FACULTY NEWSLETTER

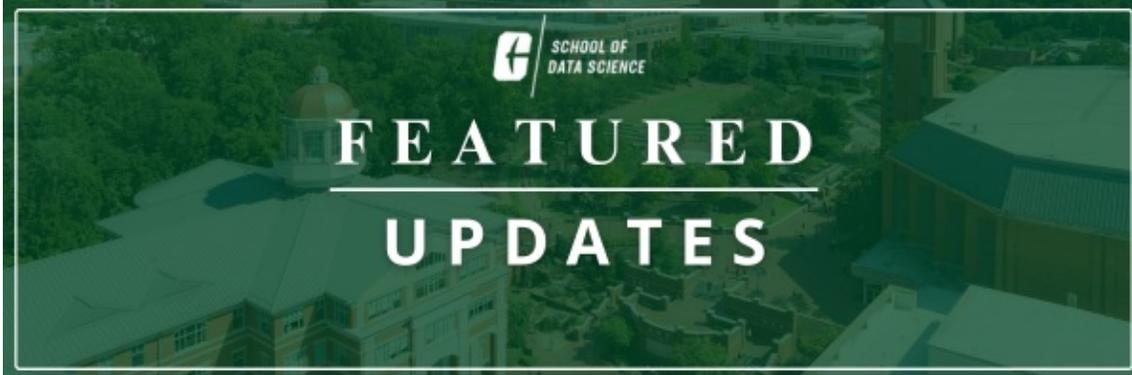Dear faculty of the School of Data Science,
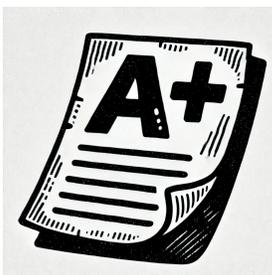
Happy New Year!

A few major updates:

- The faculty search committee reviewed 167 applications for the two tenure-track assistant professor positions and Zoom interviewed 20+ of them before selecting 7 for campus interviews in December. Those faculty candidates will visit the school, give their job talks, and meet with faculty and students from Jan. 27 to Feb. 10. These are the first two tenure-track faculty we will hire for the school. Your active participation in their campus interviews and feedback will be much appreciated.

- The Ph.D. application deadline is Feb. 1, 2025. The Ph.D. admission committee will start reviewing the applications soon.

- The first faculty meeting of SDS in Spring 2025 will be held virtually on Zoom at 2:30pm on Jan. 15. One of the major meeting agenda items will be for me to answer any questions from the faculty regarding SDS MOUs, in which all faculty members need to sign before Feb. 10.

- SDS will have multiple offices in the Colvard building (1048A~G) renovated for our faculty use this Spring. They should be available before July.

- SDS also plans to launch the new Undergraduate Sports Analytics Program in Fall 2025.

SDS will host the annual Charlotte Women in Data Science (WiDS) Conference on March 13th and the Analytics Frontiers Conference (AFC) on April 3rd. WiDS is a free event, and AFC offers a reduced price ($49) for SDS faculty. If any faculty is interested in participating in either conference as a speaker, please reach out to me and Josh as soon as possible.

Warm regards,
Dongsong Zhang, Ph.D.
Interim Executive Director, School of Data Science

FEATURED UPDATES

From Academic Affairs: Early Feedback for Students

As you prepare for Spring 2025, please ensure your syllabus allows for early feedback, as it helps students improve by raising awareness of academic concerns. Submit a Week 4 progress survey in CONNECT for 1000/2000-level courses by February 7. Report unsatisfactory midterm grades (D/F for undergraduates, C/U for graduate students) by February 28. Reporting all low grades is encouraged and can be done via Canvas. If teaching a multi-section course, collaborate with colleagues to establish criteria for early alerts and midterm performance. Please review the CONNECT Faculty Best Practices and Unsatisfactory Grading instructions.

Reminder: Required Training for new Teaching Assistants

As we approach the start of the Spring 2025 semester, a quick reminder that **all new Teaching Assistants must complete the mandatory TA Training** to comply with UNC-Charlotte's SACS accreditation requirements. This online training is in addition to any program-specific training.

Key Details:

- **Training Platform**: All modules and quizzes are available on Canvas (TA Training Spring 2025).
- **Completion Requirement:** TAs must achieve at least **80% overall** to complete the training. Quizzes are **due by January 19, 2025**.
- **Responsibility:** It is the responsibility of the TA to **complete the training by the deadline. Failure to do so may affect future TA contracts.**
- **Open for Review:** The training site remains open for the entire academic year, allowing TAs to revisit material as needed.

