Announcing the Final Examination of Steven Pyle for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Time & Location: February 20, 2019 at 11:00 AM in HEC 356
Title: LEVERAGING THE INTRINSIC SWITCHING BEHAVIORS OF SPINTRONIC DEVICES FOR DIGITAL AND NEUROMORPHIC CIRCUITS

With semiconductor technology scaling approaching atomic limits, novel approaches utilizing new memory and computation elements are sought in order to realize increased density, enhanced functionality, and new computational paradigms. Spintronic devices offer intriguing avenues to improve digital circuits by leveraging non-volatility to reduce static power dissipation and vertical integration for increased density. Novel hybrid spintronic-CMOS digital circuits are developed herein that illustrate enhanced functionality at reduced static power consumption and area cost. The developed spin-CMOS D Flip-Flop offers improved power-gating strategies by achieving instant store/restore capabilities while using 10 fewer transistors than typical CMOS-only implementations. The spin-CMOS Muller C-Element developed herein improves asynchronous pipelines by reducing the area overhead while adding enhanced functionality such as instant data store/restore and delay-element-free bundled data asynchronous pipelines. Spintronic devices also provide improved scaling for neuromorphic circuits by enabling compact and low power neuron and non-volatile synapse implementations while enabling new neuromorphic paradigms leveraging the stochastic behavior of spintronic devices to realize stochastic spiking neurons, which are more akin to biological neurons and commensurate with theories from computational neuroscience and probabilistic learning rules. Spintronic-based Probabilistic Activation Function circuits are utilized herein to provide a compact and low-power neuron for Binarized Neural Networks. Two implementations of stochastic spiking neurons with alternative speed, power, and area benefits are realized. Finally, a comprehensive neuromorphic architecture comprising stochastic spiking neurons, low-precision synapses with Probabilistic Hebbian Plasticity, and a novel non-volatile homeostasis mechanism is realized for subthreshold ultra-low-power unsupervised learning with robustness to process variations.

Major: Computer Engineering

Educational Career:
Bachelor's of Electrical Engineering, BS, 2013, University of Central Florida
Master's of Electrical Engineering, MS, 2015, University of Central Florida

Committee in Charge:
Ronald DeMara, Chair, Electrical & Computer Engineering
Deliang Fan, Electrical & Computer Engineering
Vikram Kapoor, Electrical & Computer Engineering
Reza Abdolvand, Electrical & Computer Engineering
Mingjie Lin, Electrical & Computer Engineering

Approved for distribution by Ronald DeMara, Committee Chair, on February 1, 2019.

The public is welcome to attend.