Inclusive Excellence Activities statement

Diversity Statement

Some tips
1) Not (just) about diversity, it is really about **Inclusivity**

Describe your *past, current* and *future* contributions aimed at promoting equity and inclusion for *all* students.
The question leading the writing of your diversity students should be:

What have you done/are doing/plan to do to make sure that all scholars have equal opportunities to succeed?
2) Promote the success of all scholars

➢ Under-represented minority students (URM)
➢ Women
➢ LGBTQ
➢ First-generation college students
➢ Low-income students
➢ Students with learning disabilities
➢ First year graduate students
➢ International students
➢ Graduate students who are parents
➢ ...

At all levels:
➢ K-5
➢ Middle School
➢ High School
➢ Parents of K-12 students
➢ Undergraduate
➢ Graduate students
➢ Post-docs
➢ Tenure track faculty
➢ .....
Consider having different sections in your diversity statement, to discuss initiatives aimed at supporting different categories of students.

You can split sections based on specific initiatives you have been involved in.
AN EXAMPLE

Statement of Inclusive Excellence Activities

Perhaps due to my Italian culture, experiencing a sense of community is fundamentally tied to my perception of happiness and well-being. Not surprisingly, most of my efforts to promote diversity across different levels of the educational pipeline (middle school students, women PhD mathematics students) start with an attempt to create a nurturing community.

To complement my passion with a strong understanding of best practices, in Spring 2020 I completed the Inclusive Excellence Certificate DECADE since Fall 2018.

Supporting underserved middle school students and their families

In the 4-year period under review, I have been very active in the Math Outreach (CEO) program, which I founded and directed for as a mentor. The program is based in a school where the Latinx culture is supported and respected. In Math CEO specifically targets schools that are underserved and where children walk in small groups and receive training on mathematical content and pedagogy. One kid in the program once said, ‘It’s cool to have a teaching professor help with math and is growing up!’ I have been impacting youth’s perception of what math is, as well as socio-emotional skills like how to treat people with respect and kindness. During the review period, Math CEO has grown substantially, and the afterschool math enrichment program has expanded.

Supporting (underrepresented minority) college students

I am proud to develop my career as a teaching professor at a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) like UCI. I have truly enjoyed teaching the Math portion of the CAMP Summer Science Community Enrichment Project for first generation/low income/minority students each year. I identify and support talented mathematics majors from underrepresented minority groups and recruit underrepresented minority students at diversity conferences yearly since 2017. I definitely have enjoyed classroom teaching. I have a deep trust in my students’ cognitive development. From my outreach to underserved youth, I have learned the importance of supporting and challenging. Collaborative study sessions and in-classroom group work on learning activities has allowed me to challenge students in a context that feels “safe,” as they attend office hours together, share notes from class or review sessions with peers within the classroom.
Supporting (Women) PhD mathematics students

In recent years women’s representation in mathematics departments in the US has increased substantially, and the University of California, Irvine (UCI) is no exception. The percentage of female students in the Math Graduate program at UCI over the last 10 years has increased from 15% to 30%. To support this growth, initiatives aimed at bolstering the community while raising awareness about gender bias. In the 4-year program, I volunteered to join many students’ career development and on improving the overall climate in the Graduate Program. With my background in STEM, most of the career/community building events I organized were intentionally aimed at the entire student body, whenever possible, alumnae of the Math Graduate Program. At every meeting, we asked our speakers to share their stories, which served many purposes: it allowed everybody to benefit from these professional development opportunities, and it helped the audience understand the diversity and bias that women often experience in the field. Furthermore, it gave me the opportunity to build my network and get more personalized career advice.

As Decade Mentor for the Department of Mathematics, I volunteered to join many department visits for prospective graduate students and to reach out to them during their application process. As a member of the Admissions Committee, I was able to connect with math graduate students during department visits and during their applications, and I learned the importance of building a supportive community of peers, which promotes collaboration and personal growth. Additionally, I helped students prepare for comprehensive exams.

