# **NAM WOOK KIM** · DIVERSITY STATEMENT

During the early years of my undergraduate studies, I often complained about poor gender ratio in computer science courses. It took me a long time to realize that this issue is deeply rooted in our flawed education system. Despite recent concerted efforts to foster diversity, women still only take up around 14% to 18% of students in the computer science department[1]. Issues in diversity become much more complex and nuanced when it comes to other historically underrepresented minorities.

According to statistics, I belong to one of the dominant groups as an Asian male at least in our field[2]. Although I have never thought of me as privileged, looking back, I could resolve most of the barriers through my own efforts, including cultural and language barriers I faced as an international student. As a person who did not bump into the glass ceiling, I need to put conscious and constant efforts into understanding the invisible barrier of women and minorities and remove stereotypes against them.

The first time I had a chance to break my preconceived notion about women in computer science was when I worked with a female engineer at Samsung. We worked closely together as she was pregnant and had to hand over her job to me. She made a lasting impression on me by demonstrating not only persistence and responsibility to make the handover successful but also exceptional programming skills; in fact, she taught me about Android programming. However, she was worried about her evaluation because she would be on leave for the rest of the year. I was shocked because I had never thought about it, and I felt responsible for the fact that she had to adapt to the male-oriented workplace culture.

Recently, I was impressed when Prof. Krzysztof Gajos demonstrated how to implement systematic measures to ensure an inclusive classroom environment (e.g., preventing freshwomen isolated from team projects). It inspired me to participate in the diversity & inclusion lunch at CHI'18 where I had an engaging discussion on how to involve people from developing countries. I had not realized how financially hard for them to attend international conferences mostly located in wealthy countries. My growing interests in these issues later helped me decide to volunteer for mentoring a female high-school student.

I want to foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive academic environment because it will bring benefits to all people, not just those who are underrepresented. It helps people exposed to ideas and perspectives that they have never considered, and above all, makes a good citizen in a global society.

I aim to reduce the confidence gap[3] in classrooms. It is particularly relevant to courses in human-computer interaction and visualization as they drew students from a variety of backgrounds from business, arts, and humanities. It results in a diverse range of gender, race, and ethnicity, compared to the typical population of computer science. I have observed that these students come to the courses with genuine interest but worry about their lack of technical knowledge and often express a feeling of isolation.

I believe that developing a supportive culture and promoting psychological safety[4] is vital to address this issue. I strive to build rapport with students and create a shared sense of belonging. I provide structured guidance to ease participation (e.g., a critique template) and call on diverse students whenever possible. I plan to ensure that no one will be left behind when forming project teams, and that team members treat each other respectively (e.g., team contract and conversational turn-taking). I also hope to give lectures about ethics of inclusive design so that students learn how to empathize about others in the wild.

My research and public service will follow the same principles I have for classrooms, including diversifying my research fields, reaching out to underrepresented younger students, and contributing to produce role models for them.

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[1] https://www.computerscience.org/resources/women-in-computer-science/
[2] https://www.wired.com/story/computer-science-graduates-diversity/
[3] https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/05/the-confidence-gap/359815/
[4] https://www.hmhco.com/blog/bueller-bueller-how-to-create-an-engaged-psychologically-safe-classroom