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2025 Candidates for Student and Early Career Council (SECC) Representatives to SRCD Committees

The deadline to [vote](#) is Wednesday, March 4, 2025, at 11:59pm EST.

Navigate this Page

- [Candidates for the Development Committee](#)
- [Candidates for the Equity & Justice Committee](#)
- [Candidates for the Ethnic & Racial Issues Committee](#)
- [Candidates for the Interdisciplinary Committee](#)
- [Candidates for the Membership Committee](#)
- [Candidates for the International Affairs Committee](#)
- [Candidates for the Program Committee](#)
- [Candidate for the Publications Committee](#)
- [Candidates for the Policy Committee](#)
- [Candidates for the Teaching Committee](#)

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Candidates for the Development Committee



Yan Jiang

I am Yan Jiang, a Ph.D. Candidate in Education Studies with a specialization in Computational Social Science at the University of California, San Diego. My research focuses on promoting equitable access to high-quality early childhood education, with special attention to diverse sociocultural contexts and historically underrepresented groups. My dissertation integrates innovative computational and qualitative methods to reimagine conceptions of “high-quality” early education in diverse societies. This work has been honored with the 2024 SECC Dissertation Funding Award from SRCDC. My research has been published or is forthcoming in journals including *Early Education and Development*, *Educational Researcher*, and *Review of Educational Research*.

As a first-generation scholar, I bring a firsthand understanding of the systemic barriers faced by marginalized groups in academia. This experience drives my commitment to creating inclusive spaces where graduate students and early career scholars thrive. Through my leadership roles in national and international organizations like the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES), I have organized professional development webinars on topics that include funding opportunities, conference navigation, and job-market strategies. I have also led networking initiatives that establish a supportive community among graduate students and scholars from varied backgrounds.

As a representative to the Student and Early Career Council and the Development Committee, I will continue to advocate for programs that empower graduate students and early career scholars, including travel awards, mentoring for domestic and international doctoral students, and professional development workshops. My goal is to ensure that graduate students and early career scholars have the resources, guidance, and sense of community they need to excel in their academic and professional journeys.

Candidates for the Equity and Justice Committee



Christina Rowley

My name is Christina Rowley (she/ella) and I am a postdoctoral scholar in the Health Equity Justice Action lab at San Diego State University. I earned my Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst with an emphasis in Clinical Child and Family Psychology. I study the impact of racial/economic disparities on the family system, and how that, in turn, impacts early child socioemotional development and interventions designed to reduce

these disparate effects. To that effect, my NIH-funded dissertation investigated stress in multiracial families during early parenthood with special attention to the importance of looking within multiracial families for they are not a monolith but have often been treated as a homogenous group.

Within SRCD, I am an active member of the Latinx Caucus and was a mentee in the NSF-SRCD Mentee-Mentor Emerging Scholars Program. As an SECC representative, I hope to continue my advocacy for diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice (DEIJ) in various levels of the academy, building on the long history of DEIJ-related work I have engaged in (e.g., aiding in developing protocols to improve equity in access to graduate school, including aiding in changing graduate school application review procedures that included poor predictors of success disadvantaging underrepresented minoritized students).

I am interested in serving on the Equity & Justice committee so I can help in promoting scientific scholarship on topics related to equity and justice with an eye on the heterogeneity of marginalized peoples and experiences. Thank you for your consideration of my candidacy.

Candidates for the Ethnic and Racial Issues Committee



Sommer Blair

My name is Sommer Blair, and I am a licensed clinical social worker in my third year of doctoral studies at the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work, mentored by Dr. James Huguley. My research focuses on confronting Whiteness through White racial socialization, particularly by equipping White parents to raise critically conscious, anti-racist children. This work is embodied in the Parenting for Racial Equity Project (PREP), a parenting intervention I created and piloted.

Through my community-based research and previous practice experience in child welfare, I aim to use my privilege as a White scholar to dismantle systemic racism and amplify the voices of marginalized communities.

As a Student and Early Career Council (SECC) Representative to the Ethnic & Racial Issues Committee, I will advocate for students and early career scholars to critically examine how their power and privilege can be utilized to drive meaningful social change. My work and personal investment in multiracial spaces has provided me with a deep understanding of how to navigate and challenge systems of oppression, and I hope to bring this perspective to SECC's initiatives.

