

# Diversity Statement

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Growing up in China, where the majority of my peers belonged to the same ethnic group, I was not fully aware of the intricate concept of diversity. However, a recurring theme caught my attention: societal stereotypes restricted many from realizing their potential. Preconceptions such as “girls might excel in literature but not in math” created many unjust hurdles.

After arriving in the US, I interacted with people from around the world, each bringing their unique backgrounds, experiences, and values. This exposure broadened my understanding of diversity, allowing me to better navigate various situations and foster cross-cultural connections. However, it was still disheartening to observe that, like in China, individuals here were also sometimes constrained by societal labels. Moreover, those in minority or under-represented groups often faced additional challenges. This realization further strengthened my determination to promote diversity and create a more inclusive environment.

In the classroom, the challenge lies in accommodating the diverse backgrounds of students within the constraints of time. I am deeply committed to supporting underrepresented students and those who might be struggling, recognizing that patience and consistent support can help redirect their academic trajectories back on track. I foster an environment where questions are not just welcomed but also expected. By emphasizing that “no question is stupid,” I aim to instill confidence in my students.

Outside of regular sessions, I actively promote my office hours as a space for personalized support. Through one-on-one interactions, I can identify and address specific challenges students face due to their diverse backgrounds. For instance, I recall assisting a student who wasn’t familiar with certain foundational content assumed by the course. By helping her review these areas, she exhibited remarkable improvements in subsequent quizzes.

I also actively engage in initiatives that promote the advancement of underrepresented and minority groups in research domains. One of my contributions was assuming a mentor role in the WISCERS program at UW-Madison. I viewed this program as an opportunity to mentor undergraduates in summer research, especially those who might otherwise face challenges or barriers to research opportunities. In my role at WISCERS, I had the privilege of guiding and collaborating with three talented female students on their summer research projects. These students were able to navigate the complexities of their research, develop critical thinking skills, and produce commendable results. Through this valuable experience, I was reminded of the incredible potential that can be unlocked when we offer support and mentorship to underrepresented students and foster a more inclusive environment.

As I anticipate my role as a new faculty member, I plan to proactively seek funding and opportunities for underrepresented undergraduate and graduate students, providing mentorship to both female and minority students, encouraging and supporting them to achieve academic excellence. I am committed to integrating diversity into my teaching and creating an inclusive class environment. I hold the belief that no one should be left behind and I believe this embodies the true essence of education.