

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ANALYTICS  
CLASS OF 2020**

**STUDENT PROFILES**

Employer information sessions: September–January  
On-campus interviews: January–March  
Graduation date: May 3, 2020

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## **MSA CLASS OF 2020 DEMOGRAPHICS**

Number of students enrolled:	119
U.S. citizens or permanent residents:	89%
North Carolina residents:	64%
Number of countries of origin:	17
Prior states of residency:	23
Percent who are women:	45%
Average age / Median age:	26 / 24
Average number of years since undergraduate degree:	3
Graduating with academic honors as undergraduates:	70%
Average undergraduate grade point average:	3.66
Percent enrolled with a prior graduate degree:	15%
Previously employed full-time (3 or more years):	29%
Range in age:	21 – 50

## Shiraz Ahmed

Hometown: New York, NY  
Citizenship: USA  
Languages: English, Urdu, Farsi



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.A., *magna cum laude*, Political Science, 2018
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Known at home for asking many questions, Shiraz has always been curious about how things work and how conclusions are made. This curiosity and penchant for critical thinking drives him in both his professional and academic endeavors.

As an undergraduate student, Shiraz interned at the United Nations where he met distinguished ministers and ambassadors of various nations and learned the vital importance of conflict management. Later, during his work at the State Department, he was able to use his foreign language skills in Urdu to collect and analyze data on various energy projects, which enabled him to assist in a component of American Foreign Policy. In doing so, he helped the US expand its relations with Pakistan.

Shiraz first got interested in data analytics when, as a junior in college, he researched whether racial discrimination was more prevalent towards people of a darker skin tone. He was responsible for extracting data from the 2016 ANES Pilot Dataset and interpreting results for the general public by making meaningful conclusions in regard to skin color discrimination. Thus, he recognized how data can serve to dispel preconceived notions and stereotypes and sought to delve further in data analytics.

When not programming or analyzing data, Shiraz enjoys avidly reading about Islamic theology and principles of South Asian and Middle Eastern geopolitics. He also likes traveling, especially through Pakistan and the Middle East.

## Emily Ammons

Hometown: Shrewsbury, MA  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ State University of New York College at Cortland  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Mathematics; Biology, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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Emily realized how fascinating it can be to use data to help the community during an internship with Cortland Regional Medical Center while in college. She scrutinized background information on cancer patients to find insights to better serve those individuals and determine the best locations for potential cancer centers. Emily also examined the number of tests doctors ordered for their patients across specialties to highlight patterns and compare departments. Studying these figures over time allowed the hospital to locate any areas of over or under-testing.

Emily also honed her technical and communication skills while working in a conservation biology research laboratory during her undergraduate career. She was awarded a research grant through the Beta Beta Beta Biology Honor Society in her final year of college. Emily used this award to study the spatial correlation of native common reed, a grass, and its associated herbivores. As the nonnative subspecies of this grass is destructive to both wildlife and plant life in the United States, this research looked at the spatial distributions of the native grass stems and the insects sheltered inside. This study provided valuable baselines of how native common reed grows in the community and interacts with life around it. Conducting this study improved Emily's project management capabilities while presenting the findings sharpened her communication.

Emily is passionate about interpreting data to find solutions, patterns, and avenues to improve the community. While in New York, Emily enjoyed volunteering with Paws of CNY, Inc. Through this organization, she certified her dog as a therapy dog, and together they visited nursing homes because she is passionate about giving back. Emily also enjoys playing fetch with her three Labrador retrievers, laughing at *The Office* reruns, and contemplating her next big vacation.

## David Andexler

Hometown: Independence, OH  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Duquesne University  
B.S., Biology, minor in History, 2015
  - ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling
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From an early age, David capitalized on his innate analytical ability by applying it to the world around him. He was fascinated with dinosaurs, insects, and computers, spending most of his time learning all that he could about these subjects.

David graduated from Duquesne University, where he developed an extensive repertoire of technical skills and conceptual knowledge that aided his understanding of the biological sciences. At the same time, he became involved with several student organizations, including the Student Government Association, the Academic Council, and the Pittsburgh Student Government Association. These experiences provided him with an understanding of the processes behind working collaboratively with others and how to be an effective advocate for positive change.

After graduation, David pursued a career in telecommunications sales. This position brought together his technical knowledge and his desire to work with clients to advocate for tailored solutions, culminating in his promotion to manager. Moving from direct sales to a managerial position encouraged David to think about the importance of analyzing trends over time in customer churn, expected revenue, and impact of marketing strategies. Using this information, he helped develop and implement new marketing strategies to generate revenue, to promote repeat business, and to further capitalize upon existing small business opportunities.

David has a passion for analysis and for generating unique, actionable insights to help organizations obtain a competitive edge. He nurtures his curiosity by taking any available opportunity to learn a new subject or skill. On weekends, he spends his time listening to his favorite podcasts, following political discourse, and playing chess. He enjoys relaxing with his friends and his adopted cat, Jolie.

## Ryan Ankersen

Hometown: Mobile, AL  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Spring Hill College  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Actuarial Mathematics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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Ryan is the perfect combination of his highly analytical father and risk-taking mother. This has allowed him to assess the practicality of any situation while still being able to lean head-first into new challenges. During his undergraduate studies, Ryan was part of a team that pioneered his college's first TEDx event. The challenges of organizing this event showed him the incredible power of being surrounded by talented and hardworking team members. The desire for working in a collaborative environment became a driving factor in his decision to join the MSA program.

The summer following his junior year in college, Ryan accepted an internship in New Orleans where he conducted analytics on maritime traffic along the Mississippi River. Faced with a completely new challenge, he was pushed to learn how to build complex algorithms and manage large datasets. From teaching himself Python to presenting the findings of his analysis to senior members of his company, Ryan found one thing to be certain: he had discovered a passion for data science.

In his leisure time, Ryan enjoys any hobby that challenges his ability to learn. Whether it is understanding the intricacies of a computer motherboard or perfecting his father's pancake recipe, Ryan finds he is most entertained when overcoming the learning curve of a new challenge.

## Rivers Baker

Hometown: Greenville, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
Master of Microbial Biotechnology, 2019
- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *cum laude*, Animal Science, 2012

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Rivers is best known for her perseverance, her ability to communicate effectively across disciplines, and her love of learning. Teaching high-school science in an under-resourced school in Oakland, CA, Rivers enthusiastically utilized her interest in education with her strengths in interpersonal communication and collaboration. It was there that she integrated data and assessment analysis to strategically plan for student achievement.

From devoting her time to improving urban education, to working as a research assistant at NC State's College of Veterinary Medicine, to assessing market potential as a Business Development Intern, Rivers has acquired a diverse skill set. Earning her Master of Microbial Biotechnology gave her practical experience working in the biotechnology industry. As a Business Development Intern, she quickly learned how to execute fundamental business analyst tasks and led a team of 7 internal experts through an accelerated product development plan. Rivers' interest in analytics was solidified when she discovered the impact data analytics has on finding actionable solutions and influencing business decisions. With a passion for analytics and interdisciplinary collaboration, Rivers strives to bridge the gap between business, science, and data analytics to find innovative solutions.

As a data analyst by day and animal-rescuer by night, Rivers enjoys rehabilitating wild turtles with the Turtle Rescue Team, volunteering with local animal rescues, and spending time with her little beagle, Olive. Her other hobbies include rock climbing with friends, singing, learning to speak Spanish, and exploring new cities.



## Robert Bayer

Hometown: Meadville, PA  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Edinboro University of Pennsylvania  
B.S., *cum laude*, Economics, 2017
- ▶ SAS Certified Advanced Programmer for SAS 9

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Robert's work ethic and efficient time management skills are the product of countless sleepless nights. While working midnight to 8 a.m. at a manufacturing facility and attending classes during the day, he was able to complete his degree in just four and a half years. Obtaining his undergraduate education while simultaneously advancing his career has provided Robert with 8 years of experience working in a mix of data analysis, manufacturing, and chemical research and development.

Process improvement is an area where Robert's diverse skill set has proven valuable. In his manufacturing role, he spearheaded a Lean Six Sigma project where his data analysis was able to improve yield metrics by 10% and provided a significant savings to cost and labor. After transitioning to his role in chemical research, Robert recognized an opportunity to streamline data collection, reporting, and visualization within his projects. He developed Excel templates and macros, which were widely adopted among his colleagues and created an opportunity for him to teach an advanced Excel class to his department.

Robert's work has led him to develop a passion for emerging technology and the products at its forefront. While working in chemical research, his contributions helped accelerate projects in personal electronics, solar energy, electric vehicles, and wind energy products driven by companies such as GE, Tesla, and Apple.

When Robert is not working, he tries to take advantage of the outdoors. His ideal weekend would consist of relaxing at backyard cookouts after a morning on the golf course. He also enjoys a few annual road trips south to relax on the Carolina beaches, as well as travelling north to spend time snowboarding in the mountains.



## Alison Berger

Hometown: Raleigh, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Wilmington  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Business Administration, 2018

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Alison always thrives in a competitive environment, pursuing opportunities that present her with new challenges. She uncovered her passion for data analytics after enrolling in an advanced marketing analytics and research course as an undergraduate. In the course, Alison conducted a research project on patient satisfaction in hospital settings. Using statistical tools and analysis, she was able to draw detailed insights and make hypothetical recommendations to management in the healthcare industry. She felt immense satisfaction after successfully using data to formulate and communicate ideas.

Joining the Consumer Insights and Measurement Analytics (CIMA) group at The Walt Disney Company as a Digital Analyst Professional Intern reinforced Alison's love of analytics. She provided support to the global marketing and sales teams through in-depth website analysis and reporting. Using analytical visualization tools, she generated actionable insights to enable decision-making in the Parks and Resorts division of the company. Alison's most notable project focused on the Star Wars Land opening at Walt Disney World. Working with multiple teams and developers, she prepared the analytics for the web pages and created ongoing reports to monitor web performance.

Alison credits her achievements to lessons learned as a cross-country and track athlete, embracing the concept that working together as a team contributes to both personal and team successes. She won a state championship as a member of a relay team and was individually recognized with outstanding running awards and a team captainship. Although sidelined from competitive running due to injuries, she still enjoys taking a run through town, greenways, and park trails. Alison also enjoys traveling to new places with friends, often embarking on adventurous activities like zip-lining and hiking as well as simply appreciating local points of interest.

## Marshall Bradley

Hometown: High Point, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Trinity College Dublin  
M.S., Economics
- ▶ University of South Carolina  
B.S.B.A., *magna cum laude*, International Business; Business Economics,  
minor in Spanish, 2017
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

From the time he was young, Marshall has held an insatiable thirst for knowledge, leading him down a path towards higher education. During his time at the University of South Carolina, he earned a Magellan Apprentice Grant, allowing him to perform economic research under leading scholars in South Carolina. Passionate about giving back to his community, Marshall spearheaded the International Business Ambassador Program during his senior year, leading a team of other ambassadors to volunteer at local high schools. The goal was to inspire students to attend college and become more engaged in international affairs.

Quick to seize new opportunities, Marshall studied abroad multiple times throughout his academic career: first in Vienna, Austria, where he immersed himself in an entirely new culture and fell in love with schnitzel, and secondly to Dublin, Ireland, to obtain his Master of Economics. Studying under some of Europe's best economists, Marshall's research culminated in a dissertation studying the effects of changes in the minimum wage on food insecurity across the United States. During this time, Marshall was introduced to the power of big data and the potential it has to drive change in the world. Subsequently, he decided to join the Institute for Advanced Analytics and enter a career in data analytics.

Professionally, Marshall enjoys learning about the latest economic theories and has experience in teaching others economics and statistics, among other subjects. In his spare time, you can find Marshall searching for the finest iced coffee, attending local events such as farmers' markets, and scouting for the area's best schnitzel.

## Price Burnett

Hometown: San Antonio, TX  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Texas A&M University  
B.B.A., *magna cum laude*, Supply Chain Management, minor in Economics, 2018
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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Price has always been a meticulous planner, taking an active role in organizing family trips from an early age. He frequently utilized technology to find restaurants that would satisfy both his family's foodie nature and budget by analyzing cost, number of reviews, keywords, photos, and ratings. His passions for organization and planning inspired him to pursue a degree in supply chain management with an economics minor.

As an undergraduate, Price excelled in three supply chain internships due to his perceptive nature, diligent work ethic, and ability to communicate his findings concisely with senior leadership. During these experiences, he found himself surrounded by numbers, figures, and benchmarks. While interning for a manufacturing plant, he extracted 16 months' worth of data from the company's replenishment software and determined the relationship between inventory levels, daily demand, and shipping lead times for component parts. This project exemplified the crucial role that mathematics play in storytelling, and he realized his desire to continue finding and explaining the critical narratives within datasets. Paired with his enjoyment for coursework in Python programming, statistics, and linear algebra, Price recognized that a career in analytics could perfectly combine his attention to detail with his passion for solving complex technical problems.

In his free time, Price likes to stay engaged with current events, following US politics while avoiding partisan bickering. He regularly reads news articles and nonfiction books about the subject while studying electoral maps in hopes of predicting future elections. Price is also an avid sports fan. He enthusiastically follows his hometown San Antonio Spurs and his beloved Texas A&M football team. However, his favorite sport is baseball, due to its complexity, tension, and reliance on statistical patterns.

## Jackson Cabell

Hometown: Chapel Hill, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.S., with High Distinction, Statistics and Analytics; Economics,  
minor in Spanish, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Advanced Programmer for SAS9  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

The youngest of three, Jackson has always been the chattiest of the bunch. In childhood scrapbooks, his mother described him as the “mayor of the neighborhood,” a title he earned due to countless hours spent organizing wiffle ball tournaments in the cul-de-sac. As he grew older, Jackson used his unwavering love for conversation to collaborate with and learn from his peers.

Jackson channeled this passion for storytelling through data analytics. He excelled within the classroom and eventually earned UNC’s Statistics department award. Eager to apply the methods he learned, he combined his enthusiasm for sports and statistics by joining UNC’s Varsity Baseball Data Analytics team, for which he helped create a catcher-framing report. In pursuit of more rigorous projects, Jackson completed a data analysis about bringing back the mid-range jump shot for the 2018 NBA Analytics Hackathon, in which his team placed in the top 10. They presented their findings to many NBA employees, including the King’s VP of Strategy and Analytics, Luke Bornn, and NBA TV Analyst, Doris Burke. Keen to explore another side of data science, Jackson joined MetLife as a Data Science Intern. Throughout the internship, he refined his analytical skills by automating data manipulation techniques in Python to streamline MetLife’s operational excellence.

While he considers himself a “numbers guy,” Jackson lives a well-rounded life and enjoys being around others. Whether he is playing pickup basketball, biking on local trails, or lifting weights, Jackson keeps his mind fresh every day through exercise and spending time with friends. Upon program completion, Jackson looks forward to working with others to solve business problems by creating stories with data.

## Ellie Caldwell

Hometown: Hendersonville, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Wake Forest University  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Mathematical Statistics, minor in Spanish, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

As a child and young adult, Ellie spent most of her time competing in volleyball, basketball, and softball. Being a team player and determined to be successful in competition shaped Ellie's resolute spirit from a young age. During her senior year at Wake Forest University, Ellie had the opportunity to serve as president of the Women's Club Volleyball team. She built on her attributes as a teammate and refined her leadership skills as the coordinator and coach of 25 team members.

Ellie's passion for sports coincides with her love for education. Growing up in a family of educators, Ellie understands the importance of showing students the value of an education and inspiring a passion for learning. She was able to apply her data analytics skills to an educational project during her senior year of college investigating the relationship between the socioeconomic status of students and their standardized test scores. Her results were considered by school officials to develop possible instructional solutions for struggling students. Ellie also served as a tutor in the Wake Forest Math Center where she guided her peers through introductory statistics and calculus courses, encouraging them to love the process of learning.

As a native of Western North Carolina, Ellie spends her free time hiking in the Blue Ridge Mountains and running along scenic trails. Her zeal for exploration extends past North Carolina as she enjoys discovering new cities and learning about new cultures. A six-week study abroad program sent Ellie to Buenos Aires, Argentina. This unique experience exposed Ellie to intriguing new customs as she traveled across the diverse landscape of Argentina from the Andes Mountains in Mendoza to the salt flats in Jujuy.

## Patrick Campbell

Hometown: Raleigh, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Elon University  
B.S.B.A., Finance; Accounting, 2011
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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Leveraging over seven years of experience in the financial services and analytics field, Patrick excels at navigating and communicating in complex landscapes. While attending Elon University, Patrick simultaneously double majored in accounting and finance while earning a varsity letter in football. These experiences provided the foundation for his multi-disciplinary and time management skill sets while fueling his competitive drive into the workforce.

Throughout his professional career, Patrick became attuned to the increasingly complex and diverse technical environment of the financial services industry. Starting his career with Credit Suisse and holding a leadership role in the 2013 Technical Analyst program, Patrick gained valuable IT experience while directly collaborating with multiple trade desks across the globe. He then parlayed this experience into a technical consulting role with SAS in the data management consulting group. Collaborating with clients, driving successful engagements, and working toward a common goal allowed him to move into the SAS Financial Services sales organization. As a pre-sales consultant in the Capital Markets group, Patrick helped account executives guide the technical roadmap for their clients. In his most recent role with SAS, Patrick was an Account Executive, responsible for a \$2.2 million book of business, fostering C-Level relationships and positioning analytical software solutions with six Fortune 500 buy-side capital markets firms.

Patrick has retained some of his hobbies from ten years of football and continues to lift weights, test new training methodologies, and develop his own fitness programming. When he is not studying or in the gym, Patrick is usually listening to a podcast over the grill, experimenting with new grilling styles and techniques, or reading up on historical nonfiction.



## Dominick Carbone

Hometown: Winston-Salem, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Valedictorian, Mathematics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

As an undergraduate student at NC State, Dominick craved applying math to real-world problems. To satisfy this craving, he moved to Wisconsin for a semester to work as an actuarial intern for Milliman, Inc. where he focused on health insurance pricing. His team immediately noticed the strength of his work ethic and technical skills and gave him ownership of the pricing model for a Fortune 500 company's Prescription Drug Plan. He customized the model to suit the client's needs, a role typically delegated to senior analysts. While he enjoyed the analytical aspects of actuarial work and had already passed three actuarial exams, he wanted to explore as many fields as possible, so he spent the next summer as a banking intern.

At Bank of America, Dominick worked on the consumer credit risk modeling team, which built a model to predict customer behavior using a host of techniques from a variety of disciplines. His specific project focused on data visualization to highlight the model's strengths and weaknesses. To excel as an intern, he learned R in his free time. Ultimately, the suite of tools he produced enabled the developers to rapidly understand the model's performance. He realized at Bank of America that data science enabled him to analyze a business problem, apply the math, and arrive at a novel solution. This realization piqued his interest in data science.

Dominick is a Park Scholar, NC State's full-ride scholarship program focused on service, leadership, scholarship, and character. When he is not working, he enjoys jogging in the park and listening to his favorite podcast, *The Argument*. Dominick also studied abroad in Hong Kong and loved learning about a new culture.



## Shao Chen

Hometown: Pingtung, Taiwan  
Citizenship: Taiwan  
Languages: English, Mandarin



### EDUCATION

- ▶ National Taiwan University  
B.A., Economics, 2017
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
Tableau Desktop Specialist Certification

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“Why do people make different decisions?” Shao continuously ponders this question, and exploring data is his way to solve the puzzle. During his junior year, he received the College Student Research Scholarship to conduct an independent study. Using a cross-generational dataset to determine the influence of family education on children’s risk attitude, Shao realized preference could be analyzed by finding the crucial personal characteristics in data. People with different backgrounds obtain different knowledge, and analyzing asymmetrical information is vital. The excitement when significant results confirmed his assumptions sparked Shao’s passion for data science.

Shao spares no effort to strengthen his analytical expertise. He participated in three research projects as a research assistant at National Taiwan University. Sponsored by the Ministry of Education in Taiwan, Shao was able to conduct individual projects as an exchange student at UC Berkeley. In one project, Shao defined different definitions of “the hot hand” in basketball to understand human expectations in continuous patterns. He was amazed at how programming tools like Python could complete the task of collecting NBA game records and designing a permutation model so easily. To apply research experience in a business context, Shao worked at Cobinhood, a cryptocurrency exchange platform, as a product intern. Analyzing customer data, he found 5% of the program’s trading users contributed 80% of the trading volume. This finding gave the product team a new target audience. Shao believes data science is key to understanding human decisions.

As an amateur contemporary dancer, Shao enjoys the freedom and fluidity of dance whether he is in a studio with mirrors or outdoors using nature as his dance floor. Dancing with the flow of indie and Korean pop helps Shao find balance in his life.

## Yuting (Crystal) Cheng

Hometown: Fujian, China  
Citizenship: USA  
Language: English, Chinese



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Statistics, 2015
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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During Crystal's senior year of college, she found her passion for analytics through a data science course where she learned programming skills that allowed her to manipulate data and solve real world problems. Crystal has enhanced her technical and problem-solving skills over the past three years as a skilled database developer by implementing data migration and data support at Farragut. When she first started her job, she adapted quickly to the fast-paced working environment. As a member of the data team in the property tax division, she started working on her first project and took on challenges immediately after her week-long training. During migration implementation, Crystal was recognized as a team player. She loved collaborating with cross-functional team members to transform the value model correctly and migrate the data effectively. She worked with her team to successfully deliver databases to the tax offices for five different counties.

