

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION STATEMENT | JOHN MOORE**

My commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion has developed largely through my experiences as a burgeoning social work scholar. I continually seek ways to expand and deepen this commitment. Contributing to a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment is critical to fostering students' personal and professional development. I take this commitment in my scholarly pursuits, teaching activities, and service work very seriously. My efforts in these domains are indicative of my dedication to combatting systemic oppression and promoting social justice. I recognize that championing diversity, equity, and inclusion at the scholarly, educational, and community levels is integral to advancing social justice principles.

My time as a BSW student at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte was the foundation of my knowledge, understanding, and commitment to promoting social justice. Upon entering the program, I had limited understanding of social work beyond its utility for clinical substance use practice. The foundational BSW courses were critical in developing my understanding of systemic racism and systemic oppression. Our class discussions were instrumental to my coming to terms with my own privilege as a White cisgender male and recognizing the importance of activism. Some class discussions led to organizing protests to combat police brutality and coordinating service projects in underserved communities. Engaging in these activities transformed my outlook on what it means to be an advocate of social justice. In particular, it is not enough to understand or empathize with my peers who had personal experiences with oppression. Rather, it is necessary for me, particularly as a white cisgender male, to explicitly condemn oppressive practices and collaborate with my peers in activism. The faculty and peers I worked with at UNC Charlotte fostered my development as a social worker invested in promoting social justice, and I strive to create the same environment for my students.

My professional experiences and volunteer activities as a BSW student allowed me to garner valuable working experience with diverse populations both in the community and in academic settings. These experiences were invaluable in shaping my commitment to cultivating inclusive environments that are equitable and appropriate for diverse populations. I learned that the person-centered principles that define social work are at the foundation of inclusive practices. For example, a classmate and I collaborated with a local agency and started a weekly after school tutoring program that primarily served African American students. To avoid assuming we knew what was best for these students, we met with students and parents regularly to gather their feedback and suggestions regarding how to best maximize the impact of tutoring sessions for the individual needs of students. As an intern at InReach, an agency that provides care to individuals with intellectual disabilities, I conducted a client satisfaction assessment of the agency's services. A key issue that arose was that the existing assessment was not appropriate for individuals with intellectual disabilities. In collaboration with InReach's CEO, I created a survey assessment based on client and staff feedback that was appropriate for clients and effectively captured the agency's desired outcomes. Reflecting on this experience, I crafted an assignment in the *Research Methods* course I have taught that simulates this experience for students.

My tenure as a MSW student at the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis was a major catalyst of my commitment to studying racial and socioeconomic disparities in my research program. The Brown School's emphasis on highlighting the long-term impacts of racism and discriminatory policies on local communities in the St. Louis metropolitan area impacted me personally and professionally. In St. Louis, my experiences on the *Missouri State Targeted Response (STR) to the Opioid Crisis* and as a program evaluator for a local substance use prevention agency were largely centered on reducing racial and economic disparities in service access and delivery. I also worked on a research team that specialized in criminal justice reform, with a particular focus on community reentry. I garnered invaluable experience with measure development, research

implementation, direct practice, and evaluation efforts with this population. One of the most profound experiences I had was co-instructing a technology course for men preparing to reenter the community from the Transition Center of St. Louis. Many of them had been incarcerated for over ten years and had little to no experience with current technological devices and programs that are needed for pursuing employment as well as everyday life tasks. During our time together, I listened as they disclosed to me the challenges and frustrations they had with the community reentry process. These conversations demonstrated to me the importance of conducting research that has an actual impact on the ground for individuals and families, especially those impacted by institutions that have disproportionately targeted racial and ethnic minorities and historically marginalized communities.

My current research focuses on identifying determinants of substance use and behavior change among populations that have been understudied in research to date. My practice and research experiences have demonstrated that conducting research specifically among these populations is critical to understanding factors that uniquely or differently impact substance use and behavior change. Such knowledge can lead to tailored approaches to the reduction of disparities and promotion of well-being among these populations. I have conducted numerous studies examining determinants of substance use behaviors, behavior change, and healthcare/treatment utilization specific to populations that disproportionately experience negative consequences of substance use and are underrepresented in research. I aim to translate these findings to inform intervention and prevention efforts with a focus on prioritizing determinants that are especially relevant for these populations. Moreover, my work with Community First! Village in Austin, Texas and its community advisory board has demonstrated the importance and value of collaborating with community stakeholders in research design and implementation. The leadership and contributions of residents on the advisory board has been key to maximizing the impact, reach, and appropriateness of our work for the community. For example, we modified our assessment survey to measure well-being and health after receiving feedback from board members that the survey was too focused on substance use.

My teaching philosophy and practices champion diversity and facilitate an inclusive classroom environment. I prioritize delivering pedagogical content that addresses issues related to minoritized populations, while emphasizing the importance of considering the perspectives of members of these communities. Creating an inclusive course environment requires structuring the course to meet the needs and experiences of all students. For instance, I conduct APA and other writing workshop labs in class so that students with limited experience with academic writing can grow comfortable with it. Additionally, I provide my students examples of assignment deliverables so that they clearly understand what the expectations are. I strive to ensure that course content is delivered through an array of modalities that are considerate of students' learning needs. For instance, I have recorded each class lecture with closed captioning and made these recordings directly available to students in my *Research Methods* classes. When facilitating group discussions on topics such as systemic racism, I acknowledge my own privilege and status as a white cisgender male and encourage students to consider how their own status impacts their lens on these important issues. I stress to students that it is critical to listen to and value the perspectives that we each bring to the table so that we can learn and grow from one another.

As a faculty member, I will expand my research, teaching, and community work to champion diversity, equity, and inclusion. I am committed to carrying out substance use behavior change research that is pertinent to racial and ethnic minorities and populations that have been underserved. I will incorporate community-informed research principles into my work to ensure that my research features the perspectives of those it is intended to serve. As an instructor, I will cultivate an inclusive learning environment that is encouraging of diverse perspectives. As a mentor, I will prioritize the mentorship of students of color and students from groups that have been historically underrepresented in social work science. I will carry out these long-term commitments in my roles as a faculty member and in my collaborations with scholars, students, and community members.