**Roll-Out Guide for the new
CMCI Syllabus Diversity Statement** (6/19)

***We have a new CMCI diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) statement! As of Fall 2019, this statement is REQUIRED on all CMCI syllabi.*** This document is intended as a guide for integrating the statement as a useful tool in your course (so that it doesn’t feel like another bureaucratic obligation).

***Key things to know*** about the statement:

* **Where to find it:** On the [CMCI intranet](https://www.colorado.edu/cmci/cmci-intranet) under “HR and Faculty Affairs” (also emailed directly with this guide).
* **What it does:** Amplifies our College commitment and acknowledges imperfection, encourages explicit reflection, and invites folks to contact and utilize our new DEI team. ***Does NOT replace mandatory campus syllabus language!*** Continue to include all other statements required by [CU Academic Affairs](https://www.colorado.edu/academicaffairs/policies-customs-guidelines/required-syllabus-statements).
* **Why we’re doing it:** We achieve excellence together as our community and knowledge are diversified and all of our students can thrive. The statement facilitates movement toward CMCI’s DEI goals by creating a vital feedback-into-action loop.
* **How it came about:** The Faculty Council Academic Community & Diversity Committee drafted an initial version. In AY 2018-19, the Associate Dean for DEI made revisions in consultation with Chairs & Directors, then visited all Departments to seek and incorporate feedback. The final version was unanimously approved by Faculty Council in Spring 2019.
* **When the requirement goes into effect**: ***Fall 2019*** and forward

***3 things to emphasize (and tell your students)*** about the statement:

1. **CMCI should be a place where all students encounter diverse knowledge and are supported toward success.** We want to know where there are struggles, so that we can do better.
2. **Our academic excellence depends on #1.** We do not seek DEI in order to be “nice,” “proper,” or in step with fashion. Rather, we simply cannot be a premier institution of learning and research if we only serve a portion of our students well.
3. **We are starting a more open and sustained conversation.** We want students as well as instructors to speak up and reach out with questions, concerns, and ideas about DEI in CMCI. Don’t hesitate to contact lisa.flores@colorado.edu or other members of our [DEI team](https://www.colorado.edu/cmci/about-college/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/our-team)!

***How can the statement be useful in your class?***

The statement offers an additional tool to help you intentionally address issues that already come up when designing and teaching a course. For example…

1. **Mention on Day 1.** Regardless of where you place the required statement on your syllabus, call attention to it on the first day of class. Describe it in invitational terms. If helpful, utilize the companion PowerPoint slide provided to highlight the “3 things” emphasized above. Finally, stress that the statement does NOT replace other important CU statements but, rather, expresses a CMCI-specific commitment and invitation to our students.
2. **Link to College learning outcomes. CMCI has been working to develop college-level learning goals.** One of the identified learning goals for students is to “connect globally and locally.” The description of this learning goal coheres nicely with the new diversity statement:

*CMCI students engage media, communication and information issues from a global and culturally diverse perspective, with the knowledge and skills to address systemic inequity in the United States and globally.*

*Students will demonstrate:*

* *An understanding of the historic and contemporary systems of inequity across social identities, nationalities, socioeconomic class and the role of media, communication and information in both creating and addressing them.*
* *Competency in recognizing and analyzing difference, intersectionality and power in cultural and societal divides as first steps in working to bridge them.*
* *The ability to initiate conversations about pressing issues that transcend cultural and national divides, and communicate with diverse audiences to bring about systemic change through media, communication and information.*

The point being: the diversity statement is no mere symbolic gesture toward “polite” classroom behavior. It is aligned with the College’s strategic learning objectives.

1. **Own the statement, and tailor it to your class, by connecting it to...**
* **Course learning outcomes.** How does the statement support your own learning objectives for students?
* **Course content.** How can the statement help you—on Day 1 and beyond—tell the story of your class and where it will take students? Where do DEI issues fit in this narrative? How does DEI show up in your field?
* **Classroom climate.** How might you present the statement in a way that proactively holds space for conversation throughout the semester? For instance, facilitate a discussion about how students would like to enact DEI in building a classroom community and/or navigating difficult moments that may arise.

***What if students challenge the new statement, or ask you…?***

Students may express a variety of reactions to the syllabus statement, such as feeling skeptical, relieved, critical, energized, or silenced. It might help to anticipate, and think through how you might respond, to some of their questions. For example…

* **“Why is it important to have another statement on diversity?”**

Is this just an act of lip-service for PR purposes? No. We believe DEI is fundamental to the mission of higher education. If we are not proactively addressing DEI in the College, then we are not yet serving all of our students well or achieving the level of excellence we seek. The statement is meant to encourage feedback that leads to action, NOT to shield us from criticism.

* **“Why are only some categories specified in the statement?”**

It may seem like certain identities are left out, or that some categories are valued over others. This is NOT the intention. Rather, enhancing DEI means recognizing that some folks have been excluded systematically from higher education and addressing this history and contemporary legacy with greater candor. One way to do that is by identifying traditionally marginalized groups. The categories specified in the statement begin that process with an eye toward our College context, but they are by no means exhaustive (thus, the phrase “such as…”).

* **“Is this more political correctness?”**

Sometimes, it can feel like DEI talk is just about learning to say the “right” thing or, at least, to censor yourself before you say something “improper” or “offensive.” This is NOT the goal of our statement. At CMCI, DEI is about widening the range of knowledge and ways of knowing, practicing critical thinking and self-reflection, and partaking in engaged learning. By definition, this means taking risks, making mistakes, tripping over our words, and getting upset. Our job as faculty is to provide a learning environment where we all get to challenge, stretch, and grow our understanding of the world.

***For additional resources, you can consult…***

* Brown University’s [Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning](https://www.brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning-resources/inclusive-teaching/statements) provides helpful questions that can prompt reflection on utilizing a diversity and inclusion syllabus statement.
* University of Michigan’s [Center for Research on Learning and Teaching](http://www.crlt.umich.edu/blog/facilitating-challenging-conversations-your-classes) has tips for how to navigate challenging conversations in a course.
* The University of St. Thomas’s [Center for Faculty Development](https://www.stthomas.edu/fdc/teachlearn/teaching/inclusive/#setting) gives a comprehensive list of guiding questions and resources related to inclusive excellence in the classroom.

…or just ask the CMCI DEI team for more!

***Help us improve this guide for the future!***

If you have ideas for how to enhance this guide (e.g., better answers to the questions above, or questions not yet anticipated), or if you encounter any issues in incorporating the syllabus statement, please contact Karen.Ashcraft@colorado.edu. Our goal is to help you feel equipped to engage the syllabus statement with students in meaningful ways. Just let us know how we can help!