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Professor Bob Wagner
Search Committee Chair
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Dear Professor Bob Wagner,

I am writing to apply for the position of Clinical Assistant or Associate Professor in Online Education (requisition ID: [23850](#)) in the College of Agriculture at Purdue University. Currently a postdoctoral researcher in the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, I am excited about the opportunity to contribute to Purdue's pioneering efforts in online education.

As an educator with ample international teaching and mentoring experiences, I have seen firsthand how online education can bridge the gap of education inequality. I am passionate about setting up the gold standards of future online education and believe that my research background on big data in various applications and teaching experiences with a variety of student groups will enable me to deliver superior value for the potential students at the College of Agriculture. Also, I am committed to academic freedom and free inquiry and believe that these values are essential to a thriving academic community. Being an educator and researcher, I am dedicated to creating an environment that fosters open and respectful dialogue and encourages students to think critically about the world around them.

As a researcher in the Purdue [OATS Center](#), I have worked with a broad range of large-scale datasets for high-level knowledge extraction to contribute to smarter autonomous systems for rural applications. My experience with the multi-year, multi-field GPS data collection and analysis project has familiarized me with agriculture activities. The large-scale rural cellular coverage simulator project has developed my skills to efficiently work with big geographic datasets. And the INDOT road maintenance projects have exposed me to various digital sensors and corresponding road-network-level datasets. The depth of my data analytics research ensures my competence in the skills and toolsets for these tasks. The breadth of the applications has prepared me for new data types and challenges in the future. These skills and exposures can provide solid materials in online course development and teaching.

The teaching training I received at Purdue has equipped me with diverse techniques applicable to both traditional and online classes. My teaching experiences have significantly honed my communication skills. The student-oriented approach I picked up along the way has formed my habit of always reflecting on who the audience are and how to improve content delivery accordingly. In fact, it helped me in winning multiple presentation competitions both in-person and online. Furthermore, as a video gamer and hobbyist content creator ([126 thousand+ views](#)), I am experienced at video editing and familiar with virtual rewards that work for online classrooms. I believe that these skills are essential in efficient interactions with Ag Online and Purdue University Online teams and successful cooperations with College of Agriculture faculty.

I was very happy to learn that the [2021-2026 College of Agriculture Strategic Plan](#) starts with the quote from Dr. George Washington Carver: "Education, in the broadest of truest sense, will make an individual seek to help all people, regardless of race, regardless of color, regardless of condition." Ever since my college days, I have been keeping myself busy with volunteer work, believing in the lifestyle of helping others in whatever opportunities one encounters, with whatever one has. Besides services to communities, I give out free drawings and song covers in my hobby project [Sing4U](#) to anyone who leaves a request, hoping to remind them of the beauty of life. As an experienced researcher, determined educator, skilled content creator, and experienced gamer, I am confident that I can bring my strong, diverse technical and teaching background to best fit the current needs and future ventures of the College of Agriculture in online education. I believe that this includes not only online course material preparation to "build one brick higher", but also pipelining the activities of proposing, evaluating, and promoting best practices for future online education to achieve the "pinnacle of excellence at scale".

I welcome the opportunity to speak with you about my qualifications and ways that I can contribute to the College of Agriculture at Purdue University. Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Yaguang Zhang
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