Welcome to the third edition of the ISOM Insider. Another fast-paced and productive academic year is drawing to a close. During this year the UTA College of Business celebrated its 50th anniversary and was reaccredited by the American Association of Colleges and Schools of Business (AACSB).

The Department of Information Systems and Operations Management (ISOM), together with the Department of Economics, played host to a highly successful 50th Anniversary Analytics Symposium in January to mark this milestone and look toward the future of business analytics. In the pages that follow you will learn of our faculty and student activities and their accumulating accolades, the continuing popularity of the department’s STEM MS INSY degree, and the graduation of the first MS in Business Analytics student. Former Dean Rachel Croson gives an exclusive interview with an anonymous ISOM faculty member. I want to thank retiring faculty members Dr. Craig Slinkman and Dr. Grace Esimai for their many years of faithful service to UTA. Finally, I want recognize my office team – Assistant Chair Dr. Carolyn Davis and Administrative Assistants Ashton Jones and Jennifer Hill – who have worked hard to accomplish our ISOM goals and facilitate the faculty’s outstanding accomplishments in teaching and research.

Cordially,

Professor and Interim Chair, ISOM Department

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**Awards and Accolades**

Dr. Gene Lee was invited to speak at the University of Texas System’s 2016 Texas FreshAIR conference on Big Data & Data Analytics, March 30-31st, 2016 in the session titled Business Analytics – Mobile and Social Media Analytics. Held on the campus of UT San Antonio, Texas FreshAIR (Academia-Industry Roundtable) is an initiative of the UT System with the objective to foster and encourage industry and academic collaboration.

Dr. Gene Lee’s paper, “Strategic Network Formation in a Location-Based Social Network: A Topic Modeling Approach,” was nominated for Best Paper Award at the Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS), Kauai, Hawaii, January 2016.
A paper – titled “Contextualizing or decontextualizing? The peril of using Western social capital scales in China” – co-authored by Dr. Edmund Prater and doctoral program alumnus Sherry Avery was named the Journal of Chinese Human Resource Management’s “Outstanding Paper” of 2014.

Dantu Ramakrishna was awarded the 2015 HIMSS Doctoral Fellowship, instituted by the DFW Chapter of Health Information Management Systems Society (HIMSS) to promote healthcare IT education and research.

Dr. Jingguo Wang was awarded funding by UTA’s Interdisciplinary Research Program for proposed research on Exploring Organizational Needs for Improved User Authentication Systems. Co-Investigator: Matthew Wright.

Ms. Olajumoke Awe was awarded a Doctoral Fellowship for Summer 2016.

Dr. Whiteside received the Outstanding Faculty Service Award for exceptional PhD committee service.

Dr. Prater received a $500,000 grant from the Veteran’s Administration to fund a Veterans Business Outreach Center in the College of Business.

Dr. Napier received an award from the Greater Fort Worth Chapter of APICS at its annual Top Management Night banquet. The award was for his outstanding contributions as the UTA Faculty Advisor, particularly with the large growth of student members.

Dr. Jennifer Zhang recently had her paper “On Self-Selection Biases in Online Product Reviews” accepted by MIS Quarterly. This paper was a joint effort with Paul Pavlou and Nan Hu. This paper has had a big impact in the e-business industry. Amazon.com has adopted the authors’ findings to revise their rating demonstration by showing the distribution in addition to the average rating score.

**ISOM at a Glance**

The Master of Science in IS program continues to grow by leaps and bounds. There were 197 INSY majors enrolled for Spring 2016.

The Master of Science in IS program admitted more than 250 new applicants for Fall 2016.

Ms. Yashashwini Ramamurthy is our first graduate of our new Master of Business Analytics program which began in Spring 2015.

Two of our IS doctoral students have graduated and can now be called ‘doctor’ ... Dr. Yoonsang Lee and Dr. Philip Bond. Dr. Nerur chaired the committee for Philip Bond. Dr. Sikora chaired the committee for Yoonsang Lee. Both Dr. Lee and Dr. Bond are now Visiting Assistant Professors in our faculty.

Dr. Carolyn Davis was nominated “Outstanding Academic Advisor” for the second year in a row.

Dr. M.K. Raja will be the IT member of the North Central Texas Regional STEM Degree Accelerator Program that brings together public schools, community colleges, universities, and industry to increase student performance and sustainability in CS/IT programs.

Dr. Chen is directing five PhD students in economics experiments as part of their research exploring a wide range of topics from studying how stress can impact inventory decision-making to risk perception and resource spending decisions on cyber security.

