

Diversity Statement

Maximilien Bielsa

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maximilienbielsa.com

Understanding diversity, equity, and inclusion and their importance is integral for any collegiate institution and is central to my personal beliefs for education. My commitment to these ideals is evidenced by my long history of working with organizations to achieve goals within these categories. As an out and proud hispanic bisexual male, I have experienced both the positives and negatives of how an academic environment can either build or destroy your interest in a passion, just from unwelcome and unfair treatment due to your sexuality or gender. One of the core tenants of who I am as a person is built upon the belief that I can make a difference to make sure that race, gender, sexuality, religion or any other method of discrimination is minimized or all together eliminated in an effort to give equitable opportunities for all people to love learning.

My commitment to this began in my undergraduate studies at Rowan University. Here as a resident assistants I had to oversee 36 freshman individuals who were living in dorms on campus, many of whom had never lived with other individuals and in some cases had not met their roommate until moving into their dorm room. As a result we were able to obtain seminars with the office of Social Justice, Inclusion, and Conflict Resolution on a variety of issues. These seminars focused on the differences of these individuals and how to work on solutions to de-escalate situations for individuals who may not feel included in their own living spaces. My work as a resident assistant reinforced in me the benefits of diversity. In fact, during my tenure as a resident assistant, my residents actually ended up being the first group of people I publicly came out to when a hate group came to campus in a message to not fear their individual differences and instead respect others differences.

In the past five years as a teaching assistant at the University of Delaware, I have made significant efforts to create a more inclusive classroom environment. One of the key steps I have taken is the removal of gendered language in my teaching, ensuring that all students feel respected and included regardless of their gender identity. By fostering a more neutral and open space, I aim to make every student feel comfortable participating in discussions and engaging with the material. This approach reflects my broader commitment to inclusivity

and creating a learning environment where all voices are heard.

My third year of my PHD I joined my first queer organization at the University of Delaware which was the Queer and Trans Graduate Student Union. The purpose of the QTGSU is to provide a safe and supportive social space for graduate students at the University of Delaware (UD) who identify as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community (Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, Asexual, and other queer identities). QTGSU seeks to center and support the needs of underserved graduate students on campus including Trans and Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) in the queer community. After a year of membership, I decided to become an E-Board member and was elected to be the treasurer of the organization. Through this organization I have worked with other diversity based organizations on campus including Lavender Programming Board, Women in Engineering, and Women in STEM to promote diversity and inclusion at the university.

The culmination of these experiences has significantly impacted my research as well. My interest in equity and inclusion shows in my research which is geared towards the effects of policy and events on members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. I believe research like this is important, as we should strive to quantify the positive impacts of policies that promote diversity so we can improve the standings of all individuals in an equitable manner.

My personal and professional journeys through the years has heavily influenced who I am and how I conduct my work today. I hope to make further strides in the future to understand and work with people of diverse backgrounds in the interest of diversity, equity and inclusion.