Personal Statement

Louis Primeau

I am a first year Engineering Science student at the University of Toronto. I chose this program because it is broad and offers many opportunities for different career specializations, and thus far the most interesting in my opinion are the machine intelligence and engineering physics streams. This REU is a great way to learn from AI researchers and gain useful skills while aiding in my career decision, which will enhance my learning and help me make an educated decision.

On some days, my father cannot help but complete everybody's sentences. His success rate, although low (and annoying), has sparked my interest: how does he predict what people are going to say? More seriously, I find the science of machine intelligence to be very interesting, and in this REU more specifically the natural language dialogue processing project. I hope to explore all the different applications of the field while participating in this research. One paper that Dr. Traum worked on caught my eye– it examined how conversational robots might aide deaf infants in meeting their developmental checkpoints in their first 6-12 months.

Through this REU, I am looking to develop both my hard skills and my soft skills. On the hard skills side, I hope to improve my coding skills with a real world application in tandem with other coders. In the process I will improve my understanding of machine learning and other computer science concepts. This will prepare me for the machine intelligence specialization in the Engineering Science program, and aide me in future jobs or research. I hope to produce a paper in this REU, which will help me with my soft skills in writing, speaking, and communication. One of the most valuable things I hope to get out of this REU is teamwork skills, as I will presumably be working with a larger group, learning to knit my individual contributions with collaboration with other researchers.

I am very excited about this research opportunity, and I believe that it will greatly benefit me and that I will be able to contribute to the research project to which I am assigned.