The University of Alabama
Department of Computer Science
Colloquium Series Speaker

Dr. Juan Gilbert
Auburn University

Applications Quest: A Computational Solution to Affirmative Action in the 21st Century

Friday, January 30th
11:00 a.m., EE 110

Abstract:

In 2003, two land mark cases challenged the University of Michigan admissions policies, one focused on Law School admission and the other on undergraduate admissions. In Grutter v. Bollinger, the case focused on the Law School, the U. S. Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in favor of the Law School. However, in the Gratz v. Bollinger, by a vote of 6-3, the Court reversed, in part, the University's undergraduate admission's policy to provide points for race/ethnicity. Therefore, the Court decided that race could be considered in admission's decision, but could not be the deciding factor. Later, Michigan residents voted to adopt a ban on racial and gender preferences through Proposal 2. In 2007, the Supreme Court heard two cases on race-conscious school placement policies in Louisville and Seattle. The court struck down the programs in Louisville and Seattle. In all of these cases, it is clear that racial and gender preferences are either over or on their way out. However, the need to diversify still exists, as explained by the courts and researchers. How can institutions achieve diversity without giving preference to race, gender, etc? In an effort to address these issues, a data mining tool called Applications Quest was developed by Dr. Juan E. Gilbert. Applications Quest allows the use of race/ethnicity, gender or any other attributes to be considered in admissions, school assignments, employee hiring or any other application processing area, such that no preferences are given to race or gender.

Bio:

Dr. Juan E. Gilbert is the T-SYS Distinguished Associate Professor in the Computer Science and Software Engineering Department and a Fellow in the Center for Governmental Services at Auburn University where he directs the Human-Centered Computing (HCC) Lab. He is also a National Associate of the National Research Council of the National Academies, an ACM Distinguished Speaker and a Senior Member of the IEEE Computer Society.