

Diversity Statement

As a Latino in computer science, I have been lucky to count on supportive and unbiased mentors that have fostered an environment of inclusion, equality, and respect. My mentors strived to provide their students with the tools, advice, and particular support they needed to succeed in their careers. Through these experiences, I have understood the value of teaching and advising faculty that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). As a faculty member, I will follow my mentors' steps while bringing my own experiences as an immigrant and first-generation graduate.

As a graduate student, I organized sports and recreational activities during my first, and second-year aimed to promote wellness. Since 2019, I joined the Ph.D. advisory committee to the Dean and the DEI committee. In these two committees, I advocate for improving the overall Ph.D. experience and improving the school recruiting practices that currently are not doing well at attracting and retaining students from minority groups at the graduate school level. Through my research projects, I have supported women as a mentor and collaborator. As a Ph.D. student, 4 out of 5 students I have mentored were women. I have strived to create a supportive and positive environment. All of my students successfully finished their research projects and have earned excellent recommendation letters. I have also provided support and advice among my junior peers at CMU and other institutions on how to write successful fellowship applications directed at minority students like the Microsoft Dissertation Grant. Despite my efforts, I can do more and focus on supporting support the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Community (BIPOC). The next is my pledge towards DEI as a future faculty member:

REACHING OUT TO MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS: As a faculty member, I will attract and encourage traditionally disadvantaged populations to join me in my research projects. To do that, I will attend and promote my work in venues like the TAPIA conference. I also plan to reach out to traditionally Black and Hispanic serving institutions through established networks like the Center for Minorities and People with Disabilities in Information Technology and The Computing Alliance of Hispanic serving institutions. Similarly, I want to join already established K-12 programs (e.g., code.org, black girls code, where I can volunteer to teach, mentor, or be a guest speaker.

REMUNERATED RESEARCH POSITIONS Most internships in academia are not paid. This practice leaves out low-income students who do not have the financial resources to afford this experience. In many cases, low-income students may even support their families through part-time work. They usually have to give up to work on an internship. I would not be in this country without a paid-internship: I came to the U.S. as part of the Robotics Institute Summer Scholar program, a paid internship opportunity that allowed me to travel to the U.S., sustain myself for four months, and support my parents and siblings whom at the time were unemployed and in a dire financial situation. My internship at Carnegie Mellon's Robotics Institute changed my life. I hope I can do the same for anyone who needs this type of opportunity.

MAKING MY RESEARCH OPEN SOURCE Anyone in the scientific community should be able to replicate my work. However, replicability should not only include publishing and making it accessible to everyone: it means avoiding the use of proprietary intellectual property (e.g., software, hardware) that would make it impossible for those with constrained financial resources to replicate my work. Following this principle, during my Ph.D. I have only used open-source frameworks and free or almost free cloud computing resources. I have also tried to provide alternatives in my work for unavoidable expenses. For example, in my work in mobile health interventions relying on wearables, I added capabilities to my systems so that the user can provide the same measures by hand. Following this path, I will make my research open source and my data freely available to anyone. I hope to decrease the entry cost in my research field for those in less privileged institutions and small businesses. I would also expect technologists in developing nations to take advantage of my research prototypes in mobile health interventions by adapting them to their particular needs.

PROMOTING A CULTURE OF CARING I will foster and support my students in their own DEI efforts. During my time as a member of the Ph.D. advisory committee to the dean, a constant criticism of students working on DEI efforts was that in their Ph.D. evaluation, these efforts did not count. I will support all my students working in DEI by recognizing, supporting and promoting their efforts.