[Jobs] Open PhD Positions (Robotics) at the Computer Science Department at UIC

Bio:

I (Yifan Zhu) will be starting as an assistant professor in the Computer Science (CS) Department at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) this fall. I am currently a postdoctoral researcher with Prof. Aaron Dollar at Yale University. Prior to that, I completed my PhD in CS at UIUC under the supervision of Prof. Kris Hauser. I have led publications in many top-tier robotics journals and conferences such as *Science Robotics*, *IEEE RA-L*, *RSS*, *ICRA*, and *IROS*. Please see my personal website for more information: https://yifanzhu95.github.io/.

School Information:

UIC is a top public university located in the heart of Chicago. The CS department at UIC has one of the top CS programs in the US, with 80 full-time faculty members. UIC is ranked #80 in the 2025 U.S. News rankings, and the CS department is ranked #41 by CSRankings and #54 in the 2025 U.S. News rankings. The department will welcome a new building this fall -- the Computer, Design, Research, and Learning Center (CDRLC) -- which includes a new robotics laboratory to complement existing robotics facilities.

Information for Students:

My lab will be equipped with all the necessary hardware (robot arms, computing resources, sensors, etc.) for conducting cutting-edge robotics research, with a focus on perception and manipulation. All admitted PhD students will be guaranteed full funding. As an advisor, I will ensure that:

- I am transparent and consistent about my expectations.
- I am available to my students as much as possible and will do my best to support their success.
- I foster an open and welcoming environment for everyone in the lab.

The earliest available start date for the PhD program is Spring 2026. However, if available in Fall 2025, admitted students may potentially be hired and paid as research assistants.

My future research directions include, but are not limited to:

- Perception and modeling in novel environments
- Contact-rich robotic manipulation
- Robot active learning
- Control, perception, and hardware co-design

Instructions for Applying:

Students who have backgrounds in AI, computer vision, computer graphics, numerical optimization, or control theory are encouraged to apply. Prior experience in robotics is preferred but not necessary. Proficiency in at least one modern programming language is expected.

To apply, please send an email to me (yifanzhu95 at gmail.com) with the title as [Prospective Student][Your Name], and include your CV, transcript, and anything you would like to tell me. If there is a good match, I will reach out to you.