

Use “I” language

Avoid boilerplate statements. This is **your** statement on inclusion in **your course and class**.

Acknowledge biases

What are your or your or discipline’s or your course’s biases?

Clarify responsibilities

Position yourself with your students as co-shapers of an inclusive learning space.

See supporting [Video Discussion](#) with Chad Engbers and Penny Dykstra-Pruim

4 Questions to consider when creating your D&I statement

- How does your commitment to diversity shape your readings, assignments, activities and class interactions?
- What are one or two specific ways in which a genuinely inclusive environment will improve student learning in this class?
- How will breaches of civility and mutual respect be handled?
- What are the conventions, stereotypes, or biases of your course or discipline, and how will you work to acknowledge and counterbalance those?

SAMPLE 2

Be clear about your intent

What does it mean to you specifically to value diversity and inclusion?

Make it sincere

Include what motivates you.

Cast a vision

What are the benefits of a learning space that respects diversity and embodies inclusive excellence?

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and perspectives are well served in this course, regardless of gender identities, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic background, immigration status, sexual orientation, disability, age, or religion. I strive to be anti-racist and value diverse perspectives. We can disagree without becoming disagreeable. We can have moments of discomfort while never belittling others. Join me in creating a class that respects everyone in it --a space where we can ask honest questions about our own culture-shaped identities, as we explore important ideas, texts, events, and questions of identity in modern Germany.

Springboard phrases and ideas

- Inclusiveness is especially relevant to this course/this community/me, because
- To make our class a good space for learning, we need some community ground rules. Here are few I'd like to suggest:
- Our university values diversity & inclusion, from our core diversity document, *From Every Nation (FEN)*, to ongoing training for all, to the environment in this class.
- Being inclusive is not just about political correctness; my commitment to inclusion comes from my own faith/experiences/hopes for the kind of community I want to live and work in.