

Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity Statement

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Throughout my personal and professional experience, I recognize the importance of fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion within the academic community. As a first-generation college graduate, studying in a private-university under a full-scholarship, and pursuing a doctorate in a culturally diverse country yet still a visible minority, I understand the challenges faced by individuals from underrepresented socioeconomic, cultural, ethnic and academic backgrounds.

I have been dedicated to promoting diversity in education, STEM field and mathematics where all students should be given equal opportunities regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, language, abilities, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status or country of origin. Mathematics, as served historically as a universal language, transcends the boundaries of personal backgrounds, and as a powerful means of communication that unites ideas and promote knowledge. However, it is essential to acknowledge that mathematics and other STEM fields have also been portrayed as careers predominantly tailored for men and individuals perceived as exceptionally intelligent. My role in academia and the community is to foster a perspective where Mathematics is seen as a welcoming, inclusive and diverse field accessible to anyone.

My commitment starts in the classroom, as a Professor, it goes beyond viewing students as just occupants of seats. I firmly believe in the significance of cultivating genuine professional connections with my students. This involves investing time in meaningful dialogues, learning their names, respecting their chosen pronouns, exploring their diverse backgrounds, and comprehending their expectations. These interactions serve as the foundation for creating an inclusive learning environment, where every student feels valued, acknowledged, and heard. Before the first-day of classes, I send a questionnaire where students express their preferred name and pronoun, share some of their background, and their expectations and fears towards the class.

To reinforce this commitment, I also establish classroom guidelines that promote respect for diverse perspectives and personal boundaries. Simultaneously, I ensure that students are well-informed about the resources at their disposal for academic support and the expression of their viewpoints. Furthermore, my course content selections are thoughtfully chosen to reflect inclusivity and diversity. For instance, I incorporate materials that spotlight narratives typically underrepresented in academia. This approach, such as featuring a Latina mathematics professor, or an athlete pursuing an engineering degree, not only embraces diversity but also break stereotypes.

I believe in the power of students learning from one another, and that's why I promote interactions in the classroom. I encourage extra activities by dividing students into small groups where they can team up to approach problem-solving tasks. I provide them with discussion sheets I've prepared beforehand, which spark lively conversations and let them exchange different ideas. These groups are not just about solving problems; they're also about understanding and respecting each other's experiences and backgrounds. In

these mixed groups, students learn that every perspective matters, and we celebrate the rich diversity within our academic community.

I take pride in my heritage and background, and I love sharing some of my personal experiences with my students. It's a way to help them relate and feel connected. Being of Latino descent, I've often become a point of reference for students who share a similar background. Sometimes, students feel more at ease in an environment where they can use their native language, and I'm always open to helping them out in Spanish during office hours under their request. I've also been actively involved with the Latinx student community at UofR. I volunteer to help organize events, engage students to participate and I even have spoken about my own challenges and successes in academia, particularly from the perspective of an immigrant, and how I've faced some hurdles in this academic environment, especially when it comes to representation. Even though we have a good number of LatinX students, there's still a significant underrepresentation of LatinX STEM faculty.

I maintain a strong commitment to staying connected with students from Colombia and Latin America, recognizing the prevalent socioeconomic disparities and limited access to quality education in these regions. To bridge this gap, I actively promote the utilization of Webwork and other open-source alternatives in the region. These platforms have the potential to democratize education and provide students with valuable resources that might be otherwise out of reach. By fostering the use of such tools, I aim to make high-quality educational content more accessible to students, allowing them to overcome barriers and reach their full academic potential. In addition, I have taken on a mentor role in initiative "*Pares-Ordenados*" (Ordered pairs in Spanish). This program brings together students from Colombia and other Latin American countries with Spanish-speaking professors from North American universities. The initiative seeks to provide these students with opportunities to engage in quality research projects that may be challenging to access in their home countries due to local limitations as well as sharing the opportunities, challenges and steps of pursuing a career outside of the region. Through this mentorship, I hope to empower these students to pursue meaningful research, broaden their academic horizons, and unlock their full potential, despite the constraints they may face in their local academic environments.

I'm dedicated to continuing this mission. I aim to expand my efforts in creating a more inclusive learning environment and working towards greater diversity in academia with Colleagues and students alike. I'll stay connected with students from diverse backgrounds and support initiatives that empower underrepresented individuals. To further advance the cause of diversity, equity, and inclusion, I recognize the paramount importance of the university's support and resources. Collaboration and a shared vision are essential to create a learning environment that embraces the richness of diversity and ensures that every member of our academic community feels valued and empowered. Together, we can keep building a more inclusive academic community where every voice is valued and every perspective is celebrated