

# Minorities and Diversity Statement

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I genuinely believe that every faculty member must be committed to guaranteeing that everyone receives equal opportunities to excel in their scholarly activities. The following paragraphs summarize my past and current experiences in this matter, which align with current societal efforts towards diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Improving gender equality is a crucial and essential step in STEM programs. However, it is still necessary to keep a broader focus on minorities. In my view, diversity also means providing opportunities for both underrepresented and socioeconomically underprivileged students. As a first-generation college student, I know firsthand how difficult it was to navigate the college environment and feel lost about my career decisions. Thereby, as a faculty at the University of Concepcion (Chile), I have always been attentive to struggling and demotivated undergraduate students. I am convinced that a cooperative environment can better prepare students to become professionals.

After finishing my Ph.D., I came back to Chile and committed myself to increase Latinos' representation in American Universities. I pledge to motivate my students to fulfill their dreams by helping them apply to top ISE programs in the US. I am proud of having the opportunity to mentor six exceptional undergraduate students to be accepted in competitive Ph.D. programs. However, in the process, I also understood the struggle of many female students who did not have the same opportunities as their male counterparts. Even though I tried to motivate as many as possible, it was challenging to break cultural stereotypes. In the end, the interested number of female students was notoriously lower, which is dismal for an equally balanced department.

As a Latino immigrant in the United States and a former Ph.D. student at NCSU, I am sensitive to the challenges and stereotypes minorities face. I am optimistic that I could support all LatinX students who do not receive mentoring in the LatinX style. As an active member of the NCSU Latin American Student Association, I participated in outreach activities in local high schools in the Raleigh area that needed native Spanish speakers to share their international experience. The interaction with young Americans was eye-opening and motivated me to continue working in this kind of activity once I returned to Chile. Moreover, as a Fulbright scholar, I was one of the founding members of the NCSU Fulbright students association, probably the most culturally diverse association in the University. The idea of the association was no other than Senator Fulbright's own, allowing its members to appreciate others' viewpoints and beliefs, the way they do things, and the way they think.