

May 7, 2020

CHAIR OLIVER O'REILLY
BERKELEY DIVISION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

Re: Use of Statements on Contributions to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in Merit and Promotion Reviews

We are writing in response to the Divisional Council's (DIVCO) charge of April 29, 2019, that the Budget Committee develop a "rubric" for evaluating statements of contributions to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), allowing for the wide range of ways that diversity and inclusion may be supported across the disciplines. We agree with DIVCO's conclusion (as stated in the minutes of the April 2019 meeting) that DEI statements have an important role to play in merit and promotion reviews as a way of incentivizing and promoting values of DEI. We would add that the information provided in DEI statements, when assessed according to solid principles, provides a means to recognize and reward the efforts of faculty who have devoted time and energy to promoting campus values of DEI, which frequently compete with other merit-related achievements.

Our comments in this memo concern the use of DEI statements in merit and promotion reviews for current members of the faculty rather than in searches, since the processes for the design and approval of searches are beyond the purview of the Budget Committee. As the body that reviews cases for appointment, however, we strongly believe that it is appropriate to consider an applicant's potential contributions to DEI (as demonstrated in DEI statements and by other evidence) at the initial stage of review. DEI statements can give a search committee insight into skills that contribute to excellence and innovation in research, enhance the education of a diverse population of students, and provide service to the larger public. Importantly, our view is that in all cases an applicant's potential DEI contributions should be assessed in conjunction with assessments of the applicant's achievements in research, teaching, and service. We therefore concur with DIVCO's April 2019 recommendation that DEI statements should "not be used as the sole criterion in faculty hiring."

Any guidelines established for the assessment of DEI contributions in merit and promotion reviews must proceed from the fact that the Academic Personnel Manual does not allow for the treatment of DEI contributions as a separate area of assessment or a de facto fourth area of review. APM 210-1-d ("Criteria for Appointment, Promotion, and Appraisal") states that candidates for advancement and promotion are judged on their achievements in three areas: 1) teaching; 2) research and creative work; and 3) University and public service. Appointees in certain titles (including clinical fields) are assessed also in a fourth area, that of professional activity. On the assessment of contributions to diversity, APM 210-1-d states that:

Contributions in all areas of faculty achievement that promote equal opportunity and diversity should be given due recognition in the academic personnel process, and they should be evaluated and credited in the same way as other faculty achievements. These contributions to diversity and equal opportunity can take a variety of forms including efforts to advance equitable access to education, public service that addresses the needs of California's diverse population, or research in a scholar's area of expertise that highlights inequalities. Mentoring and advising of students and faculty members, particularly from underrepresented and underserved populations, should be given due recognition in the teaching or service categories of the academic personnel process.

In accordance with these guidelines, it is our current practice to assess DEI contributions as an aspect of achievements in research/creative work, teaching, or service, rather than as a separate area. This principle must also inform any guidelines for the assessment of DEI contributions.

The Office of Faculty Equity and Welfare has disseminated a rubric intended as an aid for search committees in assessing the DEI contributions of applicants in faculty searches (available [here](#)). Although the OFEW rubric is intended for use in searches rather than merit/promotion reviews and has no bearing on Budget Committee practices, some brief comments on that rubric are called for, both because of the prominence it has assumed in discussions around DEI and because of the rigor and clarity with which the OFEW rubric sets out assumptions and priorities relating to DEI contributions.

The OFEW rubric is intended for the assessment of DEI contributions in searches; a different approach is required for assessing the DEI contributions in merit and promotion cases for current faculty. The OFEW's rubric recommends assessing a job applicant's DEI contributions in the areas of knowledge of DEI issues, track record, and plans for advancing DEI. In merit and promotion reviews, in contrast, only concrete achievements and contributions during the review period (i.e., track record) are relevant, not future plans or intentions. The use of a numerical scale or scoring system in merit and promotion cases is at odds with the practices of merit and promotion review at Berkeley, and implementing such a scale would seem to verge on elevating DEI contributions to an additional area of review unto itself. It also seems possible that a numerical scale for merit and promotion reviews would lead to situations in which faculty who had made real, but preliminary, contributions to DEI might be rated at 2 or 3 (out of a possible 5 points), implicitly sending a somewhat negative message about contributions that are tangible and valuable. We regard one of the functions of DEI statements to be the possibility of rewarding faculty for work that tends to be invisible, very demanding of time and energy, and necessary for educating a diverse population of students and serving a diverse state, but we hesitate to introduce any measures that would imply that faculty who are already contributing to DEI in various ways should do yet more. **It is therefore our conclusion that the introduction of an actual "rubric" for assessing contributions to DEI in merit and promotion reviews would be undesirable.**