I am committed to fostering programming that empowers minoritized members, such as mentorship opportunities and initiatives addressing barriers faced by early-career scholars from underrepresented backgrounds. By utilizing my position within SRCD, I aim to ensure developmental science not only prioritizes equity but also challenges dominant narratives and advances the voices and contributions of marginalized groups. Thank you for considering my candidacy.



Jun Wang

My name is Jun Wang, and I am a Ph.D. candidate in Education at Johns Hopkins University. I am interested in serving on the Ethnic & Racial Issues Committee and the Student and Early Career Council (SECC). My research, professional values, and work experience align strongly with the Committee's mission. My work focuses on early childhood education, exploring the interactions of language, culture, identity, and well-being. My recent research centers on creating

equitable formal and informal learning environments for young children, particularly those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. I aim to understand linguistic environments as part of power structures in children's educational opportunities, academic success, and overall well-being.

I am also committed to research-practice collaboration, which has enhanced my skills in communicating and collaborating with educators, policymakers, parents, and researchers in diverse settings. I have also contributed to the field by serving in various volunteer roles. As a doctoral student, I facilitated communication between incoming students and the program, advocating for their needs while helping them understand program requirements. Additionally, I have served as a graduate student reviewer for conferences, which has prepared me to review SECC Dissertation Funding Awards.

As an SECC representative, I will use my skills to amplify the voices of students and early-career members, promote equitable opportunities through developmental science research, and support efforts to address the needs of historically underserved populations. I am committed to advancing developmental science in ways that benefit all children and youth worldwide.

Candidates for the Interdisciplinary Committee



Briana Williams

I am a clinical postdoctoral fellow at Brown University Medical School/Bradley Hospital and earned my Ph.D. in School Psychology from Michigan State University. I serve as an early childhood mental health consultant in early care settings, collaborating with caregivers and educators to support young children's success.

My leadership experience spans various roles, specifically focusing on supporting graduate students and providing mentorship within the National Association for School Psychologists and American Psychological Association for Graduate Students. Within these roles, I have reviewed conference proposals, junior scientist fellowships, and applications for a leadership program targeting students and early career professionals. I also serve on the Brown University Psychology Training Committee as a Fellow Representative, advocating for the needs and concerns of postdoctoral fellows across the clinical and research training programs.

As an SECC Representative, my goal is to advocate for students' and early career professionals' representation and visibility within SRCD. SRCD is uniquely positioned to advance developmental science by investing in scholars through strategic planning of professional development opportunities and highlighting existing funding sources. Specifically, I hope to serve on the Interdisciplinary Committee to further build the collaborative and cross-disciplinary approach to understanding and exploring child development. My training across schools, medical centers, and the broader community has shaped my understanding and curiosity in exploring how to support children and their families while integrating different perspectives. I hope to leverage my position as an SECC representative to encourage mentees to pursue and explore interdisciplinary methods to grow as scholars and clinical professionals.



Jialin Lai

I am a fourth-year doctoral student in Curriculum and Instruction at Texas A&M University. Drawing on my multilingual, multicultural experience, my research focuses on early language and literacy education among culturally and linguistically diverse children, employing an asset-based framework to understand learners' literacy development and to identify family and classroom influences.

I am interested in serving on the Student and Early Career Council (SECC) because I believe in the tremendous benefits of a welcoming environment for early-career scholars' development when they feel empowered to express their needs for guidance, opportunities, and support. Having received enormous support as a first-generation, international student and having mentored undergraduate and graduate research assistants, I bring my unique perspective to the SECC to serve a diverse body of students and early-career researchers at SRCD.

The motivation for serving on the Interdisciplinary Committee is my great enthusiasm for accelerating the progress of child development research through multidisciplinary efforts. Through training in and collaboration with researchers from linguistics, education, and psychology, I have seen potentials and challenges in creating meaningful conversations among different terminologies, theories, and research methods across fields. As a representative of SECC on the Interdisciplinary Committee, I envision contributing my voice to developing programs and initiatives that increase the accessibility and visibility of awards, collaboration opportunities, and strategies for building interdisciplinary networks.

