

As an educator-trailblazer-scholar, one way that I choose to resist marginalization is by undertaking DEI work that is intentional, active, and accountable.

*Intentional.* My educational philosophy is grounded in DEI. Central to this philosophy is the idea of collective critical consciousness building. I believe that courses should be co-constructed with students. For example, at the start of *Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare*, I ask students to bring in an artifact relevant to course topics. The collaborative curation of our course anthology intentionally moves us away from this banking structure in which only I choose course material, and instead moves us towards building a shared knowledge. Students are encouraged to choose artifacts that highlight their lived experiences, social identities, and interests. As such, our course anthology intentionally includes diversity in scholars and mediums. In addition, students are encouraged to practice counter-storytelling (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) during class discussion and in their assignments. By inviting students to intentionally center their own narratives, counter-storytelling liberates students from the dominant narrative and provides a way for students to illuminate perspectives that resist whiteness as the norm. Furthermore, the products I ask students to produce are intentionally varied so as to not privilege a particular learning style and/or learning difference. To this end, I developed a photo elicitation project to challenge the typical practice of text-dominant assessments as seen in more traditional classes, a practice which places students such as English Language Learners and visual learners at a disadvantage. Moreover, the products students create are meant to build collective critical consciousness beyond our classroom. Students are asked to write op-eds rather than a traditional research paper, and in lieu of a typical PowerPoint presentation, I ask students to create a public service announcement video; both products have the capacity to reach broader audiences and help students develop new skills.

*Active.* I actively advocate for DEI for the students with whom I work departmentally, university-wide and nationally. I was the first graduate research assistant (GRA) to be selected to work with the School of Social Work's Associate Dean of DEI. In this role, I co-developed and administered a survey that investigated experiences of microaggression among BIPOC students. We used this data to develop faculty training around recognizing and addressing microaggressions to improve support for the wellbeing of BIPOC students. I also co-facilitated meetings with our research and quantitative methods faculty across all academic program levels on incorporating an anti-racist approach to their courses. I am proud that my efforts have led to the introduction of a new course in the doctoral program focused exclusively on research with marginalized racial/ethnic groups. Last year, I founded and am currently directing the Student Task Force on Equity and Inclusion. Under my direction, we have designed a newsletter to amplify BIPOC student voices, surveyed students about anti-racist curriculum (or lack thereof), and made suggestions about curriculum changes to the MSSW Curriculum Committee. As a GRA in the University of Texas at Austin's Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, I investigated climate surveys and identified strategies to hold the university accountable to fulfilling the 2017 University Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (UDIAP). Upon my recommendation, the university conducted focus groups to consider student voices when updating the UDIAP. Recognized as a leader in DEI, I was selected to serve as a member of the Council of Social Work Education's (CSWE) inaugural national Task Force to Advance Anti-Racism. I collaborated with the Faculty and Student Racial & Ethnic Equity Committee to develop and submit recommendations to CSWE. Our recommendations aimed to impact equity within social work education through the retention of diverse faculty and students; expansion of

anti-racist pedagogy; and removal of barriers to licensure and/or academia for social workers from historically excluded groups.

*Accountable.* I am an immigrant from the Philippines, a woman of color, and a first-generation college student from a lower socioeconomic status. My work is with minoritized groups with which I identify. I feel accountable both professionally and personally to conduct research that goes beyond scholarship endeavors and also contributes to systemic change. As the co-investigator for an Actions that Promote Community Transformation seed grant (funded by UT Austin), we conducted research that explores how pedagogical caring influences sense of belonging among students who hold multiple minoritized social identities. The students created a video and booklet which will be disseminated to all faculty across the university with the aim of improving pedagogical strategies and institutional practices to facilitate the well-being and academic success for students situated across multiple minoritized groups. My dissertation is another example of “me-search” which aims to examine internalized racism as a predictor of education and mental health outcomes, considering the role of critical consciousness among Asian American college students. Conducting this research holds me accountable by forcing me to reflect, recognize and reconcile the ways in which I may perpetuate white supremacy through my own internalization of racism. Moreover, my dissertation is an active and intentional contribution to amplifying the needs of the Asian community.

As a faculty member, I aim to build on my previous experiences to take a leadership role in championing DEI. Given the continued diversification of higher education, I will infuse my social work courses with ethnic studies to affirm students’ identities and cultivate students’ sense of belonging. As a mentor, I will collaborate with minoritized students to create a mechanism (e.g., newsletter, podcast) that amplifies their voices. Additionally, we will need more minoritized students to pursue careers in social work, a field in which we are underrepresented. As an educator-trailblazer-scholar, I would push to create outreach programs at community colleges and high schools with high BIPOC representation, to introduce the field of social work, discuss potential barriers, and brainstorm solutions. Only three percent of tenure/tenured track professors in the U.S. identify as Asian women. As a Pilipinx woman, one of my professional goals is to create a research lab for first generation Asian women to encourage careers in academia. I would also collaborate with women and other minoritized groups to push for more equitable hiring and retention processes to expand the pipeline of historically excluded scholars.

I recognize that I am privileged as an able-bodied, cisgender settler, and I have so much to learn about DEI. I am energized by the possibility of working at a minority-serving institution because I know that my privileges and the biases I hold will be challenged--and it is in this space of discomfort that growth happens. I believe this growth demonstrates DEI as part of my work, as integral to my core values, and as my legacy as an educator-trailblazer-scholar.