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Diversity statement

Let me explain my own point of view regarding the importance of diversity.

Diversity: Philosophy

I grew up in a small town in the middle of Germany. It was a time where there were not too many people from different cultural backgrounds in Germany in general, and in smaller towns in particular.

I did not spend my entire youth in this comforting home: I moved into a bigger city for (the German analog of) college, where I met a wide range of people having different personal histories. This new experience really impressed me and I found several good friends from various ethical backgrounds. Together we learned a lot and part of the reason I loved going to college was the exchange of ideas with my friends from various cultures and countries.

Because I had little experience with cultures outside of my own while I was young, and because of my positive experience in college, I seek opportunities to learn from (and with) others having different perspectives on a variety of topics.

Nowadays I am strongly in favor of diverse communities with broad samples from the general population. From a selfish perspective, such communities let me learn from a variety of different, strange and interesting people. From a larger perspective, they are a robust backbone for the general population.

Diversity through research

Mathematics was a "single-man-game" for a big part of its history. However, this changed drastically in the last decades. Nowadays we emphasize the importance of teamwork for projects, as teams are much more effective in modern mathematics when trying to solve a problem at hand. For example, the number of useful ideas generated is bigger than for single mathematicians; the novelty level of ideas is also significantly better.

In general, but in mathematics in particular, having teams with varying cultural, sexual, ethical etc. backgrounds further improves the outcome of teamwork. So, even seen from a selfish point of view, seeking diversity for research is a valuable goal.

Diversity through teaching

Many courses in mathematics have strong problem-solving components, and students are encouraged to work together. This provides an opportunity for introducing issues of diversity. Partially because of my own experience, I seek a learning environment where diverse perspectives are recognized, respected, and seen as a source of strength, and where teamwork is seen as a valuable goal itself.

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives are well-served by teaching classes, that students' learning needs are addressed (both, in and outside of class), and that the diversity that students bring to a class is viewed as a benefit for everyone.

Daniel Tubbenhauer; August 5, 2020