DATA TRANSFORMS
ALL OF US

University of PITTSBURGH

School of Computing and Information   Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Report

WELCOME

At the University of Pittsburgh School of Computing and Information (SCI), we believe that data is not just a tool—it is a transformative force that shapes the world around us. This year, our theme, "**Data Transforms Us All**," highlights the power of data to drive innovation, enhance lives, and solve complex global challenges. As we reflect on our achievements, collaborations, and forward-thinking initiatives, we see how data is not only a catalyst for academic excellence but also a bridge that connects disciplines, communities, and industries in unprecedented ways.

From pioneering research to impactful partnerships, SCI continues to push the boundaries of what's possible, creating new pathways for knowledge and fostering an environment where students, faculty, and alumni can lead in a data-driven world. This annual report captures our journey in transforming data into solutions that empower individuals and shape the future. It showcases how our work, grounded in data, continues to inspire progress, spark curiosity, and make a lasting impact across society and beyond.

Join us as we explore how the world of data is not only changing the way we think but transforming the way we live, work, and engage with the world. ■

Data is not only a catalyst for academic excellence but also a bridge that connects disciplines, communities, and industries in unprecedented ways.

BY THE NUMBERS

SCI POPULATION

68 FACULTY   **49** STAFF

STUDENTS
Measured using headcount, which is calculated as one full-time student and one part-time student.

1,733 TOTAL STUDENT BODY

1,190 UNDERGRADUATES

543 GRADUATE STUDENTS

DEPARTMENTS
- Computer Science
- Informatics and Networked Systems
- Information Culture and Data Stewardship

PROGRAMS
- Computational Modeling and Simulation Program
- Intelligent Systems Program

INSTITUTES
Sara Fine Institute
Modeling and Managing Complicated Systems Institute
Professional Institute at SCI

RESEARCH (FY24)

Research areas: artificial intelligence, data science, machine learning, security, networking, social computing, human-computer interaction, computer systems, data management, library and information science.

$7.4 MILLION
RESEARCH EXPENDITURES

RANKINGS
(from U.S. News & World Report unless otherwise noted)

COMPUTER SCIENCE

56TH in graduate computer science studies

54TH in undergraduate computer science programs

189TH in Best Universities for Computer Science

INFORMATICS AND NETWORKED SYSTEMS

1ST in Best Schools for Information Science in Pennsylvania (College Factual)

11TH in information systems**

16TH in Best Information Sciences Schools (College Factual)

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION STUDIES PROGRAMS**

9TH in archives and preservation

11TH in information systems

14TH in digital librarianship

17TH in Best Library and Information Studies Programs

**last ranked in 2021

ALUMNI

TOP COUNTRIES WHERE ALUMNI RESIDE
(by number of graduates)
- United States
- China
- India
- Iran
- Saudi Arabia
- South Korea
- Taiwan

NEARLY

27,000

TOTAL NUMBER OF ALUMNI

CAREER PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS

Corporate partners:
- Aerotech
- BNY Mellon
- CGI
- Deloitte
- Duquesne Light Corporation
- Eaton
- Industrial Scientific
- NetApp
- PNC Bank
- PPG Industries
- Thermo Fisher Scientific
- UPMC

CO-OP/INTERNSHIP PARTICIPATION

approximately

200

STUDENTS PER YEAR

CO-OP/INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT EXAMPLES
- Federated Hermes
- Microsoft
- Naval Nuclear Laboratory
- National Security Administration
- Sheetz
- Siemens

GRADUATION PLACEMENT

97.5%

94% of students have had an internship or co-op when they graduate

91% First-year student retention *(measuring students directly admitted to SCI starting in 2018 and declared their major by end of their sophomore year)*

Job placement location examples in addition to our corporate partners:
- DICK's Sporting Goods
- Amazon
- Epic
- Highmark
- JPMorgan Chase & Co.
- Cognizant
- Compunetix
- FAST Enterprises
- Lockheed Martin
- SAP
- Westinghouse Electric Company

PITT DAY OF GIVING 2024

$34,966.50 IN TOTAL GIFTS

234 **(29% INCREASE IN DONORS FROM 2023)**

Secured tenth place on the **Raise the Bar Challenge** leaderboard and placed on the Level UP leaderboard by reaching a donor stretch goal, receiving an additional **$4,642.85.**

GIVING (FY24)

TOTAL GIFTS AND COMMITMENTS:

$1,268,040

TOTAL DONORS:

676

GIFTS (OVER $20,000) FROM:
- Henry L. Hillman Foundation
- Amateur Radio Digital Communications
- Richard King Mellon Foundation
- The Pittsburgh Foundation
- PNC Financial Services Groups, Inc.
- NetApp, Inc
- NEC Laboratories America, Inc.

Support SCI Here!

Together transforming lives for a better digital future, from our community to the world.

I am pleased to share an overview of the progress that the School of Computing and Information (SCI) made in 2023-2024.

This year has been marked by many accomplishments, bringing us closer to our vision: *together transforming lives for a better digital future, from our community to the world.* The school's new strategic plan, aligned with the 2028 Plan for Pitt and shaped by over 100 contributors from the SCI community, serves as our guiding North Star: we are laying the groundwork for a brighter future.

A major milestone was achieved this year with the launch of SCI's Master of Data Science, which aims to make data education accessible to a broad audience online. Additionally, a new minor in information science provides Pitt undergraduates with multidisciplinary skills, enhancing their fields of study.

We also co-created Pitt's first Data Science Day with the Office of the Provost to showcase our impact in a digital world and to connect with research and academic partners through the Dean's Spotlight Series. Our numerous research and academic efforts were featured in over 40 media outlets including Scientific American, Business Insider, and Forbes.

SCI continues to be at the forefront of community-engaged initiatives. We welcomed Erin Walker as the inaugural Associate Dean for Research to guide our strategies. Faculty and students received recognitions like NSF/NASA early career awards and were noted contributors to discussions on topics like AI and civil rights. Furthermore, our research expenditures reached $7.44 million in fiscal year 2024, reflecting a commitment to innovation.

Another accomplishment this year is attracting and nurturing talent. We welcomed 15 new faculty and staff members, launched a faculty mentoring program, and appointed the inaugural Associate Dean for Mentoring and Development, Diane Litman. The first-ever Learning Academy cohort concluded with a "Shark Tank" event where three projects spearheaded by SCI faculty and staff were awarded $30,000 to enter their next phase like SCI UBelong, which started this past summer.

Our dedication to corporate engagement and student success continues to grow. We awarded 101 scholarships thanks to generous donors and placed on the Pitt Day of Giving Leaderboard. SCI collaborated with 14 companies through our Corporate Partnership Program, and annual initiatives like SCI Week, SteelHacks, and the SheInnovates hackathon events connected our students with employers to gain both practical experience and to enhance their journeys during their time at SCI and beyond.

Reflecting on these achievements, I am reminded of the incredible collective and forward-looking effort that makes them possible. Our progress is a testament to the talent, culture, and community at SCI. Together, we are transforming lives for a better digital future, with our impact reaching the Pittsburgh region and far beyond. It is possible at Pitt, and we make it happen at SCI.

Thank you for being part of our journey.

Bruce R. Childers

Bruce R. Childers
Dean and Professor
University of Pittsburgh School of Computing and Information

SCI'S NORTH STAR: OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

In the 2023-24 fiscal year, SCI finalized a strategic plan to guide SCI as our "north star" for the next five years. We are committed to fostering exceptional students, assisting the people of our community in achieving their goals, and elevating the impact of our research and scholarship for the betterment of all.

