

STUDENT NEWSLETTER

Welcome, SDS Students!

This is our final edition of 2025, a moment to celebrate our December graduates and prepare to welcome our incoming spring undergraduate and graduate students. To our recent graduates: congratulations on your achievement! We wish you every success in your next chapter and encourage you to stay in touch and let us know how we can continue to support you.

To our newest members of UNC Charlotte's School of Data Science- *WELCOME!* We are here to support you throughout your academic journey. This newsletter includes a range of information on campus resources, upcoming dates and deadlines, seminars, and job and internship opportunities. Our newsletters are published every two weeks and highlight campus and program news. *Please note: if you are viewing this via email, you are likely seeing only a preview. Scroll to the bottom to access and download the full newsletter.* We welcome your ideas and submissions for upcoming editions!

DataCamp- Free- For new students looking to prepare for the upcoming seminar, please check out the brief blurb about DataCamp in this newsletter under "Resources." If you are new to Python or maybe a little rusty with your Python programming, want to get an early introduction to SQL or different Visualization tools, you can access DataCamp over the holidays and get a running start!! One last reminder, the University will be closed from December 24, 2025, through January 1, 2026. We will return to the office on Friday, January 2, 2026. Have a safe and restful holiday- we look forward to seeing you in the new year!

Sincerely,

Josh Hertel

Director, School of Data Science



Share your SDS story! Have an event, community meet-up, Data competition, job posting, or story idea for the SDS community? Please send your submissions to <u>Lindsay Lennon</u>, SDS Communications and Events Manager.

Program Updates AND CAMPUS NEWS

Spring Semester Checklist: Tech & Textbooks

Welcome to all new and returning students! As you prepare for the spring semester, here is essential information regarding your technology and textbooks. Please make sure also to check the <u>SDS</u> <u>Calendar of Events</u> for upcoming events orientations, seminars, student meet-ups, deadlines, etc.

1. Student Laptop Requirement & Support

All undergraduate and graduate students are required to have a personal laptop computer to support their college experience. Please review the official <u>Student Laptop Requirement</u> page for hardware recommendations and important exceptions for certain colleges.



For immediate tech help, you can contact Niner Tech Support via the OneIT Service Desk:

• Web: help.charlotte.edu

Phone: 704-687-5500, option 1Walk-Up: Atkins Library, 140C

- 2. <u>Textbook and Bookstore Contact Information</u>: You are automatically enrolled in the <u>Niner Course Pack</u> program, which provides all your required materials for a flat rate per credit hour.
 - <u>To Opt Out:</u> You may opt out beginning 30 days before the start of classes. You will receive an email with a link.
 - <u>Important</u>: Opting out removes the course pack charge for all your courses for the semester.
- 3. <u>Course Cancellation & Paying Your Tuition Bill</u>: If you have questions or concerns about paying your spring tuition bill, please consult the university website for

details. The next payment is due on January 21. To avoid course cancellation for non-payment, you must satisfy your account balance by the due date. This can be done by paying the full amount due (including health insurance), paying the remaining balance after financial aid has been accepted and disbursed, or enrolling in the <u>optional monthly payment plan</u>. Accounts not paid by the due date are at risk of cancellation. If your balance will be covered by a third-party sponsor or scholarship that has not yet posted, contact <u>Niner Central</u> before the due date. If you decide to withdraw from classes, please consult the University <u>Withdrawal Policy.</u>

Spring 2027 Graduation



Planning to graduate this spring? Congratulations! All students are required to <u>apply for graduation</u>. The deadline to apply for graduation for the spring 2026 semester is February 12, 2026. Be sure to check your <u>DegreeWorks</u> and make sure you are at 98%! If you have questions, please contact your advisor as soon as possible!



- <u>December 24-January 1:</u> Winter Break, University Closed
- <u>January 5, 2026</u>: Fall <u>Academic Suspension Appeal</u> Deadline
- January 12, 2026: First Day of classes
- January, 13, 2026: Last Day to add/drop first half-term course
- <u>January 17, 2026</u>: No Saturday Classes
- January 19, 2026: University Closed MLK Day
- January 20, 2026: Last day to add/drop a full-term course
- January 21, 2026: Payment Due Date/2nd Cancellation for non-payment

Find the full **SDS Calendar of Events** on the SDS website.





SEMINARS, NETWORKING, & WELCOME EVENTS

Campus Orientation & Welcome Events for New GRADUATE Students

During the first weeks of the semester, the School of Data Science, in coordination with the College of Computing and Informatics, will host a variety of welcome sessions and seminars. In addition, the <u>Reynolds Center for Graduate Life and Learning</u> will offer several in-person events explicitly designed to support graduate students. We encourage you to join us and take advantage of these opportunities to connect and get started successfully.

