Diversity Statement

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Diversity solves problems. When facing tough challenges in any setting, people who can collectively draw on a diverse set of skills, experiences, and viewpoints are more likely to succeed. A classroom or a research lab is no exception. However, computer science as a field has historically struggled with diversity. I believe an important part of the job of a faculty member is to promote it wherever possible. For example, in the (diverse) class I'm currently teaching, I encourage students to discuss class material with each other and to work together on projects, learning from this process to appreciate and value both their own and each other's contributions. I'm personally committed to supporting all students and creating an inclusive environment. For instance, during my postdoc I have mentored two students, one of which was female; she graduated this past May, with research experience in fuzz testing language interpreters. Meanwhile, throughout my graduate studies, I co-authored several papers with many wonderful female and LGBTQ collaborators, in work that was both deeply satisfying and extremely edifying.

As an international student from Greece, a country that was severely affected by the last economic recession, I'm particularly attuned to the struggles faced by international students in financially difficult situations. During my graduate studies, I was the vice president of the Greek Club of the University of Pennsylvania, called *PennHellenic*, providing a place of support for both research and personal challenges stemming from a tumultuous situation back home. While I personally have been extremely fortunate to come from a middle-class family that did not suffer too much as a result of the crisis, my interactions within PennHellenic with those that did were eye-opening.

A similarly eye-opening experience was through interactions with my best friend in grad school. For me, a straight white male, talking about privilege and diversity is a choice: with the same ease that I opt-in to such discussions, I could also opt-out, and it would not adversarially affect almost any aspects of my everyday life. For my LGBTQ best friend, however, it is not a choice; the challenges and obstacles he faces because he is part of an underrepresented minority are real and ever-present. I'm looking forward to my role as a faculty member and I'm committed to always "opting-in", seeking opportunities to promote diversity and inclusion wherever possible.