Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement
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As I walk to one of my favorite sections of the library, I pass a portrait of a prominent professor, one of two portraits of African Americans out of the almost one hundred on campus. Inequality and exclusion are built into the university experience. Instructors are responsible for not only providing an inclusive classroom climate, but for leading efforts toward equity and inclusion. I promote equity and inclusion in three stages: tailoring support to individual students, building a collective applied political scientist identity, and expanding students' perspectives through community engaged partnerships and projects.

Students enter my classroom with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. My first step is to assess students' backgrounds and to ask them directly how I can best support them. I do this by assigning pre-course surveys and then taking up class time to meet with students either individually or in small groups at the beginning of each semester. From these meetings, I learn a bit about each student's strengths and I set a tone that encourages students to build and maintain connections with me. Students from diverse backgrounds may need additional support structures that can help address inequalities and better integrate them into the course. These structures should be collaborative and personal. When I mentor students, my aim is for us to work together to develop a plan that we can implement together. For example, when teaching a student whose first language was not English, we identified sentence structure as an area where she needed help and worked on revising one paragraph of her written work each week. My initial accessibility and openness toward meeting and getting to know students translates into an improved ability to support student learning throughout the semester.

When individual students are equitably supported, the classroom is more conducive to learning. Adding in inclusive teaching strategies and representing diverse scholarly voices also helps. Yet, I think about equity and inclusion in the classroom as promoting a deeper, mutual understanding between students that transcends a single semester's course. One of my course goals is to encourage students to develop a collective, applied political scientist identity. We know from research — including my own — that establishing a common identity among a diverse set of individuals promotes diverse friendships and increased tolerance. Therefore, I structure my courses to facilitate collective identity formation in a way that incorporates diverse perspectives. Students are challenged through reflective blogging and research activities to investigate topics in political science that they are deeply and personally invested in — these topics often revolve around life experiences, including experiences with diversity and inclusion. After working individually, I ask students to develop and apply each others' ideas collaboratively. For example, my policy day simulation activity requires student groups to incorporate policy issues and proposals from each group member in a way that respects each idea's original intent. Integrating both individual and collaborative work in a supportive environment creates common bonds among students and helps to build collective identity.

My recent leadership toward equity and inclusion has involved local community activities and projects. Community engagement both asks students to work alongside people with diverse backgrounds and life experiences and challenges them to better understand their own

values, beliefs, and priorities. However, community engaged projects can perpetuate inequality if students gain knowledge from community partners without contributing meaningfully to improve their community. I tackle this potential power imbalance head on. My community partnership in *Representation, Identity, and Dissent* was built from several years of experience volunteering with a local youth jobs program, working with staff to identify ways in which my class could contribute to their program, and setting up activities that promoted mutual exchange and benefit. The fact that this course took place online presented further challenges. Students could not visit key community sites, so I used online mapping tools and videos to introduce community perspectives. Even small community activities, like asking students to learn more about the demographics of their community and to attend community events, can effectively expose them to difficult conversations about inequality and access to services. Including the community in my courses also pushes students to become more involved in the community and introduces them to a number of relevant local community organizations. I ask students to interview members of local community organizations as an opportunity for them to be exposed to ongoing conversations about access, inclusion, and equity to which students can contribute. My community activities and projects are designed to be broadly transferable to a multitude of contexts.

I cultivate diversity, equity, and inclusion using evidence-based practices. First, I have several years of experience mentoring students from different backgrounds within academia and more than a decade of experience mentoring youth in community organizations. I have been selected to lead mentoring efforts for both undergraduate and graduate students at the department and university level. Second, my research investigates how diversity impacts perceptions of, attitudes about, and collaboration with others. Using interviews, surveys, and experiments, I show that relationships are important for determining tolerance. This is good news: it means that interventions that encourage students to collaborate with one another are likely to succeed in promoting a collective identity. Additionally, pre- and post-test surveys implemented in my *Introduction to Comparative Politics* course show that students' identification as social scientists increased, a result consistent with establishing an applied political science identity. Third, my community engaged activities and projects significantly increase student understanding of different perspectives and their ability to work with people from different backgrounds. Qualitative reflections and pre- and post-test surveys in my *Representation, Identity, and Dissent* course demonstrate that even small community engaged activities produce meaningful improvements in students reported attitudes toward inclusion and diversity-related issues.

My work supporting students, building collective identity, and establishing community engaged partnerships is ongoing. I view supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion as a process of constant evolution and improvement. Beyond opportunities for students to get involved with my own research on identity-based representational inequality, I plan to continue and to strengthen my collaborations with students by creating a mentoring group where students can explore representation and identity-based inequality. I envision that students will be involved in various ways, from conducting independent and collaborative research to exploring connections to ongoing public policy issues. I also want to continue to strengthen my work on community engaged pedagogy as a way to increase equity and inclusion. While I cannot change the composition of campus portraits, I work intentionally to cultivate equity and inclusion in my classroom, on campus, and in the local community.