Spring 2026 Virtual Graduate Orientation

Join us on Thursday, January 8, 2026, from 4:00–6:00 p.m. (EST) via Zoom. Hear a welcome from the Graduate School Dean, learn about key campus resources and services, and participate in breakout sessions from 5:00–6:00 p.m. to get your questions answered.

Register Now

Spring 2026 New Graduate Student Welcome Reception

New to campus? Don't miss the Welcome Reception on Thursday, January 15, 2026, from 4:00–6:00 p.m. in Student Union 340 D–I. Meet fellow graduate students and campus partners, explore available resources, and enjoy food, drinks, music, and free giveaways.

Register Now

College Orientation for New DSBA and HIAN Students - 2026 CCI Graduate Programs Orientation

Friday, January 9, 2026 | 11:00 am – 2:00 pm

Welcome to UNC Charlotte and the College of Computing and Informatics! We're excited to welcome you this spring and invite you to kick off the semester at our in-

person Graduate Orientation on Friday, January 9, from 11:00 AM–1:00 PM in Woodward Hall, Room 125. This interactive session is a great opportunity to meet fellow graduate students, connect with faculty and staff, and learn about key resources to help you start strong. We look forward to seeing you there!

Register Now

SDS Professional Seminars

Every Tuesday @ The Dubois Center: Spring Sessions Coming!

Each semester, the SDS is pleased to welcome industry professionals and business partners to meet our students face-to-face. Seminars are held at the Dubois Center from 4:00 to 5:00 pm on Tuesdays. This semester, we welcomed representatives from notable companies such as Honeywell, McKinsey, Wells Fargo, and others. Find the complete list of our Spring 2026 events and seminars, and <u>Register Here!</u>

January 20 | Student Internship Panel

Tuesday, January 20, Dubois Center @ 4:00 pm

This upcoming panel discussion will give CCI students an inside look at how to find, secure, and excel in internships and capstone projects. Speakers will share practical guidance on identifying opportunities, networking, applying, interviewing, and meeting academic requirements, while highlighting how experiential learning strengthens technical skills, builds professional connections, and provides real-world project experience. Panelists include Nithya Reddy Billa (Lenovo WW eCommerce), Desire Omotoye (Novant Health), and Kenny Mazza (Albemarle Corporation)—three SDS graduate students applying analytics in industries ranging from global eCommerce and healthcare to financial planning and specialty chemicals. Their insights will help students prepare for a successful and meaningful internship or capstone journey. Register Today!

January 27 | From Data to Decisions: High-Impact AI & Analytics with Azure and Power Platform

Tuesday, January 27, Dubois Center @ 4:00 pm

Build your professional network. Come join Sujay Somasekhar, Principal Data Engineer at McKinsey, as he shares real-world examples of how Azure, Power Platform, and Databricks are used to build AI and analytics solutions. Learn which skills matter most in the industry and how to translate technical knowledge into business impact. This is also a chance to learn about working at a top-5 consulting firm. Register today!



January 29 | SDS Capstone Workshop: Summer 2026

Thursday, January 29 @ 4:00pm, virtual

Join this hour-long virtual session to connect with School of Data Science faculty and staff and learn more about internship, practicum, and thesis options. Students enrolled in the DSBA or HIA master's programs may pursue either an Internship Experience or a Capstone Project. DSBA students also have the option to complete a Research Thesis. The Internship pathway is recommended for students seeking professional roles after graduation.



Faculty will also provide an overview of the other graduate pathways, including: DSBA 6390: Research Thesis - A faculty-mentored research experience designed for students interested in developing deep expertise or pursuing further graduate study. DSBA 6391/HCIP 6250: The Capstone Practicum — A project-based, applied learning course where students work in small teams to solve real-world, data-driven problems. Projects may involve industry partners or specialized assignments from the instructor and are designed to build hands-on experience in data science and business analytics. Register today!

Charlotte AI Summit

The call for proposals and registration for the 2026 Charlotte AI Summit for Smarter Learning is open. <u>Learn more and submit session proposals</u> by Feb. 5, 2026.



CCI Student Professional Development Weekly Newsletter - In Your Inbox Every Monday!

Welcome to the new academic year and a new resource for your professional growth! All SDS students are receiving the CCI Student Professional Development Weekly Newsletter, curated by <u>Jay Skipworth</u> and <u>Carmalita Govan</u>. This new newsletter replaces the CCI Business Partners Newsletter and is packed with professional development opportunities, seminars, job announcements, and networking events. Be sure to add it to your list of must-reads! You can also see details for events on the <u>CCI Events Calendar</u> (look for CCI Meet-Ups or Events). RSVPs on <u>Hire-A-Niner</u>.