Candidates for the Membership Committee



Alysia Cruz

My name is Alysia Cruz, and I am a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Education at the University of California, Irvine. I am writing to express my interest in being nominated for the SRCD SECC Membership Committee.

As a first-generation Dominican and Puerto Rican scholar, I bring a unique perspective to developmental science that is deeply informed by my personal experiences and academic training. My research focuses on cultural socialization, ethnic socialization, and prosocial behaviors in Latine children and adolescents. I am passionate about fostering inclusive, equity-focused research and view the Membership Committee as a vital platform for promoting engagement and advocacy for student and early career members.

I am particularly excited about contributing to key initiatives such as reviewing travel awards, evaluating student poster submissions, planning SECC Conversation Hours, and supporting the First Time Attendees Welcome Event. These efforts are essential to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment at the biennial meeting and ensuring that students and early career scholars feel supported in their professional development. I believe my academic background, cultural perspective, and dedication to amplifying underrepresented voices in developmental science align well with the mission of the Membership Committee.

Thank you for considering my nomination. I look forward to the opportunity to support SRCD and its members in this capacity.



Bruno Ache Akua

My name is Bruno Ache Akua. I am currently a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Human Development and Family Science (HDFS) at the College of Human Sciences of Auburn University, Alabama, USA. I aspire to complete my studies and graduate in the Spring semester of 2025. I hold Cameroonian nationality, a nation often described as a microcosm of Africa, characterized by its profound cultural diversity encompassing more than 256 ethnic groups.

I am delighted to have been chosen as a finalist for the Student and Early Career Council (SECC) and to represent the SECC on the Membership Committee. I am confident that my involvement in this committee will contribute significantly to the assessment of

membership status within the SRCD and identify essential areas for development, as well as the strategies required to facilitate that advancement. I am dedicated to the ongoing assessment of the existing membership concerning the diversity of academic rank, level of training, international representation, discipline, race/ethnicity, and gender. Concerning international representation, drawing from my experiences of living and studying across various contexts, I am committed to enhancing our membership and publications. I plan to engage several of my professors from my home country, as well as esteemed colleagues from neighboring nations like Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya, to become part of the SCRD and share their research at our biennial meetings. I will persistently strive to provide counsel to the SCRD Governing Council on matters concerning membership, including recruitment, retention, and the framework of fees.

Candidates for the International Affairs Committee



Peter Dossen

My name is Peter C. Dossen. I am a second-year Ph.D. student in the Child Development/Early Childhood Education Program of the Department of Child, Youth, and Family Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. My research interests center around the mechanism linking parental adverse childhood experiences, attachment, parenting, children's mental health, social-emotional development, and early childhood education.

Thus, I am grateful to have been nominated by Dr. Michelle P. Brown and Dr. Lorena Aceves to serve on the SRCD's Student and Early Career Council (SECC) as the SECC representative to the International Affairs Committee to integrate my voice into global conversations on child development. The United States universities are endowed with international students from underrepresented developing countries in developmental science. As a result, it is imperative to immerse oneself in such a thriving and deliberate professional stage to enhance interdisciplinary collaboration and advocate for the active involvement of underrepresented international scholars from varied cultural and geopolitical contexts. Most remarkably, as an international student from Liberia, my perspectives would span various roles and inspire a deep understanding of the importance of building the research, policy, and practice capacity among graduate students from underrepresented communities to encourage culturally relevant developmental science research that would shape the future of child development research globally.

Hence, my participation in the 2024 cohort of the SRCD Towards 2044: Horowitz Early Career Scholar and Mentor Program has provided invaluable educational and professional development exposures that are debut points for me to represent SECC ably on the International Affairs Committee.



Sarah Her

I am a second-year doctoral student in the Applied Developmental and Educational Psychology program at Boston College. My research interests include positive youth development, specifically examining how contextual factors at various levels – individual, family, school, and community – shape children and adolescent’s emotional and social development. Before coming to Boston College, I worked at Child Trends for four years and engaged in various aspects of research activities from project management to conducting data analyses. I also served as a Student Resource Senator during my master’s program at Teachers College, Columbia University where I led a panel discussion on financial support opportunities.

