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Diversity Statement

Teaching history is about questioning dominant narratives and providing students with tools to rewrite our collective origin stories. Teaching diverse groups of students at Columbia in the past five years – including non-traditional students, veterans, students from the School of Engineering, and Barnard College students – prompted me to develop methods of inclusive teaching. My personal experiences as an international student in an American institution also motivated me to decode higher education for others. Alongside my work in the classroom, I prioritize diversity in my academic service and membership in the academic community.

I believe that demystifying learning and research is a crucial tool for inclusion in higher-ed. As an international student who had virtually no experience writing in English or attending an American elite academic institution, I developed personal strategies to overcome challenges and thrive at Columbia. I communicate these methods to my students and work with them on finding their way and their voice in academia. I showcase practical tools to improve writing in a language that is not one's first language, going over apps and corpus dictionaries that helped me and brainstorming new tools at the classroom. Making my own process visible when I mentor students proved to be useful beyond the challenge of English as a second language. I make all aspects of academic study as explicit as possible and create opportunities for students to practice the craft of historians, such as class trips to the archives. In my teaching evaluations, especially in courses that involved mostly non-history majors like the Modern Middle East, my students have repeatedly described me as a teacher that is invested in their success and explains intellectual processes clearly.

When I approach a new classroom, I ask my students to consider the access that different groups have to social narratives and origin stories. I dedicate the first meeting of each semester to a conversation about power dynamics in which we formulate a "class code" for the course. Developing a code together helps students understand the importance of inclusive team-work, tailor it to their needs, and stay committed to it. This practice was particularly helpful when I led the weekly discussions sections of the Modern Middle East course. My classroom included students who had different connections to the topic: some students were from the region, others were veterans who served there, and several students had religious affiliations to the Middle East. The course touched upon several topics that created controversy, and reminding students our class codes led to an energetic yet inclusive and respectful discussion. These experiences inspired me to pursue pedagogic training that focused on inclusivity. I joined Columbia's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) certificate program in pedagogy, which included modules on diversity and inclusivity. I later invited teaching consultants from the CTL to observe my discussion sections and give me feedback on inclusivity in my classroom.

Outside the classroom, I try to improve equality in my academic community through my service at Columbia. For the past three years, I was the coordinator for the university seminar on Women and Society, organizing events and guest lectures about gender and intersectionality. In addition, I am my department's "History in Action" coordinator, responsible for ongoing public outreach that expands the discipline beyond academic research. Reviewing the program in the 2019 final report, I offered ways to tie graduate professional development to diversity at Columbia's graduate program. I hope to create new paths for diversity in my academic service in

the future, particularly in the field of environmental history which exposes issues of environmental justice.

On my teaching statement I also included the following paragraph of diversity

Mentoring students in research also means guiding them through the power structures of history and showing them how to bring historical questions into their own lives. Students in my *Political Animal* seminar came from a variety of backgrounds, and I worked with them to define research projects that excited them. Students used their personal experiences as a resource for creative historical interpretation: a disabled student who had a service dog wrote a paper about the history of service dogs and European medicine after World War I; a military veteran wrote about the war experiences of German soldiers and how they saw military horses not just as a technology but also as companions; a student who immigrated to the US from Bangladesh used her language skills to research British colonial medicine and vaccines that used animals. My students were proud of their research projects, and several of them used the projects they developed as a basis for their senior thesis or as a writing sample for graduate school applications.