

*You are welcome here. You deserve to thrive here. You can make an impact here.*

I strongly believe that success in all walks of life stems from diversity, inclusion, and equity of everyone. Academia appears in many ways to consider itself as indifferent to, and frankly *above*, the basic need to diversify its membership and especially its upper echelon. Every professor has the responsibility to their students, their peers, and their field to act as a pump, rather than a filter, for the diversification of the next generation of researchers. By uplifting underserved minorities and underrepresented voices, I can indirectly broaden the impact of operations research on our global community via my students.

As a white cis-male, I carry so many privileges in my day-to-day life. I began learning about these privileges while taking courses at a liberal arts college in women and gender studies then race and education. To this day, I continuously try to educate myself about my privileges, to recognize them, and to appreciate my many "blind spots" for the day-to-day struggles of minorities.

My identity as an LGBTQ+ individual has challenged and informed my academic development in many ways. Having access to role models with similar identities is necessary for students in the most important years of establishing their future careers. Race, gender, and class often earn the most attention; however, intersectionality of all identities is crucial. Some identities are largely "invisible", such as sexual identity and disability. All STEM fields lack proper representation of LGBTQ individuals; I, myself, have never had an "out" professor in my department to look up to. To me, a professor's decision to be out in the workplace is an extremely intimate and personal decision, but it would be important to me in my future role to be out and proud in front of my students in case it benefits them in any way.

During my time at Georgia Tech, I served as an assistant to the Faculty Diversity and Inclusion Committee. In that role, I actively collected and presented research on diversity-related issues on all levels, including the undergraduate, graduate, and faculty roles. I assisted in the creation of a more responsible and inclusive survey for faculty applicants in my school. Furthermore, I was engaged in the often messy and uncomfortable conversations that occur on such topics, and I have collected experience on how to actively listen and use published research to assist in making actionable and measurable progress.

I have applied to be a DEI Ambassador for INFORMS, including a proposal for a narrative project called "We're Here," which aims to collect and present narratives from LGBTQ+ in the professional community.