

Diversity Statement

Drake Van Egdom
Statement of Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Growing up in South Dakota, I did not have the opportunity to spend time in visibly diverse environments. My undergraduate and graduate education has afforded me the chance to learn from and connect with individuals from all backgrounds, in addition to instilling a deep sense of commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. I provide the mentorship and resources necessary to support students from historically underrepresented backgrounds to meet their personal and professional goals. I demonstrate my commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion through research, teaching, mentoring, and service.

My Research on Diversity Issues

My research shows my dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion, particularly as I address issues and barriers women and parents face in 21st century workplaces. As my first author work under review at the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* and my published work at *Saint Louis University Journal of Health Law and Policy* demonstrates, I have studied women's experiences managing breastfeeding and work. Specifically, my work shows how partners influence mothers' breastfeeding and work decisions, and how organizations can optimize the tradeoffs between the two domains. On the legal side, my work reviewed the federal and state obligations for organizations to support breastfeeding employees, along with evidence-based recommendations. My research also addresses how parents, especially mothers, manage their work and family roles and how work-family policies can support them. My work under review at *Personnel Psychology* focuses on how work-family policies contribute to parents' productivity trends with critical implications for ensuring equitable career outcomes. In the future, I will continue to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in organizations through my research as I learn and grow as an ally and researcher.

Creating an Equitable and Inclusive Classroom

The University of Houston, a Hispanic serving institution with 32% Hispanic and 10% Black students, is the educational home to mostly first-generation and working students eager to realize their full potential through Higher Education. This afforded me the opportunity to teach students of varied backgrounds and to exercise inclusion efforts in my classroom. Working and learning at UH allows me to effectively meet the needs of such students and ensure equity and inclusion permeate my teaching. Consequently, I have adapted my teaching to best facilitate my students' learning. Representation matters, so I supplement articles my students read with videos and podcasts featuring speakers from historically underrepresented backgrounds. I want my students to see experts and role models that look like them, so they know that they too can be leaders in their field. As discussed in my teaching statement, I focus each assignment and discussion on bringing out each student's voice and sharing their lived experiences.

Over the past several years in the classroom, I have learned (as we all have) that outside and uncontrollable forces have a direct impact on my students. I have taught through several external events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, power outages, and natural disasters and make sure to work with my students to continue to give them a platform to succeed. When students face difficulties, I emphasize an inclusive and empathetic classroom focusing on being flexible with

Diversity Statement

how students learn. The diversity at the University of Houston means students come from many different life situations. My students manage school, work, caregiving responsibilities, physical health, mental health, and life in general. For example, my students have a wide range of caregiving responsibilities, including taking care of their children, grandchildren, siblings, and elderly family members. In all situations, I strive to be empathetic and encouraging in an effort to give all students an equal chance of success.

I work with each student to ensure they can meet their learning goals. Where possible, I extend the same adaptations to the whole class to provide the most equitable experience for all of my students. Students may not know they can ask for modifications to the course, or they may not want to disclose their situation. My goal is to anticipate students' difficulties, such that they are supported and do not need to disclose. For example, when students disclosed challenges in completing group assignments, I adapted the course to provide an individual asynchronous option for all students in both courses and re-iterated the expectations for respectful and inclusive discussions. Several students were grateful they had the opportunity to manage their school and life responsibilities better. At the beginning of the semester, I also check in with students I notice are struggling to complete assignments, and I address any issues or concerns. I reassure them that I am there to facilitate their learning as best as possible and that I want my students to succeed.

I also make an active effort to give students an insight into future academic pursuits. I discuss graduate school during the last class of each semester and schedule individual meetings with interested students to provide targeted advice. My goal is to improve diversity in graduate programs and reduce inequities in graduate school knowledge. I reveal some of the unspoken expectations for graduate programs, including choosing between master's vs. doctorate, career paths, identifying an advisor, and applying. Most students may not know about these opportunities, or they may not know what questions to ask.

Mentoring Underrepresented Individuals

My commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is also evident in my mentorship. As an undergraduate and graduate student, I have received exceptional mentorship that I look forward to emulating in my mentorship model. My advisor's lab is diverse, including Hispanic, Black, Nigerian, Pakistani, and Chinese graduate students and several students with caregiving responsibilities. I am committed to recruiting diverse mentees and supporting their personal and career success. As discussed in my teaching statement, I co-founded an undergraduate research assistant program to recruit diverse students and reduce inequities in graduate programs. The research assistant program includes matching graduate mentors with undergraduate students, monthly informational meetings, and research projects. I personally mentored undergraduate students, guided them through their research projects and honor's thesis, and advised them on their options for graduate school.

I fully recognize that I will never understand students' experiences from historically underrepresented backgrounds through lived experience. However, I am committed to providing mentorship that furthers my students' career and life goals. For the areas where I lack experience, I connect my mentees to the resources and individuals that can meet their needs, support their success, and advance my learning and understanding on those topics. For example, my undergraduate mentee wanted more information on master's programs to make the right

Diversity Statement

decision for her situation. I connected her with individuals with master's degrees in different career stages to better understand the application process, graduate program experience, and career options. My mentors have been exceptional advocates for diversity, equity, and inclusion, and I look forward to creating a similarly supportive and impactful environment for undergraduate and graduate students at **X**.

Service in Professional Organizations

In addition to mentoring, I have championed diversity, equity, and inclusion through my leadership in professional organizations, specifically addressing the barriers to attending conferences for individuals with caregiving needs. I have been a member of the Family Care subcommittee within The Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology's (SIOP) Women's Inclusion Network committee from 2018-2022, and I led the subcommittee 2021-2022. During my time, I successfully presented the SIOP executive board with recommendations for supporting caregiving needs at the annual conference and published a commentary on our recommendations in *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*. The Family Care Grant was approved and assists 20 graduate students and early career members in attending the annual conference. I have continually advocated for ensuring the process is as inclusive and equitable as possible throughout the years. For example, I expanded the grant's definition of caregiving responsibilities to include children, elders, and persons with disabilities. The grant money can be used for any caregiving-related expenses for attending the annual conference, creating an equitable solution for a diverse range of needs. I look forward to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within the management field and at the **University of X**.

Future Advocacy

I demonstrate my commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion through research, teaching, mentoring, and service. I look forward to continuing my advocacy as I advance my awareness and appreciation of these opportunities and challenges. Given the **University of X's** commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, I believe that I would meaningfully contribute to the university's goals and values.