School of Data Science
UNC CHARLOTTE

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FACULTY
NEWSLETTER

SDS Faculty,

Almost there. I can't think of another statement about this semester that is better.

First, thank you all for your teaching, research and service this semester, the first semester with an SDS faculty. It was a great start.

Our B.S. in Data Science is now fully official and students can declare a major. The first set of studio classes are wrapping up in the undergraduate program, so we can now reflect on what went well and what to improve.

Our two M.S. programs and certificates continue to grow. From a research standpoint, we have launched our next round of seed funding (see below). We completed a series of very successful webinars. We have a set of SDS Founders that are establishing our first set of endowed undergraduate scholarship opportunities. We have launched a Diversity, Inclusion and Justice Committee for the first time. The search for new faculty members are underway and you have proposed several new special topics classes for our students.

All in all, I'd say you have done a great job this semester (by the way, you all did it in the middle of a pandemic). The School is now established. It is up to us to drive it into the future.

Best,

Doug Hague, Executive Director, SDS.

Registration For Spring 2021 Is Now Open

As a reminder, registration for Spring 2021 classes is now open. Please encourage your students to reach out to **Josh Hertel** or **Carly Mahedy** with any schedule-related or advising questions.

Berkeley Computational Social Sciences Forum

David Mongeau, Executive Director for the **Berkeley Institute of Data Science (BIDS)**, has invited the SDS faculty to participate in their events and seminars.

The **Computational Sciences Forum** is a series of talks hosted by BIDS every Monday, providing an informal setting for the interdisciplinary exchange of ideas and scholarship at the intersection of social science and data science.

Click the link above to learn about each seminar for the fall semester. To register, click the individual seminar.

The International Medical Informatics Association - 2020 General Assembly

The International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA) is holding its **2020 General Assembly** virtually on S*unday, December 6, 2020 from 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM UTC.* The proposed agenda is now available, along with the reports for review prior to the meeting.

The online system to approve the reports will be open to the IMIA GA members from December 8 - Dec 15, 2020. IMIA will include the results of the approvals in the IMIA GA Meeting minutes and will make the minutes available within one week after the approval process is completed.

In Case You Missed It: SDS Webinar Recordings

With the transition to virtual events, the School of Data Science has worked hard to ensure that SDS students, faculty, staff and the community have access to as many recordings of our virtual events as possible.

We will be updating the SDS Youtube channel weekly to provide you with updated content. The following videos can be found on the channel:

- **SDS Fall Webinar Series**
  - **What is Knowledge Production? Racism and Research in the Academy with Dr. Lewis Gordon**
  - **NEW: A Conversation with Dr. Ruha Benjamin: Anti-Blackness, Bias, Surveillance and Carceral Technology**
  - **Data Science In The Fight For Civil Liberties with Lucia Tian**
  - **NEW: Data Analytics In The Intelligence Community Panel Discussion**
- **Wednesday Seminar Series**
  - **Cloud Wars: The Transformative Impact of AWS, Azure and GCP Cloud Platforms**
  - **Five Years Out, Reflections on Careers in Health Informatics and Analytics**
  - **NEW: A Day In The Life Of A Data Scientist**
  - **NEW: Navigating Resumes and Interviews During a Pandemic**

UPDATES FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTORS

Dr. Angela Berardinelli - Undergraduate Program

DR. ANGELA BERARDINELLI
INTERIM UNDERGRADUATE
PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Spring Teaching Assistantships for SDS Courses

Within the next week, an email will go out to SDS faculty teaching spring courses (DTSC, HCIP, DSBA) regarding TA support. If your course meets the requirements, you should have received a link for the Google Forms folder earlier today. The folder contains individual applications for students currently enrolled in the Data Science and Business Analytics or the Health Informatics and Analytics programs. Given the current circumstances, we anticipate a tight budget year. We are committed to providing support to as many of the DSBA and HIA classes as possible. With that in mind, we have clarified the policy on how we assign SDS funded Teaching Assistantships.

SDS Enrollment/TA Allocation
- 25 or more students = 20 hours a week
- 15-24 students = 10 hours a week
- Less than 15 students = 0 hours

SDS pays master's candidates $5,100 for a semester-long (15 weeks)/20 hour a week assignment, roughly $17.00 an hour. An SDS student who accepts a full-time/20 hour per week assistantship also agrees to enroll in a minimum of 6 credit hours/2 classes or a maximum of 9 credit hours/3 classes.

