**Teaching and Learning**

**Diversity Statement on Syllabus Guidelines**

At DePaul, our mission calls us to explore “what must be done” in order to respect the inherent dignity and identity of each human person. The Strategic Plan also charges the university with creating a welcoming inclusive climate for our students and each other. An important way to signal the university’s commitment to diversity and inclusion is to include a diversity statement on faculty syllabi. We strongly encourage all faculty to include such a statement. Below are some guidelines to help you develop your own diversity statement. We have also provided some sample statements from other universities and colleges as well as one tailored for DePaul.

**When creating a diversity statement for your syllabus, please consider the following questions:[[1]](#endnote-1)**

* How does your statement reflect DePaul’s mission of inclusion and respect?
* How do you, concretely, recognize and value diversity in your classroom? (For instance, are there mechanisms in place to ensure everyone's voice is heard? Do you use a variety of examples, assignments and readings to convey course content? Do you have guidelines for respectful discussions?)
* How will you handle issues related to diversity when they arise in your course and classroom?
* Do you seek input from your students on classroom climate (i.e., to what extent they feel included and how)?
* What relevant resources exist on campus that could be useful to your students (e.g., Office of Multicultural Student Success, Title IX Office, and Identity Centers)?

**A few suggestions to consider when writing your diversity statement:**

* Your statement should convey to your students why inclusion and diversity matters and how these values relate to values we espouse at DePaul and in particular to your course, learning outcomes, and desired classroom climate.
* Consider your discipline's history with underrepresented groups, and how disciplinary norms might work to facilitate or become obstacles to dialogue.
* In drafting your diversity statement, ensure that the tone reflects the overall language of the syllabus. Ensuring that the diversity statement flows and complements your syllabus activities and learning outcomes.

**Sample Statements**

Below you will find some sample guidelines. We have provided one example that is specific to DePaul and our mission. The rest are from a variety of institutions. These are not “templates.” They are examples that you could gain ideas from for your own statement that would work best for your particular course.

**DePaul Sample Statement**

**Respect for Diversity and Inclusion at DePaul University as aligned with our Vincentian Values**

At DePaul, our mission calls us to explore “what must be done” in order to respect the inherent dignity and identity of each human person. We value diversity because it is part of our history, our traditions and our future. We see diversity as an asset and a strength that adds to the richness of classroom learning. In my course, I strive to include diverse authors, perspectives and teaching pedagogies. I also encourage open dialogue and spaces for students to express their unique identities and perspectives. I am open to having difficult conversations and I will strive to create an inclusive classroom that values all perspectives. If at any time, the classroom experience does not live up to this expectation, please feel free to contact me via email or during office hours.

**External Sample Statement 1**

**Respect for Diversity**

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students’ learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that we can make arrangements for you.”

Source: University of Iowa College of Education

## Sample Statement 2

The topics that we are covering in this class are often difficult, not just intellectually but emotionally. While I expect there to be rigorous discussion and even disagreement in the course of our class discussions, I ask that you engage in discussion with care and empathy for the other members in the classroom. Aim to disagree without becoming disagreeable. In this class, we will not shy away from the uncomfortable. Critically examining and assessing our most basic assumptions and values is not just one of the tasks of philosophy but is an activity vital to living an authentic life. I urge you to have the courage to the uncomfortable in this class. In exchange for your courage, I will work to ensure a classroom environment that supports your taking these intellectual and emotional risks.

Source: Whitman College

## Sample Statement 3

All people have the right to be addressed and referred to in accordance with their personal identity. In this class, we will have the chance to indicate the name that we prefer to be called and, if we choose, to identify pronouns with which we would like to be addressed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly and support classmates in doing so as well.

Source: University of Michigan, Center for Research on Learning and Teaching

## Sample Statement 4

“A university is a place where the universality of the human experience manifests itself.”
-Albert Einstein

In keeping with the spirit of Einstein’s viewpoint, the Department of Communication Studies is committed to providing an atmosphere of learning that is representative of a variety of perspectives. In this class, you will have the opportunity to express and experience cultural diversity as we focus on issues such as: gender and communication in small groups, communication in the multicultural group, and cross-cultural and intercultural
work group communication. In addition, writing assignments and daily activities have been designed to encourage individuality and creative expression. You are encouraged to not only take advantage of these opportunities in your own work, but also, learn from the information and ideas shared by other students.

