

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Ke Chao¹

Diversity and equity are of great importance to me. I believe that the existence of prejudice, inequity and discrimination is due to the inclination of people to seek common ground, while remaining resistant to accept and respect differences. Human beings are heterogeneous. A true supporter of diversity needs to be open-minded to accept and respect the differences across people. Respectively, an inclusive community should provide equal opportunities and accommodate diversified thinking. My growth experiences in China and in the United States shape my thoughts on prioritizing diversity.

I am from a middle-class family in Eastern China. When I was an undergraduate, I volunteered to take part in a program to aid education in a village in Guangxi, an underdeveloped region in China. During my stay, I was deeply shocked by the poor infrastructure and was profoundly moved by the students' desire to learn. My students were mostly children whose parents had left to work in other provinces. Many students were taught by their parents that to study was their only way to leave the depressed area and find a decent job in a big city. I still remember the excited faces when my students received the children's books that we donated. That was when I first profoundly recognized the importance of providing opportunities to minorities who haven't always received the chances that I have. Ever since then, I have formed the habit of donating my used books and clothes to those in need. The experience as a volunteer teacher deeply changed me by arousing my empathy and inspired me to endeavor to help those less fortunate than me.

My experiences in the United States deepened my understanding about promoting diversity. Being from China, I spent most of my life living in an environment where Asians make up of over 95% of the total population. Because of the lack of exposure to a multi-cultural environment, before I came to the United States, the treasuring of diversity across different cultures was a vague idea to me. Yet, it completely changed after I came to the United States. The program I have attended is fully diversified, where I met colleagues from all over the world. In addition to cooperating in study and research, we constantly communicate with each other to share our own culture, talk about various religions and discuss the histories of different countries. In my interactions with my colleagues, I have learnt different perspectives, attitudes and ways of thinking. One of my best friends is a girl from India. We talked a lot about the differences and similarities in histories and religions between India and China. We have supported each other over the past few years and constantly encourage each other to overcome the pressure from the pandemic and the stress of the incoming job market. I think the diversified environment of the United States gives me a chance to step out of my boundaries and embrace the world. By providing me the opportunities to communicate with people from different cultures, races, and religions, it has shaped me as a person who has an open mind and a person who is willing to accept, respect and embrace differences across people.

In my future work, I am firmly committed to contributing to the diversity, equity and inclusion of the community. I will strive to provide opportunities to those underrepresented, endeavor to promote communications across different groups of people, and contribute to creating an inclusive working environment.

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