Blake Grills

**Statement of Purpose**

Throughout my academic career following my retirement from the United States Air Force, I spent all of my time with one long term goal in mind, to do research in the field of Natural Language Processing, Software Engineering, and Data Science, and to teach the future generation of programmers and software engineers. I attended Bowling Green State University to attain both my bachelor’s and master’s degrees where I focused on course work related to Natural Language Processing, Software Engineering, and Data Science. It is my hope to successfully mix Natural Language Processing and modern Data Science practices to provide new research that will improve the quality of life of programmers all over the world in both academia and in industry.

To this end, I sought out schools that would be able to help me progress in my research and with being an Ohio local, Kent State University (KSU) immediately comes to mind. KSU is currently nationally ranked within the Top 10% of schools to attain a degree in Computer Science from, and it has earned a position on USA news Best Graduate Programs rankings for the Computer Science program. Not only is KSU a highly ranked school, they also believe in their program, which is shown by the department successfully being awarded a two-million-dollar grant for their computer science program and securing a slot in the 2020 NASA suits challenge.

Of course, I also have my personal reasons for wanting to attend KSU aside from it being a highly ranked school. First and foremost, my master’s advisor, Dr. Michael J. Decker, is a KSU alumni and speaks very highly of the program and what he learned while in attendance there. Second is the faculty at KSU, I have had the opportunity to work and study alongside Dr. Jonathan I. Maletic and Dr. Michael L. Collard while attending Bowling Green State University and have a tremendous amount of respect and admiration for both of them. Finally, one of the current researchers in the field of Natural Language Processing whom I have great interest in the work they are doing, Dr. Christian Newman, is also a KSU alumni and frequently works with Dr. Maletic’s team.