

Diversity and equity are an integral part of any successful social group. Whether it be a private company's executive board or the student population of research university, being conscious of diversity can help organizations of all types overcome stereotype barriers, monocultural mindsets, and archaic norms and beliefs. Creating and maintaining a diverse environment can help foster intercommunication skills between students and a sense of humbleness about their own upbringing. Thus, creating and maintaining a learning environment, where diversity is a core pillar, is becoming more important for colleges across the United States.

It is important to understand that diversity is a *fluid* concept. That is, our understanding of diversity today has expanded compared to how we approached the notion a decade ago. To avoid a typological trap and limit one's conceptualization of diversity, it is important to avoid relating this term to a specific amount of sociodemographic and socioeconomic groups. In addition, it is equally important to avoid conceptualizing diversity as an absolute. Instead, it is important to understand diversity through a spectrum-centric lens. Thus, a contemporary understanding of diversity is the inclusion of social groups that individuals congregate themselves in.

As the most diverse institution of higher education in the US, the University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) strives to maintain and enrich a socially diverse and inclusive atmosphere throughout its campus. This mission goes beyond diversity in the classroom, as the University's vibrant student organizations are a further testament to the diverse and inclusive college campus. As an instructor of political science and an active member within my college community, I have relied on my teaching and service duties to bring to light notions of diversity. I shall discuss some below.

I am currently a political science instructor at UNLV. The political science classes consist of students with diverse geographical, ethnic, racial and other social backgrounds. This vibrant student population presents opportunities to create an atmosphere of mutual understanding among the diverse students in the classroom. To create a diverse learning environment, I assign readings from scholars who have a distinct, personal understanding of an issue or concept. For example, when discussing America's civil strife, I will assign readings from African-American intellectual activists (mainly from the 1970s). When discussing Latin American and post-Soviet politics, I assign readings that includes many non-western scholars to provide an opportunity for diverse ideas.

As an active graduate student, I have sought to create an environment that is inclusive to students from diverse social backgrounds. I have held formal groups discussion with international students on best to improve their transition to UNLV and the US's social fabric. I have lobbied for an inclusive 24-hr computer lab, which decreased the unequal access to resources between graduate assistants and non-graduate assistants. I have also taken initiative to bridge the gap between our community's lower performing high school student and access to college.

A diverse college environment is an essential part of expanding one's level of social consciousness. It leads to an inclusive atmosphere of cultural appreciation and a sense of humbleness with each student about their own social upbringing.

During the 2018-19 academic year, my mentorship capacity involved (1) a one-on-one mentor-mentee relationship and (2) a group mentees-mentor relationship. The former occurred through the RAMP programs, while the latter occurred through the Grad Rebel Advantage Program. While both involved mentorship in some capacity, the type of mentorship I provided was quite different. Overall, participation in both expanded my horizon of the types of mentorship which can occur at a higher education institution.

The first mentorship opportunity came to fruition through teaching a course in political science during Spring 2018. My student Karl Catarata approached me about collaborating on a research project involving Asian-American voters. This quickly led us to apply with RAMP. This mentorship relationship was quite distinct since we already had an instructor-student relationship. While this presented some challenges (in the beginning), it was overall a net positive. This was because we already had a working relationship prior to RAMP. Through RAMP, we established a division of labor. While Karl concentrated on collected literature, I was tasked with finding data that corresponds to our proposal. Once we achieved this milestone, I spend time working with Karl and getting him accustomed to reading survey questionnaires and interpreting data. This was an important aspect of the mentorship process as it introduced him to the steps in the research design process. We then performed estimation techniques and obtained results. We drafted a paper and presented it at the 2019 Southern Political Science Association (SPSA) conference in Texas. We also presented our manuscript to UNLV's political science department.

The second mentorship opportunity came to fruition through interest in the Grad Rebel Advantage Program. Here, I initially mentored a group seven students across many disciplines. The mentorship was not research-related. Instead, it concentrated on helping and guiding undergraduate students into graduate school. This type of mentorship presented a few challenges. For example, the students were across several disciplines. The different department application deadlines and graduate college entrance exams resulted in the mentor providing a specific set of advice to each student during cohort meetings. However, the GRAP was an especially important mentorship opportunity. As a graduate student who has evaluated hundreds of funding applications and letters of recommendation, I was able to rely on my experience and provide my mentees with valuable advice. For example, during the fall cohort meeting, I distributed a sample letter of recommendation that an instructor wrote on my behalf and, as a group, analyzed the contents of the letter. I then explained the 'best practices' in asking for the recommendation letter from professors. Then we performed a brief exercise on how to write a competitive letter of intent for graduate school. In all, this mentorship opportunity allowed me to mentor students beyond my discipline and guide them in their graduate school application process. It also provided mentees with vital information towards the preparation of application material and strategies to success in graduate college.

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