



OM&IS News

Chair Message to OM&IS Students

I am sure you have noticed that all sectors of Illinois economy have reopened with businesses, schools, restaurants, sports and recreation resuming normal operations recently. NIU is not an exception and I



Chang Liu.

am so excited to welcome you back for a more normal and traditional university campus experience this fall. Most of our courses will be run fully face to face in Barsema Hall. We have also scheduled some courses in online or hybrid mode to meet students' needs.

I want to remind you that NIU requires all students to get a

COVID-19 vaccination for taking in-person courses this fall. Fully vaccinated students are not required to wear face masks or practice physical distancing in class but may do so if they prefer. Although NIU allows students to request exemption from the vaccine requirement for documented health or religious reasons, not fully vaccinated students are required to wear face masks at all times in Barsema Hall. Non-compliance with masks could result in disciplinary actions, including being removed from classes. In addition, it is understandable for faculty, department secretaries and advisors

to ask that students who are meeting in their offices wear face masks to ensure the safety and well-being of all parties.

When starting this fall, I'd like to share with you that our undergraduate program in Operations Management and Information Systems, our graduate programs in Management Information Systems (MIS) and Data Analytics (MSDA) continue to be very successful and strong. For example, we have added three additional course sections for the MSDA this fall due to high enrollment growth. Moreover, the OM&IS Department is ranked No. 81 at UT Dallas Top 100 for Productivity in Information Systems (IS) research from 2017 to 2020. The UT Dallas' research ranking has been well known for its tracking publications in 24 leading business journals. This is the first time that OM&IS has been ranked within the top 100 nationwide for faculty research productivity.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and please let us know your feedback. I'd like to assure you that our faculty and staff have committed to help you learn, succeed and stay on target for your planned graduation dates. We will do our best to help you with the knowledge and skills to *run business better by analyzing and improving processes and using technology.*

Chang Liu
Chair, Operations Management and Information Systems

Highlights

Professor Andrew Setterstrom's SAP TS410 online certification workshop received a remarkable 96.6% pass rate in May 2021. Twenty-eight out of 29 workshop students passed the certification test with an average score of 73.

NIU OM&IS Department is ranked #81 at UT Dallas Top 100 for Productivity in Information Systems (IS) research from 2017 to 2020. The UT Dallas' research ranking has been well known for its tracking publications in leading business journals and this is the first time that the OM&IS has been ranked for the top faculty research in the MIS field.

Professor Biagio Palese received the Association for Information Systems (AIS) Award for Innovation in Teaching in 2020. The AIS Award for Innovation in Teaching recognizes outstanding teaching in classroom innovation. This award specifically focuses on the uniqueness and innovativeness that increase student interest and drive achievement in information technology.

One hundred and sixty high school students participated in an online mode of NIU Business Olympic Competition in April 2021. The OM&IS Department sponsored
See **Highlights** on page 2.

Kuryliw Named OM&IS Outstanding Alumnus

After graduation as an OM&IS major in 2010, Justin Kuryliw joined Abbott Laboratories, serving in multiple IT roles while he aided in the university recruiting program, helping to hire OM&IS graduates and championing the sponsorship of NIU's Experiential Learning Center (ELC), where students made recommendations on the tools, techniques and best practices used in Abbott Nutrition's global digital marketing.

Kuryliw now serves as a strategic solution engineer at Salesforce, where he advises executives at Salesforce's most strategic commercial accounts on digital transformation and customer experience. To date, Justin has influenced

more than \$33 million in annual revenue. Most recently, Justin led the development of a Salesforce application which helped companies navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting Justin's creativity, compassion and commitment to customer success.

Kuryliw has advanced our



Justin Kuryliw.

programs by maturing recruiting partnerships for COB alumni, hosting hands-on educational events for students and providing career mentorship for graduating students. Justin also serves as a member of the OM&IS Executive Advisory Council and is a passionate NIU Huskies football fan.