AWS Women of the Cloud College Tour: Evolving Through Every Era- Friday, January 30

1:00-5:00 PM | Barnhardt Student Activity Center (Salons)

Join local students, industry professionals, cloud partners, and Amazonians for a half-day of interactive learning and networking at UNC Charlotte. This complimentary event features a keynote, panel discussion, fireside chat, and networking reception focused on advancing equity and innovation in tech. Open to all students- Registration required!



From the Career Center



The UNC Charlotte Career Center supports students and alumni in navigating today's competitive job market through career services, professional development, and employer partnerships. By collaborating with faculty, staff, and industry, we provide real-world experiences—such as internships, co-ops, research projects, and clinical rotations—while empowering alumni to advance their careers. As trusted coaches and collaborators, we connect the UNC Charlotte community to meaningful opportunities for lifelong success. Below is a list of upcoming events and workshops. See the full list of upcoming Career Center events **HERE**.

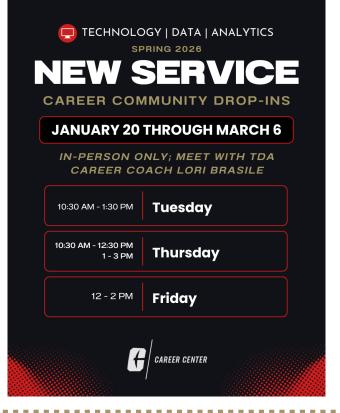
Mark your calendars - Spring Events!

- <u>Career Meet Up: Resume Strategies that Get You Noticed</u> | Monday, January 12, 2026, 2:30 3:15 pm- Virtual- Zoom
- From Campus to Career: Alumni Internship Stories | Wednesday, February 4, 2026, 12:00 1:00 pm- Virtual- Zoom
- <u>STEM Fair</u> | Thursday, February 5, 2026, 10:00 2:00 pm, Student Activity Center/Halton Arena
- <u>Spring Career and Internship Fair 2026</u> | Friday, February 13, 2026, 10:00 2:00 pm, Student Activity Center/Halton Arena

New Community Drop-Ins for the Technology, Data & Analytics Career Community

UNC Charlotte's Career Center is excited to pilot a new service for students in the **Technology**, **Data & Analytics Career Community** during Spring 2026. From January 20 through March 6, students can join Lori Brasile for in-person community drop-in sessions on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at the Career Center (Atkins Annex). Community drop-ins are brief, 15-minute sessions designed to answer quick questions and provide guidance on internship and job search strategies, interview preparation, and professional networking. This option is ideal for students who can't schedule a full

coaching appointment or need fast, targeted support. The Technology, Data Analytics Career Community supports students interested in innovative, problemsolving careers that apply technology and analytics skills. include Artificial Focus areas Intelligence, Bioinformatics, Data Science, Information Security, Networking, and Software Development & Engineering. Students exploring healthcarealso be focused paths may interested in the **Healthcare** Science | Research Career Community. Get to know your Career Center resources and take advantage of this new opportunity to connect this spring!



Community Events-

MEET-UPS, HACKATHONS, CONFERENCES, ETC.

MetLife Meet the Employer Event

December 16 at 11:45 AM (Virtual Session)

NC TECH and MetLife invite early-career tech professionals and soon-to-be graduates to a virtual "Meet the Employer" session on December 16 at 11:45 AM. This is a great opportunity to connect directly with MetLife hiring managers and tech leaders, learn about current openings, desired skills, and company culture, and gain an edge in the job market beyond traditional applications. Registration is required. Don't miss this chance to explore career opportunities at MetLife and take the next step in your tech career!

From the National Consortium for Data Science (NCDS)

The National Consortium for Data Science is a project of RENCI (Renaissance Computing Institute). Since its launch in 2004 as an institute of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill,

RENCI has been developing and deploying advanced technologies to enable research discoveries and practical innovations.

Click here to learn more



NCDS Career Event: LinkedIn Like a Data Scientist — Strategic Networking for the Digital Age

January 27, 2026, at 12:00 PM ET

Join us for an updated and insightful session with Becky Brown of SAS, focused on elevating your professional presence on LinkedIn. Learn how to clearly communicate your personal brand, refine your networking strategy, and build a profile that resonates with your target audience. Becky will share practical tips and techniques to help you make stronger digital connections and open more doors in your career.

Register Here



Free Access to DataCamp!



The School of Data Science and the College of Computing and Informatics have partnered with DataCamp to provide free access for all SDS students, faculty, and staff. DataCamp offers interactive, self-paced courses to help you strengthen your skills in Statistics, Python, and R, while staying up to date

with the latest tools and techniques in data science. All currently enrolled students should have received an invitation email from DataCamp—please check your junk or spam folder. If you haven't received one, simply create a DataCamp account using your @charlotte.edu email address and complete this form to request access.

