Diversity Statement

Collaboration among a diverse student body fosters a creative and stimulating learning environment. The exposure of students to a variety of viewpoints promotes intellectual growth both inside and outside of the classroom. Having taught at a small liberal arts school, a technical institute, and a large university, I have found that to successfully teach students with widely varying backgrounds, it is necessary to create a safe and encouraging environment to facilitate open discussions. Motivated by my own experiences in mathematics, I am passionate about encouraging students, especially those in underrepresented groups, to have confidence in themselves and their mathematical abilities.

As a woman in science, as well as a first generation college student, I have ample experience as part of a minority. As a student, I rarely had female professors and all of my research advisors (undergraduate, graduate, and postdoc) have been men. I first experienced female mentorship at a workshop sponsored by the Association for Women in Mathematics (AWM) during the summer of 2015, where I discovered the empowerment in identifying with my mentor on more than one level. As a result of this experience, I became more actively involved in programs designed to bring excitement for science to women in the community and raise awareness of successful women in STEM fields. I founded an AWM student chapter at Rensselaer to foster collaboration among women at the college and, as president of this chapter, I invited female speakers to the dynamical systems seminar. I reached out the community by opening a dialogue with a local program called Girls, Inc., an association that encourages young women in impoverished areas to be strong, independent, and motivated. At Courant, I joined the NYU chapter of the Women in Science group where we design and perform science experiments in 4th and 5th grade classrooms at a middle school designed for at-risk girls in order to foster excitement about science. I also recently joined the Proud to be First program at NYU as an advocate to support first-generation college students by sharing my story and being available for conversation and support. Since my own experience with a female mentor, I have served as a mentor to four female undergraduate students, one of whom wrote in her end-of-summer survey that I “always made her feel welcome and comfortable enough to ask questions,” which is what I strive to do for all of my research mentees, regardless of their background, as well as my students in the classroom.

In order for students to benefit from a diverse classroom, it is necessary to construct a safe environment in which students feel comfortable and accepted. I promote an inclusive community in my classroom and during office hours by ensuring that each student has an equal opportunity to voice their opinions, as well as acknowledge and responding respectfully to each student. I strive to encourage students of all social and economic backgrounds, skin color, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, and political views to reach for their goals and will continue to encourage minorities to engage in scientific areas of study. In particular, I plan to increase the visibility of the contributions of minorities in mathematics by including diverse sets of images and pronouns on worksheets, as well as highlight the achievements of minority scientists. In the community, I hope to generate interest in STEM fields by continuing to participate in, or develop, programs that provide equal opportunities to learn and grow in mathematics for all members of the community. I am excited about encouraging education through collaboration both in the community, as well as in my classes, and I hope that I can contribute to fostering a more diverse college and society.