Yael Mishani-Uval

Diversity Statement

My commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is deeply rooted in both personal experience and academic practice. I was raised in Israel by parents of mixed heritage—Mizrahi and Ashkenazi Jews. My paternal grandparents immigrated from Syria and spoke Arabic, whereas my maternal grandparents were Holocaust survivors from Bulgaria who brought their distinct language and cultural traditions. This rich background fostered an early appreciation for intersectional identities and the importance of creating spaces where diverse traditions can thrive.

My father's work profoundly shaped my understanding of equity and inclusion as a political activist and later as a Knesset member advocating against discrimination. Our home was a forum for meaningful discussions about systemic inequities, cultural identity, and social change, instilling a deep commitment to equity-minded practice and institutional transformation.

This commitment to diversity has been integral to my research and teaching methodologies. During my doctoral research, I conducted in-depth interviews with Israelis from diverse backgrounds, ensuring representation across regional, socioeconomic, and gender lines. This methodological choice wasn't merely about data collection—it was about ensuring that my research captured the full spectrum of Israeli experiences and perspectives. By intentionally including voices from different communities, I demonstrated how diversity enriches academic inquiry and leads to more comprehensive research outcomes.

My teaching experience further reflects this commitment to inclusive excellence. For seven consecutive years at Wingate Academic College, I taught Hebrew and academic literacy to a diverse student body that included many Arab students for whom Hebrew was a second language. A cornerstone of my teaching methodology was empowering students to contribute their unique perspectives to our shared intellectual community. Students wrote essays in Hebrew about topics of their choice and delivered 10-minute lectures, allowing them to bring their entire identities into the academic space. This approach proved particularly successful with second-language learners, who showed marked improvement in both written and oral communication skills. The retention rate for Arab students in my courses was consistently above the departmental average, demonstrating the effectiveness of these inclusive teaching methods.

My dedication to diverse communities extends beyond traditional academic settings. During my military service near Ofakim, a peripheral town in Israel's southern region, I mentored socioeconomically disadvantaged students, helping them improve their learning performanceI have also engaged in volunteer work with elderly residents in Givatayim, my hometown, and planned a workshop comprising eight sessions dedicated to discussing their life experiences.

My approach to diversity aligns with Emory's commitment to inclusive eminence by:

* Creating classroom environments where students from all backgrounds can succeed
* Developing teaching methods that address systemic barriers to academic success
* Contributing to institutional initiatives that advance equity and inclusion

I am enthusiastic about becoming a member of Emory University's community, which is dedicated to fostering transformative academic experiences that benefit the common good. I intend to leverage my established track record in supporting diverse learners and undertaking inclusive research to further contribute to the university's mission.

Thank you for your consideration.

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