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DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION PHILOSOPHY

To succeed in the scientific endeavor, we must **engage**, **empower**, and **retain** those long-excluded from the professional astronomy community. I acknowledge the past explicit and implicit exclusion of marginalized individuals and I am committed to enabling equitable access to research and resources. Further, I am committed to continually educating myself in matters of equity and inclusion and to use my privilege and power to uplift and empower.

As a rural student in central Wisconsin, I experienced first-hand overcoming a barrier to academia presented by limited opportunities. My non-traditional interdisciplinary background and second-generation Syrian ethnic background have also taught me how othering and exclusionary academia can be. However, I recognize that the barriers present (based on race, class, gender, disability, and more) are broader than my own experiences and see the acute burden of those multiply marginalized on intersectional axes. I bring my experiences, empathy, and commitments with me as I advance DEI initiatives addressing 3 key imperatives:

1. **ENGAGE:** Inspire, excite, and demonstrate to communities near and far that science is theirs. This requires targeted outreach to minoritized communities and opportunity-conscious hiring/recruitment. Building representation at the highest levels is especially key to developing the relationships and environments important in retention.
2. **EMPOWER:** Provide training for key research skills targeting minoritized students and grow mentorship networks that pass along the “hidden curriculum” [1]. Maximize self-control of students’ research programs, so they can adapt as necessary. Provide leadership opportunities with the power to make change, without burdening young scientists with solving the systemic problems already draining their energy.
3. **RETAIN:** Proactively monitor and quickly respond to issues of exclusion, harassment, and bias systemic in academia to retain diversity and prevent further marginalization [2]. Surveys and data collection are an important part of identifying issues within a community, and if past change was effective. However, to focus only on aggregate data is to miss the experience of the individual. Understanding and supporting the unique needs of an individual requires building trust through consistent action, flexibility, and building personal relationships.

As an early-career scientist, I have focused my efforts on specific actions and leadership roles where I feel empowered to cultivate community. I view this advocacy as inextricably intertwined with my identity as a researcher and mentor, because I know from experience how difficult research progress is in the face of harassment. These targeted efforts are designed to, and have succeeded in, improving the community in which my students and I live and work. I fiercely protect the time I allocate for building 1-on-1 relationships with students to support them as individuals, which I view as the most effective and rewarding DEI action and the core of realizing a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive academy.