Kuryliw continues to build opportunities for OM&IS students by providing hands-on experiences with CRM technology, and has helped place participating students at Salesforce and across the growing ecosystem. Currently, Kuryliw is working with OM&IS faculty on ways to further improve curriculum content around the applications of CRM and Artificial Intelligence in business.

Highlights

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a Mobile App Idea competition during the event. Eleven high school teams presented their mobile app ideas virtually. **Professors Yipeng Liu, Biagio Palese and Federico Bassetti** served on the judge panel and awarded two winning teams for their Business Olympics Mobile App Idea competition.

Instructor Federico Bassetti served as a faculty coach for NIU 40TUDE's creative agency team composed of four OM&IS students in fall 2020 and spring 2021. 40TUDE is a university-community initiative to support small local businesses that have been struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 40TUDE students learned how to work with their business clients to deliver a product or service that would make a difference in the clients' businesses.

Professors Charles Petersen and Balaji Rajagopalan taught a supply chain management and digital transformation strategy course respectively for China's Nanjing EMBA program for the first time in a fully online mode in 2021.



Faculty recognized for excellence



Outstanding Faculty Research Award — **Kishen Iyengar**.



Graduate Faculty Teaching Award — **Biagio Palese**.



Undergraduate Faculty Teaching Award — **Chuck Downing**.



Outstanding Faculty Service Award — **Jung Young Lee**.

OM&IS, MIS and MSDA Student Spotlight

Anna McComb, B.S./OM&IS '21

I always knew I liked math, so I thought I'd follow the engineering path. It took me halfway through Physics to realize what I didn't like and halfway into Intro to Business Information Systems to realize what I did — and it wasn't just math — it was data. Going through business classes at Barsema and taking advantage of all the helpful career and networking opportunities

they have to offer, I slowly realized my passion for using data to solve problems in business, and communicate both those problems and those solutions to clients.

The summer after my sophomore year, I interned with John Deere on their accounting and finance team. Though I loved the job, I found myself still seeking out projects related to analytics and building

databases to automate processes for my team. After the summer, I started job hunting at consulting companies where I could utilize both the communication aspects and the technical ones. Luckily, KPMG was hiring students for their risk consulting technology assurance team that were majoring in finance and



Anna McComb.

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Thomas Ogundipe, M.S./MIS '21

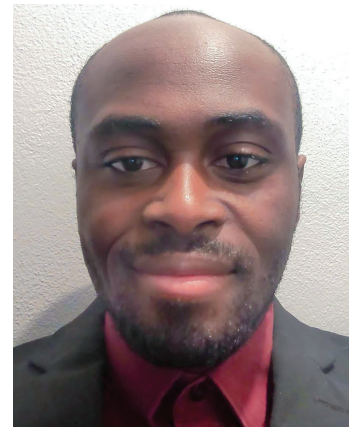
I had received my bachelor's in arts from NIU but did not find satisfaction in the field that I had gotten into. During my time with Midland States Bank, I was curious how information from one piece of software was translated into another piece of software that was completely different and how decisions were made using data gathered from past and current clients, their actions and all other facets of the

business itself. It was at this point that I discovered the OM&IS department and my own personal journey began.

The OM&IS brings a fluid combination of business management and the ever-changing IT. One misconception of this idea is that many believe that using IT means that you must have best of the best software to keep up with competitors, which is not the case. The

OM&IS program taught me that what is truly important is finding a solution that fits the problem. Being capable of thinking critically and solving the problem at hand utilizing IT and business solutions together, are skills that give OM&IS graduates the edge they need to be successful in their future.

I have grown into an individual with the hard



Thomas Ogundipe.

See Ogundipe on page 4.

Johnnie Jones, M.S./MSDA '21

What's the company you currently work for and how long have you been working there?

I work for Walmart Global Technology and will have been at Walmart for 10 years in August this year.

How did you find this job opportunity?

I was a technology consultant contracted by the Department of Energy in South Carolina when a

recruiter contacted me about an opportunity at Walmart. I was flown into Arkansas and given an offer letter at the end of the interview.

Briefly describe your job. What do you enjoy most about your job?

