

# gleasonbauer

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## DIVERSITY STATEMENT

A diverse community of learners includes people whose lived experience and positionality are shaped through intersecting lines of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, belief systems, economic status, age, education, immigration status, national origin, and ability difference. A diverse, equitable, and inclusive community striving for justice sees these differences as strengths and understands itself as a space of opportunity for empowerment, wisdom-sharing, and liberation. By incorporating the contributions of historically marginalized communities into my teaching practices, adopting strategies that support the learning and success of students from diverse populations, mentoring and engaging diverse student populations in creative activities, and working to increase access and equity in education, I have demonstrated an active commitment to supporting the success of every student:

My positionality as an educator impacts my pedagogy. Therefore, I work to make the implicit *explicit*; I name my lens as a white gender-fluid artist from a working-class background and acknowledge the hierarchical power structures of the classroom and rehearsal space. When appropriate, I name my pedagogical lineage. Jerzy Grotowski, Paolo Freire, and bell hooks all have impacted not only *what* I teach, but more importantly *how* I teach. I offer a diverse selection of critical and contextual materials for my courses, including texts from historically underrepresented artists and scholars. Queer theorists like Jordan Tannahill and Judith Halberstam reconstruct notions of failure and success, while Buddhist philosophers like Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche and social justice activists such as Sonya Renee Taylor offer new possibilities for embodied research and identity exploration. In an acting class, a Scene Selection List might include the works of Young Jean Lee, August Wilson, Branden Jacob Jenkins, and Larissa Fasthorse. These resources offer a sense of belonging as learners see themselves reflected and held within the continuity of their own artistic and cultural lineages. By de-centering traditional epistemologies and disrupting the colonized canon, historically marginalized learners are welcomed back to themselves, while those with systemically privileged identities develop compassion and deepen their understanding of their classmates' cultures, heritage, and lived experience.

Building community and engendering belonging are central to supporting the success of every student. By responding to the moment, my own learning, and those in the room, I employ a reflexive and transgressive pedagogy (hooks, 1994) that is ever-iterating toward a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. Seeing students as co-creators of an *extra-ordinary* culture, we craft consensual ground rules and practices to interrogate systems of the oppressive *ordinary*. I engage students as capable co-investigators, with whom I build a mutually agreed upon, consent-based working environment. Drawing upon the students' wisdom, we work to dismantle minoritizing systems that negatively impact our learning space to consciously co-create our classroom culture. Consensually developed community aspirations often consist of agreeing to use "I" statements, practicing "both/and", and assuming good intent while owning impact. We agree to make and take space, eschew perfectionism, and embrace the value of meaningful failure.

As a certified mindfulness instructor and somatic practitioner, I build in time for interoception and reflection. Through these practices, we learn to self-regulate, experience and find strength in our vulnerability, and summon the courage to share authentically. As we nurture our self-awareness through somatic practices, we deepen the valuing of our own and others' narratives. We recognize that diverse stories neuter the construct of neutrality. Given the space to interrogate our socialization and values, we strengthen our critical thinking skills. And as is true in any deep learning experience, we hit obstacles. The labor of creating diverse and equitable learning communities is difficult and can be fraught with failure. As an educator, I make mistakes. I've prioritized productivity over human connection, misread situations, and made assumptions based on unconscious bias more times than I care to admit. But the key is that I do admit it. Through deep listening, reflection, and a willingness to stay accountable for my actions and growth, I continue to learn alongside my students.

An example of recent learning includes initiating (Un)Grading practices (Susan D. Blum, 2020) in my classes at Colorado College. This approach emphasizes growth and learning over externalized and often culturally biased validation. By co-creating community benchmarks, learners increase their sense of agency and critical self-reflection. Alternative assessment methods reduce the possibility of biased evaluation, allow for a recognition of the impact of systemic injustice, and reduce student anxiety by offering a different model of teacher-student power dynamics. By agreeing to trust my students' final grade declaration, I de-center myself as the final arbiter and redefine my position as an ally and guide to their learning.

In my current role as the Associate Artistic Director of Boulder's square product theatre, I partner with the Producing Artistic Director to develop, present, and tour productions celebrating the voices and stories of the historically marginalized. A respected company of national artists dedicated to contemporary, interdisciplinary work, we seek not only to provide excellent artistic programming but to also offer meaningful dialogue and opportunities for direct action after each production. As theatre makers, we have an abiding sense of mission as educators to provide internships for students and professional opportunities for recent graduates. During the summers from 2010 to 2014, the ensemble engaged a diverse group of students from Naropa, UC Boulder, and the University of Denver to develop, *Slab*, a multi-media adaptation of the novel by Selah Saterstrom. For this theatrical meditation on natural disaster (nominated for Best New Play), we partnered with Denver-based Warm Cookies of the Revolution (the world's first civic health club) to generate a conversation about poverty, focusing on the stories of those who are left behind when catastrophe strikes. In 2017 we partnered with Warm Cookies again for our critically acclaimed production of Gregory S. Moss' *House of Gold*, co-hosting a community conversation about privilege, with the specific goal of presenting ways in which whiteness can be leveraged to dismantle systems of oppression within the local community. This production also involved a multicultural group of student interns and recent UC Boulder and Naropa graduates. During the summer of 2022, square's regional premiere of Clare Barron's intergenerational *Dance Nation* involved a diverse group of students and recent graduates from CU Boulder and Metro State Denver, providing them with both professional and mentorship opportunities. Many of these emerging artists, as well as students from Whitman and the University of the South, were involved in developing and performing our most recent production of *Things We Will Miss*. These young artists had all participated in Moment Work intensives with me. These workshops provided them with the tools needed to devise this collage-style, non-linear work exploring the climate crisis and the beauty and inevitability of impermanence. Viscerally honoring the grief and beauty, horror and hope inherent in being a member of the diverse young generation meeting this moment, *Things We Will Miss* will tour to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival this coming summer.

I have demonstrated a commitment to service that contributes to access, diversity, and equal opportunity in education. During my tenure at Marlborough, I served for 11 years on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Together, we successfully changed the practices and policies governing the acceptance and retention of transgender and gender-fluid students, crafted new hiring practices to ensure the recruitment and retention of a more diverse faculty and staff, instituted mandatory equity training for all faculty, and created a framework to support student affinity groups. As Co-chair of the Performing Arts Department, my fellow Head and I diversified our choice of guest artists, encouraged department members to increase their cultural competency through professional development programs, and worked to create program offerings that widened the department's appeal and more accurately reflected the school community.

Working to create and support structures that interrupt systemic oppression within learning environments is a prime directive for me as an educator. Situated within a radical pedagogical lineage, I have crafted a transgressive educational model that strives to foster the evolution of the next generation of innovative artists, culturally-responsive change-makers, and equity-minded culture holders.