

## VINEET PANDEY

## DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The 2020 CRA Taulbee survey notes that less than 24% of people in CS PhD program identify as women/nonbinary/other and less than 5% identify as African-American, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, or Alaska Native. I will continue contributing towards improving the dismal state of diversity and inclusion in Computer Science.

### **Foster a lab environment with zero tolerance for discrimination or bullying**

Throughout my research, I've collaborated and shared office with women scientists. Working alongside them, I have been exposed to the frustration caused by sexist comments on department email threads, at conferences, and in regular professional interactions. Independently, I've also learned that higher rates of sexual harassment are correlated with 1) male-dominated gender ratios and leadership; and 2) an organizational climate that communicates tolerance of sexual harassment. Providing safe and harassment-free environment is the bare minimum in supporting marginalized researchers. I am committed to ensuring that no member in my lab, classroom, or broader personal or professional surrounding will be treated unfairly. I have zero tolerance for any harassment or bullying. **To ensure that authority in the lab is not centralized among one or more individuals, lab governance will be time-shared among its diverse members.** E.g., governance activities include scheduling meetings, talks, and visitors. I will provide templates for all such activities to organizers who'll be free to modify them. I will dedicate quarterly meetings on tracking lab culture and discuss training on microaggressions, implicit bias, and discrimination.

**Foster a working environment that promotes traditionally underrepresented students and researchers.** My initial experience in HCI research was shaped by Laura (TA for my first HCI course) and Catherine (mentor for my first major HCI research project) who patiently taught me about research methods and encouraged my ideas. I've tried paying forward my mentors' kindness and patience by mentoring underrepresented groups through programs like UCSD STARS. **In my research, 11 undergraduates (5 women, 5 international students) have worked with me on designing and building software.** Three of them have continued their academic pursuit to graduate school at CMU, Parsons School of Design, and UCSD. Students' successes bring joy; however, simply providing opportunities does not end exclusion and marginalization. To that end, I strive to connect students with role models and professional contacts. After mentoring a student from a Southern California community college over a summer internship, I encouraged her to apply to a summer internship at Microsoft Research, provided feedback on her material, and introduced her to a senior researcher there. I help my students prepare for interviews and poster presentations by working closely with them through multiple iterations. For all mentees, I use gender-neutral and value-neutral language.

### **Continue developing a mentorship style that is both needs- and assets-based**

I find joy in identifying how to successfully work with people. I've realized this requires **understanding and supporting people's strengths**. For instance, one international student working with me had excellent ideas but needed to invest substantial efforts communicating them in language. To assist him in sharing his ideas (and develop confidence in the process), I requested him to run our meetings on whiteboards. With his clear design sense and clarity on programming, he discussed complex matters much better.

### **Use remote technology to foster positive connections**

I firmly believe that mentoring is lifelong. It's been 5 years since some of my undergraduate student mentees have worked with me. That hasn't stopped us from interacting over a common mailing list; mentees and I share opportunities, discuss questions, and provide professional updates. I intend to repurpose zoom meetings to 1) organize lab-to-lab meetings where two groups can discuss research and benefit from diverse mentorship; 2) invite speakers from under-represented to the lab; and 3) deliver research and outreach talks to reduce the burden on colleagues who disproportionately lift the load on improving inclusivity in Computer Science.