

Diversity Statement

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Research shows diversity improves quality and provides many benefits to companies and organizations, the technology industry, and society in general. As a future faculty member, I will commit to incorporating diversity into my classroom, research lab, department, and the university through focusing on identity, diversity, and equity in higher education.

Identity

As an African-American male, I have been privileged to graduate with multiple Computer Science degrees and an undergraduate minor in African and African American Studies. These experiences helped me realize the importance of creating a sense of belonging for students in computing. Providing students with the ability to express their identities is crucial to helping them succeed. My experiences focusing on identity in computing include attending conferences for the National Society of Blacks in Computing (NSBC) and participating in organizations such as the Minority Engineering Graduate Student Association (MEGSA) and Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA) at NC State. In my industry experience at Red Hat, I helped launch a new Diversity and Inclusion (D+I) community, B.U.I.L.D. (Blacks United In Leadership and Diversity). This and other D+I communities show the importance and value of celebrating identity and culture in the workplace. Through the Teaching and Communication Graduate Certificate (TCC) program, I completed the *Teaching About Identity, Diversity, and Equity* (ECI 509) course to focus on incorporating identity into my teaching approach. Through this course, I was able to learn about the impact of identity on learning and gain knowledge of practical activities to incorporate identity into course lectures and materials. For example, highlighting the accomplishments of minority computer scientists or incorporating research discussing diversity in computing.

Diversity

Numerous sources report the lack of diversity in STEM and computing fields, both in higher education and among industry professionals. My desire to increase diversity in Computer Science as a teacher, researcher, and member of the university community. I have participated in many outreach events focused on increasing diversity in computer science, including Duke FEMMES (Females Excelling More in Math, Engineering, and Science) event for middle school girls, volunteering at an INTech Mini-Camp to teach web design to African American middle school girls, and working as a mentor for The Coding School codeConnects program to virtually teach Python to high school students from underrepresented backgrounds. As a future faculty member, I will commit to recruiting a diverse team of students from different backgrounds and demographics to explore software engineering and computing problems through research. Additionally, I will continue participating in communities and service opportunities to increase representation of underrepresented minorities in Computer Science and STEM.

Equity

Furthermore, it is vital that members from different identities and marginalized groups receive equal opportunities to succeed in computing. As a research advisor, this could mean customizing advising and feedback styles for individual students based on their experiences and identities. Similarly, in a classroom setting, equity involves providing the necessary resources, tools, and support for all students to succeed. Through the TCC curriculum, I have also gained knowledge about treating students equitably. For example, I completed *Accessibility in the Classroom*, a course that focuses on practical ways and tools to incorporate accessibility into course materials and lecture content. This course also emphasized how accessible content benefits all students. I was able to incorporate this as the primary instructor for *Introduction to Computing: Java* (CSC 116), an introductory Java programming course at NC State. To make the class content attainable for all students virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic, I pre-recorded video lectures to post on the course website at the beginning of each week, performed live synchronous lectures and in-class activities for students during the designated class time, and provided reading materials from the textbook to help students learn the course materials. As a Computer Science professor, I will work to create teaching and research environments that foster equal opportunities for all students to succeed no matter their experience level or background.

As a future faculty member, I will commit to incorporating identity, diversity, and equity into my teaching and research approaches. I am also eager to learn from and work with other faculty members and positions in higher education to increase the representation of minority students in Computer Science and technology fields. To incorporate diversity into higher education, I will foster inclusive classrooms for all students to have opportunities to learn and succeed, recruit and mentor a diverse research team of students, participate in service and outreach projects to increase diversity in STEM, and explore solutions to various diversity problems in Computer Science and the software engineering industry.