2061 Kinridge Trail
Marietta, GA 30062

January 31, 2018

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am excited to apply for the position of Assistant Professor of Computer Science in the area of **Intelligent Systems**. My path to this application is not typical. After graduation from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1990 and finishing pilot training in 1992, I did a three year tour in Space Command. I was the first ever first-assignment space instructor at Undergraduate Space Training (UST) and attended the Air Force's six-week intensive instructor course, the same course attended by Air Force Academy professors. I achieved the best results of any instructor at UST while teaching its hardest course, mechanics. After three years as a classroom instructor I returned to flying in the KC-135, rising to the highest co-pilot position (Stan/Eval), becoming one of only two co-pilots to earn special-operations qualification, and winning an outstanding crew award while deployed in Saudi Arabia. I finished my Air Force career doing what I love: teaching, this time as a T-37 instructor pilot.

I left the Air Force in 2000 with the ultimate goal of becoming a Computer Science professor. After developing my software engineering skills professionally (rated top 5% by my engineering manager at Internet Security Systems, now IBM), I moved to Georgia Tech in 2001 where I was an applied researcher at GTRI, a research scientist in the College of Computing, a PhD student, and a full-time lecturer. As a lecturer I managed large classes with staffs of up to 40 teaching assistants. I am particularly proud of the culture of competence, compassion, camaraderie, and diversity I developed in my TAs. I was fortunate always to have large numbers of minorities and women apply to become TAs, and I believe this reflects the welcoming atmosphere I created in my classes and in my diverse TA staffs. I benefitted from the diversity of perspectives in my TAs, and my students benefitted from the diversity they saw in my staff. Rapport is important in teaching, and identity can kick-start the development of rapport.

I am drawn to Emory for its overall interdisciplinary mission. My wife owes her life in part to a surgeon trained at Emory. I am drawn to your department for its technical excellence, its size, and its breadth of research. I believe I can complement your existing research and I possess several key ingredients for success. I have a successful track record of interdisciplinary research - including significant funding development experience, I have many years of teaching experience at the elite university level, I have successfully led teams of researchers and educators, and I have a solid track record of top-tier research, most recently at the most selective year in the history of the top general AI conference in the world, AAAI-19. I also have papers in preparation for NeurIPS and OOPSLA.

I am honored to be recommended by an exceptional group of researchers and leaders. Professor Charles Isbell is an ACM and AAAI fellow and Executive Associate Dean for the College of Computing at Georgia Tech. Professor Joel Sokol is Director of the MS in Analytics program at Georgia Tech. Dr. John Cortese, Quantum Information Scientist at MIT, is the only person ever to earn two PhDs from Caltech. Dr. Spencer Rugaber, retired from the Georgia Tech faculty, is an expert in programming languages and software engineering. Dr. John Hammer, former professor at Georgia Tech, is a long time senior leader in industry.

I hope I get the opportunity to join your esteemed faculty and fulfill my lifelong dream of teaching and mentoring the next generation of researchers. Contact me any time at chris.simpkins@gatech.edu or on my personal cell phone at +1-404-793-3727 (404-SWE-DRCS). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christopher L. Simpkins, Ph.D.