

## Statement of Contributions to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

### Diversity Philosophy

I see education primarily as a public good, as opposed to a service for sale or an exclusive club. I therefore believe that educational institutions should strive to benefit all of society rather than some portions of it. This belief is at the root of my dedication to diversity in our institutions. An additional reason for my interest in diversity is my personal experience with diverse teams, which has included both diversity of discipline, but also of backgrounds and life experiences. I have invariably found diverse teams to make more perspectives and viewpoints available, leading to a more diverse set of ideas, which in turn make it more likely that there will be innovation and breakthroughs. I also consistently learn much more from these experiences when compared to working with people with similar backgrounds to mine. One last but important reason for the importance I see in diversity is that my main motivation for being in academia is to contribute to society, to make the world a better place.

There are some peculiarities about my life experience that have provided me with tools to better connect with a diverse group of people. I was 16 when I migrated to the United States, coming from a small country, Uruguay. Coming from a country with very few migrants in the United States meant that wherever I went, I was most likely the only one from there, and no one else shared a similar background. While difficult, this experience, over time, made me focus on always trying to find ways of connecting with others, and the realization that most of the time I could succeed in finding common ground. I also have an invisible disability I developed as an adult, which can affect my interactions with other people in certain settings. It has certainly strengthened my commitment to making academic experiences accessible. I also did not know anyone who worked in research when I was growing up and know what it is like to have to carry heavy groceries for more than a mile because you do not have a car, so I can relate to first-generation students and students from lower-income families.

While the ability to connect is important, I believe the most important factor in promoting diversity in academia is dedicating time. Time mentoring students and junior researchers, time supporting colleagues, time working in service positions that impact diversity. It starts with first impressions, dedicating time to new or interested students or faculty, even if they have little in common with me. It continues with making everyone feel welcome when they arrive, making them feel like they belong. I believe the most critical part though is spending the time supporting them once they arrive for those with whom I interact and working to ensure others do not face barriers, and if they do, that these barriers are removed.

### Diversity in Research

Most of my research has focused on populations that historically have not been a high priority for large software companies, such as children, older adults, and people with disabilities. I believe there is a positive role for academic researchers to play in designing and deploying technologies for these populations addressing needs that may otherwise never be met. Within this theme, I have worked on addressing the needs of people with motor impairments, children diagnosed with autism spectrum conditions, people with specific medical conditions (e.g., neuroendocrine tumors, a rare disease), and so forth.

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I have also been fortunate to work with a diverse group of collaborators. I have worked with students from rural areas, college towns, blue-collar towns, and big cities. Almost all my publications include female co-authors and two of my students who completed a PhD are of Latin American descent. In addition, almost all my projects involve interdisciplinary teams with multiple scholarly perspectives.

### Diversity in Teaching

When teaching I keep in mind that I am interacting with students who arrive with a diverse set of life experiences, abilities, and interests. Rather than trying to teach the best class I would have liked to have for myself, I do my best to appeal to multiple interests and present examples of how the power of computing can be applied in a variety of spaces. My goal is helping students understand, through a variety of examples, that computing can be relevant to their lives and interests, and that they are welcome to be part of the computing community. I also make it clear to students that I want them to succeed, and I am ready and available to help them. If I notice students struggling, who are not coming to my office hours, I reach out to them, so they know I am available to help and have an interest in their success.

### Diversity in Service

Since becoming Director of the Informatics graduate program in 2015 I have prioritized being responsive and welcoming to the wide range of students who express interest in the program. I follow up with making sure students feel supported and that they belong once they are in the program. Prior to my arrival, there were twice as many male PhD graduates as females. Since my arrival, roughly an equal number of female and male students have obtained PhD degrees in Informatics. As of the Spring of 22, more than half of PhD students were female. This shift occurred without giving any special preference to female applicants or current students.

I have also taken on more specific diversity duties within my department. When the National Science Foundation began requesting Broadening Participation in Computing (BPC) plans, I volunteered, with another faculty member to put it together. We went through training, and I took the lead in completing the plan, going through a couple of iterations with mentors from BPCnet. Ours was one of the first plans to be verified by BPCnet. Putting together the plan helped me realize that my department was falling behind in its number of female students in the computer science undergraduate major when compared to national averages. Since putting together the plan, I have also taken the lead in obtaining more data to better understand what is behind the major's disappointing performance in gender diversity, which can hopefully lead to positive changes.

When in leadership positions in professional organizations, I have always tried to ensure that the entire research community is well represented. For example, when I was papers co-chair for the CHI conference (the most prestigious in the field of human-computer interaction), I made sure we recruited a representative group of highly qualified colleagues to lead subcommittees. I did the same when co-chairing the Interaction Design and Children conference. In my roughly 10 years editing the Universal Interactions forum for *interactions* magazine I focused on seeking content on high-quality research on technology for diverse populations and from a wide range of authors, resulting in a broad range of topics and geographic diversity.