

Diversity Statement

Miao Qiao

I am deeply committed to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) across research, teaching, and academic service. I believe that a diverse and inclusive academic environment fuels innovation, enhances learning experiences, and equips students to excel in an interconnected world. As a female academic, I have been fortunate to benefit from the support and mentorship of my PhD and postdoctoral supervisors. Their guidance not only shaped my research career but also instilled in me a strong sense of responsibility to pay forward the support I received, empowering the next generation of scholars.

Past Contributions. Over the years, I have mentored students with varying academic strengths and experiences, fostering a supportive and inclusive research environment. I have worked diligently to ensure each student feels valued, supported, and encouraged to contribute meaningfully to our academic community. I strive to create a welcoming and supportive environment for all my mentees, tailoring my guidance to their individual strengths and challenges. This includes regular one-on-one meetings, structured feedback sessions, and clear pathways for academic and professional growth.

The project I led, titled “Advanced Graph Analytics for Human Brain Connectivity”, placed a strong emphasis on fostering inclusivity and community engagement. Targeted efforts were made to train underrepresented student groups, particularly Māori students, and to build meaningful relationships with local communities, including iwi and the broader Māori community. This initiative equipped students with essential research skills, empowering them for future academic and professional endeavors, while simultaneously strengthening partnerships with community stakeholders. These collaborations have laid the foundation for sustainable, long-term engagement and shared benefits.

In my teaching, I have worked proactively to create an inclusive classroom environment. Recognizing that database systems can be an abstract and intimidating subject, I redesigned course content to incorporate research-informed topics, hands-on activities, and adaptive learning materials. These efforts contributed to a marked improvement in student satisfaction rates, with my courses achieving over 90% satisfaction during the pandemic years. Additionally, I actively encourage participation from quieter and underrepresented students by utilizing online platforms, fostering peer-to-peer collaboration, and offering alternative communication channels.

Beyond my academic responsibilities, I have contributed to broader DEI initiatives at the University of Auckland. As the ACM ICPC coordinator, I ensured opportunities for diverse teams to participate and excel in programming competitions. Furthermore, I served on the University Human Participants Ethics Committee, advocating for fair and ethical treatment of all research participants.

Future Plans. As I grow my research group, I am dedicated to building an inclusive and diverse team. This includes actively recruiting students from underrepresented backgrounds and creating a culture of mutual respect and collaboration. I plan to introduce structured mentorship programs, with peer mentors guiding newer members. I aim to further incorporate inclusive teaching strategies, such as Just-in-Time Teaching and scaffolded learning models, to accommodate students with varying academic backgrounds.

Conclusion. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are integral to my academic identity. By combining mentorship, innovative teaching practices, and proactive community engagement, I aim to create environments where every student and colleague feels valued, supported, and empowered to succeed. Through ongoing reflection and action, I am committed to contributing to a more inclusive academic community.