

## Diversity Statement

**HYEMI SONG**

My interdisciplinary education and work experiences are integral sources of diversity for pursuing diversity in the design and information community. I have spent the greater part of 15 years delving into design, art, computer engineering, and molecular biology as a student and professional in the UK, Korea, and the USA. Unfortunately, in many of those spaces, I faced adversity as a minority. The most significant challenge was that I have always been at the intersection of multiple identities and have never felt like I belonged anywhere.

Concerning education, I majored in visual communication design in art schools in the UK and Korea after receiving a BS in molecular biology. Unlike other students who had studied art and design since high school, I had to overcome the sudden transition from science to design and spend time acquiring skills that everyone else already had. The rare experience allowed me to scrutinize design challenges through unique lenses, using scientific methods learned from my biology studies.

Throughout my education, I had many such experiences where I had to use my various academic backgrounds to approach unfamiliar subjects or problems. Hence, I was able to acquire competitive talents in both engineering and design, which separates me from general designers. Thanks to this experience, I am quite familiar with methods as to how a person can make his or her career special by utilizing their own unique differences. As a scholar, I could keep utilizing my multidisciplinary backgrounds in my research, proving how making an inclusive community positively affects the growth of studies in the field. If possible, sharing my unusual trajectory

through many academic environments would guide marginalized groups to take advantage of their uniqueness for realizing their goals.

This educational background above will become a foundation for looking into potential ways to pursue diversity-oriented research or activities during my Ph.D. years.