

Statement about my past, present, and future contributions to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in my professional career

Addressing equity issues affecting first-generation, low-income, and/or underrepresented communities like myself has been one of my most fundamental undertakings as an academic and activist at Eastern Washington University (EWU). Many of our students arrive ill-prepared for university-level coursework. These students struggle with essential reading and writing skills. They encounter significant financial, social, and cultural barriers as they try to navigate an academic space that is not always welcoming. Furthermore, these students' cultural, economic, racial, and linguistic particularities are commonly framed through a deficiency lens. Meaning, that it is the student or community that is the source of deficiency and lack of motivation to learn. This deficit model can lead to a belief that there is nothing that we can do to change that. Instead, we should reflect on how we need to rethink our curriculum, teaching strategies, school structure, and support services to engage the most marginalized students. As a teacher, my curriculum and teaching strategy critiques the historical roots of inequality, but I continually rethink how I can address these inequities to empower students to see themselves and their communities as examples of historical resilience. Basic things such as connecting students with campus and community resources, library access to educational media, scaffolding assignments, flexible office hours, and integrating a wide range of voices in my class lectures can make a difference for students to feel integrated and seen.

Beyond the classroom, my collaboration in cultural, academic, and advocacy events for social justice have been the vital characteristic of my service. Since I arrived at EWU, I have organized and participated in 24 events supporting and making connection with underrepresented communities, especially Latinx communities. For example, every year I coordinate with student organizations, academic units, and community partners to celebrate the Day of the Dead (Día de Los Muertos). These events occur at various venues at EWU, the Spokane Public Libraries, and in Spokane Valley in collaboration with the Hispanic Business and Professional Association (HBPA). These types of events create opportunities for Latinx students to share their culture with respect and dignity, see themselves as part of the EWU community, and educate non-Latinx communities about their complex cultural richness. Although undervalued in the tenure process, these events are essential to student retention, community engagement, cultural diversity, and integration of first-generation Latinx students and their families.

In addition to cultural and academic events, I have a long trajectory of advocacy for social justice-related issues, including DACA, immigration, discrimination, equity in education, gender equality, to mention a few. For instance, the leadership change in Washington D.C. in 2016 led to increased anxiety among various marginalized communities, especially Latinx undocumented immigrants. This problematic political and social climate let me collaborate with various faculty across campus to organize a petition to make EWU a Sanctuary campus. Although our efforts gained significant attention, backlash within the community was more substantial and we were unable to make EWU a sanctuary campus. However, thanks to those initial efforts, I am proud to say that many fantastic initiatives emanated through people's commitment across the university and others gained considerable momentum. Today at EWU, we have resource pages, a student organization, a scholarship, and a university committee

dedicated to helping undocumented students. Most recently, the Chicana/o/x Studies Program closely collaborated with the Multicultural Center to develop the first UndocuALLY training. Finally, in the past five years, I have been part of a wide range of committees mostly in advisory capacity related to diversity, equity, and inclusion work, such as the Hispanic Serving Institution Task Force Committee, the new Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Council in support of Dr. Shari Clarke, President Mary Cullinan's Student Retention Committee, and the Advisory Board for Faculty Diversity under former Provost Gordon.

In my current role as the Director of Chicana/o/x Studies Program and the College Assistance Migrant Program's Academic Director (C.A.M.P.), I am leading a wide range of initiatives and collaborations to recruit and retain underrepresented students, families, and communities. These key initiatives include developing a mentoring program that aims to support first-generation Latinx and African American students transitioning from high school through early career professionals. I am also implementing a new comprehensive curriculum for migrant and first-generation students in collaboration with university and community stakeholders. I have developed a bilingual website for the Chicana/o/x Studies Program supporting and connecting students, their families, and communities to resources. My continuous partnerships with essential community organizations such as the Hispanic Business and Professional Association (HBPA) and Raiz of Planned Parenthood allow me to connect students with community members and resources. I have also designed culturally relevant and ethical events, such as our recent Indigenous Chocolate Masterclass, which help us connect with our alumni and community members, fundraise, engage students, and ethically support Mexico's Indigenous peoples.

Other efforts of mine focus on mentoring, supporting, and advocating for the needs and strengths of my tenured and non-tenured track Latinx faculty members as well as my staff. They all engage in diversity and inclusion work and are strongly motivated by a commitment to serve underrepresented students, families, and communities. Therefore, I am committed to find additional resources, support their initiatives, offer them a balanced schedule, connect them with potential mentors, protect their time to conduct research, advocate for their needs, and ensure that their labor is never invisible or exploitative.

My future vision for integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion in our new College of Humanities and Social Science CHSS considers the demographic and economic shifts that will bring more students from historically underrepresented and underserved communities to our campus during budget and program reductions. The pathway that I have already laid out at EWU since my arrival illustrates my commitment to implementing evidence-based strategies to recruit, retain, support, and prepare students to be successful beyond graduation. Our new CHSS has a privileged position to be the leading force for implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives as we strive to become a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). CHSS will house essential programs for the HSI initiative and address social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in useful ways. However, it is crucial to understand that it will require stakeholders' commitment and contributions from all units. We cannot continue to place the burden of diversity and inclusion solely on programs and individuals whose underrepresented identities are already taxed. We need to encourage others willing to support and commit themselves to engaging in inclusion and diversity work. Our college has the vital expertise to develop

evidence-based training for our faculty through a framework of cultural humility in order to maintain an interpersonal stance that is open to others' differences and incorporates a commitment to self-evaluation and critique to address inequities.

Furthermore, our ability to recruit, retain, and successfully prepare students to succeed for a twentieth-first century world requires the support of faculty and staff that share, understand, and connect with the needs and strengths of the students and families we serve. In the context of economic austerity measures, decreasing enrollment, program reduction, and increasingly diversified student demographics, we must develop a strategy of increasing, retaining and cultivating the faculty talent we already have (including lecturers). The first step is to identify the faculty members who are already engaging in diversity, equity, and inclusion to support their needs. Also, we need to implement mentoring programs, one for faculty of color and those who actively engage in inclusion and diversity work as well as a mentoring program for chairs/directors to guide them on how to support their junior faculty mindfully. Another essential piece to retain our talent is to create the spaces and opportunities for full professors to invite junior faculty to participate in collaborative research projects as first authors. One of the biggest obstacles for underrepresented junior faculty who engage in diversity and inclusion activities, in particular, is finding the time to write and publish their research. Full professors from across disciplines would benefit from the cutting-edge ideas from junior faculty while supporting their advance for tenure. Finally, a re-evaluation of the value of service for *active* underrepresented faculty is a necessary step to retain our talent. The College of Humanities and Social Science, in particular, needs to be at the forefront of strategizing the allocation of resources for diversity, equity, and inclusion and how faculty (and lecturers) who engage in that work are evaluated. While diversity, equity, and inclusion work are essential for students' recruitment and retention, they are not adequately valued or rewarded.

In conclusion, as outlined through these pages, my approach to promoting and *implementing* diversity, equity, and inclusion goes beyond the professional realm because it is an integral aspect of my sense of self and everyday life. Through my knowledge, I understand the dangers the current economic, social, and political climate can lead to the empty use of statements promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion as mere marketing schemes. And now more than ever, it is vital that we do not continue with the same trends of the past and instead reallocate resources to make diversity, equity, and inclusion at the center of our efforts.