In addition to data migration, she was also responsible for technical support at the post-migration phase. Applying her analytical-thinking and problem-solving skills helped the team to deliver more comprehensive solutions to customers under intense time-pressure. For instance, Crystal once utilized her SQL skills to create a customized report generated from twenty tables and millions of rows in a SQL database.

In her spare time, Crystal loves baking different kinds of cakes and desserts, such as strawberry cream cake, pound cake, cream puffs, and brownies. While Crystal enjoys the process of baking and trying new recipes, she finds just as much joy in sharing her delicious cakes with friends and family.

## Kyle Clapper

Hometown: Cullowhee, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.S.B.A., with Distinction, Business Administration, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

Kyle discovered his eye for process improvement the summer after his senior year of high school while working as a rafting guide on the Tuckasegee River in western North Carolina. When he was not sharing the thrills of whitewater rafting with his guests, Kyle was constantly thinking about how to improve the efficiency of the rafting operation. This persistent need for efficiency resulted in the reorganization of the raft warehouse in order to cut down on setup time and give the guides more time to spend interacting with the guests.

This experience shaped Kyle's educational and career goals. As an undergraduate student at Kenan-Flagler Business School, Kyle was immediately attracted to his operations and business analytics courses. There he learned formal techniques and models that could be used to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of business processes. As a business development intern at a clinical research organization, Kyle was able to deploy these skills on a project to analyze and improve the contract acquisition process. During this project, Kyle discovered the thrill he received from finding insights hidden in a pile of disorganized data and decided that pursuing a Master of Analytics degree would set him on the path to an exciting and fulfilling career as an analytics professional.

Aside from his interest in data and efficiency, Kyle greatly enjoys working with teams. As an undergraduate student, Kyle worked as an expedition instructor at the UNC Outdoor Education Center. Modeled after Outward Bound, this program is designed to facilitate individual leadership and teamwork skills as participants pace through challenging experiences in the backcountry. Kyle led numerous hiking, backpacking, kayaking, and rock-climbing trips, which not only satisfied his love for the outdoors, but provided him with a unique perspective about what it means to be a good team member.

## Grant Clark

Hometown: Northport, NY  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Adelphi University  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Mathematics; Computer Science, minor in Statistics and Data Analytics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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Growing up, Grant was always fascinated with solving challenging puzzles, playing chess, and exploring the world of technology. Upon entering college, these interests led him on a path towards higher level mathematics and computer science where initially he saw himself as a software developer. However, it was not until his internship at the Lighthouse Guild that he found his true calling in statistics and data analytics.

During his time at the Lighthouse Guild, a non-profit organization that helps visually impaired people with meaningful employment, world navigation, and fundraising, Grant was exposed to the world of statistics and data analytics. While there, he utilized big data tools such as Alteryx and Hadoop, and he was able to get hands-on experience solving real-world problems. Utilizing his strong background in computer science and problem solving, Grant was also able to improve and automate several data cleaning and manipulation processes at the Lighthouse Guild. These real-world applications of analytical tools and methodologies proved incredibly fulfilling to Grant, solidifying his goal of making an impact in the field.

In his free time, Grant enjoys spending the day on his boat with friends, wakeboarding and water skiing. He is also a proficient snowboarder and has traveled to some of the largest mountains on the continent, including Whistler-Blackcomb in British Columbia, Canada to hit the slopes. When the weather does not support his outdoor endeavors, Grant can be found playing songs from his favorite classic rock artists, such as Eddie Van Halen or The Eagles, on guitar.

## Brittany Elizabeth Cody

Hometown: Denver, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.A., *magna cum laude*, Political Science, 2018
- ▶ SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

Known for her dedication and compassion, Brittany strives to combine her enthusiasm for data science with public service initiatives. As a student of political science and a lover of all things policy, Brittany decided to pursue an internship in national intelligence. With her previous experience in statistics during her undergraduate education, she was chosen to be a part of the Analytic Modeling Division of a federal intelligence agency. There, she crafted complex visualizations and reports related to world politics and digital literacy that were featured in several finished intelligence papers. Brittany's interest in diverse learning environments also led her to organize a community-wide diversity panel on intergenerational differences in the workforce during her time at the agency.

After attending a corporate panel on the uses of augmented reality for public good, Brittany realized her love for public service and interest in data could be combined to inform policy through interactive data visualizations and journalism. Through the process of writing her thesis in political legitimacy in modern Nigeria for the NC State Honors Program, she was able to hone and develop these skills. Gaining inspiration from the vast field of data science, she developed a survey framework for data collection in Nigeria. From there, she explored how the intersection of violence, goods and services, and corruption could become a model for political legitimacy within the country.

When Brittany is not reading world news, she likes to watch the newest thriller or horror movie and read popular essayists at a local coffee shop. Evenings are often spent testing her problem-solving skills by rock-climbing at the Triangle Rock Club. She enjoys volunteering for causes close to her heart, specifically the LGBT Center library, the Wake County InterAct Women's Shelter, and the Miracle League of Cary.

## Jess Conner

Hometown: Evansville, IN  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Jacksonville University  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Mathematics, 2016
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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Jess is an avid learner who enjoys engaging with new concepts and ideas. In his undergraduate studies, Jess was recognized by the mathematics faculty at Jacksonville University as an outstanding student in the department by awarding him with the Jacob Golightly Award in 2014. This honor is presented to only one student each year. Jess can attribute his wonder and stamina for dissecting new problems to his abilities in mathematics. When presented with complex problems and challenges, Jess maintains an affable personality and a calm demeanor. This allows him to work well in group settings and with cross-functional teams.

During his time as a Technology Capacity and Performance Analyst for CSX, Jess upheld these characteristics of dissecting problems, developing curiosity, and working with others. This can be exemplified by his wide range of work. Jess was often involved in late night calls to help troubleshoot issues with new applications. He was willing to dig through technical documentation on server virtualization and performance management of large clusters. He also produced quarterly forecasts and reports of server capacity, which he presented to application teams to help prevent future constraints. The analysis required in this role paired with the Mathematical Competition in Modeling experiences from his undergraduate years helped propel Jess to a future in analytics.

Outside of the classroom and his career, Jess enjoys reading philosophy, math history, and any book by Charles C. Mann. He also enjoys painting with acrylics, taking walks through wooded paths, and following baseball strategy. Before moving to Jacksonville, Jess volunteered to manage Junior Legion baseball in his hometown of Evansville and led the team to a state championship victory.



## Walter Creech

Hometown: Raleigh, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.S., with Distinction, Statistics and Analytics; Economics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

Throughout all the seasons, Walter was constantly playing sports as a child. From soccer and basketball to tennis and baseball, sports were always at the forefront of his life. As he grew older, his focus on sports shifted from playing to analyzing. From football completion percentage in the NFL to player efficiency rating in the NBA, Walter continuously looks at sports statistics in his free time to better understand sports teams' decision-making and to have talking points in friendly sports discussions.

Walter's college and work experiences led him to pursue an analytics career so that he can help companies with decision-making and problem-solving. After taking a statistics class, Walter's professor told him he was a natural and encouraged him to think of careers related to statistics. This feedback sparked his interest, so Walter decided to add a major in statistics and pursue a career in analytics. One of Walter's skills is the ability to take complex data and explain it so non-technical individuals can easily understand. He honed these analysis, communication, and teamwork skills during his time interning at Red Hat, Inc. by creating return on investment reports and presenting them to his team and senior management. In addition to his technical training at the Institute, Walter is excited for the opportunity to improve his leadership and presentation skills. He looks forward to working on a team and using his skillset to contribute valuable insights to an organization.

Outside of work and the classroom, Walter enjoys playing sports with friends, wake surfing, and spending time with family, including his new twin nieces.



## Emmanuel Daramola

Hometown: Lagos, Nigeria  
Citizenship: USA  
Languages: English, Yoruba



### EDUCATION

- Loyola University Maryland  
B.B.A., Business Administration, minor in Data Science, 2019

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Born in Nigeria, Emmanuel takes pride in the country's many diverse ethnic groups. Growing up in a multiethnic home, he became aware of the diverse, cultural perspectives that surrounded him. Ever since then, Emmanuel has grown fond of learning about other cultures, whether it be through cuisine, music, customs, or language. Thus, he naturally connects with people of different cultures, allowing him to view the world through lenses other than his own.

Emmanuel's love for learning about new cultures served as a foundation for seeking and understanding new information. As a result, Emmanuel decided to make analytics a part of his undergraduate studies. He began honing his analytical skills through many projects, including an Access Database & Data Analytics Market Research Project. With the use of SQL and Qualtrics, he was able to analyze the use of various social media platforms among different age groups within the northeastern region of the US. Emmanuel quickly found an appreciation for analytics that fueled the same desire he possessed for exploring different cultures. Through his discovery of analytics, Emmanuel learned that he could gain new skills to interpret data and hone the power within data analysis.

In his free time, Emmanuel enjoys cooking different Nigerian dishes with an array of mouth-watering spices. He is fortunate to know many traditional Nigerian recipes that have been handed down from previous generations, one of his favorites being jollof rice with fried plantains. He is also an avid music listener who is always on the prowl for new song releases in genres ranging from Afrobeat to R&B.

## Ellen Davis

Hometown: Cary, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.S.P.H., with Highest Distinction, Biostatistics, minor in Mathematics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Advanced Programmer for SAS9

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Manipulating data, creating dynamic visualizations, and communicating findings are all elements that drew Ellen to the field of data analytics. She first applied her analytical skills at UNC Healthcare and Hospitals during a summer internship where she explored the relationship between medication adherence and emergency room visits for a subgroup of patients. The following year, Ellen spent her summer in the Big Apple working as an analytics intern for the insurance company Healthfirst. Through the utilization of Macros and SQL, Ellen wrote flexible code that pulled millions of lines of claims, membership, and capitation data based on set criteria. Her code decreased work processes from two weeks down to as little as two hours.

After two summers of analyzing healthcare data, Ellen decided to branch out and explore sports metrics. During her last semester at UNC-Chapel Hill, she enrolled in an advanced SAS class and completed a semester-long project examining data from The Premier League, the highest professional division of soccer in England. She created longitudinal graphs and tables displaying the performance of all teams throughout the last ten years, and based on her findings, she recommended a change in the Premier League's current signing system for more homogeneous performance results. This project helped Ellen realize she is also passionate about sports analytics.

In her free time, Ellen enjoys volunteering in her community. Her favorite volunteer position has been working as a coach for a co-ed youth soccer team this past spring with the Chapel Hill Rainbow Soccer League. While in college, Ellen also found time to volunteer at UNC Hospital where she delivered mail and flowers to patients, organized the hospital library, and helped with administrative tasks in the volunteer office.

## Supreet Sudhir Deshpande

Hometown: Belagavi, India  
Citizenship: India  
Languages: English, Hindi, Kannada



### EDUCATION

- ▶ National Institute of Technology Karnataka  
B.Tech., Mechanical Engineering, 2017
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

A math-intensive bachelor's degree followed by a data-driven consulting job at ZS Associates instilled in Supreet a strong foundation in applied statistics and process optimization. At ZS, Supreet solved business problems for top pharmaceutical companies, allowing him to tackle unstructured problems and derive meaningful insights from data. While working on these projects, he developed analytical tools using Python and Excel, enabling process automation and improving workflows. Moreover, he actively mentored new associates, helping his team build a robust analytics department. Of the many projects Supreet worked on at ZS, his personal favorite is the 'Promotion Response' model that he built for a Fortune 500 company, providing \$5 million in incremental revenue by optimizing their promotional spend.

Supreet's interest in data science stemmed from, surprisingly enough, his experiences while volunteering at a nonprofit aimed at improving the lives of those affected by HIV/AIDS. He discovered vast inefficiencies in healthcare ecosystems, such as delayed medical treatments, inaccurate diagnosis of ailments, and wrongly-captured patient data. His belief in the enormous potential of data and its ability to harness useful intelligence further cemented his goal to become a data scientist.

During his undergraduate studies, Supreet involved himself in a plethora of ventures. He co-founded a startup that enhanced the offline shopping experience, led a 25-member team to design and manufacture an all-terrain racing car, and volunteered to teach students at a high school.

When he's not crunching numbers and chasing deadlines, Supreet can be found playing the keyboard, singing Bollywood songs, or cooking a spicy Indian meal. He also loves hiking, especially on snow-covered mountains. Having scaled a few peaks in the Himalayan range, he believes that trekking helps him satiate his thirst for living on the edge.

## Adria Dortignacq

Hometown: Portland, OR  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Colorado College  
B.A., *magna cum laude*, Economics, 2016
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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Adria thrives in environments where quantitative rigor and creative analysis intersect. During her undergraduate thesis, she developed spatial econometric models to study intergenerational income elasticity across time, space, and relatively unexplored population subsets. This work merited her the Jerome V. Bruni Research Award and the opportunity to submit an article she co-authored to the *Review of Income and Wealth*.

Adria's desire to execute and her intellectual curiosity served her well when she took a position after graduation at Brown Brothers Harriman & Co. (BBH) as a Senior Fund Accountant. As part of the oversight team, she was responsible for ensuring mutual fund NAV accounting accuracy and timely NASDAQ delivery. In this role, Adria was the conduit between the client and internal parties for problem escalation and effective resolution. Through solutioning diverse client requests, she discovered her keen desire to create and prescribe data-driven, actionable business strategies. This realization culminated when she was selected as a finalist in BBH's internal Codefest competition. She presented a social media sentiment analysis tool to validate equity price fluctuation, highlight nontraditional buy/sell signals, and contribute billable Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) metrics to client reporting. Such endeavors, where technology, analytics, and economics collide, energize Adria—bolstering her enterprising spirit and results-oriented mentality.

Outside of work, you can find Adria in the mountains. An avid outdoorswoman, Adria has been backpacking and skiing in her native Pacific Northwest since childhood. During the offseason, she enjoys baking desserts with friends and finding new artists on Spotify.

## Trevor Edge

Hometown: Raleigh, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *cum laude*, Accounting, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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Through his love for sports, specifically baseball, Trevor has been infatuated with numbers from an early age. Collecting baseball cards with career statistics of nearly every player since the early 2010s, he has found a creative outlet that has allowed him to expand upon his unique interest. While participating in baseball since his elementary and teenage years, he was granted an opportunity to play in Europe for two summers during his high school career. This gave him a chance to live his passion while immersing himself in foreign cultures.

Continuing with his love for sports, he joined the Sports Analytics Club at NC State during his undergraduate career. This gave him his first glance into the analytics world by working on projects tailored specifically for his favorite team, the NC State Wolfpack. His projects included looking into release point data of Wolfpack pitchers as well as searching for signs of pitcher fatigue within team data. These projects ultimately led Trevor to a professional services intern position with Dimension Data, a company that specializes in hybrid IT systems integration. During his internship, he used multiple linear and logistic regression to predict the success of future projects.

In addition to his interest in sports and analytics, Trevor spends most of his spare time teaching himself to play the guitar or lifting weights on campus. Trevor's other interests include fantasy sports and participating in intramural football and basketball with his roommates and friends during the weeknights.

## William Elmore

Hometown: High Point, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Wilmington  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Economics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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William's love for solving complex problems has guided his life for many years. In high school, William uncovered a passion for problem-solving through weightlifting. The process of setting fitness goals for himself and reaching them taught him an invaluable life lesson: he can achieve anything he sets his mind to, with enough dedication.

Years later, he applies that same drive towards other aspects of his life. Academically, his love of problem-solving led him to discover a passion for economics. During his senior year, he was specifically drawn to the way econometrics allowed him to apply his analytical skills to economic theory. During his undergraduate career, he completed a research project that estimated the effects of gasoline prices on lightweight truck sales through the use of several regression models. After immersing himself in this project, William realized that the broad field of data analytics would allow him to apply his skills to any subject that piqued his interest.

William also finds fulfillment by helping others develop goals of their own. Working as a Peer Advisor in the Cameron School of Business, William enjoyed collaborating with his fellow students to create long-term, academic plans based on their aspirations, questions, and concerns. Additionally, he valued the relationships he built along the way.

In his spare time, William enjoys fueling his lifelong interest in cars by keeping up with automotive news. Outside of the gym, he likes to stay active by going on kayaking trips with his father, spending time at the beach, and running. His love for music has also led him to amass an ever-growing vinyl record collection. Fascinated by the dynamic relationships that underpin economic systems, he also enjoys reading the *Wall Street Journal* to stay up to date on the latest developments.



## Abla Elsergany

Hometown: Cairo, Egypt  
Citizenship: USA  
Language: English, Arabic



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Ain Shams University  
B.A., English Language, 2002
- ▶ SAS Certified Advanced Programmer for SAS 9  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling  
Tableau Desktop Specialist Certification

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After 15 years in the translation industry, Abla discovered her passion for data. As a translator, she worked with several nationwide interpretation and translation agencies. She interpreted for schools, social services home visits, and reputable hospitals like Duke and Rex. It was her responsibility to accurately convey her client's message. She enjoyed the reward of helping others and wanted to go beyond individual cases. Instead of communicating the story of one person at a time, Abla wants to convey the story of a hospital or an entire health care system to bring meaningful change to people's lives. She believes analytics is the best way to accomplish this and thus chose to begin a new challenge with data science. As an analyst, she will go beyond finding meaningful insights and reveal the story behind the data.

Abla started her analytics journey by attending the Data Analytics Boot Camp at UNC-Chapel Hill, where she experienced six intensive months of data analysis and programming. One of the multiple projects she worked on involved analyzing a ride sharing company's data. She found missed opportunities in rural and suburban areas due to low driver availability. Abla recommended refocusing marketing campaigns and adjusting pricing algorithms to charge more for longer distances to attract more drivers. Abla's pursuit of this career shift required self-motivation, persistence, and a level of zeal that she will bring to her future endeavors. She has a newfound interest in analyzing data, and now her studies will prepare her with the skillset necessary for this field.

On a more personal level, Abla enjoys cooking projects with her husband. Her most ambitious project was preparing hand-rolled sushi for twenty friends and family. Everyone joined the preparation and learned how to roll the sushi themselves.



## Samantha Everett

Hometown: Durham, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Appalachian State University  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Psychology, 2018
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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Samantha's initial academic focus in psychology led to an interest in research and statistics while obtaining her undergraduate degree. After this discovery, she found ways to combine the two disciplines with data-driven team projects and independent studies to create the path she sought. While in college, Samantha displayed her multitasking skills to get first-hand experience in the seemingly unconnected fields of psychology and statistics. Initially a tutor for psychology and statistics courses, Samantha was promoted to a manager position at Appalachian State's Student Learning Center. She also co-authored a published journal article: "Bayesian Reasoning in a High School Statistics Course." Throughout her undergraduate career, Samantha maintained summer work as an assistant preschool teacher, as well as managing editor for *IMPULSE-The Premier Undergraduate Neuroscience Journal*.

Samantha's ample experience as a team member has solidified and consistently confirmed her role as a dependable and reliable asset. Her holistic approach to problem-solving utilizes a solid skill set of analytical and computational tactics, while also incorporating the soft skills and human-centric focus gained from a psychology foundation. With such a unique and diversified background, Samantha can adapt to many situations. She hopes to pursue a career that works with data to discover trends, find solutions, and implement meaningful change.

When not reading up on the latest psychology research articles or diving into a sea of raw data, she enjoys exploring the local area for new hiking spots, attending indie music concerts, and seeing the latest art exhibits. Samantha is passionate and dedicated to anything she sets her mind to. She is always up for a challenge: whether it be academically, professionally, or on the trails.

## Maxwell Fairbairn

Hometown: Charlotte, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.S., with Distinction, Statistics and Analytics, 2019

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While training as a jazz pianist during his undergraduate program at UNC-Chapel Hill, Max was fascinated by the technical proficiency and creativity involved in improvisation, as well as with the dynamicity of the jazz combos he performed with. When he interned with Wells Fargo Analytic Consulting the summer before his senior year, he discovered these same principles underlying the consultants' work. On display within his team was the technical prowess of a former rocket scientist, the creativity of a Tableau visualization expert, and the organizational expertise of an Army veteran. Inspired by this experience, Max took a graduate course in machine learning during his senior year where he explored the nuances of various classification techniques during a semester-long project spent predicting promotions within a company. Once he found himself doing Kaggle competitions for fun, he knew his fascination with analytics was sealed.

Max also worked as the vice president for UNC Special Olympics College where he helped create, plan, and host athletic competitions that brought together athletes with and without intellectual or developmental disabilities. In the future, he hopes to incorporate two of his passions by utilizing the power of analytics to help volunteer organizations operate more efficiently and better reach in-need communities.

While much of his free time is devoted to studying jazz, piano is only one of his loves. A life-long Francophile, Max studied abroad in Paris and dreams of one day mastering French in the City of Lights. Max also loves summer and believes no warm July night should pass without live music or a pick-up game of basketball.

## Andrew Francis

Hometown: Cleveland, OH  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of Cincinnati  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Environmental Engineering; Environmental Studies, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Professional: Advanced Programming Using SAS 9.4

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Andrew is an avid problem-solver who is passionate about addressing important environmental issues related to water, waste, and agriculture. While studying environmental engineering, Andrew served as a research assistant at the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). At the EPA, Andrew was a research technician examining water quality in pipe distribution networks. Andrew also held an engineering position at Biowish, a small biotechnology company. Working at Biowish allowed Andrew to model the impacts of differing soil microbiomes on agricultural yields and carved out a path for him to become a data scientist. At Biowish, Andrew informed senior-level management about his predictions regarding the potential size and importance of markets across the globe using agricultural production datasets. Biowish inspired Andrew to become a data scientist because it connected the three fields he is most passionate about: engineering, environmental science, and microbiology.

