My name is Veronica Pimenova, and I recently completed my second year at Carnegie Mellon University. Although I've lived in Pittsburgh my entire life, my family is originally from a small town in Russia. Most of my extended family still lives there and works as farmers. My parents, the first generation in our family to receive even a high school education, immigrated to the United States just before I was born, hoping to provide me and my younger brother with a bright future and a strong education.

I attended Seneca Valley High School in Pittsburgh, where I was first introduced to using Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence for social good. I often found myself as one of the few girls in my Advanced Placement science and math classes. Despite this, and the challenges posed by my parents' unusual background, I persisted. I served as president of our Women in Engineering club for three years and founded the Cybersecurity Club, which continues to thrive. My team's success in cybersecurity competitions caught the attention of Argo AI (now Latitude), a Pittsburgh-based self-driving car company. Before attending Carnegie Mellon, I worked as the youngest-ever Software Engineering Intern at the company, where I noticed the lack of minority representation in the field. This realization drove me to pursue Accessibility research at CMU, alongside a degree in Information Systems and a minor in Human-Computer Interaction.

My involvement in accessibility research at CMU's Software and Societal Systems department began in my first semester and reflects my commitment to creating inclusive technological solutions. I am currently developing online accessible learning platforms that teach programming skills to children with neurodiversities. Additionally, as a Lead Mentor for Women in Information Systems, I strive to ensure that students within the major feel connected, supported, and empowered to succeed.

I plan to graduate a year early in Spring 2025, after which I aim to pursue a PhD in Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon, Cornell, or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. I have participated in every Meeting of the Minds at Carnegie Mellon since my freshman year and did SURA in summer 2023. In summer 2024, I did SURF and became a SURA TA, where I have over 80 students. I am currently (summer 2024) leading a study on local users with ADHD in the Pittsburgh area, testing the usability of a segmentation algorithm I spent the past two years developing. As the Principal Investigator of this project, I aim to submit my paper to the 2025 Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, the largest HCI conference in the world. I am passionate about my research, which started as a side project and has now become my career. I truly believe in accessibility and building tools for users with various disabilities to promote minority groups within software engineering.

As a woman in STEM, I have shown commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion throughout both my academic and extracurricular experiences. Within my coursework, some classes that have shown the intersection between my technical and research skills include "Imperative

Computation," "Reasoning with Data," "Designing Human-Centered Software," and "Database Design & Development." These courses inspired me to channel my passion into practical experiences and create technology with a positive social impact.

In my role as the Lead Mentor for Women in Information Systems, I've dedicated myself to ensuring that students within the major feel connected, supported, and empowered to succeed. I have done so by personally mentoring and meeting with a mentee, as well as helping to brainstorm and set up meetings for 30+ freshmen in IS. As an ambassador, I've not only imparted knowledge but also instilled confidence, inspiring the next generation of female technologists to thrive in the male-dominated field.

As the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Chair at CMU's Delta Delta Delta, I've worked diligently to create an environment where every member feels valued and heard. Specifically, I have done presentations during our monthly chapter meetings, organized workshops, and advocated for members from underrepresented communities in the Pittsburgh area.

My technical roles as a Software Engineer Intern at Argo AI and Machine Learning Intern at Velo AI have provided me with hands-on experience in the tech industry. At Argo AI, I played a key role in optimizing visual recognition in self-driving cars. The experience of working in a multicultural environment has also showcased the significance of diverse teams in problem-solving and innovation. Similarly, at Velo AI, I employed machine learning models to enhance social media promotions, sharpened my analytical abilities, and highlighted the transformative potential of technology.

Currently, my involvement in accessibility research at CMU's Software and Societal Systems department has served as a testament to my dedication to creating technological solutions that cater to a wide range of users. I am working on developing online accessible learning platforms that teach programming skills to children with neurodiversities. This has allowed me to combine my technical expertise with my passion for diversity and inclusion, creating software that can truly change lives.

Overall, my experiences have shaped my academic and extracurricular journey and have converged into a singular passion: to utilize technology as a force for diversity, inclusion, and social impact. My career goal is to become an Artificial Intelligence Researcher who leads projects that bridge the gap between technology and society while also promoting inclusivity with women and the neurodiverse. I hope to use my knowledge and experiences to create a future with advanced technology that doesn't leave anyone behind.