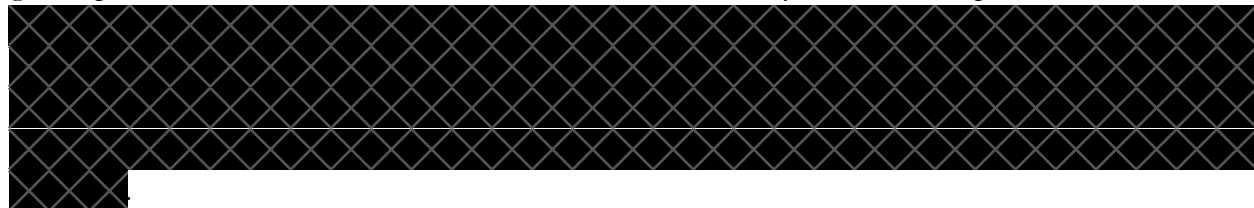


Diversity Statement

Higher education was never a given for me, and pursuing an academic career even less so. I am a woman with a low income background, and the first to receive higher education in my entire family. I am also the first person in my immediate family to receive a high school diploma—my parents didn't grow up in favorable conditions, and so had to leave school early in order to help finance their families.



Compared to my family, I was always very lucky. My parents did everything in their power for me to get a good education from early on. This meant paying a significant amount of money (especially for them) to send me to programs for gifted children since I was 9 years old. These programs changed my life, and allowed me to envision a future for myself that I couldn't even imagine as a child. Education has been the single most important factor in my life, the thing that has made me who I am and taught me who I wanted to be.

One thing I have noticed, as I've had to navigate spaces populated with people who, by and large, do not share my background, is how much knowledge they come into these spaces with—knowledge that I lacked. When I started my B.A., I didn't know how to approach my professors with questions about the class material or about the term papers, and just assumed I had to deal with them all by myself. I didn't have the social and networking skills people around me seemed to have, nor did I know what kind of academic activities I should participate in, other than taking my classes. I also had very little idea about what an academic career was, and definitely didn't know that I could pursue one, nor how one goes about doing so. During my years in academia, I acquired this knowledge, but I was somewhat lucky in doing so, as it partly depended upon particular features of my personality, such as being very talkative and approachable. Having such personal features, however, shouldn't be a requirement for acquiring this knowledge. Rather, an academic community should be a welcoming place where information is easily available for everyone.

I take the task of ensuring that this is indeed the case in the communities I'm a part of very seriously, and make use of the knowledge I acquired by sharing it with others in multiple ways. Here are some examples. I co-ran a work-in-progress group for women in philosophy at [REDACTED], which allowed undergraduate and graduate students to use each other to understand philosophical issues better, as well as improve their written work. I became a source of information to fellow students about graduate school applications—information that is particularly important for those who come from underprivileged backgrounds, and cannot consult with their families or friends on the matter. I further shared my application materials with those students, and gave them comments on theirs. In my time at [REDACTED], I mentored, both officially and unofficially, a number of younger graduate students, as well as helped organize a couple of events for gender minority people. In addition, I assisted quite a few of my undergraduate students with both personal and professional

matters, helping them get through their time in university, and providing those who were interested with resources needed for applying to graduate school.

As mentioned above, I am also a very talkative person, and I also happen to be a very opinionated one. These, I found, are good-making features for a teacher: they give my students—and especially the women among them—the courage to speak up in class. I have a very high participation rate among my students, and the women I have taught over my years at [REDACTED] have been very dominant in class. Some of them have told me that they decided to continue studying philosophy because of the classes I've taught, and that they were encouraged to do so by the open discussion and the detailed feedback they've received.

My hope and intention are to continue doing philosophy for the rest of my life, as well as continue helping others—and especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds—shape their lives using academia the way I did.