

## Xin Zhang — Diversity Statement

The STEM fields, especially computer science, have a long-standing problem regarding diversity. For historical reasons, women, minorities, and people with disabilities have been underrepresented in the field. It is the responsibility of a computer science academic to erase stereotypes from the past and any other obstacles that prevent such marginalized groups to succeed in the field, and thereby advocate inclusive education. Moreover, as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are becoming increasingly popular, the student body is growing even more diverse, which poses new challenges and opportunities for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in computer science education.

In my experiences with both teaching and research over the past five years, I have appreciated and attempted to address these challenges. In terms of teaching, I have served as a teaching assistant for both undergraduate and graduate courses on Georgia Tech's campus and contributed to course development in its online Master's program. Georgia Tech has a diverse student body comprising national as well as international students, and the online students have even richer background due to the lack of geographic and scheduling constraints. I addressed this challenge by being mindful about the students' backgrounds and not making any cultural or geographic references when I interacted with them or designed the course materials. In terms of research, I have mentored both female undergraduates and female graduates, and collaborated with researchers from North America, Asia, and Europe. When working with female students, my colleagues and I ensured that they were engaged in broader activities of our research group so that they felt being a part of the community. When it comes to collaborating with people that are from different countries, I tend to study a bit about their culture and history in order to stay respectful to them in these aspects.

In my future career, I plan to continue to actively address issues related to diversity in both teaching and student mentoring. For teaching, I will try to understand students' background better by conducting surveys at the start of each course and prevent any action that excludes any group of students. Despite all the efforts, inevitably there will be challenging moments caused by issues related to diversity in the classroom. I will try to manage these moments, and more importantly, turn them into opportunities to educate students on the importance of diversity and equity. In terms of research, I will work on recruiting female and colored students, and cultivate a group culture that welcomes students from underrepresented groups.