



The following contains recommended sample statements related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) that faculty and graduate student instructors (henceforth called “instructors”) could integrate into their course syllabi. To align with the [UM Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan](#), we propose that a syllabus statement should begin with the instructor reflecting on DEI broadly, then developing a statement that transparently and authentically reflects their values and actions as it relates to DEI.

### **Proposed Syllabus Statement**

We use the following definitions from the UM Diversity Plan as guides for this process. Please note that we use the singular “they” throughout this document to support inclusivity.

**Diversity:** Representation of all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another

**Equity:** Evaluating systems and institutions to identify and remove biases in the distribution of opportunities and resources

**Inclusion:** Ensuring differences are welcomed, different perspectives are respectfully heard, and every individual feels a sense of belonging

#### **Step 1: Reflections on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

In order for an instructor to integrate DEI into their syllabi, it is imperative that they reflect deeply on their (1) self-awareness, (2) knowledge of DEI and course content, and (3) skills and course pedagogy. Proposed reflection questions are in Figure 1.

First, instructors should consider their own background, identities, biases, and knowledge about DEI issues. Second, instructors should reflect on their course content, including all readings (textbooks, peer-reviewed journal articles, stories, artwork, music, narratives), lecture content, course activities, and assignments. Finally, instructors should reflect on their pedagogy, instructional style, and learning environment. We encourage instructors to engage in reflection alone (e.g., journaling), with their colleagues (e.g., through peer consultation), and/or with their supervisors or department chairs.

#### **Step 2: Develop a DEI Statement that Reflects the Instructors’ Vision**

Once the instructor has engaged in reflection, they can subsequently develop a statement that addresses DEI that will be included in their syllabi. Importantly, this statement should be an honest and transparent statement that reflects their vision of and commitment to DEI.

Some instructors may find that the wording of a DEI statement can be challenging. The samples below are meant to promote reflection and can (and should) be edited to align with the instructor’s vision for DEI in their class. We recommend that the instructor

- (1) includes the broader UM DEI Plan,
- (2) outlines the specific aims of the course as it relates to DEI,
- (3) describes their specific intentions and commitments for the course, and
- (4) invites students to be part of the solution and provides any specific messages or recommendations for the course.

Note for sample statements below: Instructors can choose to highlight their work towards DEI work by customizing the language to include terms such as “strive to” or “desire to” that aligns with where they are in their professional growth and perspectives in DEI.

*Sample Statement (Core Message)*

Consistent with the UM [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan](#), I will [strive to] include the representation of different identities, characteristics, experiences and perspectives of all students. I will [aim to] offer everyone what they need to succeed by increasing access, resources, and opportunities for all, especially for those who are systematically underrepresented and have been historically disadvantaged. I will [desire to] create a welcoming learning environment in which differences are celebrated and everyone is valued, respected, and able to reach their full potential.

*Sample Statement (Core Message + Instructor’s Intention/Commitment)*

Consistent with [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan](#), I will [strive to] include the representation of different identities, characteristics, experiences and perspectives of all students. I will [aim to] offer everyone what they need to succeed by increasing access, resources, and opportunities for all, especially for those who are systematically underrepresented and have been historically disadvantaged. I will [desire to] create a welcoming learning environment in which differences are celebrated and everyone is valued, respected, and able to reach their full potential.

I believe that the learning environment is enriched when students’ diverse perspectives are respected and shared. All students bring strengths to the classroom and I honor each student’s perspectives in the learning environment. I respect all students’ backgrounds, and will thoughtfully work to avoid discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, creed, sex, age, marital or familial status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. I will [strive to] choose course assignments, activities, and readings that are respectful of and responsive to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

I am part of a learning community that embraces the core values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, while acknowledging that existing systems, like higher education, have led to the oppression and marginalization of a range of minoritized groups, including, but not limited to Indigenous people in Montana, in North America, and around the world. My intent is to foster a welcoming classroom environment; yet I recognize that bias or discrimination may occur. UM encourages anyone who experiences or observes unfair

or hostile treatment on the basis of identity to speak out for justice and support. Resources are available on the [University's Diversity website](http://umt.edu/diversity) (umt.edu/diversity).

**Follow-up: Continuing Reflections and Repairing Harm**

**Developing a DEI statement is an on-going process. Instructors should review the reflection prompts and questions at the conclusion of each semester. Further, instructors may benefit from reflecting on how they navigated difficult dialogues or conflicts, including their own mistakes.**

**Figure 1**

*Reflection Questions and Prompts to Develop DEI Statements*

<b>Self-Awareness</b> Identities, Background, and Biases	<b>Course Content</b> Readings, Lectures, Assignments	<b>Pedagogy and Learning Environment</b>
Review the <a href="#">UM Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan</a> . What aspects of the plan are meaningful to you? New to you?	Review your previous syllabi. Who are the authors of the assigned readings? Do these authors fully represent the diversity of context and theories in this content area?	Reflect on your current teaching and pedagogy. In what ways have you increased access, resources, and opportunities for all students in your course? What students may you have unintentionally neglected?
Consider your identit(ies). What aspects of your identity have you explored? What aspects have you explored the least?	In what ways have you integrated different and unique identities, characteristics, experiences and perspectives into your course content?	In what ways have you created a welcoming culture in your class, so that differences are celebrated and everyone is valued, respected, and able to reach their full potential?
Reflect on the reasons you are deciding to write a DEI statement in your syllabi.	Have students shared any concerns about diversity, equity, or inclusion? If not, what barriers may exist in your class to impede students' willingness to share their thoughts?	How can diversity, equity, and inclusion in your discipline be an asset for learning?
To what degree have you discussed issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in your courses?	Review the resources available for faculty and staff on the UM website. What resources are new to you? What would be helpful to furthering your teaching?	In what ways could you integrate feedback into your course (anonymously, outside the course)?

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