This plan, crafted over a year-long process tailored to SCI, reflects the shared vision of our community. This effort, led by SCI's administrative leaders, was complemented by three faculty and staff retreats, surveys, a strategic planning website, small group sessions, informal conversations, and individual meetings, culminating in more than 1,500 collective hours of effort and hundreds of contributions.

Aligning with the University's Plan for Pitt 2028 is paramount. SCI knows the best strategic plans are dynamic and ever evolving, so we will continuously monitor our progress, engage the SCI community, and adapt as new insights and circumstances arise.

As we carry out this plan, we adhere to principles of excellence: looking over the horizon, embracing systems thinking, setting and achieving clear goals, and regularly challenging our assumptions. ■

SCI STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

GOAL 1: UNDERGRADUATE
Empower all Pitt undergraduates with the essential computational, information, data knowledge, and skills needed to thrive throughout their lives, fostering an inclusive, collaborative environment that is representative and enriched with a tapestry of ideas.

GOAL 2: GRADUATE
Enable graduate and professional learners to excel in their careers with computing and information skills and knowledge.

GOAL 3: RESEARCH
Enhance societal well-being and environmental sustainability through transdisciplinary computing and information research and innovation.

GOAL 4: COMMUNITY
Propel engaged scholarship for social impact and the social good.

GOAL 5: PARTNERSHIP
Participate in and fortify connections with Western PA's workforce, forming durable economic partnerships, and cultivate purposeful relationships with alumni.

GOAL 6: ORGANIZATION
Foster a collaborative, welcoming, and diverse school.

SCI LAUNCHED NEW MASTER OF DATA SCIENCE IN 2024

As the field of data science continues to evolve, careers in data science are projected to grow by 35% between 2022 and 2032, making a master's degree in data science more valuable now than ever before. In the new asynchronous Master of Data Science (MDS) program in partnership with Coursera, students can gain these valuable skills and expertise affordably, from anywhere, and without any prior computational or programming experience needed. The first cohort of students began their orientation in April 2024, citing price, flexibility, and accessible admissions as the top three reasons for enrolling.

"The new MDS removes entry barriers, reassesses admission processes, and harnesses technology to deliver an exceptionally accessible program that embodies Pitt's high-quality, internationally recognized education," said Dean Bruce Childers. "SCI is embarking on this new online degree program because we realize the importance of providing access to data skills and knowledge inclusive of all learners."

The 30-credit program is taught by SCI's esteemed faculty, and throughout the program, students will gain practical knowledge in data science such as data management, data curation, programming, database design, data exploration, and predictive modeling. Upon completion of the program, there are numerous career opportunities for graduates to explore, like data scientist, data analyst, data coordinator, and data engineer across fields like healthcare, business, and education.

"The curriculum is designed to bring people from many academic backgrounds into the computing and information space," said Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies Adam Lee. In his former role as SCI's Executive Associate Dean, Lee took part in the MDS program's creation. "We're looking at a different tuition price point to make this program accessible to a wide range of learners and compatible with a lot of employers and employee benefits."

As of summer 2024, more than 250 students were participating in the program to build skills to advance in their current roles. Most students are employed full-time and enrolled part-time, capitalizing on the program's built-in flexibility. The learners shared that their primary motivation is to advance in their current careers where data is increasing or to enter the data science field. Dmitriy Babichenko, clinical associate professor, led the first course offered in the MDS program, Data-Centric Computing, in summer 2024.

"This course allows somebody with practically no STEM background to get hands-on experience and an understanding of data science practices and approaches to working with data, algorithms, and so on," said Babichenko.

SCI's MDS program provides opportunities and opens new possibilities to learners across the country, making learning in the computing and information fields more inclusive and open to all.

"The program is really special because it is geared towards such a broad population of students," said Morgan Frank, assistant professor in the Department of Informatics and Networked Systems. "It's a streamlined experience to get students a very valuable data science-based skillset that you can see used across academia, companies and industries, healthcare, economics, tech, and more. There are a lot of ways to take this skillset and find your next opportunity." ■

Interested in expanding your data science knowledge? Learn more about our MDS program here:

Events like SCI's Dean's Spotlight Series bring together industry experts, SCI faculty and staff, students, and alumni to hear about the latest research advances in the computing, information, and library sciences.

FIRST DATA SCIENCE DAY AT SCI CELEBRATED ON APRIL 19

Data science is an interdisciplinary field that prioritizes innovation. Applying statistics, computing, and algorithms to a vast array of contexts, data science is optimizing fields like business, healthcare, science, and many others. On April 19, more than 100 members of the university community gathered at the University Club to celebrate the first Data Science Day at Pitt, hosted by the Office of the Provost and SCI.

The day kicked off with breakfast and networking, followed by presentations and panels featuring data science professionals. Dean Bruce Childers welcomed the attendees to the event.

"Data is absolutely everywhere – it influences science, healthcare, business, government, and so much more. That's why it is so important to empower others to not only be able to gather and interpret data, but also to use it responsibly for positive societal impact," said Childers.

SCI students like Roja Kafle, a sophomore studying computer science, attended Data Science Day not only to hear from experts, but to expand their knowledge of data science beyond the classroom.

"I'm excited to learn … about what data science can offer me, as well as how to apply it in our modern society," said Kafle on what prompted her to attend.

"I'm interested in what the speakers are doing and discussing, since I may want to go into a career in data science myself."

Alfred Spector, visiting scholar at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), spoke at the keynote presentation, "Beyond Models – Applying Data Science and AI Effectively." In his presentation, Spector discussed a framework for addressing challenges and effectively using data science and AI. The three-part framework suggests that there are three key components in applying data science and AI: technical contributors, integrity, and ethics.

"Now that we are solving really complicated problems, and many of you want to be the leaders of the solutions, not just the contributors to a particular technique, you better think broadly," said Spector. "I think we need to have a really good course of study and a broad set of subjects if we are going to apply this technology effectively. There's an enormous amount that we need to learn to apply technologies that are essentially solving the most complicated problems that we, as humans, have come up with throughout civilization."

The keynote presentation was followed by a panel discussion, "Responsible Uses of Data Science in the Workforce – Industry Perspectives," moderated by former Vice Provost for Budget and Analytics Stephen Wisniewski and featuring data science professionals:

Chris Belasco
Senior Manager, Digital Services and Chief Data Officer for the City of Pittsburgh

Bridget Fitzpatrick
Manager of Data Science, Dick's Sporting Goods

Mary Beth Green
Chief Innovation Officer, Sheetz

The discussion explored responsible uses of data science and how it has transformed workplaces across industries.

"The experience of those in the workforce is essential in understanding how the field of data science is developing and how that will impact our training of the next generation of data scientists," said Wisniewski.

The final panel discussion of the day, "Women in Data Science – Challenges, Opportunities and Empowerment," was a continuation of the SheLeads Women's Forum in March 2023. Moderated by President and CEO of the Pittsburgh Technology Council Audrey Russo, the panel featured:

Sandra Brandon – Research Liaison and Leader of Strategy and Innovation, Office of the CIO, University of Pittsburgh

Amanda Brodish – Associate Vice Provost for Data Analytics, University of Pittsburgh

Rosta Farzan – Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Associate Professor, SCI

Marcela Gomez – Director of Research Analytics, Office of the Senior Vice Chancellor for Research, University of Pittsburgh

Nalyn Siripong – Senior Data Scientist, University of Pittsburgh Information Technology

The discussion highlighted the leadership of women in data science and the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field.

"Data science brings together many different perspectives. You can be a part of data science with different backgrounds and different experiences that you have. What really got me interested in data science is that it's a field that can accommodate different perspectives. There's room for everyone to be a part of it," said Farzan.

The first-ever Data Science Day was a success in highlighting the knowledge and expertise of data science professionals across industries, as emphasized by Associate Vice Provost for Data Science Michael Colaresi.

