

Statement of Contributions to Diversity and Inclusion

As a faculty member at the University of California, Berkeley, I will contribute to the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion through my mentoring approach, my teaching, my professional service activities as well as my overall interactions with the student community.

In my research, I **train and mentor a diverse body of students and technicians and provide assistance according to each participant's needs**. For example, while conducting my field research in Madagascar, I worked with a multicultural team that included American undergraduates and Malagasy students and technicians (who came from three different ethnic/cultural groups within Madagascar). I presented instructions in both English and Malagasy to accommodate everyone, and used different approaches to explain the scientific concepts and methods to make it easy to grasp for the local villagers with little to no education (but who were familiar with the local fauna and flora and worked as field technicians). Given that cultural understanding played a great part in working with the villagers, I attempted to embrace their culture while sharing my own, and I encouraged all team members to do the same. In doing so, I managed to create an environment of mutual respect and collaboration within the team, despite of everyone's differences and language barrier. Working with such a diverse group in a team environment provided rich environment for idea exchange and a diversity of perspectives for effective problem-solving.

Similarly, I attempt to be inclusive in my classroom by **promoting the participation of students from different background and ensuring that everyone has a chance to express their opinions**. To do this, I divide students in small groups or pairs to discuss a particular topic, and then take turn in presenting the group's opinions. To engage less-assertive students, I give them ample time to think about the topic and write down their thoughts before presenting in class. I also ensure that I offer lectures and activities adapted to a diverse body of students with different needs. For example, my class requires student groups to write-up a manuscript on a project they conduct throughout the semester and then to give an oral presentation in class; thus, besides teaching them the concepts of the course subject, I also offer lectures on how to effectively write a paper and to give oral presentations. In addition, I divide up the project and writing into several phases, so I can provide them with feedback, as we progress, to improve their final products. These activities will allow those who have been little exposed to scientific communications to be well equipped with the necessary tools and to boost their confidence and productivity. It is also a chance for those who have had such opportunities to improve their skills. In addition to being inclusive, I also **convey a diversity of perspectives in my teaching**, by discussing and giving examples from various systems, from tropical forest ecosystems to our backyard. I also use my own research to explain a particular topic that I am teaching.

I strive to **promote the success of underrepresented groups** through research mentoring and capacity building activities, and by organizing platforms for knowledge exchange. I have mentored and worked with 14 female students in collaborative research projects (■■■■ whom are based in a developing country). I have published research with four different ■■■■ undergraduate students, and have a manuscript in review with another one. In addition, I have co-organized conferences, seminars and a series of career building workshops for graduate students and early-career scientists and scholars in Madagascar. Among these, I co-organized a conference with a major theme around women in science and their inputs for the development of scientific research in Madagascar. Activities during the conference included plenary talks by successful Malagasy women scientists from various fields, presentation by students and early-career scientists, professional development workshops and discussion panels. The panels assembled successful women scientists with different background and different career paths, and policy- and decision-makers, and focused on empowering women in science and finding strategies to

increase the participation of women in the science world. During this conference, I led a workshop on scientific communications, focusing on writing and publishing scientific manuscripts; 50% of the participants were women. In addition, I actively participated in a steering committee founding the Africa Chapter of the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation (ATBC). This Chapter is a network of tropical biologists from Africa and/or conducting research in any African region and is expected to promote African scientists while increasing the diversity of members within the association.

Furthermore, I have been actively engaged in groups of women in sciences that **develop and implement strategies for encouraging girls and women to pursue STEM fields and how to overcome barriers to our own careers in science**. I have co-designed and presented hands-on science workshops to 5th-8th grade girls at the annual Sally Ride Science Festival at Rice University, a program organized to excite young girls from low income and culturally diverse neighborhoods about careers in STEM fields. I also shared my knowledge in ecology with students in local K-12 schools in Houston by participating in an afterschool program called *Family Science Event*, where children and their families experience hands-on science activities with active researchers in various fields of science. I am currently coordinating the activities of the North America Chapter of Ikala STEM, an association of Malagasy women in STEM around the world with the goal of promoting education and science in Madagascar and to raise the profile of Malagasy women in STEM. We provide capacity building activities to empower Malagasy girls and women for the advancement of science in Madagascar.

Finally, [REDACTED], I aim to establish myself as a role model for young generations, especially those who identify themselves in similar way. My experience as [REDACTED] studying in the US and my challenges as a [REDACTED] leading a research team in [REDACTED] at a research center hosting primarily multi-national foreign researchers from western countries, gave me a **deeper perspective regarding the importance of multicultural diversity in undergraduate education** as well as the recognition that the continued advancement of STEM fields will require unconventional thinkers with a diversity of perspectives. The initial confusion of seeing a [REDACTED] as a mentor and project leader to US students and research assistants (I was often presumed to be working for them), eventually led to stereotypes being broken and contributed to building a culture of mutual respect. My role as a PI broke the traditional hierarchy among cultural groups at the research station and resulted in shifted attitudes and behaviors. I also saw my position as a research leader create a positive impact on the Malagasy students. By being able to see themselves in my role, they gained self-confidence and even shifted their career goals towards higher aspirations. I became their mentor not just in research but in how to pursue a career in STEM. Furthermore, I have given lectures and acted as a mentor to US undergraduates on study abroad programs visiting my research site in Madagascar, during which I provided advice about being a successful female student while inspiring them in continuing their studies in sciences. I hope to use my personal experience to inspire students to be successful in their education and to motivate them. I hope that my interactions with students will spark interests and inspirations in them. I will let students know that I am available to provide guidance for their current and future academic / professional plans and to discuss their current research.

These experiences demonstrate that I can be a valuable member of UC Berkeley, contributing effectively to equity, diversity and inclusion in the department and across campus, as well as through professional services. I will continue these activities that have been successful in increasing diversity in science and will participate in various initiatives on campus.