I am interested in serving on the International Affairs Committee as I am passionate about bringing an international perspective to research. Over the past five years, I have been involved in various measure development and validation work. Recently, I have been focusing my graduate work on examining constancy and change in Positive Youth Development (PYD; Lerner et al., 2005) from adolescence to young adulthood. By exploring cultural differences and similarities in relation to child and adolescent development, I seek to contribute to the broader literature on parenting, peer relationships, and school and community contexts. The SECC provides remarkable opportunities to engage with a research community committed to fostering international collaborations. I hope to connect with and learn from others in the SECC as well as contribute to building a stronger community of rigorous international research. Thank you for considering me for the International Affairs Committee.



Adelaide Delali Klutse

I am Adelaide Delali Klutse, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at The Pennsylvania State University. I received my Master's in Applied Family Science from Kansas State University and my Bachelors in Family and Consumer Sciences (Family and Child Studies major) from the University of Ghana. Currently, my work focuses on understanding how the context (individual, environmental and

relational) in which children develop influences their developmental trajectory.

I am vying for the position of Student and Early Career Representative to the International Affairs Committee because of my passion for serving and contributing meaningfully to spaces where I find myself. Serving on the international affairs committee of SRCD would not only be a privilege and an honor, but an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the internationalization of SRCD.

Being an international student and having received my undergraduate education from the University of Ghana and later transitioning to graduate school in the US, I have experienced the difference in not only education but also the state of publications and how it is not so inclusive of the majority world a situation I want to meaningfully contribute to improving.

In addition to bringing the student and early career scholar voice to the table, I believe I am uniquely positioned to contribute meaningfully to this committee as well as help facilitate and spearhead some innovative strategies that would allow the primary goal of the committee to be achieved.

Lastly, in addition to fulfilling the stated responsibilities required in this role, I look forward to working with the other SECC committee members to advance the course of students and early career scholars in SRCD.

Candidates for the Policy Committee



Cara Kelly

My name is Cara Kelly, and I am a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Oklahoma-Tulsa's Early Childhood Education Institute (ECEI). I earned my Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Sciences from the University of Delaware where I specialized in early care and education. My research focuses on early care and education programs and policies that impact young children's development.

This scholarship addresses questions about the indicators of early care and education programs that promote children's development, policies that impact these programs, and types of early relationships that

are associated with children's short- and long-term outcomes. Aligned with SRCD's mission, I approach research from a developmental perspective, with the ultimate goal of producing research for policy and program development so policies can best support children and families.

I have been an SRCD member for 10 years and have benefited from mentorship and networking opportunities within SRCD. Being considered for the Student and Early Career Council's Science & Social Policy Committee is an honor and is aligned with my career goals to more effectively translate research findings into policy recommendations. As part of this committee, I hope to contribute my knowledge and experience toward identifying and implementing changes that benefit graduate students and early career scholars. As a graduate student, I held various elected positions at the university and national levels focused on supporting graduate students, including Vice President of the University of Delaware's Education Graduate Association and Graduate Student Representative for AERA's Early Education/Child Development Special Interest Group. My experience as a first-generation college student continues to inform my mentorship approach and selection of service opportunities. If elected as representative for the Student and Early Career Council's Science & Social Policy Committee, I hope to continue advocating for the development of early career scholars within SRCD.

Candidates for the Program Committee



Megan Sattherthwaite-Freiman

I am a sixth-year Ph.D. Candidate in Education with a concentration in Human Development, Learning, and Teaching. I am interested in serving on the SRCD Program Committee as the SECC representative in part because the SECC has personally supported me through my Ph.D. journey. I am extremely grateful to have received funding from the SECC for my dissertation research and I want to pay it forward and continue to build the much-needed pipeline of scholars committed to reimagining human development. As Program Committee member, I would prioritize expanding support for undergraduate and graduate students in terms of attending and networking at the SRCD Biennial Meeting as well as programming that intentionally pulls back the curtain of

the hidden curriculum of academia for students and early career scholars. This has been a priority of mine as formal and informal mentor of current graduate students. Additionally, I would be eager to work with other committee members on the implementation and application of the SRCD Anti-Racism Task Force Report (presented in 2024) to the SECC and the Program Committee, as well as develop accountability structures for the Task Force's recommendations.