Call for Speakers: Spring 2025 Health Informatics Research Seminars

The Duke Center for Health Informatics is hosting its statewide Health Informatics

Research Seminar Series this spring, with a session scheduled for March 28, 2025. UNC Charlotte has two slots this semester to highlight campus research, and we are seeking a faculty presenter for this session. This is a great opportunity to share your work, connect with researchers across the state, and promote UNC Charlotte's contributions to health informatics and data science. If you're interested in presenting, please reach out to Yaorong Ge, yge@charlotte.edu.

Upcoming Information Sessions: New Ph.D. in Data Science

We are excited to announce that the School of Data Science (SDS) has received approval for a new Ph.D. program by the UNC System Board of Governors, set to launch in Fall 2025, pending final accreditation by SACS. **Virtual Info Session: Wednesday, January 15th, 4:00-5:00 pm.** Join us online for a comprehensive overview of the same topics as the in-person session. This presentation is particularly aimed at international applicants, with faculty invited to participate.

Register Here!

New DataCamp and SDS Bootcamps Resource

As we begin the new semester, we want to express our sincere thanks to Katherine Davis (DSBA) for her dedication and creativity in troubleshooting the SDS Bootcamps and DataCamp subscription over the past year. This January she will start working as an intern with Volvo Trucks!
We are pleased to introduce Desire Omotoye (oomotoye@charlotte.edu), our new SDS Graduate Assistant, who will be stepping in to take over this role. Desire joined the HIA program this fall from George Mason University. She will be your primary point of contact for access to these tools. *Please join us in welcoming Desire!*

SCHOOL OF DATA SCIENCE

RESARCH AND GRANT
OPPORTUNITIES

☐ 2025 SDS Summer Seed Grant Proposals Now Open!

We are excited to announce the continuation of the 2025 Summer Seed Grant Program with increased funding of up to $20,000 per grant. The deadline for submissions is March 15, 2025. This year, we've made some updates to the proposal format. We are requesting a white paper that can serve as a foundation for future submissions to funding agencies or foundations. This change aims to help position your projects for long-term success beyond the initial grant. If you have any questions about the process or the new format, please don't hesitate to reach out. Please visit the SDS website or email Jason Windett (jwindett@charlotte.edu) with any questions.

Submission Form

SDS Research Symposia

We are excited to announce a 5th Anniversary Celebration of the School's Founding on Friday, February 28th in the Student Activity Center! Building on the success of last year's poster session, this year's event will showcase a full day of Data Science research through conference-style panels, roundtables, and a student poster session. We encourage all faculty and students to participate and share your work. No full papers or manuscripts are required—just a 10-12 minute presentation on your research. Food and beverages will be provided. If you'd like to participate, please fill out the form here: Participation Form.

Google Research Scholar Funding Opportunities

The new Google Research Scholar program is now accepting applications! In each funding cycle, the RS program aims to support early-career professors (received Ph.D. within 7 years) who are pursuing research in fields relevant to Google. The program provides unrestricted gifts to help support world-class research at institutions around the world conducted by early-career professors. Faculty whose PhDs were awarded in 2017 or later are eligible. Funding is only about $60k, but it comes as an unrestricted gift with bragging rights. Applications are due by January 27. Learn more about the program at: https://research.google/programs-and-events/research-scholar-program/ Just a note: Google is interested in applied research (e.g., applications of LLM and multimodal models) as well.

2025 Biomedical Data Science Innovation Lab | Nashville, TN | Applications close January 31

The 2025 Biomedical Data Science Innovation Lab (BDSIL) aims to spark new interdisciplinary collaborations to develop innovative data science strategies for spatial multi-omics, with a focus on cancer and rare diseases. The lab will unite quantitative and biomedical researchers, including experts in mathematics, statistics, basic science, and clinical fields, to tackle critical challenges in spatial multi-omics

and advance our understanding of complex biological systems. NIH-NCATS community members are strongly encouraged to apply. Visit the website for more information. *From South Big Data Hub*

NAIRR Pilot Seeks Datasets for AI Education and Skill Development | Submissions due Feb. 7

