

Over the past few years, we have seen a resurgence like never before of marches all over the world for the Black Lives Matter movement. Racism and injustice have been unveiled and the oppression of the BIPOC community will no longer be ignored. Recently, a phrase has circulated among those who are allies of the BLM movement: “I cannot understand, but I stand with you.” Although I wish equality and equity were our reality, I understand how vital it has been for me to see the depth to which it is not. I quickly realized the lifelong road of listening, learning, and working ahead of me, but the least I can do is choose to walk it every single day. I have kept coming back to this phrase as I continue to do my own self work and have recognized how it applies to all aspects of my life where I have a privilege I may have left unchecked.

While I write this, I am fully aware that I am a privileged, heterosexual, cisgender, white woman, and as much as I wish that was not something that warranted a privilege, I have confronted that it does. Unfortunately, we live in a world that is in need of a lot of work and has spent far too many years believing it doesn't, but I promise to be one of those fighting for a better future. I vow to check my privilege every day and use it, in and out of the classroom, to amplify the voices of those who have been vastly underrepresented.

As an instructor, I am aware that I, personally, don't bring much diversity to the room, but I would like to use as many resources as possible to incorporate a diverse curriculum. I will be conscious of the reading material I choose ensuring all types of cultural backgrounds are represented, I will listen to the needs, ideas, and suggestions of my BIPOC, LGBTQ+, neurodivergent, and socioeconomically challenged students, and I will invite industry guests who are members of all of these communities to provide a perspective on our classwork that I cannot. It is my sacred responsibility as an educator to create an environment in which each student feels heard, seen, and valued. I believe in equal opportunities for every student, and to provide that, I must honor the diversity present in each classroom.

Each artist has a unique gift worthy of being seen. Sadly, we live in a world that often turns its back on some of the most unique gifts of all simply because they don't come from those society has deemed “respectable.” I will continue to use my voice to change that narrative, and in my class, each student's differences will be embraced, nurtured, and celebrated. We have so much to learn from one another, and my voice is easily not the most important one in the room. I pledge to create an educative experience centered on diversity, equity, and inclusion.