Kathryn Newhart June 1, 2019

Diversity statement that describes commitment to excellence and diversity, addressing past and or potential contributions to advance equity and inclusion through research, teaching, or service.

When I consider the learning outcomes for a class I teach, inevitably one involves the ability to think critically and creatively about a problem. While a fundamental understanding of the scientific principal can yield valid solutions, the best engineering solutions arise from out-of-the-box thinking. Students have little incentive to exercise

I am involved in a multi-campus student and post-doctoral committee for diversity and inclusion (SPCDI) under the National Science Foundation’s “ReNUWIt” Engineer Research Center. In my option, the greatest achievement of the SPCDI over the past three years is the assessment and critique of graduate university admission policies. The committee performed a literature review of best practices for equity in admissions, geared towards identifying metrics that better measure the skills required for a successful graduate career as opposed to GRE scores. While there is a substantial amount of literature reviewing medical and law school admissions, where fewer than 10% of applicants are accepted in some cases, there is less data on engineering graduate admissions. The divide is especially apparent for my department, Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) at the Colorado School of Mines (CSM), where more than 90% of applicants are accepted for a non-thesis Master’s degree. To better understand the challenges facing CSM’s CEE graduate program, SPCDI members from CSM worked with faculty and staff to observe the admissions process for the upcoming academic year and use the rubric developed by the ReNUWIt SPCDI to assess potential students.

The rubric review was a beneficial experience for furthering the work of the SPCDI and in my personal development as a future academic.