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My Diversity Statement

Diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, and belonging is about both impact and intent. I seek to do no harm in my efforts. I have failed and will fail again while striving to put my feet to my word. I have practiced this and will continue to do so by speaking in public spaces, writing in open forums, marching in equality and equity events, and being a guide and facilitator to those who ask to grow in their own journey and in their own direction. I can speak for no one other than myself. I embrace diversity of thought as well as diversity of practice. I open myself up to be influenced and influencer seeking common ground for forward movement. In full disclosure, the underlined items are areas with which I sometimes relapse into old ways of thinking or those in which I must continually strive to overcome.

My Philosophy

With intentionality and derived from self-reflection, I hold to the following:

Ableism: I am Crip. I have bipolar mental illness. I see, I touch, I taste, I smell, I hear, I am mobile. People experience the world differently. I am no more abled than anyone else. Adaptive and assistive technology does not define a person. I have agency over my own body only. I strive to see everyone has agency over their own body equally. I strive to not intervene unless asked to do so.

Racism and Colorism: Race is a construct; racism is real. I commit to seeing the color of a person's skin and the whiteness of my own. I am not colorblind. I seek to better understand the privilege's my white and male form have given me without merit, in order to disrupt the-isms of society. I must remember that I am not a white savior. I strive to educate and disrupt white power systems instead.

Neurodiversity/Geneticism: My brain is wired with bipolar illness that impacts the way I see and interact with others. I acknowledge everyone's brain is wired differently than my own, without exception. I seek to accommodate when asked, not to make assumptions, and realize our differences are visible and invisible. To date, geneticism is not an accepted word, I use the word intentionally as I associate it with an -ism of discrimination.

Ageism/Youngism. I am 62 years old. I have been judged and I have judged those of younger and older ages. I have finally come to realize that what I judged as poor work ethic of those younger than I, especially as an instructor, is just a different work ethic. When I became the primary caregiver of both my mother and father, I began to see them as people and not just my parents. I strive to remember that wisdom is not age dependent.

Body positivity. I celebrate the human form. I have grown to respect my own body and know the difficulty in doing so. Looks are visible, feelings may be invisible. I have no knowledge of

how a person feels about their own body, so I strive not to project my understanding and expectations onto their body nor my own upon my body.

Genderism/Sexism. Gender is a social construct. Sex is a biological construct. Gender and sex do not have to align visibly or invisibly. My pronouns are my pronouns. I may be he/him/his, I may be he/they in my professional writing. I celebrate my identity and will celebrate others expression of their own.

Reproductive equity. I support health equity and reproductive equity. Agency in both belongs to the individual. Health equity requires full access to health care services and as a respecter of persons. I have spoken up on health equity on the treatment of seniors at hospitals and have done so in anger. I strive to do so from a position of advocacy versus anger.

Heteronormativity/Religious Discrimination. I am a cis/Queer white male in a heteronormative world. I struggle with my diversity statement here having been on the receiving end of hate crimes and hate speech. Similarly, I have retaliated with those same words thrust upon my body in religious and secular settings. I am a respecter of a person's theistic, atheistic, and agnostic views yet heteronormativity and religious discrimination are so intertwined as harmful forces within my lived experience, I have to be watchful of my own biases, prejudices, and discriminatory practices. For my philosophy I strive for acceptance over tolerance as it is the same I would wish extended to me.

Diversity of Thought. Being honest, I still fight against cisgender heterosexual white male patriarchy as it is the very system I wish to interrupt and dismantle. This is a deeply held belief and one in which I strive to remember diversity of thought is a foundational right through the first amendment. I strive to seek common ground to have the dialogue, knowing that agreement is not always possible.

Application

My philosophy of diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, and belonging is put into action through my instructional design lens to see who I have omitted or not considered in my design. Have I included imagery that is diverse? Have I included authorship representative of diversity? When working with a subject matter expert, how have I helped them implement practices in line with principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, and belonging by having them reflect upon their audience of focus AND without projecting my own belief system upon them.

As a member of the Institution of Higher Education and committee chair and members of many of the college's and university's diversity committees speaking in open forums and interacting with people, how have I considered my own part in the organizational gaps and opportunities for improvement? Am I projecting my agenda upon the organization or looking at the organization's agenda and needs? How can I use the tools of Human Performance Technology to guide the process to help me maintain and respect my lens while maintaining and respecting the lenses of others?

This statement and philosophy I will keep in visible places in my workspaces at home and in my office to remind me of who I am, what I say, and what I do. I will also include this statement in my syllabi.