Some Guidance on Crafting Diversity Statements

Two sample diversity statements are offered at the end of this brief guide, so feel free to skip down if that's all you're looking for.

Diversity statements have become an increasingly common part of the application process for many positions. Colgate University often requests a diversity statement from candidates because diversity, equity, and inclusion are key elements of the University's strategic planning and its ambitions for the future.

Diversity statements need not be long (they are frequently shorter than a page), but they should speak to your strengths. Some factors you may want to consider are:

- As part of its mission, Colgate welcomes students, staff, and scholars from across the world: people of all races, religions, genders, sexual orientation, physical abilities, backgrounds, philosophies, etc. Our goal is to support all of these members of our community in their work. How do you see yourself contributing to that goal?
- If you have work or personal experience in working to ensure that people are treated equitably and fairly, or in fighting racism, bias, or prejudice, you should certainly include that in your statement. But not everyone has this kind of experience, so don't worry if you don't.
- If you have ever received any kind of training or education aimed at equity and fairness, or in fighting racism, bias, or prejudice, you should certainly include that in your statement. But not everyone has this kind of experience, so don't worry if you don't.
- Diversity statements are becoming more common in part because our whole society is increasingly concerned about inequity and unfairness. More of us recognize the problems with policies or prejudices that undermine people on the basis of their identity—for example, their race, their gender, or their disability. These inequities diminish our overall potential as a society.

You might also benefit from reading the first few pages of Colgate's Plan for Equity and Diversity (at https://www.colgate.edu/about/third-century-plan/plan-diversity-equity-and-inclusion); it lays out the University's goals, and defines what Colgate means by "equity," "diversity," and "inclusion."

Sample 1 (for someone who has not yet had extensive experience with diversity and inclusion issues):

I do not have any work experience that is directly connected to diversity or inclusion, and I also have not received any special training on these issues. But I am very comfortable working in a diverse workplace. When I worked at [*organization name*], we had folks of all kinds of backgrounds, and I appreciated the opportunity to talk and work with people different from

myself. I know that sometimes people are more comfortable with folks from similar backgrounds, but I think the more kinds of people you have, the more kinds of ideas you get, which is better for everyone. I remember one meeting where we were trying to schedule an event for the public, and there was one person in the room who said that some of the dates we were looking at would be a problem for some people in the area for whom it was a religious holiday. We wouldn't have known about that if he hadn't been there. It can be easier when we just assume everyone is the same, but easy isn't always best. In this case, we were lucky to have had some diversity and to be in a place where the guy who brought it up felt safe to talk about it.

I think I probably have things to learn about diversity and inclusion, but I understand that Colgate is committed to it, and I believe I can contribute. Your plan says that "Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts are absolutely necessary if Colgate is to achieve its third-century ambitions." I believe in fairness, and I believe that diversity brings more ideas, more perspectives, and greater possibilities to decision-making. I would look forward to working with, and learning from, Colgate's diverse community.

Sample 2 (for someone with more extensive experience with diversity, equity and inclusion issues, adapted from a sample at physicalsciences.ucsd.edu):

I have long been committed to diversity, and recognize the barriers faced by women and other minorities in engaging in some fields. In high school, I was one of the very few female students participating in math olympiad teams. During my undergraduate studies, I had surprisingly few female professors in mathematics. It could even be hard to find female study partners. To overcome this, I developed a discussion group that encouraged all the female undergraduates in our major to share their experience and discuss academic problems each week. To further promote support for female students, I co-organized a mentor program in the department that invited faculty members to share career advices in science.

In my work in Admissions, I strive to create an open, inclusive, and equal environment in which every prospective student has the opportunity to engage comfortably and find the answers they specifically need. At my current university, I was the lead on a program that targeted recruits from underrepresented groups in economics, physical science and social science, and we have had some success in helping students who might not otherwise have seen themselves at our school, envision a future in these fields. I have learned a great deal simply by listening to the kinds of questions these students bring, instead of trying to project what their needs might be.

I have read Colgate's Plan for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, and I believe I can see myself furthering the University's goals. My values are well-aligned with Colgate's, and I am committed to supporting students of all identities: including all races, gender expression, sexual orientation, ability, and socioeconomic background. And I want to be working as part of a diverse team who can pool our experiences and our perspectives to strengthen our effectiveness in bringing in the strongest possible student body.

Some good tips are also available at
https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2016/06/10/how-write-effective-diversity-statement-essay and at
https://www.brandeis.edu/diversity/dei-recruitment-hiring/contributions-to-diversity-statements.html.