

Diversity Statement

I believe that diversity is essential for a thriving academic community. Individuals from varied backgrounds, with their unique experiences and perspectives, significantly enrich our collective intellectual life. I am deeply committed to embracing the power of these diverse perspectives, and I find interacting with people from different backgrounds immensely rewarding.

Below, I detail my philosophy and efforts to promote diversity, and share my plans for continuing these initiatives in the future.

Philosophy and Efforts on Promoting Diversity

My philosophy on promoting diversity is grounded in two principles: avoid overcomplicating issues and encourage integration.

My first principle involves actively assisting those in need or who are underrepresented, without being overly cautious or perceiving the issue as overly sensitive. I believe that addressing diversity concerns should be part of normal human interactions. When assistance is required, I provide it promptly and with respect. Overemphasizing help or approaching it too cautiously can inadvertently feel patronizing. It is crucial to openly acknowledge when someone is underrepresented or in need. My support is given not out of pity, but because it is the right and fair thing to do—akin to lending an eraser; it's a simple act of assistance.

For example, over the last three years, I have proctored exams for students with disabilities, including those with mental illnesses, mobility challenges, and other conditions that require special accommodations. These situations often require extended support from me, sometimes up to six hours, to ensure that these students receive the accommodations they need. Initially, some students might feel apologetic for requiring extra time. I make it clear that their needs are legitimate and that I am more than willing to assist. My aim is to ensure they feel valued and confident in their academic environment. This approach not only helps in mitigating any stigma associated with their needs but also promotes a positive and inclusive atmosphere.

My second principle is to cultivate an environment where everyone mingles voluntarily. True diversity cannot be forced or driven solely by one person; it flourishes when members willingly overcome invisible barriers to interact with each other.

In the three years that I have taught the undergraduate Introduction to Macroeconomics course, which enrolls around 100 students each spring, I have observed that students often start the

semester sitting apart during sessions and office hours. To encourage mingling, I leverage these office hours to foster diversity by prompting students to assist each other with common questions. For example, I might say, “Hey, A, can you help B with question 1 while I talk to C?” This approach helps break the ice, and though students may initially feel awkward, they usually start to form connections quickly.

Interestingly, one student remarked that one advantage of my office hours is the opportunity for socializing. This student even exchanged phone numbers with another student from a different racial background. Watching students from diverse cultures and races come together to tackle economic problems and develop friendships is deeply gratifying. It shows that with just a small nudge, students are willing to take that first step towards integration. This method isn’t about forcing interaction; it’s about facilitating natural connections that might not otherwise occur.

Plans for Future Effort

I aim to be a teacher who supports underrepresented students in a respectful and relaxed manner, ensuring they never feel like a burden. I am genuinely happy to provide this support and consider it a fundamental aspect of my role. I intend to be approachable and accessible to all students, regardless of their race, gender, religion, disability, cultural background, or any other characteristic.

In my classes, I will strive to foster an inclusive and diverse environment where students interact naturally, not out of obligation but because they have developed genuine friendships. I plan to utilize office hours and assignments, as I have done previously, to facilitate this interaction.

I will apply the same principles to my relationships with colleagues. I firmly believe in the power of diversity in economic research, recognizing that it enriches our understanding and enhances the quality of our work. Diversity is not merely a necessity; it is an invaluable asset to our academic community.