Name: SWETHA KRISHNAN

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Discipline: Computer Science

Area I applied in: Computer Science –Networks and Image Processing i.e. to some univs. , I highlighted the former while for other univs. , I highlighted the latter.

Term/Year: Fall 2005

Scores:

C.G.P.A (time of applying): 9.81

GRE: 1390/1600

Verbal:	Quantitative:	Essay
630	760	6.0

TOEFL: 290 /300

TSE: 50/60

Recommendation letters:

1) Mr. TSB Sudarshan (CSIS, BITS)
2) Dr. R. R. Mishra (Physics Group, BITS)
3) Mr. Chittaranjan Hota (CSIS, BITS)

Projects done: (including internships etc)

1) **Application of Soft Computing Techniques to Cache Replacement Algorithms for Caching on the World Wide Web. (**Jan - April 2004)
Project Guide: Mr. T.S.B. Sudarshan, CS & IS Faculty, BITS, Pilani

2) **Multi-Resolution Image Analysis and Image Compression Using Wavelets** (May – July 2003)
Done during Practice School – I at Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Trombay (Mumbai, India)
Project Guide: Mr. J.K. Mukherjee, Head, Advanced Robotics Lab, BARC.

3) **Survivable Networks: Active and Backup Path Computation** (Aug – Dec 2004)
Project Guide: Mr. Chittaranjan Hota, CS & IS Faculty, BITS, Pilani.

4) **Face Recognition** (Aug – Dec 2004)
Project Guide: Dr. R. R. Mishra, Group Leader, Physics Group, BITS, and Pilani.
5) **The Chase (A network-based game)(**Jan - March 2003)

Done for APOGEE 2003 (Annual Academic Fest)

6) **Trainee Information System** (May – June 2004)
Done during summer internship at Information Technology Services (ITS) Dept., TATA STEEL, Jamshedpur.
Project Guide: Mr. P.N. Jha, Head, IT-HR and OA and Mrs. V.N. Kala Devi, Manager, OA & WFL, ITS.

7) **Text-to-Speech Conversion: Implementation of the Instruction Set for the Voice Chip (**Sep – Dec 2004)
Done at CEERI, Pilani
Project Guide: Dr. Atanendu Shekhar Mandal, IC Design Group, and CEERI.

Relevant electives done:

1) Network Programming
2) Image Processing
3) Parallel Computing
4) Real-Time Systems
5) Neural Networks

Special achievements/scholarships/fellowships

- Was honored with the **ALL INDIA TALENT SCHOLARSHIP (A.I.T.S**) AWARD, 1993 conferred by the International Children's Excellence Fund (INCEF), a child body of **UNICEF**. Received the award from **the Honorable Prime Minister of India**, Shri H.D. Deve Gowda, at a special function at the capital.

- Recipient of the **BITS Merit Scholarship** (awarded to the top 10 students of the entire undergraduate batch of about 900 students) for all the 5 semesters at BITS, Pilani. (Scholarship list for last semester not yet released)

- Stood **1st** in my city as well as school, in the Indian Certificate Examination (class 12 board examination)

- Was selected for and attended the special **Internet Technologies Training Programme** conducted by **MIT-India Connect** team from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, USA, at Tata Steel premises, Jamshedpur.

- Participated in **QUANTA '98- an International Competition for Science** conducted by City Montessori School, Lucknow.

- Stood **All-India 2nd**, securing 92% in the **All India General Knowledge Test** conducted by the **United Schools Organization of India,** Vec for The United Nations Organization.

Universities I applied to: (include Prof name/ Group u were interested in and also the program you applied to – MS or MS/PhD or PhD). Please list the univs in decreasing order of priority i.e. best at number 1.

1. Carnegie Mellon University (CMU)- Systems & Networking, PhD
2. University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) - Systems & Networking, MS
3. University of Wisconsin – Madison – Systems & Networking, MS
4. University of Washington – Systems & Networking, PhD
5. University of Maryland, College Park – Computer Vision & Image Processing, PhD
6. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill – Computer Vision & Image Processing, MS
7. University of Utah – Computer Vision & Image Processing , MS

Results (give both admits and rejects – and decisions about aid also)

1. CMU –Reject
2. UIUC – No intimation through e-mail or post, so must be reject
3. University of Wisconsin-Madison – Admit (for MS) with full financial aid (full tuition waiver plus graduate assistantship)
4. Uwash - Reject
5. Univ. of Maryland, College Park – Admit (for PhD) with full financial aid (full tuition waiver plus research assistantship (RAship) plus Block Fellowship)
6. Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill – Admit (for MS) with full financial aid (full tuition waiver plus graduate assistantship)
7. University of Utah - Reject

University planning to attend: University of Wisconsin-Madison

Mistakes I made:

1) Delayed some of my applications due to certain things, which I should have arranged for earlier- credit card, financial documents. I did not have adequate know-how about how to arrange for the financial docs. reqd. and so it was very late by the time I could enquire from different people about these and then try to arrange for the same.

2) Took lot of time deciding firstly between job and higher studies and secondly upon which univs. - in a way it was good coz I thought I apped to the right univs. , but again it made other things get pushed to the eleventh hour.

List the factors you think were important in your case in decreasing order of priority (e.g. CGPA, projects, reccos. Scores etc.)

1. Undergraduate college (BITS, Pilani) and department rank
2. CGPA
3. SOP & Resume
4. Projects
5. Recos
6. GRE/TOEFL Scores

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Any other advice (Please fill in personal experience etc)

- Research the univ. thoroughly before you decide upon it…try and correspond with the students there in the department to which you want to apply.
- If possible, decide 4 must-app. univs. before you give your GRE/TOEFL. This way, you could save money coz you could send scores to those 4 univs for free immediately after your tests.
- Arrange for a valid credit card (VISA/Mastercard) –either yours or someone known to you, but make doubly sure it isn't expired or anything, and also that it's a credit, not a debit card!
- Try and app. for PhD even if you are slightly interested in it, that is, you think you might do one if you get interested. It is easier to get aid if you app. for PhD especially for certain univs (this was true at least in my case- dunno whether it's a general rule!)
- Keep in touch with your college (BITsian) seniors – they are the best people to look to for any guidance in case of doubts…. of course, they'll be busy and might take a l'il time to get back to you-but be assured they will! (Again this was so in my case- I did my apping wholly and solely with the immense amount of help I received from my seniors- some of whom I did not even know before mailing them!) . A big thanks to all of them.
- Start the main application process (or at least the enquiries leading to that) by beginning of September. This way, you'll have enough time to find out about financial stuff or any special requirements of univs. , and comply to the same.
- Remember to keep a back-up (in your e-mail account or somewhere else) of all your apping material. In my case, this was another reason for my apping getting delayed. I had kept some of the data only on my PC's hard disk, and when that got damaged in an accident, I had to re-do some of the stuff, though, thankfully I had kept a back-up of the very important things (like my SOP, resume etc.) either on paper or in my BITS (prithvi) e-mail account.

Helpful links: (websites for SOPs, rankings, any prof's/student's website you found helpful etc)

Information from ex-BITsians regarding apping :
http://www.geocities.com/greenmile_gradstudies/

For writing SOPS: http://www.gradfortune.com, http://www.ee.iitb.ac.in/~teesa/apping/sigpro/sops.html. And of course, for anything and everything www.google.com

Rankings: www.usnews.com (you'll need a login account for access to this- could be shared by all those apping in the batch)

Graduate students' webpages (go for the ones of Indian students first) on any university website- you'll be sure to find lots of useful stuff there!