Personal growth

One of the most important lessons I learned in my work to support diversity is the power of collaboration and building upon the many strengths of diverse communities. It is crucial to recognize and value that low-income Latinx families place on education. Therefore, partnering with local schools and community organizations to provide support for students from underrepresented backgrounds. Creating an encouraging and friendly space that allows first-generation students to feel comfortable sharing their struggles (‘I am the only one struggling here; hence, I am not cut for college’) and to seek help when needed is vital. With math graduate students, I learned the importance of creating opportunities for personal growth and promoting the growth of the whole student. The more intentional I become in my efforts to promote diversity and inclusive excellence, the more I can contribute to the success of underrepresented students, and I look forward to taking part in more initiatives in the future.
Diversity Statement -

While training to become a research mathematician at the University of California, Irvine (UCI), I have continued to ensure my mathematical work is at the forefront of promoting equity and accessibility in STEM fields. To further help my community and promote diversity of opinion, I have also been heavily involved in department outreach activities relating to my Latino and immigrant heritage. At UCI, I am also am heavily involved in department recruitment practices and have continued to include tenets of diversity, equity and inclusion into my work. At UCI, I have directed my outreach and service to local schools within the math department, and have worked with the local community, the math department, and other community members to engage with math education and outreach activities.

1 SESRC and GEAR-UP

My work and volunteer experience before starting at UCI has been centered around addressing systemic sources of inequity in education and the ease of access to resources. I worked as an analyst in the Social and Economic Research Center (SERC), conducting research on the full spectrum of research on projects — from survey design to the writing and presentations — while my focus on diversity. Of particular note, my work with SERC has been to study the impact of college-readiness and preparedness resources to maximize its capacity to support underserved populations.

After SESRC, I worked at a school on the GEAR-UP, a government program designed to prepare students with challenging academic resources. I served as a teaching assistant in STEAM coursework, alongside university and public school students I interacted with were native, low-income students. I helped them continue their studies.

2 Math CEO

At UCI, I have continued my engagement with historically marginalized communities. One program I have been heavily involved with since my arrival at UCI is the Math CEO (Community Educational Outreach) program, which brings together low-income and majority Latino communities in Southern California to UCI to participate in learning activities while fostering a strong mentor-mentee relationship with students. Demographics for participating schools show over 85% Latino students in the participating youth in the program are from low-income families who are not fluent in English. In academia at large — and in mathematics in particular — my work with the Math CEO program as a graduate student and mentor mental health. A lot of this is due to systemic barriers that faculty and staff, which then propagates lower representation in future generations. In my research statement, I outline two research projects I am over one compares standardized student proficiency metrics in math and reading with the same students and non-participants, and the other focuses on assessing the impact of CO program as well as the participating student and mentor mental health. I am the one of proposal materials for internal and external funding grants to help support the program, we were awarded a $5,000 grant to support a survey analysis project I am currently contributing to programs like this at [Short name], or to help co
3 Community, Outreach, and Mentoring Program

At the college level, mentoring is especially meaningful in helping students become engaged within seemingly alien academic settings. Research has shown this impact is significant among first-generation students, and also students with a combination of marginalized identities. At UCI, I have been involved in the Peer Mentor Program, where I have been a Peer Mentor for students who are first-generation students, and I have been overseeing the Peer Mentor Program (PMP) Fellows for COMP. COMP is a graduate student program in the Department of Cognitive Sciences. It was a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the results of two Qualtrics surveys I conducted helped to inform the DECADE (Diverse Educational Communities Advocating Disability Excellence) initiative aimed at identifying and elevating graduate student experiences. One result was the creation of initiatives to address issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This support to its students, the department is committed to working to meet each pillar of COMP. These include:

- Community activities to foster a sense of belonging among graduate students.
- Learning activities to enhance graduate student growth.
- Mentoring activities to support graduate student development.
- Engagement activities to increase graduate student participation.
- Scholarship activities to support graduate student success.
- Advocacy activities to represent graduate student interests.

4 Women in Math

Additionally, I am overseeing the analysis component of a department-led study of the math graduate program starting in December 2020 in collaboration with the UCI Center for the History of Mathematics and Science (CHoMS) and the Department of Mathematics. This study aims to explore the experiences of women in Math at UCI and the barriers they face.

5 Parenting Workshop

My first son was born one month before I started my program at UCI, so every aspect of being a graduate student is also an experience I have had as a father. When I started, there was an urgent need for accurate information on parenting resources, and I found a similar dearth of information in other areas. As a result, I partnered with DECADE to organize a workshop in December 2020 to provide these parenting resources for grad students, postdocs, and faculty. I compiled resources and recruited a diverse panel of other parents, while also leading a campus-wide ad that resulted in a full room of workshop participants from all over campus. Feedback was positive, so I have collaborated with the Associated Graduate Student Parent Advisory Board to bring this into a regular occurrence. The next workshop will take place in January 2021.
What have you done/are doing/plan to do to make sure that all scholars have equal opportunities to succeed?
3) **It’s about what you do**, not so much who you are or what you know.

