

Diversity Statement

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In a personal capacity, I am an out and proud member of the Sam Houston State University and Huntsville/Houston, Texas LGBTQ+ community, and survivor of childhood domestic violence. I use these experiences to inform my efforts as an ally to marginalized people across communities. In my work as an educator, I strive to build an inclusive, safe, and diverse class environment. As an academic, I am active in efforts to increase diversity both within the field of political science and on Sam Houston State University's campus.

In classes, my primary duty is to magnify the perspectives of students, communities, and scholars. Their experiences and work are crucial for a full understanding of politics, political science, and the people-centered consequences of both. However, it is inappropriate to expect students to be their own advocates, and it is not the duty of a student to educate their peers or instructor. To this end, I have built inclusive syllabi that emphasize the contributions and perspectives of female, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and other scholars from marginalized communities.

My course structures are designed to emphasize discussions of diversity in the classroom. For example, my introductory American Government courses spend three weeks exploring the insidious role that slavery and racism play in US politics. International relations courses begin with confronting the eugenic, racist, and colonial origins of the subfield. Throughout, we discuss the works of contemporaneous advocates and scholars who first criticized these structures to emphasize the importance of anti-racist discourse and understand that these ideas were not simply "how everyone thought at the time." This approach also illustrates how early racist influences still harm marginalized communities, bias modern political analysis, and reiterates the importance of a critical approach to social science.

I also focus on issues of physical and mental illness/disability. As outlined in my teaching statement, my courses are structured so that students can successfully engage with the class regardless of their health status and ability to access additional resources.

Outside the classroom, my service work is dedicated to improving campus diversity. I serve on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. For the last three years, I have served as chair of the committee's LGBTQ+ working group. We have run roundtables discussing the intersection of students' LGBTQ+ identities and their racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. We are also working with members of the local community, university, and student body to construct an LGBTQ+ Pride Center on campus. I also serve as a faculty mentor for the university's R.O.A.D. to PhD program dedicated to closing the race gap in PhD achievement by helping minority students navigate the highly competitive, vague, and often hostile world of graduate school.

In summary, I work to be an example, advocate, and ally who provides consistent support to those in marginalized student and faculty communities. While my current efforts are tailored to issues unique to Sam Houston State's campus, I look forward to adapting what I have done and learned to a new environment.