

---

## Andrei Migunov - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

Everyone who wants a place in higher education - whether as a faculty member, student, or any other category - deserves to be treated with dignity, equal formal consideration, and sincere regard. However, equality in concrete terms contends with the reality of unequal circumstances and an un-level 'playing field' between individuals, ethnic groups, sexes, genders, orientations, and many other categories. When opportunities for an individual's flourishing are stifled by the conscious behavior of individuals, long-crystallized habits and prejudices, or institutional structures operating at the behest of nobody (as they often do) what overcomes this is not a condescending savior who hopes to champion their cause *in their place*, but solidarity and the lending of one's privilege to their cause. This of course includes, but is not limited to, the duty to use one's privilege as a faculty member to protect students from asymmetrical harm and to advocate for them *where they cannot do so themselves*.

My personal experiences have taught me to value the autonomy of those who seek *on their own behalf* to improve their conditions and those of others, and to practice solidarity with all those who are affected by the absence of justice wherever it is absent in the university.

My experiences working in ordinary community mutual aid associations have shown me that support needs to entail dignity. This has been true in my mutual aid work with our houseless neighbors, and it should be true in the university setting as well. Students have their own agency and we have to respect the forms of reason that come with that agency even if we don't always like or understand them.

It is a noble effort, and one I support and practice, to *actively* try to understand others, their circumstances, and how they make their way in the world or in the classroom. However, the category of 'understanding' has its limits as well. At those limits, the notion of 'solidarity' comes into play. We may not fully understand someone's motives or means, but it is the duty of faculty to support students unconditionally as *they* express their interests. Though I am a native English speaker, I am also an immigrant who came to a strange place at a young age. I am familiar with the strangeness of not seeing my own reflection in the institutions and culture around me. Those who helped me when my family and I came to the U.S. didn't need to understand us or place conditions on their support, nor did they interpret our needs for us. They simply supported us.

Lastly, science belongs to everyone. The incarnation of diversity that is most essential to the nature of my work as a researcher is the inherent internationalism of scientific collaboration. I am lucky to be part of a field that is not only interdisciplinary but populated by excellent scientists from all around the world, some of whom I am grateful to call my collaborators. Science also *affects* everyone, and it does so unevenly. Inequality - social, economic, or otherwise - does not have a utopian technical solution based in scientific advancement alone. Rather, the distribution of technical innovations in the world is shaped by existing inequality. It's the responsibility of a scientist to spend time thinking about how their work affects the world in uneven ways. Working with people from other backgrounds, whether students or colleagues, makes that task much easier than trying to sprout this knowledge from one's own head. It is in this sense that inclusivity is an essential element of both research and teaching.