- Only a couple of sentences on
  - Your previous life experiences
  - Your general understanding of issues of equity, diversity equity and inclusion

- **Concrete and specific examples of activities demonstrate your commitment**
  - The context
  - The purpose
  - The impact
  - Your contribution (your role, your overall time and effort)
  - Lesson learned
## EXAMPLE of Diversity Statement Evaluation Grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Scoring System 0 - 5</th>
<th>Candidate 1</th>
<th>Candidate 2</th>
<th>Candidate 3</th>
<th>Candidate 4</th>
<th>Candidate 5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provides a statement of contributions to diversity</td>
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<td>Indicates awareness of inequities and challenges in education faced</td>
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<td>by historically underrepresented or economically disadvantaged groups,</td>
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<td>and the negative consequences of underutilization</td>
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<td>Demonstrates a track record and measure of success in activities</td>
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<td>(such as mentoring, teaching or outreach) that aim to reduce barriers</td>
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<td>in education or research for underrepresented or economically</td>
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<td>disadvantaged groups</td>
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<td>Specific plans to contribute through campus programs, new activities, or</td>
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<td>through national or off-campus organizations</td>
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Examples:  
(5 = EXCELLENT)  
(1 = STATEMENT ONLY)
In the opening, you can talk about your personal experience. It is important, because it contributed to your awareness.

When I was in high school, adults would ask me what I wanted to major in during college. When I said mathematics, their response was always the same: “oh, so you want to be a teacher.” After hearing this response over and over, I started to believe that a career as a mathematician was out of reach. This feeling only grew when I got to college and noticed that there was only one female professor in the department and there were very few female students in my class.

But this is just the beginning. The bulk of the diversity statement is about describing your past/present/future actions to promote diversity and inclusivity.
What counts as an inclusive excellence activity?
An example: Math enrichment to underserved youth
4) It is not just about outreach to underserved communities but it is also about teaching, creative activities and service within UCI.
Concrete examples of inclusive excellence activities

- Participating or volunteering at Diversity Conferences or other events aimed at broadening the academic pipeline

  - Were you a participant? Speak about lessons you learned
  - Were you an organizer/a volunteer? Describe your role and comment on the success of the event
Concrete examples of inclusive excellence activities

- Participating in a diversity forum (E.g. Anti-Racism and Inclusion Journal Club, a Decade workshop)

It’s OK if you were just a participant. Describe how it raised your awareness.
Concrete examples of inclusive excellence activities

- Organize a diversity seminar
  - The speaker represents a minority in the field
  - The topic discussed fosters diversity/creates awareness
Concrete examples of inclusive excellence activities

- Participate in recruitment events
  - Skype interviews with prospective graduate students
  - Department Open House for prospective graduate students
  - Volunteer at UCI boot at Sacnas Conference, Field of Dreams Conference, etc
Concrete examples of inclusive excellence activities

- Become a “diversity-leader” in our department
  - Decade student representative
  - AWM board
  - COMP fellow
  - Inclusive excellence committee
Concrete examples of inclusive excellence activities

- Serve as a mentor
  - Peer mentor for a graduate students in the department
  - Competitive Edge mentor
  - Participate in undergraduate panels aimed at introducing underrepresented groups to graduate school
  - Talk to your UG students in your class about graduate schools and give them advise about preparing for graduate school
Concrete examples of inclusive excellence activities

- (Help) Organize initiatives in the department aimed at improving climate in the department
  - Volunteer at existing initiatives
  - Help create your own. You know the needs!!
Concrete examples of inclusive excellence activities

- **TA work in the classroom**
  - Use teaching approaches that promote diversity, equity and inclusion (e.g. small group discussions)
  - Use specific strategies to create a classroom environment which is supportive of all students

