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Mentoring Statement

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I believe the role of a mentor is to help students understand what research is, and then to let them decide whether research is what they want to pursue. That means guiding mentees toward becoming independent researchers with their own skills, motivations and methods, and teaching them how to find their niche and their fit within the research community.

How I mentor

Four strategies set my mentees up for success.

- I have them carry out the research steps themselves, because motivation and goal setting have to come from within. I rarely assign concrete tasks; tasks and capacity are for each person to set. Instead I ask mentees to take ownership of their projects, define their research questions and build their own action plan. I often ask what they think the right thing to do is, because I want them to develop confidence in their own intuition.
- I ask them to position every contribution against the literature, because academic success rests on being able to situate one's work, build on others' knowledge and reflect on it. This builds the self-reliance to navigate research problems without me.
- I give honest feedback, even when it hurts, and I give it early. A mentee who hears a hard assessment from me first will not hear it for the first time from a reviewer.
- I teach research skills and processes in one-to-one sessions, I am available for help at any time, and I listen. Academic life is complicated, and part of my job is to be a supportive presence while mentees find their way through it.

What mentees learn

- How to do literature research, and the diversity of methods and contributions common in my area.
- The difference between seeking knowledge and developing a product.
- How to develop a meaningful research question.
- How to choose the method that best answers that question.
- How to balance rigorous and creative research.

What I expect

Open communication, and a willingness to engage in thoughtful discussion about progress and challenges. I expect mentees to tell me what is not working, in the research and in our working relationship, as early as they can.

Evidence

My mentees' work speaks for the approach. Doris Rhomberg joined me as a visiting researcher from TU Wien and co-authored three papers with me, including a journal article in Zeitschrift für Psychologie and the Best Late-Breaking Work at CHIWORK 2026; she now designs for Drei Österreich in Vienna. Qiuquan Gu co-authored our DIS 2025 paper and is now a product designer on TikTok's AI social team. Pranav Sinha, a master's student at Columbia, co-authored a CHIWORK 2026 workshop paper on AI accountability across three course cohorts. Two further student-led projects, a reflective vibe-coding sandbox and an audit of dark patterns in vibe-coded interfaces, were accepted to the DPCHI 2026 workshop. I currently mentor Irene Wu (Cornell) on bias and inclusive design in AI tools, and Hayatt Khan (Mumbai) on tools that help people see through manipulative design and AI-generated noise.

Beyond individual mentees, I co-run an eight-week workshop for PhD Impact Fellows on value-centered design, and I worked in industry before my PhD, including three years at Volkswagen Group, so I can advise students bound for product teams as well as for academia. A student should leave able to state what they intend, defend it against a reviewer, and ship it.