

Brittany Butts
Diversity Statement

Being a nurse makes you a better person. In my years working in the Emergency Department of an urban Atlanta hospital I met just about every type of person. And my job was to help each one of them. Perhaps the most important thing I learned working with my community is to never view someone else's life through my own lens. Diversity is a complicated and multi-faceted idea that is often simplified into gender, race, and creed. But within a community there is diversity of socioeconomic status, coping mechanisms, safety, power, sense of belonging, and many other factors that affect an individual's overall well-being.

Thus, my goals for diversity in nursing education are two-fold: 1. To create a community of nurse leaders and scholars who are as diverse as the communities in which we live and serve and 2. To foster a learning environment such that these nurse leaders and scholars are able to promote optimal health for all by creating, changing, and leading through innovative teaching, discovery, nursing practice, and social action.

Recruiting a diverse group of nursing students should be a priority at the undergraduate, masters, and doctoral level. Racial minorities make up less than 20% of the nursing workforce, and men make up less than 10% of the nursing workforce. Gender identity, outside of the number of males and females, and sexual orientation are not considered in workforce makeup. I would like students to include diversity statements in the essay portions of their nursing school applications as one of many things to consider in accepting new students.

As an instructor, I find it important to include topics on diversity, culture, and society into the course content. These topics should not just provide students with information on topics such as gender identity and cultural norms, but also require students to reflect on an individual might feel within today's society. For example, students are often instructed to respect a patient's gender identity, but better instruction could include an exercise requiring reflection on how a patient who identifies as gender neutral might feel when filling out a form or getting a driver's license. Nursing education should include teaching students to try to look at each situation from the patient's perspective and never from their own.

Diversity comes in many forms, and as an instructor and researcher I have a duty to promote and celebrate the diversity within our communities. I have a responsibility to guide students in considering the resources available to those they encounter and care for and to set an example by demonstrating that each person is deserving of the same respect and care no matter what their background, beliefs, or situation.