

# **Guidance Regarding Contributions to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statements in Faculty and other Academic Appointee Recruitments**

**March 2025 – Issuance**

## **Summary of Decision by UC Board of Regents**

- On March 19, 2025, the UC Board of Regents directed the University to ensure that newly initiated hiring processes no longer require diversity statements. While the University has no systemwide policies requiring the submission of diversity statements as part of employment applications, some programs and departments have used this practice in the past.
- Our commitment to UC’s mission remains steadfast. We can continue to effectively serve Californians from a variety of life experiences, backgrounds, and points of view without requiring diversity statements in hiring processes. In particular, the University of California remains committed to the values set forth in Regents Policy 4400, Section 210-1d of the Academic Personnel Manual, and elsewhere.
- The direction from the UC Board of Regents applies to staff, faculty, and other academic appointee recruitments. Guidance on staff recruitments will be separately provided by Systemwide Human Resources.

## **Frequently Asked Questions Related to Contributions to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statements (“Contributions to DEI Statements”) in Academic Recruitments**

### 1. What is a Contributions to DEI Statement?

A Contributions to DEI Statement enables candidates to provide information about their past or planned actions to contribute to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts in their teaching, research, and service. While it is up to the applicant to determine the past achievements and future plans they would like to include in their application materials, the following are examples of contributions that have been included in statements:

- Teaching: Implementing pedagogical strategies tailored to varied learning styles, innovating upon assessment practices, and mentoring students. Efforts to create welcoming and supportive classroom environments for all students are also examples.
- Research: Examining barriers to equity in academia and studying socio-cultural issues affecting different populations.
- Service: Engaging in outreach efforts, advocating for institutional reforms, and promoting practices in departmental spaces, institutional settings, and professional associations to ensure they are inclusive to all.

Under UC's existing practice, a candidate's personal background or identity may not be considered in hiring processes. Instead, for positions posted before March 19, 2025, Contributions to DEI Statements may be used to evaluate a candidate's past achievements and future plans that indicate they have the experience, skills, and promise to be a successful academic appointee at the University of California by fulfilling the teaching, research, and public service missions of the University, including promoting an environment that welcomes and fosters a variety of experiences and perspectives.

2. Under the new Regental directive, are stand-alone Contributions to DEI Statements permitted? Can a department indicate in their application instructions that applicants may (but are not required to) submit a statement describing past, present, and future contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Optional stand-alone statements are not permitted because candidates may perceive this to be a requirement and infer that the non-submission of a statement could be a detriment to their candidacy. Moreover, the provision of optional stand-alone statements would place search/hiring committees in the position of evaluating candidates who submitted statements alongside those who did not, making it difficult for hiring committees to evaluate candidates with different types of application materials. Instead, candidates should be given the latitude to describe their teaching, research, and service experience and aspirations in the context of the job requirements, and that information will be considered as they align with the required qualifications for the position.

3. Does the new Regental directive apply to ongoing searches, where applications are being reviewed that were already appropriately submitted before the new directive went into effect?

The new Regental directive applies to positions posted after March 19, 2025, except for open pool recruitments, as described in response to FAQ #4 below.

4. What about open pool recruitments that are open for one year or more, with multiple review dates and hires during that time? Do campuses need to close these recruitments and reopen them with no requirement for Contributions to DEI Statements?

For current pool recruitments with a requirement to submit a Contributions to DEI Statement, the campus should close the recruitments by no later than July 1, 2025. New pool recruitments should align with this guidance with no requirement for submission of a Contributions to DEI Statement.

5. If a candidate voluntarily highlights broad contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion in an interview or in a CV/cover letter, can that information be considered in hiring decisions?

Yes, if a candidate voluntarily highlights broad contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion in their teaching, research, and service during their interview or in their CV/cover letter, those contributions can be considered in the recruitment process. They can be evaluated and credited in the same way as other achievements, provided that the knowledge, skills, abilities, and contributions are voluntarily provided and are clearly relevant to the required qualifications of the position.

6. Are we allowed to include language in a job announcement/posting asking candidates to speak to their current and potential contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion?

For new jobs posted after March 19, 2025, candidates cannot be required to speak to these contributions. Instead, candidates should be given latitude to speak to their qualifications and experience in teaching, research, and service, in a way they deem appropriate. The key is their discretion to explain/explore their qualifications rather than the institution imposing a requirement of this kind. If a candidate chooses to refer to these accomplishments in other parts of an application or during interviews and discussions, hiring committees may consider these contributions alongside the candidates' other qualifications provided that the knowledge, skills, abilities, and contributions are voluntarily provided and are clearly relevant to the required qualifications of the position.

7. Are we allowed to ask candidates about their current and potential contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion during interviews and campus visits?

