Initial Report

Last Modified: 02/08/2017

1. Name (first and last)

Text Response
Ronald Fecso

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	1

2. VT Email

Text Response
ronnief1@vt.edu

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	1

3. Contact Phone

Text Response
7034894236

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	1

4. Essay (up to 500 words): “What do you want to get out of this experience?”

Text Response
After graduation, I plan to apply to graduate school to study big data and machine learning. While my undergraduate experience at Virginia Tech will provide good foundational classes for machine learning, I want to move beyond classroom experiences to better understand its complexities and immerse myself in big data. In this increasingly hypercompetitive world, especially regarding academia, admissions criteria at the undergraduate and graduate levels now require more than they have in the past. It is well known that big data is an especially booming sector, so I want to prepare myself to compete for the opportunity to study at an elite graduate school. Tougher graduate school requirements coupled with a field whose popularity is growing will likely force graduate admissions officers to be more selective. They will look past one’s GPA and consider a student’s extracurricular activities and research experience. This is where the Data Science for the Public Good program becomes especially important to me. It will provide me with a meaningful data analysis experience. At the moment, I have little research experience, set aside rudimentary science fair projects. If accepted into the DSPG, I would be able to spend my time thinking and collaborating with some of the best in the field of big data. The amount I would learn about big data and how to conduct research would be almost incalculable. I once read a sentence that resonated with me and has shaped the focus I have today. It read: “If you are the smartest person in the room, leave the room.” While some people could interpret that mantra through an elitist lens, this phrase actually taught me to interact with people that you can learn something from. You will hear different points of view and your capability to learn will increase drastically. If you are in a room with people who are significantly wiser than you, you will gain knowledge just by listening to the conversation. That phrase kick-started a mindset of continuous learning in me. At the moment, I am reading a book on quantitative finance using R. Last week, I was reading Plato. If I were able to work at DSPG this summer, I would be working with a variety of people, from undergraduates like me, to graduate students with a far greater wealth of knowledge. There would be so many viewpoints from people that have taken different classes with different professors at different universities. I would be able to watch and interact with other people conducting research, pick their brain, and get feedback on my techniques and technical knowledge. The opportunity to research with DSPG would be priceless. Not only would I learn an immense amount from my colleagues in data science as well as research in general, I would increase my chances of admission into a top-tier graduate school significantly. A summer with DSPG provides me with a learning experience that cannot be had in any classroom in the world.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	1

5. Essay (up to 500 words): "Please describe any previous research experience and/or work experience you may have."

Text Response
My most recent work experience involved me walking customers through the thorough sales process in the flooring department at Home Depot. When customers would walk into the flooring section of the store, I utilized my sales techniques and help them locate the perfect product for them. Whenever a customer decided to order flooring and installation for their home, I helped them finalize the sale on our store computers. The process was so detailed that it would take, on average, 30 minutes to complete. When there were no customers that needed assistance in my section, I made sure that all of the shelves and aisles were in order. I appreciated this job immensely because all of my co-workers had unique reasons for working at Home Depot. I enjoyed talking to and learning about other employees' lives. As an 18 year-old preparing for college, I realized that each and every person's life is different. At Home Depot, I learned a lot more than how to figure out the best tile for a kitchen. My most relevant work experience to a career in data science was when I managed databases at California Tortilla. Since our restaurant was located in the middle of many office buildings, we had a big rush every day for lunch. We asked professionals to drop their business cards with us so we could contact them about promotions and catering. Not surprisingly, our jar of business cards grew quickly. It was my duty to enter all of the new customers into an Excel spreadsheet. I entered their names, addresses, phone numbers, and any other relevant information into separate columns. I maintained multiple databases for different types of customers; some interested in promotions, and others interested in catering deals. As a high schooler, I started dealing with data long before I knew I would major in Computational Modeling and Data Analytics. At Elite Performance Marketing, I developed marketing strategies for make-up, a product I knew nothing about. This forced me to get outside of my comfort zone and think of creative ways to sell our products. The common theme among all of my jobs has been developing people skills through continuous interaction. I strengthened my sales skills and ability to connect with any given person. While the classroom can teach me the technical aspects necessary to function in a data science career, the jobs I have held have taught me how to operate in a professional environment.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	1

6. In Fall 2017 you will consider yourself to be a:

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Freshmen Undergraduate Student		0	0%
2	Sophomore Undergraduate Student		0	0%
3	Junior Undergraduate Student		1	100%
4	Senior Undergraduate Student		0	0%
	Total		1	

Statistic	Value
Min Value	3
Max Value	3
Mean	3.00
Variance	0.00
Standard Deviation	0.00
Total Responses	1

7. What degree(s) and major(s) are you pursuing?

Text Response
B.S. in Computational Modeling and Data Analytics

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	1

8. List any Minors you are pursuing.

Text Response

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	0

9. List any honors and/or awards received:

Text Response
Valedictorian in HS, Honor Roll all four years of HS, outstanding volunteer award

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	1

10. Please indicate which position you are interested in:

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	For pay		0	0%
2	For VT credit (you are responsible for contacting your department to obtain advisor approval for research credit. This form should be submitted to BI once you have been matched.)		0	0%
3	either for pay or VT credit		1	100%
	Total		1	

Statistic	Value
Min Value	3
Max Value	3
Mean	3.00
Variance	0.00
Standard Deviation	0.00
Total Responses	1

11. Please rank in order of preference which labs you are interested in:

#	Answer																	Total Responses
1	Mathematical Biocomplexity Laboratory	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
2	Network Dynamics and Simulation Science Laboratory	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
3	Nutritional Immunology and Molecular Medicine Laboratory	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
4	Social and Decision Analytics Laboratory	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
5	Biochemical Networks Modeling Group	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
6	Dickerman Research Group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
7	Epigenomics and Computational Biology Laboratory	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
8	Hoeschele Research Group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
9	Michalak Research Group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
10	Capelluto Research Group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
11	Cimini Research Group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
12	Finkielstein Research Group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
13	Hauf Research Group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
14	Kojima Research Group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
15	Honors College Summer Program in Data Science for the Public Good	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
30	Honors College Summer Program in Metagenomics	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Total	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-

Statistic	Mathematical Biocomplexity Laboratory	Network Dynamics and Simulation Science Laboratory	Nutritional Immunology and Molecular Medicine Laboratory	Social and Decision Analytics Laboratory	Biochemical Networks Modeling Group	Dickerman Research Group	Epigenomics and Computational Biology Laboratory	Hoeschele Research Group	Michalak Research Group	Capelluto Research Group	Cimini Research Group	Finkielstein Research Group	Hauf Research Group	Kojima Research Group	Honors College Summer Program in Data Science for the Public Good	Honors College Summer Program in Metagenomics
Min Value	4	5	6	2	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	1	3
Max Value	4	5	6	2	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	1	3
Mean	4.00	5.00	6.00	2.00	7.00	8.00	9.00	10.00	11.00	12.00	13.00	14.00	15.00	16.00	1.00	3.00
Variance	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Standard Deviation	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Responses	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1