

Diversity Statement

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My commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion has been part of my teaching and scholarship and will be central in my future role as a mentor and research advisor. To foster equity and inclusion in my classes, I develop direct channels of communication with my students. As a researcher in economics, I am interested in understanding the sources of inequality of opportunities that lead to a disparity in outcomes. As an assistant professor, I will take an active role to contribute to a culture of inclusion in a diverse community.

I came from Colombia to the United States in 2013 to pursue a Ph.D. in Economics motivated by my intellectual curiosity. I am the first in my family that has had the privilege of studying in a foreign country, engaging in a different culture and language. Facing the cultural and linguistic challenges of a Hispanic immigrant has shaped my approach towards diversity. In my native country, I had never felt anxiety for participating in class, for example, answering questions posted by professors or engaging in subject discussions. However, during my first month in the Ph.D. program, I was indeed afraid to engage in class discussion fearing my accent would interfere with the clarity or acceptance of my arguments.

My personal experience facing cultural and linguistic challenges raised my awareness of the importance of approaching differences in culture, race, religion, and gender in the academic environment and the community. In my courses, I clarify concepts without forcing participation during class. I promote equity and inclusion in my classes by giving alternatives to my students to ask or answer questions. Mainly, I hold additional office hours and also encourage communication over e-mail. Students have reported that this practice helped them to improve their learning. Moreover, I devote extra effort to make sure that my grading is fair and this has been reportedly valued among my students.

As a researcher, I think that the equity of opportunities leads to equality on achievements. Economic policies should develop programs to empower families to rise out of poverty and achieve better life outcomes. I am concerned with the increasing patterns of income inequality that we observe in the United States. Race and gender should not play a role in wage determination. In my paper, "*Understanding Sources of Wage Inequality: Additive Decomposition of the Gini Coefficient Using Quantile Regression*," I study the factors that contribute to the disparity in the distribution of wages in the United States. I show that more education provides young men and women with further opportunities. My research shows that changes in educational attainment are related to reductions in wage inequality. My findings suggest that economic policies should increase access to education to reduce wage differences.

In the future as an assistant professor, I will take an active leadership role to contribute to a culture of inclusion in a diverse learning community. In my role as research advisor, I will encourage my students to consider their part as researchers to promote equality and inclusion for women, Hispanic, and other underrepresented groups.