Jasmine Bigelow

I am a second-year doctoral student in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences at Indiana University Bloomington. I am grateful to be considered for the position of Student and Early Career Council (SECC) representative on the SRCD Program Committee, a role to which I will bring my experience as a first-generation student and a strong commitment to supporting graduate students.

As a first-generation female scientist, I am dedicated to supporting early-career and underrepresented graduate students. In my current position on the IU PBS Graduate Student Council, I provide resources and professional development opportunities. I also serve on the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students (APAGS) committee, where I assist with projects helping disadvantaged students navigate the financial burden of higher education. These experiences have taught me the importance of creating meaningful support systems for graduate students, which I aim to bring to my role on the Program Committee.

My interest in serving the SRCD Program Committee stems from my first-year experience at the Society for Research on Adolescence (SRA) Conference, where I realized the impact that thoughtful programming – speakers, presentations, and workshops – had on students' academic development. As this Spring marks my first time attending SRCD, I hope to leverage my fresh perspective to enhance programming for the 2027 meeting, especially for students and early-career academics. I aim to expand student-centered programming while enhancing accessibility for first-generation and underrepresented students. Ultimately, I will strive to support the next generation of developmental scientists by contributing to the Biennial SRCD Meeting.



Dominique La Barrie

I am a sixth-year developmental psychology graduate student at the University of Georgia and an incoming Assistant Professor at Virginia Tech. My research examines how cultural processes buffer the adverse effects of discrimination in Black and Latinx families. As an Afro-Latina scholar, I focus on ethnic-racial socialization and how kin networks—especially non-parental members like

grandparents—contribute to youth well-being.

I am passionate about supporting students and early career scholars. At UGA, I founded mentoring programs and secured funding to support them. My commitment extends to SRCD, where I serve on the Latinx Caucus, organizing professional development programming, planning committees, and chairing events for the 2025 Biennial. Through SRCD, I have built lasting relationships and gained valuable experience supporting student and early career scholars.

The 2027 SRCD Biennial will also be held in Atlanta, GA – a city deeply significant to my academic journey. My passion for developmental science was born in the heart of Atlanta as an undergraduate at Georgia State University, a city rich with history and activism. As the cradle of the Civil Rights Movement, Atlanta shaped my understanding of how historical and cultural contexts influence child development.

I am delighted to express my interest in the SECC Candidate for the Program Committee. As a representative for the planning committee, I plan to leverage my experience in organizing inclusive programming, my understanding of student and early career scholars' needs, and my deep connection to Atlanta to create meaningful opportunities for connection, growth, and success within our scientific community.

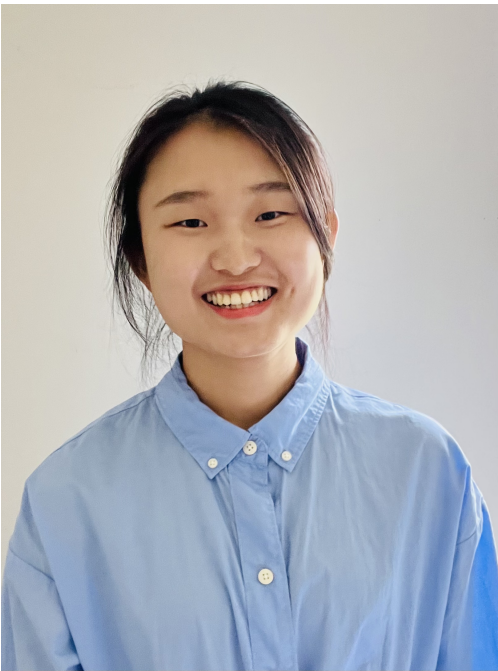
Candidates for the Publications Committee



Tiyyobista Maereg

I am a Ph.D. candidate in Developmental Psychology minoring in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Pennsylvania State University. My primary research interest is exploring the role place-based and social contexts play in the relationship between ethnic-racial identity development and academic outcomes for Black youth.

I am interested in serving as the SECC Representative for the SRCD Publications Committee. For the past few years, I have served as the graduate research assistant for SRCD's Sociocultural Data Tracking Initiative, which evaluated the implementation of the Sociocultural Policy in SRCD journals. My experience in this initiative has provided me a unique insight to SRCD publications that I can share with the SECC. Additionally, I have served in a similar role as a student representative during my graduate career at Penn State which I believe can help me ensure that students concerns are heard and considered within this organization.