I spent my first eight years with the Financial Technology group working on financial planning and budgeting solutions before being promoted to solutions

architect. I now work as a Business Solution Lead with our Global Technology group which gives me a chance to work with some of the company's data scientists. The thing I like most about my job is the ability to work with brilliant technologists across the globe.

How did your education in the MSDA program prepare you for your job?



Johnnie Jones.

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Virtual OM&IS Meet the Firm Event

The department is hosting the annual Meet the Firm Night (Career Fair) from 6 to 8 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 29, 2021.

The event will be hosted online through the Huskies Get

Hired platform using Symplicity. For more information and to register please visit: go.niu.edu/OMISMeettheFirm.

Scholarship and Award Winners

The OM&IS Department awarded a total of \$68,450 in scholarships during the 2020-2021 academic year. Due to COVID-19, the scholarships were awarded to the students directly without an award ceremony. The scholarship sponsors and recipients are:

Business Enterprise Computing and SAP Scholarships

— Albert Gracz, Jeremy Levine, Jillian Moorman, Snigdha Kalagadda, Srushti Mangesh Somvanshi, Can Sun and Anthony Abavelim.

CNA/AZEL Carter Scholarship — John Holliday.

Deutsch Family Scholarships — Dallen Roman, Jackie Ferreira and Emilee Thumm.

Beth Towell Excellence in Data Analytics Scholarship — Xavier Smith.

Kathleen McFadden Community Service Scholarship — Zachary Lamarca.

Brian Osterberg Memorial Scholarship — Nathaniel Narofsky.

Shail Godambe Family Scholarship — Braden Vercler.

Jeffrey Burton Lollar Memorial Scholarship — Curtis Baryla.

Marian E. Millington Scholarships for Advancement of Women in IT — Abigail Wood, Liana Roman and Sydney Guerra.

OM&IS Faculty Scholarship — Sofia Gomez Enriquez Riart.

OM&IS Leadership Award — Curtis Baryla.

OM&IS Student Excellence (Liu Family) Scholarship — Mingyi Chen.

Outstanding MIS Student Scholarship — Sukahada Satish Kanetkar.

Outstanding OM&IS Student Scholarship — Alberto Briones.

Pearson Publisher Scholarships — Jeremy Levine and Wilson Karanja.

Stanley Lipien and James Mailander Scholarship — Ryan Jackson.

William and Eileen Brietzke Endowed Scholarships — Qasim Deen, Zachary Lamarca, Jacob Schlegel, Lance Dolan, Nathaniel Narofsky, Alberto Briones, Xavier Smith, Abigail Wood, Liana Roman and Sydney Guerra.

McComb

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accounting but had an emphasis in IT, and as an OM&IS/ Finance double major I qualified for the job and received it. The internship program this summer looked a bit different as it was virtual, but I was offered a full-time position in July 2021 in Chicago to be on the team. I can't wait to use all the technical course knowledge and the soft skills I learned here at NIU to succeed at KPMG. OM&IS isn't something I would've pictured myself liking had you told me five years ago what it was, but it's such an underrated program that's so highly ranked at NIU and has such amazing staff.

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skills needed to be successful in my future, thanks to NIU's OM&IS department and its faculty. Throughout my time in the program, I took every opportunity available to me such as earning my certificate in Data Analytics as well as serving on the graduate council as a representative of the business school. I received valuable information from the various professionals that took time from their busy lives to speak about their professions to our classes. Upon graduating from NIU, I received an offer from CDW to take on the role of Sales Analytics Specialist utilizing my skills and knowledge of business and technology. I was thrilled to finally see my hard work and experience pay off in a big way.

Jones

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The classes I have taken have helped with my new position in better understanding business intelligence concepts, visualization concepts, text-data mining and machine learning. These are very helpful with my current job responsibilities.

What advice will you give to current or prospective MSDA students?

Use this opportunity in school to learn as much as you can about technology. Go beyond the grade and challenge yourselves to seek understanding that will help you someday contribute to the advancement of technology.

Is there anything else you want us to highlight about you?

I am also completing a master's in educational psychology at Northern Illinois University.