

Instructions

Please give a Statement of Purpose detailing your academic and career plans. Include your reasons for choosing the College of Computing as opposed to other programs and/or other universities. Your space is limited to 4000 characters.

Purpose Letter – Online Masters in Computer Science Candidate

Dear GA Tech Entrance Committee,

I am writing you to express my interest in joining the Online Master's in Computer Science (OMS CS) program at Georgia Tech. With this program, I would like to add a theoretical foundation to my knowledge of computer science. Additionally, I have spent the past two years experimenting with online education and see this program as a logical next step in that process. With this degree, I plan to pursue a career in the online education space, while running my current IT related projects more efficiently and effectively.

I have always had an interest in computer. In the late 90s, I created my first website and things have progressed ever since. As a consultant in the financial services industry, I would routinely find opportunities to implement my computer skills in forms such as writing small programs to automate processes. As I grew older, I felt as though my passion and skills in technology were not being properly utilized in consulting and in a grander sense, I wanted to have a greater positive impact on the world. So two years ago, I decided to leave the well-paid world of consulting in order to pursue my own experiments in online learning. I believe online learning has the power to change the world and imbue the opportunity of education onto so many new people around the world. While exploring the world of online education, I realized that a formal education in computer science would help me regardless of whether I join a larger company or become an entrepreneur in the space. Specifically, the machine learning specialization looks particularly applicable to my future career. One of the great strengths of online learning is the ability to collect the data from the learners, and use this data to make the course/program more effective. Machine learning provides the foundation for this. Although I have had a small taste of this in the Recommender Systems MOOC course that I took, I would like to explore the subject matter more deeply.

As for why this particular program? There are several reasons, but first and foremost, the format of the program intrigues me. As I said earlier, I have been experimenting with online learning for the past two years, and primarily in MOOCs and online language learning. The OMS CS program at GA Tech is the most ambitious use of MOOCs to date. I want to be an example that the process is effective. I also have a deep respect for GA Tech as an institution. I received my undergraduate degree from Emory University and lived in Atlanta for 2001 to 2013. While I still believe there is a bias against distance, the GA Tech brand should overshadow any concerns one may have about the format of the program. Finally, the online nature of the program gives one more freedom with regards to location and time. In Berlin, I have developed great relationships doing volunteer work at the Prinzessinnengarten and the Rütli Schule, which are two things that the OMS CS program would allow me to continue doing while pursuing my degree. The real international experience that I am gaining right now wouldn't have to end like it would had I chosen a more traditional program.

In conclusion, the OMS CS program at GA Tech would provide me with the tools that I need to pursue a passionate career in online education while at the same time, imparting freedoms that would allow me to continue to build lasting global relationships. Thanks for your time and I look forward to the opportunity to become part of the OMS CS program.

Sincerely, David