**Diversity Statement**

David Vasquez

I was fortunate to attend an OSU Event that allowed students from underrepresented and minority groups the ability to speak out about the unique challenges they face on the OSU Campus. The event really stuck with me for a number of reasons and gave me the desire as an Instructor to continue my own learning to help remove the barriers these students face. What really excited me and stood out to me about the ability to work as a Project Instructor in the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science is the STEM fields face challenges not only in academia but also beyond as these students move into their careers. If selected for this position I would like to work with other Departments and Faculty to help make progress on these issues and strengthen my own knowledge about ways to make a difference.

The challenges I have observed that these students face come from personal interactions and the education I have received on these issues. Many students entering the STEM fields can often be first generation students which can create barriers to their success and confidence in feeling they can succeed in a challenging engineering discipline. Students also face day to day difficulties of entering classrooms that they may struggle to feel accepted in. While working at the Career Development Center I was able to learn about and see the challenges these students face upon graduation as they begin their professional careers.

There are a number of steps I have taken in my professional and teaching positions to try to help remove these barriers and create opportunity for all students. The first is that I always work to create an open and inclusive atmosphere in the classroom that allows every student to feel welcome and appreciated. One of the small things is I do is plan small class activities that allow students to interact with most everyone from the course. I feel these small interactions create a more supportive and accepting classroom where students feel free to speak out and also learn about the unique and interesting backgrounds of their peers. I also view education as powerful so I work to bring up these issues in a way that is supportive of all students and promotes the ability to listen and be open to accepting challenging ideas. My goal is always to promote positivity and inclusivity so if we are discussing something that may be sensitive I work to make it a positive learning experience and am very careful of how every student is feeling.

Some other work I have been involved in included working with the Dean of Student Life to analyze demographic data at the Career Development Center. I was able to utilize Python and Java to gather and analyze almost five years of past data that allowed us to see what student groups we were not supporting as fully. I wrote multiple reports from this data that were used by leadership at the Career Development Center and the Office of Student Life. I also worked as an Intern at Legacy Health System where I put together a plan to attract and retain more minority owned vendors. This was a really amazing experience allowing me to get out into the community and meet small and locally owned minority vendors and learn about challenges they face trying to integrate with industry.

If selected for this role I would love to continue my own learning since I know that solving complex issues takes time. I also would like to engage with other faculty and staff to implement effective and supportive ideas that benefit students in a positive and meaningful way.