

Service Statement

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Our research community is like a living system that evolves with the contributions of selfless research that help move it forward. Besides producing great research output, this progress commands organizing events to facilitate our communication and promote specific research directions, contributing to the peer-review process to identify promising ideas, and encouraging participation in computer science research for bringing in the future generation of researchers. That is why I have endeavored to give back to this system that has helped me grow. To this end, I have dedicated a significant amount of my career to service activities, on various levels. As a future professor, I am planning to build upon this experience and engage in more service activities, within my home department, our research community, and more broadly, in the society that I live in.

Professional Service

I have contributed to natural language processing (NLP) and artificial intelligence (AI) communities in several ways:

Organizing: I have helped organize several events within the research communities. I co-chaired an [ACL student workshop 2019](#) which provided a forum for student researchers interested in computational linguistics to present their work and receive valuable feedback from the international research community — especially those who did not have easy access to top-notch mentors, typically found in top schools. I am [the volunteer chair of NAACL 2022](#) which is meant to help the younger generation, especially those from minority groups, get involved in the organization of a top-notch conference and get exposure to many influential researchers.

Program committees & Reviewing: I have served as the program committee of over 20 conferences or workshops.

Volunteering: I have served as a mentor to junior participants at several conferences (NAACL'19 & WiNLP'20).

Technical talks: Talks are one way of disseminating ideas. I have given technical lectures in various occasions (over 10 venues) as **invited** (e.g., Georgetown, Yale NLP seminars) and **conference talks** (e.g., IJCAI'16, AAI'18).

Department & Community Service

Advising — I had the opportunity to mentor undergraduate and graduate students. During my **advising experience**, I mentored over 10 undergraduate or junior graduate students with a variety of backgrounds. Each of these projects typically involved starting from high-level research questions, brainstorming ways to turn them into pilot experiments, forming a story tying together the key findings of the experimental observations. Collaborations with these students have led to publications at prestigious conferences such as EMNLP (2018, 2019, 2020), ACL (2020, 2021), and NAACL (2019), with several still under review.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Efforts — I have dedicated time to teach basic AI or computer science to underprivileged middle-school or high school students to help **reduce the accessibility barrier** to science. I have **volunteered to teach** basic computer science in various communities. For a number of semesters in 2018, I worked with a [group](#) that teaches the basics of web design to middle school students in Philadelphia, a city that suffers from enormous generational social and economic inequality. Similarly, during the pandemic, I gave online lectures about AI to elementary school students through the [SkypeAScientist](#) program. After one of these lectures, I received an email from the teacher. An excerpt read “... was great! I haven't seen [...] that excited about anything for a long time - so that was worth it right there!” Feedback like this indicates that no matter how small these contributions might seem, they have the power to inspire the students to pursue something bigger for a prosperous future for themselves and their communities.

Department Organizing — As a graduate student, I took part in organizing several recurring events in my host departments. For a number of years 2013-2015 I organized AI/NLP reading groups. Later in 2014-2016, I was the student organizer of AI talks at UIUC. In addition to such recurring roles, I participated in visit days for admitted students and helped with welcoming incoming PhD students.