Based on current enrollment in your class, DSBA 6156 Applied Machine Learning, you have been allotted 20 hours a week Teaching Assistant to support the course. Here is the link to the original Google Forms folder with student applications and resumes:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1XPdzJ55jGJBfDDg4Xe8gGn7dkI4dPYQ lhFveFZnW0CE/edit?usp=sharing

Please review the files, reach out to your preferred candidate, and confirm their availability for fall 2020. Once they have accepted the offer, please contact me and I will set up their contract in the EGA system. Here is a link to an active spreadsheet that might be a little easier to navigate:

General requirements for SDS funded assistantships can be found here. Some important high points:

- As a policy, we require that students holding an SDS funded assistantship be registered for a minimum of 6 credit hours and a maximum of 9 credit hours.
- Students must have a minimum 3.0 GPA.
- Assistantships do not come with tuition remission.
- International students are eligible to hold an assistantship, but they need to sign up for the ISSO workshop if they have not already done so.
- One common question is whether faculty can hire TAs from outside the Health Informatics and Data Science program. The answer is a qualified no. Funds for these positions are derived from the program's tuition increment. Because the money comes for DSBA and HI students our priority is to use it to support students in these programs.

Students interested in applying for an assistantship can find more information **here.**

Reminder: Complete The Research Climate Survey

Research has shown perceptions of ethical research climate can impact research behavior. Because UNC Charlotte is committed to continuous improvement of our research climate, we are seeking to gather your perceptions about the research climate of our institution.

Your input is critical to this project. **on Tuesday, November 17th, all UNC Charlotte received an emailed invitation from the National Center for Professional and Research Ethics (NCPRE) to an online survey about our research climate.** If you consent to participate, you will see screening questions to determine if you are eligible to complete the full survey.

Your survey responses will be anonymous (research study IRB #19-0818). Those who complete it will have the opportunity to provide contact information

on a separate form to be eligible to receive an Amazon gift card.

Faculty will be entered into a random drawing to win one of four (4) $25 Amazon gift cards.

Faculty will need to search their email for "UNC Charlotte Survey on Organizational Research Climate" for their personalized survey link.

Call For Proposals: Spring 2021 Seed Grants For Data Science

The School of Data Science is now accepting research proposals for the Spring 2021 Seed Grants for Data Science funding cycle.

This seed grant opportunity provides up to $10,000 per award for UNC Charlotte and partnering faculty and researchers. A total funding of $20,000, and two to four awards are anticipated in this cycle.

Proposals must be submitted by teams comprised primarily of UNC Charlotte researchers (The lead PI has to be UNC Charlotte faculty).

Candidate teams will be multidisciplinary and draw personnel **from at least two colleges, with at least one principal or co-principal researcher holding an affiliate or core faculty appointment within the School of Data Science.** While collaborators external to UNC Charlotte may be included, the **focus is on supporting the formation of new research teams based at UNC Charlotte.**

The deadline to submit a proposal **is January 10, 2021, 10 p.m. EST.**

Learn More Here

SDS Research Website Tab

The School of Data Science has created a **new research tab** on its website.

The tab currently features *the COVID-19 Dashboard, The Seed Grants for Data Science Initiative and a database for the school's portfolio of funded research.*

While each tab will be built out in stages, be on the lookout for additional links on SDS faculty expertise, recently published research and industry research collaboration requests.

SDS Affiliate Faculty Members - Awarded Research Grant Funding

We'd like to congratulate the following affiliate faculty members for their research efforts and for being awarded the **2021 National Science Foundation I-Corps Grant:**

- **Victor Chen**
- **Wenwen Dou**

 The project is entitled "Knowledge Graph Embeddings-based Explainable Artificial Intelligence for Enterprise Performance Management". The project team is offered a $50,000 grant and free NSF training between January 19-March 5 on technology entrepreneurship and discovery of industry partnerships.

The team also includes: Industry mentor Gary Cokins, Entrepreneurial Lead (EI) Wendy Long (OS PhD Student), and co-EI Nasheen Nur (PhD Candidate in software and information systems).

Learn more about each research project **here.**

Research Opportunity For Undergraduate Students

Dr. Xi (Sunshine) Niu has recently been funded by NSF REU (Research for Undergraduate Students) to support two undergraduate students to work on an NSF funded project "CHS: SMALL: Promoting Unexpected Information Discovery: An Interactive Framework for Computational Serendipity" (Award Number: 1910696)", where Dr. Xi (Sunshine)Niu is the lead PI. The total budget including the NSF REU part is $512,041. Dr. Mary Lou Maher is the Co-PI.

The project is studying serendipity, a concept associated with unexpected discoveries that are valuable. This project's goal is to make progress on how to predict and foster serendipity in how people interact with information online. The project will make contributions to the study of recommender systems, information retrieval algorithms, and human-computer interaction, along with developing recommender tools, called SerenCat, for academic libraries to support serendipity and knowledge discovery in libraries.