"In responsible data science here at Pitt, data science is about and for people," said Colaresi. "Today marks an exciting milestone as we continue to grow Pitt's positive impact in data science." ■

THE POWER OF MENTORSHIP AT SCI

Diane Litman, *Associate Dean for Mentoring and Development*

SCI is committed to fostering a work environment that is positive, productive, and driven by teamwork, and mentorship is a key factor in a happy and healthy workplace. Professor Diane Litman, Associate Dean for Mentoring and Development, is passionate about guiding faculty to succeed. In her associate dean role, Litman serves as the chair of the SCI Faculty Council, which last year focused on guidelines and policies related to appointment stream dossiers, practices for appointment to graduate faculty, teaching assessment plans, and mentoring and development ideation. As a result of these focused efforts, SCI is launching a new faculty mentorship program beginning September 2024.

"Mentees are individually paired with a team of faculty mentors from across, and potentially beyond, the school," explained Litman. "Twenty-eight full-time faculty have opted in to participate as either mentees or mentors for the Fall 2024 pilot."

Throughout the year, teams of faculty members across all three SCI departments will meet with mentees, both individually and as a group. Mentees will have many opportunities to learn and develop, including at supplementary events like lunch-and-learns.

"SCI prioritizes faculty and staff development, recruitment, and retention. The creation of an Associate Dean for Mentoring and Development position dedicated to these priorities is an important step in supporting this effort," said Litman.

Litman is looking forward to refining and expanding faculty mentorship at SCI to boost workplace performance, productivity, and morale.

"Studies have shown that a successful mentoring program leads to improved job satisfaction, increased performance, better retention, and a cultural organization that embraces a sense of community, collaboration, and a positive work environment," said Litman. "Successful mentoring allows for career growth and development through shared experiences, guidance, support, and creating a bond of trust." ■

SCI STUDENTS HELP TO PRESERVE INDIGENOUS CULTURES WITH VR TECHNOLOGY

In March 2024, students went to Ecuador for their Digital Narrative and Interactive Design (DNID) capstone project with Dr. Dmitriy Babichenko, clinical associate professor in the Department of Informatics and Networked Systems. Students were divided into five teams each with a distinct focus and function in order to gather information on an isolated indigenous Waorani tribe to preserve their culture. Two SCI students, Emily Hann (SCI '23) and Sydney Rodriguez (SCI '25), share their experience on the trip and beyond.

"Traveling to Ecuador to find a way to bring the Waorani people's history to life using technology is exactly what DNID is all about," says Rodriguez. "We were able to apply our skills in computer programming, virtual reality, graphic design interfaces, problem solving, and narrative study to this project to create a virtual adaptation of important Waorani experiences and information that will act as a way to preserve their culture for years to come."

The DNID program is a nexus for technology, communities, and creativity, and through capstone projects like Dr. Babichenko's, Pitt students can directly see the impact their work has on the world around them.

"My goal with my DNID major is to develop immersive educational experiences that encourage participants to actively engage with diverse cultures through the art of narrative storytelling and environmental immersion," says Hann. "By comprehending both the power of information and good design, DNID students demonstrate that art and technology are not mutually exclusive as they operate within the liminal space where both fields coexist and inform one another. It is here where the future of media technologies resides."

Both Rodriguez and Hann were part of the UX/UI team, where they created a website for the project, a VR prototype, and a database cataloguing Kichwa narratives and local ecological data.

"As our site had to cater to the needs of diverse users, including researchers, social scientists, and indigenous community members, we ensured that the database search results were easily accessible and usable by everyone," explained Hann.

The research group hopes to eventually partner with the Carnegie Museum of Natural History to expand access to the program. The ultimate goal with *HeritageRoots* is to create the world's largest virtual museum dedicated to these indigenous narratives.

Rodriguez extrapolated on the project's accessibility, saying that it was "very important for this project to be physically presented and to give individuals, whether researchers, scientists, native groups, or anyone else, access to information to learn more about various cultures and their experiences."

On this trip, students had a chance to not only utilize their existing skills but develop new ones. Rodriguez recounted learning how to use 3D scanning to take pictures of real objects and recreate them in virtual spaces.

"It was very rewarding to see our hard work come together into a physical product," she said. By collaborating with various teams, the DNID students had the opportunity to exhibit the cross-functional nature of their program and try new things to expand their skillset.

Hann and Rodriguez are looking forward to using their new and honed skills in both their professional and academic careers.

Rodriguez has already put into practice what she learned at PNC Bank as an intern for the digital content design team in Retail Product Management & Development. "This position has utilized the same skills I used for wireframing user experiences in Figma to wireframe online experiences for PNC customers," she says. "I will definitely continue to use this as a conversational point and as a unique experience for future job positions because it was very relevant to my interests in UI/UX design."

As the Fall 2024 term has just begun, Rodriguez is an undergraduate teaching assistant for the DNID class under Dr. Babichenko and Christopher Maverick, a teaching assistant professor in the English Department.

"This will involve a lot of communication with the teachers and students, collaboration with the other UTA and teachers, and design thinking for certain projects in the class, which was important in the capstone," she says. ■

INNOVATIVE COLLABORATION
Erin Walker, *Associate Dean for Research*

Research is a driving force behind innovation and real-world change across disciplines like computing, information, healthcare, business, and education. SCI emphasizes collaborative, interdisciplinary research, a passion shared by Associate Professor Erin Walker, Associate Dean for Research. In this new associate dean role, Walker nourishes SCI's research and amplifies its impact and reach.

" facilitate making connections, exchanging ideas, and building community based on individual research agendas, leading to better support for scholarship that has impact and for people to come together around large scale initiatives," said Walker.

Erin Walker
Associate Professor; Research Scientist, LRDC; Associate Dean for Research, SCI

Walker has led the formation of two clusters of faculty, the AI Safety Cluster and the Generative AI and Argumentative Reasoning Cluster. These clusters serve as pathways to understanding and communicating how different research areas are related.

"Along with a Data Science Education cluster, assembled by Professor Alexandros Labrinidis, we are exploring how these clusters can accelerate and amplify the research being done within SCI," explained Walker. "I led a proposal resubmission working group to support faculty in workshopping their proposals and building community related to proposal-writing. I also supported Rosta Farzan, Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, in directing an undergraduate research program this summer that built a cohort of SCI undergraduate students working with faculty on research projects."

Walker will continue to lead researchers and address their needs in various projects. Her three main priorities for the upcoming year are to support proposal writing and award management, map SCI research and facilitate research cluster formation, and amplify the school's visibility and broader impacts.

"I have been so inspired by how much faculty are prioritizing societal impact as a driving force for the research questions they select, their methods, and how they disseminate their results," said Walker. "Research presents a vision for what should be done that can then serve as a roadmap for technology innovators." ■

NEW ACADEMIC DASHBOARD REVOLUTIONIZES ACADEMIC POLICIES ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY

A central goal at SCI and across schools at the University of Pittsburgh is to implement innovative, data-driven ways for members of the Pitt community to learn, work, and make the most of their Pitt experience. The new academic standing dashboard puts that goal into action.

During her time as Director of Academic Records at SCI, Brandi Belleau worked with Pitt IT's Transformation and Data Analytics Team and the Registrar's Office System Analysts to develop and implement the new dashboard at SCI. The Academic Intervention and Outreach Team under the Student Success Team in the Office of the Provost is now expanding upon the dashboard for development and use across the University. Projects like this show how data-driven solutions initiated by members of the SCI community can influence positive change across the University.

"The new academic standing dashboard has improved our academic standing policy by highlighting inconsistencies and prompting important discussions," said Belleau, who took on the role of Data Analyst for Pitt IT's Transformation and Data Analytics team in summer 2024. "It positively serves faculty, staff, and students by enabling proactive and timely interventions."

