

Diversity Statement

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November 4, 2024

Over the course of my education, my time both as a student and as an educator have made one thing very clear: there is no such thing as a typical student. Every student brings different resources with them (e.g. level of mastery over prerequisite material, support network quality/size, comfort participating, extroversion, note-taking skills, self-regulation strategies when dealing with stress, enthusiasm, communication skills, etc.) and will face different challenges at different points of their education (on set by factors both within and outside academia). Given this, the most important thing we can do to as instructors to set our students up for success is to foster a welcoming, inclusive, and accommodating environment. I speak in great detail about my experience in promoting precisely this kind of environment in my **Teaching Statement**, discussing a number of policies which I've found to be very successful. Primarily, I think it's of great importance to ensure students have equitable access to an abundance of resources on both the current and prerequisite course material, to allow students a flexible learning path with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their mastery of the material, and to often encourage students to come to me if they have any concerns or need some extra help. The student evaluations I've received during both my time as a Teaching Assistant and as an Instructor serve as an important signal in demonstrating how successful this strategy was. Importantly, such policies are also consistent with what I believe is our moral obligation: to look after the well-being of others and to encourage those around us. The benefits of engaging in such a way extend beyond the classroom too.

In any context where we interact with others, creating a positive, comfortable environment for others can allow for a greater willingness to engage in the future. This was certainly true across the number of diverse, trans-disciplinary research teams I've been lucky enough to be a part of. On a number of occasions, the willingness of a single member to bring up their confusion or grievances on some aspect of the mutual project can be pivotal in the project's trajectory and can strengthen the depth of our mutual understanding. Such insights are a product of the unique perspectives everyone brings to the team, which in turn can come from their specialization, their training, the way in which topics are framed in their field, their culture, and their lived experiences. Given the immense number of ways in which all of these features can be varied, it's reasonable to conclude that everyone has potential, in one way or another, to offer important insights which other members of the group have a lower propensity to incur. Given this, the cost of having even a few members of any group feel uncomfortable to provide their perspective can be fairly costly. Thus, the importance of inclusion and building diverse teams (on many dimensions) cannot be stressed enough.