New Analytics Certificate
Meet Our New Analytics Faculty
Summer Analytics Workshop

Pontikes Center Newsletter
Analytics in the SIU College of Business
Director’s Message

The spring 2019 semester marks a milestone for analytics at the SIU College of Business. We’ve shifted from program development to program delivery. We’re finally out of the frantic pace that has characterized the past two years, and we can concentrate on all the other things that makes the Pontikes Center and the analytics program at SIU something very special! Great things are still happening, but at a slower, steadier pace. With that, we’re moving from a monthly Pontikes Newsletter to one in the spring, summer, and fall semesters with supplementary notes to the Advisory Board as needed.

I’d like to thank once again all of the board members who attended the board meeting in October. And I’d like to extend a special thanks to CME Group and to Jim Boudreault for hosting the meeting and arranging a very interesting visit to the trading floor.

New Certificate in Analytics for Managers

All the paperwork has been approved, and the new online graduate Analytics for Managers Certificate program is ready to go with the first classes starting in the fall semester 2019. The certificate has six courses covering all of the important areas of analytics that managers must know in order to make the most effective data-based decisions. These courses are: Foundation of Analytics, Information Systems, Data Science, Artificial Intelligence, Visualization, and the Analytics Capstone course. Students should be able to complete the certificate program in just one year.

Here’s the catalog description of the certificate:

Everyone at every level in every organization needs to make better, faster decisions. The amount of data that must be considered is overwhelming in its massive volume, its high velocity, its vast variety, and its questionable veracity. Analytics is a technical tool that can be used to dig through all this data to find what it’s telling us. This graduate certificate program allows practicing executives, managers, and those on the managerial track to understand their organization in terms of analytics, to make the best use of their organization’s analytics function, and to apply analytical models back into their organization. This is not a deeply technical program since few managers will need the highly technical skills of data scientists. But rather this is a program that will introduce managers to the latest advances in analytics and artificial intelligence so they can make more efficient and effective data-based decisions.

New Analytics Majors in Process

Two new majors are working their way through the approval process. The undergraduate Business Analytics major has been approved at the College of Business and is in the hands of university
administrators for final approval. This undergraduate major is very different from Business Analytics majors found at other universities. It is much less technical and data-science focused. Instead, it gives graduates a good understanding of both the managerial and the technical sides of analytics. Our graduates will not go directly into data science jobs, but will be perfectly positioned to use their business knowledge and data science knowledge to take full advantage of their organization’s analytics function for effective and efficient data-based decision making.

Students will take the business core courses for a great foundation in business. They will have an education in database management and project management. Students will be able to connect business and analytics through courses in business analysis and business intelligence. Analytics courses include Data Science I and II, Artificial Intelligence, and Information Visualization. All of this is topped with a course in the Ethics of Analytics.

We expect the Undergraduate Major in Business Analytics to go live in fall 2020.

The graduate Masters in Strategic Analytics major is still working its way through the College of Business for approval. It has been approved by the Masters Program Committee and is currently under consideration by the entire faculty. This major blends a strong foundation in business with the analytics every manager needs to make effective tactical and strategic decisions. The business foundation includes courses in accounting, management, marketing, and finance, and will be expanded to other fields in the future. The analytics component has courses in Management of Information Systems, Database Design, Data Science, Artificial Intelligence, Data Visualization, and field-specific analytics courses that match student interests.

If all goes well, the Graduate Major in Strategic Analytics will go live in fall 2019.

**Academic Update**

The first cohort of the online MBA Analytics for Managers concentration will graduate in May 2019. To recap, this concentration has all the components of the online MBA with the addition of courses in Data Science, Artificial Intelligence, Data Visualization, and the analytics capstone course.

The second cohort of online MBA Analytics for Managers has arrived and is three times larger than the first cohort. They completed the Data Science course and are excited to pursue the remaining courses in the program.

**Analytics Graphics Contest**

We have been planning a contest to highlight the “artwork of analytics,” this year. Each artist would produce three digital works of art that would feature prominently on the Pontikes Center website, various video displays around campus, and as many other places as we could put it. The winner will receive a cash prize of $1000 and a $500 cash prize will be awarded to the runner-up.

http://business.siu.edu/academics/pontikes
We are still attempting to launch the contest this semester despite current constraints and setbacks in our university administrative processes. Failing that, we will definitely be ready to accomplish this task by fall 2019 should we need to delay for any reason.