The National Artificial Intelligence Research Resource (NAIRR) Pilot, led by the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) in partnership with 12 other agencies, is seeking datasets to support AI education and skill-building. The goal is to expand opportunities for researchers and educators, especially those new to AI, to contribute to the AI research and education community. This initiative aims to identify datasets for use in classrooms, workshops, and other educational settings to strengthen the nation's AI workforce. *From South Big Data Hub*

NIH Data Sharing Index (S–index) Challenge | Letters of Intent Due: March 3

The National Eye Institute (NEI), in collaboration with multiple NIH Institutes, Centers, and Offices (ICOs), invites participation in the Data Sharing Index (S-index) Challenge. This initiative seeks to create, develop, and validate a quantitative metric to assess and reward effective data-sharing practices.The S-index will evaluate how well researchers share data for future use, considering factors such as adherence to FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) standards, data timeliness, annotation completeness, reuse in other studies, and associated publications or patents. This metric aims to recognize and incentivize data-sharing efforts by individuals and teams. *From South Big Data Hub*

2025 Summer Research Program

The Office of Undergraduate Research is accepting submissions for faculty project descriptions for the 2025 OUR Summer Research Program.

Current Resources and Opportunities to Advance Research Projects from the Center for Research Excellence
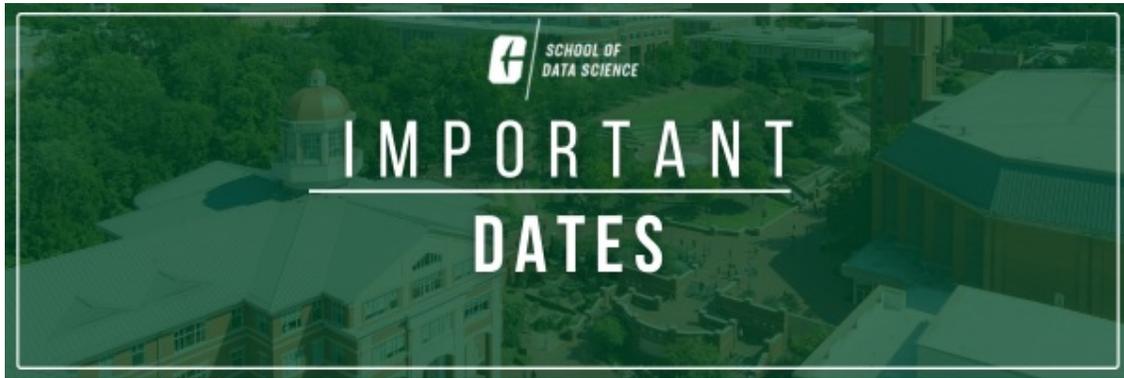
The Center for Research Excellence has several opportunities to advance research projects in Ignite Planning Grants and Faculty Research Grants. The Center is also offering a New Assistant Professor Workshop Series which seeks to help professors to the FRG process. Additionally, external funding opportunities are available.

More Info

New SDS Faculty Research Published

SDS faculty Shan Yan recently published a lab research article titled "Distinct regulation of ATM signaling by DNA single-strand breaks and APE1" published at

Nature Communications. The paper can be found here. A news article on this paper was released at EurekAlert titled "Demystifying APE1: New findings on direct activation of ATM signaling by DNA single-strand breaks" which can be found here

IMPORTANT DATES
(SCHOOL OF DATA SCIENCE)

Find the full **SDS Calendar of Events** on the program website.
- **January 13:** **DSBA/HIA New Student Orientation**
- **January 13:** First day of classes
- **January 18:** No Saturday classes
- **January 20:** Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day - University Closed
- **January 21:** Last day to add, drop with no grade * Payment Information
- **January 22:** Payment Due Date/2nd Cancellation for non-payment
- **January 25:** Saturday Classes Begin
- **January 27:** Census date for Spring Enrollment
- **January 27:** Niner Course Pack - last day to opt-out

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
(SCHOOL OF DATA SCIENCE)

☐ Digital Humanities Job Talk

Jan. 16, 10:00-11:00 AM (Fretwell 290B)

The English Department, in partnership with the School of Data Science, is hosting a job talk as part of its search for a tenure-track Assistant Professor of English in Digital Humanities. The first candidate, Dr. Helen Davies, will present her research on Thursday, January 16, from 10:00 to 11:00 AM in Fretwell 290B. All are welcome to attend.

