

Commitment to Diversity

During my undergraduate experience at Vanderbilt University, I founded a student organization to support and foster community among students from low socio-economic backgrounds, and this experience has significantly impacted my development as an individual and scholar. The mentoring that we provided through a partnership with the Graduate Student Union helped foster an environment for academic and social success, and led directly to my interest in pursuing a doctoral degree. As I reflect on my teaching and research, I am delighted to discover opportunities to continue serving this population. Advancing diversity requires contributions from multiple constituents, and I have endeavored to lead these efforts throughout my educational and professional journey.

At Notre Dame, I taught a section of the Moreau First Year Experience Course, incorporating topics of diversity and inclusion to increase cultural awareness and competencies in my students. Conversations centered on the writings of minority alumni who have achieved both local and global success, and emphasized strategies for overcoming challenges faced in the students' own lives. I have also taken an active role in developing outreach programs that make positive impacts on my fellow graduate students who may come from underrepresented groups. While the undergraduate population is well-represented by student organizations that offer a wide range of opportunities, minority graduate students sometimes struggle to find their connection to campus. To help prevent this from happening, I have served in a liaison capacity on the Graduate Student Life committee and organized an orientation event that introduced incoming students to available resources and support.

Moving forward, my research in economics will be used to create platforms for increasing access to educational opportunities among all groups. In partnership with engineers from the National Society for Immigrant Education, we are developing new technologies that will lower the costs for universities to offer affordable training programs in the community. I will continue pursuing external funding sources to further develop and promote this research, and to provide mentoring and training opportunities for immigrant and minority community members to bring these programs to their areas. The application of my scholarly research represents a continuation of efforts that began as an undergraduate and will extend throughout my academic career, and I count these prior successes among my proudest achievements.