Larry D. Pyeatt, PhD
2624 Dana
Lubbock, Texas 79415
pyeatt@cs.ttu.edu

December 23, 2005

Search Committee Chair
Department of Computer Science and Engineering/171
University of Nevada, Reno
Reno, NV 89557

Dear search committee,

I am currently a tenured associate professor in the Department of Computer Science at Texas Tech, and a visiting associate professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at University of Missouri, Rolla (UMR). I have read your departmental strategic plan, and my background and interests make me an excellent fit in your department.

Although my research interests are primarily in Markov Decision Processes and Robotics, the courses that I most enjoy teaching are digital logic and architecture. In the context of ABET criteria for Computer Engineering, I would be happy to teach any of the following: ECE 249 (Digital Systems Laboratory), ECE 290 (Introduction to Computer Engineering), ECE 291 (Computer Engineering II), ECE 312 (Computer Organization and Design), CS 125 (Introduction to Computer Science), and CS 225 (Data Structures and Software Principles).

In addition to an interest in championing the hardware courses and helping to attain ABET accreditation for the Computer Engineering program, I would also fit well with the department's longer-term goals. I have experience in three of the critical targeted areas listed in your strategic plan. They are: Machine Learning, Evolutionary Computing, and Robotics. Some of my recent research, in collaboration with a federal lab, is related to security and surveillance, which is also listed in your strategic plan.

I enjoy teaching and find it to be rewarding. Course evaluations indicate that the students view me as an excellent, though demanding, instructor. My background in computer science is broad and I can teach a wide range of courses from introductory programming to advanced theory. I bring industry experience to the classroom and focus on theory and skills that will help the students throughout their careers. My strong teaching ability would be an asset to UNR.

My record shows that I would bring a proven ability to perform research and attract funding. I have developed an active research program and created the AI Robotics Lab at Texas Tech. I have been involved in writing several proposals for funded research projects. I have always worked in a collaborative setting. I believe that my ability to attract funding and collaboration would be valuable at UNR. Over the last year, I have been pursuing collaborative research with Don Wunsch at UMR, on two major projects. The first involves applying Reinforcement Learning techniques to improve packet delivery in disruption tolerant networks, and the second involves sensor fusion and decision support in distributed sensor networks.

My record of departmental service is also good. As graduate advisor, I re-structured the graduate program to increase graduate student enrollment and improve graduate student quality. As a result of my efforts, our PhD enrollment increased from four PhD students in 1999, to twenty-four in 2002, and over thirty in 2004.

While performing a high level of departmental service, I have also been active outside the department, serving as reviewer for journals and conferences, and serving on the program committees. My involvement in service activities could benefit the department at UNR.

I have enclosed my curriculum vitae, a statement of teaching and research interests, and evidence of teaching and research effectiveness. I have also asked my referees to send letters of recommendation. Please contact me by e-mail at `pyeatt@cs.ttu.edu` if you require any additional information. My web page at `http://www.cs.ttu.edu/~pyeatt` always has links to the most recent version of my curriculum vitae and a broad sample of my research papers. The AI robotics lab web page at `http://www.cs.ttu.edu/robot` gives an overview of my current research efforts. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Larry D. Pyeatt, PhD

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