

**1 Values**

I firmly believe that everyone brings a unique set of interests, experiences, goals, and personal circumstances to the table. This diversity is a strength that enriches our collective learning experience, bringing creativity to the questions we ask, the methods we use, and the problems we solve. As a privileged individual, my responsibility is to create an environment where everyone feels like they belong in computing. As a mentor for students, this means developing a lab culture that values enthusiasm over “ideal” prior experience, impact over flashiness, and good science over deadlines and deliverables. I don’t believe in gatekeeping the research process; students should be involved in ideating, developing, evaluating, and communicating research. In the larger campus community, my strengths lie in developing administrative structures that benefit the whole department. This requires teaming with other faculty and campus staff to create an environment where everyone can succeed.

**2 Experiences**

My first encounter with not belonging was my own as I took the Intro to AI course in college. I was fresh off a related summer research project and excited about the possibility of applying to graduate school. The course was not what I expected; the majority of my classmates were men that interrupted class to ask unrelated questions to show off their superior knowledge and shirked assignments in favor of messing around with a cool idea. My professor praised and rewarded these behaviors. As one of the only women in the class and a math major, I felt that I didn’t belong in computing if I didn’t fit into the mold of the lone genius. These guys started their computing journey much earlier than me and didn’t have to try as hard, did I want to continue on this path?

(Spoiler Alert) I did continue, with the goal of making my department and university a place where all students felt like they belonged. At first, I listened and learned about student experiences. I completed UndocuAlly training on campus to learn about the history and challenges of DACA and undocumented students in the U.S. and Colorado. In the campus graduate student government, I learned about the lack of support for graduate student parents and international students in the wake of federal CPT policy changes. As I learned more, I took action. As the Chair of the CS Graduate Student Association, I developed an intentional orientation centered around modules on finances, advising relationships, and demystifying the PhD milestones. While this information benefits everyone, my goal was to reach the incoming international students who are often unaware of U.S. cultural norms. In addition, I worked with department administration to make policies, timelines, and decision making mechanisms to students more transparent. I firmly believe that everyone belongs in computing, even if they aren’t a card-carrying member of the Computer Science department. This is why I developed a workshop on computational thinking for graduate students who want to learn basic coding concepts and project management strategies.

My volunteer work also centers around belonging. I currently serve as the national Ritual Director for Phi Sigma Rho sorority, an organization founded to empower women in STEM disciplines. This summer, I introduced changes to our ritual to adopt gender-neutral pronouns to support my non-binary sisters and also removed harmful colonialism-centered language. I approach outreach and mentoring with empathy and flexibility, building off the knowledge that people already have to help them reach their individual goals. As a Tech Help volunteer at the local library, the older patrons often feel shame about needing help with technology. I love that I

can work with them, using metaphors for concepts they already understand, to achieve new things like calling a dear friend on FaceTime or applying for a job online.

### **3 Future Plans**

As a faculty member, I first serve my students. In the classroom, I aim to implement small but impactful [practices](#) that encourage belonging, such as auditing course materials for diverse representation and promoting a growth mindset. I recognize that my own experience and expertise are limited, so I will work with students to develop their own support network; this could be encouraging experiential opportunities such as REU programs, connecting with the campus inclusion resources, or facilitating introductions with other faculty members who may share their interests. My approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion is constantly evolving. I plan to continue educating myself on the needs of others through soliciting feedback and connecting with campus resources. Everyone deserves to feel like they belong in computing. I see it as my responsibility to use my strengths and resources to contribute to that goal.