SCHOOL OF DATA SCIENCE
IN THE NEWS

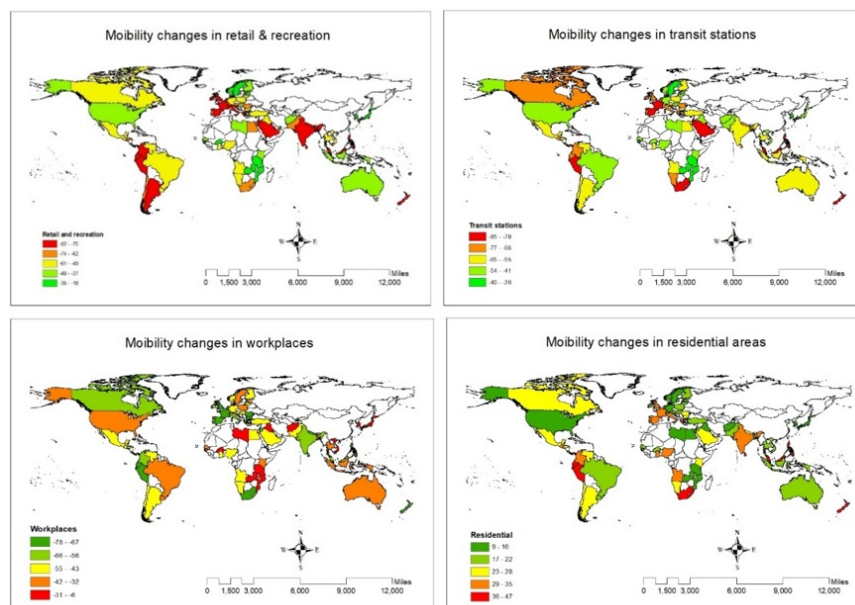# SDS Executive Director Appointed To UNC Charlotte Strategic Planning Committee

SDS Executive Director, Doug Hague, was appointed to the 2021 Strategic Planning Committee, on behalf of Chancellor Gaber.

Learn how this diverse committee of faculty, staff, students and administrators will set the direction of the future of UNC Charlotte for years to come.

Read More Here

SDS Affiliate Faculty Member Published In MDPI

A team of researchers from UNC Charlotte's College of Engineering and

School of Data Science was recently published by MDPI for research on the early stages of the pandemic.

Discover how their research investigated the complex interaction between the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic, people's mobility and lockdown regimens across 88 different countries.

Read More Here

Wednesday Seminar: Resume Critique and Interview Coaching with Chris Black

When: Wednesday, December 2nd, 4-5 p.m.

Please join the School of Data Science to welcome Chris Black from LendingTree to present this hands-on workshop.

LendingTree is a Charlotte-based company. It is the nation's leading online marketplace that connects consumers with the choices they need to be confident in their financial decisions. LendingTree empowers consumers to shop for financial services the same way they would shop for airline tickets or

hotel stays, comparing multiple offers from a nationwide network of over 500 partners in one simple search, and can choose the option that best fits their financial needs. Services include mortgage loans, mortgage refinances, auto loans, personal loans, business loans, student refinances, credit cards, and more.

Register Here

Altair: No Code Analytics – a Workshop for the Citizen Data Scientist

When: Thursday, December 3rd, 1 - 3:00 p.m.

Altair will be presenting a hands on case study using their platform for faculty and staff at UNC Charlotte.

Altair is a global technology company that provides software and cloud solutions that transform organizational value by applying data analytics, simulation, and high-performance computing to design and operational decision making.

Register Here

Google Cloud Public Sector Summit

When: December 8th - 9th, 2020

Sponsored by Google, Google Cloud's Public Sector Summit, a two-day global, digital event connecting government and academic communities across the globe. Create your own experience from over 50 sessions, book time to "ask

an expert," explore success stories, access resources, and more.

Wednesday Seminar: Career Opportunities with Genpact

When: Wednesday, December 9th, 4-5 p.m.

Join us to learn more about how Genpact is using Data Science and AI to serve their clients, and career opportunities for students.

Genpact is a global professional services firm that makes business transformation real. It drives digital-led innovation and digitally-enabled intelligent operations for clients, guided by experience running thousands of processes primarily for Global Fortune 500 companies

IBM Academic Initiative Workshop

When: December 10th, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

The IBM Academic Initiative provides professors and students access to the latest technologies in open source and IBM software, hardware, course materials, training, technical support, and other resources. The speakers will be presenting IBM Watson/AI cloud-based services and ongoing CAS projects using different IBM methods and platforms to the participating faculty.

Register Here

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