Juho Kim • Diversity Statement

Diversity is what makes an academic environment more vibrant and thriving. I believe a key to academic excellence is an environment in which students and faculty with diverse interests, backgrounds, and perspectives can openly communicate and collaborate. Through my teaching, mentoring, research, and community service, I am committed to contributing to increasing diversity, as well as creating an environment that better accommodates diversity.

Teaching and Mentoring

In graduate school, I have mentored students from under-represented groups. These experiences have helped me better understand the challenges students from these groups face. As faculty, I will commit to actively resolving any potential challenge students might encounter due to their backgrounds.

An important role as a teacher and mentor is to promote a culture in which students can learn to recognize and appreciate the differences between them. In my classroom, I would like to design various in-class activities and group projects where students with diverse skill sets and backgrounds get to collaborate with each other. Through this experience, students will have a chance to learn how to work with partners who are different from them, and also learn how such differences can actually yield better results that would have been impossible otherwise. In my research lab, I am excited to create an informal, shared space for students to hang out and mingle. The role of a physical space can be pivotal in creating a friendly environment for diverse students. In these open environments, I will reach out to and engage in conversations with students from under-represented groups to help them succeed in their study and research.

Research

My research in human-computer interaction and online education attempts to improve the video learning experience. This research has the potential to bring quality, customized educational materials to learners with varying capabilities and challenges. My research program will explore a broad range of sociotechnical applications, with the goal of lowering the barrier to access and participation for users. Possible domains include healthcare, civic engagement, and accessibility: research impact in these domains can directly aid under-represented and minority groups. There exist many groups within a community that do not have an interactive channel to express their opinions, that have low awareness on related issues to even consider participation, and that are skeptical that they can make a difference. I am passionate about building technical solutions that raise awareness on important social issues, specifically focusing on under-represented communities.

Service

I will take an active role in various community-level and institution-level initiatives whose vision is to increase diversity and support under-represented groups. As an international student from Korea, I faced difficulties in my first years in the United States, adjusting to the new culture, social norms, and language. Having spent seven years in the U. S. as a student and three years in India as a teenager, I learned that respect for other cultures and values is essential in building successful relationships. These personal experiences have encouraged me to think harder about diversity in an academic environment. I believe diversity is not a handicap, but a strength of a community.