

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

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Mathematics is usually considered as the language of the universe, as its inclusive contents and objects. As a mathematician, it is natural and intrinsic to accept all possibilities. Although the content of mathematics leaves no room for, e.g., inequity and discrimination, it does not indicate that problems do not exist beyond it, such as racist, sexist, LGBTQ-phobic, ablest, etc. And both intentional and unintentional behaviors can be seen. Being aware of the differences, such as race, gender, nationality, disability, I am delightedly to contribute to the community on building a diverse society.

Communication. As a Chinese student studying in the US, my PhD experiences gave me the lessons not only on culture shocks, but isolating and marginalized feelings, ice-breaking strategies, and developing communication skills. Therefore, in my teaching and research, and even daily life, I encourage all types of communications.

Traditional group work, group discussions can be a small but reliable step to break the ice among students in the classroom. Peer-reviewed presentations and Q&A sessions usually lead to a deeper and better mutual communication. I always work hard to guarantee an inclusive space, for students with various background and identities to freely express themselves.

While in research projects, besides my collaboration with diverse groups of mathematicians, statisticians, and physicists, undergraduate students particularly are involved. Regardless the majors, identities, personalities of those students, the only factors to foster those collaborations are their enthusiasm, our common interests, and our contributions. While organizing seminars both at Dalhousie University and here at Duke Kunshan University (DKU), both undergraduate and graduate students are encouraged to present the latest progress, and valuable suggestions sometimes come from peers instead of instructors.

I would assume, as the Tea Time organizer during my PhD study at Tulane University, I already began to contribute to the community, on a harmonic environment for communication. Welcoming new students, bridging the gap between the faculty and students, as well as among students with different background, etc. are all achieved, by communication.

Accommodation. My several institutes, from PhD program to postdoc positions and now as a faculty, are all special and unique. Such special characters are not limited to the types: private university, public university, joint-venture liberal arts college, or a pure research institute; and regional disparities: US, Europe, Canada, and China. Such experiences require continuous adjustments and accommodation.

I am making every possible effort to accommodate students need, such as religious observances, disabilities, and both physical and mental health issues. Take my experiences at DKU, besides COVID-pandemic policies, I volunteered the training of the “Adviser Program for Student Care”. Now as a peer adviser, we guide other faculty members, to take the first action on any unusual behavior of the students, and to refer them to the professional experts, such as counselors from Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS).

In teaching, adjusting materials based on, e.g., majors, purposes, becomes part of my routine. Again, here at DKU, due to the special 7-week schedule, for calculus, we only have one week of lectures on applications of integration. Since last year, setting a survey becomes part of the teaching and different sections have completely different results and I enjoy satisfying the most of them.

More Diverse Activities. Diversity can mean a lot more. The abundant activities in teaching, academic events, campus life, can broaden students’ understanding of the diverse paths to professional success, irrespective of identity or background. For instance, the public event: film screening of “The Man Who Knew Infinity” successfully presents to all students the life of the legendary Indian mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan. Guest speakers with different races, cultures, research interests and topics can offer the interactions served as eye-opening and empowering experiences for students.

Finally, I will remain committed to cultivating a collaborative academic community in which diversity is always appreciated, multiculturalism is recognized, and faith in social justice is sustained.