The new dashboard uses cutting-edge data-driven methods to provide major improvements that more accurately assess students' academic performance. It reveals variability in policy and practice across campus, encourages evaluation of different student populations' needs, and initiates more efficient academic intervention for students. If a student shows unexpected dips in academic performance, students will receive timely outreach to help mitigate these circumstances, such as through financial aid counseling and academic recovery planning.

"The dashboard's timeliness is crucial, especially given the tight turnaround between grade postings and the start of new terms," explained Belleau. "It addresses a long-standing challenge of providing timely support to students, particularly during critical periods like the short turnaround between end of Fall term, winter recess, and the start of Spring term."

The development of the new dashboard brought together some of Pitt's most skilled technology experts, and showed how data systems are integrated across the University. The Office of the Registrar is the source of student data, working with all the schools and their academic policies across the University. Pitt IT continually uses their data expertise to translate and build solutions for all schools and offices.

"[This] project is catalyzing a data-driven approach to policy refinement, potentially leading to more consistent, fair, and effective academic standing policies across the university," said Belleau.

Data holds endless possibilities for the future of SCI and the University. SCI's influence in data-driven solutions like the new academic standing dashboard show how collaborative work can improve efficiency, encourage further collaboration among schools, and refine policies and services for the benefit of all faculty, staff, and students.

"Ultimately, leveraging data effectively can transform how we approach education, student support, and institutional management," said Belleau. "It allows us to move from reactive problem-solving to proactive, informed decision-making, potentially revolutionizing the academic experience for students and the professional experience for faculty and staff." ◼
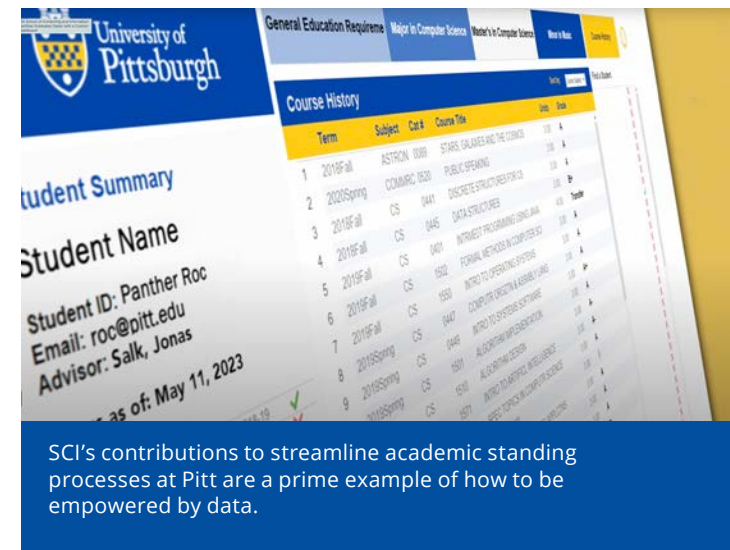
SCI's contributions to streamline academic standing processes at Pitt are a prime example of how to be empowered by data.

CORPORATE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: AEROTECH ON THE FUTURE OF DATA

As a valued corporate partner, Aerotech collaborates with SCI to help students find success during and after their academic journeys. Aerotech designs and manufactures custom precision motion-control and automation systems for sectors like government, science, and research institutions. Through events like career fairs, information sessions, and discussion panels, Aerotech has guided SCI students towards their career goals across disciplines in the computing and information fields. Nate Homitsky, Vice President of Information at Aerotech, is closely involved in the SCI community, helping students pursue different career paths.

"Aerotech officially started in the SCI partnership program a few years ago, but before that I have personally been involved in several SCI and computer science (CS) days, guest lectures, resume reviews, discussion panels, and other events," said Homitsky.

In addition to the skills students build through their coursework, SCI events held by corporate partners like Aerotech are imperative to navigating and choosing from various career paths after graduation.

"Students should attend the events and outside-the-classroom experiences that SCI provides because it will help them clarify and achieve their career goals after graduation," explained Homitsky. "The more information that students have regarding the organizations who employ computing and information professionals, and the vision and culture of those organizations, the better they can evaluate what it is they truly want to do with their careers."

Aerotech has also onboarded talent from SCI, expanding their teams of skilled professionals.

"Time and time again, Aerotech has found exceptionally talented and motivated employees who graduated from the University of Pittsburgh, and SCI specifically," said Homitsky. "Our involvement with SCI is mutually beneficial

because it helps to raise awareness of Aerotech and the innovative work that we do. And it helps to enrich the student experience at SCI by bringing in an industry perspective and professional sounding board for collaboration."

Data is transforming fields like science, education, and healthcare at a rapid rate. Aerotech works with data to fuel innovation. Homitsky emphasizes the importance of reliable data sources and usage in both academic and professional settings.

"In academic settings, the ability to collect, store, clean, and use data sources is a fundamental requirement for testing theories and searching for meaningful insights–especially given the ever-increasing information stores around us," said Homitsky. "In professional settings like Aerotech, the power and potential of data is largely the same as in academic settings. Aerotech has provided motion control technology to a great variety of universities, research institutes, and national labora-tories throughout our history. One key difference is that data analytics and information system integration/automation often is used within businesses to improve operational efficiency."

Professional organizations like Aerotech offer countless opportunities to work with data, a promising future for those pursuing degrees in data science.

"Degrees in data science are valuable indicators that employers are likely to view as confirmation that a candidate has a solid foundation in the key concepts, tools, and best practices required to succeed in relevant roles," said Homitsky. "I am particularly excited to see the impact of the ADDM certificate in regard to opening new data science roles to people coming from diverse educational backgrounds. Working professionals who have encountered data science and analytics use cases through the course of their current careers may find new, innovative career opportunities by expanding their skills and knowledge via this certificate program."
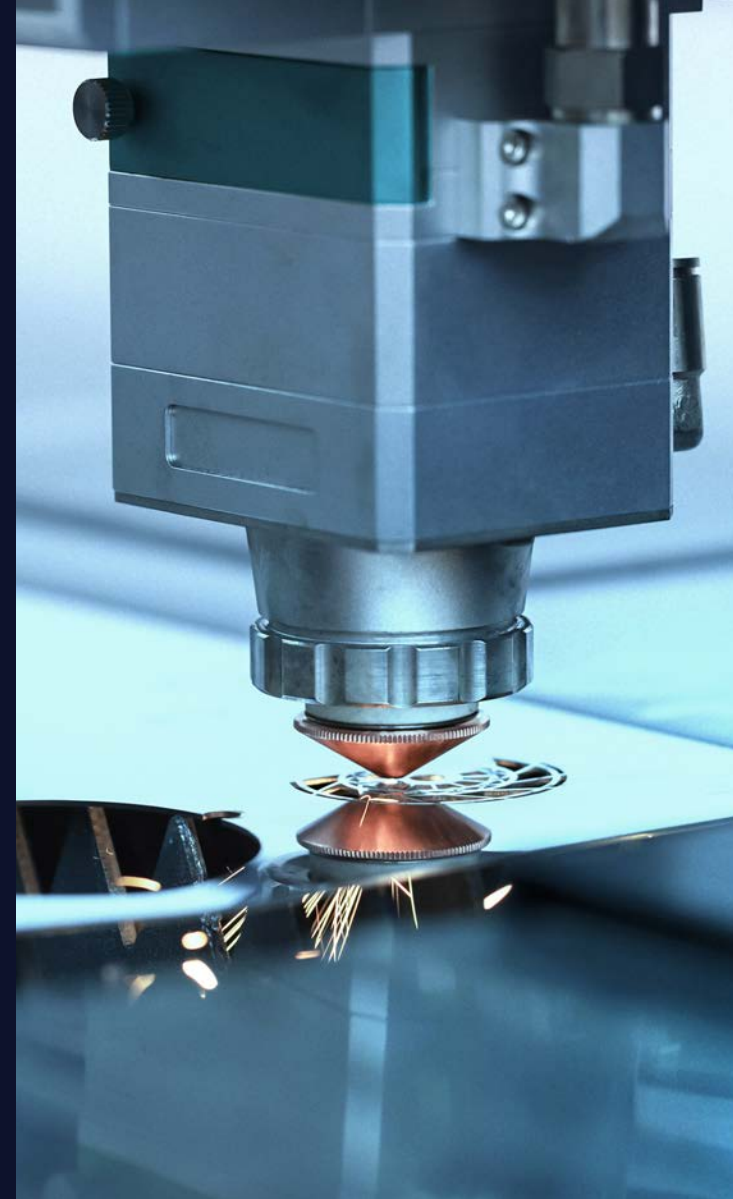
Learn more about SCI's corporate partnership opportunities!

