

## Chair's Message



Manish Agrawal

Welcome to another great year at the Information Systems and Decision Sciences (ISDS) department at the University of South Florida's Muma College of Business. There have been a number of developments in the department since the

last newsletter, including the integration of the Management program into the department. Another important development is that **Professor Balaji Padmanabhan** rotated out of the role of department chair at the end of the 2015-2016 academic year, after three years in the role. As chair, he built on the strengths of our academic programs, including aligning the Management Information Systems program with evolving industry trends. As a result of these efforts, the MIS program is now named the **Business Analytics and Information Systems (BAIS)** program. Professor Padmanabhan is now the director of the college's Center for Creativity and Analytics. **Professor Joni Jones** is now the associate chair of the department.

The department continues to focus on program improvements and student success efforts to ensure that our graduates are ready to meet the needs of the economy. In this regard, our academic directors have developed innovative concentrations in our programs. In the management program, we will start a concentration in human resources at both the graduate and undergraduate levels and a concentration in project management is in the works. In the BAIS program, concentrations in cybersecurity and healthcare business have been developed at the undergraduate level. The former MIS Society has been re-organized as the USF chapter of the Association for Information Systems, the professional association of BAIS academics. The result of these efforts is that our students are competing successfully for positions nationwide.

This newsletter features our regular columns on students, alumni, faculty, news and research. We are also starting the advisory board corner to help our industry advisory board communicate with our readers. In fact, our CIO breakfast this year became possible because of the active efforts of our industry advisory board. Among our current efforts is the development of the In alumni circle, including having a representative of the alumni circle on our industry advisory board. We count on our alumni in various ways, including spreading the word about our programs, informing us of internships, and providing guidance on industry trends. Please do not hesitate to reach out.

Cordially,  
 Manish Agrawal  
*Professor & Chair*  
*Information Systems and Decision Sciences*

## Advisory Board Corner



David Allen  
 CTO, Raymond James

“The ISDS industry advisory board is the department’s interface with local industry to ensure that the department’s curricula align with workplace expectations and prepare graduates for successful careers. The board currently has 18 members and meets twice a year to provide

valuable input to the department and identify areas of needed assistance. The membership represents key local industries to capture trends, needs and priorities of local, regional and national businesses. At the Fall 2016 meeting, it was my pleasure to be nominated as the ISDS industry advisory board’s liaison to the department for planning board meetings and assisting with implementation. I look forward to leveraging this newsletter to provide highlights on these interactions.”

-- David Allen

## Student Success

**Jack Gebhart**

Jack Gebhart

*Jack Gebhart is one of our graduating seniors. Below are a brief profile and tips that he has for fellow students.*

After being in the Marine Corps for six years, where he served as a network administrator and support specialist, Gebhart decided to pursue a higher education degree immediately after his contract finished. Being an individual who is passionate about computing and technology, and having previously worked in the information technology domain, he wanted to major in an IT related program. After researching his options, he found that Management Information Systems appealed to him more than any of computer science and computer engineering.

Gebhart grew up on a farm in Central Indiana, and originally started his MIS program at Indiana University before transferring to USF so that he could be with his wife, who took a job in Tampa. Interestingly, Gebhart chose USF over other schools in the Tampa Bay area because of the school's website.

**"Coming into this program, I have learned how to write business applications, how to manage a database, and how to do some advanced analytics ..."**  
**Jack plans to use the skills he has learned when he starts working at General Motors.**

"It seems funny to make a decision based on this, but I liked the [USF] website better," he says. "It has actually worked out so far for me".

Although he is experienced in IT network administration, Gebhart credits the MIS program for having helped him develop other marketable skills. "Coming into this program, I have learned how to write business applications, how to manage a database, and how to do some advanced analytics on that through business intelligence. Basically I learned a

whole new set of skills," he says. Further, he is grateful for the experiences gained through his internships at the department's practice center initiative. He worked on a Bank of America project where he performed sentiment analysis. Currently he is part of a team developing a C# application that interfaces with a legacy system for the Department of Veterans Affairs. This application when completed will make it easier for users to query the VA's databases. §

## Event Spotlight

**ISACA Student Case Competition**

ISACA has been a strong supporter of the department and our students. In the last couple of years, they have supported our undergraduate information security class through a case competition. This year, the competition included a write up and presentation judged by ISACA office bearers. Winners were awarded cash prizes sponsored by ISACA. These efforts by ISACA have helped information security become one of our most popular classes. We invite participation from other professional organizations to similarly add value to our other classes.

