



FARMER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS  
*Department of Information Systems  
and Analytics*

# ISA NEWSLETTER

Summer 2025 / Vol 14

## A Letter from the Chair



Hey Everyone,  
Another year has flown by. As usual, ISA continues to move the needle and help the FSB embrace and leverage some of the same rapidly emerging and disruptive technologies that your organizations are figuring out how best to leverage. At the top of the list is Artificial Intelligence of course. ISA faculty helped form and will lead the way for a divisional AI strategy. The goal is for every FSB student to graduate AI aware and capable of contributing to their future company's efforts. ...more on pages 2 & 4.

As I enter my 15<sup>th</sup> year as chair, I realize how lucky I have been to have the opportunity to lead such a dedicated and capable group of faculty. I take great pride in all that they have accomplished along the way. They did all the great work, I just removed roadblocks and helped clear their paths to the best of my ability.

The time has come to turn over the reigns. This will be my final year as chair and I am sure I will miss it. We have plenty of both experienced and rising leaders in the group and I have no doubt that one will step forward to lead.

I thank you all for your involvement and contributions over the last 15 years. I've built lasting relationships with many of you and I look forward to those continuing. My plan is to go back to teaching for a bit and help our new chair off to a solid start. The department will still need strong alumni and industry partners' support for success.

Thanks for all you have done and will do.  
Skip

## 2024/25 Another Interesting Year

Never a dull moment in ISA and Miami as a whole. This year did not let us down. We finally got a union contract in place in the spring and are already onto negotiating the next one. Overall, the bargaining agreement did not change things much. Faculty finally got well deserved salary increases, but not much else is significantly different.

Of much bigger impact was Ohio Senate Bill One which became law this summer. If you are not familiar with it, google it or ask GenAI to summarize it. The bill necessitates in some significant changes in higher education in Ohio.

ISA had another solid year. Faculty from ISA received over a dozen separate forms of individual recognition in the last year. Our curriculum continued to advance and we have plenty of future changes in the works. ISA faculty also landed close to \$2,000,000 in external funding. Much of this is described in a little more detail on the following pages.

Our strategic partnerships with EY and US Bank continued having large impacts. Both provide key resources at perfect times to help us innovate.

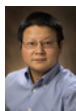
We graduated 34 from the MSBA this spring and awarded 87 BA, 21 IS and 14 Cyber undergraduate degrees this year. It was a tough recruiting year caused by the uncertain economy in combination with entry level jobs that are being replaced by generative AI. However, ISA starting salaries overall remained at the top of the division.

Overall, enrollments remain solid. We ended the spring semester with 728 students declared in ISA programs compared to 702 in May 2024. Heading into the fall we have 652 compared to 674 this time last year. Both our Business Analytics and Cybersecurity Management minors grew by 10% year to year. The IS minor was unchanged. Growing minors was a focus for the year, so some success. This year's focus will be on growing the ISCM major

Thank you to all who participated in any way to another successful year. I enjoyed reconnecting to those who came to campus. We simply cannot do what we do without the help and support of our alumni and industry partners.

Department of Information Systems and Analytics  
800 E High Street, FSB 3095  
Oxford, OH 45056  
513 529-4835

## Dr. Jay Shan named inaugural Director of AI Initiatives



The FSB established a leadership role and named Jay Shan as the inaugural Director of Artificial Intelligence Initiatives. The position reflects the school's strategic commitment to preparing students and faculty for a rapidly changing business environment shaped by AI technologies. The FSB seeks to become a regional leader in responsible, applied AI in business.

The role brings together AI work in progress across the division, aligning efforts in curriculum, faculty support, research, and external engagement. Jay will oversee school-wide coordination of AI curriculum development, co-curricular programming, and both internal and external research collaborations including partnerships with industry leaders.

The AI initiative builds on ISA momentum underway including hosting AI-focused events, seminars and a speaker series since 2019. recently faculty across departments now integrate AI tools into coursework and student services, ranging from instructional chat bots to content creation workshops and applied learning in capstone projects.

With the formal launch of the initiative, the school is now planning core elements of its multi-year AI strategy. Early priorities include an ISA department's proposal for an AI minor and certificate program, the launch of a faculty and staff training series focused on AI literacy, and the planning of FSB's inaugural AI Case Competition. The FSB is also actively pursuing grant funding to support faculty-led course redesigns, research initiatives, and opportunities for industry engagement.

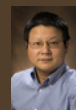
## Cybersecurity Management Grows

Our Information Systems and Cybersecurity Management Major graduated its largest class of Cyber concentration students to date this spring. Fourteen students graduated from the concentration this year. The program prepares them to help bridge the gap between the technology group and the business units in all things Cyber. The program's management, especially risk management, focus serves our students well.



Joseph Nwankpa, Initiative Director, has expanded programming and developed summer research and curriculum grant programs to infuse Cyber awareness across the division.

