My ranking of faculty candidates 3/3/23. Alden Wright

A reminder that the presentation recordings are available on Box at UM Computer Science Dept Files > Faculty Recruitment 2023 > presentations or at <https://umt.app.box.com/f/ba63cd2762fc4874bb31dfcc1d854f6a>

I see plusses and minuses for each of the top 4 candidates, and I am somewhat open to changing my ranking based on comments at the meeting. I am most uncertain about how to rank Jialu.

My top rankings for Eduardo and Bilal go together as I see their strengths as complementary.

1. Eduardo Izquierda
   1. Research: He has a very strong research record. His research should be very interesting to students, and this will help us recruit graduate students. He has a career grant which runs until 2024, so he has excellent potential for continued grant funding.

He collaborates with many other researchers. For example, he is session chair for the major artificial life upcoming conference. I think he has strong potential for very scientifically significant results.

He has a lot of potential for collaboration with biology which is the strongest science research department at UM.

His research is close to my collaborative research with Cheyenne, and I learned a lot by reading his papers and related research.

Thus, I rank his research as best of these candidates.

* 1. Teaching: His teaching lecture was not very focused but showed his capability for covering a lot of interesting topics. In my conversations with him, he expressed willingness to teach core courses and to help with software engineering.

1. Bilal Al-Ahmad
   1. Research: His most cited paper does an excellent job of describing and presenting the methods used. However, his research talk discussed a paper where machine learning was an essential tool, and he did not seem to understand how machine learning was used in the paper. I agree with Jesse’s decision (or suggestion) to hire him to a teaching track position where his teaching load would be higher but research expectations (especially grant expectations) would be less. However, if we hire him, he should have some research expectations since this is expected for promotion.
   2. Teaching: He has extensive experience in teaching many different software engineering courses, and he should have a good understanding of the whole field of software engineering. His talk on inheritance was a good presentation of a difficult topic.
2. Seth Poulsen
   1. Research: His research is based on the one basic idea of proof blocks. He can generate papers on the use and evaluation of this teaching technique, be he doesn’t seem to have ideas on additional teaching tools. I don’t see his research as being very interesting to students since most of our students are not going to be in CS education. I can’t really evaluate his potential for grant funding.
   2. His teaching talk on graphs was good.
   3. Other: It is a plus that he will accept if we offer him a position. If we hire him, we need to emphasize our commitment to gender diversity.
3. Jialu Zhang
   1. Teaching: I had problems with his teaching talk where some of the things that he said at the beginning of the talk turned out to be wrong later in the talk. As a mathematician, it is very important to me to be consistent and correct. This suggests that these are not his priorities in teaching.

It is a plus that his research involves one aspect of software engineering. However, I am not sure that he has much understanding of the field as a whole.

* 1. Research: Detecting software misconfigurations. Potentially of high interest to students. Seems to have good potential for funding. My second ranking candidate based on research.

Note: His research talk recording is now correctly up on Box.

1. Shehenaz Shaik: below threshold.
   1. Teaching: She never described how array lists were implemented and the implications for time complexity.