

Statement of Commitment to Diversity and Inclusivity in Computing

Higher education and professional development are among **privileges many are denied** because of their circumstances, including but not limited to their socioeconomic background and **systemic disadvantages** to **historically marginalized and disenfranchised groups**. I believe that **ensuring equity of access** to opportunities for academic, professional, technological, and personal growth is a prime imperative of university instruction and mentoring. I also believe that higher education should strive to **uplift marginalized communities**, give their voices a place to thrive, strengthen the championing of inclusivity as a community value, and help affirm a broader spirit of service, empathy and kindness.

Objectives and Commitments

I believe the cause of equity and inclusivity in computing education spans many **domains of student experience** (the academic, the professional, the technological, the personal). It requires a reflection on a multitude of challenges and stressors in these domains, including, but not limited to, inaccessibility of spaces and technology, implicit biases, isolation, misinformation, and work-pay inequity. It also requires a commitment to developing resources for **empowerment of computing and HCI students from diverse backgrounds**, and building awareness and empathy in the broader on-campus community. I further review my commitment to these issues as follows.

1 Teaching and Advising

My teaching philosophy includes a commitment to facilitating **equity of access** to resources of academic success for students from diverse backgrounds. Having served as instructor and GTA for **CS1064** (Intro to Programming in Python) and GTA for **CS3724 + 5714** (Intro to HCI + Usability Engineering) has provided me a crucial, practical look at the most commonly encountered **barriers to academic progress** for first-generation college students, immigrant students, and students with disabilities or learning difficulties. It has also allowed me to reflect on how these barriers can be countered in conscientious course policies. These include creating safe, inclusive discussion spaces [1][2] and accessible alternatives for course materials, motivating students to engage with the instructional staff about their pressing needs, and encouraging teaching assistants and support staff to be empathetic and kind in responding to special needs voiced by students. I'm also firmly committed to the cause of access to affordable on-campus counseling services, especially for students from marginalized and minority groups. It is essential that students feel an **environment of support and stability** which allows them to concentrate on their learning objectives and build resilience in facing the stresses of employment, financial limitations, cultural barriers, and separation from family and loved ones [3].

My own experience as an international graduate student in the US has guided my ambition to recruit researchers from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds at my lab, because I firmly believe that this exposure can inspire personal growth, especially empathy and collaboration in researchers. I'll also strive for my research advisees to appreciate that contemporary information systems have the capacity to reinforce and diminish the inclusive spirit and equity of opportunity users of these systems experience in their daily lives. Research in HCI and sociotechnical systems should, thus, prioritize the **evaluation of inclusive experiences** and **uplifting of vulnerable communities**.

2 Outreach and Community

I had the privilege of attending and serving as a student volunteer for ACM Richard Tapia Conference on Celebration of Diversity in Computing in 2021 and 2022, respectively. Volunteering for ACM TAPIA, WWW and RecSys conferences during the COVID-19 era revealed the adverse effects, personal and professional, of the pandemic on researchers from marginalized and minority groups, especially **WPOC, LGBTQIA+** and

APIDA communities. They also reaffirmed for me the efficacy of **peer networks** in the career development and personal support of these communities. By (1) leading initiatives of support groups, spotlight talks by faculty, and career networking events, and (2) seeking research grants and collaborations with institutional [4] and non-profit **stakeholders in engineering diversity** (NSF EES, CRA-WP, Society of Women Engineers, among others), I plan to strengthen these networks on campus and in the broader academic communities of computing researchers. Finally, using my expertise in digital curation and recommendation of learning resources, I'll support departmental initiatives for faculty training and on-demand educational resources on issues of inclusivity and diversity. To conclude, I'll continue my advocacy for marginalized communities and foster new initiatives to empower future researchers of sociotechnical systems and HCI from these communities.

References

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2. "An easy-to-use checklist for holding inclusive meetings". https://uwaterloo.ca/human-rights-equity-inclusion/sites/ca.human-rights-equity-inclusion/files/uploads/files/inclusive_meetings_checklist-only.pdf. Equity Office, University of Waterloo. Accessed Nov 10, 2022.
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