

Diversity Statement

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Diversity is not a burden that our society has to deal with. Quite the contrary, it is the vehicle that our society is gifted in moving forward. I believe it is only through working with people with different perspectives can we come up with constructive solutions that have a broad societal impact. As a Professor and educator, I am committed to improving diversity in the computer science and engineering community through my research and teaching activities.

I have been actively involved with UT Austin's [Women in Engineering Program](#) where I mentored two female sophomores. I frequently interacted with them to guide their academic and career development. For instance, I carefully selected a small research project closely related to my research for them to undertake. Using the well-crafted project, I helped them learn about the research process, showcased what it is like to be in graduate school, and more importantly, conveyed that computer science and engineering is for everyone. Throughout the mentorship, I paid special attention to genuinely hearing their frustrations that they might feel as an under-represented group in engineering. At the end of our mentorship, one of them, Hannah Peeler, won a merit-based scholarship based on her demonstrated potential.

Apart from mentoring, I also contributed to diversity through outreach activities and services. I was a speaker at a high-school summer camp to encourage female students to pursue STEM careers because I believe fostering diversity is a long-term process that must begin at the K-12 stage. As the PC Chair of [Tiny Transactions on Computer Science](#), I intentionally created a diverse program committee with people from different countries and with different genders.

Looking forward, the diversity issue will become even more important as our society is increasingly relying on artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) technologies. ML and AI require massive data sets, which, if are not sufficiently diverse, will lead to systems that have inadvertent biases. For instance, learning from data sets containing only behaviors from men will produce systems that are likely bias toward men—an issue dubbed “[a sea of dudes](#).” I plan to seek university-wide inter-disciplinary collaborations (e.g., policy, social computing) to develop methodologies that embrace diversity in computing systems, and thus contribute to diversity from a technological perspective.

In addition, I will also continue my mentoring and outreach activities to improve diversity. I will create an inclusive classroom and research group where everyone is encouraged to avoid unconscious bias. I will look for opportunities to have conversations with K-12 under-represented students, and encourage them to pursue careers in the STEM fields.