Several faculty members in the College of Business (Dr. Chen, Dr. Nerur, Dr. Casper) have teamed up with the department of bio-engineering to explore how functional near-infrared brain imaging can inform business decision-making. The team’s experimental design is underway, and the first pilot experiment is expected the first week of July.
The College has a new program with BNSF to deliver a BBA degree to a select group of BNSF managers. The students started at Tarrant County Community College more than two years ago to complete their first 60 hours of coursework. In January, 2016 they transitioned to UTA and began their first UTA course with Dr. Mark Eakin. The course was delivered in person at our Fort Worth Campus, but Dr. Eakin used a “flipped classroom” approach that was very effective for these students. The students were able to use class time to work directly with Mark in practical application of the material. We received very positive feedback from the students. This was a great start to the UTA portion of their degree program.

Ms. Karen Scott gave a presentation to Tyler Junior College related to the use of SAM 2013 products in INSY 2303 Introduction to Data Processing.

We graduated our first Chinese INSY Cohort group in August 2015.

Dr. Michel Whittenberg and three of our students represented UTA and our department at the UT-Dallas Supply Chain Leadership Council Case Competition in 2016.

Dr. Cannon and Dr. Mahapatra developed online versions BSTAT 5315 and INSY 5350, respectively, for the Healthcare Administration online program.

Dr. Baker is coordinating the adoption of McGraw-Hill Connect online tool and smart e-book for BSTAT 3321 and BSTAT 3322.

Faculty and Community

Dr. Edmund Prater, Associated Professor, was awarded the Lockheed Martin Community and Professional Faculty Leadership Award. This award recognizes faculty who have made significant contributions to the professional community. Dr. Prater worked closely with the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) to establish an active presence on the UTA campus and access to facilities in the College of Business. In addition, he serves on the Veterans Coalition (VETCO) board.

Dr. Prater established a unique boot camp opportunity for veterans interested in manufacturing. Beginning in the Summer of 2016, the Manufacturing Boot Camp for Veteran Entrepreneurs will be offered annually. The boot camp will offer training in entrepreneurship to post-9/11 veterans, designed to enable them to start and successfully grow their own business, creating jobs not just for themselves, but for those they eventually hire.

Dr. Prater was Principal Investigator on a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration to fund a Veterans Business Outreach Center in the College of Business. The SBA will be providing $250K per year for two years guaranteed, with the option of indefinite renewal, which will allow us to provide training in entrepreneurship and other business advice to veterans and others.

Dr. Prater was awarded the Arlington Sunset Rotary Service Award. This award is to honor faculty with outstanding service to the community. Dr. Prater’s work with TVC, VETCO, and industry giants such as Alcon and Texas Health Resources highlight his dedication to community service.
Interview with a Dean

A little over three years ago I was asked to sit down with our new College of Business Dean, Dr. Rachel Croson. She was speaking with every faculty member to learn about the College and its needs.

I didn’t know what to expect. Would I find a formal type, a by-the-book type? Would I be able to answer her questions? But from her first question I found her to be warm, genuine, and sincerely interested in what I had to say. For the next three years, I would see her on occasion in and around the Business building or I would be in a meeting with her. She was always engaged in College business, but she always had a kind word to say and took the time to say it.

Fast forward three and a half years … she has now accepted a position as Dean of the College of Social Science at Michigan State University (MSU). Now, before she leaves, I have asked her to sit down and speak with me.

Q. What do you see as the importance of INSY, OPMA and STAT to the future of business?

A. The future of business is data intensive. While data mining has been around for a while, the amount of data that firms are faced with is growing exponentially. Firms are no longer reliant on focus groups or customer surveys (although those tools are still useful), they now analyze large datasets of their customers’ previous purchases, “clicks” through a site, and responses to customized advertisements. Amazon has used this kind of information to build effective recommendation systems, while others have mined Twitter data, or used distributed information from cell phones to predict traffic slowdowns. Firms today use ever-increasing amounts of data to decide to whom to lend money (and at what rate), spot and recall defective products, or optimize production lines by sensing when products are no longer moving quickly. All the areas of study offered by the department – INSY, OPMA and STAT – contribute to understanding this new world.

The courses in Information Systems guide our undergraduate and MBA students in understanding how systems and data can be used to increase a firm’s effectiveness and profitability. Our Master of Science in Information Systems produces experts prepared to lead the IS function within a firm or other organization. Courses in Operations Management guide our undergraduate and MBA students in applying process control, quality management, and supply chain principles to increase efficiency and total quality of an organization. And education in statistics forms the foundation of the emerging field of Business Analytics. ISOM continues to expand and update these disciplines to support the ever-changing global environment of the future. The technical, statistical, and operational aspects of a firm are the foundation of its success.

