

**What does diversity mean to me?** I came from China six years ago, first as an exchange student, and then as an international doctoral student. I have kept pursuing my professional career in the US, and it has been nearly a quarter of my life. During this period, I experienced the many challenges in both life and learning environment caused by the dramatic differences in histories, cultures, and social structures, but I do believe the faith and hope for a better life for everyone is universal — no matter where we are. This makes me value of diversities and stimulates me to contribute to diversity and inclusion.

As international students, it is hard for them to integrate to the domestic student community. This is not just caused by different backgrounds where they grew up. I believe a key obstacle is the language, which makes the points can hardly be conveyed in time and accurately. Though English proficiency is a requirement of admission, the English learned and tested was far less than enough, which brings me significant challenges in daily life and studies.

**Life** I live in the university apartment, and I have met many students like me, as well as their families. Because of the low income and high cost of living, many families have food security issue, and I participated in FoodCycle LA [1] program to fight against hunger. I was in charge of the food distribution, which needs to deal with nearly everyone in the community. Unlike those international students and researchers, their family members do not necessarily use English, which makes my work challenging. For example, some non-English users are still interested in participating in the volunteer work, and every time when the food is ready for distribution the notifications should be sent to everyone involved, including non-English users. To make the volunteers work smoothly, and convey the notifications accurately, I not only use my first language to translate, but also coordinate with other international students as a bridge to have these messages translated. This experience tells me using English as a second language can not only be challenging, but also helpful to aid more people like me.

**Study** I had a tough time to convey my thought succinctly in discussions and structure the articles in a fluent flow. I had to collect some very common English usages from my daily life and paper readings to improve, which was a slow process. According to a survey done by Congressional Research Service [2], in the year I came to the US (2016), foreign STEM students occupies 54% of master's degrees, and 44% doctoral degrees, and this trend is still increasing in the following years. If I could join as a faculty member, I would inevitably mentor students with the similar language issue like me. I would do my best to help each of them.

**Future Plans on Diveristy** Diversity means to deal with so many diverse dimensions, including but not limited to gender, race, and ethnicity. To best practice my inclusion to all these dimensions, I believe an old say from Confucius best describes my goal and my methodology:

No student shall be left behind, and educate them based on their aptitudes. (有教无类, 因材施教)  
— Confucius (BC551—BC479)

According to a recent study on Journal of International Students [3], successfully welcoming and supporting diverse students largely depend on the faculties. At the very early stage of study, both undergraduate and graduate, because of students' diverse backgrounds, it is important to consider their basis. To make sure no student left behind, I will make my classes as interactive as possible so that everyone's attention is on the class and I can interactively know the requirements from all the students. After the classes, office hour is also an important portion of education. For the students attending office hours, I should carefully make sure they understand what I taught in classes. Moreover, I should also take advantage of new technologies to help the education. After the pandemic, Zoom is widely used for instruction, and it is still useful even after being in-person. For example, for students too shy to express themselves in classes, they can post their thoughts in Zoom chatting when interacting. For the students with special requirements who are unable to attend the office hours, I should carefully study their conditions. For example, at UCLA, there are a large amount of commuter students, who live far away and have part-time jobs to do, I would schedule separate office hours with them via Zoom.

When hiring and mentoring my own students, I will provide equal opportunity and engagements to every diverse prospective candidates. I will create an inclusive learning environment for everyone: once students have an identity issue, I shall gather all resources I know, both on and off-campus, and provide to them. I will also have my students more involved in mentoring programs.

[1] [FoodCycle LA](#)

[2] [Foreign STEM Students in the United States](#)

[3] Jin, Li, and Jason Schneider. 2019. "Faculty Views on International Students: A Survey Study." *Journal of International Students* 9 (1). University Printing Services: 84–99. [doi:10.32674/jis.v9i1.268](https://doi.org/10.32674/jis.v9i1.268).