For positions that were posted prior to March 19, 2025, campus practices are not required to change, though each recruitment should be reviewed to ensure that it remains compliant with state and federal law. For all new jobs posted after March 19, 2025, candidates must be given latitude to define their expertise in teaching, research, and service. They are welcome to include DEI related contributions but the UC should make clear that these contributions are not required in order to be hired by the University. If a candidate chooses to refer to these accomplishments in other parts of an application or during interviews and discussions, hiring/search committees may consider these contributions alongside the applicants' other qualifications provided that the knowledge, skills, abilities, and contributions are voluntarily provided and are clearly relevant to the required qualifications of the position.

8. Are we allowed to consider contributions to DEI as part of department discussions and voting process on faculty hires?

For positions that were posted prior to March 19, 2025, nothing is expected/required to change, though each recruitment should be reviewed to ensure that it remains compliant with state and federal law. For all new jobs posted after March 19, 2025, departments should evaluate the totality of a candidate's achievements/aspirations, including contributions to DEI they may have relayed. Hiring/search committees may consider these

contributions alongside the candidates' other qualifications provided that the knowledge, skills, abilities, and contributions are voluntarily provided and is clearly relevant to the required qualifications of the position.

9. We are currently recruiting for an open position. Should we evaluate the Contributions to DEI Statements that candidates have already submitted?

Yes, you should evaluate the Contributions to DEI Statements that candidates have already submitted, and they should be evaluated and credited in the same way as other achievements, provided that the knowledge, skills, abilities, and contributions they are highlighting are clearly relevant to the required qualifications of the position. The Regents' directive is intended to take effect for all new jobs posted after March 19, 2025. Accordingly, you do not need to change your process for soliciting Contributions to DEI Statements for job openings that that have already been posted, are in the process of receiving applications, or are in the evaluation/selection stage. UC's practice, in compliance with state and federal law, is that Contributions to DEI Statements are viewpoint neutral and not based on an applicant's identity.

10. For searches that have been submitted by deans but are being held by Academic Affairs and have therefore not been posted in UC Recruit, should we send these back to the deans with the instruction to delete the Contributions to DEI Statements from the search requirements?

If the position has not been posted as of March 19, 2025, a Contributions to DEI Statement cannot be required. Therefore, the search plan should be sent back to the dean with instructions to delete the Contributions to DEI Statements from the search requirements. Consistent with federal and state law, the University should, and will, continue to consider the contributions of candidates who wish to share how they have contributed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in their teaching, research, and service. They should be evaluated and credited in the same way as other achievements, provided that the knowledge, skills, abilities, and contributions they are highlighting on a voluntary basis are clearly relevant to the required qualifications of the position.

11. Should evaluations of Contributions to DEI Statements be eliminated from current search plans?

Current recruitments that have already opened for receiving applications should follow the process of evaluation you have had in place, provided that the knowledge, skills, abilities, and contributions they are highlighting are clearly relevant to the required qualifications of the position. For all new jobs posted after March 19, 2025, the requirement of a stand-alone Contributions to DEI Statement should be removed from search plans. Instead, the totality of a candidates' qualities and qualifications for the position should be evaluated. UC's practice, consistent with state and federal law, is that Contributions to DEI Statements are viewpoint neutral and not based on an applicant's identity.

12. What should search committees do if a candidate voluntarily submits a stand-alone Contributions to DEI Statement that was not solicited?

A search committee should adhere to the campus and/or department guidance on how to evaluate materials submitted by a candidate that were not solicited. The submission of an unprompted/unsolicited stand-alone Contributions to DEI Statement by a candidate should be handled and evaluated in the same manner as other materials that a candidate may submit that were not prompted or solicited by the search committee. If the campus and/or department practice is not to consider any unsolicited materials, then the Contributions to DEI Statement should also not be considered.

13. Given that the UC Recruit system will be redesigned to prevent a Contributions to DEI Statements requirement, how do discussions of inclusive excellence conversations/information get included in various different recruitment processes?

Candidates have the option to raise contributions they have made to diversity, equity, and inclusion on a voluntary basis, especially in the course of writing about and discussing with hiring/search committees their experience, aspirations, and qualifications in research, teaching, and service. The emphasis is on permitting the candidate discretion to elect to invoke, highlight, and explain their qualifications when and in a manner that seems appropriate to them.

14. If a search seeks statements on areas such as research and creative activities, teaching, and service, to what extent can it require candidates to address certain issues?

Candidates should be given latitude to speak to their qualifications and experience in teaching, research, and service in a way they deem appropriate. UC simply cannot impose a requirement for them to do so. If a candidate chooses to refer to these accomplishments in other parts of an application or during interviews and discussions, hiring committees may consider these contributions alongside the candidates' other qualifications that align with the position qualifications. Below are potential prompts that provide candidates with latitude to speak to their qualifications and experiences:

- *Please submit a letter of application indicating your interest in the position and describing your record in teaching, research or creative activity, and campus or community service. We welcome information about other relevant aspects of your experience, including personal and professional experience, mentorship, and contributions to the success of all students regardless of background insofar as they are relevant to the position for which you are applying.*
- Another example is a campus specific formulation where a campus has expressed goals/strategic plan. An example is provided at the bottom of

these FAQs. The prompt for candidates could be: *Reflect on your personal and professional experiences, highlighting your past contributions and future commitments to advancing the campus goals/strategic plan/mission, among which are ensuring opportunity for all students and fostering a community of inclusion and belonging. These accomplishments and ambitions should be discussed in the context of describing your teaching, scholarship, and service.*

15. In the sample prompts offered, units can reference the University and campus's goals and objectives. To what extent can they emphasize specific goals in the prompts, such as ensuring the broadest opportunities for all students and a commitment to the success of all students?