We see it as valuable to convey clearly to faculty how DEI statements are used in merit and promotion reviews, what kinds of contributions are most highly valued, and how faculty might structure their DEI statements so that those contributions can be discerned and appropriately

rewarded. The remainder of this memo is an attempt to do that. We encourage all faculty to include DEI statements with their merit cases, but note that faculty who do not submit DEI statements or who do not have significant DEI achievements to report will not be at a disadvantage in the review process. DEI contributions may augment assessment in any one area of review, much like other outstanding contributions, and Chairs and Deans should communicate clearly to their faculty that faculty who have made exceptional DEI contributions during a review period could be eligible for an acceleration. As in the preparation of cases generally, it is crucial that Chairs and Deans provide detailed assessment and that they draw attention to contributions across the three areas of review that might otherwise not be visible to campus reviewers. It is also important that Chairs ensure equity in their assessment of DEI contributions; for example, they should take care not to inadvertently downplay contributions from faculty in under-represented groups due to implicit expectations that such faculty will dedicate time to DEI work.

Research: APM 210 specifies that “superior intellectual attainment” in research is an “indispensable qualification” for appointment and promotion; recognition of DEI-related contributions assumes and requires that a faculty member’s research contributions meet that standard. There are a number of ways DEI considerations can inflect research contributions. The most obvious cases might concern research topics, but DEI considerations can also be relevant in connection with research impact and with exceptional challenges involved in pursuing certain types of research. A faculty member’s research might merit special recognition when it expands the range of research questions addressed by a discipline or leads to important innovation or discovery. To mention just a few examples, campus DEI goals are furthered by work that identifies ways to improve outcomes and experiences of underserved populations, documents the history and expressive culture of an underrepresented group, or helps to correct deficiencies in general knowledge and lead to innovation (e.g., research on racial bias in facial-recognition technology, or on women’s health). Equally important are the complexities that a researcher may encounter in pursuing their work (e.g., logistical challenges of working with underserved, mobile, or unhoused populations, or collaboration or co-authorship with community-based partners) and the effects research can have on promoting equity and inclusion in some segment of society. At the same time, we recognize that many valuable areas of research do not have direct relevance to DEI principles and stress that research uninflected by DEI values is not in any way at a disadvantage in the review process.

Teaching: Equity and inclusion are principles that should be applied across all teaching activities, but we also see the potential to recognize special efforts and particular excellence in the pursuit of these goals. Chairs might recognize particular success in fostering inclusion in the classroom, including demonstrating skill at leading discussions on sensitive issues and making students from different backgrounds and who have different relationships to a subject feel empowered to contribute. They might recognize innovations in instruction and assessment that improve outcomes and persistence in the field among underrepresented groups, or significant work done to diversify the curriculum of a department or academic program. Other examples include mentoring students from marginalized groups, providing them with meaningful research opportunities, or providing informal mentorship (both academic and personal) to these

groups, which often involves extra time spent with students in office hours and connecting them with resources to address specific needs.

Service: Service contributions related to DEI principles may also enhance assessment for merit and promotion. In reporting and assessing DEI-related service, it is particularly important to attend to contributions that vary widely in visibility. Such contributions may include, for example, accomplishments in improving yield and completion rates for underrepresented students, initiatives that significantly improve departmental climate, or innovations that lead to more equitable admissions or hiring processes. Serving in an equity role (e.g., Departmental Equity Advisor) is not significant in and of itself. In order to recognize this work fully, campus reviewers need to know what exactly a faculty member accomplished, what innovations they implemented, and any special challenges confronted. Many other types of discrete contributions are also valuable and worthy of recognition, such as serving as a faculty advisor to a student organization or educating colleagues by serving on panels, organizing workshops, or taking a leadership role on DEI issues in teaching and mentoring for a department or other unit. This work, which is often invisible, can be included in self-evaluations but should also be underscored by the Chair and/or the Dean in case preparation.

We thank you for the opportunity to articulate our principles and practices around DEI statements, and we hope that these remarks will clarify for the faculty the roles played by DEI contributions in merit and promotion reviews.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Ann Smart". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Ann Smart
Chair

MAS/wl