Diversity Statement

I actively engage in activities that foster inclusivity and address the persisting discrimination in STEM based on race, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Through continuous education and proactive efforts, I strive to create a secure and inclusive environment for all individuals at both individual and institutional levels.

My experiences with diversity and inclusion: I grew up in suburban India, where diversity thrives based on factors such as caste, religion, and language, which fostered my awareness of the existence of discrimination. It motivated me to actively participate in events promoting diversity, including the annual Celebration of Diversity at the CSE department and the activities of WeCe (Women in ECE) and N2Women organizations. During one of these events, I learned shocking stories about the mistreatment of women in job interviews—ranging from frequent interruptions during their presentations to inappropriate jokes during introductions. Additionally, a panel discussion provided insights into Prof. Arun Kumar's struggles as an LGBTQ individual, both in his personal life and as an aspiring CSE faculty member. These experiences solidified my understanding that these challenges are real, and it is our collective responsibility to promote awareness, particularly within our STEM community.

My commitment to promote diversity and inclusion: Over the past five years, I actively contributed to advancing diversity and inclusion at individual, institutional, and global scales. I participated in the IDEA Center (Inclusion, Diversity, Excellence, Achievement) at UC San Diego, where I mentored two first-generation undergraduate students, Aiden and Kaitlyn, guiding them through their academic journeys and offering insights into career options in academia and industry. My mentorship played a pivotal role in empowering Aiden to explore research opportunities aligned with his interests. This experience was so thrilling that I decided to expand my engagement, assuming the role of coordinator and helping over 100 underprivileged students connect with experienced graduate student mentors.

A tangible example of my commitment is evident through my election as Vice President of the ECE Graduate Student Council. In this leadership role, I initiated the ***ECE Buddy Program***, connecting over 300 newly admitted ECE graduate students with current students in the same major to provide mentorship support and cultivate a diverse, collaborative community within our department. One major challenge that I realized was the absence of a platform for student discussions and support. I addressed this by creating a department-wide slack group that maintains a safe environment among students to discuss various issues, which we actively resolve with assistance from the department. The group remains active and has expanded to include over 700 graduate students in ECE. These activities led me to win the ***best service award*** during the 2021 commencement ceremony.

Beyond the university, I collaborated with Prof. Olivia Graeve on an education campaign in Tijuana, Mexico, making STEM accessible to underprivileged K12 students through engaging video lectures and hands-on exercises. Additionally, my involvement with the Marconi Society facilitated national-level discussions, contributing to the promotion of diversity and inclusion in STEM research. These engagements solidified my commitment to driving diversity and inclusion across various educational levels.

Diversity and inclusion in research and teaching: Advocating for diversity in a research environment involves more than just assembling a diverse team; it necessitates cultivating a collaborative culture where everyone feels valued and maintains a safe, supportive space. Upon joining my lab at UC San Diego, I took the initiative to organize group activities, such as reading groups and lab outings, fostering a sense of camaraderie. To highlight our inclusive lab culture, I managed the lab webpage, showcasing group photos and detailing our diverse composition, encompassing 15 PhDs and over 40 MS/BS students over five years. Actively mentoring women and students of color, I guided Weginbara (Michael) Youpele in building a 5G testbed through FPGA programming, resulting in his successful transition to a full-time position at the Naval Surface Warfare Center in California. Additionally, mentoring Ushasi Ghosh and Puja Shukla, both women students, led to a top-tier conference publication. *These experiences reinforced the notion that diversity enhances collaborative research, bringing fresh perspectives and diverse ideas to research problems.* In teaching, I prioritize getting to know students individually, raising awareness about institute organizations that support diversity, and encouraging the pursuit of research interests, particularly among the most diverse students.

As I apply for a faculty position, I am determined to use my role to support diversity and inclusion. I want to create an environment where everyone, no matter their background, can succeed. I am dedicated to fostering awareness and contributing to a more supportive academic community for everyone.