**Executive MS Business Analytics and Information Systems Program**

To meet the industry demand for technology professionals, we are launching a weekend offering of our MS program in Business Analytics and Information Systems. The program is designed for technology professionals looking to take on managerial challenges. This is an 18-month cohort based program, with the first cohort starting in August 2017. The launch event will be held downtown on the evening of March 30. Please inform anyone in your network for whom the program may be useful. More information is available at <http://www.usf.edu/business/graduate/masters/bais-weekend/>.

## Alumnus Feature

# Travis Armstrong

*Travis Armstrong is a recent graduate of the BAIS program and is currently a project engineer at Northrop Grumman.*

### *What are your responsibilities at your job?*

At my current job, I am on the engineering side of the house where I have projects to manage. As a project engineer, I make sure that all units working on the various facets of a design project are in sync with the overall design goal. In essence I work as a systems engineer. When there are changes in design from one unit, I need to articulate such changes to other units so that they can adjust their designs accordingly.

### *What do you see as some of the trends in the industry?*

Most businesses now are looking at ways to use every bit of information they can gather on their business, competitors, and customers to drive their outcomes. That can mean costs, efficiencies, revenues, or profit. So I think it's critically important for students in today's society to understand and know how to use technology to bridge business gaps.

### *What is your advice or recommendation for students?*

The first thing would be to work hard and persevere in your studies. Don't seek the easy way out, do your due diligence. Second, pursue internships while you are in school. While you are at your internships, work hard because you are interviewing the whole time and your employers are probably watching. Finally, when you are talking to potential employers, make sure you have a plan and that you can articulate what you are bringing to the table. §

## Event Spotlight

# CIO Breakfast



Anil Cheriyan  
CIO, Suntrust

**Anil Cheriyan**, Chief Information Officer of Suntrust Bank, will be the keynote speaker at the 2017 “Breakfast with a CIO” event organized by the ISDS department. He will be discussing ‘Digital Transformation for Competitive Advantage’. As CIO, he is responsible for the unit that provides the company’s overall technology, operations and information-related support.

The CIO breakfast is the department’s annual development event and the local technology industry, alumni and well-wishers have generously supported the event in the past. We look forward to your continued support this year as well. More details will follow, or for more information, please contact **Anna Bahvala** at [bahvala@usf.edu](mailto:bahvala@usf.edu). We look forward to your participation. As in prior years, the breakfast event will be held at the USF CAMLS facility in Downtown Tampa. The date is Monday, May 15, 2017.

## Event Spotlight

# Jabil Hackathon



In January, Jabil organized a day-long hackathon that attracted over 20 competitors. Competitors joined teams with Jabil staff and worked for 12 hours to build chat bots to automate manufacturing processes. The winning team won \$1,000 for their “manufacturing manager,” which learned general questions and answers for use on a production line.

## Faculty Focus

## Gert-Jen de Vreede



*In July 2015, Gert-Jan de Vreede joined the ISDS department as a tenured professor. Here is a brief profile:*

According to Professor Gert-Jan de Vreede, the people and the entrepreneurial spirit of the department are some of the things that attracted him

into joining the ISDS department at USF. In particular, he likes that the environment is one where people are hungry and eager to try new things - ideas, programs, and methodologies - rather than one where people are quick to say “no”.

De Vreede’s research focuses on understanding what makes people more productive when they work together. He has studied collaboration in small groups of between 3 to 6 individuals and has recently began to examine collaboration in crowds. As part of his research in collaboration, he co-developed a pattern language called “thinkLets”. ThinkLets can be used to produce a predictable pattern of interactions among people collaborating or working together towards a defined goal. Its value is in helping to design and deploy processes for high-value recurring collaborative tasks, and to design these processes such that practitioners can execute them successfully without the intervention of professional facilitators.

De Vreede teaches project management in the graduate program and a course on writing and research in the DBA program. He is also in charge of the independent study and practicum for the cybersecurity graduate program in the Information Assurance concentration.

His advice to students is to not only focus on their GPA but also to explore different topics, especially ones that make them versatile. Further, students should learn from their experiences, and should not be afraid to fail or make mistakes. “One thing that students don’t realize is that the classroom, and the learning environment as a whole, is one of the last places that they will ever be

in where they can actually make mistakes, learn from it, and get away with it,” he says. “When you are in a job, failures may have consequences!”

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For PhD students, he suggests that they start working towards their tenure as soon as they begin the doctoral program. “Remember that in academia, you have to know how to sell,” he adds. “At any point in time, whatever you are doing, you are selling something. You are selling your papers to reviewers and publishers; you are selling your grant proposals to someone who controls the funds and you want them to say ‘yes’. So, don’t ask ‘Will you fund this?’ Rather, ask: ‘How do you want me to change this, so that you will fund me?’” §

## Faculty Achievements

## Best Paper Awards

December is an active season for academic conferences and several department faculty won best paper awards at the leading workshops and conferences.

