DIVERSITY STATEMENT
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My interest in issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) is deeply connected to my own identities. Increasing diversity in mathematics will enrich our field and will lead to more perspectives and creativity, my commitment to EDI initiatives is motivated not only by the positive impact that it would have in our field but also the positive impact that this would have on the lives of individuals from underrepresented and marginalized groups (URMs). The latter motivation comes from my lived experiences. Before starting graduate school, I did not know a lot about EDI issues. After moving from Costa Rica to Utah, I was made aware for first time that I am a racial and ethnic minority. This experience allowed me to reflect on my own identities and recognize the intricacies of being human in mathematics.

With the long-term goal of increasing participation of URMs in mathematics and other STEM fields, I have organized outreach activities for elementary and secondary school students. It is important to challenge stereotypes internalized during childhood, which deter women and people of color from pursuing a STEM career, so I have organized different workshops with hands-on activities to spark interest in mathematics. I have held various workshops such as Defining Your Path at the University of Utah, “What is Math?” Day, and Expanding Your Horizons conference, for which more than 150, 450, and 60 participants attended, respectively. For each of these activities, I recruited volunteers and helped with the development of the contents covered. I have also volunteered as a teaching assistant and a leader for the University of Utah Math Circle.

Most of my EDI work at the undergraduate level is done through mentoring. I serve as academic chair for Latinos in Action (LIA) at the University of Utah, a student group that empowers Latinx youth. Part of my work with LIA consists of advising students on their career options after graduation and how to apply to graduate programs if they decide to do so. LIA is for students of all majors, and most of its members are first-generation students. I was a mentor for two female undergraduate students as part of Utah’s AWM student chapter mentoring program. I currently mentor more than ten undergraduate students, many of whom are former students of mine. This informal mentoring is very similar to the one I do for LIA. It includes guiding students through the admissions process to graduate programs and providing information on opportunities like Research Experience for Undergraduates.

Recently, I co-founded the Association for Women+ in Mathematics at the University of Costa Rica (UCR) to serve URM students in my alma mater. This association has a similar structure to AWM. It is a much-needed support system for female students; currently, only four people in Costa Rica who hold a Ph.D. in mathematics identify as women. I organized a speaker series in which female faculty and alumni shared their research and career path in mathematics. We are also hosting workshops to educate all faculty about issues of sexual harassment and gender discrimination. I plan to provide students at UCR with information about admissions to graduate programs in North America.

The Utah AWM student chapter has played a significant role in my graduate experience. I served as outreach chair and currently serve as president. In addition to expanding the elementary and secondary school outreach described above, this year our chapter received the Scientific Excellence Student Chapter Award from AWM due to our speaker series and conference organization. Our chapter holds two speaker series, one of which is joint work with our Research Training Group (RTG) grant. These speaker series bring four mathematicians from URMs to visit the Utah department, where they share their research and their experiences in mathematics. These visits are an excellent opportunity for our students to expand their networks and to meet role models. Our BRIDGES conference is aimed at advanced undergraduate students and early-career graduate students primarily from URMs. The conference seeks to build a support system for these students. It will be held on June 2021, and we are currently hosting virtual events throughout this academic year to build a community among the participants. Furthermore, I participated in a peer-mentoring program, which pairs first-year graduate students and more advanced graduate students.

At the research level, I am thankful to have found communities with EDI-related goals in programs like Women in Numbers and Rethinking Number Theory. I am aware that EDI work is always ongoing, so I attend workshops and trainings to keep educating myself on EDI topics. I have attended several unconscious bias and bystander training sessions. I have also participated in the AMS webinar on advocating for students of color and attended paraDIGMS Fall Conference on diversity in graduate mathematical sciences.