

# Diversity Statement

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As a Latino immigrant myself in the United States, I understand the challenges that minorities may face both within and beyond academic settings. That is why I believe in creating a welcoming environment for everyone. Moreover, I am committed to treating everyone with respect regardless of their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and physical or mental abilities.

Having the opportunity to study and work in four different higher educational institutions, in two different countries, has given me the experience of meeting wonderful colleagues, staff, and students from around the world. This journey has opened my mind and has helped me be more aware of the fact that everyone comes from different backgrounds, that everyone has gone through different paths that made them be the person they are. In particular, the collaborative interactions with fellow graduate students and faculty members from a variety of backgrounds have deepened my appreciation for the vast array of personalities, individual perspectives, racial and cultural backgrounds, all of which collectively enrich the diverse academic community.

In the classroom I make sure to acknowledge and respect diversity by recognizing that my students come from diverse backgrounds with varying experiences, abilities and needs. I ensure that my course materials and content reflect a variety of perspectives, cultures, and identities using diverse examples and case studies when appropriate. I provide accessible learning materials, including digital content and printed materials, to accommodate students with disabilities. I also offer multiple formats for content, such as transcripts for videos. I encourage active participation and engagement from all students and make an effort to create an inclusive classroom where every student feels comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas.

I firmly believe in recognizing the diverse skill sets and requirements that students bring to the learning environment. It is crucial to extend special attention to those individuals who may be encountering challenges, particularly those who, due to their unique life circumstances such as socioeconomic backgrounds, are more susceptible to dropping a class or even leaving college. For this reason, I believe it is my responsibility to reach out and let these students know that they are valuable and that they can get help from me. In particular, I make sure my students know I am available to answer questions during and out of class. I encourage them to attend office hours so that they would realize that they can talk to me and ask me about the course material. This approach not only establishes a foundation of trust but also provides valuable insights into each student's specific needs, enhancing their prospects for success in my class.

I am committed to stay informed about best practices for promoting equity, inclusion and diversity in academia and to adapt my advocacy efforts based on such practices. For example, during my postdoctoral training I completed the Diversity Certificate Program at University of Tennessee Health Science Center where through a course of six weeks we covered topics such as Unconscious

Bias, Gender Bias, Inclusive Language, and discussed challenges faced by underrepresented minorities including women in science, African Americans, LGTBQ+, among others.

I was fortunate enough to be the recipient of an NIH diversity supplement which funded my postdoctoral training. As I transition into an academic role, I look forward to using my experiences to advocate for Latino and underrepresented students in Mathematics and the Sciences. My goal would be to encourage them to seize opportunities similar to those that have significantly shaped my career. Moreover, I look forward to participate and organize community outreach programs to engage with local Latino communities and schools to inspire interest in Mathematics and Sciences. I would advocate for internal and external resources, scholarships, and funding opportunities and collaborate with university administrators and departments to secure these resources.

I am convinced that diversity strengthens every single aspect of our society. In particular, in science and academia, a larger representation of a diverse population brings new and fresh ideas to the table. Having a research community that is more diverse would bring attention to issues that may otherwise be ignored. By embracing diversity in research and academia, we guarantee that a wider range of voices are heard, leading to a more complete understanding of complex subjects such as health disparities and sociocultural factors.