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Diversity Statement

Migration has been a common feature of my entire life. The purpose was always in search of better opportunities, as a child back and forth from the United States and South Korea, for my parents' developing careers, and as a young adult moving for my own opportunities. I have tried to blend into my destination for the most part of my life. Often this meant camouflaging myself and shadowing what others around me were doing, until I became invisible. I had always suppressed my differences and accepted my circumstances that it was not until much later that I realized I was practicing the life of a minority. The invisibility I felt when I was younger directly has informed my commitment to diversity in the workplace and the classroom.

After entering the PhD program, the exposure to each field in applied microeconomics brought me joy and excitement. It was a scholarship of identifying problems in societies and testing the effectiveness of potential remedies. Topics on minorities constituted a significant fraction. Minorities were no longer invisible. Among many important research topics, I settled for one that spoke to me personally—the study of immigrants, a growing yet marginalized population. My research strives to facilitate understanding and integrating immigrants around the world. Through my research on immigrant lives, I have come to embrace my own identity and use it as a driving force in my work. I am excited to continue to produce research that will help people understand the background and integration process of immigrants.

I have exhibited my commitment to diversity and inclusion not only through my research, but also through mentoring two female students during my PhD studies. I had been lucky to have female professors, seniors, and peers who have served as my role models and support system to guide me through my journey as a young economics enthusiast. As I advanced to my graduate studies, more often I was in an environment where most, or occasionally all, of the people in the room were male. This time, rather than being invisible, I decided to share my experience and knowledge with younger students to extend my understanding and encouragement, just as my professors and seniors had with me.

I believe a diverse body of employees enriches the research topics and brings a creative solution in the policy realm by bringing together each individuals' unique experience and understanding of our society. I look forward to being a part of a collaborative and inclusive work environment. I will continue to be committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, and cherish the strength of these values.