

Diversity Statement

The human brain consists of approximately 86 billion neurons, which underlie our every thought, action, and emotion. Hundreds of neuronal cell types – distinguished by morphology, neurotransmitter content, firing patterns, and synaptic profiles – underlie the rich repertoire of brain activity responsible for our unique identities. Similarly, diversity in our communities underlies the rich repertoire of our collective perspectives, experiences, and interactions. As neuronal diversity gives rise to the beautiful complexity that makes each of us unique, we likewise benefit from embracing the diversity in our communities.

My passion and commitment for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) permeate my teaching, research, and service. My teaching efforts with the Cornell Prison Education Program bring high quality higher education to incarcerated students so they can gain valuable skills and prepare for successful re-entry into society. My research, detailed in my research statement, addresses sex bias in medicine to achieve a more equitable society. Finally, my service activities support diverse groups such as international graduate and professional students at Cornell.

To strengthen my inclusive teaching practices, I recently completed the Teaching and Learning in the Diverse Classroom course, which inspired me to rethink my teaching practice. Now, for instance, I provide printed slides to make my classes more accessible. This small change increases students' engagement and comprehension, helping them to focus on the content in class and review the slides at their own pace. I also continue to increasingly address inequalities in mental health as part of my teaching practice. To educate students on the topic, I added a four-part podcast, which explores how mental health issues have influenced different marginalised communities over the last four centuries, to the course. By engaging students in reflective and critical discussions, I aim to foster an environment where they can grow their awareness and understanding of disparities in mental health care.

While at Cornell, I have been actively engaged with Graduate and Professional Student Diversity Council organisations. This year, as a Graduate and Professional Students International (GPSI) Co-President, I am fostering an inclusive community for international students and advocating for our most pressing and consequential needs. This past summer, the ICE directive on international students directly affected our community, causing a state of extreme anxiety and panic. I worked with GPSI to launch an anonymised survey for students to voice their concerns to the Cornell Office of Global Learning (OGL). Within a week we collected 25+ responses – OGL created a new webpage addressing these concerns. Throughout the school year, I aim to work with GPSI to launch a series of workshops dedicated to helping international students navigate the academic landscape. Topics will include networking and building professional relationships, as well as applying for grants, fellowships, and academic positions.

In my teaching, research, and service activities, I have developed a deep awareness and understanding of the importance of DEI, I have actively launched and participated in DEI initiatives, and I intend to continue advancing DEI throughout my academic career.