

Jeanne Marie Viviani, Region III Chair-Elect Nominee

Diversity Statement – Limited to 1 page, single spaced, 11-point font, answering the following questions:

- What does diversity, equity and inclusion mean to you personally?
- What is your personal position on and experience with diversity, equity, and inclusion? Please give examples, and share which experience was the most impactful.
- What are some diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives that you would like to see within NCURA?

In our current culture, getting through the hyperbole to the heart of what diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) should be (at various levels – organizational, community, and individually) is no easy undertaking. It takes vigilance to call out things you see and hear. At our institutions of higher education, where history and processes continue to be rooted in structures and dynamics that thrive on exclusion, they are difficult to change.

For me, I grew up in an immigrant family that never defined people by their gender, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or sexual orientation. My father owned hair salons in the 1980s and I grew up with and worked side by side with many in the queer community at a time when it was barely acknowledged let alone accepted. We didn't call it DEI, but it was the manifestation of one man's personal belief in people. Throughout my working career and in my personal life, I have always defined people by their character. My father always tried to hire ethical, hard-working, kind, and responsible individuals who also came from every imaginable background, and it worked well. Nothing is more powerful than providing a safe space and employment to individuals who may not have been given an opportunity. I have taken that life lesson into my research administration career. It is who I am – it is in my DNA.

When I started in research administration over 20 years ago, I focused on hiring the right person and not the right resume. There is something to be said for finding the person who WANTS the job, not NEEDS the job. While I applaud the hard work of DEI advocates, many programs, all well-intentioned, do not have the desired outcomes. I have always been a hands-on leader and believe that change happens with doing and not with talking. I would consider it a privilege to implement programs that focused on doing and encouraging and not talking and training. I have studied Kouzes's and Posner's The Leadership Challenge and would encourage the use throughout Region III among other powerful tools and resources.

While I may not have specific initiatives in mind, as an athlete, mom and professional, I believe in doing better every day, coaching where I can and welcoming input and ideas to drive the growth and success of Region III.