Service, Leadership, and Diversity Statement  
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I believe that leadership and service efforts have profound and lasting effects. For example, hiring faculty affects student relationships with those faculty for years, and advice to student groups trickles down onto the student body. Accepting these roles and tackling them with gumption is a vital part of being an effective faculty member. I posit that there exists a waterfall effect here: that by accepting service roles enthusiastically, and pursuing these and related tasks with strong conviction, we can increase the overall value of the education we provide and hopefully promote increases in diversity.

### Service and Leadership

My service roles typically involve working with students across our curriculum. I coach our Inter-Collegiate Programming Contest (ICPC) team. Every year, 100 students participate, and 30 are selected to compete at a regional competition. We often qualify for the world finals competition (e.g., Ekaterinburg, Russia 2014; Phuket, Thailand, 2016). This engages students in problem solving, providing another venue for interacting with peers and faculty. I also advise the student chapter of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). Through this, I am able to work closely with majors to increase engagement through social activities (e.g., board game nights), informative sessions (e.g., CS Elective Info / Grad School Info), and academic pursuits (e.g., corporate tech talks).

I’ve contributed to our department’s curriculum as a member of our Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UGCC), and more recently by developing two of the pilot courses for our new core curriculum (Data Structures and Analysis I and II). To this end, I chaired a sub-committee to work out the details of the courses and taught the pilot courses in Fall 2018, Fall 2019, and Spring 2020. I’ve also contributed to our department by helping hire new faculty members on search committees.

I’ve also accepted external leadership roles. I’ve participated in the selection committee for the Jefferson Scholars Program, have run SEAS wide workshops on how to tackle technical interviewing, and recently became the faculty advisor for Alpha Phi Omega, our University’s community service fraternity. Additionally, I’ve accepted a role on the ACM SIGCSE (Special Interest Group in Computer Science Education) organizing committee. I work to organize the student volunteers for the conference, working with the program chairs to facilitate volunteer activities.

I see all of these service and leadership roles as opportunities to engage our student body outside of the classroom. As previously stated, I believe these efforts have effects on the University and students, but also tertiary effects. Students can more easily become engaged in our major, be dissuaded from quitting when difficult courses come, and acquire personal relationships with faculty.

### Diversity

I believe that engaging students has a positive effect on diversity. Institutions often graduate upwards of 80 percent male students in CS, and a large majority of students are of White or Asian descent. While I do not personally contribute gender or racial diversity to UVa, I believe that everyone needs to consider diversity issues and take actions (no matter how small) to impact diversity. I try to create a welcoming environment, so students (especially vulnerable ones) feel comfortable approaching me about personal or academic issues. I then have an opportunity to impact students who otherwise do not feel comfortable or confident in approaching an authority figure.

Fostering an inclusive environment can be difficult. The power of stereotype threat, grandstanding, and other issues can put already disadvantaged students in an increasingly intimidating situation. Students always have their guard up, afraid to display signs of weakness. To combat these issues, I like to 1) involve a diverse set of students in class discussions while not demeaning anyone, 2) hire a diverse set of teaching assistants, and 3) combat intimidation by not allowing confident students to inject pretentiousness into the learning environment. Successfully accomplishing these requires showing weakness myself. By showing students that I myself am flawed and can confidently move past my own personal issues, I hope to embolden students to continue working to surpass their own. I regretfully do not have any concrete evidence of the effect of these approaches, and must continue to listen and learn about how my actions can affect (either directly or indirectly) diversity issues. While I don’t have generalized data that my approach is effective, I can present some anecdotes:

* An administrator in the SDAC office sent me an email containing: “I just wanted to say a quick thank you for doing such a great job working with our SDAC students (and all students for that matter!). <Student> was quite relieved after your conversation with her about being able to take an incomplete. I continually hear great things about you and your courses.”
* Disadvantaged students will approach me to have honest discussions about how they can be successful in getting a job, or improving their resume, or in thinking about their future. I try to always be receptive to these students. One student wrote to me: “Thank you so much for looking at [my resume]. Also, my grade in your class is still lower than the average but I’m confident now I can get it to jump a little”.
* I have a track record of guiding women and other underrepresented students in leadership roles (e.g. teaching assistants, ACM officer positions, etc.). I am proud that my TAs are often 50 percent women and are racially diverse. The ACM has also engaged women in officer positions. Two of our last four ACM presidents were women.

### Conclusions

I do not believe that I do enough to promote diversity. What I’ve written above is perhaps evidence that I care, but we can all do more. The events of this summer (2020) have triggered me to reflect more deeply about diversity. It is our obligation to try to take concrete steps to combat racism and well-documented achievement gaps. I’m considering several possible concrete actions. I’m organizing anti-racism workshops for Alpha Phi Omega (APO), the fraternity I advise, by working with the office for diversity and equity at UVa. I plan to attend these workshops myself. I’ve also had several conversations with colleagues about how UVa might engage our local community/schools and how we might obtain funding to do so. Lastly, I plan to incorporate explicit research on how my scholarship, specifically my novel course designs (see research statement), affects our most underrepresented students. My hope is to isolate how novel courses might be beneficial to underrepresented students. I don’t have all the answers, but by being conscious about diversity issues, by continue to learn from others, and by taking small concrete steps I hope to make a small impact on our community.