**Professor Kaushik Dutta** and his co-authors Shalinda Adikari and Jungpil Hahn won best paper award at **Workshop on Information Technology and Systems (WITS) 2016** for their study, “Temporal Feature Grouping Based Campaign Optimization in Real-time Bidding Digital Advertising.”

**Professor Balaji Padmanabhan** and his collaborators (including **Zachary Kazanski**, an MS BAIS student) won the best prototype award at **WITS 2016** for their study, “Predicting the Winner of a NBA Game in Real-Time: A Data Snapshot Approach.”

**Professor Anol Bhattacharjee** and co-authors won best paper award at **Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences 2017** for the study, “The More the Merrier? The Effects of Community Feedback on Idea Quality in Innovation Contests.”

## Research Spotlight

# Shivendu Shivendu



*Research conducted by Professor Shivendu Shivendu and his coauthor was recently accepted for publication in Information Systems Research (ISR), one of the premier MIS journals. Below is a summary of the research.*

Analytics and big data technology have enabled targeted couponing for online auctions. There is some evidence to suggest that online auction platforms are starting to offer coupons. For example, eBay provides a third-party hosted couponing solution through MyStoreRewards “to offer cash back and coupons to buyers.” A key difference in impact of couponing in retail and auction context is that while in the retail context, couponing does not create any externalities on consumers who do not receive the coupon, in the auction context couponing creates negative externalities. While there is rich literature on the role of targeted couponing in the retail context, there is scant research on the implications of targeted couponing in the context of online auctions, and our research seeks to bridge this gap.

One novel result in the context of couponing in auction setting is that, it can be optimal to target the low-valuation bidder even when he always enters the auction. Another interesting finding is that, in the context of online auctions it can be optimal for the seller to issue targeted coupons to the high-valuation bidder. Our novel findings can be understood in the context of the two key forces driving couponing in auctions: (i) the value extraction role of coupons, and (ii) the influence of coupons on the entry probability of the bidders. §

## Faculty Achievements

# Grant Awards

Department faculty won several competitive grant awards that aim to transform teaching and entrepreneurship in the local community. **Professor Kaushik Dutta** is part of a team that won an **NSF i-Corps entrepreneurship training award** for “Commercialization of a GPU-Based Data Management System Software.” The award will allow Professor Dutta and his team to explore the market for the technology and to train one graduate student in market assessment for the technology.

**Professor Shivendu** is part of the team that won a **Department of Labor TechHire grant**. The USF team’s effort is focused on training and placing cohorts of students who meet the program benchmarks. The program is set to launch this summer. The team is inviting applications.

## Event Spotlight

# Muma Big Data Day



More than 250 high school seniors from eight high schools in the area came to spend the day learning about business analytics, professional opportunities in the area, and academic programs available to help them start careers in business analytics and information systems. Pictures from the event can be found on the ISDS Facebook page.

We plan to organize this event twice a year – once in the fall and once in the spring. KForce has kindly agreed to sponsor the event for the next 3 years as the “**KForce BAIS days at Muma.**”

The next event will be held on May 12. We welcome schools to participate.

## Connect With Us

### AIS Chapter

The MIS Society has historically served as the student organization for the BAIS major. This year, the society morphed into the USF student chapter of the Association for Information Systems, the professional society of the information systems profession. This new structure provides more direct links to our students with activities at sister chapters, such as the chapter at the University of Florida. To learn more about the chapter, officers and meeting schedules, please visit their page at

<https://orgsync.com/86981/chapter>

### Alumni Circle

If you are an alum and would like to enhance your professional and personal network, participate in educational lectures and provide input to the ISDS Department, we invite you to join the ISDS Alumni Circle.

Members of the circle are at all levels of their careers and are making their mark in many parts of the business analytics and information systems industry. This is your opportunity to reconnect with other alumni, and attend networking and social events that bring alumni together with leading industry and academic experts.

To join, please e-mail **Anna Bahvala** at [bahvala@usf.edu](mailto:bahvala@usf.edu), especially if you are located in the Tampa Bay area.

Remember us for all your hiring needs. You can forward relevant open positions within your company directly to Anna.

<http://www.usf.edu/business/departments/isds/>

**Muma College of Business 4202 E. Fowler Ave., BSN 3403, Tampa, FL 33620**

**Contact [bahvala@usf.edu](mailto:bahvala@usf.edu) (813) 974-5524**

#### WEBSITE REFRESH

The department website has been refreshed to better reflect the array of activities in the department. The changes include a **student resources page**, highlights of our **research activities**, **student placement efforts**, and a link for well-wishers to support us directly from our website.



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