

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

A commitment to the values of diversity, equity, access, and inclusion forms the cornerstone of both my teaching and professional work. Such values are central to the academic mission of most prominent universities, and the desire for social justice is described as both a process and goal within the ALA core competencies.

In my teaching, I am cognizant of the historical and unique challenges often faced by minority and less-represented populations as they navigate academic environments, particularly graduate education. I believe the value of the diverse perspectives and experiences these students bring to the classroom enhances the education outcomes for all students. Diversity and equity efforts, however, should not stop with creating a welcoming and inclusive learning environment. The role of historical practices which have marginalized particular populations must be addressed in the curriculum. Our discipline is, at its core, the study of information and people, both of which have been significantly influenced by practices that have privileged specific groups and, by extension, their information or informational views. In teaching information organization, I reiterate throughout the courses the need to consider and evaluate the historical and cultural bias within and created by any information system. Yet, it is not enough to simply recognize the inherent bias of informational systems; as information professionals, we can change these systems to create inclusion instead of marginalization and reflect diverse values instead of a dominant mindset. This begins with a graduate education that prioritizes such values.

My commitment to creating a diverse and equitable educational environment has been central to my professional work for over 20 years. As an Information Specialist in the Office of Institutional Equity, I participated in setting hiring goals to address underrepresentation, the creation of diverse recruitment strategies, and the evaluation of affirmative action programs and initiatives. Currently, as a Senior Equity Analyst, I investigate issues of harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct perpetrated against IU students, faculty, and staff. From this work, I understand firsthand how harassment and discrimination undermine the educational experience, be it through derogatory comments, biased assumptions, or inequitable treatment. My professional work seeks to irradicate these harmful practices so that all students, faculty, and staff can learn and grow to their full potential. My understanding of the federal laws and best practices associated with diversity, access, and inclusion in both the workplace and educational environment has also been beneficial in my teaching. While teaching Management for Information Professionals, I placed these issues as central to management practices. I did not treat such topics as a single unit. Instead, I incorporated these principles into all course units as they are fundamental to management practice. While working through case studies related to hiring, leadership, budgeting, or staff communication, students were additionally encouraged to consider how race, gender, disability, or sexual orientation may be influencing the situations. In this way, students were asked to interact with management tasks with all the complexity they are likely to encounter in their working lives after graduation. I hope that if students take away one thing from that class, it is that diversity, equity, access, and inclusion are essential to all parts of management.

For me, diversity, equity, access, and inclusion are not things one needs to have a position on. Rather, they are the building blocks of a quality education and a successful workplace.