Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement

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I deeply believe that **everyone should be given equal access to education and equal opportunity to pursue their professions**, regardless of their race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability and age. We must strive to **foster diversity and create an inclusive environment where students can feel welcome and valued**.

My attitude towards equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) has been shaped by my personal experience. Through mentoring several female students in STEM in the past two years, I became aware of the many invisible challenges that women face when pursuing a career in STEM, e.g., self-doubt due to the lack of female role models [1, 2] and parental expectations and pressures [3]. In the future, I will strive to remove these barriers for students from underrepresented groups and actively participate in EDI initiatives and outreach programs.

Working in the cross-disciplinary field of music information research, I deeply value diversity as it helps me rethink about my research in a broader context and from diverse perspectives. During my PhD, I am fortunate to have been working in two research groups with fellow PhD students spanning diverse expertise, cultures, nationalities and backgrounds. Moreover, I collaborate with researchers in the Music department and research scientists in industry. In the future, I am determined to recruit a diverse group of PhD students from different backgrounds and continue seeking cross-disciplinary and international collaborations.

Past Contributions

I have been contributing to fostering equity, diversity and inclusion through mentoring students from underrepresented groups and promoting equity and diversity with my research.

Mentoring women students in STEM. I have been serving as a mentor for the WiMIR (Women in Music Information Retrieval) mentoring program since 2021. I have also been mentoring five female students in STEM for the Tyra project (Taiwanese Young Researcher Association) in the past two years. I meet regularly with my mentees and provide advice on topics such as choosing a career in academia or industry, applying to graduate schools, handling work-life balance and making connections at conferences. Through these mentoring experiences, I became aware of the many invisible barriers faced by women students when pursuing their careers. I will strive to remove these barriers for students from underrepresented groups and participate in EDI initiatives and outreach programs.

Mentoring students from underrepresented groups in Computer Science. I have been serving as a mentor in the NSF-funded Early Research Scholars Program (ERSP) at UC San Diego since Fall 2023, where I am responsible for mentoring three sophomore students to pursue a research project as a group. This is a team-based research apprenticeship program that places special emphasis on mentoring women and underrepresented groups in Computer Science.

Open science for all. I deeply believe in 'open science' that will make science more accessible and approachable. It promotes equity by granting everyone access to research funded by public agencies. Open science also fosters diversity by increasing the exposure of a field to the general public and drawing a more diverse group of people into the field. To make my research accessible for all, I make *all* my papers freely available online,[1] make open source the code used in my work,[2] and publish the recordings of my talks on YouTube.[3]

[1] https://salu133445.github.io/publications
[2] https://github.com/salu133445
[3] https://www.youtube.com/@hermandong

Future Plans

In the future, I will continue my pursuit of equity, diversity and inclusion in education. This section outlines three directions that I can immediately contribute to in the near future. I will also actively participate in departmental or institutional EDI initiatives and outreach programs.

Recruiting PhD students from underrepresented groups. I will actively recruit PhD students from underrepresented groups to join my lab. As diversity itself is not enough [4], I will strive to create an inclusive environment in my group so that every member feels valued and supported. I will seek cross-disciplinary and international collaborations to solicit diverse perspectives and inputs to my group. Further, I will continue mentoring students from underrepresented groups in STEM and support them to pursue their career goals.

Fostering an inclusive environment in class. I will strive to create an inclusive classroom where every student can find a sense of belonging and freely express themselves. First, I will conduct an anonymous questionnaire in the first week to assess their background knowledge, understand their motivations and expectations, and address any technical difficulties they might face. Second, I will solicit student feedback throughout the term and adjust my teaching strategy and pace accordingly. Third, I will include a diversity statement in my syllabus and set up a code of conduct to foster an inclusive and healthy space for discussions.

Inviting successful alumni from underrepresented groups to talk with students. The *lack of female mentors or role models* is one of the main reasons that women students decide not to continue pursuing an academic career [1, 2]. To help alleviate this issue, I plan to invite successful alumni from underrepresented groups to give talks and connect with students. I believe this will help students from underrepresented groups build their self-recognition through seeing how successful someone like themselves can be in the future.

Accessible music creation. My research aims to lower the barrier of entry for music composition and democratize music creation. Through empowering everyone to create their own music, I want to make music creation accessible to the general public and promote equity and diversity of the field of music creation. Further, prior studies have shown that certain groups of students are significantly underrepresented in high school music ensembles [5, 6]. I envision that my research will find pedagogical applications that help improve equity and accessibility in music education.

References

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