

1. DEI and Mentoring Philosophy

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) requires creating and maintaining a space of respect and value for differences in race, gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, socio-economic class, and any other form of social or personal identity. Based on my experience incorporating DEI into my workplace, I have identified three main areas of consideration: understanding how my own background can have an impact on others, creating a culture that brings women and minorities into traditionally male and white areas, and making the opaque academic system transparent to my students through mentorship.

The impact that I have on others is borne by my customs, social skills, and use of language. My ethnic background determines how I interact with others, as well as how I am perceived by those around me. For example, I come from a large Greek family in West Philadelphia. We are very animated and greet people with handshakes, hugs, and kisses (embodied in the Greek *φιλοτιμο*). However, in the U.S., this is not a universally shared cultural norm, and may not always be appreciated. Awareness of these types of interactions can improve my ability to create an environment where advisor-advisee interactions are appropriately welcoming.

I will endeavor to fill gaps in my laboratory and community culture by seeking to bring women and minorities into traditionally male and white circles. At a laboratory level, equity starts with how I assign work. After reading undergraduate applications for a research opportunity program and serving on an MIT institute-wide committee for education policy, I noticed that women tended to have significantly more teaching and service activities on their CV. I discovered that this can largely occur because women may more frequently be asked to do service work in universities than men would be. I therefore intend to support the promotion of women in my laboratory to research project leadership roles and to include them in fundraising activities. This will both elevate their academic profiles and help launch their careers.

I have already successfully mentored three students from diverse backgrounds. Caleb successfully completed his Bachelor's thesis and Sebastien is writing the results of his summer work into a publication. Kimberley is currently working with me on liquid-state thermopower measurements. By treating our relationship as a collaboration and guiding my students through the potential pitfalls in the academy, I provided them the space to grow as both people and researchers. I demonstrated to them that the advisor-student relationship is a collaboration, not an employer-employee contract. This approach can be successfully applied to managing a lab that includes international students and people from across the United States. I am convinced that these efforts will improve my ability to hire, retain, and mentor world-class colleagues in the future, when given the opportunity to do so.