

DEI Statement: Sarah King

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are incredibly important in today's world, and especially in academia. Together, these three words mean valuing people of different backgrounds, ensuring that all people have a seat at the proverbial table, and that all voices are heard. They also mean being cognizant of differences in backgrounds and experiences which may require additional support and being empathetic towards the needs of all different people. I have focused on this importance through my research, teaching, and service. In my research, I focus on issues relating to equity and have focused on equitable communication in my writing. In my teaching, I have tailored my teaching methods to include a variety of student backgrounds, learning methods, and perspectives. Finally, through my service, I have committed to a variety of mentorship roles in which I interact with a diverse set of students, and I have participated in other DEI-focused initiatives including the DEI Core Team as part of my research organization.

My research is focused in the area of education policy, and I am particularly interested in equity issues in education. I grew up in an affluent suburban town, so it was not until I began working as a tutor at a local high school during college that I realized that not all students are receiving the same educational experience that I did. From that point, I decided that I wanted to focus my career on ensuring that all students can achieve equitable outcomes in education. In my job market paper, which focuses on a summer school program, I evaluate who attended the program and how the effectiveness of the program varied for different subgroups of students with the hope of being able to understand the equity implications of the program. In addition, I have explored equity issues in education through other papers including my joint work on student engagement during the COVID-19 pandemic where we looked at differences in remote learning, engagement, and outcomes for different students as well as my paper on teacher labor markets during the pandemic where I explore who returned to teach during the pandemic and how the pandemic specifically impacted teachers in schools with a higher proportion of low-income and minoritized students. In addition to my research agenda, I have committed myself to learning more about equitable and inclusive writing so that I can effectively communicate my research to all audiences. This approach to writing also shows in my research itself in that I am careful when crafting my analyses that I am not taking a white-dominant approach simply because that is the norm in the field.

My teaching experience began at Georgia State University which has been ranked as one of the most diverse institutions in the United States. Therefore, my students have come from a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds and have included students of numerous faiths, family circumstances, sexual orientations, gender identities, and citizenships. Additionally, I have taught many first-generation students and multiple students with disabilities. In my teaching, I work to ensure that all my students feel included and feel that they can have a voice in discussions. In addition, I strive to provide an environment where students not only feel heard, but students are able to positively contribute to discussions through their diverse perspectives. I do this through a variety of methods to engage students in-class such as through a "think-pair-share" exercise where students can discuss concepts and questions together without having to speak in front of the entire class. I also utilize technology to engage more students, particularly through class discussion boards. These discussion boards encourage discussion among students while reducing the stressors some may face from having to think on-the-spot and speak in class.

Finally, I strive to connect concepts that we discuss in class to the real world and make an effort to keep an equitable lens when doing so. Specifically, I try to connect concepts to real-world issues to help student with understanding the relevance to current events while being careful to be inclusive in how I am discussing concept. This was especially important when I taught The Economics of Cities which had a focus on place-based equity issues. In this course, I worked to ensure students that the class was a safe space to discuss issues that they may be passionate about which led to fruitful conversations with students sharing a variety of perspectives.

While DEI is important to my research and teaching, I believe it is my service that truly exemplifies my commitment to inclusion. I currently serve on the DEI Core Team for my research organization, Georgia Policy Labs. As our organization partners with a variety of education, child, and family focused organizations, equity is an important part of what we do. The goal of the Core Team is to help our organization to learn ways to bring a more equitable approach to our research and partnerships as well as to foster inclusion within the organization including, but not limited to, racial, gender, and role inclusion. Our team worked together to develop an action plan to address problems that we and others noticed within the organization with respect to DEI and we have worked together to implement change including additional non-work time as a team to break down walls between groups of people, revising the onboarding process for new staff members and Graduate Research Assistants to be more inclusive and to better share who we are as an organization, and revising our communications guide to also include recommendations on how to be more inclusive in our writing including academic papers, reports and other communications for our partners, and our policy briefs. In addition to my work with the Core Team, I have also served as a mentor for many different students both through GSU's Department of Economics and through my professional fraternity, Delta Sigma Pi. Through Delta Sigma Pi in particular, I have worked with chapters at multiple universities, each with their own struggles and triumphs. Further, I have engaged with other volunteer leaders on ways to improve practices with an equitable lens to better serve students both within the organization and professionally.

My commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion has been at the center of my work throughout graduate school and I plan on continuing to pursue that commitment in my professional career. I plan to continue to shape my research around equity issues and to be cognizant of inclusion when writing. I intend to continue to learn more about using inclusive practices in the classroom so that all of my students will feel included and engaged. Finally, I plan to continue to serve students and the academic community in DEI-focused initiatives such as through mentoring and through serving on taskforces. Specifically, I hope to be more involved with DEI initiatives through the AEA such as the Committee on the Status of Women in Economics Professions (CSWEP) as I have already benefitted from their programs as a mentee. In addition, I plan to continue to work with Delta Sigma Pi to be able to continue to mentor student organizations and help them to develop more equitable practices. Finally, I plan to continue to be able to mentor students, especially female economics students, to help ensure that everyone feels they can have a seat at the proverbial economics table. Ensuring equitable outcomes for all students takes all of us but I hope to be able to do my part to make a difference.