

Statement of Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

I am committed to doing the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This work is not easy. This work has not been easy for me. And never have I expected such work to be so. However, I have committed my life's work to championing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all that I do because I believe each effort in this vein, no matter how big or small, creates a better society for us to learn from one another, to grow with one another, and to author a robust investment in our collective humanity. The sweat equity required to champion diversity, equity, and inclusion requires courage, self-reflection, deliberate strategy, intentional design, critical-thought, leadership, an investment in life-long learning, community engagement, data-driven decision making, and the maturity to actively listen. I believe a commitment to this work requires holding ourselves accountable while showing grace for us to learn from our mistakes. I have committed to embracing all that makes us different to strategically create opportunities for all to have access and ensuring that we all feel affirmed and valued in our collective pursuits of excellence. This is the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion. It is not and will not be easy-going in this work as we stand at the crossroads of power, privilege, and justice. I am imperfect in this work. And I remain committed to stand in its gaps to pass on a better society to our next generations.

As a leader, it is imperative to foster an environment for which those I serve see themselves reflected in the planning, the implementation, the decision-making, and the growth of our endeavors. For me, taking the time to invite and listen to multiple perspectives, to have my own thoughts constructively challenged, to engage qualitative and quantitative data so to make informed decisions is critical and fundamental to my leadership styles. Thus, I find it paramount to establish processes by which effectively include opportunities for input, deliberation, and communication. It has not been my experience that effective leadership requires consensus-by-committee. Rather, it has been my experience that leadership requires finding ways to allow others to contribute, offer their voice into the conversation, and feel heard. While most decisions, in my experience, come with some degree of compromise, effective leadership is most appreciated when we have had an opportunity to be authentically heard even if the decision may not have gone completely in our favor. Where some may have a vision clouded by challenged and conflict, I believe it is vital that we keep our sights on opportunities to grow understanding and civic dialogue.

I am a strong advocate for mentorship. Mentors have guided me as a student, faculty, and administrator all along my own personal and professional journeys. As a first-generation college student, I can say that mentorship has and continues to be a lifeline that I am tremendously grateful for. I have participated in numerous opportunities to create mentoring relationships for many of my own students and colleagues. I have served on faculty and staff development task forces to develop programming and panel presentations to promote mentorship for tenured and untenured faculty. I am often tapped by students, faculty, and staff to participate in formal and informal mentorship roles. I simply have a passion for pouring into others as others have graciously poured into me. As Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, I look forward to working with our leadership team, students, staff, and faculty to advance and enhance opportunities for mentorship to meet the professional, career, and personal needs of our college. In this role, I can see that mentorship will play a critical role in the development of our faculty. Such mentorship would aim to guide them appropriately through tenure and promotion processes; offer constructive feedback mechanisms to enhance their pedagogy in the classroom; and create opportunities for them to engage in service and/or other engaged scholarship activities that are especially meaningful and fruitful to their professional ambitions.

I am also a strong advocate for engaging in the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion through curriculum and pedagogy. I have led the design and introduce courses and curriculum that thoughtfully engage students with course content, concepts, ideas, readings, and learning activities centering diversity, equity, and inclusion. I have led efforts to develop core curricula at the undergraduate and graduate level of course plans that explicitly encourage the students' exploration of the concepts and practice of diversity, equity, and inclusion. I have also worked with my faculty colleagues to redesign their courses (and my own) to include new learning objectives, modern readings, the adoption of new texts, peer-to-peer instruction, case studies, and other instructional techniques to enhance inclusive pedagogical methods as well as enhance the classroom climate. The work described here has reflected the domains of inclusive pedagogical practices, curricular alignment, and classroom climate as part of the Teaching Effectiveness Framework from The Institute of Learning and Teaching for which I have employed as part of my

own professional development. Students have expressed greater learner satisfaction from and understanding of course/assignment learning aims with these course enhancements.

Beyond emphatically stating that I am committed to doing the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion, I hope that you will see that my body of work, as demonstrated by some of what I have described here and more that is outlined in my curriculum vitae, makes this statement better than I. The work of diversity, equity, and inclusion is challenging work. And I am glad to be trying to do such work better and better each day.