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## Diversity Statement

My role as an instructor, mentor, and researcher provides opportunities to create a space for individuals who have not historically benefited from academia's persistent structural inequalities.

**Representation:** I have benefited a great deal from being mentored by strong female role models, such as my PhD advisor and Cornell supervisor, and realize the benefits of working with a diversity of scholars to improve research outcomes. It is imperative that students of all genders and backgrounds do not feel unwelcome in exploring STEM topics, especially early on in their studies when high attrition rates have been observed. Through a 6-week mentoring workshop at Cornell, I developed skills necessary to combat some of these imperceptible barriers by learning to develop intellectually safe environments through empathetic listening, focusing on inclusive communication and teaching styles, and setting time aside for conversations with students.

**Access:** I recognize that as a middle-class male whose parents had graduate training, my circumstances have allowed me to take risks that would have been difficult, if not impossible, for those less fortunate. This social positioning allowed for entrée into some of the world's most privileged universities as a student and researcher and has precluded me from much of the difficulties I would have encountered as a first-generation college student, for example. Because of this, I believe that I have an obligation to support students as an instructor and mentor by providing the *information, access, and guidance* necessary for success. My experience leading a series of 6 extra-curricular interviewing and networking workshops at Cornell and assisting more than 10 undergraduate students with graduate school applications is a testament to my commitment to addressing these disparities.

**Career assistance:** Many career pathways outside academia are closed off to students who are unaware of their options, whose connections are limited, and who do not have the extra-curricular experiences that are required when seeking employment. As a leader of campus organizations focused on consulting at Penn and Cornell, I made diversity a key part of our own recruitment efforts, leading to the most number of universities and backgrounds represented in our annual case competition. The lesson I have taken from my experience as a consultant is the spirit of "pass-it-on": an enduring sense of obligation to help others succeed, just as others spent their time to help me with the same ethos. I believe in helping students achieve success on their terms, giving them the information and freedom to reach their own conclusions, and supporting their decisions.

**Community service:** I believe universities should serve the community in which they are based, as well as their students. As a graduate student in Philadelphia, I was deeply affected by the problems of the city's school district (SDP). Students were failing exams because they did not have access to books, even though those resources existed in closets and abandoned schools. Our team of 4 liaised with the SDP, school principals, and teachers for over 6 months to understand their perspectives and realized that the SDP's asset-tracking system had not been upgraded since the 80's due to funding shortfalls. We created a simple optical character recognition-based asset-tracking app ([SmartTrack](#)) that teachers could use to monitor their classroom materials, at no cost to them. Our project won the Penn Public Policy Challenge and came second at the Fels National Challenge, business plan competitions for social impact ventures. Our system is now in use in Camden (NJ) and Philadelphia schools, helping students perform to their full potential.

I aim to continue to increase access, representation, inclusion, and community service throughout my career.