In addition to his work experience, Andrew is also the vice president of Resilient Communities, a nonprofit organization developing waste to energy technologies in impoverished communities around the world. The organization is currently pursuing a research project in Marrakech, Morocco focused on developing technology to recover methane from wastewater and provide it to a nearby community. In his role, he also led a team that designed a methane capture device for a wastewater treatment lagoon.

When Andrew is not trying to save the world, he enjoys baking sourdough bread using his home-grown yeast culture. He may be spotted tending to his herb garden trying to harvest the best herbs to bake his next loaf of bread. His passions extend to cooking and tinkering with Indian food recipes inspired by his various excursions to the country. Andrew can also be found pedaling his bicycle around town hunting for the best coffee beans to take home to his French press.

## Christopher Goodrich

Hometown: Charlotte, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Valedictorian, Economics, minor in Business Administration, 2013
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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Christopher is a deeply inquisitive individual who is dedicated to solving problems with data. Whether it was during his five years as an analyst working in health economics research or as a youth sports coach computing detailed player stats, he brings zeal to turning analytical insights into real-world change. Professionally, Christopher has earned a reputation for being diligent and innovative; he achieved this by frequently offering inventive solutions, even if it meant learning a new programming language or technology to complete a task. Assignments that exemplify Christopher's talents include automating hundreds of quarterly reports with Python, identifying gaps in diabetes treatment in Dubai by analyzing healthcare records for three million residents, and learning R from scratch to program probabilistic sensitivity analysis for a model of pediatric tuberculosis interventions.

While working at RTI International, Christopher was fulfilled by their mission of positive social impact and plans to continue a career prioritizing that goal. Working towards that aim galvanized his work on many projects, such as programming optimization techniques in MATLAB for a national-level model of HIV/AIDS created for the Centers for Disease Control. He is especially proud to have worked on that model because it was used to launch a public health initiative announced during the 2019 State of the Union Address.

Christopher's professional skill set is built on a foundation of academic excellence. During his undergraduate studies, he graduated as university valedictorian and was designated by department faculty as the Outstanding Senior in Economics.

To unplug, Christopher plays ultimate frisbee as often as he can. To him, victory on the field is only surpassed by spending a relaxing afternoon on the couch with his greyhound, Evey, and his orange tabby, Ron.

## Thomas Gow

Hometown: Worcester, MA  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Elon University  
B.S.B.A., Management: Business Analytics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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Strategy and innovation became a passion of Thomas's in 2010 when he invested in his first Microsoft stock with his grandfather. This ever-accelerating passion continued through academia into the workforce, from participating in analytics competitions to internships at multiple startups. His most recent experience was the Business Analytics Competition at Manhattan College, where his team of four took first place out of seventeen universities. They developed a thorough and creative feasibility report analyzing the possibility for New York's electricity to be 50% clean by 2030 and the next steps to achieve that mandate. Continuing into the workforce, Thomas's favorite startup was Knotel.

At Knotel, he was the third person to join the San Francisco expansion team. The small team allowed Thomas to have a significant impact on a wide range of responsibilities. These included executing clients' installations, plotting timetables, managing client and contractor relationships, and supervising inventory deliveries and installations. The high impact and strong bonds formed in SF cemented his attraction to working on small teams.

Outside of work, this die-hard foodie loves playing golf as well as hockey, and he is a former champion of fantasy football. While his go-to place to recharge is Saint-Adolphe-d'Howard in Canada, he is also eager to continue his recent addiction to wake surfing. Throughout the day, he reads about current events in innovation and technology or adds to his never-ending apartment wall of sticky notes, which are full of ideas and mindsets that he uses to visualize a future not yet realized.

## Sydney Greer

Hometown: Canton, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Appalachian State University  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Mathematics, minor in Statistics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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Sydney's passion for challenge, analysis, and formulating unique solutions has been constant throughout her life. With an aptitude for math and efficient problem-solving, Sydney knew she would enter a technical field. However, it was learning that her interests could be used to help people that ignited her spark for analytics.

During an internship at Tresata, an analytics software company in Charlotte, NC, Sydney was assigned to identify a problem in the local community and use massive amounts of data to find an answer. Sydney configured a solution to the plague of low health literacy in Charlotte that would cut medical spending by \$93 billion. The epiphany that data can enrich life, save money, and make a difference led Sydney to pursue this line of work. Exiting the summer internship with a newly assured path, Sydney was eager to master the field of analytics.

Prior to this experience, Sydney was consistently involved within the mathematics department at her university. She became a tutor, where she exercised both her love for helping others and math. Sydney engaged in research on a football analytics project that evolved into her thesis for the honors program. Her immersion in the mathematics department throughout her four years led to Sydney being the recipient of the Outstanding Senior Award in Mathematical Sciences.

Sydney represented her university at a research fellowship at Coastal Carolina University. She performed research on climate change using text and sentiment analysis on one million observations of Twitter data. This work was presented at several conferences and published in the IEEE Digital Library.

In her free time, Sydney loves exploring new cities and exotic restaurants with her husband, Chandler. She enjoys roaming around the farmers market and gathering the freshest ingredients for the latest recipe that she is determined to perfect.



## Sarah Grieco

Hometown: Chantilly, VA  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ San Diego State University  
B.A., Journalism, minor in Political Science, 2011

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Sarah believes that information empowers and supports effective decision-making. Following a decade in the news industry, she is turning her passion for storytelling into helping people better understand data.

Sarah's career has been diverse across mediums and locations. After graduating with a degree in journalism, she received a Fulbright grant to learn about the impact of digital media in the German news landscape. She then spent the early part of her career working in television news in California, and later moved to New York City. While working at *Time* magazine, she collaborated with the international division to better deliver news to Indian citizens during the general election and witnessed the transformative power that access to data can have on real-world situations. Sarah built on this experience at the *Columbia Journalism Review*, interpreting trends in online publications and delivering audience reports to the board of trustees for strategy development. Prior to joining the Institute for Advanced Analytics, Sarah worked at North Carolina's PBS station, where she developed an executive dashboard that consolidated multiple data sources into a single, automated layout, improving access to a broad range of information. Working at fast-paced media companies has prepared her for a career in analytics, and her unique perspective is a strong asset to any team. Her former colleagues would say she is efficient, engaging, and one of the most organized people they know.

Sarah is an early riser with a love for yoga and homemade cold brew coffee. She also enjoys listening to comedy podcasts while cycling on the American Tobacco Trail. As an avid hiker, she believes that every mountaintop is within reach—from Half Dome in Yosemite National Park to Salcantay peak in Peru. Her next adventure is to summit Mount Whitney.



## Hirsh Gupta

Hometown: Princeton, NJ  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Rutgers University  
B.A., Economics, minor in Statistics, 2016
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

Hirsh's curiosity in stories uncovered by data started with his fantasy football league. Competitive in nature, Hirsh wanted to give himself an advantage over his competition by leveraging undervalued athletes for his roster, so he used publicly available data to identify potential breakout players. Through his analysis, he was able to identify some of these players and ultimately lead his league in wins and scoring for the past two years. This process has been a valuable learning experience that provided Hirsh with technical experience in data analysis, from gathering and cleaning data to creating insightful visualizations. He quickly realized the value these skills play in solving business problems and strove to build a career in the analytics field.

After graduating from Rutgers University in 2016, Hirsh worked as an analyst for an energy company called South Jersey Industries. As an owner of data, he noticed inefficiencies in identifying and maintaining damaged pipelines and sought to provide a more data-driven approach to solving this problem. Hirsh leveraged his statistical knowledge to build a logistic regression model in R to predict the probability of future pipeline failure. In addition, he developed a user-friendly interface, through Power BI, which highlighted specific locations and alerted management when a pipeline may soon need maintenance. This allowed the company to flag potential threats weeks earlier than before and strategically deploy engineers, bypassing areas posing little to no immediate risk.

Outside of his analytical and technical pursuits, Hirsh enjoys staying active by playing basketball, going on hikes, and traveling—most recently to the Swiss mountains and across Italy. He hopes that his next adventure will lead him to Iceland to experience the breathtaking northern lights.

## Savannah Hampton

Hometown: Valparaiso, IN  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Wake Forest University  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Mathematical Business, 2017
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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Savannah's love for numbers has always been the lens through which she has viewed the world. During her undergraduate career at Wake Forest, Savannah's mathematics classes and senior seminar project for Food Lion introduced her to the exciting career field of analytics. It was during the hours spent conducting principal component analysis and model testing with her team that she knew she wanted to spend her career in analytics.

Since college, Savannah has implemented her analytical skills during her work in the Global Sourcing Leadership Development Program at Owens Corning. During her buyer rotation, Savannah modeled spare parts costs, predicted plant production, and met with suppliers. As a production supervisor, she led a shift of 25 employees through the production manufacturing process, and her finance rotation taught her how to craft the story behind the financial results. While working internationally at the office in Chambéry, France, Savannah enhanced a transportation model that predicted the best carrier options for the annual bidding process.

In her free time, Savannah loves sports, traveling, and giving back. She has played competitive soccer nearly her entire life, and she continues to play on intramural teams in every city she has lived since college. During the winter months, you can find Savannah following the Chicago Blackhawks. Between her time living in France and her study abroad semester in London, Savannah has travelled to 11 countries. When she is not playing soccer, watching hockey, or exploring new destinations, she enjoys volunteering as a member of the Junior League.

## Lance Hudson

Hometown: Asheville, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Wilmington  
B.S., Statistics, 2018
- ▶ SAS Certified Advanced Programmer for SAS®9  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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Lance's interests in the world of athletics paired with his passion for mathematics led him to pursue a career in the field of analytics. As an undergraduate student, Lance spent much of his time with self-led research. His efforts in that domain resulted in honors from his school as an Undergraduate Research Scholar that will hopefully lead to a publication in the future. Lance also spent time as a statistical analysis intern at UNC-Asheville for the Health and Wellness Department. In that time, he aided in data cleaning and data maintenance for a clinical trial aimed at limiting injuries in the elderly associated with slowed muscle reaction times.

After graduation, Lance worked as a statistical programming intern at Pharpoint Research, a Clinical Research Organization that specializes in clinical operations, data management, biostatistics, and strategic clinical trial consulting. As a statistical programmer, he was responsible for the creation and validation of datasets, data listings, and statistical reports in a wide range of clinical studies. Lance's time in this position has furthered his interest in the world of research and programming, and he hopes to continue working in an area that satisfies that desire.

During his free time, Lance enjoys reading about history and statistics, spending time with his family and his dogs, and researching the connection between data and athletic success.

## Nathan Jones

Hometown: Maple Grove, MN  
Citizenship: USA  
Languages: English, Spanish



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Brigham Young University  
B.S., Statistics, minor in Mathematics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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After hearing “With statistics, you can play in anyone’s backyard,” Nathan was hooked. Over a warm bowl of chicken and wild rice soup, a Ph.D. statistician had just led Nathan to his vocation. Since that day, Nathan has obtained mastery in statistics in conjunction with his joy of problem-solving.

As a statistics teaching assistant, Nathan actively taught the material and invited others to explore the major. He often formed friendships that lasted outside of the classroom. Interest in athletics led Nathan to undergraduate research in sports analytics where he conducted Chi-square analyses on NBA injury data, finding significance between rookies and ankle injuries. Searching for different “backyards,” Nathan became the first statistics intern at Smiths Medical, an engineering company. Working there, he developed an analytical technique that finds the survivability of medical devices to meet the Food and Drug Administration’s post-market requirements. For his senior capstone project, Nathan’s team used natural language processing in Python to extract questions from text and match them to frequently asked questions within Qualtrics, a survey software company.

Nathan grew up performing in musicals (seven to date), parading as the high school mascot named Leafy, and playing any sport he could. He cherishes his two years in Colombia on a service mission, where his appreciation for other cultures grew. While there, he directed and trained over fifteen volunteers from all over the world. Public speaking has always brought joy to Nathan, motivating him to take multiple classes on the subject and winning him the Marie Clegg Jones (no relation) Public Speaking Award from his university.

## Shawn Kim

Hometown: Cheonan, South Korea  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Mechanical Engineering, 2016
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

Striving to continually learn has always been a driving force in Shawn's life. As an undergraduate student, Shawn sought to feed his hunger for knowledge in a variety of ways, from studying abroad in the Czech Republic and learning more about different cultures to building a desktop and understanding how computers function.

Post-graduation, Shawn worked as a Sales Engineer at Micro-Epsilon (ME), a company that manufactures and sells sensors. He saw this as a great opportunity to develop his communication and interpersonal skills while also supplementing his technical abilities. Shawn quickly learned how to deliver effective customer service by breaking down technical concepts to customers, troubleshooting, and testing sensors to ensure his products fit their needs. For instance, Shawn provided support to 3M by interfacing its system with ME's sensors as well as optimizing it for specific applications. One of Shawn's proudest moments was when 3M invited him to showcase Micro-Epsilon's products to engineers and executives at 3M's facility in Minnesota.

Despite how exciting his role was, Shawn's real passion has always been crunching numbers and working with mathematical models. As he looked into different ways to pursue a more statistics-focused career, the opportunity to apply to the Advanced Analytics program at North Carolina State University arose. While taking the prerequisite statistics courses for the program, he discovered both an aptitude and interest in learning more about data analytics.

Outside of work and school, Shawn prefers to spend his time serving in the multimedia team at his local church as a sound engineer. He can often be found with his friends at Bean Traders Café in Durham or playing board games such as Settlers of Catan or BANG!

## Elaine King

Hometown: Wilmington, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.S., with Distinction, Biostatistics; Women's and Gender Studies, 2018
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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Elaine developed passions for both analytics and gender equality during her time at UNC-Chapel Hill. For her undergraduate research project within the Women's and Gender Studies Department, she collected data on the experiences of undergraduate women pursuing mathematics degrees and the barriers to the completion of their studies. Her findings on the importance of mentorship inspired her to join the Women's Research Triangle Network and become a mentor herself.

After graduation, Elaine worked at IQVIA as a statistical programmer in the biostatistics department, where she gained valuable experience developing analytical routines for clinical trials. As a primary production programmer on a large client-specific team, she wrote and maintained existing SAS programs to create analysis datasets, tables, listings, and figures for a variety of deliveries. Tasked with increasing the efficiency of the team's processes, Elaine created macro programs to standardize output formatting and was involved in the testing and validation of new departmental tools. During her time at IQVIA, she received seven 'Work Worth Doing' awards from her colleagues for her work as well as her involvement in the department's Green Team and the social event planning committee.

Community service and activism are very important to Elaine. As a Buckley Public Service Scholar at UNC-Chapel Hill, she volunteered a collective 300 hours with a local natural disaster relief organization, UNC Hospitals, the Campus Y, and more. Elaine has been a mentor with Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Triangle since 2014; exploring Raleigh with her 'little sister' is always a highlight of her week. When she is not studying or volunteering, she enjoys staying active with her water polo and kickball teams.



## Grant King

Hometown: Southern Pines, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.A., with High Distinction, Economics; Linguistics, 2017
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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Grant discovered analytics through a desire to solve big problems. Originally a student of linguistics and international development, he traveled to Japan as a recipient of the Phillips Ambassadors Scholarship, which fosters constructive cultural exchanges with Asia. He became interested in economics after taking a class on development economics and experiencing its potential for solving real-world problems. While completing degrees in economics and linguistics, Grant worked as a research assistant in an otolaryngology lab, applying data analytics to speech comprehension testing for people with hearing impairments.

Pursuing his interests in international development and health, Grant arrived in the Public Health Economics Program at RTI International. There, he had the opportunity to do research in domestic and global public health in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization, among other institutions. While at RTI, Grant developed skills in data manipulation and analytical methods, specializing in epidemiological modeling, regression, and cost-effectiveness analysis. He was also recognized for his communication skills, becoming the liaison between RTI economists and computer scientists on two CDC-funded diabetes projects. Grant received a Spot Award for his contributions to these and other projects at RTI.

In his free time, Grant enjoys reading nonfiction and volunteering for the Citizens Climate Lobby. As a student of linguistics, he also has a fascination with foreign languages and cultures, and has studied Japanese, Spanish, and German.

## Emmanuel Kinuthia

Hometown: Nairobi, Kenya  
Citizenship: Kenya  
Languages: English, Swahili



### EDUCATION

- Egerton University  
M.Sc., Agricultural and Applied Economics,  
B.Sc., Agricultural Economics, 2007

An ardent and highly versatile analyst, Emmanuel has been working in research for the last 8 years. This work has nurtured his thirst for discovery and passion for working with data, which he developed during his graduate school studies. He has diverse organizational experience in guiding teams to make data-driven decisions. In partnership with other agribusiness industry players, he has overseen the establishment of more than 100 farmer-owned associations across the East Africa region. As a result, they have generated business worth over 200 million dollars and positively impacted more than 300,000 farmers. When he was not having breakfast with farmers discussing production optimization, he was in boardrooms with the organizations' management, exploring strategies to improve business processes for sustainability, or other forums discussing policy implications for farmers' enterprises. To communicate his findings, he has written several journal articles, one of which was selected for presentation at the European Association of Agricultural Economists Conference in Parma, Italy in 2017.

He is an individual who is continuously seeking improvement at personal and professional levels, and coming from an applied economics background, he believes that the MS analytics program will further strengthen his skills in generating value from various data sources for businesses as well as tailoring communication to multiple audiences.

Outside the office environment, if he is not watching tech shows like *Click* on BBC or business news, he likes playing guitar or lifting weights in the gym.

## Beruk Kiros

Hometown: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Citizenship: USA

Languages: Amharic, Tigrigna, English



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of Massachusetts at Amherst  
B.S., *cum laude*, Biology, 2014
- ▶ SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

Growing up in the highlands of Ethiopia, Beruk developed a keen interest for things on wheels. To the amazement of his friends, his obsession with automobiles allowed him to identify the make and model of cars just from pictures of tail lights they took to test him. After moving to the United States, his infatuation grew immensely. Usually, he can be found under the hood carrying out DIY projects.

Beruk's foremost passion, however, is human biology. In college, his enthusiasm for research led him to spend two summers at UCSD medical school studying the effects of membrane proteins on heart muscle disorder caused by diabetes. Yet, his main focus was researching the effects of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals on the thyroid system using US Environmental Protection Agency's Toxicity Forecaster database. This experience gave him a deep appreciation for the role of big data and analytics in toxicology and an opportunity to join the National Toxicology Program (NTP) as a Research Fellow. At NTP, he evaluated the utility of text-mining and machine learning tools for the systematic literature review process. His work demonstrated that these tools can be useful in screening large scientific publications. Beruk has presented his work in national and international meetings such as Society of Toxicology and has received numerous awards including NIH Intramural Research Training Award, Best Undergraduate Poster Award, and multiple travel awards. Beruk also has expertise in toxicogenomics, high-throughput screening methods, metabolomics, data curation, and collaboration with software development teams to define novel computational approaches to develop tools for scientists.

Although he admits one of his greatest accomplishments in college was teaching himself how to play guitar from YouTube, Beruk also enjoys the outdoors and activities such as biking, hiking, kayaking, swimming, billiards, ping pong, and volleyball.

## Taylor Kooy

Hometown: Caledonia, MI  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Grand Valley State University  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Statistics, minors in Data Science and Mathematics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Base Programmer for SAS 9  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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As an intern at Eidex, Taylor experienced the quintessential moment that revealed his true passion and changed the trajectory of his future career. During his tenure with the company, his role expanded from data analyst to software developer. He became fluent in Python by using his previous programming background and learning from his mentor. The skills that he quickly cultivated allowed him to better automate, design, and simplify the data load process at Eidex.

The knowledge and tools Taylor gained during this internship culminated in his senior project. Working with the United States Office of the Inspector General (OIG), he developed a software tool in Python that analyzes phone records. This software, code-named Agent Caorle (Call Analysis Of Records for Law Enforcement), analyzes data sets of tens of thousands of records to pinpoint key witnesses and other crucial information pertinent to a criminal investigation. In an exit interview, the project sponsor – an OIG special agent – reported that Agent Caorle would save one to two months of investigative work per case. Coupling this project with Taylor's academic success and leadership in the classroom, he was named Grand Valley State University's Outstanding Statistics Major in his junior and senior year.

Taylor has led a multitude of projects and teams in his internship roles, in the academic environment, and the competitive realm of sports. His peers and teammates describe him as a responsible and selfless leader. To help foster a successful team, he prides himself on building strong relationships, practicing determination, forming trust, and learning from every team experience.

When he leaves the technical world, Taylor enjoys waterskiing, woodworking, the great outdoors, spending valuable time with friends and family, and reading horror, suspense, and thriller novels.

## Andrea Kopaskie

Hometown: Charlotte, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.S., Environmental Sciences, minor in Biology, 2017
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

Andrea discovered her passion for data science while conducting research and studying on the outskirts of Bangkok, Thailand. As she dove into a project examining carbon capture and sequestration methods, Andrea became fascinated by the real-world practicality and applicability that data analytics has to offer. Her interest continued, and she promptly began working toward her newfound passion by learning all she could about the subject.

