

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

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It is great to see that academic institutions explicitly emphasize the importance of campus diversity. Issues of inequality are deeply important to me – personally and professionally. I grew up in a low-income family, and because of this, I have come to appreciate the privilege of having a university degree.

After getting my Master’s degree from Bauman Moscow State Technical University in Russia, I had a unique opportunity to work in South Korea for Samsung Electronics from 2007 to 2009. In 2012, I came to the United States to pursue a Ph.D. in computer science. Throughout my whole career, I worked in very diverse teams with brilliant people from all over the world. Based on my experience, I strongly believe that diversity is a fundamental factor of success, both in academia and industry. Diversity is the source of creative novel ideas and accomplishments. Inadequate representations of historically underrepresented or economically disadvantaged groups leads to inequality and negative consequences for society, in general.

I take the challenge of teaching diverse audiences very seriously. In organizing lectures and lab sessions, I make the material understandable for non-native English speakers. I always try to create a positive and encouraging environment and consider students to be my peers. In anonymous teaching evaluations, students gave me very positive feedback for that. In 2017, I received a Harris Teaching Award for “Supporting Women in Computer Science” from the Computer Science Department at Purdue University. For the second consecutive year, the Graduate Student Board selected me to be a mentor for the two incoming graduate students. I currently work with four undergraduate students on two research projects. I have an experience in working with students with disabilities. I enjoy seeing my students’ progress and I learn from working with students.

As an international Ph.D. student at Purdue University, I had to overcome numerous academic and social challenges. To help new graduate students, I nominated myself for the Graduate Student Board. In 2014, graduate students elected me as a PhD representative. Until 2017, I represented the interests of Computer Science graduate students in our department and in university committees. It was important for me to help new students to overcome the same issues I had as a Ph.D. student.

To help economically disadvantaged people in the United States and around the world, I volunteer for the “Pack Away Hunger” non-profit organization twice a year.

I will strive to create a positive diverse environment in campus through teaching, mentoring, and outreach. I believe that supporting diversity is one of the key factors to succeed in academia.