

Growing up in a small town in China and as a female, I feel very lucky that I have the opportunity to experience many different parts of the world, meet and make friends with a diverse body of people around the world, and receive higher educations in both China and US. While most of my peers ended up settling down in my small town since their early 20s and joining the same traditional industry as their parents did, I feel lucky that my parents always believed that women and men should have the same right to pursue higher education, and they always valued my own passion for making impact on the world more than just a secure job. My earlier experience has inspired me to make a contribution to diversity, which mainly includes the following three directions.

Promoting Women in Computing. Being a female Ph.D. student in computer science, I had quite some close female Ph.D. student friends and we would share the experience we had in our Ph.D. programs. In the first few years, we would share the difficulties we met in research, and talked about the difference between female and male Ph.D. students on the way they prioritize tasks and handling pressure. Meanwhile, I attended a few events at our university campus. During one of those events, I got a chance to talk to Dr. Laura Haas (who was visiting our university campus) on females' academia careers, she responded to my concern that female often have a mindset of constraints for preventing them from trying, and yet I should think more about what I can do instead of what I cannot do. It was through these conversations with other female researchers, I learned more about myself on my own weaknesses, seeing how I could improve, and grew more confident over time. I realized the importance of having such conversations among females, and started to pass such conversations to junior female students. While mentoring students on their course projects, I tried to help female students to grow and build confidence by encouraging them to think about what they were good at and to lead the projects. In the future, I plan to work on two main directions: (1) diversifying my teaching content so that female students can work on what they are most passionate about; (2) encouraging female students to speak up their opinions.

Cultivating Inclusive Environment. I believe the culture of a research group is very important, especially for junior students. As a senior (female) Ph.D. student in our research group, I stood out as a leader to try to make new members (students, visitors) feel welcome and their voices being valued. In particular, I organized the research seminar of our research group, and the seminar became the main bonding activity among students. New students were able to introduce themselves by speaking up at the seminar. At the end of the semester, students got more familiar with each other and more of them were able to speak up their opinions. In the future, I plan to continue working on cultivating an inclusive environment by taking actions and trying to positively influence people around me.

Broadening Participation of Minority Students. At our university campus, I got the chance to know many minority students, including African American, Latino, and Muslim students, who are both in and outside of our research group. I have outreached to many of them and we helped each other on making research progress. Among these minority students, I have helped one female Muslim student (Fareedah Alsaad) with her term paper (with which she passed her qualifying exam). The paper was about constructing a concept graph on MOOC, and we had a few discussions where I helped her with designing a graph algorithm based on my background in algorithm designs from the undergraduate courses I took from Prof. Andrew Yao's class in Tsinghua University. Later, she turned that paper into a publication at EDM 2018. When I was a teaching assistant for CS 510, my fellow TA was a female Muslim student (Assma Boughoula), and we worked closely together and helped each other with problems and grew our leadership together by solving problems on our own (e.g., designing assignments, proctoring exams, handling plagiarism). My PhD co-advisor Prof. Tao Xie is a leader in the Tapia community focusing on promoting diversity in computing (being the Program Chair and General Chair of the Tapia 2017/2018 conference), and through observing his leadership and commitment on serving and mentoring a large number of minority students, I am inspired to join him and make my own contribution in my future career.

to broadening participation of minority students. In the future, I plan to design my career agenda to make more contributions such as participating in events focusing on minority students in computing and outreaching to and mentoring minority students in computing.