



Promises and Pitfalls of Diversity Statements

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The promise of institutional diversity statements

- Attract and retain diverse students, faculty, and staff
- Establish a basis for developing policies and practices that promote a welcoming, inclusive environment
- Provide a rationale for considering applicants' ability to foster diversity or work with diverse populations when hiring faculty and staff

Carnes M, Fine E, Sheridan J. (2019) *Academic Medicine*, 94(1): 20-24.



Not all diversity statements are effective

Declarative	vs.	Aspirational
“[Name of Institution] is proud to be a diverse and inclusive environment”		“We strive to create a welcoming, diverse, and inclusive environment”
“We do not discriminate against any employee because of race, religion, gender, ...”		“[We seek to understand and dismantle] personal biases (unconscious and conscious) and systemic injustices within our society and School.”

Kaiser et al., 2013
Castilla and Benard, 2010
Uhlmann and Cohen, 2007

Duguid and Thomas-Hunt, 2015
Carr, Dweck, and Pauker, 2012



Not all diversity statements are effective

Controlling	vs.	Autonomous
“It is socially unacceptable to discriminate based on cultural background”		“We value interacting with people different from ourselves and find this to be vital to our educational mission.”
“I should avoid being racist”		“We value inclusion as a core strength and an essential element of our public service mission.”
“The [Name of University] must seek to achieve diversity ...”		“Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation ...”

Legault, Gutsell, Inzlicht., 2011
Dobbin and Kalev, 2016



Not all diversity statements are effective

Colorblind	vs.	Multicultural
“At University X, we encourage our diverse student body to embrace their similarities ...”		“At University X, we believe that embracing our diversity enriches our campus ...”
“The [Name of University] is committed to providing a supportive and open learning environment for all individuals regardless of age, gender, gender identity, race”		“The peoples served by and associated with the [Name of University] vary widely; all are valued for the richness their different culture, heritages, perspective, and ideas bring to the community.”

Wilton, Good, Moss-Racusin, Sanchez, 2014.
Plaut, 2009, 2014.



Not all diversity statements are effective

Statements	vs.	Actions
<h3 style="color: #a52a2a; margin: 0;">Interviews with Black and Asian job seekers</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 36% engaged in “résumé whitening” 2/3 knew of others (friends, family) who “whitened” their job applications Less likely to “whiten” résumé if employer valued diversity – e.g., posted a diversity statement <h3 style="color: #a52a2a; margin: 0;">Résumé audit study</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whitened resume’s received more callbacks for interviews No difference between companies that claimed to value diversity and those that did not. 		

Kang., DeCelles, Tilcsik, and Jun, 2016.

Implications for search process

- Messages about commitment to diversity in job ads
- Evaluation of job applicant's diversity statements
 - Preparation of committee members
 - Role of controlling/autonomous messages on committee members
 - Accountability

Implications for search process

- Consequences for job applicants/new faculty
 - Identity vs. experience
 - Identity clues and potential for bias
 - Reduction or increase of expectations for underrepresented faculty and responsibility for diversity
 - Evaluation of "job performance" in realms of diversity and inclusion
- Beyond diversity statements