Diversity Statement

I am defined by being a female in STEM, a first-generation college student, and an international student. At one point, I was the only female out of ten PhD students in my research group. As a first-generation college student, I am the only one in my family who has attended college and graduate school, and is now applying to become a professor. As an international student, I have witnessed how racial stereotypes can hurt people, impact policy, and influence society. These experiences have motivated me to support diversity, equity, and inclusion in my future career as a professor.

1 Past experience in diversity, inclusion, and equity

Mentorship has been an outlet for me to promote diversity, inclusion, and equity. So far I have closely mentored four female students in research and career. Currently, one of them is pursuing their PhD, two are working in tech companies, and the other one is applying for graduate school. As a female mentor, I always encourage my mentees to ignore the negative voices from outside and chase their dreams, especially with my own experience. For example, one of my students came to me for advice because she wanted to work for a few years and then pursue a PhD, but she also wanted to start a family and was concerned about the balance between family, and career path. I shared my experience working full-time in the industry for two years before starting my PhD, which is not a common choice, especially for females. But I appreciated my working experiences as they prepared me with valuable skills and a strong will to finish my PhD. Then I told her that it takes time to figure out the right path and it is never too late to pursue a PhD. Eventually, she decided to follow my path to work in the industry first and then pursue a PhD, and I felt proud of her.

I have also supported diversity by giving back to the community. I have served as an area chair in *Women in Machine Learning*, a workshop for female researchers in machine learning to share their work. When reviewing the proposals, I was inspired by the in-depth thinking of female researchers on using technologies for social good, such as battling against online grooming. Moreover, I have been a TA for multiple courses, allowing me to interact with students from diverse backgrounds and create an inclusive environment for them. I am glad that students all felt comfortable coming to me not just for questions on lectures, but also for career advice.

I have also promoted inclusion and equity through my own research. During my PhD, I have made substantial efforts in donation persuasion for social good [1–4]. I have also studied people's perception of chatbot identities [3], which is a pioneering work on ethics that serves as solid evidence for legislation on AI agents and proposes guidance on AI system design. In the future, I plan to improve the inclusivity of the AI community, by educating the general public on how AI models work, and involving them in AI development.

2 Future plans on diversity, inclusion, and equity

Teach others/myself about diversity, inclusion and equity. Through my own experience, I realize that people may not understand the challenges others face: for instance, as a first-generation college student, I did not even know I could reach out to senior mentors to guide me; but when I talked to my friend, he found it hard to imagine because his family gave him many suggestions on college life. Therefore, to help people better understand the challenges others face, I will share my own story and encourage different groups to talk about their experiences. I will also include related research in my courses to educate people on diversity, inclusion and equity, and share resources so people can get advice easily.

Create more opportunities for underrepresented groups. Although I was the only female PhD student in my research group at one point, I was lucky to have a female advisor and external female collaborators. In the future, I will do my best to create more opportunities for different groups. I will advertise research positions in my lab and encourage people from underrepresented groups to apply. I will introduce people to researchers in their groups for collaboration. I will also organize workshops and

social events for underrepresented groups so that they can know each other and discuss research and career goals.

Embed diversity, inclusion, and equity in my own research. As mentioned in my research statement, I firmly believe technology should be used for social good and I am passionate about building dialogue systems for marginalized groups, such as senior citizens, patients in need, and groups speaking dialects and low-resource languages, to make them feel included in the fast-developing world. To accomplish this goal, I will devote my efforts to listening to them, understanding them, and eventually helping them overcome the technological barriers.

References

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