

Diversity Statement

I am a first-generation student, born and brought up in a culturally and socio-economically diverse society. I pursued my doctoral program at University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), far from my home, where I explored and experienced diverse cultures from global student population. I served as an international student ambassador at UMKC for three years, during which, I came to know about different ideologies and cultures while interacting with international and domestic students. I strongly believe that a diverse academic campus is beneficial place for students to learn new perspectives and become open-minded in this continuously globalizing world.

Diversity is multifaceted which means a range of traits. Within the context of American education, race, gender, socioeconomic status and sexual orientation are the key defining factors of diversity. But it could exist at three different levels at an academic setting: individual diversity, organizational diversity and cultural pluralism (Faist, 2010). The meaning of having a diverse and inclusive campus is to consider the contributions of individuals (students, faculty and staff) and include them into organizational policies rather tolerating them (Andrea, Ashlee, 2018). My commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is reinforced with my past academic experiences to engage students and advance their interests in science. I often recollect some of the bizarre experiences that I had on my first encounter of college campus in the US to empathize student's situation as well as appreciate the diversity on campus. As a preparing future faculty scholar, I learnt about underrepresented students, their hardships to make it to college and graduation – it was an eye-opener to realize that there is an inspiring story behind the smile of every student.

As a faculty member, I intend to serve as a mentor for diverse and underrepresented student populations and encourage them to pursue higher education and research in STEM fields. As a graduate student, I visited Kansas City's high school science fair to judge student's projects, and

it was great to witness young talent and innovation. The students were also very excited to meet professors and college students. Likewise, I will organize lab visits and demonstrate experiments for high school students from critical socioeconomic areas to encourage their participation in STEM fields. I will also incorporate these strategies as part of my broader impacts in research proposals to have far reaching implications on younger generations. As an international student ambassador, I used to help students to get acclimatized with the US culture and college routine. Likewise, I would extend my services as an advisor and participate in summer bridge programs and student orientations.

In the age of multidisciplinary scientific research, the students not only should learn the topics across disciplines but also gain hands-on experience. Chemistry stands as a fundamental course and a pre-requisite for many disciplines. Teaching students from diverse majors, could be beneficial to share/discuss knowledge across disciplines. In addition, I will extend opportunities to get involved in research and experience science. The diverse behavioral/cultural aspects of students could be made useful by assigning group projects to transform them as great team player with interpersonal skills and global thinkers. Every student has a unique learning curve that depend on pre-college education and other circumstances – and it's not an appropriate way to imagine all at the same level. I wish to explore and understand the students' cognitive skills to tailor my teaching methodologies and support them to be successful. In many of my classes, whether I took a role of instructor or student, I observed that students of color and international students were passive in class. Probably due to their inferiority complex or language constraints. I will include discussion sessions in my lesson plan to encourage underrepresented students to voice out their thoughts.

I hope to bring more diversity to campus, serve students and university within my capabilities to prepare future leaders and thus transforming society at large.

References:

- Andrea Arce-Trigatti & Ashlee Anderson (2018): Defining diversity: a critical discourse analysis of public educational texts, *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, DOI: 10.1080/01596306.2018.1462575.
- Faist, T. (2010). Cultural diversity and social inequalities. *Social Research*, 77(1), 297–324.