At the University of North Carolina's Environmental Finance Center, Andrea seamlessly combined her passion for environmental science and data analytics. As a utility rates specialist, she assisted in managing the data acquisition, processing, and analysis of over ten water and wastewater surveys. Using data analytics, Andrea directly advised the operators of water and wastewater systems on how to provide equitable, safe, and financially sustainable services to customers. She successfully communicated and summarized data in clear, accessible ways for diverse clients ranging from governmental officials to utility regulators. Additionally, Andrea acted as a database manager. In this role, she ensured data integrity and quality by maintaining databases that were utilized in the water and wastewater surveys.

In her free time, Andrea enjoys throwing pottery, felting soap, and making candles. An avid podcast enthusiast, her favorite genres include true crime, emerging technology, and global culture. She also loves the outdoors and frequently visits the many beaches and mountains of the East Coast.

## David Ku

Hometown: Taipei, Taiwan  
Citizenship: Taiwan  
Languages: English, Mandarin



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
M.S., Mechanical Engineering, 2019
- ▶ Ming Chi University of Technology  
B.S., Valedictorian, Mechanical Engineering, 2015
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

After graduating as valedictorian in mechanical engineering, David worked as a mechanical engineer. Although it has been a while since he last utilized the knowledge of mechanics to design jazz drums, he treasured his time as an engineer, which allowed him to develop the foundation to take on challenges, solve complex problems, and deliver valuable solutions.

While David pursued his master's degree in mechanical engineering at NC State, a class project using Choice-Based Conjoint Analysis sparked his desire for statistical knowledge and cultivated his interest in analytics. David continued expanding his knowledge in statistics and programming by working with a professor who specializes in engineering design optimization. At the time, David explored various optimization algorithms and machine learning techniques during a semester-long project where he incorporated Bayesian Networks into optimization algorithms to improve the efficiency in solving discrete-choice optimization problems. Since his work employed probability theory, Bayesian statistics, and data manipulation, David challenged himself to learn Python, R, and SAS for processing these data and building algorithms. Furthermore, he seized the opportunity to take graduate-level statistics courses at NC State to prepare himself to become an analyst. Over time, he has developed skills to explore, process, and analyze data to solve challenging real-world issues.

Outside of his passion for analytics, he also enjoys weightlifting and immersing himself in nature with friends by hiking and skiing.



## Samuel LaFell

Hometown: Durham, NC  
Citizenship: USA  
Languages: English, Spanish



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.A., *magna cum laude*, Communication, minor in Psychology, 2018  
B.A., *magna cum laude*, Foreign Languages and Literatures, 2018
- ▶ SAS Certified Advanced Programmer for SAS 9  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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Analyzing baseball card statistics as a kid to predict winners of games primed Sam to realize what is possible with data. Fast forward to 2019, Sam used Python and Tableau in a project where he produced a dashboard showing average Team ERA by year from 1975 to 2017. The project provided more insights to overall team performance and opened Sam up to the possibility of exploring his passions together.

Through his world exploration and study abroad, Sam has realized the function of analytics crosses continents and industries. After studying abroad in Quito, Ecuador and becoming proficient in Spanish, Sam became president of the Cultural Exchange Network at NC State. There, he combined his desire to learn and teach about other cultures with an increased focus on tracking membership enrollment and participation. Sam learned through this experience that his endless desire to discover more about the world could be paired with analytics.

Post-graduation, Sam went on to combine his diverse experiences as the Director of Residence Life for Duke University with a summer program at Davidson College. In this role, Sam directly supervised 18 staff members and continued to refine his leadership skills through encouraging transparent communication and open feedback.

When he is not studying or taking vacations to South America, Sam enjoys breaking out his Salsa shoes and going Latin dancing. Additionally, he appreciates kayaking on Lake Johnson and taking large portions of weekend days to meet with friends. For those rainy days, he loves staying connected with his friends in Ecuador and Argentina.

## Laura Lancheros

Hometown: Chicago, IL  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of Chicago  
M.A., with Honors, Public Policy Studies, 1994
- ▶ University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
B.A., Political Science; Psychology, 1991
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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Laura did not think much about socks on her first trip kayaking Alaska's Prince William Sound. However, when the group's strongest member reached a breaking point—all his socks were wet—Laura did something small that had a surprising impact. She shared a dry pair of socks, and the group finished together. Ever since then, she makes a point to look for unexpected opportunities that create value for clients.

As a technical partner, Laura's strength comes from challenging traditional paradigms to find innovative ways to meet business needs. Her curiosity is backed up by strong data fluency gained working for NORC, an independent research organization. Starting at entry-level, she advanced quickly and built a quality assurance department designed to improve processes and nourish a company-wide culture of excellence. Most recently as a portfolio manager, she led diverse teams to create scientifically rigorous data products for projects worth more than \$40 million annually. Colleagues and executives see her as a trusted, lead-by-example collaborator who builds strong relationships because she listens and asks good questions.

Dedicated to empowering others who want to grow, Laura presented "Stand out! Amp Up Your Soft Skills in a Technical Environment" at the Women in Statistics and Data Science Conference. The enthusiasm and support of the conference community changed Laura and inspired her to amp up her own technical skills. She earned a six-month data analytics programming certificate from the UNC-Chapel Hill, and she is not done learning.

## Kateryna Lashko

Hometown: Lviv, Ukraine  
Citizenship: USA  
Languages: English, Ukrainian, Polish, Russian



### EDUCATION

- State University of New York at Binghamton  
B.S., Financial Economics, 2005
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Kateryna's fascination with data science and analytics stems from her love of puzzles and "out of the box thinking." As a passionate analytics student and practitioner, Kateryna strives to apply her keen leadership and creative problem-solving skills beyond the classroom.

Over the past decade, her passion for generating impactful data-driven insights and creative solutions awarded her opportunities to work and train with leading analysts and researchers in both private and non-profit sectors. Kateryna's team at Standard and Poor's (S&P 500) developed a rating model for public high schools in the US, which has been implemented by the *U.S. News & World Report* in its annual rankings. As a Quantitative Analyst at a research institute, Kateryna formed a deep interest in behavioral economics after working on several studies. Her research interests include data ethics, applications of data analytics for social good, real estate, and geo-spatial analysis. Kateryna's creative side, on the other hand, is expressed through her love of fashioning palpable data visualizations to help explain and simplify difficult analytical concepts.

In her spare time, Kateryna finds inspiration and enrichment in discovering the history and culture of new places. Her favorite places to visit include Europe, Hawaii, and Mexico. A zealous reader from a young age, some of Kateryna's favorite books are *Freakonomics*, *Predictably Irrational*, and *Nudge Theory*. Kateryna expresses her creativity via DIY interior and flower design projects. When not reading or traveling, you can find her at a soccer game, enjoying water sports, or playing a friendly game of poker.

## Zach Lewis

Hometown: Raleigh, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Economics, 2019  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Statistics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Professional: Advanced Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

Zach's determination has equipped him with the skills needed to reach his goals, including achieving the rank of Eagle Scout and earning two bachelor's degrees in four years while working part-time at a law firm. By applying his strong work ethic to his studies, he found a natural affinity towards math. Recognizing statistics as an application that incorporates problem-solving with mathematical theory, Zach chose to pursue a degree in the subject. During his undergraduate career, he took an elective economics class and found the matter to be an engaging way to apply his knowledge in statistics, motivating him to strive for a second degree.

Taking the initiative to engage with his community, Zach accepted a research position with Juntos NC, a non-profit organization that supports Latino high school students and their families by helping the students achieve higher education. Working alongside program coordinators, he focused on the task of evaluation by building surveys, analyzing results, and generating reports for involved partners across the state. One of the highlights of Zach's experience with Juntos was his involvement in its annual Summer Academy on NC State's campus. He led the development of evaluation metrics for the program and interacted with participants to obtain qualitative data that helped to inform the report he produced. His year-long evaluation efforts led to actionable results that allowed coordinators to restructure the program for subsequent years. Through this experience, he observed how analytics could be used to drive meaningful change.

Zach's hard-working attitude and determination have carried over into his personal life through health and exercise. Spending much of his free time lifting weights and running, he finds a sense of accomplishment from using analytics to track workouts and caloric intake to achieve his fitness goals.

## Yinxi (Evan) Li

Hometown: Chongqing, China  
Citizenship: China  
Language: English, Chinese



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Franklin and Marshall College  
B.A., *magna cum laude*, Mathematics; Music, minor in Computer Science, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

As both a musicologist and applied mathematician with a genuinely inquisitive and critical mind, Evan developed her passion for data science through interdisciplinary research. Evan's musicological studies during her undergraduate years enabled her to balance the intellectual and the emotional in her observations on music and society. For example, Evan explored the philosophical ideas of tragedy and the sublime from nineteenth-century German philosophers and analyzed Richard Wagner's *Ring Cycle* and its appropriation by the Third Reich. Eager to learn about different industries outside the classroom, Evan further applied her analytical skills in her internship as an asset analyst for the Housing Development Corporation MidAtlantic, a non-profit provider of affordable housing. The analytical and interdisciplinary nature of Evan's research helped her understand and interpret the context and story behind the real estate industry and asset management.

Evan's passion for data science grew with her experiences. Combining her subject knowledge of numerical analysis and music theory, Evan developed computer algorithms in MATLAB to detect and visualize recurrences of thematic sections within a music score. Later in the COMAP Math Modeling Contest, she and her team performed comprehensive data analysis on a large data set. Furthermore, Evan and her team utilized an Artificial Neural Network model to evaluate state energy profiles and forecast the energy productions of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas with an accuracy rate of 89%.

Other than dealing with numbers, Evan is a professionally trained vocal singer and conductor who enjoys performing and listening to music from diverse cultural contexts, ranging from British rock 'n' roll, romantic symphonic pieces, to Hindustani classical music. She also loves travelling and exploring the world, with her favorite cities being Berlin, Germany and Oaxaca, Mexico.

## Katlyn Limer

Hometown: Dallas, TX

Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.A., *cum laude*, Psychology, minor in Cognitive Science, 2015

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Katlyn's interest in data derives from her passion for working with people. As a data analyst, she hopes to address the gap between those collecting data and those who will benefit from the findings. During her undergraduate psychology studies, her research projects focused on two areas: (1) adult cognition and emotion and (2) community-engaged research in afterschool programs. This research sparked her desire to create value and find meaning in data that can enact change and improve lives.

Katlyn began her professional career in health care working to expand access to pediatric mental health. As a program coordinator, she worked on many close-knit teams, alongside other professionals from varying social and educational backgrounds. She also oversaw the undergraduate and volunteer activities within her division. The success of these projects depended on communication and collaboration. Her work with clinicians, patients, and families gave her an appreciation for the source of data: people. Understanding that data comes from and directly impacts people fuels her interest in analytics.

Outside of school and work, Katlyn never misses an opportunity to connect with others. She especially enjoys bonding and expanding her network through unique and challenging workout classes. She also enjoys running and hiking local trails with her husband and pup, and diving into the deep world of Netflix true crime documentaries.



## Kevin Lybrand

Hometown: Spartanburg, SC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Clemson University  
M.S., Bioengineering,  
B.S., *cum laude*, Bioengineering, 2013
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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Kevin is a curious person who has always searched for a deeper understanding of why things work the way they do. He engaged his curiosity in his early career by evaluating postmarket quality trends of medical device failures to initiate proactive solutions. While working for Teleflex, he received an Impact Award for planning, coordinating, and performing rework of nonconforming material on short notice. His swift action allowed the business unit to end the year \$288,000 below the forecasted backorder value. Kevin enjoyed the data analysis he encountered in his quality role, and he sought to perform more complex analyses than his position required. He began learning Python in his spare time and came to appreciate the power and potential of coding to manipulate large datasets and generate insights to help solve problems before they occur. Kevin looks forward to creating a significant impact by solving intricate problems using data science.

As part of his undergraduate honors thesis in bioengineering at Clemson University, Kevin was privileged to work as a research intern at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. The summer after his junior year was spent researching drug delivery and targeted cancer therapies using light-activated gold nanorods embedded in polymer thin films. This was a tremendous educational opportunity, and his summer in Southeast Asia instilled a passion for seeing the world and learning about other cultures.

Over the past few years, Kevin has pursued this passion by exploring the streets (and restaurants) of Tokyo, cliff jumping in Jamaica, and hiking through the mountains and rainforests of Peru. He also plays cello in the Raleigh Community Orchestra and cheers on the Clemson Tigers in whatever sport is in season. On his ideal day, Kevin would have friends over for a cookout and to watch college football.

## Brett Lytle

Hometown: Fairview, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Sport Management, minor in Statistics, 2015
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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The product of a small town outside of Asheville, North Carolina, Brett displayed an aptitude for math early on. Always his strongest subject in school, his penchant for working with numbers manifested itself through his love for sports. This passion, particularly for basketball and football, was only stimulated by the ability to research and explain trends in statistical data. The idea of using this data to predict future performances and make organizational decisions was the initial seed for his career aspirations.

After completing his undergraduate degree, Brett moved to Charlotte, NC, with the hopes of increased opportunity in a growing city. He landed a job in sales, where he was able to develop his interpersonal skills while working in a fast-paced environment. Despite his initial motivation being focused around sports, he found this experience incredibly rewarding, and it opened his eyes to numerous other career possibilities. Although he may no longer have tunnel vision on working in the sports industry, his passion for data and statistics is stronger than ever. Since learning of the MSA program at the Institute, Brett knew this was the path he wanted to take to begin the next chapter in his life.

Though Brett remains an avid sports fan, playing, attending, or watching games as often as he can, his interests extend beyond the arena. He also enjoys both music and travel. His favorite music is hip-hop or rap, preferring the old school sounds that convey a message, but he also thoroughly enjoys Motown and the classic rock of the '70s. Brett has been afforded more opportunities to appease his travel bug in recent years as well, taking a cross-country road trip after graduation and more recently celebrating his honeymoon with a Mediterranean cruise.

## Preston Daniel MacDonald

Hometown: Fayetteville, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Appalachian State University  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Mathematics, minors in Statistics and Computer Science, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

From fighting a structure fire at 4:00 AM to constructing structural equation models to help save the bees, Preston's pursuit to make a positive impact has shaped his life. Fresh out of high school, Preston volunteered at Cotton Fire Department where his passion and initiative earned him a position as a part-time firefighter. Through collaboration, his team conquered dangerous situations to rescue those in need. Humbled by the harsh realities witnessed as a first responder, Preston was instilled with a calling to maximize his academic potential through online coursework and eventually as a full-time student. With an aptitude for problem-solving, Preston competed in programming competitions and served as a tutor throughout his academic career.

Preston's impressive background earned him a position as a Data Analyst for the Center of Analytics Research and Education. He provided data-driven business recommendations to executive members of the Hivetracks software company. Additionally, he provided an entity-relationship model of the Hivetracks' database to map out possible avenues to apply analytics. Continuing as a project manager, he used the technology acceptance model to proactively improve software by modeling behavioral intentions of Hivetracks users and how it translates to actual use of the software. Furthermore, Preston was on a team that prototyped apiary disease movement in the United States. The extensive bee research attracted attention from the United Nations, building support for future research.

Outside of work, Preston's perfect day is driving his manual Jeep Wrangler on a 2-lane back road with the top down listening to rock music. As a car enthusiast, Preston enjoys hand-washing, detailing, and working on his car. In his free time, he enjoys playing strategy computer games to stimulate his problem-solving abilities.

## Chandni Malhotra

Hometown: New Delhi, India  
Citizenship: India, U.S. permanent residency pending  
Languages: English, Hindi



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Statistics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

Chandni enjoys finding patterns amidst chaos. Her passion for science and strategic thinking led her to return to school as an adult undergraduate student at NC State. Multiple undergraduate research stints have not been able to sate her love for big data yet. Skilled in handling large datasets, she employed her mathematical and statistical skills in various investigative studies. Her areas of expertise include survey analysis, predictive modeling, and spatial analysis. Chandni is mindful of the critical points involved in analysis, from problem formulation to articulation of results. She has co-authored multiple research papers with a team of doctors and nurses at Duke Health. She was inducted into the US National Statistics Honor Society for her academic and research accomplishments and is a recipient of the Outstanding Research Award by NC State's Department of Statistics.

A native of India, Chandni graduated with a bachelor's degree in biotechnology from Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla. In the years before moving to the US, she worked as an underwriter at WIPRO Limited. She analyzed and reported on financial and health data and completed initial underwriting on insurance policies. She has enjoyed professionally and personally enriching experiences in diverse cultural settings. Given her passion for working with data, her interpersonal skills, and a multidisciplinary undergraduate background, a career in analytics is perfect for her. Recognizing the growing need for analytics professionals, she looks forward to applying her statistical expertise to solving problems in the real world.

Chandni maintains her perspective by hiking and tent camping from the mountains to the coast with her husband. When in town, she can be found tending to her plants or experimenting in her kitchen, or she could be in the garage restoring old furniture. She also has a burgeoning collection of coasters from local breweries.

## Meg Malone

Hometown: Raleigh, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Elon University  
B.A., *magna cum laude*, Media Analytics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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In an increasingly digital world, Meg believes that there is an imperative need for analytics professionals who are familiar with the evolving landscape of digital media. Meg chose to enter the challenging field of media analytics at Elon University, where she discovered that she loved discerning and sharing patterns in data.

Her undergraduate professors recognized Meg's inherent curiosity and encouraged her to pursue several research projects during her time at Elon — projects that gave her hands-on experience analyzing data. She used quantitative and qualitative tools and methodologies to scrutinize the rhetoric of an anti-vaccination media outlet and research the effects of marijuana legalization on mental health and crime. Stepping into the field of survey creation administration, she evaluated the results of two surveys regarding religious expression on social media and the privacy concerns of students. These projects challenged her problem-solving skills and gave her opportunities to practice text analysis, data visualization, and professional writing as well.

Meg's interest in communications, strategic thinking, and analytical skills converged during her tenure as the News Editor of Elon News Network. In this role, Meg coordinated and collaborated with a large team of reporters, photographers, editors, and producers to routinely publish articles and a weekly newspaper. This role taught her the value of teamwork, and Meg thrived as a leader working amongst a diverse group of people.

A native North Carolinian, Meg is a longtime fan of the Carolina Hurricanes and enjoys exploring the state from the mountains to the coast with her beagle, Baker. When she has the chance to travel out of state, Meg enjoys snorkeling and scuba diving.

## Michael Marchetta

Hometown: Raleigh, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ William Peace University  
B.S., *cum laude*, Business Analytics; Business Administration, 2017

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For as long as Michael can remember, he has had an interest in Formula One racing and all things fast. The passion that each team puts into optimizing their drivers, cars, and strategies had Michael hooked. As the cars lapped the circuit at blinding speeds, Michael noticed how a team's strategy was key to its performance in a race. Whether it was analyzing how long different tire compounds would last before the cars would come to pit, or how drivers found the optimal engine modes to balance between power and fuel consumption, Michael loved seeing how teams used data to make these split-second decisions to improve their race results.

Michael found he could apply this passion for racing to real world problems by optimizing systems and processes he encountered. During his time as a financial analyst in the pharmaceutical and clinical research industries, Michael led the development of tools and assisted with the deployment of systems. These included new revenue recognition processes, gross profit and cost analysis calculations, and accounts receivable wire transactions—all of which were ultimately implemented across the multiple organizations with which Michael has worked. He loves seeing how systems and tools work, breaking them down, and making them easier to operate in a more efficient manner for any team with which he is involved. Michael is energized by applying data to understand how and why processes operate, and how they can be optimized using data-driven solutions.

In his free time, Michael enjoys spending time outdoors, running the American Tobacco Trail with his two golden retrievers, Enzo and Dino; reading the latest book by Michael Lewis; and traveling. In his next adventure, Michael hopes to drive the length of the Blue Ridge Parkway—one of the most scenic highways in the United States.



## McKinnon Martin

Hometown: Rutherfordton, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.A., Economics, minors in History; Mathematical Decision Sciences, 2017
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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McKinnon spent the previous two years designing and developing Patient Pulse, a web-based application (via R Shiny) for Syneos Health, one of the world's largest clinical research organizations. The application uses a supervised regression model built upon patient sentiment data to provide burden estimates for both the entire clinical trial and individual visits, which enables research teams to identify potential risks to recruitment and retention. Additional functionalities of Patient Pulse include recommendations that highlight specific changes to reduce patient burden, a reporting function that compiles the output of the application into a Microsoft Word document formatted with company templates, and persistent storage to write and load data directly to the company's data lake.

While McKinnon was pursuing an economics degree from UNC-Chapel Hill, he participated in a paid internship for Watsco, the country's largest distributor of HVAC equipment, parts, and supplies with annual revenue exceeding \$4 billion. There, he led an initiative under the direction of Watsco's Logistics Manager to assist in the renegotiation of company-wide logistics contracts with UPS and FedEx. Using R, he created an algorithm that reverse-engineered UPS's and FedEx's pricing schemes to predict shipping costs under stipulations of current proposals and provided strategic recommendations that helped save an estimated \$1.7 million over a four-year contract period.

During his time at UNC-Chapel Hill, McKinnon was also a member of the 2013 football team and proud recipient of the "Walk-on Player of the Week Award," which was awarded to him after he received a brutal blind-side hit from now All-Pro tight end, Eric Ebron. McKinnon's perfect day includes watching the Tar Heels play and relaxing on a pontoon boat in the mountains of North Carolina.

