

Diversity is more than including people from a range of social, ethnic, gender, sexual, mental, and physical identities and backgrounds. Diversity is more than providing a space for everyone. It is all these things, but it is also ensuring people are comfortable voicing their perspective and that their perspective is heard. Diversity is imperative for the sake of representation and equality.

Growing up in rural Minnesota, I learned how marginalized, under-represented, and under-funded rural communities can be. During middle school, I took part in a program where I was paired with a special education teacher, Bill Kruschel, as my academic advisor. Mr. Kruschel made me aware of the physical and mental challenges affecting students. He inspired me to learn, challenge norms such as using the r-word, and fight hard for my own education. I realize that was easier to do as a white, able-bodied male because I had privilege and prejudice in my favor. My time with Mr. Kruschel made me more aware and open to include people whose diversity presents roadblocks in their quests for academic success.

My goal is to serve as a researcher and a teacher. In teaching statistics, part of that process will be to raise awareness of the racist, xenophobic, and sexist history underpinning statistical and mathematical studies. The field has motivated policies that have disproportionately hurt people of color; redlining—the systematic denial of various services by federal government agencies—is one example. However, statistics can also shed light on disparities between groups of people, raising awareness and allowing the targeted use of resources to address disparities; one example is the higher mortality rates for African American women. The same tools used for redlining can and have been used to empower others, and subvert power structures. I hope to teach and give those tools to others through research and teaching. A vital part of that equation is the inclusion of all peoples.

In teaching, researching, and being of service to others, I want to improve inclusivity, encourage diversity, and empower historically marginalized groups of people. In doing so, I recognize and hope to use my privilege to improve the lives of others. As a graduate student at the University of Minnesota, I would contribute to the development of a diverse and inclusive learning community through teaching, research, and service.

I recognize the privilege I have as a white male-bodied person pursuing graduate studies, and I hope to use my privilege to raise awareness of marginalized groups and to ultimately improve their lives through service, research, and teaching.