Esteban Carisimo | Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Statement

My work as a researcher and teacher has shown me the value of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Growing up and studying in Latin America, I was exposed to educational institutions that were open to the entire social spectrum. Universidad de Buenos Aires offered me a unique experience as it is both the highest-ranked university in Latin America and a tuition-free institution. There, I witnessed how inclusive policies empower individuals from all social and economic backgrounds, both nationals and from other Latin American countries. This diverse environment taught me that when people from varied perspectives come together, it fosters innovation and drives social progress.

As both a student and an instructor at the university, I learned the transformative power of inclusion when educational and technological barriers are lifted. This experience shaped my research interests and my teaching approach. My research focuses on critical Internet infrastructures, with some work in Latin America, an area often overlooked in computer network research. Recognizing the pervasive influence of the Internet on modern life, from communication and entertainment to healthcare and education, I aim to address the knowledge gap by examining the Internet infrastructures within their sociopolitical contexts.

The Focus on Overlooked Regions

In collaboration with local stakeholders and international organizations, Bolivia and Paraguay established local Internet Exchange Points (IXPs), where I participated in the research aspect of this project, focusing on capturing the changes in both the network structure and its societal impact. These initiatives aimed to improve Internet affordability and accessibility, enabling more people to get access to essential services such as education and healthcare. Working directly with these communities gave me firsthand experience of how building computer systems shapes our societies and highlighted the importance of equitable access to technology.

My interest in overlooked regions in context also extended to examine the erosion of Venezuela's Internet infrastructure under its devastating economic and social crisis. The study highlighted vulnerabilities in critical infrastructures and spotted the consequences of the lack of reliable Internet for families split apart after forced migration. Presenting this work at the ACM SIGCOMM flagship conference, the first Latin American study featured at this prestigious conference, I felt a profound responsibility to continue advocating for underrepresented regions in global discussions.

Promoting Inclusion in Teaching and Mentorship

In the classroom, I create an inclusive and engaging learning environment. Using real-world examples from my research, I make abstract concepts tangible and relevant. Studies have shown that connecting educational content with social impact enhances engagement particularly for students from underrepresented backgrounds. I believe that when students see the potential of technology to effect positive change, they become more motivated to contribute to the field.

At Northwestern University, I extended my commitment to inclusion by serving as a faculty mentor for the Latinxs in Computer Science organization. Engaging with the US-Latino community offered me a new perspective on the unique challenges the Latino community faces within higher education in the United States. Attending the ACM Richard Tapia Celebration of Diversity in Computing further highlighted the barriers underrepresented minorities encounter in computer science. These experiences reinforced my dedication to fostering an academic environment where everyone feels valued and supported.

Future Commitment to Advancing Diversity and Equity

Looking ahead, I am committed to implementing initiatives that promote diversity and inclusion within my field. I plan to develop curricula that highlight contributions from diverse scholars, establish mentorship programs for students from underrepresented communities, and collaborate with organizations to improve access to technology in underserved areas. By actively working to remove barriers and create opportunities, I aim to cultivate a new generation of scholars who reflect the diversity of our society.

In my future role as a faculty member, I will continue to incorporate a view of overlooked communities into all aspects of my work. My goal is to build a collaborative and inclusive academic community that advances knowledge and contributes to a more equitable and just society.