

I am committed to making the communities I belong to more diverse and inclusive.

Outreach. I seek to participate in outreach programs that diversify STEM participation and raise awareness of computer science in the communities I belong to. As a man, I am privileged in that I have rarely faced significant barriers due to my gender. Because of this privilege, I take the participation of women in STEM seriously and actively try to advocate for more inclusion. I co-worked with the K-12 Outreach BPC team of the Department of Computer Science at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) and participated in a writing workshop, which helped undergraduate women with diverse backgrounds apply for the Aspirations in Computing Award (<https://www.aspirations.org/>), which honors 9th-12th grade women, genderqueer, or non-binary students for their computing-related achievements and interests, and encourages them to pursue their passions. In the workshop, I shared my personal story as an undergraduate in mathematics who got interested in computer science and decided to pursue a Ph.D. in this area out of interest and motivation. I also listened to other participants, especially women undergraduates, sharing their personal experiences. From those, I realized that prospective K-12 students in our local community might only sometimes be aware of the available resources that help them gain skills and fulfill career opportunities in computer science. As a faculty member, I will continue to engage in diversity-focused outreach and increase participation from women in computing careers.

I consider myself a learner about diversity and I am still on the journey. I joined ENG/CS591 Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, a seminar run by the Grainger College of Engineering at UIUC, to learn more about how I can contribute to advocating for DEI in my department and beyond, and proposed a Peer Mentor Program for the department, aiming at increasing social support for early-stage Ph.D. students by offering a private, open-minded supportive ear and sounding board. I seek opportunities to implement the proposal as a faculty member.

Teaching. I am eager to learn and use *inclusive teaching practices* to create educational environments where all students are welcomed and supported in the learning process. Since 2020, the global COVID-19 pandemic has raised more significant challenges for students and instructors. As discussed in my teaching statement, when I served as the lead teaching assistant (TA) of CS427 Software Engineering (I) in the Fall 2020 semester, I noticed that many students were in a different time zone or a place with a lack of access to reliable internet. Some students told me about their responsibility to care for dependents and other family members and thus would occasionally be absent from classes or group project meetings. To create an inclusive educational environment, I helped make all teaching materials and homework instructions accessible in an asynchronous manner, including making the course website the primary hub for all course-related information, uploading recordings of office hours, and coordinating with other TAs to host office hours at different times of the day to accommodate students from different time zones.

I use scientific tools such as CATME (<https://info.catme.org/>) to assign students to more diverse teams and advocate for inclusion in teamwork. In his Leading The Future of Work LinkedIn Newsletter Series, Jacob Morgan said that “inclusion means everyone feels comfortable bringing their whole selves to work and that their diverse backgrounds, beliefs, and opinions are embraced and valued.” I believe that a diverse team spurs creativity as it provides various unique perspectives from its members and their differences regarding gender, nationality, ethnicity, and professional skills. When I serve as a supervisor of students’ team projects, I seek to signal respect and politeness. I work hard to learn to pronounce students’ names correctly. And when I introduce myself, I also say my name clearly because I understand that the pronunciation may be difficult for some students, who may feel embarrassed to ask. By taking the initiative to do the self-introduction, I hope to break the ice and let students feel comfortable studying and working with me.

Future Directions. I will continue my learning trajectory from my previous experience in serving to diversify participation in STEM, proposing a peer mentor program for early-stage Ph.D. students, and practicing inclusive teaching in my classrooms. As a faculty member, I will continue to engage in diversity-focused outreach efforts to support women in computing-related careers. I seek opportunities to implement the peer mentor program proposal and I am willing to contribute to pre-existing programs on campus.