I have personally changed paths many times in my life, taking on new and changing my old (personal and social) identities. I have plenty of visible social identities that confer many privileges. This is something I do not take for granted: Having gone through a medical transition from female to male, I have hard-won experience of the power and impact that external, assigned, visible social roles have on one's life socially and physically in the lived environment. It is with this in mind I hope to leverage my privileges in pursuit of the aims of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Equity means removing barriers to access and entry to any and all facets of society such as institutions and infrastructure. In a metaphorical sense, some may need a large boost and some may need a small boost for this to be achieved. For an illustration of how equity is applied differently (rather than equally), from the perspective of my role at UM, and just under the topic of physical disability, I consider two scenarios of differing scale. In one, I ensure all doors and ramps are cleared which improves access not only for those in say, a wheelchair, but also for those who are older, temporarily impaired, moving carts or strollers, etc. In another scenario, I choose to research subjects who are specifically physically disabled, in a way that fills out gaps in our knowledge, i.e. research that is well known for able-bodied persons may need to be replicated on more various subjects.

I have expounded on equity specifically, and now I will briefly touch on the diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. Diversity is celebrating differences in identity and backgrounds. When it comes to problem solving of any kind, it pays off to draw from a wide variety of experiences. Inclusion means making an effort to ensure access for all, it is a deliberate intention and action. Finally, accessibility means not everyone interacts with the world the way I do, including both sensory and physically.

In terms of topic areas of the course, I would say my strengths are in understanding intersectionality and how multiple identities can interact with power structures. This comes from the personal experience I described above of transitioning between two different visible social identities, meaning I have experienced a wide variety of treatment from the general public. This has reinforced for me that when others share their unique experience of intersecting identities, it is critical to approach of trust and listening. The greatest challenge I faced in the course was coming to terms with my sense of responsibility for power imbalances. I perceived injustice to be largely institutional and out of my control, but I see that I do not get to opt out of interacting with existing power structures, especially in my role at UM where I may be in control of some students classroom/lab experience. My challenge will be to take responsibility for EDIA where I can.

As a result of my learning, there is one important action I would like to take in my role at UM. I believe having safe, brave, and accountable spaces make a positive impact on the environment of inclusion. So my action towards equity is to foster safe, brave, and accountable spaces. This applies both to environments I have obvious control over, such as when I am leading a classroom or lab, but also applies to spaces I occupy such as my research group, in committees, in my peer group, etc. I will do so by using my unique access to power structures and authority to call out oppressive acts I see whether they are policies and procedures of the institution, or the actions or words of a (knowing or not) individual. I will also apply equity in this regard by ensuring my response is appropriately scaled with the harm I see being done. Also, I am acting from an unequal position of authority so I understand the potential impact of my actions.