## Natalie Martin

Hometown: Atlanta, GA  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of Georgia  
B.B.A., Marketing, 2019  
B.B.A., Risk Management and Insurance, 2019  
Certificate in Actuarial Science, 2019

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By embracing challenges, Natalie indeed developed a passion for analytics. While studying at the Terry College of Business at the University of Georgia, she not only noted the integral role of data in the modern business world but also saw analytics as a way to acquire new skills and assist firms in answering difficult questions. As an intern at UPS, Natalie provided analytical assistance to the Finance and Accounting Vision and Transformation Program, a project centered around using automation to increase efficiency in the company. Although she was not a formally trained data analyst, she rose to the challenge and was a vital player in the success of her team. This incredible experience prompted her to pursue a Master of Science in Analytics and become the data-driven professional she desires to be.

Natalie uses her analytical skills not only professionally but in her personal life as well. During her time at UGA, she was an active member of Delta Phi Epsilon. She held many leadership positions in the chapter, but the VP of Operations proved to be the most challenging. In that role, she expanded her leadership experience and developed financial budgeting and forecasting skills. These new capabilities allowed her to create a \$400,000 budget that proved successful for the large sorority. During Delta Phi Epsilon's International Leadership Forum in 2018, she was a part of a team from her chapter that won an award for financial excellence.

In her spare time, Natalie enjoys traveling and volunteering. She recently visited Costa Rica but plans to head to Italy or Greece on her next adventure. As far as volunteering, she primarily works with food banks to eliminate food insecurity. Natalie is always ready for the next chance to push herself in any aspect of her life.

## Kevin McDowell

Hometown: Baltimore, MD  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of Maryland at College Park  
B.S., Finance; Economics, 2015
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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Kevin's love of analytics began at an early age while playing and watching baseball during the "Moneyball" era. This passion intensified during his economics and statistics classes, which opened his eyes to the world of quantifying and understanding complex relationships. Outside of the classroom, he enhanced his leadership and communication skills at the University of Maryland through his job as a facilitator at the on-campus challenge course, which served both the university and corporations with team-building events.

Kevin spent the past four years working as a financial valuation analyst for a consulting firm near Washington D.C., specializing in the valuation of middle market debt and equity securities. Throughout this experience, he gained exposure to several different industries and was particularly intrigued by challenging valuations of companies in the retail, digital media, transportation, and healthcare spaces. In addition to performing diverse, technical financial analyses, his duties included communicating results and conclusions to clients, managing a team of analysts in India, reviewing coworkers' analyses, and creating more efficient processes. He also created and improved upon key deliverables presented to clients' executive-level personnel, and regularly represented the company at on-site client engagements. Kevin enrolled in the MSA program with the primary goal of finding an opportunity to apply his analytical talents and leadership abilities in ways that have a substantial, positive impact on today's world.

In his free time, Kevin is an avid reader of 20<sup>th</sup> century American fiction, as well as modern science fiction and fantasy novels. He enjoys cooking Indian and Mediterranean food, traveling both domestically and abroad, and attending baseball games with his family and friends. Music is Kevin's greatest passion; he loves to curate playlists, play guitar, write music, and attend concerts.

## Catherine McSorley

Hometown: Cary, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of Wisconsin at Madison  
B.S., Mathematics; Statistics, Certificate in Computer Sciences, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

A lifelong interest in mathematics and a desire to positively impact her community through her career led Catherine to the Institute for Advanced Analytics. At UW-Madison, Catherine became involved in orientation and new student programming. Serving in logistics, operations, and communications on behalf of the UW Center for the First Year Experience, she became passionate about student experiences, particularly regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion. She strengthened her problem-solving skills and had the opportunity to present her research on conflict transformation at a professional conference. After being promoted to an intern and taking on a supervisory role, she enjoyed sharing her love of inclusive practices, language, and policies.

While studying abroad at the University of Glasgow in Scotland, Catherine took a class in multivariate statistical methods and became fascinated with their applications. She further applied this interest by pursuing a Certificate in Computer Science and studying coursework in cartography and geographic information systems upon returning to Wisconsin. In these classes, she developed several projects that honed her passion for data-driven storytelling. In one project, she created a data visualization and map design display on congressional districting in North Carolina. In another, she investigated migrant flow matrix data using factor analysis. Then, in a collaborative capstone, she created an interactive map and teaching tool about Native American land loss. The combination of design, quantitative tools, and human-centered data in these projects was particularly motivating for her and affirmed her trajectory down the path of analytics.

In her free time, Catherine enjoys drawing and painting depictions of favorite photos captured on her travels, watching movies and television shows in French to practice her language skills, and exploring nature trails around North Carolina.

## Kasia Michalska

Hometown: Warsaw, Poland  
Citizenship: Poland  
Languages: English, Polish



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Quinnipiac University  
M.B.A., 2017
- ▶ Warsaw School of Economics  
Master of Economics, 2013  
Bachelor of Finance and Accounting, 2011
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

Kasia is an experienced analyst who excelled in the insurance industry. With work experiences at both Travelers Insurance and United HealthGroup in Connecticut, she can be counted on to identify trends affecting the business bottom line and provide a framework for rate negotiations with healthcare providers.

Her passion for numbers was ignited early on in her career. She started as an analyst for the Office of the Polish Prime Minister, where she used her critical thinking skills to estimate the costs and benefits of government regulations. Her analysis of drug spending patterns of 38 million patients over five years was published by Harvard Kennedy School.

When it comes to communicating complex ideas in an understandable way, Kasia has proven her abilities by authoring a 140-page book on economics for children aged 10-12. She enjoyed the challenge of explaining financial terms such as inflation, credit, and profit in an uncomplicated way. The popularity of her work is proven by the 50,000 copies sold since 2013 with multiple translations completed. Because of her impactful work in Poland, she was one of two young professionals awarded a Polish-American Business Leaders Scholarship to pursue MBA studies in the U.S.

Outside of professional life, Kasia enjoys spending her Friday evenings with friends over home-cooked potluck dinners while playing strategic board games. She has yet to encounter a board game more captivating than The Settlers of Catan. When she feels mentally exhausted, she dances the Argentine tango to balance things out.

## Liesl Miranda

Hometown: Dunellen, NJ  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Textile Engineering, minor in Statistics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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In high school, Liesl loved weaving through the racks of clothing at local thrift stores, enamored by the way the different textures and patterns could combine into a wearable story. As she went on to pursue her undergraduate degree, she marveled at the way the layers of the story unfolded when learning about the individual fibers, yarns, weaving, and dyeing of textiles. Not only did she delve into the manufacturing steps, she was challenged to improve these processes through the use of analytics. During her first internship at a nonwovens company, Liesl developed a new method of tracking KPI's across a production line through a personalized dashboard. It was there that she first realized her passion to share the analytical stories held within the mysteries of numbers.

Liesl pursued opportunities in manufacturing throughout her undergraduate career. As a quality engineering intern for a plastic injection molding company, Liesl explored manufacturing data, finding insights pulled from the production floor. In order to understand the full story the data was revealing, Liesl collaborated with production workers to pinpoint a source of plastic waste within the facility. This combination of analytics and human insight resulted in potential savings of millions of pieces of plastic waste annually.

When she has free time, you will find Liesl cruising around Raleigh asking baristas about the tasting notes in their coffee beans, eating croissants from local bakeries, or hunting for treasures at the same thrift stores she frequented in high school.



## Will Misenheimer

Hometown: Archdale, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Charlotte  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Mathematics: Statistics, minor in Data Science, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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Bridging data science with his personal interests, Will established himself as a diligent, highly adept learner early in his career. Alongside an associate statistics professor at UNC-Charlotte, Will engineered a list of simple predictors that were implemented in a variety of machine learning algorithms to predict the outcomes of NFL games. He trained his most robust model on data from the 2013 and 2014 seasons and successfully predicted the results of 2015-2016 contests for the NFC South, NFC East, and AFC West divisions at a rate of almost 64%, achieving greater accuracy than many professionals. This project is currently pending review for submission to the *Journal of Quantitative Analysis in Sports*.

Will thrived as a Data Analytics Intern at the Husqvarna Group, completing a sales opportunity project to quantify lost-profits due to under-consumed and counterfeit goods. His work identified approximately \$62 million in prospective revenue. Later, while working as a Data Analytics Intern at SentryOne during his senior year of undergraduate studies, Will dove deeper into the realms of analytics by creating Microsoft Power BI reports, cleaning data in Salesforce CRM, and performing Extract-Transform-Load (ETL) procedures using Microsoft SQL Server. However, Will's most self-fulfilling contribution to SentryOne was the development of a prototypical, continuous learning lead scoring model. Overcoming the challenges he faced during the completion of the lead scoring project spurred his hunger for data science and desire to quantify complex phenomena.

When he is not striving for data-driven discoveries, Will enjoys playing disc golf with his rescue dog, Utley, and sustaining the highs and lows that come with being a fanatic of the Philadelphia Phillies and Carolina Panthers. Having completed a statistical analysis of his own disc golf drives, he was pleased to find that the distance of his forehand drive was statistically indifferent from the US average.

## Iqra Munawar

Hometown: High Point, NC  
Citizenship: USA, Pakistan  
Languages: English, Urdu



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Appalachian State University  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Accounting, 2018
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

Iqra's curiosity and eagerness to learn about different cultures and the world led her to study abroad in Thailand and explore the streets of Seoul, South Korea independently. Her first solo traveling experience resulted in many long-lasting relationships, cultural experiences, and great memories. From these adventures, she learned that sometimes you must overcome your fear of not knowing to expand your knowledge and explore the unknown.

In addition to seeking new knowledge and learning, Iqra's growth mindset helped her to improve her communication skills through her jobs in tutoring and accounting. In her tutoring position, she worked with students from diverse backgrounds. To improve their grades, she made sure that the students understood the importance of the subject they were studying. She achieved this goal by giving them examples from everyday life. For instance, when she tutored math to football players, she showed them how math was used in football games to calculate their statistics and scores. Furthermore, in her accounting position, she oversaw a group of three members to help convert clients' data from old software to new software. To complete her task, she communicated with people of all levels from partners to interns. She was recognized by her managers for her communication skills and dedication to finishing projects on time.

Through her work and research, Iqra learned about the field of data science. She took an online course to self-study SQL and noticed that her love for business and math will provide her with an array of opportunities in the realm of analytics to help make life easier for people and the world.

In her spare time, when Iqra's not traveling, she enjoys spending time with her family, cooking Pakistani cuisines, and listening to music from around the world.

## Rachel Nagley

Hometown: Forest, VA  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Valedictorian, Industrial Engineering, 2018
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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Rachel strives to optimize herself and the world around her by eagerly pursuing diverse opportunities. As a Park Scholar at NC State, Rachel built a strong community and developed into an enthusiastic scholar and leader. Her passion for optimization led her to shine in the Industrial and Systems Engineering program—obtaining membership into the Alpha Pi Mu Honor Society and excelling in the first advanced Python programming course ever offered by the department.

Rachel continually challenges herself to explore and enhance the impact she can make with her analytical skills. Previous internships in the manufacturing industry, in the entertainment world, and with the federal government have provided her with a unique set of experiences and a broad perspective to apply to new problem sets. One of her favorite ways to apply her experiences and skills is to serve others. As Director of the Feed the Pack Food Pantry at NC State, Rachel effectively leveraged the talents of each person on her eight-member team and applied analytics to improve pantry operations. The team was able to bring over 1200 pounds of donated food into the pantry each month and to raise awareness about the issue of food insecurity. Rachel's optimization mindset energizes her to constantly think about how to maximize resources and to fearlessly test out new ideas.

To make the most of her spare time, Rachel loves planning fun-packed vacations all over the world, whipping up flavor-filled meals for her family and friends, and mastering new yoga poses. She looks forward to each day as an opportunity to learn and grow.

## Ragi Nayak

Hometown: Cary, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.S.P.H., Biostatistics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Advanced Programmer for SAS 9  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

Ragi is a natural-born data scientist with an expansive interest in making sense of complex problems. Her love for data started as a child when she would track the number of apples growing from the tree in her backyard and evolved to more advanced projects in college, where she surveyed undergraduate students about their sentiments towards binge drinking. Once given a problem, Ragi sets out to learn everything about the topic at hand. She understands that any scientist must know the data in order to conduct strong analyses and drive powerful insights.

Ragi's need to understand data served her well during her undergraduate career. Trained as a biostatistician at the Gillings School of Public Health, she got hands-on experience with clinical trial datasets in her courses that honed her analytical skills and sparked a tenacious need to expand her knowledge of statistics. Ragi used her affinity for analytics during her internship at the Special Olympics to implement better data-collection practices. Her report on data missingness in athlete record sheets was used by the Special Olympics to collect better data on their athletes, and consequently, avoid wrongful disqualifications and fraudulent scores in the upcoming Special Olympics. This internship and variety of biostatistics projects showed her that she could combine her love of numbers with helping people—two things essential to a meaningful career for Ragi. With a desire to follow her passion, she set out for the Institute for Advanced Analytics to learn how to combine her analytical skills with big data.

When she is not on Twitter catching up on the latest news in analytics or politics, you can find her practicing Bhangra, an energetic and powerful style of Indian dance. Practicing dance has always been Ragi's outlet and what she enjoys doing most, other than eating.

## Travis Nofle

Hometown: Winston-Salem, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Business Administration, minor in Accounting, 2010
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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Having almost a decade of experience in investment banking and capital markets at Credit Suisse, Travis has worked in various roles earning a promotion to Assistant Vice President in 2015. He has gained experience analyzing data and providing useful reporting to banking teams and senior management and has years of experience building relationships across teams and regions. Working in industry analytics and strategy, he is experienced with various types of data and reporting tools. A senior member of his team, he led several significant projects to evolve business processes, one of which earned him his Lean Six Sigma Green Belt certification in 2013. He always strives to provide effective, polished deliverables in an efficient manner and has also received extensive training in professional development, coaching, and leadership.

Travis's passions are optimization and insight, passions in which the field of data science aligns directly. The information age presents endless opportunities to utilize data effectively and accomplish goals that may not seem possible. Embracing this new frontier and enhancing the quality of life for individuals provides him with great intrinsic value. Additionally, providing companies with effective solutions to build their brand, profits, and goodwill is exciting and fulfilling to him.

Travis enjoys hobbies that are both technical and creative. A lifelong musician, he knows the discipline it takes to learn the piano and saxophone and express music artistically. Similarly, he enjoys photography as it blends the technical nature of the camera with the creative element of the craft. He also likes to cook for his family and to travel; his most notable trips are playing a concert in the Sydney Opera House in 2008 and visiting Singapore in 2018. He also enjoys volunteering with the SPCA animal shelter and spending time with his wife, Anna, and their two rescue dogs, Lucky and Rusty.



## Urbain Nounagnon

Hometown: Ivory Coast  
Citizenship: USA  
Languages: English, French



### EDUCATION

- University of North Carolina at Charlotte  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Systems Engineering, 2012

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Turning challenges into opportunities best describes Urbain's mindset. He moved to the United States in 2007 with his wife and their eighteen-month-old son. The many challenges he faced did not erode his goal-oriented personality. He managed to complete his undergraduate engineering degree on a full-time schedule with honors in three and a half years, while working full-time, and adjusting to American culture.

Urbain has accrued over seventeen years of work experience in the corrugated packaging, mailing, and automotive-fastener industries. His work history demonstrates success in leadership and project coordination roles. Throughout most of his career, he deployed and maintained quality management systems in compliance with international standards. As a result of his effective coordination, he led companies to obtain and maintain certification status. In 2018, thanks in part to his efforts, the company at Urbain's last employment received the prestigious General Motor Supplier Quality Excellence Award, given for recognition of a supplier's ability to meet a stringent set of quality and performance criteria.

Quality engineering inspired and increased Urbain's passion for analytics. In 2016, he passed the American Society for Quality's Certified Quality Engineer exam. This demonstrated his interest in improving process efficiency based on data collection, analysis, and effective decision making. Urbain's quest for honing his skills in analytics to better contribute to the "Big Data Challenges" led him to the Institute for Advanced Analytics.

Outside of work, Urbain is best known for helping others. He is a member of the Knights of Columbus, a fraternal organization engaged in charity. Urbain and his two boys raised money to support mentally handicapped children. In addition to the help provided through the Knights of Columbus, Urbain enjoys reaching out to people around him in need of support.



## Krishna Patel

Hometown: Cary, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- East Carolina University  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Economics, 2019

As an avid butterfly enthusiast throughout her childhood, Krishna spent countless hours observing caterpillars in her backyard. Recording all the findings in a composition notebook, she would often find herself evaluating the data, recognizing patterns, and making predictions. Her unique infatuation with butterflies catalyzed her enthusiasm for analytics.

While seeking out more opportunities to gain a better understanding of the analytics profession, Krishna served as the Director of Information for the Financial Management Association (FMA). During her time with FMA, she worked with the other executive officers to provide members with experiences to further their knowledge of careers in the finance industry. Krishna assisted in organizing guest speakers, networking events, and planning a trip to visit financial institutions in New York. Interacting with professionals in the analytics field helped her discover analytics as a career path.

Outside her passion for analytics, Krishna enjoys serving in the community. As a Lead Academic Mentor for East Carolina University's Pirate Academic Success Center, she helped incoming first-year students adjust to college, discover their careers, and work towards becoming successful students. In April, Krishna went on a weeklong mission trip to Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. She volunteered with the organization, Stronger than Maria, to help rebuild, repaint, and power wash the homes of those affected by Hurricane Maria.

In her spare time, Krishna enjoys playing board games with her friends. Some of her favorites include Machi Koro, Settlers of Catan, and Pandemic. As a genuine foodie and a vegetarian, Krishna is always looking for new vegetarian-friendly restaurants to sample. She also likes to relieve stress by running and biking.

## Payal Patel

Hometown: Morehead City, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.S., with Distinction, Information Science, 2017
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
ITIL v3 Foundation Certification

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Payal is an ambitious adventurer who enjoys exploring different places, trying new things, and experimenting with innovative ideas. Her adventurous spirit has led to hiking in the Grand Canyon, climbing the O2 Arena in London, and zip lining in the snow at the Jungfrauoch in Switzerland. Payal's passion for pursuing new experiences manifests itself in her work. During her undergraduate career, she interned at the Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise, where she was immersed in the world of UNC startups through collecting and analyzing data for the innovation and entrepreneurship database.

After graduating from UNC-Chapel Hill, Payal joined the rotational Technology Analyst Program at Credit Suisse, where she gained experience in two vastly different roles. As a production support analyst, she resolved issues for several bank-wide applications that spanned the realms of legal, human resources, and financial data. She then transitioned to a data analyst role, where she dove into the trading landscape to create a control mechanism that provided valuable insight on trade processing and validation methods. Through this role, Payal learned about the tools and processes used in data lake development, data governance, and data analysis. Eager to dive deeper into analytics, Payal sought out an additional team project, where she developed time-series forecasting models to make predictions on market data. This project led to the reduction of thousands of false market data exceptions previously generated with static rules.

When she is not looking for a new adventure, Payal can be found reading a good book or supporting a local STEM initiative. As a woman in STEM, Payal understands the importance of building the talent pipeline and recruiting women in STEM fields, which is why she continues to encourage and support others in her community through organizations such as Girls Who Code and Triangle Women in STEM.

## Samir Patel

Hometown: London, United Kingdom  
Citizenship: USA, UK  
Languages: English, Gujarati



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., Statistics, 2015  
B.S., Mathematics Education, 2015
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

One of the most important ties Samir has to his home is rooted in his passion and enthusiasm for soccer. From an early age, Samir has been enamored with soccer statistics. He has spent many late nights scouring databases for his favorite team, Manchester United, to analyze the newest data and to best understand the latest trends in player formations, tactics, and breakout stars. While this interest never panned out to an actual soccer career, Samir continued to share his passion for statistics and curiosity by teaching common core math classes to high school students.

After college graduation, Samir wanted to use his teaching experience to take on a new challenge, venturing into the world of educational research at RTI International, a non-profit research company. There, he further enhanced his statistics knowledge by imputing demographics and running non-response bias adjustments for middle school surveys. He also garnered experience by creating weights for better metrics and a more accurate representation of the population during survey selection.

Outside of work, Samir enjoys challenging himself in other ways. To stay active, he likes to participate in running competitions. To date, he has completed a 5k, 8k, 10k, and a half-marathon and soon hopes to add a full marathon to that list. On other days, Samir enjoys trying to recreate nostalgic and cultural family dishes like vagharli roti. Samir strives to recreate his grandmother's flavors, albeit with a little bit less success.

## Urmila Patil

Hometown: Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India

Citizenship: India

Languages: English, Marathi, Hindi



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Shivaji University  
M.Eng., Civil Engineering, 2005  
B.Eng., Civil Engineering, 2001

Urmila's best qualities are analytical thinking, problem-solving skills, and a strong drive to succeed. She has lived in different cultures and worked in many different fields, which has given her a unique perspective towards problem-solving. She has also learned that many business problems can be addressed by analyzing data volume, metrics, and patterns. Her experience has reinforced her interest and fascination towards data science and analytics.

Urmila has great business acumen in the health insurance industry. In her most recent experience as a subject matter expert at ACS, she spent a lot of time analyzing patient, provider, and company data to see how the health industry can benefit from underlying data analytics technologies and capabilities. Her ideas about building analytics and predictive models using the transactional and metadata of providers' and customers' demographics will provide a solid foundation to solve many business problems in the healthcare sector.