Contact:
Jennifer Welton
Director of Career Development
jwelton@pitt.edu
412-389-8915

OUR VISION, OUR SPACES:
UNIFYING SCI'S FACILITIES

SCI consists of students, staff, and faculty of diverse backgrounds and walks of life. Like a mosaic, each member contributes to the school in a unique and valuable way. SCI is committed to developing a unified community and fostering connections, as demonstrated by the unified facility initiative. In three SCI spaces – the Information Sciences Building, floors five and six in Sennott Square, and floor five at 130 N. Bellefield Avenue – digital signs in lobbies and shared areas have been transformed to improve cohesion and consistency at SCI.

The unified facility initiative was pitched during the COVID-19 pandemic when students had limited access to in-person resources and faced occupancy and social-distancing restrictions. Since then, digital screens have been placed in the foyers, lobbies, and common spaces across the University, displaying announcements, resources, and information for students. Now, SCI is taking it to the next level by unifying the screens in each SCI location, providing consistent and cohesive guidance to students, staff, and faculty. Spearheaded by Dean Bruce Childers and Senior Director of Business Administration Sharon Bindas, the screens will continue to develop a common identity and highlight resources and accomplishments at SCI.

"Unifying our facilities and vision through new digital signage is an opportunity to tell our story and highlight our accomplishments," said Bindas. "We want our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends to feel a connection when they are in SCI spaces and to present a shared identity within the school."

This project first saw a major update with the completion of SCI's space at 130 N. Bellefield in Fall 2022, where a branded entrance and digital signs were installed in public areas. With updates made to SCI's spaces in Sennott Square in Spring 2024 and additional updates to the Information Science Building lobby in October 2024, the project brings together all members of the SCI community, no matter where they are on Pitt's campus.

The project puts entrance space and technology to use in a positive way, uniting members of the SCI community. The consistent "look and feel" of each entrance to SCI's three locations enables the school to highlight faculty, staff, and students. The signage is helpful to display information like events across campus, SCI news and announcements, and academic initiatives and programs. Together, they will share SCI's story and connect the community in a multifaceted way.

The initiative was implemented with SCI's vision in mind: to together transform lives for a better digital future, from our community to the world.

"This initiative has been a success in showcasing SCI's identity and shared community," said Dean Bruce Childers. "It's an opportunity to feature the remarkable academic achievements of our students, innovative research conducted by faculty, and the hard work of our staff. Most of all, it provides everyone in the SCI community with a place to connect with each other." ■

ALUMNI IN DATA SCIENCE:
ILYA GOLDIN AND ARCHANA RAMKUMAR

Ilya Goldin (SCI '07, '11G)

As the field of data science rapidly grows, SCI offers many different programs for students to excel in a career in data science, and alumnus Ilya Goldin (SCI '07, '11G) is but one example. Goldin graduated from SCI with a master's degree and doctorate in the Intelligent Systems Program (ISP) and since then, has advanced in his career to become the Head of Data Science at Phenom, an organization dedicated to delivering artificial intelligence (AI)-powered talent experiences to global enterprises. Goldin emphasizes that his education at SCI helped him prepare for a successful career in data science.

Goldin notes that during his time at ISP, he forged connections, built his expertise in data science, and set professional goals that guided him throughout his career.

"Throughout my time at ISP, I learned how to think skeptically about research, how claims are made from data, and how to be practical in building AI applications in an applied industry setting," said Goldin. "ISP had a strong emphasis on methodology and critical thinking, which is really important for designing AI architectures and for evaluating that your AI systems do what they are supposed to do."

In Goldin's current role, data is the driving force for all the work he does. Phenom builds AI-powered software for human resources, especially in talent acquisition and talent management. As Head of Data Science, Goldin ensures that Phenom's AI technologies are innovative, effective, and safe.

"It's critical for me to stay on top of new developments in AI to design new systems, measure and communicate the value of what we've built, and to implement robust governance for our AI innovation," said Goldin.

Goldin sees the transformative effects of data in his day-to-day role, and encourages students, mentors, and professionals across sectors to embrace the uses, applications, and power of data-driven technologies for a digital future.

Archana Ramkumar (SCI '24)

Data science is transforming the workforce, and so are SCI graduates like Archana Ramkumar (SCI '24). After graduating with a bachelor's degree in computational biology, a minor in applied statistics, and a certificate in global health, Ramkumar now works as a data science analyst at CVS Health. Ramkumar notes that the countless opportunities she had at SCI, both inside and outside the classroom, helped open doors for her career.

"[Being an undergraduate teaching assistant and peer tutor] refined my communication, leadership, and technical skills, as I effectively explained and guided students through complex programming concepts," said Ramkumar. "I learned the importance of adaptability and patience, as I worked with students from diverse backgrounds and skill levels. These skills are highly transferable to the professional world, where effective communication, problem-solving, and the ability to work with diverse teams are essential."

Ramkumar's studies at SCI also helped her prepare for her current role at CVS Health by building a strong foundation for analytical and programming skills. Courses like CS 1656: Introduction to Data Science provided Ramkumar with hands-on experience with real-world datasets that would be essential in her career.

"What motivated me to pursue a career in this industry is knowing that my work directly has an impact on our patients and customer experience at CVS," said Ramkumar. "We use data-driven insights to optimize how healthcare services are offered, making them more efficient to enhance our customers' experiences and overall health journey."

Ramkumar emphasized the importance of data scientists in an ever-evolving labor market and their role in an increasingly digital future.

"As data scientists, we collaborate closely with business partners to identify existing challenges and determine where we can analyze the data to extract meaningful insights and drive actionable solutions," said Ramkumar.

Ramkumar's experiences both at SCI and beyond are a testament to the transformative and influential power of data science, inspiring future graduates to harness their skills for meaningful change in an increasingly digital landscape.

Get involved with SCI's alumni community!
Contact Mackenzie Ball, Director of Outreach and Alumni Engagement, at mackenzie.ball@pitt.edu to learn more.

PEOPLE FIRST:
A COMMITTMENT TO OUR FACULTY AND STAFF

A core value of SCI is "people first." The school makes a commitment to all its community members, recognizing the importance of developing faculty and staff. SCI takes a career-oriented lifecycle approach spanning scouting, recruitment, career progression, and leadership. SCI's commitment to faculty and staff reflects the school's goal of not only becoming a "school of choice" for students but also an "employer of choice," supporting the Plan for Pitt 2028 goal.

Multiple faculty searches were conducted in the 2023-24 Academic Year, with five new faculty and a visiting scholar being hired. The school continued embracing "active recruitment" to proactively build applicant pools and conduct welcoming on-campus interviews, facilitating transition into the university when hired, in partnership with the school's Associate Dean for DEI and the DEI Committee. 241 candidates applied to our tenure-stream searches and 44 applied to the appointment-stream searches. More than 20 on-campus interviews were conducted.

