Personal Statement of Jun Rao

PhD Candidate for NAU School of Informatics, Computing, and Cyber Systems

I will complete my graduate degree and thesis for the MSE Master’s in Computer Science at Northern Arizona University in May 2017. As a student in the School of Informatics, Computing, and Cyber Systems MSE program, my scholarly concerns were mostly focused on the theory about stochastic sampling in computer graphics, data analysis and statistics. In addition, the rigorous graduate curriculum in the MSE program placed a strong emphasis on individual research and intensive academic writing to prepare me for PhD-level studies. As a student, I find myself consistently engaged with the intersection with the math, statistic, biology and computer science.

Before beginning my graduate studies, I completed my Bachelor’s in Computer Science at NAU in December 2016 with an overall GPA of 3.75. I also earned a Bachelor’s degree in bioengineering at China’s BaYi Agriculture University in July 2012 and I was a graduate student in bio-metallurgy also in China. I was fortunate enough as a student both in China and NAU to have discovered exhilaration and joy while performing academic research. Setting a goal to pursue a lifelong career as an academic allowed me to overcome a weakness that were initially felt to be insurmountable, including studying aboard and research. Learning the strategies necessary for university study while following a compelling curriculum enabled me to complete my degree, participate in interdisciplinary thesis research, and eventually continue on to graduate school. Relocating to the NAU for study proved to be a worthwhile choice, as living here for the past few years has been a formative and enriching experience.

The last year of my Bachelor’s in Computer Science at NAU was devoted to complete my Capstone project mobile app and web tools which created tagged information to pictures and text similar to Facebook but for any web site. For my graduate research, I am helping develop a stochastic sampling algorithm for USGS to access big image fast. I was a T.A. for CS122L MATLAB programming lab class and I am a T.A for CS126L Python programming class and CS136L Java programming class.

It is with gratitude that I can finish my Bachelor’s degree and Master’s degree in NAU. It would, therefore, be an honor to pursue my PhD in Informatics and Computing at Northern Arizona University. Based on my educational background, I believe I am an ideal candidate for this program.