## ISA Faculty Secure \$1.5 Million Grant to Revolutionize Workplace Safety



ISA faculty members, Fadel M. Megahed, Arthur Carvalho, and Jay Shan, in collaboration with Dr. Mohammad Mayyas of the Department of Engineering Technology, were awarded nearly \$1.5 million from the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation, (BWC). This is the largest external research grant in FSB history. The funding comes from the BWC's Workforce Safety Innovation Center, which invests in research collaborations between higher education and industry to develop cutting-edge technology to reduce the frequency and severity of workplace injuries.

The grant funds a groundbreaking initiative to address shortcomings of traditional safety training in manufacturing. Conventional safety training is often limited to a one-size-fits-all approach, which fails to adapt to evolving hazards or individual worker needs, leaving Ohio's manufacturing workers vulnerable to preventable injuries. The grant project will transform this model by using Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), and Augmented Reality (AR) to deliver personalized, adaptive, and immersive training.

The project includes an AI-powered VR platform that creates gamified training scenarios accessible on any web browser and an AR system that provides real-time safety coaching by overlaying guidance directly onto workplace equipment. The solution will especially benefit small and medium-sized companies that lack dedicated safety professionals. This grant demonstrates the ISA department's leadership in applying advanced analytics and technology to create innovative solutions with a profound impact on our communities and economy.

## MS in Business Analytics Grows to Two Cohorts This Fall

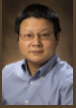


Our MS in Business Analytics continues to grow. Under the leadership of Dr. Allison Jones Farmer & Dennis Ferguson, the program graduated 34 students this spring and has over 55 incoming students in the fall. We will be splitting the group into two cohorts, which was the plan all along for the program. The MSBA is still predominantly populated by 3 plus 1 Miami students, also as originally intended. We are starting to see it help recruit solid undergrads across campus enticed by the possibility of graduating in four years with a dual degree (BS/MS).



# Faculty & Staff News

## Dr. Jay Shan Promoted to Associate Professor



Jay joined us in 2018 from the University of Cincinnati. He received his Ph.D. in Information Systems from Penn State University in 2011. Jay is an excellent teacher and researcher and works at the intersection of Information Systems and Analytics. Most recently his focus has been in Artificial Intelligence.

## Dr. Bob Leonard Promoted to Associate Teaching Professor



Bob began as a full-time visiting faculty member in Analytics in fall 2015. He became an Assistant Teaching Professor in fall 2019. He regularly teaches both of our core Analytics classes and has also taught ISA 365, Design of Experiments.

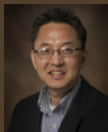
## Dr. Maria Weese Named FSB Research Fellow

The FSB Research Fellows Program recognizes research-active Associate Professors and provides them with extra time to continue to advance their research. This is solid recognition of her contributions.



## Dr. Gabe Lee Continues as Senior Editor of Decision Support Systems

Gabe was recently renewed for a second term as the Senior Editor of *Decision Support Systems*. DSS is a very respected journal in the Information Systems Discipline. This role attests to Gabe's ability and commitment as a scholar.



## Dr. Chad Anderson Recognized by the Association for Information Systems



Chad was named an AIS Distinguished Professor earlier this year. This recognition acknowledges long-term commitment and involvement to the association. He has reviewed for and published in both of the association's major journals, is active in both of their major conferences and has been a member for 18 years.

## Dr. Jeff Merhout Leads Students to a Best Paper Award

Three of Jeff's students in IT Governance, Audit, Security and Risk Management course submitted an interesting project in spring 2024 on medical IOT devices. Jeff mentored them to a conference paper submission that received a best student paper award at the Midwest AIS Conference in the spring. This is the second year in a row that Jeff and students co-authored a paper for the conference. [press release link](#)



## ISA Faculty Clean Up at the Annual FSB Awards Ceremony

I am incredibly proud of our faculty's commitment to and excellence in both scholarship and teaching. Never more so than at this spring's FSB recognition ceremony. ISA faculty received four awards for the first time ever. The faculty and awards are listed below.

**Fadel Megahed** - Richard K. Smucker Teaching Excellence Award

**Joseph Nwankpa** - Senior Faculty Award for Research Excellence

**Jay Shan** - David W. Rosenthal Case Method Teaching Award

**Rayna Xu** - Jack & Pat Gifford Junior Faculty Teaching Innovation Award



## Dr. Doug Havelka Retires

Doug retired after 25 years in ISA. He has been a valuable member of the department and will be missed. I thank him for his contributions over the years. Congratulate and thank him for his service if you get the opportunity.