SCI also expanded staff capacity with ten staff hired. In addition to new hires, SCI has been developing staff who advance in the school and contribute broadly to the University. Six staff were promoted to other units at Pitt or within SCI, advancing staff careers for the University and deepening partnerships between SCI and other Pitt units.

The school created the role of Associate Dean for Mentoring and Development to foster career success and belonging. Diane Litman (CS/LRDC) was appointed and onboarded in this role, forming a committee to design a school-wide mentoring program, which held focus groups to develop a pilot. Mentoring teams were formed in Summer 2024, with the inaugural cohort of the programming beginning in Fall 2024. She has also been working to encourage a cohort of associate deans at Pitt to be involved in mentoring activities.

The first cohort of SCI's Learning Academy, a project-based program designed to support faculty and staff development and leadership, concluded in February 2024 with a "Shark Tank"-style final group session, where teams of faculty and staff members pitched their projects to experienced advisors. Members of SCI's Alumni Board, Board of Visitors, and corporate partners served as the advisors. Nine faculty and staff members participated in the cohort, with projects on community building, a summer bridge program for incoming first-year students, and an intranet for SCI. A total of $30,000 was awarded to the teams to implement their projects, furthering faculty and staff development beyond the cohort's participation. The second cohort began in April 2024. ■

During SCI Week, SCI's annual week-long series of professional development and networking events, students have the opportunity to connect with our corporate partners to explore job opportunities and best practices.

NEW FACULTY FOR 2024-2025

After a rigorous faculty search, SCI is excited to welcome five new full-time faculty members to the school! These esteemed faculty members will continue SCI's mission of supporting discovery and innovation driven by data, technology, and information.

Raquel Coelho
Assistant Professor, DINS/LRDC

Raquel Coelho is jointly appointed as a research scientist at the Learning Research and Development Center. She holds a PhD in learning sciences and technology design combined with education data science from Stanford University and has experience as a researcher at the Centre for the Science of Learning and Technology (SLATE) at the University of Bergen, Norway. Her research, rooted in sociocultural theories of learning, examines novel applications of text analytics and text generation technologies in educational contexts.

Junyu Liu
Assistant Professor, CS

Junyu Liu holds a PhD in physics from the California Institute of Technology and has experience at the Walter Burke Institute for Theoretical Physics and the Institute for Quantum Information and Matter. Previously, he worked as a computer scientist and theoretical physicist at the University of Chicago and IBM. He specializes in combining physics and computing, particularly in machine learning and modern computing technologies. His research focuses on quantum machine learning, variational quantum circuits, quantum optimization, and quantum data centers.

Nils Murrugarra-Llerena
Teaching Assistant Professor, CS

Nils Murrugarra-Llerena holds a PhD in computer science from the University of Pittsburgh and has experience as an assistant professor in computer science at Weber State University. His teaching and research interests encompass computer vision, machine learning, and natural language processing, with a focus on attribute recognition and projects involving deep learning, gaze prediction, transfer learning, reinforcement learning, and metric learning.

Patrick Skeba
Teaching Assistant Professor, CS

Patrick Skeba holds a bachelor's degree in cognitive science and computer science from Johns Hopkins University and a PhD in computer science from Lehigh University. His teaching and research interests lie in internet privacy, and responsible use of AI and data. He teaches courses in machine learning and computer programming.

Michael Miller Yoder
Teaching Assistant Professor

Before joining SCI, Michael Miller Yoder was a postdoctoral researcher in the Software and Societal Systems Department at Carnegie Mellon University and a part-time instructor in computer science (CS) at Pitt. His teaching includes graduate-level CS courses and introducing machine learning to students outside of CS. His teaching and research background is in natural language processing and computational social science, with applications in countering hate and extremism online.

NEW STAFF FOR 2024-2025

During the 2024-25 academic year, SCI welcomed ten new esteemed staff members who will continue to support the school's numerous efforts and students. We're dedicated to developing staff who advance in the school and contribute broadly to the University.

Noel Antalek
Undergraduate Recruitment Specialist

Noel graduated from the University of Pittsburgh with a Bachelor of Science in Natural Science with a neuroscience concentration in 2023. During her time at Pitt, Noel worked in the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid as a Pitt Pathfinder, the University's student tour guide and ambassador organization.

Bobbie Coyne
Travel Events and Business Coordinator

In this role, Bobbie assists department administration with planning events, arranging travel requests accurately and timely, and troubleshooting travel questions and issues while providing excellent customer service. She assists faculty, staff, students, and guests of SCI in the processing of all travel and business reimbursements, preparation and submission of contracts and service agreements and verification of available funds.

Jane Graham
Temporary Development Associate for Philanthropic and Alumni Engagement (PAE)

As the Development Associate, Jane works with the Director of Development to cultivate positive relationships with our donors and alumni. She helps plan alumni events, like SCI's Pitt Day of Giving and Toast to SCI, and works on all communications to SCI's alumni community.

Jessica Ham
Department Coordinator, Department of Computer Science

Jessica graduated from Chatham University with a Bachelor of Arts in Arts Management in 2022. Post-graduation, Jessica worked for the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh, The Frick Pittsburgh and PNC Bank. She has a passion for the arts and education in her role at the University of Pittsburgh.

Tiffany Holmes
Budget and Finance Manager

Tiffany joined SCI after working at the Carnegie Science Center where she worked as the Budget and Data Analyst. Tiffany is familiar with the Pitt community and is a graduate of Pitt's College of Business Administration.

Mara Silver
Online Programs Data Analyst
Master of Data Science Progam

Prior to SCI, Mara worked for the Office of the University Registrar (OUR), supporting university information systems. She worked closely with the schools on many projects, including creating a streamlined transfer credit process for the university. After four years in OUR, Mara joined SCI to support the school and the University's endeavors to expand online programs, and give a new population of students access to SCI.

Jane Smith
Graduate Admissions Manager

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in English and certificate in children's literature, Jane briefly held roles in event planning and coordination, and administration and customer service, before returning to the University of Pittsburgh as an Admissions Counselor with the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid (OAFA). Following nearly eight years in OAFA practicing enrollment services and visitor engagement, she joined SCI ready to keep connecting ambitious students with their higher education goals.

Trudy Stajduhar
Research Administration Manager

Trudy brings a wealth of knowledge in both post- and pre-award administration, bolstered by her time spent in that role at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. In her current role, she focuses primarily on the post-award activities specific to SCI.

Amy Vaught
Assistant Director for Student and Academic Affairs

Amy has been at the University of Pittsburgh since 2011 and graduated with her Master's in Higher Education in 2016. Before starting her current position, Amy was Assistant Director of the Outside the Classroom Curriculum (OCC) in Student Affairs for nearly nine years. Amy's experience in higher education has focused mainly on program management, organizational development, strategic planning, and soft skills development. She also earned her Certificate of Organizational Leadership and Ethics from the University of Pittsburgh.

Rebecca Zanaglio
Academic Records Lead

Rebecca graduated from Westminster College in 2022 with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Minor in Writing. During her undergraduate experience, Rebecca worked in the Student Affairs, Admissions, Theatre, and Psychology departments, and she interned at City Mission-Living Stones as a Youth Counselor.

Department of Computer Science

For the past 58 years, the Department of Computer Science has excelled in teaching and research, having real-world impacts across the globe. From small to large companies and across fields like health care, business, and education, our alumni are making innovative changes in the world. Both our faculty and students continue to conduct transformative research, funded by internal and external grants, and gaining recognition for their groundbreaking discoveries at various conferences.

