

Diversity Statement

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It goes without saying that diversity is essential for the development of a large community. There are many studies and statements on why, and how, appropriate diversity, which is encouraged and enforced by institutions, including companies and universities, can help organizations adopt a multivariate culture and benefit more people in a profound and lasting way. Here I am not reiterating this wisdom (the world would not become better because of that). Instead, I choose to directly get to the point by illustrating: (1) why I advocate diversity from my perspectives, (2) what I have done to put my advocacy of diversity into practice, and (3) how I plan to help improve the diversity in the future.

1 My Perspectives on Diversity

Aside from benefiting a larger number of people more comprehensively, I advocate diversity for a very straightforward reason: I treat the teaching/mentoring as a mutual process (more of this in my teaching statement), and with diversity, I am able to learn from a wider variety of students and understand the world from more angles. As a person who keeps pursuing knowledge, it is extremely pleasant to closely collaborate with a group of students from different backgrounds. Similarly, I highly appreciate having an opportunity to work with people from minority and under-represented communities, as their views and experiences are extremely attractive and valuable.

2 My Previous Experiences on Promoting Diversity

Motivated by my intrinsic interest in helping to improve the world via various viewpoints, I tend to participate in activities that proactively support local under-represented groups. During my undergraduate studies in Shanghai, I taught Chinese classes in a local school designated for children whose parents were usually from rural areas and could not send kids to the local schools. At that time, I was impressed by the enthusiasm of these young students. To them, the shortage of access to educational resources did not curb their desire to acquire knowledge at all. Their incredible passion, which gave my teaching a higher significance, still encourages me towards taking up education, (as partly mentioned in the teaching statement, I have been working in K-15 education).

Meanwhile, I have also helped mentally disabled local adolescents recover, by teaching them to conduct rehabilitation exercises. My primary task was to act as a field coach while helping revise the teaching procedures. Though my efforts in the office have made a greater contribution than my advice on the sports field, I am still glad that, in the end, we managed to facilitate the healing process with a lasting and positive impact. Furthermore, thanks to this experience, I have acquired a more in-depth understanding of patience and inclusiveness, which is an essential ingredient of my teaching philosophy.

After becoming a PhD student, I have been active in helping a composite group of students conduct their individual research projects in a one-on-one manner. This group is composed of one 1st-year PhD student, seven master's students, including one woman, and seven undergraduate students, including one co-advised woman. Unlike in previous activities, this time, I have directly promoted diversity in the computer science field. Considering the respective interests and characteristics of the different students, I have adaptively set the research directions and tuned my mentoring styles for their best experience. Based on the feedback ("Best mentor so far", "Really considerate and knowledgeable", "Cares about student interests"), I am doing high-quality work while managing a diverse group of students, which I will try to further develop in the future.

3 My Plan on Improving Diversity

In the future, I will keep up with my proactive effort to diversify my working environment. Potential actions include, but are not limited to:

1. Trying to maintain an active constitution of my research group when reviewing applications.
2. Reaching out to connected universities (e.g., my undergraduate university) for potential candidates from minorities.
3. Encouraging/sponsoring under-represented students to present at public occasions (conferences/workshops/tutorials) to highlight their impact.
4. Actively participating in department events which promote diversity.