SDS Research Seminar: Public Officials' Online Sharing of Low–Factual Content

Friday, January 24th, 12:00–1:00 PM, Cone 208

Join us for the next SDS Research Seminar featuring Dr. Bruce Desmarais, DeGrandis-McCourtney Early Career Professor in Political Science at Penn State University and CEO of Public Square Analytics LLC. Dr. Desmarais will present his research on public officials' online dissemination of low-factual content, examining nearly 500,000 Facebook posts by U.S. state legislators (2020–2021). Discover key insights into how institutional structures and ideological leanings influence the spread of misinformation and explore potential interventions to mitigate its dissemination. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from an expert in social data science, machine learning, and network analysis.

BI-WEEKLY RESEARCH TALK

Public Officials' Online Sharing of Low-Factual Content:
Institutional and Ideological Checks

Bruce Desmarais

CEO & Co-Founder
Public Square Analytics, LLC.

IN PERSON EVENT

SCHOOL OF DATA SCIENCE

January 24, 2025

PUBLICSQUARE ANALYTICS

Register

SDS *Virtual* Faculty Meeting – Wednesday, January 15th– 2:30–4:00 pm

The start-of-semester faculty meeting has been rescheduled to Wednesday, January 15th. The agenda will include discussions on MOUs, faculty recruitment, and PhD admissions. If you have not received the invitation or meeting link, please contact Barbara Howard at Barbara.Howard@charlotte.edu.

SDS Faculty Recruitment: On-Campus Interviews January

The search committee has invited 7 candidates to campus for in-person interviews for the two new SDS faculty positions during the weeks of January 27th and February 3rd. Please plan to participate in the interview process. We aim to have 2-3 SDS faculty members meet with each candidate one-on-one. In the coming week, we will email faculty members with candidate details and coordinate scheduling. Below are the finalists and their interview dates:

- Jiaqi Wang: Monday, January 27th
- Zhiyang Wang: Tuesday, January 28th
- Yingbo Ma: Thursday, January 30th
- Keith Burghardt: Monday, February 3rd
- Sijia Qian: Tuesday, February 4th
- Yuanyuan Lei: Thursday, February 6th
- Nitheesha Nakka: Monday, February 10th

Women in Data Science Conference: March 13

Women in Data Science Worldwide

Charlotte

The Women in Data Science Conference is a free event held at the UNC Charlotte Marriott. It will feature a full day of female thought leaders' presentations and a career fair for our students to network with sponsor companies. Please be sure to **register starting January 15th** and encourage your students to as well!

Analytics Frontiers Conference: April 3

The AFC will be held at the Hilton in Uptown Charlotte this year. AFC is the largest data science conference in the region, attracting over 500 thought leaders, scientists, and business executives from various industries and academia! It features an agenda packed with two keynote speakers, two main stage panels, and several breakout sessions scheduled around a catered breakfast, lunch, and an evening networking reception.

Early Bird registration for the general public opened on January 3rd, so please spread the word within your networks! There is a reduced rate for SDS faculty - only $49. This price will be in effect leading up to the conference.

Secure your spot today!

Registration Open: Outlook for Tech 2025

February 13-14, 2025- University Hilton in Charlotte

Join NC TECH's annual statewide kick-off event, *Outlook for Tech*, where industry leaders discuss cutting-edge trends and innovations shaping the future of technology. This dynamic event features executive panels, a keynote on future predictions, an innovation briefing, the unveiling of the 2025 'State of the Technology Industry Report, a tech expo, and more! Held at the University Hilton in Charlotte, the event includes breakfast, lunch, and a pre-event reception, offering prime networking opportunities.

Register Now

6th National Big Data Health Science Conference

Columbia, SC | February 13 - 14, 2025

The University of South Carolina Big Data Health Science Center hosts this annual conference to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and advance Big Data health science research. It serves as a multidisciplinary forum for sharing innovative concepts, methods, and findings across industry, academia, and government. Delegates engage in open discussions on critical topics and emerging methods shaping the future of healthcare and Big Data health sciences. Learn more HERE.

☐ Green Tie Gala 2025:
For the Love of Charlotte

Join us for the Green Tie Gala on February 22, 2025, as we celebrate UNC Charlotte's For the Love of Charlotte campaign! This year's gala takes over all three floors of The Dubois Center at Center City, with an evening of live music by ACE Party Band, photo experiences, culinary delights, an open bar, and interactive surprises.