As a database developer at Intec, Urmila gained hands-on experience in data streaming, collection, aggregation, and normalization. She has been part of data migration across various systems. She understands the mammoth efforts involved in solving real business problems using data analytics.

Urmila is a willing volunteer and dedicates many hours to neighborhood schools, helping students both in the classroom and with extracurricular activities. She has served as an Odyssey of the Mind head coach for her boys' schools and led the team to the state championships in many different tournaments. She is persistent, an astute observer, and a market-aware person. Urmila is a hiking enthusiast who motivates her peers and has led many hiking trips and excursions.

## Jackson Perry

Hometown: Providence, RI  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Worcester Polytechnic Institute  
B.S., with Distinction, Mathematics; Psychology, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

Team is everything to Jackson. Over the last fourteen years, he has enjoyed an illustrious competitive swim career, earning recognition on the Academic All-American Team for the last three years. His leadership skills and emphasis on team cohesion also earned him three straight Best Teammate awards for his college swim program.

Jackson's team-first attitude extended outside the pool and into the classroom. The group-based curriculum at his undergraduate school pushed Jackson to complete multiple high-level projects with his peers. In his senior project, his multi-disciplinary team worked in conjunction with a leading fantasy sports company. Over the course of nine months, they built a predictive model for the outcome of contests based on various categorical data and time series information. This project earned the Provost Award for Best Major Qualifying Project in Computer Science and an Honorable Mention in the mathematics department.

Jackson's myriad skills working in teams also paved the way for professional success. His work experience took place mostly in a research setting. For the past two summers, he has contributed to groundbreaking work in education and microorganism mobility research. Jackson developed model simulations for various microbiological interactions, assisting in the verification of analytical results from graduate students. He also contributed to a first-of-its-kind algebra educational software, where he analyzed experimental data and modified the user interface alongside seven other students.

Jackson enjoys maintaining an active lifestyle via training for triathlons. Such a lifestyle helps mediate his burgeoning passion for baking. At heart, Jackson is a lifelong teacher, coach, and learner driven by the desire to be part of a great team.

## Rachel Powell

Hometown: Charlotte, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Auburn University  
M.S., Biology, 2018
- ▶ Meredith College  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Biology, 2016
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

After many rounds of experiments, Rachel quickly realized keeping her research plants alive was not one of her strengths. Needing to find a new thesis research project, her focus shifted to analyzing plant genomes, sparking an interest in the data analytics field. Through this research, Rachel created a novel technique for assessing genetic conservation, which is published in Nature's *Scientific Reports*. To expand upon her newfound skills, Rachel enrolled in a Data Analytics and Visualization Boot Camp through UNC-Chapel Hill. Through team-based work and real-life data analysis, she realized data analytics was one of her strengths. Combined with years of working as a researcher and a graduate teaching assistant, she prides herself on her ability to explain complicated and conceptual topics to a wide range of audiences in written and oral presentations.

When not spending time on the command line, Rachel's love for problem-solving, exploring, and taking on new challenges extends into her free time as well. Rachel's primary hobby is hunting down the best Thai restaurants. Sometimes foregoing a sought-after landmark or photo opportunity, Rachel's main goal is finding the best bowl of Pad Thai in every city to which she travels. Rachel also spends time remodeling a recently purchased fixer-upper. Working with her dad, Rachel has learned carpentry, electrical, tiling, and other numerous skills that fulfill her deep love of problem-solving. On her journey to visit every North Carolina State Park, Rachel enjoys exploring new trails with her four-legged best friend Esther. But more than anything, Rachel's true passion is cheering on her Auburn Tigers each football season. Her favorite memory from her years at Auburn was storming the field after defeating the University of Alabama in the Iron Bowl.



## Alexander Preiss

Hometown: Raleigh, NC  
Citizenship: USA  
Languages: English, Spanish



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
Master of International Studies, 2015
- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.A., with Distinction, Psychology, minor in Hispanic Studies, 2009
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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Sandy thrives at the intersection of data and people. He balances technical chops and strategic thinking with the ability to connect with diverse audiences and get them excited about analytics. With polished writing and speaking skills, Sandy has presented his work in settings ranging from academic journals to the CEO's office. His colleagues have praised his approach to communicating complex concepts in an accessible, action-oriented way.

After earning his master's, Sandy spent four years managing the evaluation of multimillion-dollar public health programs. At the American Cancer Society (ACS), Sandy built systems to collect and use new kinds of data on HPV vaccination interventions. His work showed leaders how the ACS could evaluate its public health programs with an increased level of rigor. During his tenure, HPV vaccination became a new priority for the ACS, in large part due to the strong evidence base and data systems Sandy had built for the work.

At Ipas, an international nonprofit, Sandy managed a complex database that stored all the organization's programmatic data. He translated business needs from technical and non-technical staff into database structures and reports. He also traveled across Africa to train staff on data entry and data use. His work at Ipas, along with two years of living and working in Spain and Ecuador, has given Sandy great appreciation for the unique energy that intercultural teams can create.

In addition to solving complex problems with data, Sandy and his fiancé, Dani, also love flying downhill on mountain bikes, cooking vast quantities of food for meal prep, and playing with their cat.

## Sunny Qin

Hometown: Jingmen, Hubei, China  
Citizenship: China, US Permanent Resident  
Languages: English, Chinese Mandarin



### EDUCATION

- University of Denver  
B.S., Business Analytics, minor in Finance, 2017

As a product of entrepreneurial parents who moved frequently, Sunny became someone who can easily adapt and shine in any new environment. Passionate in experimenting with small business ventures ever since she was young, Sunny started her new adventure across the ocean in the U.S. as a business student.

While searching for her passion and cultivating her curiosity for learning, Sunny took a new internship every summer throughout college. With her natural communication and networking skills, she became the first international student to work as a financial advisor at the Denver branch of Northwestern Mutual. Having worked as a data analyst in several internships and seeing her family business thrive by embracing business intelligence, she saw the impact analyzing data can make on business decisions, which motivated her to pursue a career in analytics.

As a marketing insight analyst for AAA Carolinas, Sunny dedicated her time to investigating membership insights and developing strategies for membership retention and new member acquisition. The membership renewal performance reports her team designed played a major role in detecting underperforming subgroups and gave the senior executive a clear path for action. While supporting the marketing department for multiple lines of business, Sunny demonstrated her passion for storytelling through data by presenting exceptional visualization reports and dashboards to the senior executives and marketing managers.

Outside of school, you can find Sunny adding to her artistic portfolio by drawing her favorite celebrities with charcoal and pastel on her easel. Sunny is enthusiastic about meeting new people and developing deep friendships. She enjoys singing, playing the piano and drums, and going to '80s R&B concerts. As an amateur Chinese gourmet chef, Sunny loves cooking for her friends and family and sharing her secret homemade recipes.

## Lahari Revuri

Hometown: Raleigh, NC  
Citizenship: USA  
Languages: English, Telugu, French



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Computer Science, minors in French; Sociology, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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Lahari explores the world through the lens of data and has always been keen on bringing this characteristic to the forefront of their career. During undergraduate studies, Lahari eagerly searched for research opportunities in labs whose focus ranged from cognitive science to machine learning. At the Data-Driven Decisions Lab at NC State University, they preprocessed healthcare data for a neural network designed to predict sepsis. While at the lab, they also worked with the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina to forecast in-kind donations using time series models. Lahari presented the results of their research at the State of North Carolina Undergraduate Research and Creativity Symposium among students from across the state.

These various undergraduate research experiences made it impossible for Lahari to ignore the ubiquity of models that affect every aspect of peoples' lives. Having presented to both the general public and highly technical audiences, Lahari endeavors to create compelling visualizations that can inform any audience about both the pervasiveness and usefulness of data. Understanding the impact of data has also pushed them to evaluate every graph and model encountered while reading the news or research papers. Lahari strives to raise awareness about faulty analysis when they encounter it and does so by sharing and discussing these articles openly with friends.

Lahari enjoys developing problem-solving and conflict resolution skills through weekly sessions of Dungeons & Dragons, and they have a particular penchant for derailing the intended storyline in entirely unexpected and novel ways. Data plays a role as important as any character in these games. Lahari revels in optimizing predicted damage output and projecting the value of abilities over time, much to the dismay of the game runner.

## Jonathan Rice

Hometown: Charleston, SC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Wofford College  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Applied Mathematics, minor in Computer Science, 2017  
B.A., *summa cum laude*, Biology, 2017
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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Studying human population genetics for the last two years at the graduate level, Jonathan leveraged statistical methods and parallel computing to search for signals of natural selection in the human genome. In his research at the University of California, Merced, he worked on teams with international collaborators and presented his work at SMBE 2018, an international molecular biology conference in Yokohama, Japan. Jonathan also produced a research paper that is being reviewed for publication in a well-known scientific journal.

While in Merced, Jonathan was selected for a National Science Foundation funded program in interdisciplinary computational science that gave him the opportunity to work on projects outside genetics. These projects included financial market analysis and building sports team ranking systems. Applying the same tools used in his graduate work, Jonathan realized that his skills translated to other interesting datasets. Jonathan continues to work on projects that pique his interests and manages a Twitter account dedicated to analyzing the current Atlanta Braves.

During his undergraduate career at Wofford, Jonathan was a four-year letterman for the Cross Country and Track and Field teams. Honored as team captain his senior year, Jonathan guided the team to its best finish in school history and received several awards highlighting his dedication to academics and athletics. In this experience, he formed lasting bonds with team members and reinforced the importance of hard work and dedication in achieving goals. Jonathan continues to run. Most mornings you can find him in Umstead State Park training for his first ultramarathon.

## Benjamin Roberts

Hometown: Midland, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.A., with High Distinction, Economics; Political Science, 2018
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

Growing up in a small town, Benjamin was always interested in the wider world and the political decisions that shaped it. This intrigue eventually led him to pursue a joint major in economics and political science at UNC. During this time, growing studies regarding economic inequality and its political ramifications fed Benjamin's desire to use quantitative research methods to study the relationship between government, individual behavior, and the market. This translated into Benjamin's work on his Senior Honors Thesis in Economics, which used instrumental variables and survival analysis to examine the relationship between restrictive abortion policies and female labor supply. As a result of the project, Benjamin acquired valuable experience using R to clean and manipulate large datasets.

Following his graduation from UNC-Chapel Hill, Benjamin continued to explore his interest in the wider world by accepting a position to teach English in a bilingual primary school in Madrid, Spain. In Madrid, navigating an entirely new language and culture presented him with many challenges. These included using his limited Spanish to secure an apartment in one of Europe's largest cities and overcoming cultural misunderstandings with Spanish teachers and students. In the process, Benjamin substantially improved his Spanish skills while developing an appreciation for cultural differences and the importance of effective communication within diverse workplaces. Through his experience teaching his native language to Spanish students, Benjamin also enhanced his ability to convey difficult concepts in relatable terms to people from diverse backgrounds.

When he is not exploring economic data or new cultures, Benjamin enjoys playing basketball and exploring analytics-based team building strategies in professional football and basketball.

## Basil Rodts

Hometown: Raleigh, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.S., with Distinction, Statistics and Analytics; Environmental Science, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

Basil will “try anything once.” This life motto has allowed him to leave his comfort zone, hone his ability to think outside the box, and solve problems. This includes roles as a young professional in a growing industry, a college campus leader, and a role model in his personal life. The blend of preparation and skills to adapt in the moment has led to success for Basil in the past, and is his blueprint to excel in the future.

Determined to make a difference in the solar development industry, Basil joined an expanding start-up company as an upperclassman at UNC-Chapel Hill. As the data analytics intern for the company, his data manipulation and regression work in underwriting and market analysis enabled the company to expand its development branch and enter new markets across the United States.

At UNC-Chapel Hill, Basil took forty new students under his wing as a resident advisor to help them acclimate to collegiate life and provide social education and conflict resolution. As a student, he also spent a summer studying abroad in the Netherlands, Germany, and France, meeting with industry leaders to discuss European renewable energy innovation and implementation.

As the oldest of ten children in his family, one of Basil’s cherished pastimes is playing Thanksgiving football with his brothers and sisters. He is also known among friends and family for his fantasy football prowess, making the playoffs eight straight years and bringing home the bacon twice.



## Kyrsten Rudock

Hometown: Fort Lauderdale, FL  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Textile Engineering, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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Whether pouring passion into a clarinet concerto or pondering over a math problem, Kyrsten enjoys using both sides of her brain. As an undergraduate student, engineering provided the perfect blend of creativity and critical thinking. Kyrsten's love for analytics came from the intersection of product development and coding applications while interning with HanesBrands Inc.'s advanced analytics team. Using data from product attributes and sales correlations, she made recommendations for future product lines based on key success drivers. Concluding her internship with a successful presentation solidified analytics as the next step of her career, providing the perfect blend of information and communication.

Armed with leadership and industry experience, Kyrsten resolved that data analytics would be her best tool to serve people and society. As president of Textile Engineering Society, she presented appropriations requests that funded new opportunities to members. After tripling her organization's funds, she helped other on-campus leaders by streamlining the budgeting process within her college. Inspired by her own research experience in electronic textiles, Kyrsten organized a hands-on coding workshop that demonstrated how data can be used to drive decisions. At graduation, her peers voted to award her the Service and Dedication Award in recognition of her dedication and proven advancement of fellow students.

Kyrsten enjoys challenging herself in and out of the classroom. Most of her weekends include a hike through the mountains followed by downtime to read alternative comics or watch sketch comedy. She loves bringing people together by hosting a night of negotiation through role-playing board games that satisfy both sides of her brain.

## Burton Scott Rudolph

Hometown: Kinston, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Cornell University  
B.S., Industrial and Labor Relations, 2017
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

Impact motivates Burton. Whether it manifests itself in analytical decision-making, transformative global service, or tangible leadership accomplishments, experience has taught him that diligently pursuing any endeavor fuels positive impact. A love for the outdoors and hiking pushed him to summit Mt. Kilimanjaro. Academic hunger led him to graduate from Cornell University. Professional drive earned him employment at J.P. Morgan Chase in New York City. His passion for helping others prompted him to co-found a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization that provided clean drinking water to over 10,000 people in Tanzania. A continual desire to learn encouraged him to pursue a master's degree from the Institute for Advanced Analytics. Every venture Burton undertakes is energized by his all.

Burton has seen firsthand that the future of work has data at its heart. This exciting development became clear to him as a member of J.P. Morgan Chase's Core Data Team, where he partnered with executives on cutting-edge initiatives. Although the nature of work is outpacing the skills of individuals in many industries, Burton recognizes that reinforcing his analytical abilities will allow him to help organizations as well as individuals sharpen their decision-making skills and strategically approach the future. At the Institute, Burton sees what he is learning as a catalyst to a lifelong career of growth and consequence.

Often, Burton mentions how grateful he is to his family in Kinston, NC, friends locally and globally, professors, and professional mentors for empowering him along this extraordinary journey. Today, he enthusiastically anticipates partnering with new friends, colleagues, and mentors to continue forward on the path of giving his all in everything, impacting others meaningfully into the future, and being thankful for every moment along the way.

## Charlie Ruff

Hometown: Crystal Lake, IL  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of Iowa  
B.B.A., with University Honors, Business Analytics; Finance, minor in Sports and Recreation Administration, 2019

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Charlie's love for sports statistics led him to the analytics field. While growing up in the Chicago area, Charlie and his friends spent hours discussing the prospects and decisions of the Chicago sports teams. As an undergraduate at the University of Iowa, Charlie decided to put his analytical skills and sports knowledge to the test by creating a four-student analytics team for Merkle Inc.'s 2018 March Madness analytics tournament. His analytics team correctly predicted more games than 50 other college teams and won the competition. Charlie found that his love for sports provided a perfect platform to grow his analytical tools beyond the classroom.

Charlie's favorite part of the competition was collaborating with his friends to explore the many solutions to their analytics challenge. Throughout this process, Charlie and his teammates learned how to code, model, and manipulate large datasets. He went on to enhance and automate the team's tournament model for his Honors Thesis. To this day, Charlie and his friends continue to teach each other new analytical approaches by creating NBA and NFL models.

During his senior year working in the Finance and Data Analytics departments at the University of Iowa Center for Advancement (Center), Charlie applied his analytics skills and financial knowledge on projects aimed at increasing the university's funding. Charlie worked closely with the Center's data scientists and finance team to develop a cash segmentation model to predict future cash flows and determine investment strategies. As a result of his day-to-day experience working with the Center's team, Charlie decided to pursue a career as a data scientist. He particularly enjoyed collaborating with different departments to analyze data and solve diverse business challenges. Each project involved taking time to understand the underlying business process and objectives.

## Sameen Salam

Hometown: High Point, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.S., Biology; Music, minor in Chemistry, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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From a very young age, Sameen identified and sang along to patterns he heard in music on the radio. At its core, music is comprised of frequency ratios spread over units of time in the pursuit of an aesthetic or emotional goal. Sameen's early journey into the realm of music allowed him to appreciate the beauty of numbers in the world around him.

During his time as an undergraduate research assistant in the biology department at UNC-Chapel Hill, Sameen united his love for numbers with his biology major coursework. After consulting online resources for R, Python, and MATLAB, he forged software pipelines to conduct microscopy image analysis of yeast cells and ran polymer chain simulations. Using the resulting data, Sameen ran several statistical comparison tests to make inferences about the movements of cellular components. His contributions to the lab helped inform biological conclusions on the dynamics of DNA-associated proteins. Upon documenting and presenting his methodology, Sameen realized that data analytics offered a promising career path with constant opportunities for growth.

Outside of his professional pursuits, Sameen is an active musician with proficiency in voice, electric/upright bass, guitar, keyboard, violin, and clarinet, among others. He performs music in the RTP area in a variety of venues, educates himself on music theory and history, and tries to learn any new instrument he can get his hands on. He also enjoys lifting weights and outdoor sprinting.

## Samantha Sassorossi

Hometown: Highland Park, IL  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Business Administration, 2018

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Data science is like a puzzle where all the pieces do not fit together. Samantha is driven by finding which pieces go with which puzzle to create a beautiful picture. While pursuing a degree in business administration, Samantha discovered her passion for data science. The use of data to form insights and the communication of those insights to drive business decisions enthralled Samantha. Due to this, she enrolled in the Data Analytics Honors Program. In this program, Samantha completed a practicum for an automotive industry manufacturer of commercial vehicles. She used time series forecasting and regression analysis to reduce the company's carbon footprint and identify an energy conservation strategy.

Samantha had both an internship as a Business Systems Analyst and a full-time role as a Technical Marketing Engineer with NetApp. During her internship, Samantha performed and developed a new automated testing framework in ServiceNow. This automation leads to increased efficiency in opening a ticket with the IT help desk. In her full-time role, she worked with project managers to gather technical requirements for projects and create solutions to be distributed to customers and business partners worldwide.

Growing up in three different states, Samantha has an innate love for travel. She has traveled to over 30 states and nine countries, and she plans to see many more. She has a goal to visit all seven continents and the Seven Wonders of the World. In her free time, Samantha enjoys art, specifically painting. She even won a competition that allowed her to design a patch that went to outer space. Samantha hopes to combine her creativity and curiosity with her passion for data science throughout her career.

## Cassidy Sater

Hometown: High Point, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Applied Mathematics, 2019  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Economics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

From a young age, Cassidy was always seen solving puzzles or drawing, so it was no surprise that she developed a passion for math and art. She continued to pursue her interests through her studies in college by taking classes in both fields. Her courses in statistics, economics, and programming sparked her interest in analytics. In her econometrics course, she used SAS to conduct a time series analysis to study the effects that incarceration rates had on the unemployment rates in the United States. Cassidy's artistic side influenced her fascination for data visualization. She is intrigued by the idea of communicating visually as well as verbally. Recently, she took a class in Tableau, as she is always excited to develop her skills in different visualization tools.

Throughout her undergraduate years, Cassidy enjoyed helping others. Tutoring students in mathematics and statistics taught her the importance of being able to explain information to people with different backgrounds. Her own experience with dyslexia encouraged her to take on a mentorship position in a program called Eye to Eye, where she inspired students who learn differently to become the next generation of scholars and leaders.

Outside of class, Cassidy enjoys drawing portraits and painting landscapes and animals using watercolors. She looks forward to spending time with her dog, Gucci, whether she is exploring new trails or teaching her tricks. As a self-proclaimed animal lover, she also enjoys stopping by the local SPCA shelter to play with the animals.



## Noah Woessner Sayre

Hometown: Cary, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.S., with High Distinction, Computer Science, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

Passion and dedication are fundamental core values for Noah. Both values were evident while he was competing on his year-round swim team. Swimming also helped hone Noah's time management skills and work ethic as practices routinely lasted up to four hours a day. In the pool, Noah won two state championships with his high school team and competed at the junior national level for his club team. Upon graduating high school, he continued to swim on the UNC-Chapel Hill club team. Looking to cross train and stay in shape, Noah has come to enjoy triathlons. His first competition was the Azalea Sprint in Wilmington, and he is now considering training and competing in an Olympic distance race.

At UNC-Chapel Hill, Noah devoted his time and energy to his major of computer science. During his sophomore year, he was hired as a year-round technical intern at SAS Institute. He significantly improved his programming abilities, including Python and other scripting skills, through developing enterprise grade software and creating automation testing. This internship was vital in deciding Noah's current career direction. Being a member of an event stream processing project was the spark that led him down the path of data analytics. The informed decisions that can be made when using data analytics tools opened Noah's eyes to the possibilities available to make an impact on the world around him.

