Maksym Andriushchenko **Diversity Statement**

I strongly believe that diversity and inclusion are fundamental to the responsible development of AI and to the field of computer science more generally. My commitment to these principles has been shaped by my international academic journey across Ukraine, Germany, and Switzerland, as well as my experiences working with students and communities from different backgrounds. As AI systems are getting more closely integrated into daily life, identifying their potential harms—sometimes quite subtle—and ensuring equitable impact across all communities is becoming increasingly important. Through my research in AI safety and collaborations with industry and government organizations, I have clearly realized that varied viewpoints and experiences are essential for developing AI systems that serve all of society. As a future faculty member, I intend to raise awareness about these issues and work to support underrepresented communities through mentorship and outreach activities.

Diversity Philosophy

Developing reliable AI systems requires diverse perspectives to prevent systematic biases that could disproportionately harm specific demographics. Throughout my career, I have witnessed both challenges and opportunities in making the AI field more inclusive. I have had a chance to work closely with students and faculty coming from diverse demographics and backgrounds. However, women and minority groups (e.g., the LGBTQ+ community, people of various religious and cultural backgrounds, individuals with disabilities), still remain underrepresented in the AI field, which can limit the diversity of perspectives and lead to biased and non-inclusive systems. To address this disparity, I will actively support existing inclusion initiatives and engage in outreach activities that encourage underrepresented groups to pursue STEM education and research.

My commitment to diversity has shaped my mentoring philosophy. Throughout my PhD, I have supervised 13 students from diverse backgrounds across multiple institutions. Rather than having them assist with small parts of larger projects, I prefer to guide them toward taking more central roles in their projects. This also requires adjusting to individual strengths and weaknesses, as each student has a unique background and mindset. In the future, I plan to continue working closely with students while taking into account their individual differences and giving them the autonomy to explore their own research interests.

In teaching, I will prioritize creating an engaging learning environment that accommodates students from diverse backgrounds and encourages them to feel connected and comfortable debating and asking questions. I believe my experience with diverse cultures and educational systems will enable me to better understand students' varied needs. In my AI courses, I plan to integrate comprehensive discussions about inclusivity, particularly focusing on topics such as AI bias and fairness. Through this teaching approach, I aim to ensure that all students can engage productively with the material and build confidence in their abilities.

Outreach and Community Support

Through my academic service, I have contributed to broadening participation in AI research through service on program committees for 19 workshops at major conferences (ICML, NeurIPS, ICLR, CVPR). These workshops provide opportunities for emerging researchers to present work in progress and receive feedback from more experienced colleagues. This service has given me valuable insights into the challenges faced by researchers from different backgrounds.

My non-academic outreach activities of the last few years have been mostly centered around helping people from Ukraine affected by the war. Since I am originally from Ukraine, I felt that this is where I could meaningfully contribute by teaching basic AI concepts to children, helping refugees to find temporary positions and integrate into a new academic environment. As a national coordinator for #ScienceForUkraine in Switzerland, I have worked extensively to help displaced researchers and students continue their academic careers. This role has involved coordinating with multiple institutions, evaluating applications, and providing guidance to scholars navigating challenging transitions and cultural differences. As an admission officer for the Ukrainian Global University, I interviewed numerous talented students whose education had been disrupted by the war. Many of these

students showed remarkable resilience and creativity in continuing their studies despite extremely challenging circumstances. This experience reinforced my belief in the importance of creating pathways and opportunities in academia for students from non-standard or underrepresented backgrounds.

I believe it is particularly important to begin outreach activities at a very young age to motivate children—including those from disadvantaged communities—to study STEM-related subjects. For this, I taught AI lectures for displaced Ukrainian children at a summer camp in Cisnădioara, Romania organized by my friends. Interactive demonstrations with generative AI tools, such as the DALL·E text-to-image generation model, worked particularly well with children and kept them highly engaged. The children's enthusiasm and quick grasp of general technical concepts demonstrated the importance of early exposure to technology. One particularly memorable moment was when a young participant became fascinated with prompt writing, spending a lot of time crafting increasingly sophisticated interactions for DALL·E. These lectures revealed both challenges and opportunities in making AI education more accessible.

Figure 1: A slide from my AI lectures for displaced Ukrainian children, featuring interactive demonstrations with generative AI tools, such as DALL·E.

My experience of working with displaced children from Ukraine vividly illustrated how AI systems can fail when designed from limited perspectives. For instance, I observed content filters, though intended to prevent misuse, inadvertently blocking legitimate content about these children's homeland. For example, it was impossible to generate *anything* related to Ukraine with the popular text-to-image generation model. This experience emphasized how seemingly neutral safety measures can have unintended consequences for vulnerable populations, reinforcing the importance of comprehensive evaluation across different use cases and contexts.

Future Commitments

Systemic barriers like limited early exposure to STEM subjects, lack of role models, and persistent stereotypes create hurdles for underrepresented groups entering computer science. These challenges are reinforced by unequal access to technology and educational resources across different communities. As a future faculty member, I plan to address these issues through multiple approaches.

- **Building Diverse Research Teams:** I will actively work to attract students with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. I will strive to create an environment where every group member can productively contribute their unique insights to addressing crucial challenges in AI development.
- **Making Teaching More Inclusive:** In my AI-related courses, I will include thorough discussions of AI bias and fairness topics. I will also develop course materials and teaching methods that accommodate different learning styles, with a particular focus on introductory AI courses where we can encourage students from all backgrounds to engage with technical challenges.
- **Advancing Inclusive AI Development:** I will promote inclusive research practices by organizing engaging competitions and hackathons that welcome broad participation, fostering interdisciplinary collaborations, and ensuring our research—especially in areas like AI evaluations and benchmarking—considers impacts across different communities.

Concluding Remarks. The rapid advancement of AI technologies makes it increasingly important to ensure that the field benefits from different perspectives at all levels—from early education to advancing frontier AI models. I view fostering diversity and inclusion not just as an ethical imperative, but as a practical necessity for developing robust and reliable AI systems. By creating an inclusive research and teaching environment and actively supporting underrepresented groups, I believe we can successfully advance towards this goal.