As a professor, scholar and citizen of the world it is my duty to ensure that I am engaging in activities that promote opportunities for groups whose voices are historically marginalized, ignored and / or outright silenced. As a first-generation student that attended a community college, private university, an urban university, and a traditional state university during my academic pursuit, I have witnessed the struggles that many of my peers faced across racial, gender and socioeconomic lines. My commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity is personal. Professors, colleagues, and friends who have identified as one or more underrepresented groups whether by their gender, race, ethnicity and / or other identifiers historically used to oppress are people that have served as the protagonists within my academic journey is my duty to pay it forward by creating an environment and providing opportunities for individuals form historically marginalized backgrounds to succeed. Consistent with NASPAA Universal Competency 5 which is the ability “to communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry”, in my teaching, service and research, I proactively aim to amplify the groups whose voices go unheard, and the needs of populations that are often unmet.

Given my exposure to the various issues facing public policy makers today as a professor and professional, I am committed to cultivating a class culture that encourages students to apply their own personal experiences to the material and to examine how social equity can be better incorporated within their communities. If we can extend tangential topics that relate to student passions for the purpose of engagement, especially those affecting their own community to course materials, then I make every opportunity to do so.

A major component of my teaching philosophy is a commitment to diversity and social equity through the personal participation in professional development opportunities that relate to improving non-traditional ways of teaching, evidenced by teaching certifications on course content including improving educational methods (online and HyFlex methods) and promoting inclusivity (Ssrving adult learners, creating LGBTQIA+ safe spaces and facilitating racial injustice classroom conversations). I have utilized university-level awards for institution-wide teaching conferences / initiatives to improve my ability to reach students of all backgrounds. I also have taken steps to promote social justice, diversity and inclusion by amplifying and assigning articles written by underrepresented scholars as well. This gives students the opportunity to identify with the author in instances where maybe they haven’t and to hear perspectives that traditionally are not assigned.

My research informs my teaching and I take the impacts of my research and infuse related discussion in my classes. While public marketing and branding from a strategic management policy perspective is my “home base” and is a topic that students find intriguing, I started engaging in public administration research that expands student knowledge and amplify discussions on diversity and social equity in my classes. Dr. James Wright II of Florida State University and I have published research in both *Public Administration Review* and *Administrative Theory & Practice* that examines protests highlighting systemic racism and the growing role of American Black athletes (both men and women) speaking on administrative state discourse and social policy and the impact it has on American public administration. With this research stream, I have chosen intentionally to collaborate with scholars that identify as BIPOC (Wright) and women (such as Dr. Jamie Levine Daniel of IUPUI) to connect culturally appropriate voices on the matter and to expand the quantity of people engaging in this newer area of public administration research. The breadth of the research has implications for creating and testing new theories on while simultaneously providing an empirical understanding of how emergent stakeholders can strategically manage their voices and impact public policy. In all research that I engage in, I make a concerted effort to cite underrepresented voices when applicable.

My teaching and research parlays into service. When possible, I attempt to engage in opportunities that enable me to learn more about my academic and local communities and ones where I am exposed to perspectives and experiences that differ from my own. I currently serve as an Executive Board member of ASPA-Cascades and as a MPSA 2021-22 academic mentor. I have extensive university and department service, most notably recently participating on the VSU Faculty Senate and NCAA Athletic Committees in addition to multiple college and department committees. In my former communities, I served on the Leon County (FL) Affordable Housing Advisory Committee as a student at FSU. I was also the Secretary & Treasurer for the Oregon Governor’s Council on Fitness and Sports and was a member of the Beaverton (OR) Human Rights Advisory Council. In recent years, as I’ve started to understand the value of true representation within these positions, I have sought to encourage more diverse voices when available.