When Noah is not working, you can find him making every effort to get out in the sun. His favorite activities include going to the lake with friends, jet skiing, and playing sand volleyball. To decompress, Noah likes watching classic movies like *Good Will Hunting*, *Top Gun*, or *James Bond*, the Daniel Craig version.

## Sam Scarpino

Hometown: Dover, NH  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of New Hampshire  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Statistics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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Before arriving in the field of analytics, Sam's primary career focus was on music. In his freshman year of college, Sam's band was able to grab the attention of one of his musical idols, Dave Grohl of Foo Fighters, resulting in a huge influx of online traffic. As a result, he made the decision to put school on hold and pursue this passion. After a few years of touring, recording, and playing festivals, such as South by Southwest in Austin, Texas, he decided to pivot back towards academics, ultimately finishing his undergraduate studies in statistics based on his academic success in mathematics during high school. Although his career focus has shifted, he still regularly writes, records, and performs music in his free time.

While learning the practices associated with the statistics curriculum, Sam wanted to apply these techniques to other hobbies, in particular, the television show, *Survivor*. After posting a few small analyses in online fan forums, a winner of the show cited his work as a factor in his victory. This success, in part, is what made Sam want to pursue analytics.

Sam further developed his passion in the field of analytics while working for a private energy supplier as a quantitative analyst intern. There, he improved his skills in statistical practices and supported his team by applying these techniques to grouping analysis, financial asset optimization, risk analysis, and predictive modelling. He successfully merged his professional experience and academics by using his work with natural gas price forecasting as his undergraduate capstone project and was the only student in his program to use industry data.

## Austin Seals

Hometown: Madison, MS

Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Claflin University  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Management Information Science, 2019

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After conducting research that modeled the performance of terrorist attacks across the world, the prospect of saving lives through data confirmed Austin's interest in data science. Austin had the opportunity to conduct research sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security at North Carolina A&T State University. There, he built a probabilistic model that uncovered some of the underlying factors in successful terrorist attacks. During this time, he was able to develop skills in tools such as Python, R, and Tableau as well as various machine learning and data manipulation techniques, such as logistic regression and dplyr, an R package for data mining. After his research in North Carolina, Austin knew his future lay in the realm of data science. In addition to research, Austin had the opportunity to intern with the Claflin University Career Development Office. There, he was tasked with building a student intake database that the staff would use to store information on students over the coming summer.

However, data science is not the only part of Austin's life. From an early age, Austin had interests in both sports and music. He has played soccer all of his life, playing both Division 1 and 2 youth soccer as well as high school soccer, where he was a part of two state silver medalist teams. Though he no longer plays competitively, Austin still plays soccer whenever possible. Austin also loves music. He played trombone and the drums throughout his youth. In his free time, he loves playing soccer, watching bad horror movies, and listening to all genres of music. Austin hopes to use the skills and experience he will gain at the Institute to create positive change in the world, one dataset at a time.

## Keyur Shah

Hometown: Mumbai, India

Citizenship: India

Languages: English, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of Pune  
M.Sc., Statistics, 2017
- ▶ University of Mumbai  
B.Sc., Statistics, 2015
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

An avid fan of the game of cricket, Keyur used to guess players' future performances based on their past ones. This curiosity continued as he went on to defend his thesis, *Player Performance Prediction in Cricket Using Parametric Statistical Quality Control Techniques*, while pursuing his master's in statistics. Keyur applied statistical techniques, such as regression analysis, time series analysis, Bayesian analysis, and stochastic risk evaluation, to real world datasets throughout his master's program. He went on to present these analyses at national-level statistics conferences, collecting various awards and scholarships along the way. He furthered his strong aptitude towards numbers by passing nine examinations of actuarial science, where he gathered knowledge of actuarial and statistical techniques in the fields of finance, economics, and insurance.

Raring to apply the knowledge gained from his master's degree, Keyur gained experience as an analytics consultant at Nielsen, a market measurement company. He catered to several top Fast-Moving Consumer Goods clients in India, solving their business questions in sales, distribution, pricing, and innovations using data. He received two awards for generating new revenue streams for his team by developing two new analytics products for the company. He deployed his hands-on experience in R by conducting regular training sessions for his peers and automating various business-as-usual processes.

When away from data, you will find him enjoying his favorite sports—cricket and soccer, from both the field as well as the couch. He is always on the lookout for new trails and treks, where he can go on early morning jogs.

## Sufyan Shahin

Hometown: Niskayuna, NY  
Citizenship: USA, Jordan



### EDUCATION

- ▶ State University of New York at Geneseo  
M.S.Ed., Mathematics, 2008  
B.S., Mathematics; Adolescent Education: Math, 2006
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

Sufyan has spent the past decade helping aspiring young statisticians and researchers delve into their passions. These projects have extended from exploring the water quality of the Cape Fear and Neuse River Basins to the implications and impacts of Catalonian independence from Spain. Sufyan taught them effective researching methods, how to build statistical models, and successful presentation techniques so that they could communicate their findings with confidence. It has been a great joy to pass on this knowledge and the skills he has developed to the next generation.

Coaching the high school robotics team where he taught has also been a mark of pride for Sufyan over the past 8 years. In the beginning, they were a wonderful but disorganized group who consistently ranked at the bottom 5 in state competitions. In the past 3 years, under Sufyan's leadership, the team has gone to the FIRST World Championships in Houston twice on the merit of their ingenious designs. Sufyan's goal was not to move them from the bottom to the top; rather, he recognized that the most important skill they could learn is leadership, and that leadership would drive them towards success. The work he did coaching them how to work effectively together, communicate ideas, and build relationships helped them become a competitive team in the state and worthy of the World Competition.

Sufyan feels a calling to inspire others in pursuing their passions and building their skills, and he recognizes that it is time for him to carry this talent into the field of data analytics. The ability to lead and embolden others while puzzling through a task is a strength that compliments his own intelligence and dedication to problem-solving. The success that he helps others find is rooted in the successes that he builds for himself.

## Mehak Shamdasani

Hometown: Fayetteville, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.A., Computer Science, minor in Statistics and Analytics, 2018
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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Since childhood, Mehak has been drawn to patterns and relationships in the world around her. Early on, she explored creativity through photography and painting. In college, Mehak's desire to find structure in abstract concepts led her to study computer science and statistics. Coding served as a tool to extend her methodical approach of understanding information into other domains. That furthered her interest in how technical systems could create a social impact across many domains.

In school, Mehak explored ways to build on her problem-solving skills through evidence. Mehak worked alongside a researcher at NCSU to implement a prefix-based collaborative filtering algorithm in R applied to drama management in gaming. She integrated her technical skills with the methodical approach of statistics to understand patterns and relationships in data. That summer, Mehak laid the framework for multiple implementations of the algorithm to account for the sequence of user ratings. This experience motivated her to pursue opportunities at the intersection of coding and data analysis.

At Fidelity Investments, she completed three months of training in full-stack engineering on an agile team. She delivered key functionalities using Java, event-driven Scala, and SQL while working on team-wide initiatives. Mehak planned trainings in technical and domain knowledge for her 90-person international team and supported an online forum for learning resources.

Since her first foray into coding, Mehak has worked to understand how technical skills can be used to empower others. At UNC-Chapel Hill, she became involved with planning Pearl Hacks, an all-female hackathon, where she led the initiative for mentorship and workshops. After graduating, she worked at Code Ninjas, where she helped children learn Scratch and JavaScript through the program's game-based curriculum.



## Stephen Slogar

Hometown: Orlando, FL  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of Florida  
B.S., *cum laude*, Statistics, minor in Mathematics, 2018
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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Stephen's passion for mathematics goes back as long as he can remember, but his relationship with statistics is a relatively short one. He explored several career options in engineering before discovering the many diverse applications of statistical modeling at the end of his undergraduate studies. A course in probability theory demonstrated to Stephen that statistics had the rigor and theory of math, but it felt more pragmatic to him than other math subject areas. So enamored with statistical theory and modeling, Stephen changed his major in his senior year to statistics, where he excelled academically for the remainder of his time at the University of Florida.

Stephen strengthened his quantitative skills at Fidelity Investments in Boston. A self-taught software engineer, Stephen quickly got himself up to speed with advanced programming concepts and software development methodologies, and within a few weeks, he was designing and building web apps from scratch using React JS and Material UI. He got his first taste for big data at Fidelity when he analyzed and created visualizations for a sizeable app-generated dataset using Python.

When Stephen is not coding or studying math, he can probably be found supporting his local music scene or exercising. An avid alternative music fan, Stephen frequently goes to concerts. His favorite genres are hardcore and grunge. In addition to continually going to live shows, Stephen is also a musician. He plays both guitar and mandolin. Stephen is active in the running community in Raleigh and is a member of several running clubs. He enjoys challenging himself and trying unusual races, typically ones involving mud or eating challenges.

## Jiin Son

Hometown: Busan, South Korea  
Citizenship: South Korea  
Languages: English, Korean



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Valedictorian, Textile Engineering, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

Jiin gets an adrenaline rush in the boxing gym. During her three-minute rounds, she distracts the other fighter using strategic defense and powerful punches. She overcomes fears and develops mental toughness in the ring. The determination she demonstrates in the ring has supported her enthusiasm for analytics and engineering.

Jiin uncovered her interest in data while working as a data analyst co-op for Xerium, a machinery company that supplies the metal and paper industry. She cleaned the data by writing Visual Basic functions and analyzed year-to-date sales trends and the performance of sales representatives using the Power BI. During this time, she also manipulated databases using SQL and created dashboards to help executive members be more proactive in discovering daily sales status.

Jiin also becomes enthusiastic when she relates her analytics skills to the textile engineering field. In her undergraduate senior project, she collaborated with Hanesbrands and conducted a project simplifying the reordering process for consumers. Specifically, Jiin and her team demonstrated the use of the embedded Near Field Communication (NFC) chip. This launderable NFC chip is attached to Hanesbrands clothing, allowing customers to reorder their favorite clothing by scanning the NFC chip from a cell phone. Her interests in analytics led her to the Data Analytics Club at NC State, where she served as vice president. In this role, she assisted with the marketing of the hackathon, called PackHacks, resulting in 220 participants from local colleges and high schools.

Jiin thrived as a successful student due to her in-depth understanding of textile engineering and analytics as well as her diligent attention to mental and physical health through boxing. She will continue to expand her technical capabilities in data analytics, aspiring to be a well-rounded data scientist.

## Paige Spell

Hometown: Boone, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Appalachian State University  
B.S., Mathematics, minors in Biology, Computer Science, and Statistics, 2019
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Don't be afraid to fail. Paige applies this mantra to all aspects of her life to ensure she gets the most out of every opportunity. That is why when she obtained her undergraduate degree in applied mathematics, she also secured three minors in biology, statistics, and computer science. She wanted to do more than just study the subjects; she wanted to actually apply them.

This desire led her to work on a biostatistics project for the National Institutes of Health last summer in Denver, Colorado. There, she discovered her passion for working with data to make a difference. She was able to develop many technical skills, including random forest generation and data visualization. Paige also took part in preparing a manuscript that is being submitted for publication. With this project, she realized the value in effectively relaying complex information to both technical and non-technical audiences.

When she was not collaborating with her team about statistical methods for their biological research, she was pursuing her love for the outdoors by ascending the unfamiliar terrain of the Rocky Mountains. Along with being outside, you can find Paige reading the most recent murder mystery, twirling at this month's contra dance, or training at her local CrossFit gym.

Looking back, Paige says that the moments where she was most afraid to fail ended up being the best opportunities she took. That is what brought her to the Institute for Advanced Analytics to pursue a higher degree where she could continue learning about her passion and one day make innovative and far-reaching contributions to the scientific challenges of today.

## Nick Sterling

Hometown: Morgan Hill, CA  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Wilmington  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Physics, minor in Mathematics, 2018  
B.A., *summa cum laude*, Philosophy, minor in Spanish, 2018
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

Is it possible to forecast a coastal housing market crash? Nick's passion for analytics was cultivated by a research project seeking to answer this question. Working closely with a physics professor, his role in the project was to determine whether sea level rise and beach nourishment, an erosion mitigation technique, can be used to detect market instability. His drive to work on the problem was fueled by the fact that it has major implications for the financial stability of people living along coastlines, how governments respond to climate change, and how insurance companies appraise risk. Through this experience, Nick discovered his passion for utilizing collaborative, data-driven techniques to generate actionable solutions to impactful problems. In addition to the coastal housing market project, Nick spent his undergraduate years exploring questions about the natural world through physics and philosophy. His research experiences in theoretical and experimental particle physics and the philosophy of space-time ontology all fed his hunger for exploring interesting problems.

Since attending his first San Jose Sharks game at six years old, Nick has been an avid hockey fan and player. Throughout his childhood in California and adulthood in North Carolina, many of his closest friendships and fondest memories have come through the game. Nick welcomes the recent rise of hockey analytics as it combines his primary passions. On most nights from October to April he can be found watching NHL games while closely tracking advanced statistics to gain more insight into the mechanics of his favorite pastime.

During any downtime, Nick can frequently be found listening to podcasts. Whether he is keeping current with the *New York Times* on *The Daily*, re-examining old ideas with Malcolm Gladwell on *Revisionist History*, or learning about gerrymandering with *FiveThirtyEight*, there is always a new idea in Nick's ears.

## Ben Sullivan

Hometown: Ashburn, VA  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Appalachian State University  
B.S., Economics, minor in Music, 2017
- ▶ SAS Certified Professional: Advanced Programming Using SAS 9.4

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Ben found an interest in analytics during his undergraduate career. He participated in the College Fed Challenge, an academic competition in which small teams make recommendations on monetary policy. With thorough preparation thanks to biweekly meetings, his team placed as national finalists at the Federal Reserve Board. Ben also pursued research. Using spatial analytics techniques, he explored how hemlock tree health affected local property values. In his time as an academic tutor, he mentored students studying economics and statistics.

Soon after completing his undergraduate degree, Ben worked at Corolla Adventure Park at the NC Outer Banks. In addition to keeping his body active and coaching participants to challenge themselves, it allowed him to apply his analytics education to a business problem. Using a combination of sales, weather, and oceanic data, he built a time-series model to forecast sales. The business used this forecast to improve its staffing and revenue outlooks.

Ben enjoys living an active lifestyle that allows him to appreciate the outdoors. In his free time, he can be found hiking a mountain trail or out on the ocean surfing. He finds different avenues to express his creative side and challenge himself. As a classically trained musician of 13 years, Ben plays the euphonium and has performed with many collegiate and local ensembles. If not playing music, he may be found fine-tuning his home-brewed beer recipes to share with friends and family.

## Heqing Sun

Hometown: Nanjing, China  
Citizenship: China  
Languages: English, Chinese



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
M.S., Chemistry, 2018
- ▶ Nanjing University  
B.S., Chemistry, 2016
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

Heqing's eagerness to learn quantitative approaches to problem-solving led him to pursue a graduate degree in organic chemistry at UNC-Chapel Hill. As he advanced through graduate school, he quickly gravitated towards the data analytics component of chemistry. Heqing was especially fascinated with the application of informatics to the high-throughput discovery and optimization of organic reactions. There, he quickly recognized the value of rigorous data analytics, especially in helping to draw meaningful conclusions from vast amounts of experimental data and to guide the ongoing research in the right direction.

Heqing has always embraced opportunities to improve and has shared this passion by working as a teaching assistant for general chemistry lab courses at UNC-Chapel Hill. This leadership position provided an opportunity to hone his presentation skills while explaining professional concepts to the non-technical audience.

When working as a medical analyst at Wind Information, a leading data provider in China, Heqing was able to incorporate his scientific background with his interest in data science. He appreciated the challenges that each day presented and the various methods available to tackle them. For example, he developed a database automation tool, which sped up the data collecting and cleaning process 20-fold. These experiences have given Heqing insight into problem-solving and analytics, and he is interested in applying his skills to help companies make data-driven solutions.

Beyond work, Heqing loves exploring food from different countries. Japanese cuisine is his favorite, and a bowl of authentic tempura can make his day. Heqing always believes that food is the bridge connecting people.



## Yao Sun

Hometown: Qingdao, China  
Citizenship: China  
Languages: English, Chinese



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Emory University  
B.A., International Studies, 2016
- ▶ SAS Certified Advanced Programmer for SAS®9

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Intrigued by the knowledge hidden behind an array of seemingly erratic numbers, Yao was trained to solve problems with data-driven approaches. As an undergraduate research fellow, Yao worked in teams to analyze the effects of public information. She built and analyzed data of diplomatic visits and international trade of over a thousand entries and, along with her team, presented findings at conferences both at home and abroad. Yao also expanded her communication and interpersonal skills by taking on leadership roles in college, such as being co-president of the Chinese Student Association.

At The Carter Center and the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, Yao relied on data analytics to draw insights from international and domestic policies. She published over 15 op-eds and commentaries in Chinese and English on hot-button issues in the economy and politics. Her bi-weekly reports on the US Bureau of Labor Statistics provided easy-to-read analytical results to her colleagues. Meanwhile, by working in her family business over the years, Yao has cultivated her business acumen and developed interests in incorporating analytics into business operations.

As a graduate researcher at the University of Pennsylvania, Yao launched a research project, recruited over 400 participants, and designed an online experiment that used survey data to measure sentiments toward military actions. She further honed her technical and analytical skills on a second project that converted qualitative data from over one thousand television transcripts into quantitative measurements. With the help of unsupervised text analysis and natural language processing, Yao identified the shifts and evolvments of news frames on Fox News over two decades.

Yao's best way to relax is to enjoy her home-brewed coffee early in the morning before going for a run. Her favorite route is The Beltline and the picturesque Piedmont Park in Atlanta.

## Shannon Tart

Hometown: Benson, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Textile Engineering, 2016
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

An innate curiosity, a passion for solving complex problems, and a nerdy love of math led Shannon to pursue an undergraduate degree in textile engineering. As part of her Senior Capstone Project, Shannon worked to develop materials and an innovative design for a sport accessory that would provide an enhanced grip surface and finger stabilization to athletes across all levels of play. To better analyze materials, she created custom test methods to provide quantitative data for product and material selection. Her creativity aided in the development of this cutting-edge sport accessory that was worn by players in the 2019 AFC Championship football game.

This creativity fueled her work to improve and validate the current practices at Polymer Group Inc. (PGI) (currently Berry Global) and the Wilson College of Textiles. Tasked with collecting and analyzing data associated with the quality assurance procedures at PGI, Shannon used data analysis and Lean Six Sigma methodologies to collect data and suggest solutions that were implemented and turned into hard savings. As Coordinator of Recruitment for the College, Shannon used data to substantiate the efficacy of recruitment practices and to track students from first contact through the admission and yield processes. These findings were used to identify areas that lacked coverage and resources to determine potential new areas and markets for the successful recruitment of students.

Shannon's fervor for data analytics is matched only by her love of Carolina Hurricanes hockey. Her love of sports has carried her as far north as Maryland, as far south as Florida, and as far west as Kansas. In her free time, she enjoys watching rom-coms and action movies, cheering on the Wolfpack, soaking up the sun at Holden Beach, and spending time with family, friends, and her Maltipoo, Jax.

## Reema Thakkar

Hometown: Edison, NJ  
Citizenship: USA  
Languages: English, Gujarati



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Statistics, 2017
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

Growing up as a child of two Indian immigrants, Reema was inspired by the selflessness and generosity of her parents. She quickly learned to always hold her culture near to her heart. Reema found the field of analytics to be a unique niche in which she could use the values instilled by her upbringing, and the statistical concepts she was fascinated in, to provide guidance and support for others on a global scale.

Reema uses data to help others. During her undergraduate career, she analyzed student data to identify at-risk students and to provide them with the resources necessary for success. She furthered her goals of helping others on a broad level and enhanced her analysis abilities at the same time by working at the non-profit research institute, RTI International. Through her time as a statistician, she was part of a project funded by the USAID to assess reading abilities of students in third world countries. Other research includes her work on the national survey to treat opioid addiction, sponsored by the CDC.

Reema has been able to explore various avenues to strengthen her analytical tools by learning them in the classroom, on the job, and even on her own time. She will continue to follow her passion and heighten her technical abilities so that she may turn her knowledge into practice to help others. When she is not bolstering her analytical mind in the classroom, you can find Reema in a dance studio or traveling the country for a dance competition with her Bollywood-Fusion dance team. She also enjoys exploring new and trendy restaurants, traveling internationally, and watching Indian movies with her parents.

## Chelsea Thomas

Hometown: Burlington, NC  
Citizenship: USA  
Languages: English, Malayalam



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Charlotte  
B.S.B.A., *cum laude*, Finance Data Science, 2019

Chelsea first fell in love with data analysis when building a sales prediction model for a Kaggle contest. It involved creating a program that used a Random Forest Regressor to predict six weeks of future sales data for about eleven hundred stores. In college, she picked up a minor in data science and found that she really enjoyed it; there was a level of creativity and structure that she could appreciate. Having the ability to condense multiple variables into usable data points in order to make a valid prediction of what the future could hold was an exciting prospect.

Being a highly adaptable and curious individual, she interned at both a multinational Petrochemical company as well as a small e-commerce start-up. In both roles, she found inefficiencies in the use of time. From the way data was processed, to the way it was utilized, there were many oversights that could have been avoided with the proper analytical tools. In part, these inefficiencies are what led her to the Institute, to better her own understanding and to remedy these situations in the future.

