

# Commitment to Justic, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

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September 30, 2024

I aspire to be a researcher and educator who supports, promotes, and defends diversity in all its forms. This aspiration is driven both by a desire to be equitable and inclusive of all people, and by the understanding that diversity is an effective driver of innovation. Without diversity of thoughts, opinions, and backgrounds, higher education would be destined to fail its purpose of advancing scientific discovery.

The primary reason I have chosen to pursue a career in academia is my strong desire to positively influence society. However, I am aware that my contributions in academia—whether through research, teaching, or service—will only have a truly beneficial impact if they are inclusive and considerate of all groups within our society. As such, I am committed to fostering an inclusive and diverse environment in each of my teaching, mentoring, and research roles.

As an educator, I am committed to cultivating a classroom environment where all students—regardless of their background, race, gender identity, or abilities—feel safe, welcomed, and capable of learning. I believe that fostering inclusivity begins with understanding each student on a personal level and being flexible in my teaching approach. By recognizing the diverse strengths and backgrounds of my students and adapting my teaching methods accordingly, I can effectively deliver course material to benefit the greatest number of students. Because it may be challenging to accommodate all learning styles simultaneously, I strive to provide supplementary learning materials that present course material from alternative perspectives than my own. Moreover, I encourage students to take advantage of office hours for discussions in a non-judgmental setting. Additionally, I acknowledge that traditional assessment methods may not be effective for everyone. Therefore, I am open to exploring innovative approaches to evaluate student understanding and am committed to offering additional resources when necessary.

My approach to mentoring students, much like my approach to teaching, recognizes that each student's needs and preferences are unique. To develop a mutually beneficial mentor-mentee relationship, I prioritize getting to know students personally and adapting my mentoring approach to fit their individual needs. During my time as a PhD student, I have had the opportunity to mentor undergraduate and master's students on their research projects. Through this experience, I have learned the importance of listening carefully to the questions and concerns of those I mentor in order to address their specific needs. Listening carefully to both verbal and nonverbal communication enables me to create an inclusive mentoring environment where students from diverse backgrounds feel valued and supported. By fostering open communication and showing a genuine interest in my mentees' personal and academic development, I aim to empower them to achieve their full potential.

I further intend to prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in my research. As previously stated, I am aware that diversity of thought and opinion are important drivers of

scientific innovation, and therefore I am committed to seeking out collaborations that can provide perspectives that are distinct from my own. As a researcher who works in an area with potential applications to public health, I recognize the importance of considering how my work may impact marginalized groups within our societies. One of my particular application areas is the modeling of infectious diseases. I believe that our efforts in this field can contribute to more equitable health solutions and policies, fostering a broader impact that extends beyond academia to positively affect diverse communities around the world.

I acknowledge that I do not fully understand all of the challenges that members of underrepresented groups face within and outside of academia. Therefore, I am dedicated to continuous learning and growth in order to become a more effective ally and advocate for these communities. As part of my commitment to fostering an inclusive and diverse academic environment, I am currently enrolled in the University of Michigan's Professional Development in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Certificate program, which I will complete by December 2024. I am confident that this program will profoundly enhance my ability to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of my teaching, mentoring, and research. By equipping myself with the necessary knowledge and skills, I aspire to make a lasting, positive impact on the academic community and beyond.