"I want to expand the guidance and mentoring we provide to our graduate students, including peer mentoring and mentoring-topic-based workshop sessions. I also strive to find creative mechanisms to ensure we maintain top-notch courses, including keeping undergraduate electives and graduate courses up to date with cutting edge computational techniques, while also providing sufficient scaffolding."

Adriana Kovashka, *Department Chair*

Adriana Kovashka
Associate Professor and Department Chair

Thank you to our outgoing CS Department Chair

As the 2023-2024 term concluded, we bade farewell to our outgoing interim chair of the Department of Computer Science (CS), Dr. Daniel Mossé. Throughout his time as interim chair, Dr. Mossé led the way in promoting groundbreaking research, increased course offerings for undergraduate electives and seminars, and saw a significant increase in the CS faculty and student bodies. Dr. Mossé served as a leader for fellow faculty and staff and as a mentor for students in technology-driven innovation. In the 2024-2025 term, we welcomed Associate Professor Dr. Adriana Kovashka as the new chair of CS. We extend our sincerest gratitude to Dr. Mossé and warmest welcome to Dr. Kovashka!

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

CS Faculty Lead Project Establishing Pitt Cyber Energy Center

- A $2.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) will establish the Cyber Energy Center at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Daniel Mossé is part of an interdisciplinary team dedicated to defending America's national infrastructure. Additional SCI faculty members leading this project include Assistant Professors Amy Babay (CS, DINS) and Stephen Lee (CS).

- As cyber technology in the energy sector becomes more advanced, cybersecurity is a priority, which is why the DOE is providing $15 million in funding for universities across the nation. It is critical to protect against malicious attacks to ensure the safety and quality of cyber technology. The grant was provided to the School of Computing and Information, the Swanson School of Engineering, the School of Public and International Affairs, the Center for Energy, the Energy GRID Institute, and the Institute for Law Policy and Security.

Department of Informatics and Networked Systems

Daqing He
*Professor and
Department Chair*

The Department of Informatics and Networked Systems (DINS) seeks to empower people and organizations by creating innovative technologies that support better decision-making, governance, and business practice across a wide range of industries. Our community of scholars and students work at the junction of information, networks, and human behavior, so that all can understand systems, networks, data, and users, and how all three must work together for businesses and society to thrive. Our research and educational programs have an impact on research, technology development, and day-to-day life by making information useful across a spectrum of industries including higher education, health care, manufacturing, finance, technology, and human services.

"Building on DINS' 60+ years of providing innovative educational opportunities, we launched our first Minor this year – the Minor in Information Science. This 15-credit minor is so successful in attracting students from numerous Pitt schools and majors in its first year, while also positioning the department and SCI to impact more students from across the University. The Minor has attracted students from more than 20 non-SCI degree programs, reflecting how the Information Science discipline can, and does, intersect with other fields and professions. When added to our current educational programs, we feel that DINS is offering a suite of opportunities to meet the needs of the rapidly changing information environment and related job markets."

Daqing He, *Department Chair*

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Two DINS Faculty Publish in Prestigious Nature Venues

- Assistant Professor Lingfei Wu has added to the conversation about working/interacting remotely with a recent article on "Remote Collaboration fuses fewer breakthrough ideas" published in Nature. Assistant Professor Morgan Frank explored how location, not reskilling, is a challenge for fossil fuel workers seeking jobs in green industries in an article published in Nature Communications.

Informed Design of Emotion-aware AI Systems for Urban Living

- Assistant Professor Na Du secured funding from the Honda Research Institute for her project "Human Emotion Regulation During Human-AI Interaction." Dr. Du, who joined the faculty in 2021, works in the areas of human-computer interaction, human factors, computational modeling of human behaviors, and human-centered design.

DEPARTMENT AND PROGRAM SPOTLIGHTS

Department of Information Culture and Data Stewardship

Focused on serving the information needs of communities through teaching, research, and library and information scholarship, the Department of Information Culture and Data Stewardship (ICDS) has created leaders in library, archival, and information studies for 120+ years. Our department integrates cutting-edge technologies in the library and information fields to achieve teaching, research, and service excellence. By connecting people, information, and technology with ethical practices, ICDS contributes to the well-being of individuals, organizations, and communities.

"The 2023-2024 school year was a banner year for ICDS, two new faculty members joined us, two faculty members were promoted, almost every faculty member had grant funding, and most presented at a national conference or played a leadership role in a professional association. And our graduates succeeded in a competitive job market!"

Mary K. Biagini, *Department Chair*

Mary K. Biagini,
Associate Professor and Department Chair

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

ICDS Faculty Awarded IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Grant

- Teaching Assistant Professors Eleanor Mattern, Chelsea Gunn, and Marcia Rapchak were awarded a Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to support their work on the Pittsburgh-based Civic Switchboard Project. This funding supports the Civic Switchboard's efforts to host regional and online sessions for library workers interested in connecting civic data, their communities, and their libraries.

Tim Huang's "The Time Traveling Project" Presented at Governor's Residence

- In March 2024, Assistant Professor Tim Huang shared his work on The Time Traveling Project in Harrisburg at Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro's residence. This project uses a VR headset to bridge the gap between historical preservation and modern technology, providing a new opportunity to view the work of famed Black photographer and Pittsburgh native Teenie Harris. Presenting in Harrisburg gave Huang an opportunity to showcase the impact of work done at SCI and ICDS, and a forum to encourage collaboration partnership on this research.

Intelligent Systems Program

Peter Brusilovsky
Director, Intelligent Systems Program Professor

For more than 30 years, the Intelligent Systems Program (ISP) has been a premier multidisciplinary graduate program at the University of Pittsburgh dedicated to applied artificial intelligence (AI). From the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, School of Medicine, School of Law, School of Education, School of Computing and Information, Swanson School of Engineering, and Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences, faculty across schools at the University are represented in the program. Students in ISP gain a well-balanced foundational knowledge of applied AI along with advanced research and training in many disciplines, including computer science, biomedical informatics, cognitive psychology, information science, education, and law.

"ISP is one of the oldest graduate programs on AI in the world. It is also unique due to its focus on applied AI. Over the more than 30 years of its existence, ISP has graduated an impressive number of students who now serve as professors in research universities or perform AI-focused research in leading IT companies. What started as a PhD program has now grown to include master's students, with a new curriculum designed to better answer the needs of the rapidly expanding AI and data science industries."

Peter Brusilovsky, *Director*

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT

Assistant Professor Receives NSF Award and New Publication in Nature Human Behavior

- Assistant Professor Amin Rahimian and his co-researcher Kiran Garimella, Assistant Professor of Library and Information Science at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, received a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant for their project, "Towards a Privacy-Preserving Framework for Research on Private, Encrypted Social Networks," on October 1, 2023. Rahimian and his co-researchers explore the role of private, encrypted social networks (ESNs) like WhatsApp and iMessage in the spread of manipulated information compared to public social media platforms. The continuing grant is estimated to be completed in September 2026.

- Rahimian's research, "Long Ties Accelerate Noisy Threshold-Based Contagions," was also published in Nature Human Behavior on April 22, 2024. The research explores models of social contagion on social networks and shows how the introduction of noise in the models harmonizes qualitative facts about how network structure affects contagion. Rahimian and his co-researchers found that long-tie connections accelerate the speed of noisy threshold-based contagions, countering recent findings that clustered networks are better at facilitating the spread of threshold-based contagions than randomly rewired networks.

