

Diversity Statement

Dongwei Xu[§], October 2020

My perspectives on diversity were shaped along with a set of significant events that happened during my life, which would urge me to hesitate not to take responsibilities in academic organizations supporting diversity, equality, and inclusion. We are living in a world with physical, emotional, institutional, and social barriers that constantly remind some of us of our differences. Therefore, such organizations supporting diversity, equality, and inclusion play crucial roles in bridging people with differences. As a new faculty member, even more importantly, I would work immediately and tirelessly to utilize my own experiences and firsthand insights, and to enhance diversity, equality, and inclusion in any research and learning environment I encounter.

After leaving China and landing in St. Louis, Missouri, to start my master's study, for the first time in my life, I felt like a minority. I was the first person in my family to pursue graduate education and in an environment where I had little experience and knowledge. At Boston University, I have been actively seeking opportunities in research, the classroom, and across campus to enhance diversity and opportunity for individuals from historically excluded or underrepresented backgrounds. As the instructor of a summer course in Introductory Macroeconomics, I had the chance to interact with young students that were not only from undergraduate programs at Boston University, but also from local high schools, local community colleges, and foreign universities. Therefore, my goal was to create an effective learning atmosphere and, more importantly, to use a wide range of learning activities and techniques in the classroom so as to adjust my teaching to the diverse set of needs of my students. I carefully combined both writing on blackboard and slides to make sure that students could feel comfortable in the way the materials being presented. I encouraged students to conduct group projects on topics ranging from U.S.-China trade conflicts to NATO spending across countries and to discover how individuals' own experiences could shape the understanding the social-economic issues they face. During office hours, I not only discussed course materials but also provided suggestions about careers and graduate studies to students who might be at crossroads of life. My own background and my commitment to diversity have informed and inspired my approach to teaching and, more broadly, my mentorship, and I will continue bettering my pedagogical approach to fulfill my commitment to diversity.

As a Ph.D. student, I have been particularly and uniquely benefited from the conscientious work of my advisors, who guided me as an academic and professional. When communicating with my advisors, I always felt not only professional respect but also care at a personal level. Learning from them, I have been trying to do the same in engaging with others.

As a new faculty member, I am committed to continuing to pursue efforts to enhance diversity, equality, and inclusion. Looking forward to my new role, I believe my commitment to diversity is not just something to be achieved by myself but also something that would be incorporated into students' personal growth to ensure they can achieve their education goals.

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