Source: University of Alabama, Department of Communication Studies

**Sample Statement 5**

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.

Important note: Given the sensitive and challenging nature of the material discussed in class, it is imperative that there be an atmosphere of trust and safety in the classroom. I will attempt to foster an environment in which each class member is able to hear and respect each other. It is critical that each class member show respect for all worldviews expressed in class. It is expected that some of the material in this course may evoke strong emotions, please be respectful of others' emotions and be mindful of your own. Please let me know if something said or done in the classroom, by either myself or other students, is particularly troubling or causes discomfort or offense. While our intention may not be to cause discomfort or offense, the impact of what happens throughout the course is not to be ignored and is something that I consider very important and deserving of attention. If and when this occurs, there are several ways to alleviate some of the discomfort or hurt you may experience:

1. Discuss the situation privately with me. I am always open to listening to students' experiences, and want to work with students to find acceptable ways to process and address the issue.

2. Discuss the situation with the class. Chances are there is at least one other student in the class who had a similar response to the material. Discussion enhances the ability for all class participants to have a fuller understanding of context and impact of course material and class discussions.

3. Notify me of the issue through another source such as your academic advisor, a trusted faculty member, or a peer. If for any reason you do not feel comfortable discussing the issue directly with me, I encourage you to seek out another, more comfortable avenue to address the issue.

Source: https://www.brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning-resources/inclusive-teaching/statements

**Sample Statement 6**

Class Diversity Statement: Centenary College of Louisiana—and your professor—value human diversity in all its richly complex and multi-faceted forms, whether expressed through race and ethnicity, culture, political and social views, religious and spiritual beliefs, language and geographic characteristics, gender, gender identities and sexual orientations, learning and physical abilities, age, and social or economic classes. Enrich yourself by practicing respect. For questions, concerns, or more information, contact your professor and/or Centenary’s Diversity Chair, listed here: <http://www.centenary.edu/globalengagement/diversity>.

Source: University of Southern California

**Sample Statement 7**

Commitment to an inclusive learning environment: Yale University adheres to the philosophy that all community members should enjoy an environment free of any form of harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination, or intimate partner violence. If you have been the victim of sexual misconduct, we encourage you to report this. If you report this to a faculty/staff member, they must notify our college’s Title IX coordinator about the basic facts of the incident (you may choose to request confidentiality from the University). If you encounter sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual assault, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability please contact the Title IX Coordinator, Stephanie Spangler, at stephanie.spangler@yale.edu (link sends e-mail) (203.432.4446) or any of the University Title IX Coordinators, who can be found at: <http://provost.yale.edu/title-ix/coordinators>”

***Source:*** <https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/DiversityStatements> (Yale CTL and SAS)

**Sample Statement 8**

The Department of Sociology embraces a notion of intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions, including race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, class and religion. We are especially committed to increasing the representation of those populations that have been historically excluded from participation in U.S. higher education.”

Source: Brown University, Department of Sociology

**Sample Statement 9**

Statement on Diversity: We value human diversity in all its richly complex and multi-faceted forms, whether expressed through race and ethnicity, culture, political and social views, religious and spiritual beliefs, language and geographic characteristics, gender, gender identities and sexual orientations, learning and physical abilities, age, and social or economic classes. We respect the value of every member of the class, and everyone in the class is encouraged to share his or her unique perspective as an individual, not as a representative of any category. Multicultural and intercultural awareness and competencies are key leadership skills, and we intend to present material and classroom activities that respect and celebrate diversity of thought, background, and experience. College is supposed to challenge assumptions and to provide new and sometimes uncomfortable ways of looking at issues, but if you feel uncomfortable regarding content or perspectives that are presented or discussed by professors, guest speakers, or other students we encourage you to contact one of your instructors immediately so that we can discuss those feelings. We would like to use your preferred language when addressing you, so please let us know if your preferred name (or the pronunciation of that name) differ from what we are using and we ask that each of you let us know your preferred gender pronouns. Your suggestions on how to incorporate diversity in this course in a meaningful way are appreciated and encouraged.

Source: Brown University

1. Eberly Center: Teaching Excellence and Educational Innovation. Carnegie Mellon University. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)