When not at work, Chelsea enjoys traveling and giving back to the community. She highlights her study abroad trip to Santander, Spain as a defining moment in her life. The deep appreciation she feels for other cultures allows her to mirror appreciation for her own. Chelsea is also passionate about volunteering. She enjoys spending time at the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and giving back to the organization that helped her as a child. Interacting with the kids and encouraging them to see possibilities outside of their current situation fuels her desire to be successful.

## Jason Thompson

Hometown: Cary, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ North Carolina State University  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Valedictorian, Applied Mathematics, 2019  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Valedictorian, Statistics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Professional: Advanced Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

Jason fell in love with numbers at an early age, and math became a lifelong obsession. While pursuing a double major in applied mathematics and statistics at NC State, he completed honors programs at the university, college, and department levels. Jason combined his knack for leadership with his passion for sports and data science by leading the Sports Analytics Club for three years. He attended hackathons and conferences, organized activities, and led projects with younger students—all while pursuing his own interests in baseball, volleyball, and basketball analytics.

For the last decade, Jason has tutored younger students outside the classroom and served as an in-class resource for his peers. Always willing to help, he finds that the process of clarifying and explaining things to others solidifies his own understanding of the topic at hand. Not satisfied with passive, surface-level learning, Jason digs deeper into his interests through independent reading and conversations with his professors. This thirst for knowledge led to him being recognized by the Department of Statistics with the Undergraduate Outstanding Scholarship Award.

During his summer internships, Jason honed his data science skills in new areas. At Ribbon Communications, he explored the telecommunications industry while developing analytics dashboards for clients. At SAS, he investigated a novel signal processing method and evaluated its appropriateness for future software versions.

In his free time, Jason enjoys playing soccer and basketball and watches any sport he can find on television. He attends numerous NC State sporting events and plays on as many intramural sports teams as possible. Jason also loves choral singing, volunteering at youth basketball camps, and eating delicious meals prepared by his mom and younger sister.

## Wesley Thompson

Hometown: Tracy, CA  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ California Lutheran University  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Business Administration, 2017
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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At the beginning of his A.P. statistics course, Wesley was told, “you will never look at a graph or chart the same way.” From that moment, his admiration for data visualization was born and has only grown since. He feels visualizations are the best way to communicate statistical findings to any audience. His passion for effectively communicating through graphs was exemplified in his work at the Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE). During his time there, he researched the effects of class time and student disability, as they related to test scores. Ultimately, the findings were presented to the California Superintendent of Education. Wesley’s supervisor at the VCOE described him as a self-motivated, curious learner with an unmatched work ethic.

Wesley has also worked for PwC, as a Risk Assurance Associate performing IT audits. In ten months, he was awarded three performance differentiators. The differentiators were attributed to being one of the first associates in his office to successfully use Alteryx, a data analysis platform that extracts and manipulates data. His efforts led to a 15% reduction in project hours, resulting in increased revenue. During his tenure, he worked on ten different teams and developed a strong interest in team dynamics--specifically how leadership affects team success. He hopes to one day lead a team that will establish camaraderie, establish communal goals, and radiate positive energy.

Wesley’s fascination for team dynamics is driven by his competitive nature. As he loves the thrill of competition, Wesley is a passionate fan of almost any sport. His favorite teams are Oakland’s Raiders and A’s. His ideal Saturday would start with an intense morning workout, followed by a barbecue with close friends, and end with watching a big game. Wesley is a firm believer that the best is yet to come.



## Cathy Tran

Hometown: Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam  
Citizenship: Vietnam  
Languages: English, Vietnamese, Mandarin



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Ithaca College  
B.A., *summa cum laude*, Economics, Politics, 2018

Cathy positively impacts every place she joins. At Ithaca College, she was the first international student to win the annual Campus Life Award in 2018. She initiated and implemented a professional development series to assist her peers in securing internships and employment opportunities.

In addition to working to improve her college community, Cathy applied technical skills from coursework in econometrics, statistics, and Excel to her internships. While interning at Cornell University's Human Resources Department, she used regression modeling to analyze 190 employment satisfaction surveys from new employees after the first 90 days of working. Cathy identified that males and females have different work experiences and proposed initiatives to improve the university's onboarding process. The internship supervisor agreed with Cathy's analysis and implemented her suggestions.

After college, Cathy worked as a Trade Enrichment Analyst at Fifth Third Bank in Cincinnati. Her crowning achievement was building a market validation report to confirm the trading price of all publicly traded commodities. In addition to her primary responsibilities, she led the employee engagement project for the Capital Market team. She firmly believes that talent is the greatest asset of any company and loves to positively transform the work environment to better suit employee needs. She examined the 2018 employee engagement survey, conducted additional studies, and held listening sessions to solicit team members' feedback. The recommendations Cathy made were incorporated into the Capital Market 2019 goals by the managing director.

In her free time, Cathy spoils her friends with Pho and other homemade Vietnamese dishes. Additionally, you will find her spending time optimizing her investment accounts and sharing professional development tips on online communities.

## Khoi Minh Tran

Hometown: Vietnam  
Citizenship: USA  
Languages: English, Vietnamese



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.A., with Distinction, Economics, minor in Mathematics, 2015
- ▶ SAS Certified Professional: Advanced Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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Behind every success, there is a story to be told. Khoi's story began with indelible memories that she cultivated from her eye-opening travel experiences. From the rainforests in Central America, the historic site of Roman ruins in Naples, to Khoi's fond memories of welcoming locals in Guatemala, she treats every adventure as a learning opportunity. A 5000 feet hike and a near-vertical descent to the Cerro Chato volcano crater taught her to be creative and push past her discomfort, whether that involves her hanging onto tree roots, branches, or even a friend, to continue down the muddy path to reach the bottom of the crater. Khoi also improved her people skills in order to communicate with people from different cultures, using body language or learning foreign languages right on the spot. Those surprises that Khoi encountered while traveling solo has taught her to step outside her comfort zone to achieve greater satisfaction in life.

Khoi incorporates that unique blend of can-do attitude, curiosity, and growth mindset not only in her personal life but also at work. While working at Samsung Semiconductor, she taught herself rapid prototyping as well as web design and created a user-friendly, web-based application that automated revenue reporting and reduced bonus calculation errors to a fraction of what they had been. Her innovation is now widely adopted not only in Samsung Semiconductor-USA but also in South Korea's Global Headquarters. As a result, Khoi was recognized by the CFO for her contribution to improving the company's productivity and transparency.

Khoi's initial interest in business process innovation led her to pursue a career in data science because she would love to gain technical skills to create profound impacts on business and serve as a "bridge" between technology and business teams to drive effective execution.

## Faith Turner

Hometown: Benson, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of South Carolina  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Computer Science, minor in Business Administration,  
2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

From a young age, Faith has always been a creative thinker and problem solver; what started out as endless Sudoku and jigsaw puzzles turned into a love for coding, a passion for analytics, and even a way to “veganize” childhood recipes. During Faith’s undergraduate studies as a computer science student, she decided to add a business minor to better understand the goals of companies once she began job searching. It was in these business classes that Faith realized she wanted to get into a field that combined her love of coding with her love of business, leading her to data analytics.

The summer before her senior year of college, Faith interned at Harsco Rail as an IT intern. While working there, Faith developed a Power BI dashboard to help the company understand and improve customer satisfaction. After successfully publishing the dashboard, Faith presented it to the upper-level management; management continues to review the information as the customer data continuously updates.

Because of Faith’s opportunity to study abroad in Prague, she has visited 17 countries, some of her favorites being Iceland and Croatia, and developed a great appreciation for traveling and experiencing new cultures. She enjoys spontaneous, go-with-the-flow trips that allow her to find a quaint coffee shop where she can settle down and read a literary fiction novel, though she also enjoys reading at home with her puppy, Maverick, curled up beside her.

## Travis M. Walker

Hometown: Marion, IN  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Trident University International  
B.S., *summa cum laude*, Leadership, 2018

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A veteran of the United States Navy and Special Operations Command, Travis has always been driven by the pursuit of adventure and personal challenge. These were key factors when selecting his naval occupation, in which he volunteered to become a special operation's medical provider. This afforded him opportunities to hone his critical-thinking skills, whether it be in the diagnosis and treatment of a patient or conducting mission analysis and planning. A key aspect of his success was the ability to lead small teams in various environments, articulate mission details to senior leaders, and develop creative solutions in a resource-limited environment. This led to numerous personal awards, promotions, and increased responsibility.

As his career advanced, Travis was appointed to more complex and challenging leadership positions that inspired him to diversify his skills and abilities. He earned his Project Management Professional and Lean Six Sigma Black Belt certifications to confront unique challenges effectively. It was in these pursuits that he became aware of, and fascinated by, the power and applicability of analytics. He soon gained the reputation of providing evidence-based, realistic solutions to inexplicable problems that earned him an appointment to a working group for the Deputy Under Secretary of the Navy. The analysis and guidance he provided to senior leadership ultimately led to improved morale and welfare among Sailors and ensured future mission success.

In his spare time, Travis loves to travel and spend time with family. His adventurous spirit and cultural curiosity have led him from the Ten Thousand Buddha's Monastery in Hong Kong to the Pyramids of Giza in Egypt. Whether it is the Appalachian Mountains, coastal beaches, or the lakes of North Carolina, he and his family enjoy hiking, swimming, and paddle boarding.

## Meghan Weber

Hometown: Naperville, IL  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Wright State University  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Biomedical Engineering, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

Meghan's ambitious spirit has always driven her to become the best version of herself. This attitude is evident in her decision to study biomedical engineering while playing NCAA Division I volleyball and working for the Air Force Research Laboratory. The mixture of her enthusiastic and outgoing personality has provided her with opportunities to participate in a variety of teams involved in athletics, work, and school. She thrives in innovative and collaborative environments.

With these skills, Meghan hopes to make a positive impact not only for herself but also for others. While having the privilege to work for the Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine, she was presented a "Challenge Coin" by an Air Force Colonel and Chief Nurse. Military members award these rare coins as a way to honor a significant achievement. She created an intracranial pressure waveform generator to help Critical Care Air Transport Nurses more effectively diagnose and treat traumatic brain injuries in combat. Her contribution to helping save the lives of the brave men and women in the military has had a profound impact on how Meghan carries out her life and future ambitions.

Captivated by the complexity of this project as well as the diversity and knowledge of the team, Meghan proceeded to work for the Air Force Research Laboratory, developing novel machine learning techniques for laser protection applications. She presented this work at the Midwest Machine Learning Symposium and published it in the *Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)* journal. Through her various experiences, she recognizes the power that data can provide. Enamored at the opportunity for a positive impact using analytics, Meghan will continue to share this exhilaration in her future career. Aside from searching for ways to change the world, Meghan enjoys playing in volleyball tournaments and attending concerts with her friends.

## Ryan Weisner

Hometown: Winston-Salem, NC  
Citizenship: USA  
Languages: English, French



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.A., with Distinction, Economics; Public Policy, 2018
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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Making a difference. This is what energizes Ryan.

Discovering how he wants to make a difference, though, has been a journey. His prior ambitions have led him to consider careers ranging from teaching music as a professor to researching public policy as an economist. While at UNC, he discovered and honed in on analytics, driven by the field's potential for making an impact.

As a Buckley Public Service Scholar, Ryan spent over 400 hours during his undergraduate career performing community service. Notably, he served as a volunteer music mentor for Musical Empowerment, a non-profit that provides free music lessons to children whose families cannot otherwise afford them. During his senior year, he developed his leadership skills while serving as the interim co-president for the UNC-Chapel Hill campus chapter. Later that year, he collaborated with a team of student consultants to collect and analyze data to evaluate the chapter's impact, which culminated in a presentation of key findings to the executive director. He has also interned for the Education Policy Initiative at Carolina, where he helped analyze the effectiveness of federal education grants on college preparedness among students from rural, low-income school districts.

Apart from his passion for leveraging data to make a difference, Ryan also loves cycling, which he discovered while studying abroad in Copenhagen, Denmark. He has travelled to over fourteen countries and has worked as an English teacher for eight months in Clermont-Ferrand, a small city in the south of France. In his free time, he enjoys practicing jazz on the piano, and will listen to any genre that grooves and gets his foot tapping. His peers, teachers, and professors know him for his enthusiasm to break the ice and his eagerness to ask questions and seek understanding.



## Samantha Widman

Hometown: Chapel Hill, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Appalachian State University  
B.S., *magna cum laude*, Mathematics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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Teamwork is a foundation skill for Samantha. At a young age, she was introduced to sports, including tennis, soccer, and swimming. Being involved in many teams immediately made Samantha a team player. Sports would also play into her passion for analytics. During high school, she started working with her high school's baseball organization to get a look at what is involved in computing statistics for a sports team. When it was time for her to declare her major in college, she had no doubt that mathematics and statistics were highly correlated to her interests, as these subjects appealed to her need to constantly learn and evolve.

Throughout college, Samantha had many professional development experiences, including being a data analyst intern for Mindshare, a media advertising company in New York City. Being exposed to this sort of environment was always a goal of hers, and she took every moment to learn as much as possible. Some of the skills she acquired were in data cleaning, data manipulation, data storytelling, as well as collaboration and teamwork with people from various backgrounds and industry levels.

The summer after graduation, Samantha backpacked around Europe where she visited Portugal, Spain, and Ireland. There, she had the chance to advance her foreign language skills and have more immersive cultural experiences. Through these choices, Samantha has successfully grown her technical and communications skills and is excited to continue this growth while obtaining her master's degree.

## Sarah Wotus

Hometown: Cary, NC  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
B.S.P.H., with High Distinction, Biostatistics, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

Sarah has always been passionate about health and wellness, whether it was researching nutrition while training for a marathon, studying the latest public health issues, or managing Hispanic health data during her internship at the Collaborative Studies Coordinating Center. Combined with her strong affinity for mathematics, her focus on health led Sarah to a biostatistics degree at UNC-Chapel Hill.

While studying smart city development and renewable energy in Germany and the Netherlands, Sarah was inspired by companies driving environmental and public health innovation. As a result of her experience abroad, she added an environmental science minor and pursued an internship with the City of Charlotte Storm Water Department focused on data analytics. Sarah quickly absorbed water quality knowledge while also leading a project on culvert function in which she directed data collection and conducted statistical analysis in SAS. Her analysis will be used for follow-up studies and future design considerations in order to improve aquatic life passage and flood control in cities, and she had the opportunity to present those findings at the NC Water Resources Research Institute Conference.

It was no surprise that Sarah incorporated the environment into her studies, as she has always had a love of the outdoors. As an avid runner, she enjoys exploring local parks and discovering new trails to run. Her desire to travel and explore grew after a trip to Zion, Bryce Canyon, and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Parks. When not dreaming of her next hiking adventure, Sarah enjoys reading her favorite book series, *Harry Potter*. However, you will always find Sarah with the biggest smile on her face when she is surrounded by friends as well as meeting new ones.

## Lu Wu

Hometown: Hefei, China  
Citizenship: USA  
Languages: English, Chinese



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Ph.D., Mass Communication, 2017
- ▶ Ohio University  
M.S., Journalism, 2013
- ▶ Tianjin Foreign Studies University  
B.A., Chinese Language and Literature, 2011
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

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Lu crossed paths with data analytics when she was a Ph.D. student in mass communication. Since then, she has had a profound interest in growing her knowledge and skills in this field. Before attending the MSA program, Lu was a prolific social science researcher and educator. Now she is eager to apply the same energy along with analytical methods to tackle real-life business and social issues to make positive impacts on society.

At work, Lu was an effective communicator, team leader, and problem-solver. Three months after joining the Communication Department at the University of Colorado Denver, Lu was promoted to Associate Program Chair and successfully managed a multinational faculty team on CU-Denver's Beijing campus. During her tenure, the Beijing program achieved academic excellence by receiving some of the highest student evaluation scores inside the Communication Department.

Professionally and personally, Lu's highly-focused and goal-oriented style has won the trust of colleagues and friends as a reliable ally and desirable collaborator. In graduate school, she collaborated with cohorts, advisors, and scholars from other institutes on multiple published research projects; at work, she co-chaired student thesis committees and co-organized numerous departmental events.

In her free time, Lu takes weekly Japanese lessons and participates in local Japanese group meetups. She regularly fosters cats for the local animal rescue group.

## Chesaney Wyse

Hometown: Waterford, MI  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Saginaw Valley State University  
B.B.A., *summa cum laude*, Management, 2018
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

With an analytical mindset and fortitude beyond measure, no challenge will divert Chesaney from her goals. While her passion for working with numbers and problem-solving emerged at a young age and directed her academic path, these attributes ultimately secured her current academic status. One of the most intriguing projects of her undergraduate degree examined NFL data to explore the “home-field advantage.” This project inspired her to enroll in the Udacity Data Analyst Nanodegree program to further explore the possibilities with data. Beyond academics, Chesaney has demonstrated her critical thinking skills through health and nutrition consulting. In coaching over 40 clients to date, she has found success in considering the unique lifestyles and preferences of each individual to determine the best plan.

Born a natural competitor, Chesaney is highly involved in athletics. She has played volleyball as well as intramural football, and she has competed in CrossFit and obstacle course racing. She continually pushes her athletic abilities to new limits while also putting a fun twist on them—like catching a football mid-backflip. She is driven by her love of being active, exploring the capabilities of the human body, and challenging personal limits.

Chesaney enjoys outdoor adventures, has a big heart, and loves helping others. As an adrenaline seeker, Chesaney immerses herself in situations beyond her comfort zone. Skydiving, cliff jumping, and white-water rafting only brush the surface of her thrilling experiences. During her undergraduate studies, she traveled to Costa Rica for a service trip where she assisted a wildlife rescue and helped a small village impacted by Hurricane Otto. The goal of inspiring others guides her lifestyle. Through a Facebook page called “Wyse Words,” she spreads messages of kindness and encouragement.

## Sharon Yao

Hometown: Shenzhen, China  
Citizenship: USA  
Languages: English, Mandarin, Cantonese



### EDUCATION

- ▶ Duke University  
B.A., Sociology, 2014
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4  
SAS Certified Statistical Business Analyst Using SAS9: Regression and Modeling

The first time Sharon influenced changes on a large scale was when she presented analytical findings on Capitol Hill. After months of conducting research on juvenile delinquency with a prominent Washington, D.C. advocacy group, Sharon was chosen to present her team's findings, which contributed to the outlawing of solitary confinement of minors in several states.

Data has always played a major role in Sharon's aspiration to make a systematic impact on people's lives. As the winner of the Duke Dean's Summer Research Fellowship, Sharon worked with the largest longitudinal dataset on centenarians in the world. She applied regression analysis and data visualization to uncover insights on the link between gender, living environment, and mental health in China.

Since graduation, data analytics has been Sharon's tool of choice for leaving her mark. While consulting for a global education company, she turned to statistics to help educational institutions restructure their international programs. She taught herself Python to turn years of data on resource allocation and student outcomes into actionable insights. Her analysis identified factors that were hurting student performance, which led to new training and support programs. Later, as a data analytics consultant at a manufacturing company, she built a decision tree classifier to segment clients based on payment risk, which resulted in better cash flow planning and reduced customer outreach budget by 15%. Most recently, through volunteering with the American Cancer Society, Sharon spearheaded online engagement strategies by researching trends in social media interactions.

Sharon enjoys being an amateur detective at interactive mystery dinners and reading every detective story she can find. She also relaxes by experimenting with novel cuisine. But above all, she loves going on adventures with her Pomeranian.

## Michael Zabawa

Hometown: Denver, CO  
Citizenship: USA



### EDUCATION

- ▶ University of Colorado at Denver  
B.A., Economics, 2019  
B.S., Mathematics, minor in Computer Science, 2019
- ▶ SAS Certified Specialist: Base Programming Using SAS 9.4

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Believing that knowledge backed with data is more powerful than knowledge alone, Michael seeks to impact the future of an organization or industry by using his talents to the fullest. He was inspired by an economics course that highlighted the quantitative aspects of the field and became fascinated by analyzing real-world interactions through data. While maintaining a full course load, Michael also used freely available resources to teach himself algebra, trigonometry, and precalculus in one semester. His determination and passion for learning drove him to earn two degrees and a computer science minor in the standard four-year time frame.

Michael's tenure at a leading national transportation company instilled him with a strong work ethic. Supporting his family throughout his collegiate career, he worked full-time as a driver with many days extending past sixteen hours. He was driven to accomplish his goal of a brighter future for himself and his family. In the spring of 2019, Michael interned as a data scientist for Nuview Analytics. There, he worked within a group implementing a sales forecasting model, conducting customer segmentation analysis, and combining multiple Excel reports into a centralized Tableau dashboard to reduce reporting tasks for clients.

Spending most of his childhood summers in the Colorado mountains with his grandfather, Michael grew into an outdoor enthusiast. He has summited nearly twenty unique mountains above fourteen-thousand feet, repeating many of them that were close to his home. He enjoys sharing his love of the outdoors with his wife and four daughters. Michael is a hardworking and passionate leader who strives to bring out the best in those around him. As an Assistant Scoutmaster for fourteen years, he continues to support his community by volunteering. This experience, along with many outdoor excursions, provides him with a unique perspective on leadership and personal development.





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Dr. Michael Rappa, Founding Director