
Diversity Statement

Prof. Dr. Aya Kachi

Diversity is one of the defining characteristics of my research and teaching activities. This is partly due to my first-hand experience in a wide range of work environments; I completed my bachelor's degree at a national university in Japan, M.A. at a private university in the U.S., Ph.D. at a large state university in the U.S., and postdoc at a technical university in Europe. Not only the type and location of institutions but also the gender and race/ethnicity composition of my students and coworkers varied significantly across my career path.

Looking back, I have never experienced extreme difficulty either coping with the diverse work environment or with the fact that I am female and Asian, which have typically put me into so-called "minority" category in quantitative social sciences. First and foremost, I would like to thank my colleagues throughout my career for maintaining (overall) such a pleasant environment. However, I also believe that I have made a constant effort to prevent or overcome potential tension associated with diversity issues in my research, teaching and mentoring activities.

I believe that the key to success is communication. In our scientific community, one of the most important elements of communication is the quality of work. However, I believe there are two more important aspects to it. First, we must be sensitive to the diversity of the audience and think carefully how my presentation might be understood differently by listeners of different backgrounds. Second, we must be aware of how we, as a set of certain characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity, educational background etc., might be seen or taken by the other party. Needless to say, this consideration should always be of great importance in presenting our research or giving lectures; however, in a highly diverse environment, the effort needs to be more explicit.

It is these experience, awareness and communication skills that I believe I can bring to my team, my work place, and more broadly to the academic community in the longer run. My interpersonal and communication skills appeal to scholars from various backgrounds. Furthermore, though I consider myself as a junior scholar, I am prepared and very much willing to share and collaborate with more experienced scholars to mentor junior members, including graduate students and postdocs, regarding their career in this highly diverse academic community.

Finally, I particularly enjoy working with researchers and interacting with students who hold an equally high standard for handling diversity. For this, I am definitely grateful to my current team.

Aya Kachi

