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Diversity and Inequality Statement

As a tenure track faculty member at Columbia college, I have had the pleasure of working at an institution that prides itself on the inclusion, equity, and diversity of its student population. As a person who prides himself on his own mixed ethnicity, Hispanic, White and North African I strive to better understand the complexity and the evolving nature of not only my own work but my students' work through the lens of diversity, social stratification and social change.

As a member of the dean of the media arts, diversity and inclusion committee, I am part of a team that has been tasked with looking at the way inclusion, equity, and diversity is conducted in our faculty hiring processes; in our overall curriculum and individual teaching. Our committee is made up of a racial and gender diverse group of exceptional artists. Following each meeting we return to our departments and provide faculty training. I have integrated many of the things I learned from this fantastic group into many of the committees I currently serve under and as a dual major, department coordinator.

One such committee is the Interactive Arts and Media's tenure track, Game Design hiring committee. As part of this committee, I helped draft the documentation for new hires. My main goal was to draft language into hiring documentation, that would not only help the department find a strong candidate but welcome members from underrepresented groups to apply. I believe by having a more diverse faculty Columbia will become stronger and more creative unit, that will be more responsive to the educational, emotional, and practical needs and interests of Columbia's diverse student body. As a multi-major department coordinator, I am tasked, through curriculum committee, with creating new curriculum for over 350 students and the 14 part-time faculty that I supervise.

Each of these students and faculty members brings with them a multiplicity of histories, cultural backgrounds, that embodies every individuals' experiences. I strive to empower and inspire these individuals to embrace their own cultural backgrounds as a way of continually expanding their work. I ask my students to explore difficult and unfamiliar subjects. Subjects that require them to explore a world in which access to power, resources, and social and political participation can be considered unequally distributed along lines of race, gender, sexuality, class, immigration status, religion, disability, and other forms of socially-constructed differences. They are asked to write, story tell, build virtual worlds, and explore game development as a central way in which power and inequality are both enforced and challenged.

In closing I affirm that while the quality of our students' work is important, their mental and physical health is most important. We must inspire in our students that we value one another first and foremost as human beings, with all of our distinctive differences. And we believe that, consistent with our individual strengths and abilities, we should help each other sustain the physical and emotional well-being that is vital to our success in learning, inventing, solving problems, thinking boldly, discovering new truths, growing as individuals, mentoring others, and collaborating effectively as team members and create a community with equal access and opportunity and take care to treat one another with openness, respect, and kindness.