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Diversity Statement

My experience with diversity has been both challenging and rewarding. As a second generation Taiwanese American, I have experienced firsthand the struggles of being underrepresented in a society that lacks acceptance. Despite these challenges, the lessons learned from my personal experiences has enabled me to help others embrace diversity throughout my teaching career. I believe diversity is the acceptance and inclusion of a variety of beliefs, values, interests, cultures, ethnicities, abilities, and sexualities. I welcome diversity as it embraces and supports each other's differences as positive impacts within our community. I believe our uniqueness make us better, stronger, more interesting and fun as a community.

I have been teaching at Ohlone College for over 12 years with a focus on contemporary dance technique for the past five years. Contemporary dance is a discipline with a realm of opportunity for embracing diversity and expressing individuality. In my classroom, diversity is an invaluable tool and catalyst for self-reflection and self-improvement because it constantly challenges the reasonings for our beliefs. I also explore content that deals with issues of inequality in my classes because I want to empower students to communicate with each other and their audience through dance, for any topic.

My students at Ohlone have been diverse over the years: majority of students are from lower- to middle-class; all races and ethnicities; LBGTQ; only half seek higher education. With such a mixed group bringing a wide variety of experiences and perspectives, it has been incredibly rewarding to engage my students with a number of different learning activities and techniques which embody diversity with intention. For example, I have combined writing with dance-making to find emotional commonality despite superficial differences. Writing and sharing written thoughts has consistently proven to be a profound exercise for students to connect and empathize with their peers because it gives students time to reflect as they process words that carry deep meanings.

In my view, a core tenet to diversity and inclusion is the ability to have your own voice and to show respect for the voices of others. In my teaching, I strive to facilitate students to find their own voice while learning to receive feedback from others who hold different points of view. For example, I often pair up students with different levels of dance and life experiences to critique movement together. This helps students learn how to understand each other's differences with the goal of coming to a consensus, which is vital to preserving individuality and diversity.

My practice of diversity goes beyond the classroom. In 2003, I created my dance company, Bliss, with diversity in mind because I felt a need for women's voice in dance. I wanted a safe place for our stories. Aside from creating dance, Bliss has been a means to explore ways to connect with each other while expressing their individuality. Through Bliss, I have distilled and implemented techniques that help to embrace diversity with my students. I have also been able to set a positive example through Bliss by exploring issues of race, gender, sexuality, and power inequality. I'm proud to have also contributed to events that celebrate diversity such as Mbongui Square Festival, All The Way Live, and many others.

College is a crucial time for students to challenge ideas and theories, practice critical thinking in all aspects of life and the arts, and to develop a personal identity. I look forward to more opportunities to highlight and celebrate diversity through my teaching at such an important time for young adults in our community.