

# PREPARING YOUR PERSONAL HISTORY STATEMENT

Here are some helpful tips for drafting a compelling personal history statement for the DEI Recruitment Scholarship.

## What does this statement need to accomplish?

The personal history statement should give the review committee an image of you as a person. It should also provide concrete evidence of your promise as a member of the University of Iowa academic community. It is an opportunity to present your potential to bring a critical perspective rooted in your background, which may include a non-traditional education, experiences as a member of a group historically under-represented in higher education, and your commitment to increase participation by a diverse population in higher education.

## What kinds of content belongs here?

Anything that can give reviewers a sense of you as a person; you can repeat information about your experiences in your personal statement, but any experiences that show your promise, initiative, and ability to persevere despite obstacles belongs here. This is also a good place to display your communication skills and discuss your ability to maximize effective collaboration with a diverse cross-section of the academic community. If you have faced any obstacles or barriers in your education, sharing those experiences is helpful to the review committee. If one part of your academic record is not ideal, due to challenges you faced in that particular area, this is where you can explain that and direct reviewers' attention to the evidence of your promise for higher education.

## The basic message: your academic achievement despite challenges

It is especially helpful for the review committee if you discuss any or all of the following:

- Demonstrated significant academic achievement by overcoming barriers such as economic, social, or educational disadvantage;
- Potential to contribute to higher education through understanding the barriers facing women, minority groups, students with disabilities, and other members of groups underrepresented in higher education careers, as evidenced by life experiences and educational background. For example:
  - Attendance at a minority serving institution;
  - Ability to articulate the barriers facing women and minorities in health science fields; or
  - Participation in higher education pipeline programs such as Summer Health Professions Education Program or McNair Scholars.
- Academic service advancing equitable access to higher education for women and racial minorities in fields where they are underrepresented;
- Leadership experience among students from groups that have been historically underrepresented in higher education;
- Research or practice interests focusing on underserved populations and understanding issues of health inequities. For example:
  - Research that addresses issues such as race, gender, diversity, and inclusion;
  - Research that addresses health disparities, educational access and achievement, political engagement, economic justice, social mobility, civil and human rights, and other questions of interest to historically underrepresented groups; or
  - Artistic expression and cultural production that reflects culturally diverse communities or voices not well represented in the arts and humanities.

*Note: The information in document is adapted from language developed by the UC Berkeley Graduate Division admissions team.*