

Diversity Statement

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I define diversity as the multi-faceted and unique set of personal identifiers that make each individual unique. For example, these facets can include external diversity, such as race or age, or they can embody internal diversity, such as experiences and skills. The beauty of diversity is that no two people are exactly alike; therefore, even within ingroups, each individual will have unique perspectives to draw from and contribute. Ultimately, diversity drives innovation and provides more holistic understanding of any topic.

As a Caucasian individual, I recognize I have privilege that was not afforded to many others I may interact with. I try to embody diversity by always seeking to listen and understand different viewpoints. As an individual who identifies as a woman, I recognize the challenges associated with the gender identity and seek ways to embolden and empower other women. As an individual with a disability, I am aware of the types of challenges students may face in academia. My teaching philosophy for all students, regardless of how they identify, is to be inclusive and encourage all perspectives while making myself accessible to address any potential needs a student may have. I wrote an article about diversity and inclusion on LinkedIn in 2019. The article discussed a common problem: pushing diversity alone, without inclusion. Diversity without inclusion actually leads to exclusion, so one of my primary goals in the classroom is always to foster inclusion.

As a professor and a citizen, it is imperative that I have an understanding of the identity development of those outside of my own identity so that I can make decisions and form thoughts in an inclusive way. My experiences with diversity, especially in the last few years of more

visible social justice advocacy, have provided me with opportunities to learn and grow. I continue to actively seek these opportunities, as growth is a continual process, especially regarding diversity and inclusion.

Research on the use of counter-stereotypical exposure has shown to be an effective method for overcoming unconscious bias. A strategy I regularly use is to continually expose myself to counter-typical exemplars based on physical characteristics such as race, gender, and physical ability in order to increase my judgment accuracy and decrease my accurate judgment response time. This has allowed me to have breakthroughs in my unconscious bias, which has ultimately made me a better citizen and professor to my students. As a professor, I can offer an inclusive classroom for your students where diversity will be celebrated and stereotypes will be challenged.