Personal Biography and Picture. Learners should prepare a short personal biography (2 pages), including a picture of her or himself. In this biography, discuss how you have been affected (personally and professionally) by living in a diverse society, and be prepared to summarize to the class. Student (headshot preferably) picture due to instructor for assembling into e-class student collage. Bio is due January 30.

The rose that grew from concrete is what I consider myself. Throughout life, I have faced many challenges growing up in an impoverished, marginalized community where the chances of obtaining a degree were far out of reach. However, I did not allow that to hinder my goals. Due to the resources available, there were few college and career exploration options. However, I found my passion for STEM through a summer program, Emerging Scholars, at Clemson University. My success so far was in part due to my village. Past and present professors have allowed me to achieve far more than I could imagine. Thus far, I have completed advanced coursework in chemistry, biology, microbiology, and neuroscience while completing my MS and BS, followed by admission to the Biology graduate program at Howard University. My current objective in graduate school is to publish valuable data in biology that will advance the field while collaborating with other professionals. I want to mentor undergraduate students and help create a networking environment during this time.

I have also become a member of a few organizations, such as the Neuroscience Scholars Program, Women In Biology, American Association for the Advancement of Science, and American Society for Microbiology. While a member of these programs, I have been allowed to enhance my skills in the research processes and cutting-edge scientific content. Where I can strengthen my critical thinking skills and scientific knowledge, these programs provided me with

tacit knowledge throughout the science community. Each is brimming with its own sense of diversity.

Diversity is the biggest challenge many seem to face in the workplace. However, it's the most beneficial thing that can occur. My professional life shows that I have held a wide range of jobs. These jobs ranged from pharmacy technician to teaching assistant to project management. At each position, I have grown and changed my way of reasoning. As a teaching assistant, I found shaping young minds for their future endeavors quite invigorating. Being an underrepresented minority, I strive to be the best example, knowing firsthand the impact a lack of education can have on an individual and the limitations that it causes. Specifically, while working, one of my first jobs was being a pharmacy technician in a local pharmacy. Looking back on my young career, I realize this is the first job that helped me realize my impact within the workplace. Everyone has their unique way of doing things. Does this mean that they are wrong? Diversity is essential when it comes to the thought process. I firmly believe that in order for us to learn new things, we need to be taught by those before us. People who have the knowledge and experience in their respective fields.

I have also trained and mentored incoming personnel at each position. Assisting new employees is a strenuous task that many need help to handle. Thus, I have become a valuable asset to every company I've worked in. These jobs provided me with the necessary skills to be used in any career choice. With this knowledge, I have gained something extraordinary: the ability to listen. Which is why it is baffling to think that many companies have removed diversity and inclusion. What better way to understand the communities that you will be serving than incorporating tools that can benefit everyone.

I look forward to working in a diverse environment. It shows me that in that environment, I would not have to worry about certain colloquialisms and slang being seen as obscene. However, suppose there's an off chance that it is seen that way from what I have experienced in that case, people in diverse environments are open to learning and tend to appreciate the differences that everyone possesses. Diversity helps people be more open-minded. The closed-mindedness that people exhibit leads to a plethora of issues.

As mentioned previously, I grew up in an impoverished area. My town in rural South Carolina was riddled with many issues against black and brown folks. For example, my mother was around when schools began to integrate. The ridicule and backlash she faced were unbelievable. The same people who hired her and her siblings to nanny their kids did not want them to attend the same schools. So what did they do? They built a new school, private, might I add. They would rather pay a hefty price every year than send their children to school with African Americans.

In my academic career, there has been a limited amount of diversity. The school where I obtained my bachelor's is a Predominantly White Institution (PWI). To say there were challenges is putting it lightly. Numerous times, my friends and I experienced microaggressions at the hands of our professors. We were often told internships and research opportunities were not available while our caucasian counterparts were actively sought out. Were they "smarter" or well-equipped to handle these situations better?

Now, at a Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), I still find myself caught in the cross hairs of what I would call microaggressions. There are professors of various backgrounds at the university, so I find it baffling that they are not equipped to understand their students. I've been in meetings with professors of a different ethnicity where it's been verbalized

that since I, an English-speaking African American, was present, they would do the courtesy of speaking English.

As a member of the African American community we are faced with so much adversity. So all of these factors changed my outlook on life. Which is why I am so grateful for diversity and inclusion at each stage of my life. These experiences can and will transcend boundaries if were open to the idea.