

I believe that understanding the importance of EDI begins with recognizing the nearly-infinite dimensions along which individuals develop their identities and how these identities are uniquely valuable to society, workplaces, and classrooms. There are, of course, primary dimensions along which diversity occurs: race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc., each of which impacts the individual through the societal institutions which are associated with these identities. However, it is not any single dimension which creates a person, but rather the combination of each of them which makes someone unique. For example, people of the same ability of different races will see the world differently, adding gender to the mix further differentiates. Then if one further considers religion, sexual orientation, family background, etc., we observe such a host of contributing factors that it becomes impossible for any two people to share the exact same perspectives, tendencies, and behaviors. These differences are intuitively and scientifically valuable because it is in this individualization where unique innovations and ideas arise. As an economist, I am fundamentally interested in human behavior and manners in which all humans can be better off. In my personal work, I focus much on what we call "heterogeneity." That is, how do different people respond differently to the same stimulus? Much scientific research, especially that in the social sciences, concerns itself primarily with how people respond on average. However, I have always believed and thus work hard to shed light on the limitations of this approach and the inefficient policies this leads to regarding societal welfare. In truth, the field requires a much deeper understanding of how people of different values, identities, and backgrounds behave, what they care about, and how they are differentially impacted by economic forces.

I believe that not only should we seek to further understand how different people are impacted by and respond to policies, institutions, and events, but we should work to champion those differences in all settings. As an instructor, this begins by establishing a learning environment where different ideas may be shared freely and in a manner where they are not seen as divisive, but rather as simply unique and valuable. In order to be successful in establishing such a collaborative environment, it is key to continue my personal growth and understanding of EDI and to strive to tailor my course to best engage students of different race, ability, gender, etc. The greatest goal of an instructor should be to endlessly search for better ways to foster learning for their students, and it is clear that embracing diversity of thought by celebrating uniqueness is one such method.