

Evaluating Staff Candidates

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statements

Rating Criteria

1. Awareness of and ability to articulate understanding regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion broadly conceived, and historical, social, and economic factors that influence the underrepresentation of particular groups in academia, as well as their experiences of inclusion and belonging. Life experience may or may not be an important aspect of this understanding.
2. A track record, calibrated to career stage, of engagement and activity on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and creation of a respectful community. Demonstration requires specific details about these activities, including goals, strategies, and outcomes, as well as information about the role played. Strong evidence typically consists of multiple examples of action from undergraduate through graduate (and postdoctoral if relevant) studies.
3. Specific, concrete goals, plans, and priorities, calibrated to career stage, for engagement on diversity, equity, and inclusion as a potential staff member at Columbia. Ideally these plans involve an understanding of current programs and initiatives already taking place on campus.

Examples of Evidence Demonstrating Contributions to Advancing Equity and Inclusion

Knowledge and understanding:

- Knowledge of, experience with, and interest in dimensions of diversity that result from different identities, such as ethnic, socioeconomic, racial, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and cultural differences.
- Familiarity with demographic data related to diversity in higher education.
- Understanding of the challenges faced by underrepresented individuals, and the need to identify and eliminate barriers to their full and equitable participation and advancement.
- Comfort discussing diversity-related issues.

- Understanding of mentorship power dynamics and personal-professional boundaries between faculty and students.
- Understanding of the impact of bullying, microaggressions, and harassment.

Experience:

- Strategies to create inclusive and respectful environments for community members.
- Strategies to encourage both critical thinking and respectful dialogue.
- Mentoring and supporting the advancement and professional development of colleagues, students, or others.
- Work focused on underserved communities.
- Outreach activities designed to remove barriers and to increase the participation of individuals from underrepresented groups.
- Workshops and activities that help build multicultural competencies and create inclusive climates.
- Supporting student organizations that serve underrepresented groups.
- Participation with professional associations or meetings that aim to increase diversity or address the needs of underrepresented students.
- Serving on university or college committees related to equity and inclusion, or preventing sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Knowledge about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expresses limited knowledge of, or experience with, dimensions of diversity that result from different identities. • Defines diversity only in terms of different areas of study or different nationalities, but does not discuss gender, ethnicity/race, or other axes of identity. • Discusses diversity in vague terms, such as “diversity is important for Columbia.” • Discounts the importance of a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. • Describes having had little experience with these issues because of lack of exposure, and does not provide any information or evidence of finding ways to educate themselves. • Demonstrates little understanding of demographic data related to diversity in higher education. Uses vague statements such as “there need to be more people of color at colleges and universities.” • Expresses discomfort discussing diversity-related issues. • States that they “haven’t had a chance to think about these issues yet.” • Seems unaware of, or doesn’t understand the personal challenges that underrepresented individuals face in academia, or feel any responsibility for helping to eliminate barriers. For example, may state that it is better not to have outreach or affinity groups aimed at underrepresented individuals because it keeps them separate from everyone else, or will make them feel less valued.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will likely show aspects of both “1-2” and “4-5” ratings. • May express little understanding of demographic data related to diversity, and have less experience and interest in dimensions of diversity, but show a strong understanding of challenges faced by individuals who are underrepresented and the need to eliminate barriers, and be comfortable discussing diversity-related issues.
4-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates clear knowledge of, experience with, and interest in dimensions of diversity that result from different identities, such as ethnic, socioeconomic, racial, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and cultural differences. This understanding can result from personal experiences as well as an investment in learning about the experiences of those with identities different from their own. • Is aware of demographic data related to diversity in higher education. Discusses the underrepresentation of many groups and the consequences for higher education or for the discipline. • Comfort discussing diversity-related issues (including distinctions and connections between diversity, equity, and inclusion), both in writing and in an interview. • Understands the challenges faced by underrepresented individuals, and the need for all students, faculty, and staff to work to identify and eliminate barriers to their full and equitable participation and advancement. • Discusses diversity, equity, and inclusion as core values that every faculty and staff member should actively contribute to advancing.

Track Record in Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participated in no specific activities, or only one or two limited activities (limited in terms of time, investment, or role).• Only mentions activities that are already the expectation of staff members as evidence of commitment and involvement (for example, “I always invite and welcome students from all backgrounds to programs, and have mentored several women.” Mentoring women and/or students of color may be an important part of an established track record but it would be less significant if it were one of the only activities undertaken.• Descriptions of activities are brief, vague, or describe being involved only peripherally. Or the only activities were oriented toward informing oneself (for example, attended a workshop or lecture).
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• May have participated extensively in a single activity. Less clear that there is an established track record.• Limited participation at the periphery in numerous activities, or participation in only one area.• In describing mentoring of underrepresented students, mentions specific strategies used for effective mentoring, or awareness of the barriers underrepresented students face and how to incorporate the ideas into their mentoring.• Membership in a student or professional organization that supports underrepresented individuals.
4-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describes multiple activities in depth, with detailed information about both their role in the activities and the outcomes.• Consistent track record that spans multiple years (for example, applicants can describe activities undertaken or participated in as an undergraduate, graduate student, and/or professional).• Roles taken were significant and appropriate for career stage (e.g., a senior leader may have led a relevant project, while a current graduate student may have volunteered for an extended period of time for an organization or group that seeks to increase the representation of underrepresented groups in a particular place or area).• Organized or spoken at workshops or other events (depending on career stage) aimed at increasing others’ understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion as one aspect of their track record.• Served as a leader in a student or professional organization that supports underrepresented individuals.

Plans for Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

1-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vague or no statements about what they would do at Columbia if hired. May even feel doing so would be the responsibility of someone else. • Describes only activities that are already the expectation of Columbia employees (mentoring, treating all students, faculty, and/or staff the same regardless of background, etc.). • States that they would be happy to “help out” but seems to expect the University or department to invite or assign them to activities.
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentions plans or ideas but more is expected for their career stage. • Plans or ideas lacking in detail or clear purpose (for example, if “outreach” is proposed, who is the specific target, what is the type of engagement, and what are the expected outcomes? What are the specific roles and responsibilities of the staff member?).
4-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and detailed ideas for what existing programs they would get involved with and what new ideas they have for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion at Columbia. Level of proposed involvement commensurate with career level (for example, a new professional may plan to undertake one major activity within the department or school over the first couple of years, seek to mentor several underrepresented students, and co-chair a subcommittee or lead a workshop for a national conference. A more seasoned professional would be expected to have more department or campus-wide impact, including leadership). • Intends to be a strong advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion within the department/school/college. • References activities already taking place at Columbia or at other institutions, and how additional or new activities would advance diversity, equity, and inclusion. • Addresses multiple areas of need (for example, classroom climate, offices, laboratories, conferences, etc.).

These materials were developed based on the work of UC Berkeley and other institutions that have created resources for Faculty and Staff Search Committees and Faculty and Staff Candidates.