

SERVICE STATEMENT

JORDAN BOYD-GRABER

1. PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

In addition to reviewing articles for journals and conferences, I've served as an area chair for machine learning at EMNLP 2015, document classification and topic clustering at NAACL 2015, and an "at large" area chair at ICML 2015, helping to shepherd hundreds of submissions in the one of the fastest growing areas of these conferences.

I also organized the 2015 ACL student research workshop with NSF support, which helps introduce students to the research community, and research-focused workshops at NIPS 2010, 2013, and NAACL 2015.

2. CREATING A NEW UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM

Because I care deeply about undergraduate education, I was the founding chair of the undergraduate committee for Maryland's College of Information Studies. This was a passionate and hard-fought struggle to create a new undergraduate program in a resource-constrained environment.

I first had to convince elements within the college that an undergraduate program was indeed a good idea and would not distract or detract from the College's existing (graduate-only) programs that were already stable, successful, and well understood. I crafted a data-driven message that convinced faculty holdouts and the administration that we should continue a new undergraduate program that would be well-received by potential students.

The next challenge was resources and coordination. Because of space constraints, we had to work with the Universities at Shady Grove and Montgomery County Community College to make sure we would have sufficient space and students to launch our new program. We also had to work with Maryland administration to have sufficient faculty lines to teach new classes and coordinators to make the new program a success.

I then created a set of concentrations, courses, and schedules to offer the courses for initial cohorts. We drafted course descriptions, learning outcomes, and worked with feeder programs to work out prerequisites. Although I left before it was implemented, Susan Winter led the final implementation of the program which will soon admit its first students.

3. GRADUATE LIFE

At both Maryland and Colorado, I worked to improve our recruitment of graduate students and to make sure they have a rich and rewarding experience once they come to the university.

At Maryland, I worked to build research depth, research breadth, and cultural competency in graduate students. To build research depth, I began the probabilistic modeling reading group to bring together common users of probabilistic methods across computer science, linguistics, and information studies. To build research breadth, I organized a colloquium series (with funding from UMIACS) to bring external speakers working in machine learning and natural language processing to campus. To build cultural competency and improve the social atmosphere of graduate students,

I organized a movie night to introduce international students to the “standard” Western nerdy popular culture (it was also quite popular with US students).

At Colorado, I’ve worked hard as a part of graduate committee to improve the quality of the graduate students we can recruit. To boost the crop of applicants, I traveled extensively to recruit high quality graduate students from Europe and Asia; obviously this also helped my own recruiting: in my first to years at Colorado, more applicants expressed interest in working with me than any other Colorado CS faculty. As a part of the graduate committee, we also improved recruiting materials: our brochure, a recruiting video, interactive demonstrations at visit day, and our offer letter.

4. BUILDING THE FACULTY

At Maryland, I served on the UMIACS Appointments, Tenure, and Promotions committee (2012–2013). At Colorado, I served on the search committee that hired Jed Brown, Raf Frongillo, and Matt Hammer; with Aaron Clauset, I lead the Network Science/Machine Learning track that recruited Raf Frongillo.

5. OUTREACH TO UNDERGRADUATES AND HIGH SCHOOLS

A major part of my research involves outreach to high schools through computers that play trivia games. These events are possible because I’ve built a reputation among schools as an effective organizer of events. In addition to human-computer tournaments, I’ve run multiple academic tournaments in Colorado at both high school and college levels. Before my arrival, Colorado had not taken part in this national competition; organizing these events has improved the state’s visibility in academic competitions and brought additional resources to University of Colorado student organizations (by way of tournament fees).

I’ve done this in collaboration with groups of passionate undergraduates. At Maryland, I advised an existing academic team that consistently was in the top ten nationally. At Colorado, I created an organization from scratch that in 2015 placed second in the Rocky Mountain region in their first year of competition.

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