

# Diversity Statement

Norman Matloff  
Dept. of Computer Science

5 October, 2017

I've been interested in, and committed to, diversity issues from an early age, long before the term *diversity* existed in a social context.

I lived the first nine years of my life in the City Terrace neighborhood of East Los Angeles. Even at that time the area was “majority-minority,” mainly Latino, Asian and Jewish. That, plus having politically liberal parents, set the tone for my lifelong appreciation for groups outside the white mainstream. By the time I was in high school, I was engaged in activities such as canvassing neighborhoods for an African-American candidate for Congress, Myrlie Evers.

Throughout my career at UC Davis, I have continued that commitment to improving conditions for people of color in general and the impoverished. I was Chair of the Academic Senate Affirmative Action Committee, for instance, and have written several op-ed pieces in support of Affirmative Action, including one published in the *Los Angeles Times*. I was active in programs with acronyms such as MAP and MORE, and the Graduate Minority Forum. I gave invited “testimony” on Affirmative Action to the student Mock Congress at Berkeley High School.

Due to marriage, interest and my childhood experience, I have been quite involved in the Chinese-immigrant community. Among other things, this led to my being active in a national committee defending Wen Ho Lee, a Taiwan-immigrant engineer at the Los Alamos National Laboratory who, due largely due to his ethnicity, was falsely accused of spying for China, and Raymond Luh, a NASA engineer in a similar situation. Due to this and other activities, I was selected for UCD's Distinguished Public Service Award in 2002.

On occasion I have been invited to speak at Asian-American forums, such as the Harvard University Law School Asian Pacific American Conference on

Law and Public Policy. Just last month I gave an invited talk on Affirmative Action in Los Angeles to the Chinese-American Citizens Alliance, the oldest Asian-American civil rights organization.

As a faculty member, I have pushed hard to hire more women in the four campus departments I have been in, often convincing my faculty colleagues to vote for a female candidate rather than a man who had been their first choice. In one case, I even went to a dean to enlist his support. I believe my lobbying in this regard made a major difference in at least three cases, and am proud to state that all three of these women have gone on to prominent, highly successful careers here at Davis.

I try to expose my students to the world of social activism too, such as in teaching our in-house ethics course, ECS 188. A major theme in my version of that course concerns the status of women in engineering.

This extends also to my most important “student,” my daughter Laura. Just as my parents instilled in me an appreciation for those unlike me, I have aimed to do so in Laura, who is currently a PhD student planning an academic career in engineering. I am proud to say that she minored in International Relations as undergraduate (rare for an engineering student), is fluent in Spanish (and Chinese), and has spent a bit of time in South America in STEM education activities.

City Terrace was a good neighborhood for future socially conscious professionals. My childhood friend, the late Don Nakanishi, grew up to be a pioneering professor of education and Asian-American Studies, and our acquaintance Zev Yaroslavsky became a long-time LA County Supervisor. I can claim a level of social involvement only a tiny fraction of what they have done, but I continue to do what I can.