

In my teaching and mentoring, I emphasize a growth mindset philosophy. I make it a point to remind students that no one is born knowing everything - or even knowing much at all. Knowledge and skill are developed through a process of learning, rather than innately endowed. As a minority woman in STEM, I am all too familiar with the messages society sends about the innate abilities, or lack thereof, of those who are different. A growth mindset can counter the harmful effects of these prevalent biases by empowering the marginalized individual to drive their own intellectual development and success, rather than helplessly resign to the limitations dictated by these stereotypes.

My commitment to diversity and inclusion is demonstrated by my outreach work which I see as a very important part of my work as a scientist. In particular, I feel that it is crucial to offer access to the world of scientific research to underrepresented individuals in STEM. Several times a year, I give talks to various groups of high school and junior high school-aged students from underrepresented backgrounds. I not only tell them about my work, I also try to give them a sense of what it is like to actually do my work. I tell them about what a typical day is like for me and what my work environment is like. Painting a picture of my life as a scientist gives them license to imagine themselves in that frame as well. In this endeavor, I developed a pilot project to give students an inside view of my day to day life at work through Snapchat Stories. Maintaining a constant level of daily content proved to be far more time consuming than I had anticipated, so I have put the project on hold until I can recruit a content manager to assist me. I am looking forward to having the support and funds to reboot this and other outreach projects.

In my professional development, I continuously educate myself by attending workshops and seminars about diversity, equity, and inclusion. This spring, I enrolled in a workshop at UW on writing diversity statements, and I actually learned a lot about the issues surrounding minority student and faculty retention, gender discrimination, and why it is important for institutions to even ask for statements from candidates about their commitment to diversity. I see it as my responsibility to arm myself with knowledge so that I can bring an informed perspective to my work environment that will benefit everyone. In my current setting, I am an advocate and a safe harbor to the young women in our lab. They often come to me for advice on navigating issues of bias and fairness. Last year when a group convened to decide on which speakers to invite to our seminar series, I interjected early on to bring attention to the fact that seminar series in past years were lacking in gender and racial diversity. I asked the group to take a moment to relax their internal schemas before contributing their suggestions for potential speakers. That year we invited a record number of women speakers and had more diversity than in past years.

I recently participated in the BRAINS fellowship, an NIH program dedicated to supporting minority neuroscientists in their early careers. In addition to receiving a tremendous amount of support and access to resources for myself, I learned about the steps I can take to make my own lab an inclusive space. I am looking forward to creating a lab handbook when I start my own group that sets standards for the lab culture I hope to foster. It will also outline my expectations for students, trainees, and for myself. For example, what criteria should be met for authorship, what my expectations are for participation in lab meetings and attendance at seminars, how to handle conflicts with colleagues and advisors, and what my trainees and

employees can expect from me in terms of mentoring time and access to resources. Laying these expectations out upfront is a technique called Frontloading. By setting these expectations outright, I hope to avoid unnecessary conflict. A mistaken perception of bias or discrimination is less likely if my group members know that I expect the same work ethics of participation and compassion from everyone.

The steps that I have taken and plan to take to foster an inclusive environment connect with my broader views on inclusion. Inclusion comes from a joint effort to make systemic change. I look forward to being in a position where I can use my tactics and knowledge to have a greater influence on changing the systems that are in need of becoming more inclusive; a position such as chairing a panel, running a lab, or sitting on a committee for admissions or hiring. I am a believer in the power of empathy. It is our greatest superpower to transport oneself into the experiences and emotions of another. I rely on this power to check my own bias, but also to deal with people who become defensive when I try to check them. Speaking out and speaking up are not easy, and often this is the burden placed on those who represent a minority or marginalized group. Nonetheless, it is important to do and it is much easier when one is equipped with information, resources, and support.