Mention these in your teaching statement too!
I contribute to diversity in teaching by treating everyone equally and respectfully, and accommodating different learning levels using different teaching strategies and teaching methods. I am open and approachable, take time for questions, and encourage attendance in office hours or extra help by appointment. To include audio, visual, reading/writing, and kinesthetic learners, I say everything out loud, make connections between examples or physical visualizations, write everything down, and make my students do tons of examples. I also employ active learning. I encourage create solutions. When helpful, I will explain multiple solutions to one problem, stressing that each is valid and students should use whichever technique is most appropriate. My favorite teaching memory so far happened in office hours: I explained four different ways of approaching a problem to a group of four struggling students, and a different student lit up with understanding at each explanation.
While these initiatives are noteworthy and meaningful, my biggest impact to promote diversity in college education is definitely through everyday classroom teaching. I have a deep trust in my students’ potential to succeed in the learning of mathematics, and a genuine interest in their wellbeing and in their overall emotional and cognitive development. From my outreach to underserved youth, I have learned the importance of a whole-child approach to education, and I strive to create a learning environment where every student is engaged, supported and challenged. Collaborative study sessions and in-classroom group work activities helped me create a sense of community for my students, while the use of learning assistants to facilitate active learning activities has allowed me to challenge students in a context that feels “safe” to them. I also try to foster a spirit of collaboration among my students; for example, I encourage them to form study groups, attend office hours together, share notes from class or review sessions with peers who missed the opportunity to attend, and – most importantly – I model an inclusive and supportive behavior inside and outside the classroom.
5) **Meaningful reflections and future plans**

- What did you learn from your previous involvement?
- What do you want to do next?

Research the institution you applying to. What are the demographics? What are the needs?
Personal growth

One of the most important lessons I learned in my work to support diversity is the need to really engage with the communities we serve in order to understand not just their needs but also their strengths. Joining forces and building upon the many strengths of diverse communities is a powerful way to influence positive change. By working with parents of middle school students in Santa Ana, I learned about the immense value that low-income Latinx families place on education. Therefore, partnering with families is a very effective way to support educational achievement of Latinx youth. By working with Latinx college students, I learned the importance of building a supportive community of peers, which proudly reflects the familism of the Latinx culture, to help mitigate the negative impact of cultural stereotypes on student success. Creating an encouraging and friendly space that allows first-generation students to be vulnerable, and hear difficulties that others are experiencing, can help move students away from false perceptions of personal failure (“I am the only one struggling here; hence, I am not cut for college’) and find collective strength in the unique motivation and resilience that first-generation students bring to college. Lastly, by working with math graduate students, I learned the importance of creating opportunities for students to engage socially with their peers, attend to their personal wellbeing, and pursue interests outside of academia, because promoting the growth of the whole student can only strengthen their chances for success as mathematicians. The more intentional I become in my efforts to promote diversity and inclusive excellence at UCI and in the community, the more I realize there is an urgent need to do more. Completing the Inclusive Excellence Certificate Program at UCI helped me frame my efforts to support inclusivity in a broader context. It also raised my awareness and my understanding of the needs of other members of the UCI community (Black and LGBTQ students, for example), and I look forward to taking part in more initiatives to make UCI a thriving home for all.
Although great strides have been made to diversify academia, there is still a ways to go. I constantly find myself being the only woman at seminar talks, conferences, and workshops. I rarely see students from low-income or first generation backgrounds strive for higher education in mathematics and other STEM fields. At UCSD, I will contribute to diversifying academia by mentoring and organizing workshops for traditionally under represented groups in mathematics, machine learning, and data science. I will also partner up with AVID programs at local high schools in San Diego to mentor and tutor students who want to attend college. Without the help of my mentors and diversity-focused programs, I would not have had access to the amazing experience in academia that I’ve had thus far. I look forward to making education accessible to everyone, regardless of their background and helping others reach their full potential.
Certificate Programs Overview

Why enroll in a certificate program?
The GPSRC offers a wide range of certificate programs to help you enhance your knowledge and skills beyond your degree. Certificate programs are free and open to graduate students and postdoctoral scholars.

When are certificate programs offered?
Certificate programs are offered throughout the academic year. Currently, all certificate programs are offered online via Zoom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certificate Program</th>
<th>Fall 2020</th>
<th>Winter 2021</th>
<th>Spring 2021</th>
<th>Summer 2021</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellence in Engineering Communications by Activate to Captivate</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improv for Teaching by Activate to Captivate</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>New! Management Beyond the Classroom</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Electives Only</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Mentoring Excellence</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparing for Faculty Careers</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Speaking by Activate to Captivate</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</table>
Identify an issue related to equity, diversity or inclusion that you really care about (it may be motivated by personal experiences, but it does not have to be)

Focus on this issue. Reflect upon
- What you did
- What you wish you had done differently
- What else you might have done
- Would you plan do in the near future

Triangulate information (cv, cover letter, teaching statement,...)
Resources

- UCI Advance Program:
  - https://ap.uci.edu/faculty/guidance/ieactivities/

- Rutgers:

- Emory:
You can also ask questions to me (Alessandra) or to Dr. Isabella Velicogna.