

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

DHANYA SRIDHAR

I am committed to diversity, equity and inclusion. I recognize that academic institutions must work continually to meet the needs of underrepresented minorities, women, and disabled students, who have been historically overlooked in academia. I recognize that being a mentor and teacher gives me an opportunity to help underrepresented students succeed. I will continually endeavor to meet this goal.

In my own lab, I will place a strong emphasis on recruiting students from diverse backgrounds and creating an inclusive environment for everyone. I strongly believe that a diversity of views is necessary for a vibrant academic community. As a teaching assistant and as a recitation instructor in Columbia, I taught students from diverse backgrounds. I made sure to accommodate students' varying needs by having extra office hours and scheduling individual meetings when students required it. As a postdoctoral researcher, I have mentored undergraduate and PhD students from a variety of backgrounds. I have worked to learn each student's needs, and adapt my mentoring style accordingly so that each student can achieve their goals.

My experience as a researcher has been profoundly shaped by being a woman in computer science. As a undergraduate, I was one of four women in the entire department. As a graduate student, I continued to face the challenges that women experience when trying to carve out space in a research community. Based on my experience, I bring empathy for the varied circumstances that students face, and the different working and communication styles that they require to succeed. I endeavor to create environments where students feel comfortable to communicate their needs, and I will do my best to support them.

As faculty member, I am eager to serve on committees that ensure diversity and inclusion in the hiring and recruitment process. I am also eager to participate in community outreach programs that help under-served communities. As a graduate student, I participated in workshops geared towards increasing the representation of women in computer science. These include Grace Hopper Conference, Grad Cohort Workshop for Women, and Women in Machine Learning workshops. For the last two years, I have volunteered as a mentor at the Women in Machine Learning workshops, allowing me to give back to the community. Going forward, I will continue to volunteer for affinity groups that serve to make machine learning welcoming to underrepresented groups.

One thrust of my research vision is to use machine learning to provide equitable outcomes for under-served and underrepresented groups. In my research, I have developed algorithms that are fair and equitable when making high-stakes decisions about people [1]. I will expand my work on fair machine learning methods and focus on applications where data can be used to inform beneficial policy decisions.

References

- [1] Wang, Y., Sridhar, D., & Blei, D. M. (2019). Algorithmic Approaches to Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action via Counterfactual Predictions. arXiv preprint arXiv:1905.10870. Under submission at Science Advances.