

Diversity Statement

As a part of my educational career, I have been fortunate enough to live in a variety of places throughout the United States. My time in New Orleans, Pittsburgh, and Boston have given me the opportunity to experience diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, and culture, and to realize the both the assets that diversity provides and the challenges that must be overcome to realize those assets. For everyone to fully benefit from diversity, we must be ready and willing to engage people from every background in order to benefit from their perspective and to include them in the future of an organization or place.

As both an instructor and as a researcher at the University of Pittsburgh, I have had the opportunity to put these concepts into action. As a school in which 30% (25%) of students (faculty) identify as non-white and 5% (6%) are international students (faculty), I have had the opportunity to hone skills to teach and present in a way that engages an audience of diverse backgrounds. Additionally, I have benefitted from workshops provided by the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Teaching and Learning specifically about diversity and international students. These workshops have provided me with tools to engage students and peers of diverse backgrounds, including in race, ethnicity, gender, disability, socioeconomic background, sexuality, and location of origin, by recognizing my implicit assumptions about what is common knowledge and commonly accessible and challenging those assumptions to ensure the material I present is accessible by all audience members. As such, in my class materials I actively use diverse names and contra-stereotypical examples. I am conscious about the cultural references I use both in class and in research presentations, ensuring that if Amero-centric references are used I explicitly highlight the relevant details for international students or peers. However, my favorite way to engage students from a diverse background is to ask students to answer check-in exercises in which they give examples from their lives that illustrate topics relevant from class. In this way, students apply the lessons to their own experiences and engage with it in the environment in which they are most comfortable. I find that this allows students to share with me aspects of their own lives and cultures that allow them not only to be more confident in the material but allows me to learn about them as well.

In my time at the University of Pittsburgh I founded the Graduate Peer Mentoring Program, in which I matched first- and second-year graduate students in the economics department with more advanced graduate students in order to receive mentorship. A main motivation for developing this program was to ensure that everyone had someone to go to for help and advice, regardless of their background. As a part of this goal, I had to consider not only the research interests of the individuals being matched, but also their cultural backgrounds and gender. By respecting that people of different backgrounds may need different mentoring styles or may want something different from mentoring relationships, I was able to ensure that people were able to get as much out of their mentoring relationship as possible, such as international students specifically wanting an American mentor to hone their English skills or women knowing they had another woman to go to in order to discuss the difficulties women face in academic Economics.

My research speaks to issues of diversity and inclusion on a broader scale. My job market paper "A Hidden Cost of Affirmative Action: Muddying Signals about Women's Ability" highlights how policies meant to improve diversity can have negative impacts later on if those issues are not taken into account. Specifically, I find that affirmative action can have a negative effect on future employment outcomes for beneficiaries after the policy is no longer in place if employers

believe beneficiaries are of lower ability due to the affirmative action. This contributes to our understanding of how best to structure policies aimed at improving diversity and representation. Furthermore, in my paper “The Mortality Effects of Community Mental Health Centers”, joint with Jessica LaVoice, we analyze how legislation affected mortality from mental health related causes, an underappreciated and stigmatized area of health. These papers, and the related research agendas associated with them, contribute to conversations about how to make society more inclusive in the most effective way possible.