

Although I have worked adjacently to issues of diversity in the sciences throughout my career (e.g., [Price et al. 2008](#)), in 2015 I deliberately shifted my focus to stop discrimination as much as possible. Benefiting from the interdisciplinarity at UWB, I listened and learned from colleagues who laid the groundwork for this change. I read voraciously. I began struggling with concepts like marginalization, intersectionality, and belonging.

Jump ahead to early March 2020. I'm sitting in my kids' school library for what will become an online community of practice for white womxn working toward antiracism and justice. I'm here for additional learning, to process what I have been reading and doing to promote antiracism, inclusion, equity, and justice. I need a space where I can process mistakes and talk through puzzles in a place that does not harm others with my ignorance. COVID has come to Kirkland, WA, everything is confusing, and the pandemic is exacerbating the urgent need for action. The white, womxn facilitators begin by sharing moments when they made racially charged mistakes. Each story models how we make mistakes—and how to learn from them. In our meetings over the next three years, this community helped me learn and process from my mistakes and from the positive actions I've taken. I listen. I learn. I act.

## Service

I apply an inclusive lens to service. As an NSF reviewer, for example, I've noticed that many scientists design research projects that they think are new ways of increasing representation, but in actuality their ideas would be improved by including social science research about learning, belonging, and persistence. Here, inclusivity is the act of being an interdisciplinary scholar—blending social science frameworks into natural science questions. When speaking with graduate students and postdocs about their next steps, I listen to their priorities, then offer guidance that honors their identities and quality of life; for example, I affirm that queer folk need to think about where they are going to live in this country given the increase of anti-gay and anti-trans legislation. Shocking as it may be, my approach differs from other mentors who focus solely on potential career gains. I facilitate conversations in ways that lift a variety of voices in the room, not just those who are most likely to speak. For example, I invite a random selection of people to share their ideas, and I use collaborative documents like Google Docs in which people can record their questions (anonymously) as a workshop unfolds. I use apps like Padlet where people can share ideas in a conversation with many others. These strategies help me listen and learn to direct future actions.

Members of the Campus Council for Promotion and Tenure (CCPT) listen to the stories that the candidates' files collectively tell. For example, CCPT has observed that our campus is like many others in that women, especially when they are people of color, take on enormous service loads relative to others. I have taken this feedback to VCAA Jones, Acting AVC Udell, and the academic deans so that Schools can consider appropriate responses. Serving as AVC-FS would increase my ability to act, helping Schools develop systems to make service loads both equitable and fulfilling. Under my leadership, CCPT has engaged with VCAA Jones about the need for clear guidelines from each school for promotion at all ranks, which helps faculty members determine when they are ready to apply for promotion. Clear guidelines help address the pattern that folks with marginalized identities wait longer to apply. The opportunity to reflect on changes that Schools have implemented comes with listening and learning from candidates' dossiers in the next cycle.

Consequently, CCPT acts by reporting back to the academic deans about the way guidelines are implemented by external reviewers, review committees, and in faculty discussions.

One of my roles as a monitoring editor in *CBE-Life Sciences Education*, is to edit collaboratively the feature “[Annotations of LSE Research](#),” which unpacks the research methods, teaching implications, and background for scholars new to the field ([Frantz et al. 2024](#)). We choose papers to annotate by listening to and learning from articles that promote justice and belonging in biology education, including the [Scientist Spotlights Initiative](#) ([Schinske et al. 2017](#)); applying community cultural wealth to identify the social capital of undergraduate researchers ([Thompson and Jensen-Ryan 2018](#)); comparing persistence between historically over- and underrepresented students ([Estrada et al. 2019](#)); and using participatory action research to identify strategies that Black students rely on to succeed in a predominantly white space ([Stanton et al. 2021](#)).

## Research

When I shifted my research to focus on diversity and justice, I built on previous work developing assessments (e.g., [Price et al 2014](#)). I began to consider the fairness of the questions in these assessments—that is, how to improve fairness by editing questions in which different demographics of people perform differently ([Martinková et al. 2017](#)). I have also published on how to begin conversations about gender discrimination ([Price 2021](#)). In more action, colleagues and I improved STEP training to emphasize the inclusive practices we use, even during emergency remote teaching ([Ma et al. 2021](#), [Seah et al. 2021](#)).

In 2020, I worked with Dr. Thelma Madzima on a grant awarded by VCAA Jones to support faculty with marginalized identities. The project stemmed from NSF proposals we had been submitting to support postdocs; while those NSF grants were not successful, we repurposed the ideas to support faculty members here at UWB. The most impactful part of the grant was biweekly support led by [WellAcademic](#) for a cohort of marginalized faculty members. The WellAcademic team led sessions focused on implementing scientifically informed, culturally sensitive practices that decrease participants’ stress while also increasing their productivity, focus, work-life balance, and general satisfaction. I also worked with participants to frame a research project—a project that has been slow to progress because of the pandemic—that explores how emotions affect faculty members’ notions of success across research, teaching, and service. Our work differs from previous studies by considering race and by listening to faculty members from primarily undergraduate institutions, many of which are minority serving institutions. I am currently analyzing (and learning from) the more than 700 responses to our survey.

Recently, colleagues and I wrote an essay urging researchers in biology education to expand their methods to use asset-based frameworks when considering issues of diversity, inclusion, and justice ([Shukla et al. 2022](#)). Although education researchers in K-12 have long argued for abandoning deficit-based models of research (e.g., Ladson-Billings 2008 *AERA*), in biology education research, even studies seeking to minimize achievement gaps work within a construct that defines baseline behavior as white and male. It would serve us well to learn from our colleagues in K-12 education.

## Teaching

I create enjoyable and rigorous learning environments that foster a love of learning among our diverse population of students. More than that, however, is how I listen to students to create an atmosphere of belonging. One student, who granted permission for me to share a reflection, wrote: “I am so thankful for your presence. As I have stated before, I had never before experienced a white bodied individual nam[ing] the physical threat that exists for us (some of us more than others), especially in today's world. Being seen and acknowledged on this level gave me a feeling of being seen that is not often found, particularly in institutions of higher learning.”

STEP enacts my inclusive teaching philosophy both in how I conduct trainings for beginning instructors and in how STEP scholars teach. We focus on building classrooms with techniques that guarantee that all students are participating, learning, and sharing: small group discussion, think-pair-share, individual writes, individual worksheets, gallery walks (small groups circulating through the classroom together to answer questions at different stations), jigsaws (multiple expert groups discuss their material, and then reshuffle into new groups with each member teaching their expert content), and collaborative documents. A meaningful example of the kind of inclusive work mentees have done is pandemic related instructor talk—conversations at the beginning of class during the first quarter of emergency remote discussion that were about how to cope with the challenges of that difficult time ([Seah et al. 2021](#)).

## Conclusion

I am constantly involved in the cycle of listening, learning, and acting. As a white woman striving for equity and justice, I work to center the needs of the people I serve without acting like a white savior. I wrestle with conflicting and overlapping voices that often express deep pain caused by discrimination and marginalization. I also see UWB making progress. I am part of that change.