☐ The Dubois Center at UNC Charlotte Center City
☐ February 22, 2025 | 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM
☐ VIP Reception at 6:00 PM

AMIA 2025 Informatics Summit:

The AMIA Informatics Summit is the leading conference for professionals in data-driven informatics. It offers a comprehensive program covering translational bioinformatics, precision medicine, clinical research informatics, data science, and artificial intelligence (AI). Attendees will hear from leaders in the field, network with peers, and earn credits. Early bird registration is now open, offering discounted rates for those who register early.
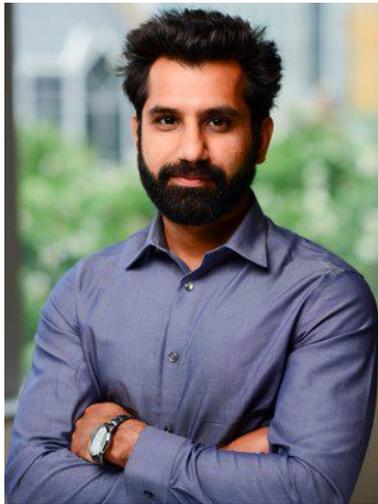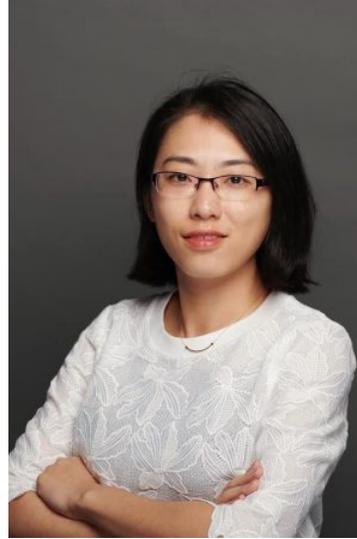
More Info

Faculty & Staff NEWS

New Faces with the SDS: Welcoming New Adjunct Faculty

Dr. Zhijun (Zwick) Tang will teach *DSBA 6188: Text Mining and Information Retrieval*. Zwick is currently the Vice President of Data Science and Advanced Analytics at Universal Music Group, where he leads efforts to develop data insights and predictive models to enhance fan engagement for music artists. With a Ph.D. in Electrical and Computer Engineering from The Ohio State University, Drt. Tang has held leadership roles in various industries, including financial services, digital media, and marketing. He also serves on the Advisory Board for UNC Charlotte's School of Data Science.

Henan Li joins the School as an adjunct faculty member, teaching *Databases for Data Scientists (DSBA/HCIP 6160)*. Henan brings over 10 years of experience in data analytics and digital transformation. She currently serves as a Resident Consultant at Alteryx, where she supports clients in accelerating their

digital transformation efforts. Henan holds dual M.S. degrees in Economics and Statistics from Georgia Institute of Technology and has extensive experience in the banking and financial services industries.

Dr. Archit Parnami, also an adjunct faculty member, will teach *DSBA 6165: Artificial Intelligence and Deep Learning*. Dr. Parnami earned his Ph.D. in Computer Science from UNC Charlotte, where he focused on few-shot learning. He is passionate about education and received the UNC Charlotte Graduate School Teaching Fellowship. Dr. Parnami is currently working in quantitative analytics and data science, helping financial institutions detect fraud using machine learning.

We are also pleased to welcome back **Richard Sheinis** as an adjunct faculty member. Richard will teach *HCIP 6201: Health Information Privacy and Security: Law, Ethics, and Technology*. As a Partner at Hall Booth Smith, P.C., Richard is recognized for his expertise in Data Privacy and Cybersecurity Law. He has led hundreds of data breach investigations and is a certified expert in privacy and security laws, including HIPAA, GDPR, and mobile device security.

We look forward to the spring semester and are thrilled to have these exceptional faculty members join us in shaping the future of data science education.

Student Resources
AND OPPORTUNITES

SDS Monday Professional Seminars: Returning on January 25!

Join us on *Mondays from 4:00 to 5:00 PM at the Dubois Center* for insights from top employers in finance, manufacturing, retail, and healthcare. Connect with industry leaders, explore careers, and tackle real-world data challenges. Don't miss this opportunity to grow your career!