Q. You launched many new programs while Dean of the College of Business. One of those was the Master of Science in Business Analytics. How do you feel this program contributes to the College goals?

A. I love this degree because it draws on the expertise of faculty across the College. The Master of Science in Business Analytics covers business intelligence, data mining, econometrics, marketing research and statistical techniques that prepare students for careers in data analysis. It is spearheaded by the ISOM department, but includes courses taught across the various departments in the College of Business, drawing from expertise that has been developed in multiple domains around the opportunities and perils in using big data to inform business decisions.
Q. What is the key to a great college and great programs?

A. Educational offerings are important, especially ensuring that what our students learn in the classroom is what firms need them to know on the job. As a result, we have developed advisory boards for many of our programs, including the new MS in Business Analytics, which enables us to learn from industry experts about the skills they need and to ensure that we are delivering those skills to our students. I also believe that faculty research is what creates a great college and great programs. Our faculty do research using big data.

For example, a recent project uses data from Texas Health Resources to predict and potentially improve health outcomes. These activities all contribute to the UTA-wide focus on Data Driven Discovery, and provide new insights on how business analytics can improve the profitability of a for-profit firm, but also help other organizations to reach their goals, whatever they may be.

Q. Any final thoughts?

A. I am so proud of what we have accomplished together during my time here. We have increased our research profile, citations and press coverage of our research. We have increased the number of internship and employment listings, the number of companies and individuals engaged with the College, and our reputation in the DFW community. We have launched a new professionalism curriculum which will better prepare our students for the job market. We have increased our reach internally as well, offering more student-credit-hours to non-business majors. The faculty, staff and students have worked incredibly hard, and it shows. I will miss this community, these students, and especially this faculty and staff who are so dedicated to our mission.

Fast forward three months...an unsure MSU faculty member sits across from a new dean and is asked, "What would you like to see happen for the College?"

Little do they know they are in for an exciting ride, .....................Our best wishes go with you, Dr. Croson.
The Department held its first Business Analytics Symposium in January 2016 as part of the College of Business 50th anniversary celebration hosted jointly with the Department of Economics. Attended by industry, faculty, and students, it was a great time to learn, network and share.

The keynote speaker was Kimberly Nevala, Director of Business Strategies, SAS Best Practices, Advisory Business Solution Manager at SAS. She presented the future directions of analytics and its usefulness in industry.

A guest panel featured Matthew Soloman from AT&T, Jessica Thorud from Sabre, Pooja Dewan from BNSH, and Sashi Bengala from Baylor, Scott & White. Dr. Prater moderated the discussion on the successful application of analytics in industry.

Students were able to present analytics class projects and network with symposium attendees.

We want to extend a special thanks to Dr. Nerur for pulling this event together. He worked with our SAS sponsor to identify our keynote speaker. In addition, he coordinated the panel attendees and consulted with the MSBA Advisory Board to make this symposium a successful event.
Distinguished Speakers

**October 2015**  
Dr. Diana Wu  
Associate Professor of Decision Sciences and Supply Chain Management Department School of Business, University of Kansas  
Topic: Power and Fairness

**February 2016**  
Dr. Pengyuan Wang  
Research Scientist Advertising, Marketing, and Targeting Advertising & Marketing, Yahoo Labs  
Topic: Large Scale Causal Inference for Digital Advertising: How do We Measure Digital Ad Effectiveness Fairly (Causally)?

**April 2016**  
Dr. Tracy Xiao Liu  
Associate Professor School of Economics and Management, Tsinghua University  
Topic: Group Identity and Cooperation in Infinitely Repeated Games

Dr. Lakshminarayan Choudur  
Principal Research Scientist in the Big Data Advanced Research Center at HP Software.  
Topic: Frontiers in Big Data Analytics: Opportunities, Case Studies, and Challenges

**May 2016**  
Dr. Daniel Chen  
Associate Professor of Information Systems and Supply Chain Management, Texas Christian University  
Topic: From Big Data Analytics to Big Supply Chain Impacts: An Integrated Model

New Initiatives

ISOM remains the epicenter of UTA’s participation in the SAP University Alliances. UTA has qualified five undergraduate courses and eight graduate courses for the software publisher’s SAP Student Recognition Award. Students can earn the Award by successfully completing three approved courses with hands-on SAP content. Many marquee employers in the DFW area actively recruit students with classroom experience in SAP’s enterprise resource planning system.