Qi Huang

I am a doctoral candidate in Human Development and Family Studies at Michigan State University, and I am excited for the opportunity to serve as the SECC representative on the SRCD Publications Committee. My research centers on the experiences of ethnic-racial minoritized adolescents and young adults, particularly the impacts of discrimination, ethnic-racial socialization, and mental health. I am also committed to understanding the experiences of international students, who often navigate complex identities shaped by their ethnic-racial backgrounds. Throughout my graduate program, I have gained valuable experience in research and publishing, with work published in journals such as Child Development and Research in Human Development.

This experience has equipped me with a strong foundation in scientific writing, peer review, and research dissemination. I am eager to contribute to the Publications Committee by supporting the dissemination of high-quality, inclusive research that advances developmental science. My goal is to support SRCD publications amplify diverse voices, uphold ethical standards, and foster the visibility of early career scholars. In addition to my research, I served as a Leadership Development Fellow, where I created a

Wellness Ambassador Program to advocate for the well-being of international students and postdocs. I have also been involved in mentorship and service roles, such as representing graduate students in the Council of Graduate Students, reflecting my commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. As an early career scholar, I understand the challenges emerging researchers face in publishing and professional development. My expertise and passion for research, publishing, and leadership uniquely position me to contribute meaningfully to the SECC and the Publications Committee.

Candidates for the Teaching Committee



Rebecca McGregor

I am a 5th year Ph.D. Candidate in Developmental Psychology at the University of Pittsburgh. My research explores how parents support preschool-aged children developing literacy, math, and social-emotional learning skills. I have participated in SRCD activities since 2019, attending Biennial meetings, serving as a Reviewer, and participating in webinars and I am excited to attend the Teaching Institute Pre-Conference this year. I have taught for five terms during graduate school, teaching undergraduate courses in Introduction to

Psychology, Research Methods, and a seminar on Culture, Parenting, and Literacy. I will be starting a faculty position at a teaching-focused liberal arts college after graduate school.

I am interested in serving as SECC Representative to the Teaching Committee because I am passionate about promoting the advancement of high-quality teaching. I have eagerly sought to develop myself as a teacher through my department's Advanced Achievement in the Teaching of Psychology distinction and encouraged others to do the same through mentoring fellow graduate student instructors. On the Teaching Committee, I will advocate for the needs of graduate students and early career scholars, expanding the committee's resources offered to instructors with an emphasis on current issues such as AI and inclusive pedagogy. Serving on the SECC would allow me to give back to a community that I have benefitted from throughout graduate school. I look forward to collaborating with other SECC members to support the council's initiatives, foster relationships with graduate students and early career scholars, and contribute to the society in a meaningful way.



Lina Carpenter

My name is Lina Carpenter, I am a recent Ph.D. graduate in education from University of California, Irvine. My research has covered topics around child development, inequitable discipline in pre-k, socioemotional development, empathy, and prosocial behavior in young adults. My dissertation examined what differentiates between altruistic versus performative kindness, and I'm interested in how self-compassion might foster positive classroom climate that is sustainable for both faculty and students.

I'm extremely passionate about teaching at the university level and providing mentorship to both undergraduate and graduate students. I was a 2024 UC Irvine Pedagogical Scholar, which involved more than 100 hours of training in higher education pedagogy; this culminated in creating and facilitating a 2-day workshop series to train incoming UC Irvine graduate teaching assistants. As an educator, I aim to give students tools to understand their own learning processes, pique interest in human development, and foster self-efficacy with critical thinking skills and collaboration.

As a disabled scholar, I consistently advocate for disabled community members and illuminate the ways in which universal design is universally beneficial. I also have personal experience with the invisible barriers and hidden curriculum faced by marginalized community members -- as a student representative during my Ph.D., I helped guide and streamline department policy to foster student well-being, academic success, and community cohesion. I'm very excited to work with the SRCD SECC Teaching Committee and contribute to the improvement of teaching and learning in developmental science. Thank you for your consideration!

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