

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, BELONGING AND TOLERANCE:

A Personal and Professional Commitment

Diversity, equity, belonging, inclusion, and tolerance are deeply rooted in both my personal values and my religious beliefs as a Muslim. The teachings of Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon Him), the most influential person in history, resonate profoundly with the principles of DEI. In his final sermon, he unequivocally declared that no white person is superior to a Black person, and no Arab is superior to a non-Arab. These principles of equality and justice are central to my faith and have significantly influenced my professional practice. The values embedded in the Western framework of DEI reflect the ideals I strive to embody in my work and life. (For more detailed insights on Islam and justice, please see [this link.](#))

My educational and professional journey has unfolded in environments that prioritize diversity, including the UAE—one of the most diverse countries in the world. These multicultural experiences have profoundly shaped my approach to language, behavior, and thought processes, fostering a deep commitment to inclusivity and cultural understanding in all aspects of my work.

Below are excerpts from my Teaching Statement and previously published works that highlight specific ways I integrate DEI into my practices as an educator and theatre practitioner:

- *“One of the first activities I assign is the Identity Illustration, where students create a stick figure and label different parts with words that represent their values, influences, and experiences. This exercise fosters self-awareness and builds rapport, encouraging students to bring their full selves to the classroom. I also have each class establish community norms that reflect our shared goals and values, and these norms guide our interactions and hold us accountable throughout the semester.”*
- *“I am also witnessing a system of un-conditioning of ‘white supremacy’ characteristics that strays away from cultural stereotypes, a sense of urgency, and more individualized learning techniques. I hope that as an Intimacy Director and a third-culture individual, I can contribute to this un-conditioning and become a key driver of change.”*
- *“Founding MSU’s first affinity group, Diggin’ (Discussions Initiating Greater Growth, Inclusion, & Necessity).”*

Looking ahead, I strive to deepen my commitment to DEI through innovative practices. One example is an evolving exercise I call "blind peering." This method encourages students and educators to evaluate ideas based solely on the merit of their dialogue and content, rather than physical appearance, social class, or gender. I believe this approach has the potential to dismantle biases, fostering equitable and inclusive dialogue while cultivating meaningful connections.

Through my work as an educator and theatre practitioner, I am committed to creating environments that celebrate diversity, challenge inequities, and inspire transformation. My goal is to empower individuals to transcend stereotypes, engage in thoughtful discourse, and collaboratively shape a more just and inclusive world.