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Diversity Statement

Diversity in the classroom is much more than who we are and where we are from; in order to address it, we as educators need to be willing to identify and address our learned biases and those of our students and colleagues. We must endeavor to recognize bias and institutional barriers that negatively impact the educational access of underrepresented or marginalized groups. With this recognition, it is my hope that we can create an inclusive environment of respect, open dialogue and equity.

I have had the opportunity to teach a range of people from all different backgrounds. I worked with high risk youth in detention and seniors in assisted living facilities; I taught middle and high school art at a charter school that served the Hispanic population in Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and I worked for the Print Center's Artists in Schools program that served inner city high school students in Philadelphia. In my current position at West Virginia University, I regularly engage first generation students from rural Appalachia and have seen a marked increase in openly LGBTQIA+ students in the classroom.

I have seen how systematic inequalities can hinder a student's ability to succeed. The question of how to create an equitable world is overwhelming at times, but the effort to make the classroom a place where all students feel comfortable can start with simple changes such as asking students preferred pronouns, refraining from using gendered language in the classroom and actively working to include diverse populations when presenting artist's work.