

## **Statement on Contributions to Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

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I believe learning and intellectual explorations are most successful when they are done in the environment of respect, trust, inclusion, safety, and confidence. Studies and educational experience have shown that if in the classroom/course someone feels isolated, like they don't belong, that their voice will not be heard, this will compromise their progress. I generally emphasize respect for others as part of my life and am particularly mindful when teaching that no student is overlooked and that I give due attention to every student. I have been consistently getting highest marks for the "demonstrated respect for students" category in students' evaluations which serves as confirmation of creating an atmosphere of respect and inclusion in the classroom.

As an immigrant, someone who moved to the US to study from abroad, and from a country that was quite different, I am aware of the challenges of international students and generally students for whom English is not the first language. From my experience, students feel comfortable approaching me, sharing their background (and asking about mine). I encourage questions and value students' opinions and thoughts. I enjoy hearing different perspectives, learning the associations and examples that students bring during our discussions of economics concepts, and I often gain new insights from their comments. Hearing students' perspectives helps me develop scenarios and applications that everyone in the class can relate to. I enjoy finding applications of concepts we study in class to scenarios that students are interested in. I value each student's experience and contribution, am amazed at their creativity, and enjoy building on their examples to contribute to their deeper understanding of the course material.

I am always interested in learning more about making campus and a classroom a more inclusive, diverse, and equitable place. I volunteered to take the workshop on "Allies & Safe Zones" which counts as an elective course for the Diversity & Inclusion Certificate through the Center for Leadership and Social Change for faculty and staff members at FSU. It was a valuable experience to learn about ways to make the academic environment more welcoming for minority students as well as learn about nuances that might be overlooked by out-of-group members. I also served as a liaison between CSWEP of AEA and the Economics department and ensured circulating information about relevant events and opportunities. I participated as a faculty advisor in two graduate students women network events.

The grading criteria in my classes are transparent, objective, and based on performance. I specify in the syllabus the precise percentage weights assigned to each grade component of the total class score. To ensure some flexibility so that all students are treated equally, and exceptions would not be needed even considering various circumstances, I often use two scoring schemes (announced in advance in the syllabus) with automatically taking the highest of the two total scores for each student to determine the grade. The second scoring scheme typically assigns higher weight to the final exam and the higher of the two midterms, so, for example, students who showed significant improvement and mastered the material by the end of the semester are not penalized too much by lower early performance. At the same time, someone who maintained consistently good performance throughout the semester would retain the merit of such achievement based on the main/first scoring scheme. I am also very transparent with students about the grading key for specific tests and the overall distribution of scores for each of the midterms, so they know where they stand in the class.

I have used examples of scientific contributions or discoveries by minority or unexpected populations' representatives that are related to class concepts. Sometimes having a role model, someone similar who has achieved what you thought might not be feasible for you, inspires students to have faith in themselves and in the opportunities available to them. I have been approached by many students who wanted me to advise them in research, and regularly conducted many Directed Independent studies (DIS) with a diverse group of students over the years. I have also recommended many undergraduate students to graduate schools. One of the examples of the accomplishments of my undergraduate students who I recommended, including being a minority, is Sebastian Tello Trillo, who has since completed PhD and is currently an associate professor at the University of Virginia.

Although the following is perhaps not a common highlight when talking about diversity, equity, and inclusion, I am proud that I have been approached by and interacted with all types of students, including those well-represented in economics, which to me indicates that I was successful in promoting equity and inclusion for all.