Diversity Statement
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I am committed to diversity in mathematics, and I recognize the structural and social barriers that women and minoritized groups face both in the classroom and in the broader mathematical community. As a gay man, I also understand the related struggle of trying to navigate a potentially unfriendly social environment, especially for people like myself who have invisible identities that they are unable or afraid to share.

For the past three years, I have been a teacher in the Collegiate Scholars Program. This is a summer program for high school students in the Chicago Public Schools system designed to help prepare students to apply for and succeed in college. The program is aimed primarily at students from underfunded schools that don’t have the same college preparation resources that more privileged schools have. These schools are mostly in neighborhoods with large populations of low-income families and under-represented racial and ethnic minorities, and that diversity is mirrored in the population of students enrolled in the program.

These students often don’t have the resources or the social support in their home schools to experience mathematics as something that they create and have a say in, as opposed to as a set of facts that they have no input in, and I design my courses with this in mind. I emphasize creativity, problem solving, and peer support of ideas. These values have led to very high self-reported levels of engagement and enjoyment in the course, and as a result the program director has asked me to expand this course into a two-section course, instead of the standard one-section, to accommodate more of their students in Summer 2020.

I have seen firsthand the struggles that students from low-income families face, from food insecurity to technology access. Two years ago, I sat down with a homeless woman in my neighborhood and we quickly struck up a friendship. After I helped her secure public housing for her and her four children, she told me that she wanted to complete her GED. For the last year, I have been tutoring her in all subjects, and I am happy to say that she is on-track to pass the test by the end of this year.

Within the University of Chicago, I have worked to make the mathematics department a more diverse and inclusive place for women. After a graduate student climate survey showed that rates of anxiety, depression, and feelings of inadequacy were significantly higher among women (compared to men) in the department, I contributed to an official list of suggestions for the administration for how to create a more inclusive environment. I also want to support diversity in the next generation of mathematicians: and I have mentored five undergraduate women, four of whom have gone on to graduate programs, and I have directly inspired at least one woman in my calculus courses to pursue a math major. After the course, she wrote to me: “I’ve learned so much about math,... hard work, and dedication and the value of theory from you”.

Throughout all of my teaching, I believe that one of the best ways for me to serve under-represented students is through using evidence-based practices in my classrooms. In order to inform my own teaching, I participated in a workshop on inclusive assessment practices in STEM where I examined literature on mathematics education to help create a list, to appear on the Chicago Center for Teaching website, of 8 steps instructors can take.
to design assessments that decrease the achievement gap between minoritized students and their more privileged peers. Since then, I have facilitated workshops for graduate student and postdoctoral instructors in the mathematics department on diversity in the classroom, from course design and “day-to-day” inclusive teaching practices to exam writing and grading.

Connecting mathematics instructors “on the ground” with the literature and research on diversity and inclusion in education is a priority of mine. One of my future goals is to create a collection of resources to serve as a bridge between instructors and the literature so that they are better equipped to answer the question “What does inclusivity mean in the math classroom and how can I achieve it?”

Helping to spread inclusive teaching practices, creating a welcoming and diverse environment for students in the university, and sharing mathematics with members of underrepresented groups in the broader community have all part of my identity as a mathematician and of my commitment to diversity, and I plan to continue all of them at my future institution.