

**Sanket Kanekar**  
**Diversity Statement**

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My dedication to diversity and inclusion is deeply rooted in my experiences, research, and teaching. During my undergraduate education in India, I realized that even though education is a fundamental human right, not everyone receives the same quality of education, creating inequality. In order to reduce this education gap, I started volunteering at Door Step School in India from 2013-2015. I taught in a government school for children in grades 5-8 who belong to lower socio-economic groups in 2014. Additionally, I educated low-income families about the option of free education in a government school and admitted their children to the school. I also provided tutoring services to children with HIV at the nonprofit organization Manavya in India from 2010 - 2015. I am currently delivering training to them through online sources. This experience has taught me to be welcoming to my students so they feel comfortable in the class. I believe that all students have the ability to succeed, and it is my role as a teacher to provide the guidance and resources necessary for students to reach their potential.

During my undergraduate education in engineering, I learned the importance of inclusion and diversity. In a traditionally very male-dominated field, creating an environment that is welcoming and inclusive of everyone is essential. I learned how inclusion and diversity could help engineers create designs and products that are accessible to everyone, regardless of ability or background. This can help create a more inclusive society where everyone can participate and benefit from technological advances. I am committed in creating an inclusive environment where all students feel welcome and respected.

In my research, I focus on differences in health indicators due to socio-economic factors. My experience in volunteering at Door Step School and Manavya has promoted my research interest in education and health, especially for low-income households. I have been a part of the Office of Inclusion & Diversity at Auburn University. This year I attended the session hosted by the Office of Inclusion & Diversity, which was themed “Engaged Scholarship: People, Purpose, and Passion”. This gave me gain perspectives on the impact of outreach and community engagement. It exposed me to the individual’s work that contributes to society through their research, such as improving methods for students with disability, increasing STEM education for the minority population, and helping socio-economically backward society access health care. This is an excellent community in the university where common interest is explored. In the future, I want to participate in research that creates solutions for all people, especially those that have been disregarded.

I value diversity and inclusion in the classroom because I believe it helps create a more enriching and challenging learning experience for all students. It is essential for students to feel comfortable and safe in the classroom so that they can engage in learning. My approach to diversity and inclusion in the classroom is to create a safe and supportive environment where all students feel valued and respected. I believe that all students should have the opportunity to share their unique perspectives and experiences. In order to create such an environment, I make sure to use inclusive language and avoid making assumptions about students’ backgrounds or abilities. I also create opportunities for students to get to know each other and build relationships of trust. When students feel safe and respected, they are more likely to take risks and engage in learning.

I would love to learn more about marginalized communities and how to improve diversity and inclusion in economics. I am updating my knowledge by engaging in the Office of Inclusion & Diversity and being a member of the Graduate Student Council at Auburn University, reading books, and attending seminars.