João Paulo Pizani Flor
Av. Santa Catarina, 174 – Bela Vista 1
São José – SC
88110-300, Brazil

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Universiteit Utrecht
International Office – Graduate Admissions
Heidelberglaan, 8
3584 CS Utrecht – The Netherlands

Dear Sir or Madam:

I write to you in order to clarify my motivations to pursue graduate studies in Utrecht University, more specifically in the Computing Science M.Sc programme. During my undergraduate studies I always wished to pursue a research career in Europe; also, I have long been interested in functional programming and in the Haskell programming language. Because of its excellent reputation in this subject area, I have chosen to apply for the Computing Science M.Sc programme at Utrecht.

Since my second year at college several of my lab assignments and course projects were coded in Haskell. Unfortunately, the software industry in my city offers no opportunities for functional programmers, so to compensate this lack of professional FP experience I developed a few personal projects in my spare time. Links to some of these project can be found in my CV.

A topic which I would like to explore in Utrecht is the connection between functional programming and high-performance computing. More specifically, the implementation of functional massively-parallel systems, whether in software or hardware. In my B.Sc thesis I already developed ideas regarding hardware synthesis from high-level languages. Such synthesis – with parallel Haskell code as input – is a possibility I would like to investigate, ideally contributing to existing initiatives such as Data Parallel Haskell or the Accelerate library.

I see my background education as a solid foundation for a Computing Science master's course. I achieved very good marks in CS fundamentals like Computability & Complexity Theory, Discrete Mathematics and Data Structures; also in applied courses such as Compiler Construction, Embedded Systems Laboratory and Pattern Recognition. Furthermore, I was involved in research, taught short-courses and led student-organized academic events while member of the PET group (a brazilian honours scholarship programme). Last August I took part in the Utrecht Summer School, and in December my first paper will be published in the 18th IEEE ICECS conference. Together, all these experiences make me feel very motivated and prepared for graduate studies in Utrecht.

In my understanding, Utrecht will provide me not only with excellence in teaching and research, but also with a favorable environment for career development. The Netherlands are a center of functional programming activity, and by working close to experts I hope to pave the road for my long-term goal: work – in academia or industry – as a leading functional programmer and researcher. At last, but not least, I want to be considered for the Utrecht Excellence Scholarship. In fact, the UES is the only scholarship available for students with my background, and without the support of the UES (in its largest possible amount) I will not be able to finance my studies.

With these motivations in mind, I kindly request your attention and look forward to your reply.

Yours Sincerely,

João Paulo Pizani Flor (3860418)