DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION STATEMENT — STÉPHANE P. FRANCIOLI

Issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are central to my research identity. They also inform my teaching and my sense of responsibility as a representative of the academic community. As university faculty—and as scholars of management practices in particular—we have a unique opportunity to shape DEI practices in both academia and the workplace. I'm excited to contribute to this positive change.

Developing an appreciation for DEI issues very much depends on one's own background. In my case, it starts by acknowledging the unique circumstances from which I benefited, as a member of many privileged groups: I am a cisgender, white male; I grew up in France, a prosperous country with well-established infrastructures, education system, and freedom of speech; I was raised by an affluent family, with caring, supportive, and well-educated parents, who put a wide range of cultural, financial, and social resources at my disposal for me to achieve my goals. Finally, although I have attention-deficit disorder, which comes with its own set of challenges, I acknowledge that my condition is a form of neurodivergence that is reasonably well understood and can be effectively accommodated.

From this brief overview of my background, I draw three important lessons. First, I have seldom been victim of the prejudices, discriminations, and socio-economic obstacles that affect many people's personal, educational, and professional lives. Second, I was fortunate enough to grow up with an extensive panel of available role models who looked like me and favorably shaped my life goals, personal choices, and career trajectory. Finally, my personal and professional achievements have been not only the reflection of my hard work, but also—and to a non-negligible extent—that of auspicious circumstances.

I believe that it is my responsibility to educate myself about the obstacles others regularly face, the various forms these challenges can take, and the most effective ways I, as an ally, can help alleviate them. This translates into concrete actions in my daily professional life. For instance, I begin all my one-on-one meetings by asking my students, mentees, and co-authors how they are doing and what is happening in their lives. This helps me build stronger relationships, better understand others' circumstances, and find ways to offer support when needed. I have also benefited from this empathetic approach firsthand when my wife and I cared for an infant with little social support during COVID-19, when we recovered from two miscarriages, and as we now navigate her multiple sclerosis diagnosis, which has required me to be more present at home. Having gone through these personal challenges, I am more aware and empathetic toward others' circumstances and better able to offer meaningful support.

DEI also plays a key role in my research process. My research aims at both developing a more comprehensive picture of contemporary DEI issues and identifying solutions to alleviate the social inequalities they reveal. I discuss these research endeavor in detail in my Research Statement, accessible here. Beyond the content of my academic work, I also keep DEI in mind when I am *conducting* my research. I am convinced that diversity goals in academia are most effective when set at the earlier stage of academic careers (i.e., research assistants and doctoral students), where strong mentoring can have the greatest impact. With this in mind, I ensure that the team of RAs I recruit every semester

reflects the diverse body of undergraduate students in my institution. I spend time understanding their motivation for being a research assistant and adapts my mentoring to fit their goals. I also promote collegiality so each RA can learn from the others.

Taking concrete steps to build an inclusive environment in the classroom is, in my opinion, a fundamental mission of university instructors. As an instructor for an introductory undergraduate class in management, I took the following three steps. First, I ***set and enforced norms of inclusion***. At the beginning of the semester, I compared our class to an orchestra. I am the conductor. Students are the musicians. Building on this metaphor, I stressed the importance of coming to class well prepared, out of respect for other musicians; listening carefully to others and moving along with the flow rather than repeating the same (musical) pattern multiple times; limiting solos in length, volume, and frequency; and acknowledging that all instruments have their place and contribute something unique. Finally, I pointed out that we were not the New York Philharmonics, and that mistakes and explorations were welcome, in the spirit of our collective learning experience.

I enforced these rules in multiple ways. For instance, after offering a question to the class, I'd pause for a moment, to let less frequent contributors—particularly foreign students for whom English is not the primary language—the time to collect their thoughts and form an answer before raising their hand. I'd also vary the difficulty of questions, to let more self-conscious students a chance to participate without the fear of giving a wrong answer. In the spirit of building a more comprehensive picture of an issue, I'd often encourage divergent opinions; when doing so, however, I'd ensure that all perspectives be considered seriously, and their initiators, treated with respect. This might include coordinating a back and forth between two perspectives to give an opportunity to respond; involving multiple students in the debate so no one feels isolated; and contributing my own arguments in support of an unpopular point of view to acknowledge its merit.

I also take concrete steps to build an inclusive environment in the classroom by ***preparing class material to which all students can relate***. Most notably, I ensure that the material I select represents the breadth of diverse profiles in the classroom. This includes choosing examples, pictures, videos, case studies, and activities that comprise—and offer a positive and non-stereotyped image of—women, minorities, and members of underrepresented groups. I also avoid pop-culture references that might be too American-centric. Instead, I take this opportunity to present pop-culture of other countries. For instance, I introduced a class on bureaucracy with a video excerpt from a famous French cartoon. To me, these alternative references help foreign students feel more included, all the while offering local students an opportunity to discover fun facts about other cultures. Beyond the material itself, I also adapt my discourse to avoid words non-English natives might be unfamiliar with. When technical words are unavoidable, or when students use jargon or references that others might not be familiar with, I invite a classmate to define the term or explain the reference to the rest of the class.

Finally, I strive to ***give all students an equal opportunity to succeed***. To do so, I apply strategies in and outside of the classroom. For instance, foreign students and first-generation college students are often less familiar with the tacit rules, codes, and expectations of local institutions. At the beginning of the semester, I made a conscious effort to spell them out clearly and concisely, so no student had to guess what was coming up in the class. My syllabus also included a to-do-list with check boxes for each session. These to-do-lists included both prep and administrative tasks for the following session. I also separated required from optional weekly prep tasks, so expectations were as clear as

possible.

Another example involves students with medical conditions that prevent them from taking notes efficiently, as well as students with long-term medical conditions that lead them to miss multiple classes. At the beginning of the semester, I created a pairing system, in which students who had writing difficulties or were going to miss multiple classes for health-related reasons had the opportunity to be paired with a student who could share their notes, if needed. Yet another example relates to exams. As much as I can, I avoid in-class exams, particularly those with long essays, which penalize slow writers, English language learners, and students with writing disabilities, attention deficit disorders, or proneness to stress and anxiety. Instead, I favor short, multiple-choice questionnaires for any in-class tests. I minimize essays in general, and reserve them for homework and team projects.

In the future*, **I hope to not only apply DEI strategies in my classes, but also help develop and teach a class dedicated to the topic.** As a member of many demographic majorities and privileged groups, sensitivity to DEI issues did not come naturally to me. I learned from others' experiences, and then dedicated my academic career to studying these issues. From my own journey, I have learned that the primary barrier to increasing diversity, equity and inclusion is a lack of awareness. With this in mind, I hope to one day get the opportunity to teach a class dedicated to these issues at a top business school. Teaching a DEI-related class constitutes undoubtedly my biggest and most exciting teaching career goal.

To conclude, I believe that DEI issues permeate all dimensions of a faculty role, from administrative duties to research and teaching responsibilities. I see myself as an advocate as much as a learner of best DEI practices, and I look forward to contributing to a fair, diverse, and inclusive environment at your institution.