Student Organizations

UTA’s APICS student chapter is now in its third year of activity after being re-chartered in 2013. The chapter sponsors monthly membership meetings, special educational presentations, and tours of manufacturing and distribution facilities. The chapter’s mission is to facilitate learning outside the classroom and provide networking opportunities with current and future industry leaders.

APICS is The Premier Professional Association for Supply Chain Management, and is in the process of being re-chartered with that name by the Office of Student Organizations. Please do not refer to the American Production and Inventory Control Society, which is a name that APICS abandoned back in the 1990’s. The organization’s web site is [http://www.apics.org/](http://www.apics.org/).

UTA’s Association for Information Technology Professionals (AITP) student chapter experienced significant growth in the 2015-2016 academic year. AITP is a career-development group that focuses on information technology education. The organization promotes learning, sharing, and networking and can be a great asset for those in the IT field. We anticipate an active 2016-2017 academic year and invite you to join us. The organization’s web site is [http://www.aitp.org/](http://www.aitp.org/).
Retirements

A bounce house, a picnic spread, music, colleagues, friends, and family. That was the scene for an outdoor retirement celebration on the College of Business deck on April 27. The weather was sunny with a little breeze; children were running around; and passersby looked on with curiosity. Could stodgy, old faculty have this much fun? The answer is a resounding yes. We gathered together to celebrate the retirements of Professor Dr. Craig Slinkman and Full Clinical Professor Dr. Grace Esimai.

Dr. Craig Slinkman, Professor, retired this spring. He came to UT Arlington in 1980 with a PhD in Quantitative Analysis from the University of Minnesota, an esteemed pioneering program in IS and MS that had many of the best statisticians in the world – among them Dennis Cook and David Hinkley – on the faculty at the time. He has taught at the undergraduate, masters, and doctoral levels. He is the only faculty member who has taught INSY, MASI, OPMA, and BSTAT courses. His research publications reflect the same breadth of interests dealing with topics including forecasting, expert systems, rural health care, information technology for hospitals, and agile vs. traditional systems development. Of late, you could always find him in a Hawaiian shirt, preparing for his life on the beach in Hawaii. He will be missed...Aloha.

Dr. Grace Esimai, Full Clinical Professor, retired in the fall of 2015. Dr. Esimai came to UTA in 1996 as a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Mathematics. In 1998, ISOM lured her from Mathematics to the Department of Information Systems and Management Sciences, where she served faithfully as a Lecturer, coordinator of the statistics lab and, most recently, as a Full Clinical Professor. She taught courses at both the graduate and undergraduate level. She was a mainstay of the China MBA cohort curriculum. During her nearly 18 years in ISOM, she received the Provost’s Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2002 and the College of Business’ Outstanding Lecturer Award in 2001. Her most recent publication was “Lean Six Sigma Reduces Medication Errors.” She is certified as both a Six Sigma black belt and a Toastmaster’s Competent Communicator.

Publications


Kurian, George presented a paper titled "The effect of stress on decision making in news vendor problem" at the DSI Annual Meeting 2015 in Seattle. It was co-authored by Kuldeep Singh.


Napier, Randy presented “Going Live with the University Alliances Curriculum: You Can Do This!” at the SAP Americas 2016 Academic Conference in San Diego, CA, February 17-18, 2016.

Napier, Randy and Singh, Kuldeep attended the SAP University Alliances 2016 Winter Workshop in Huntsville, Texas on January 4-7, 2016.

Prater, Edmund and former doctoral student Sherry Jackson had a publication awarded “best paper” by *Journal of Chinese Human Resource Management* for which Sherry will get an award at the Academy of Management meeting.

Singh, Kuldeep attended the North America SAP University Alliance Workshop in January 2016.


Zhang, Jie presented at the following conferences: Workshop on Health Information and Economics: 2015, INFORMS 2015, and the 49th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences 2016. She also discussed the paper “Online reviews as a measure of service quality” at the 14th Annual Big XII+ MIS Symposium, 2016.

Zhang, Jie presented a paper titled “A Comparative Analysis of Univariate Time Series Methods for Estimating and Forecasting Daily Spam in United States” at the 14th Annual Big XII+ MIS Research Symposium in Waco. It was co-authored by Dr. Gene Lee and Dr. Jingguo Wang.


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Alumni Update

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Home Address: ____________________________________________

Email:______________________________________________

Employer: ____________________________________________

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Employer’s Address: ____________________________________________

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