**New Analytics Faculty**

The College of Business welcomes three new assistant professors for the fall 2019 semester. These faculty members are all experienced in analytics and will teach ½ analytics classes and ½ classes in their respective departments. What’s truly amazing is all of these new faculty members were invited to their respective discipline’s doctoral consortiums. This is a high honor for a PhD student. *Please welcome:*

**Tyson Van Alfen, Finance, University of Kentucky**

Tyson’s research focuses on analytics, reputation, managerial myopia, and financial analysis. He presented papers at the Financial Management Association Doctoral Student Consortium and has considerable analytics teaching experience. He will defend his dissertation in Spring 2019.

“Vast amounts of data are being continuously created, and we are fortunate enough to live in a truly exciting time in which we have the tools necessary for its analysis. Whether you are a CEO forecasting cash flows, a meteorologist tracking a hurricane, or a student picking a restaurant, data and its analysis are crucial to making good decisions. We can sift through data heaps, give order to unstructured information, and use advanced computing to learn from inputs and guide the decision making process. I thoroughly enjoy utilizing many of these methods in my research, and I am looking forward to assisting other Salukis in implementing them as well.”
Dr. Omid Kamran-Disfani, Marketing, University of Missouri

Omid’s research focuses on marketing and consumer analytics and marketing strategy. He has several papers published in top journals and papers in top marketing conferences. He was invited to the American Marketing Society Doctoral Consortium and has real-world experience in analytics.

“I am very excited to be joining SIU, where I hope to continue my current projects and work on new collaborative research with faculty, the business community and students. To me, making sense of data and utilizing analytics to improve managerial decision making in an uncertain world is not just an important part of my academic career, it is also something that excites me tremendously. Analytics uncovers fascinating insights by letting data speak!”

Md. Shariful Islam, Accounting, Louisiana Tech University

Shariful’s research focuses on big data analytics specifically in accounting and he has written journal articles and conference proceedings in analytics, cybersecurity, and IT auditing. He was invited to the International Conference for Information Systems (ICIS) 2018 doctoral consortium. He’ll defend his dissertation in Spring 2019.

“I actually believe (big) data analytics has potentials to fundamentally change many aspects of businesses. It makes possible to gain much better insights from many sources of data that remained underutilized few years back. Further, (big) data analytics is the 21st century’s new skill requirement for students. The job markets for the data analytics are very strong now, with IBM predicting demands for data scientists will increase 28% by 2020.”

Summer Analytics Workshop

We’re in the early planning stages of a Pontikes Center Summer Analytics Workshop. This workshop will include analytics faculty from Advisory Board companies and faculty from SIU’s College of Business to share ideas and the state of the art of analytics in the real world. This meeting will be somewhat less formal than our usual board meetings. Summer is a great time to

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reflect on the past academic year and to prepare for the next. In a field as fast-moving as analytics we need to be sure that our students are prepared as possible for what they will be facing when they graduate. It’s also a great time to let the member companies know about the cutting-edge research our faculty are involved in to see how that research can be applied in business.

We’ll introduce new faculty members and new board members and have good discussions to let everyone know what we’ve been doing and plan what we will be doing in the next academic year. It’s a great way to bring business and academics together and talk about analytics.

The dates of the workshop are yet to be determined. For planning purposes, it will most likely be in Chicago in early July 2019.

**Pontikes Center Booth**

We can have the best analytics programs in the world (and we think we do!), but if we can’t get the word out it won’t do anyone any good. To help spread the word about the Pontikes Center and analytics at the SIU College of Business, we’re getting a custom booth that can be used at student recruiting events, science fairs, and many other places.

Jackie Ritter is a Dean's Advisory Board member and Design Manager at Taylor Studios. Through her, Taylor Studios is donating the graphic design work that will be applied to a custom tradeshow booth that will be dynamic, attention getting, and informative. This booth will set us apart from the crowd and will be an outstanding recruiting tool for new undergraduate and graduate analytics students.