

Diverse perspectives build cohesive understanding.

I am a curious mix of Asian-American/gender fluid and I used to be relatively passive in conversations on race and sexual orientation. This changed when I met Dr. David Asai, an Asian-American who was actively promoting diversity and inclusion within the STEM fields. Through his talk titled “Race matters” I learned how diversity in heritage and identity is essential to good science¹. I now actively strive to use my heritage and identity as a foundation to listen to perspectives and construct concepts that build inclusion.

As a scientist, I want to move beyond well-intentioned anecdotes to scientifically backed thinking. There are mathematical, computational, and scientific reasons why diversity and inclusion are important². In science, solutions are reached through multiple routes. Understanding is the ability to grasp the multi-route framework that lead to solutions. Cohesive understanding is then collectively built from communication between people with diverse perspectives, identities, and life-histories³. My approach to diversity and inclusion is to establish interconnectivity through open communication and application of active listening. It is my goal is to promote the expression of identity, heritage, and mindful open communication as a FIRST fellow, researcher, and educator.

1. Asai, D.J., *Race matters*. Cell, 2020. **181**(4): p. 754-757.
2. Page, S., *The difference*. How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, 2006.
3. Boaler, J., *Limitless mind: Learn, lead, and live without barriers*. 2019: HarperCollins.