

Merit in diversity

Please allow me to share my vision on diversity based on my lifetime of accomplishments and international experiences. My international experience (*i.e.*, USA, Belgium, Netherlands, France, Germany, Kenya, Seychelles), has shaped my worldview and values, and encouraged me to identify and appreciate both the commonalities and richness of people. I am a strong believer in merit in diversity, especially in the academic domain where knowledge is purposefully disseminated to develop active and productive citizens through deep student engagement, to stimulate innovation and better understanding of the dynamic world, so as to improve the lives of all people. Although a survey engineer by training and interest, I believe that critical thinking engendered by all fields is centrally important to the academic mission that champions merit in diversity. My research efforts have been fundamentally interdisciplinary and involved global stakeholders, and will continue in this trajectory, especially as I accept greater leadership responsibilities. I have been "central in novel academic and research projects", for instance, in the \$ 35 million United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - National Institute of Food and Agriculture project (<http://sustainablecorn.org/>), whose goals were to investigate the potential impact of abrupt climate change on agricultural production in the northern United States of America. This USDA project had a diverse team of over 41 Principal Investigators from 9 U.S. states, students, extension officers, administrators and the general public.

Previously, I set up the center for land degradation at the United States International University in Africa; reignited the African Students Association at South Dakota State University and served as the first Vice President. The goals of ASA were to assist, foster, and encourage unity, cooperation, harmony, coherence and the well-being of the association members, not only with the university, but also with the community as a whole. I have been the patron of the association

“People Living with Challenges” at the United States International University (USIU). This association involved different charities and worked with relevant institutions (e.g., hospitals) to provide services that could enhance the living standards of the disadvantaged. I also formed the geographical information scientist (country chapter) an affiliate of the environment information society of South Africa, which organized a major workshop held at the United Nations Office in Nairobi from 5th to 9th of November, 2001. Alternately, I started a new pilot surveying program for tertiary level institutions. This was a daunting task because other than textbooks, surveying is a practical instructional subject that requires expensive tools and equipment. I therefore partnered with the local district government department of surveys to gain access to their equipment to train my students and later organized and arranged to receive donated surveying equipment from other institutions. As part of my responsibilities, I prepared the national curriculum and exams. Because of the success of the program, more staff were recruited for this institution, and similar training programs were approved for other technical institutions. I am also a “go-getter”, to mention “a case in point” our research team at the Ohio State University, USA, did not have a field spectrometer which is an expensive remote sensing data collection equipment, so I borrowed from another University for the duration of the experiment.

I am an astute listener who strives to enhance the academic chemistry between instructors, students, parents and colleagues. My work has been featured in technical collections here (<https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=40qX4k8AAAAJ&hl=en>). Other related information is here (<https://vobade.wixsite.com/dr-vincent-obade/copy-of-philosophy>), and here (<https://vobade.wixsite.com/dr-vincent-obade/philosophy>).