## Two ISA Faculty Receive Named Professorships

Dr. Fadel Megahed and Dr. Joseph Nwankpa were recognized for their academic contributions with named Professorships. Fadel is now a **Raymond E. Glos Professor in Business** and Joseph has been named an **Endres Associate Professor**. Both are outstanding researchers and well deserving of this recognition. Our number of named faculty ISA is now 5 Including:



**Arthur Carvalho** - Dinesh & Ila Paliwal Innovation Chair

**Allison Jones-Farmer** - Van Andel Prof. of Business Analytics.

**Gabe Lee** - C. Michael Armstrong Business Chair

# Other News & a Look Ahead

## ISA 406 Develops Kofenya's New Website



Gabe Lee's ISA 406 students recently completed a client-based IT project using a hybrid project management methodology. The project involved designing and developing a new website for Kofenya Coffee, a local coffee shop in Oxford that some of you likely remember fondly. One of the student teams, Digital Drip—comprising five Information Systems and Analytics (ISA) students and one Software Engineering (SE) student—delivered a final product that the business owner was highly satisfied with. As a result, Kofenya Coffee adopted the student work as the company's website, now live at: <https://www.kofenyacoffee.com/digital-drip>

## ISA 387 Getting a Refresh

The Designing Business Systems Course required in the ISCM major is being updated to better align with how IS work is now done. The course was redesigned a while ago to add major exposure to Agile in addition to Waterfall methodologies as an approach to designing and implementing systems. Over time, it has evolved to a blended approach just like most organizations.



This fall, Skip Benamati will be adding more scaled agile and blended approaches as well as instilling a product focus to developing IT artifacts for both internal and external customers. The role of generative AI in the process will also be added. The goal is to better prepare students to contribute in the rapidly changing IS landscape. The redesign is based on information gathered from extensive visits to four of our ISA advisory board while Skip was on a sabbatical last fall.

## Allison Jones Farmer Acting Chair Last Fall

While Skip was on sabbatical in the fall, Allison Jones-Farmer stepped in as Acting Chair. It was trial by fire for her, but she did an excellent job. Her leadership was much appreciated.



## Six New ISA Faculty Starting in the Fall

Six new visiting faculty members will join us in the fall. Each is listed below along with the courses they will teach

**Maliha Amal** - Database & Python Programming.

**Dr. Lauren Davidson** - Business Statistics

**Laien He** - Principles of Analytics

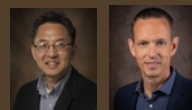
**Dr. Rachelle Morissette** - Computational Thinking & IT in the Intelligent Enterprise

**Ralph Stikeleather** - Bus. Stats & Principles of Analytics

**YoungHo Yoon** - Computational Thinking

## New Prereq for ISA 235 Will Replace CSE 148

In May, the division approved an ISA strategy to replace CSE 148 as the prereq to 'the required core IS course for all FSB students. The new course will be much more business in its focus but still include a strenuous introduction to Excel needed by all in the FSB. We will also replace the SQL content in 148 with a 3-4 week dive into visualization through both Excel and PowerBI. AI and open source tutorials and platforms will be integrated throughout as a way to learn these tools. Our hope is that we instill confidence in FSB students that they do not need to take a course to learn a new tool as that is likely how they will operate after graduation.



Gabe Lee and Chad Anderson will lead the project which will kick off this fall. The goal is to pilot the course spring 2027 with a full launch in fall 2027 to all FSB students. This will also necessitate a rethink of the content of ISA 235 as some of the IT in business content will move to the new prereq to help motivate students with more context.

## AI Minor and Undergraduate Certificate Vision



As discussed on Page 2, ISA is currently designing a nine credit hour credential in Artificial Intelligence open to all FSB students. The credential will include ISA 235 which now has a major AI thread that is pulled through the course. It will also include a newly designed Generative AI in Business course being developed by Arthur Carvalho. The course will cover practical applications of Gen AI as well as prompt/context engineering and the basics of large language models. It will also include potential risks and societal issues of AI and have only 235 as a prereq. The final course will be a discipline specific course covering applications of AI in the various business disciplines. For example, applications of AI in Accounting or AI in Marketing. The goal is to equip students to evaluate and apply Gen AI to drive innovation and solve real-world business problems.

The minor will be a bit more technical and require our Python Programming and Big Data Management courses in addition to the certificate. The proposals are just beginning through the approval process, but we hope to have the new course, as well as both the certificate for all FSB students, and the minor ready to go for spring semester.

# ISA Best of Graduates 2024-2025



## ISA Scholarship Recipients 2024-2025



## Interested in Helping the Cause?

We have highly regarded and successful programs. Continuing to evolve ISA programs and deliver both the quality and quantity of our pipeline of ISA students takes resources well beyond our annual allocation of University Funding. Our external funding has become an essential lifeline to success. We are dependent on external funding to support:

- Faculty development and training on emerging tools and techniques in IS, Cybersecurity, and Analytics
- Curriculum and course development efforts
- Cloud Resources, Software, and Hardware necessary for all of our ventures
- Research Support to keep in touch with evolving business processes
- Student-focused events to attract and retain ISA as well as enhance the educational experience of ISA students

If you would like to contribute financially, copy and paste this URL into a browser, <http://bit.ly/44Sxwjj>, or use the QRcode below

If you prefer, you can mail your gift directly to me at the address below. Please make the check payable to Miami University and write Information Systems & Analytics on the memo line. Remember that no gift is too small. Every little bit helps. Thank you in advance for your support. If you have any questions please contact me directly at 513 529-4835 or [benamajh@miamioh.edu](mailto:benamajh@miamioh.edu).

Skip Benamati  
800 E High St; FSB 3095  
Oxford, OH 45056

