

Diversity Statement

Vamsi Addanki

My personal and professional journey has been profoundly shaped by the diverse and inclusive research environments I have been part of at Telecom Paris, ETH Zurich, the University of Vienna, and during my PhD at TU Berlin. These experiences have taught me to value the power of diversity in fostering creativity, collaboration, and innovation. Working alongside individuals from a wide range of cultural, academic, and personal backgrounds has deepened my understanding of how diversity and inclusion enrich the research process and broaden perspectives.

I am a strong advocate for diversity and inclusion in academic and research spaces and have actively contributed to creating inclusive environments throughout my career. During my PhD, I supervised bachelor's and master's theses, and I took care to ensure opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds. While our lab maintained high standards of selectivity, I occasionally took affirmative action to improve representation. I recognize that diversity extends beyond gender and nationality to include factors such as socio-economic status, institutional background, physical abilities, and lived experiences. Being conscious of these dimensions, I am committed to create an environment where all individuals feel valued and supported.

Figure 1 outlines my approach. As a faculty member, I recognize that the role comes with greater responsibility and a more profound impact on students' lives and careers. I am deeply committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive lab environment where everyone feels welcome and respected. I have drawn inspiration from my PhD supervisor, Prof. Stefan Schmid, whose ability to make young researchers feel heard and appreciated left a lasting impression on me. Following his example, I aim to recruit and mentor students from underrepresented backgrounds, ensure fairness and equity in the admission process, and establish a culture where diverse perspectives are celebrated. I firmly believe that an inclusive environment is essential for nurturing creativity and innovation in research.

Beyond the lab, I recognize the importance of promoting diversity and inclusion across the broader academic community. Academic conferences, in particular, present unique opportunities to build connections and foster inclusivity. A small gesture like greeting early-career students or wearing a badge that signals "Open to Talk" can make a significant difference in making young students feel welcome, especially those who might hesitate to approach senior researchers. I plan to incorporate such initiatives to create a more approachable and inclusive atmosphere at conferences. Furthermore, I intend to hold weekly open office hours dedicated to students from diverse backgrounds. These sessions will provide a safe space to discuss their academic aspirations, challenges, and career goals, ensuring that they feel supported and empowered to succeed. Small steps like these can significantly enhance the inclusiveness of the academic community and inspire more individuals from underrepresented groups to thrive in academia.

By fostering a culture of respect, openness, and collaboration, I am committed to building a more equitable and inclusive academic landscape.

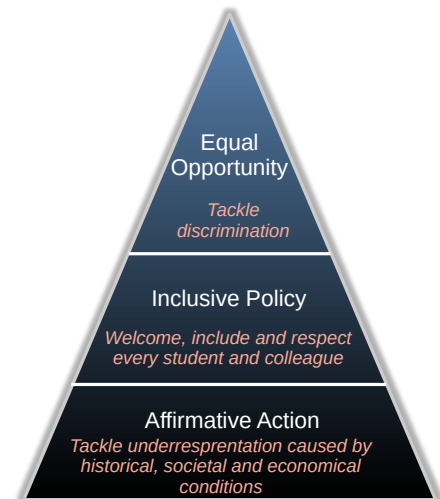


Figure 1: My approach to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is structured like a pyramid: at the top is ensuring equal opportunities for all students, supported by creating an inclusive environment, and with a strong foundation of taking affirmative action where necessary to address underrepresentation.