RUSSELL FAIST PEKALA

EDUCATION

Harvard College Class of 2019   **GPA: 3.78**   Cambridge, MA
- Math/Computer Science Major. Finished (a year early) with coursework required for degrees in both majors.
- Machine Learning, Functional Programming, Algorithms, Advanced Microecon, Data Visualization.
- Strong writer, was awarded the distinction of having the top final paper in freshman writing class.
- Taken graduate coursework in statistics, computer science, and math.
- Selected for a Jacob Goldfield Scholarship for strong academic performance in math and physics.

University of Minnesota, Twin Cities   **GPA: 3.83**   Minneapolis, MN
- Finished BA Math reqs during high school. Cryptography, Differential Geometry, Error-Correcting Codes.
- Engaged in pure math research with professor, presented at a regional math conference.

Southwest High School   **GPA: 4.0**   Minneapolis, MN
- Graduated Valedictorian in a class of 380. National Merit Scholarship Winner. National AP Scholar.
- Competed on Minnesota State Math Team for two years (team won 4th in a national competition).
- Debate Captain that lead team to 3rd place finish in the state tournament. Individually Quarterfinalist debator.
- Lead student election-judge recruitment efforts. Signed up 42 students to volunteer at Mpls. polling locations.

PROFESSIONAL

Kensho Technologies   Cambridge, MA
Kensho (now part of S&P) is a $550B financial analytics company disrupting equity investing through utilizing event data.
Data Scientist Intern
- Youngest summer intern on the Machine Learning team.
- Helped to select features and modeling techniques for a recommender system for mortgage trades.
- Realized improved results for the team by decomposing net buying into total buying and total selling.

University of Minnesota NOVA Experiment Collaboration   Minneapolis, MN
NOVA is a $330M experiment that sends a beam of neutrinos from Fermilab to MN to study neutrino oscillation.
REU Student Specializing in Machine Learning Architecture
- Wrote scripts in C++ and Python to analyze the performance of a Convolutional Visual Network (CVN) through optimizing across dimensions such as result variability, accuracy, and interpretability.
- Selected to present findings at the National Science Foundation's Washington D.C. Conference in October 2016.

ACTIVITIES & LEADERSHIP

Harvard Computer Society   Cambridge, MA
HCS is both a social organization for CS students, and an umbrella organization for student-initiated projects.
***Datamatch Project Co-Leader** (Datamatch is HCS's largest project with 25 coders annually)*   October 2016-Current
- Datamatch is a Valentine's day matchmaking web app serving 10k+ students at 5 schools with over 65% student participation at two schools, Brown and Harvard). Ruby, React, Javascript D3.
- Selected to be 2019 leader of project after leading different subteams (Statistics, Business) each of the last 2 years.
- The 2018 success of my efforts to expand Datamatch got us featured by WashPo, MTV, among others.

Black Diamond Capital   Cambridge, MA
Macroeconomic Analyst
- BDC is the most selective investing club on campus. Our fund's returns have averaged a 22% return.
- I pitch macroeconomic investment opportunities to the 30-person group once per semester.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES & SKILLS

Self-Initiated, Entrepreneurial
- Self-studied for and passed the Society of Actuaries' Exam P (Probability).
- Ran my own independent tutoring business in high school, managed 15 client relationships.
- Organized a group of 4 undergraduates that won 2nd place in campus stock pitch competition.
- Working on own data-science startup Transcriptr (transcriptr.com), was selected for Harvard Ventures Fellowship.
- Former Harvard editor for the entrepreneurial web-publication Innovation Forward (innovationfwd.com).

Well-Rounded, Community Minded, Strong Communicator
- MATLAB and Multivariable Calculus paid teaching assistant.
- Two-time Boston Marathon finisher who once won 5th in age division at the Chicago Marathon.
- Volunteer debate mentor/judge with the Harvard College Mentors for Urban Debate. Former club treasurer.
- As CS class project, coded a Node-JS video-chat web application that matched people with political differences to be able to video-chat. Incl. feats. like blurring & socket.io client-to-client data transfer.