

Erick Garcia

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Technology is the most fascinating thing in the world, while developing at an exponential pace it all indicates that this is where the future of progress lies. Since before I entered elementary school my passion for computers had already started. In the absence of my father due to his business trips, I had the home computer to myself for days without end. My name is Erick Garcia, currently an undergraduate Computer Science senior student at the University of Texas at El Paso.

During the course of my undergraduate studies, I was highly interested in becoming involved with the CS community, so shortly after starting my upper division courses I got the opportunity to join Doctor Natalia Villanueva's Research group. Our research area of interest is Web Semantics and Ontologies, Data Mining, sharing and contribution of data. It was my first experience in Research, and since then I have been highly fascinated with the research environment. After graduating in the coming summer 2016, my objective is to pursue my MS in Software Engineering at the University of Texas at El Paso in which I will further improve my research skills, and aim towards a my interests in Data Science, which will also increase my opportunities to work in an interdisciplinary area in order to tackle real world problems such as the use of models to predict crucial changes in the environment due to climate change.

To the present I am still part of the research group and have had the chance to collaborate with some interesting projects including: The creation of a Semantically-annotated website for the research group that is dynamically populated from heterogeneous sources. This project benefits the usability for human resources, while increasing the discoverability of resources by machines (e.g search engines) using

metadata. (Possibly talk about current elseweb water project). After having a year of research experience I was still eager for more valuable experiences, so I applied for the Army High Performance Computing Research Center's 8 week program at Stanford University. During my time at Stanford I had the honor to work under the mentorship of Doctor Patrick Hanrahan and his research group which focused on Image Processing and Visualization. There I participated in the project of Real-time Computer Vision on Quadcopters. The objective was to embed custom, optimized C image processing code to the ARM processor in the Drone. Working with Doctor Hanrahan was both a challenging and rewarding experience in which I got exposed to Linux based operating systems, parallel computing and different optimizing algorithms used for image processing.

Through these opportunities I have gained valuable skills in the CS background that I am constantly improving. I have adept mastery of the following programming languages: C, C++, Java, Php, Javascript and assembly. I am also proficient in the creation of Database Content Management Systems, Dynamic Websites and Linux-based operating systems.

I attended the CAHSI conference at Puerto Rico and HEENAC at Pasadena and on both occasions I heard about the GEM fellowship and it peeked my interest. It is a great opportunity for those interested in graduate school, and with the foundation acquired through the rigorous CS program at UTEP, and my various research experiences I think would greatly qualify to be in a MS program. The MS in Software Engineering that I plan to earn at the University of Texas at El Paso will undoubtedly provide me with the right knowledge, skills and experience to pursue my goals fullest extent. I sincerely thank you for the opportunity of earning this fellowship.