

Having grown up in a developing country and later studying in the United States as an international student, I have personally experienced the profound impact of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment on individuals and communities. These experiences have shaped my philosophy and deepened my commitment to promoting DEI.

Philosophy. My core philosophy centers on the belief that the ultimate goal of technological advancement should be human flourishing—not merely efficiency, optimization, or profit maximization. I am convinced that human diversity acts as an excellence multiplier and is essential to our collective evolution. Research [1] shows that diversity in ethnicity, discipline, gender, affiliation, and academic age has a clear link to scientific impact, surpassing individuals and homogenous groups. However, a recent study also shows underrepresented students innovate more but often receive less recognition, limiting their access to academic roles [2]. I believe the potential can only be realized when differences are embraced and conflicts are effectively managed through true inclusion and equity.

Experience. During my Ph.D. journey, I came to understand that diversity, equity, and inclusion encompass a wide spectrum beyond gender—including race, ethnicity, religion, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, and more. As an international student studying at the U.S., I initially grappled with fears about fitting in and thriving in a new environment far from home. These experiences deepened my appreciation for inclusive spaces like the Computer Science department of the University of Chicago, where diverse perspectives are valued.

Observing my advisor, Prof. Nick Feamster, and his impactful work on initiatives like the Internet Equity Initiative at the University of Chicago, I was inspired by his commitment to creating equitable, resilient, and sustainable Internet solutions for all communities, especially those underserved. His dedication to DEI principles deeply influenced my own perspective on the importance of diversity and inclusion in technology. Throughout my Ph.D., I collaborated with colleagues from various backgrounds—including women, LGBTQ+ individuals, racial minorities, and international students—outside of this initiative. These experiences enriched my understanding of diverse needs and perspectives and reinforced my commitment to fostering inclusive environments in academic and research settings.

As the Head of the NSF ACTION AI Institute Student Advisory Council, I prioritized diversity within the council and advocated for inclusive practices. We organized a series of distinguished lectures featuring speakers from varied backgrounds, enhancing the dialogue around AI and cybersecurity. I also mentored undergraduate and high school students through programs like iCTE, guiding them in cybersecurity challenges and fostering their interest in technology. In reviewing internship programs at UCSB, I emphasized the importance of selecting candidates from diverse backgrounds, particularly from California community colleges, to broaden participation in computing. My involvement in the ACTION AI Institute's first annual Knowledge Expo allowed me to contribute by preparing posters and delivering lightning talks, promoting DEI in AI and cybersecurity discussions.

Commitment and future plans. Looking ahead, I am committed to advancing DEI through both my research and teaching. I am currently engaged in projects that analyze cyber behavioral patterns among underrepresented groups, including victims of intimate partner violence and individuals who are blind or have low vision. These projects aim to develop defense systems and health-related tracking solutions that address the unique challenges faced by marginalized communities, which further works towards the goal of technology for human flourishing. I intend to integrate my efforts with the National Science Foundation's Broadening Participation in Computing (BPC) program, leveraging its resources for professional development and seeking funding opportunities that advance diversity initiatives. Prioritizing the recruitment and mentorship of students from underrepresented backgrounds and minority-serving institutions. I am confident that cultivating diversity within my research team will not only foster a cohesive and supportive environment but also drive our collective achievements by blending diverse perspectives and methodologies.

In the classroom, I am dedicated to cultivating a welcoming atmosphere where all students feel encouraged to participate freely. I will remain vigilant in identifying any discomfort or barriers to inclusion, taking immediate steps to create safe spaces and address concerns. My goal is to empower every student, recognizing and valuing their unique contributions to enrich the learning experience for all.

As a faculty member, I consider it my responsibility to expand on these efforts, bringing my empathetic approach to fostering an environment where diversity, equity, and inclusion are integral to our collective success.

References

- [1] Bedoor K AlShebli, Talal Rahwan, and Wei Lee Woon. The preeminence of ethnic diversity in scientific collaboration. *Nature communications*, 9(1):5163, 2018.
- [2] Bas Hofstra, Vivek V Kulkarni, Sebastian Munoz-Najar Galvez, Bryan He, Dan Jurafsky, and Daniel A McFarland. The diversity–innovation paradox in science. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 117(17):9284–9291, 2020.