

Emma Tosch · Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Statement

My record exemplifies a long-standing dedication to: **leadership** in diversity-focused organizations, **resourcefulness** in acquiring funding for diversity initiatives, and **investment** in building lasting mentoring relationships with diverse students. For example: I **revitalized the women's group** at UMass, first as co-chair, continuing as treasurer and web master; I authored an **external grant proposal** to the National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT), to fund a **technical workshop** series whose objective was parity in teacher and student representation; and I've mentored **women, under-represented minorities, and first-generation college students** throughout my time in graduate school.

However, these efforts are not enough. Diversity is more than representation, and inclusiveness cannot be measured by lines on a c.v. We cannot achieve equity or systemic change simply by highlighting individual researchers with inspiring stories, who would find a way to succeed anyway. I believe the only way to move the needle on diversity, equity, and inclusion is for each of us to engage in a potentially discomforting radical re-thinking of how we see ourselves, how we interact with others, and what we expect from academic institutions.

Faculty have an unusual amount of power over the spaces where they operate. I have learned over the years that achieving a specific socio-cultural environment requires significant care and effort; given the pressures and values of academia, the default emergent environment is often one dominated by fear: fear of rejection, fear of lost resources and opportunities, and fear of judgement. Therefore, my efforts will be focused on fostering environments where all students can thrive, without taking away from each other.

As I assert in my teaching statement, the **undergraduate classroom** is where a professor has the greatest impact. It is incumbent on us to listen and be mindful of students, and to seek out criticism, and to actively research differing opinions about best practices. Some techniques I've seen for fostering inclusion — and have incorporated in my own teaching — have been to avoid specific cultural references; to emphasize that mastery is about the number of focus-hours, rather than talent; and to incorporate common disability accommodations to the entire class, since students who have fewer social and economic resources in college may be less likely to seek help. I try to emphasize that grading is about the material, and not about ranking in the classroom. In introductory courses, I tend to focus my efforts on the students who are struggling the most.

The environment and importance of a **research lab's** atmosphere varies with the size and composition of the lab. I have participated in graduate student admissions and have had the privilege of seeing how faculty who care about these issues manage their own biases during the **graduate admissions** process. I believe that one of the greatest predictors of a student's success is the belief from both the advisor and the student that they will succeed. Therefore, I believe that beyond a baseline skills threshold, there is no objective predictor of whether a student succeeds, and that anyone can do so, if they are in a supportive environment.

Finally, how faculty treat each other and their professional colleagues teaches students the cultural norms of a field. Thus, we must support each other in the **faculty environment and professional environment**. An advisor who hires students from diverse backgrounds, but who only socializes with colleagues who share a small set of features, sends a negative message about what inclusion looks like later in students' careers. Because we live in a world that is not equitable, it can be challenging to identify downstream instances of bias. For example, in my experience, the researcher subfields within computer science do not have the same demographic features of computer science as a whole. There can be rivalries and judgements between subfields, and sometimes these subfields look demographically very different from each other. We need to be mindful about what this might say about the underlying power dynamics of specific disciplines.