FACULTY AND STAFF

Recent Faculty Additions

(starting in 2023-24)

Raquel Coelho
Assistant Professor
Department of Informatics and Networked Systems and the Learning Research and Development Center

Scott Jordan
Visiting Assistant Professor
Department of Computer Science

Junyu Liu
Assistant Professor
Department of Computer Science

Michael Miller Yoder
Teaching Assistant Professor
School of Computing and Information

Nils Murrugarra-Llerena
Teaching Assistant Professor
Department of Computer Science

Patrick Skeba
Teaching Assistant Professor
Department of Computer Science

Faculty Promotions, Appointments, and Reappointments

Wonsun Ahn was promoted to teaching associate professor in the Department of Computer Science.

Dmitriy Babichenko was promoted to clinical professor in the Department of Informatics and Networked Systems.

Matt Burton was promoted to teaching associate professor in the Department of Information Culture and Data Stewardship.

Na Du was reappointed as assistant professor in the Department of Informatics and Networked Systems.

Bill Garrison was promoted to teaching associate professor in the Department of Computer Science.

Tim Huang was reappointed as assistant professor in the Department of Information Culture and Data Stewardship.

Sherif Khattab was promoted to teaching associate professor in the Department of Computer Science.

Adriana Kovashka was appointed Chair of the Department of Computer Science.

Diane Litman was appointed as the Associate Dean for Mentoring and Development.

Marcia Rapchak was promoted to teaching associate professor in the Department of Information Culture and Data Stewardship.

Kaushik Seshadreesan was reappointed as assistant professor in the Department of Informatics and Networked Systems.

Erin Walker was appointed as the Associate Dean for Research.

New Staff Hires

Noel Antalek
Undergraduate Recruiter

Bobbie Coyne
Travel Events and Business Operations Coordinator

Jane Graham
Temporary Development Associate for Philanthropic and Alumni Engagement (PAE)

Jessica Ham
Department Coordinator
Department of Computer Science

Tiffany Holmes
Budget and Finance Manager

Mara Silver
Online Programs Data Analyst
Master of Data Science Program

Jane Smith
Graduate Recruiter

Trudy Stajduhar
Research Administration Manager

Rebecca Zanaglio
Academic Records Lead

Amy Vaught
Assistant Director for Student and Academic Affairs

FACULTY AND STAFF

Staff Promotions, Appointments, and Recognitions

Miranda Acosta was appointed as the Administrative Assistant for Associate Deans

Matt Barbosa was appointed as the Director of Information Technology

Heidi Davis was appointed as the Intelligent Systems Program Coordinator

Elizabeth Defide was promoted to Manager of Personnel and Administration

Lynnsey Doane was appointed as the Director of Student Success

Sasha Kotarski was promoted to Communications and Media Manager

Selected Faculty Recognitions and Accolades

Dmitriy Babichenko received Pitt Seed funding.

Jacob Biehl (CS/ICDS), **Thomas Downes** (SCI '23, '24G), and PhD candidate **Talha Khan** won the Best Paper Award at the IEEE International Symposium on Mixed and Augmented Reality (ISMAR).

Aakash Gautam (CS/ICDS) received a Pitt Moment Fund Award and the Spotlight Award for "Validated Image Caption Rating Dataset" at NeurIPS 2023.

Xiaowei Jia *(CS) received an NSF CAREER Award.*

James Joshi (DINS) received an NSF Director's Award.

Diane Litman *(CS) received the NSF EAGER grant*.

Diane Litman, Adriana Kovashka, and **Erin Walker** (all CS) received Best Poster Award at the Artificial Intelligence in Education Conference, also co-authored by PhD student **Yuya Asano**, SCI PhD Alum **Mingzhi Yu**, and Learning Research and Development Center colleagues.

Lorraine Li (CS), **Diane Litman** (CS), **Ryan Shi** (CS), **Eleanor Mattern** (ICDS) received Spring 2024 Pitt Cyber Accelerator Grants.

Yu-Ru Lin (DINS) was appointed Research and Academic Director for Pitt Cyber.

Daniel Mossé, Stephen Lee, and **Nadine von Frankenberg** (all CS) received a Mascaro Center for Sustainable Innovation research seed grant.

Rebecca Morris (ICDS) was elected Chair of the Educators of School Librarians Section (ESLS), American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and Co-chair of ALISE 2024 Conference Committee. She also received the 2024 Nancy Tannery Grant for Open Educational Resources.

Luis de Oliviera (CS) and **Kuo-Ting (Tim) Huang** (ICDS) won a Pitt Momentum Fund Award.

Balaji Palanisamy (DINS) and SCI alumni **Chao Li** (SCI '19) and **Runhua Xu** (SCI '20) receive Distinguished Paper award at CCS 2023.

Longfei Shangguan (CS) received the NSF CAREER Award.

Ryan Shi (CS) received the 2024 Newell Award for Research Excellence from the Carnegie Mellon University School of Computer Science and the Mascaro Center for Sustainable Innovation 2024-25 award.

Song Shi (ICDS) published a new book, *China and the Internet: Using New Media for Development and Social Change*, with Rutgers University Press.

FACULTY AND STAFF

Selected Faculty Grants

Na Du
Assistant Professor, ICDS
Honda Research Institute
Exploring how human emotions and emotion regulation influence human-AI collaboration and urban experiences.

Adriana Kovashka
Associate Professor, CS
National Science Foundation
Studying how objects appear differently in countries with different geographic, cultural, and economic conditions in relation to object detection systems and how information about these countries may be used to bridge the gaps in appearance.

Stephen Lee
Assistant Professor, CS
National Science Foundation
Developing sustainable computing systems by minimizing carbon emissions.

Yu-Ru Lin
Associate Professor, DINS
National Science Foundation
Analyzing the interactions, responsiveness, and transparency of more than 10,000 U.S. officials across social media platforms.

Nora Mattern, *Teaching Assistant Professor, ICDS;*
Chelsea Gunn, *Teaching Assistant Professor, ICDS;*
Marcia Rapchak, *Teaching Associate Professor, ICDS*
Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Laura Bush 21st-Century Librarian Program
Implementing a civic data literacy institute for libraries.

Angela Stewart
Assistant Professor, DINS
National Science Foundation
Expanding the range of perspectives and voices that are a part of AI technology through after school and summer camp.

As the field of technology is constantly evolving, SCI's research is groundbreaking, making breakthroughs in computing, information, data, and many others.

STUDENTS AND ALUMNI

Selected Student Recognitions and Accolades

Stephen Arndt (SCI '24) received an Honorable Mention for the 2023-2024 Outstanding Undergraduate Research Award by the CRA.

Anna Baskin (SCI '23) was selected as a finalist for the 2023-2024 Outstanding Undergraduate Researcher Award by the Computing Research Association (CRA).

Nitish Chandra (IS PhD) selected as Pittsburgh Quantum Institute Fellow.

Chloe Datner (MLIS '24) and **Maggie Michael** (MLIS '24) received the 2024 Outstanding School Library Certification Program Outstanding Student Award, Sarah Cohen Outstanding School Library Certification Program Practicum Student Award, and Pa. School Librarians Association Outstanding Student Award.

Griffin J. Hurt (SCI '24) was named a 2024 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) scholar.

Rory McCann (SCI '26), **Chase Lahner** (SCI '26), **Ivan Puri** (SCI '26), and **Holden Gent** (SCI '26) received first place at Hacking4Humanity.

Brandyn Whitaker (MLIS '24) received the BRASS Student Travel Award from the Business Reference and Service Section of the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) to attend the 2024 ALA Conference.

Selected Alumni Awards, Recognition, and Accolades

Charlotte Chung (MLIS '21), a librarian at Suncrest Elementary School in the Monongalia County Schools in West Virginia was selected as an Emerging Leader (EL) by the American Library Association.

Leah Lindemann (MLIS '07), a librarian at Blackhawk High School in Beaver County, Pa., was elected President of the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association.

Kunal Gandhi (SCI '21) founded a new company, Somatic Health.

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