As a professor, scholar and citizen of the world it is my duty to ensure that I am engaging in activities that promote opportunities for groups whose voices are historically marginalized, ignored and / or outright silenced. As a first-generation student that attended a community college, private university, an urban university, and a traditional state university during my academic journey, I have witnessed the struggles that many of my peers faced across racial, gender and socioeconomic lines. My commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity is personal. Professors, colleagues, and friends who have identified as one or more underrepresented groups whether by their gender, race, ethnicity and / or other identifiers historically used to oppress are people that have served as the protagonists within my academic trek.

A major component of my teaching philosophy is a commitment to diversity and social equity through the personal participation in professional development opportunities that relate to improving non-traditional ways of teaching, evidenced by teaching certifications on course content including improving educational methods (online and HyFlex methods) and promoting inclusivity (Serving adult learners, creating LGBTQIA+ safe spaces and facilitating racial injustice classroom conversations). I have utilized university-level awards for institution-wide teaching conferences / initiatives to improve my ability to reach students of all backgrounds. I have taken steps to promote diversity and inclusion by assigning articles by underrepresented scholars as well. This gives students the opportunity to identify with the author in instances where maybe they haven’t and to hear perspectives that traditionally are not assigned.

My research informs my teaching and I take the impacts of my research and infuse related discussion in my classes. While public marketing and branding from a strategic management policy perspective is my “home base” and is a topic that students find intriguing, I started engaging in public administration research that expands student knowledge and amplify discussions on diversity and social equity in my classes. Dr. James Wright II of Florida State University and I have published research in *Public Administration Review* (2022) and *Administrative Theory & Practice* (2021) that examines protests highlighting systemic racism and the growing role of American Black athletes (both men and women) speaking on administrative state discourse and social policy and the impact it has on American public administration. With this research stream, I have chosen intentionally to collaborate with scholars that identify as BIPOC (Wright) and women such as Dr. Jamie Levine Daniel of IUPUI. Our most recent work together was published in *Administration & Society*. It is important to connect culturally appropriate voices on the matter and to expand the quantity of people engaging in this newer area of public administration research. The breadth of the content has implications for creating and testing new theories on while simultaneously providing an empirical understanding of how emergent stakeholders can strategically manage their voices and impact public policy. In all areas, I make a concerted effort to cite underrepresented voices where applicable.

My teaching and research parlays into service. When possible, I attempt to engage in opportunities that enable me to learn more about my academic and local communities and ones where I am exposed to perspectives and experiences that differ from my own. I currently serve as an Executive Board member of ASPA-Cascades and as a MPSA 2021-22 academic mentor where I am matched with an individual representing a different racial / ethnic identity than my own, which allows me to better serve as an advocate for students of all backgrounds. I have extensive university and department service, most notably recently participating on the VSU Faculty Senate and NCAA Athletic Committees in addition to multiple college and department committees. In my former communities, I served on the Leon County (FL) Affordable Housing Advisory Committee as a student at FSU. I was also the Secretary & Treasurer for the Oregon Governor’s Council on Fitness and Sports and was a member of the Beaverton (OR) Human Rights Advisory Council. In recent years, as I’ve started to understand the value of true representation within these positions, I have sought to encourage more diverse voices when available. If given the opportunity at this institution, I would welcome the opportunity to work towards bringing practitioners and scholars from underrepresented backgrounds to speak to not only my classroom but to the students in the department as well. I would also like to bring students into the secondary research stream that examines issues associated with protests highlighting systemic racism and the growing role of American Black athletes (both men and women) speaking on administrative state discourse and encourage conference proposals and ultimately co-publishing of papers related to that content. As America’s demographics change, the need to engage in conversations on economic, social, and racial inequalities are more important than ever.

My classroom philosophy is best characterized by one key statement I consistently relay to my students: ‘I care about [the student] more as a person than as a letter grade.’ I take a holistic approach and have students at the graduate and undergraduate levels participate in personal reflection where I get to know them as people first and foremost. In doing so, I establish a rapport, which ultimately leads to high levels of engagement in discussion, where personal application of content takes place. In my experience, students that are engaged almost always attain the grade they desired at the outset, but more importantly connect to the material. As a first-generation college graduate, who along the way has attended a community college, a private university, an urban university, and a traditional state university, I am confident in my ability to reach nearly everyone I teach.