Language is one of the most immediate and sensitive indexes of diversity. We all speak with an accent; and our speech varies depending on who we are talking to, what we are talking about, what kind of personal identity we want to convey, and other contextual factors. Language is also a key tool to organize and navigate diversity: listeners attribute social meaning to the variation that they hear. We see evaluation surface as language attitudes and, more broadly, through notions of dialect versus language, linguistic standards and linguistic prestige. It is clear, then, that one cannot theorize about language without addressing diversity, multiculturalism and inequality. As a scholar in linguistics, I could not be a stranger to these conversations, and my teaching and research could not remain unaffected. Through the many years I have studied and taught linguistics, I came to reflect upon the inequalities over which I have agency in my classroom and in my research, as well as the kinds of change I can implement. I am now convinced that I can contribute to concerns of diversity and inequality by addressing faulty representations in my classroom, by giving a space to linguistic diversity, and by providing support and guidance through mentorship.

Homogeneous representations of what a scientist or a historian or a linguist is can be discouraging for students whose identities do not fit into these categories. In my research, I have seen first-hand how unequal (and damaging) representations can be deployed in educational materials. In the paper I published in the *IULC Working Papers Online*, I examined gender biases in example sentences of a textbook published by the *Real Academia Española* (RAE). I compared noun phrases to see how men and women were labeled, the types of activities they participated in, their employment, and so on. The findings revealed crucial differences between genders: men outnumbered women, women’s employment was undermined, their social status presented as inherited, and men were associated with intellectual activities. Thus, when I write handouts and syllabi, I make a concerted effort to avoid covering up gender identities under the umbrella of generic masculine pronouns and agreement markers—more so when these materials are in Spanish, which overtly marks for gender in pronouns as well as in nouns and adjectives. One can imagine how other identities based on sexual orientation, religion, race, national origin, or physical/mental disability undergo similar experiences. For this reason, I am careful about the images and example sentences I include in my teaching materials. For instance, images of people in my PowerPoint slides are curated to exemplify diversity. Also, instead of the ever-present example of a boy kissing a girl, I design example sentences to have a variety of identities in the role of the syntactic subject and object of the phrase. Through these efforts, I hope to convey respect and support for non-traditional identities, and in doing so, to encourage students to consider how my classroom, and more broadly linguistics, is a place for them.

As a linguist, I never find the samples of speech I present to my students apolitical. Who we choose to give a voice to is not an innocent choice: a lack of linguistic diversity can threaten someone’s ability to convey their identity and exercise cultural autonomy. To this end, when I teach an introductory course in linguistics, I use a variety of languages to exemplify course concepts. For example, even in a Spanish-language content course such as *Introduction to Hispanic Linguistics*, I introduce the concept of grammatical gender with examples from Shona, a bantu language that has fifteen genders (or noun classes). I also want my students to be exposed to a variety of dialects of Spanish, not only because it will enhance their proficiency in the second language, but more importantly because it challenges monolithic language standards. In my conversation classes, students watch feature-length and short movies from different countries, such as Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Cuba, México, Paraguay, Spain, and Venezuela. And as a researcher in Spanish linguistics, it is important for me to disseminate my research in
Spanish, in addition to English. For this reason, I seek opportunities to showcase my work in Spanish-language journals, such as *Signo y Seña*, where I published my work on Buenos Aires Spanish. By embracing linguistic diversity in my teaching and in my research, I hope to make room for a multiplicity of voices.

As a faculty member, my approach is to enhance students’ chances of success through mentorship. One way I seek to provide students with resources and guidance is by increasing contact-time outside of class. To this end, I assign one complex project, such as a research proposal, and I require students to meet one-on-one with me during office hours. These meetings give me an opportunity to connect and later follow-up with them. As a result, I am able to get to know them, their particular strengths and the challenges they face. This is especially important with some minority student populations, which for a host of reasons are more reluctant to ask for help when they experience difficulties. So, I try to facilitate this step by requiring students to meet with me first, and thus establish a fruitful dialogue. However, I do not see my mentorship as confined to students who identify as members of a minority. I hope to serve all students by bringing their attention to issues of diversity. I devise assignments that encourage introspection, asking students to think critically about the relationship between their personal experience with language and their cultural background. In *Conversation and Diction*, students write short essays where they must reflect on their linguistic histories in light of course content and extrapolate to larger populations and general truths. All in all, through my mentorship I strive to model successful academic practices and, by helping students connect the dots between course assignments and their own stories, I establish the relevance of course content to their diverse lives.

Through my work in Spanish and in linguistics, my awareness and appreciation of diversity and cross-cultural understanding grows continually. At the heart of my work as a scholar and teacher lies an appreciation of and commitment to the full range of human identity and experience, reflected in linguistic and dialectal variation. I am excited by the impact that my mentoring and teaching can have on issues of diversity and equity in the classroom and, beyond, in the Department.