As long as a reasonable person would not see the prompt as a requirement to address specific topics, units may emphasize specific goals and objectives that are important components of the University's mission.

16. During candidate visits, could a separate talk on the candidate's approaches to DEI issues be required?

No, a separate talk on the candidate's approaches to DEI issues may not be required. Candidates should be given latitude to speak to their qualifications and experience in teaching, research, and service, in a manner they deem appropriate during interviews or campus visits. The key is providing candidates the discretion to explain/explore their qualifications rather than the institution imposing a requirement. If a candidate chooses to refer to these accomplishments in other parts of an application or during interviews and discussions, hiring/search committees may consider these contributions alongside the candidates' other qualifications that align with the position qualifications.

17. During candidate visits or pre-visit interviews, are there limits on the questions that hiring/search committees can ask concerning DEI issues?

Candidates have the option to raise contributions they have made to diversity, equity, and inclusion on a voluntary basis, especially in the course of writing about and discussing with hiring/search committees, their experience, aspirations, and qualifications in research, teaching, and service. The emphasis is on permitting the candidate discretion to elect to invoke, highlight, and explain their qualifications when and in a manner that seems appropriate to them. Candidates should be given the latitude to describe their teaching, research, and service experience and aspirations in the context of the job requirements, and those descriptions will be considered as they align with the required qualifications for the position.

18. What, if any, limits or restrictions would apply to how committees/units can use candidates' remarks/talks about DEI issues in making decisions about candidates?

The University of California is committed to excellence in every facet of its mission. Committees/units should evaluate candidates' past achievements and future plans that indicate they have the experience, skills, and promise to be a successful faculty member or academic appointee at the University of California by fulfilling the teaching, research, and public service missions of the University, including promoting an environment where diversity of thought, experiences, and inspiration, is welcomed and fostered. Consistent with federal and state law, the University should, and will, continue to consider the contributions of candidates who wish to share how they have contributed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in their teaching, research, and service. These contributions should be evaluated and credited in the same way as other achievements, provided that the knowledge, skills, abilities, and contributions they are highlighting on a voluntary basis is clearly relevant to the required qualifications of the position.

19. If application materials are still being collected, are we obliged to consider an application complete if a candidate does not provide a stand-alone Contributions to DEI Statement that was required in the original ad for the search?

For job openings posted on or before March 19, 2025, if a stand-alone Contributions to DEI Statement was required, you should follow the process you have had in place and require it of all candidates. UC's practice, consistent with state and federal law, is that Contributions to DEI Statements are viewpoint neutral and not based on an applicant's identity.

20. For hiring via a search waiver or search exemption, what rules apply concerning seeking and evaluating Contributions to DEI Statements? That is, is such hiring any different in terms of the questions posed above?

When hiring via a search waiver or search exemption, if candidates have already been asked to submit a Contributions to DEI Statement, campuses/departments should follow the process of evaluation they previously had in place, provided that the knowledge, skills, abilities, and contributions candidates are highlighting are clearly relevant to the required qualifications of the position. UC's practice, consistent with state and federal law, is that Contributions to DEI Statements are viewpoint neutral and not based on an applicant's identity.

After March 19, 2025, if you are newly requesting materials from a candidate for a position that is subject to a search waiver or search exemption, you may not require the submission of a Contributions to DEI Statement. Instead, the totality of the candidate's qualities and qualifications for the position should be evaluated.

## Addendum: Example hiring statement/prompt

As the nation's premier public research university, the University of California is dedicated to the creation, dissemination, preservation and application of knowledge for the betterment of our global society. We have a particular responsibility to the people of the state of California which we express in the excellence of the education we provide, the impact of the research we do, the comprehensive, life-saving medical services we provide, and the public service mission we are devoted to. The University of California promotes the social mobility of its students, equips them with the tools and experience that furthers their ambitions, and regards their accomplishments across the life span as evidence of the profoundly positive impact of higher education.

The XXX campus has expressed these goals in its strategic plan as follows:

1. Deepen our engagement with (Los Angeles/Merced, or some other locale)
2. Expand our reach as a global university
3. Enhance our research and creative activities
4. Elevate how we teach
5. Become a more effective institution.

### **Prompt for candidates for recruitment or promotion:**

Reflecting on your personal and professional experiences, highlight your past contributions and future commitments to advancing (this campus) strategic plan. These accomplishments and ambitions may be discussed in the context of describing your teaching, scholarship, and service.