- Monday, January 27th
- Monday, February 3rd

Schedule & Registration

The Informatics Research Seminar Series Virtual Sessions | Wednesday @ 4:00 PM

The Informatics Research Seminar Series, sponsored by Duke University and collaborating institutions (UNC-Chapel Hill, NCCU, UNC-Charlotte, ECU, and WFU), offers valuable insights into Health Informatics. Seminars cover industry perspectives, research results, and diverse projects in the field. Join us on Wednesdays at 4 PM EST **(resuming 1/10/2025)** to engage with industry leaders and researchers.

Duke University
School of Medicine

View the Event Schedule!

Call for Proposals: Inaugural UNCG Game Studies Conference – Liminality in Gaming

Game on! Join us for the first-ever *UNCG Game Studies Conference* on **Saturday, April 5, 2025**, hosted at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro's Esports Arena with options for virtual attendance. This interdisciplinary event, themed around "Liminality in Gaming," explores the transitions, ambiguities, and intersections within gaming across platforms and disciplines, including analog games. We invite proposals for academic, creative, and non-traditional scholarship addressing topics such as gender and queer theory, transmedia, AI, virtual reality,

and more. Presenters will engage in a unique talk-and-play format that blends discussion, gameplay, and interaction. Proposals from undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and independent scholars are welcome. Submit your 250-word abstract by January 24, 2025, to uncggamestudiesconference@gmail.com.

Details

Faculty
RESOURCES

Innovate, Engage, Inspire: Spring Faculty Workshops: Faculty Workshop Series, January 7– February 15, 2025

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) invites all faculty and instructional staff to participate in the Spring Faculty Workshops, celebrating 25 years of teaching excellence at UNC Charlotte. These workshops will focus on high-impact teaching strategies that support student success and enhance classroom effectiveness. Key topics for 2024-2025 include generative AI pedagogies, student success strategies, Canvas tools, and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) grants program. Participants will gain practical knowledge, learn from expert instructional designers, and collaborate with colleagues. Flexible training formats, including online and self-paced options, are available to accommodate all schedules.

Spring 2025

INNOVATE YOUR TEACHING
FACULTY WORKSHOP SERIES

GENERATIVE AI TOOLS
AI FOR WRITING SKILLS
AI FOR STUDY SKILLS
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF AI
ZOOM AI FOR TEACHING

CANVAS STARTING FRESH
CANVAS QUIZZING
CANVAS ASSIGNMENTS & GRADEBOOK
CANVAS ANALYTICS
CANVAS STUDIO INSIGHTS

SYLLABUS 101: ROADMAP TO SUCCESS
GROWTH MINDSET ACTIVITIES
TEACHING WITH POLL EVERYWHERE
ENHANCING CULTURAL AWARENESS
DESIGNING GROUP PROJECTS

FACULTY REGISTER NOW!

Jan. 7 to Feb. 15

CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Enhance Your Teaching Skills!

UNC Charlotte HPC Educational Cluster Account

Request for Spring 2025

Instructors planning to use the UNC Charlotte HPC Educational Cluster for Spring 2025 courses should complete the account creation request form here.   User documentation is available for the CENTAURUS (13 nodes / 208 cores) and GPU (9 nodes / 136 cores / 24 GPUs) partitions. The URC staff typically processes student accounts the day after add/drop, unless early access is requested. Please submit account requests as soon as possible to allow adequate time for processing. The final submission deadline is February 4, 2025. Note: The educational HPC clusters are for course-related work only, not research. For more information, visit the Education Cluster page. For questions, contact Mark Olson in the Office of OneIT at molson@charlotte.edu.

NC Technology Association (NC TECH) IT Job Trends Dashboard

The NC Technology Association (NC TECH) publishes an IT Job Trends Dashboard, offering a detailed analysis of IT positions across North Carolina. The dashboard highlights key insights, including top job postings by MSA, job titles, required skills, experience levels, wage trends, and leading hiring companies. Read more and subscribe to the regular report HERE.

Data Science and Health Analytics In The NEWS

Imaging startup CEO sees potential in AI czar appointment

President-elect Donald Trump has appointed David Sacks as the first White House czar for AI and cryptocurrency, a move expected to lead to looser regulations. Ryan Tarzy, CEO of Avandra Imaging, supports the appointment, believing it will accelerate healthcare innovation and improve patient outcomes. Tarzy notes that the US healthcare system is behind technologically and sees Sacks' influence as a potential catalyst for a "golden age" of medical AI. Full Story: MedCity News (12/26)

Other Newsletters and Resources

Suggestions are always welcome- please email lindsay.lennon@charlotte.edu with any questions or recommendations.