Diversity Statement

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I love to cook. By taking a diverse set of complementary ingredients, spices and flavors, and combining them I can create a dish that is better than any of the individual ingredients in it. This melding of different flavor profiles together to create a dish better than the sum of its parts parallels my beliefs around diversity in an academic setting. I believe that diversity is essential to creating a rich, productive academic environment. Creating an inclusive environment, with a diverse set of contributors from all backgrounds (including gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic, and ethnicity) will help bring these different perspectives, ideas, and skill-sets, creating a community that is much stronger than any one of its many diverse members.

I take creating a productive learning environment where all are comfortable, and enabled to succeed seriously, and I have taken several steps to ensure students I work with feel included and comfortable. Inevitably when teaching a diverse group of students, I encounter a diverse set of strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles. To best serve my students I employ a wide array teaching styles including explaining traditional reasoning as well as background, applications, examples, posing open-ended questions, and using analogy to relate foreign topics to familiar ones. I use all of these techniques in a classroom settings, and often adopt my individual instruction to match the skill-set of the student or students I’m working in small group or one-on-one sessions.

While I believe in individualism, and respecting each student uniquely, I believe that for a diverse classroom to strive, it must be fundamentally rooted in equality. To ensure I don’t show favoritism, I am fairly regimented about creating objective criteria for evaluating both my fairness in interactions with students as well as grading and evaluating student progress. For instance, I will often limit myself to answering only one in-depth question at busy office hours before I make a student re-queue themself in the office hours line, ensuring that all students get an equal chance for my time. I do, however, ensure that students have high availability to aid, so that a student who requires more aid is not without the ability to get the help they need.

In summary, I believe that diversity is essential to growth and solving many complex problem in computer science. I work hard to ensure that all students I work with are encouraged to succeed, and that I treat everyone with respect, dignity, and fairness. A diverse student body is like cooking, having too much of one ingredient is not ideal, but when the correct mixture of spices comes together, the overall dish is far greater than the sum of its parts.