Last month, DataCamp added 15 new courses and 3 new learning tracks, from Snowflake AI to Hugging Face, built to help you upskill in the platforms and workflows shaping modern business. <u>Start exploring today and stay ahead of the curve!</u>

SAS Viya for Learners - Free for Students

SAS Viya for Learners and SAS Viya Workbench for Learners are free, cloud-based analytics platforms that let students explore data, build models, and gain hands-on experience with the same software trusted by 90% of Fortune 100 companies. Work in SAS,



Python, or R, create compelling visualizations, and develop marketable skills in AI, machine learning, and data analytics. Students also have access to free learning resources, certifications, and digital badges to showcase their expertise.

Compus RESOURCES

As part of our efforts to highlight campus resources available to SDS students, we have links to two campus units that may be helpful to you in your time at UNC Charlotte.

New UNDERGRADATES - Orientation for Data Science and Sports Analytics

Congratulations to all new students on your admission to UNC Charlotte! If you haven't already, be sure to visit the <u>NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION website</u>, your go-to hub for new undergraduate students. The New Student Orientation (NSO), required for all incoming first-year and transfer students. Led by Charlotte staff and student leaders, NSO helps students and families understand academic expectations, connect with peers, and learn essential campus processes. Before attending NSO, you'll complete a Pre-Orientation Checklist, which includes reserving your session, completing new student modules, and participating in virtual advising and registration. Ready to get started? Select your student type to learn more and begin your journey at UNC Charlotte.



The School of Data Science Welcomes New Faculty for Spring 2026

The School of Data Science (SDS) continues to expand its curriculum, academic programs, and enrollment. This spring, we are excited to welcome several new full-time and adjunct faculty members who bring a strong mix of research excellence and industry experience. Please join us in welcoming them to UNC Charlotte and the School of Data Science.

Aileen Benedict joins SDS as Affiliate Faculty this spring and will co-teach Data and Society (DTSC 2301-2302). In addition to her work in SDS, she teaches across Computer Science and Data Science, offering courses in data mining, machine learning, visual analytics, data structures, and data and society. work focuses artificial on intelligence, recommender systems, human-centered and ethical AI, and computer science education, with an emphasis on using data-driven approaches to support learning, well-being, and informed decision-making. Aileen brings a strong commitment to studentcentered teaching and responsible AI, grounded in applied research and real-world projects.





Dr. Keith Burghardt accepted a role as Assistant Professor in the School of Data Science this summer and will formally join the School in January. This spring, he will teach Machine **Learning** as part of the Data Science Ph.D. program. Dr. Burghardt is a computer scientist specializing in online extremism and social media analysis. He holds a Ph.D. in Physics from the University of Maryland and currently serves as a faculty member at the University of Southern California's Information Sciences Institute. His research focuses on detecting extremist groups, studying recruitment tactics, and developing large-scale deradicalization methods. His work spans topics such as opinion dynamics, information cascades, social influence, and the evolution of urban road networks, and he has received multiple best paper and best poster awards.

We are also pleased to welcome <u>Dr. Frazier Smith</u> as Adjunct Faculty in the School of Data Science. This spring, he will be teaching DSBA 6190: Cloud Computing for Data Analysis. Dr. Smith brings extensive experience from both industry and higher education, including leadership roles at VMware and Broadcom. His expertise in cloud technologies, artificial intelligence, and workforce development—

along with his role as co-Principal Investigator on an NSF-funded project focused on developing AI talent, adds a valuable real-world perspective to the classroom.



Student Government NEWS

Student Government & Advocacy – A Voice for Students

The School of Data Science supports two student government organizations that represent and advocate for our students, ADS for undergraduates and the SDS Graduate Student Council for DSBA and HIA graduate students. Together, they offer events, workshops, networking opportunities, mentoring, and social activities that build community and support student success. This Spring 2026, students can look forward to hackathons, networking and social events, town halls with SDS leadership, and elections for 2026–2027 officers.

Learn more and get involved

Pata Science and Health Analytics IN THE NEWS

Keeping North Carolina's Emerging Tech Talent, from NC TECH | MetLife Center for

Technology

North Carolina may lead the nation as the #1 state for women in tech, but a troubling trend threatens the future of its workforce. Despite strong recruitment, early-career attrition—particularly among women in STEM—is quietly draining talent and costing employers hundreds of thousands of dollars per employee in turnover, lost productivity, and institutional knowledge. New research from the NC TECH | MetLife Center for Technology Workforce Innovation highlights why early-career professionals are leaving, how the Research Triangle compares to other tech hubs, and what actually works to retain emerging talent. With Gen Z demanding better support and STEM roles growing faster than ever, the stakes for North Carolina's tech leadership have never been higher. Read the full article, *The Hidden Cost of NC's Early Career Exodus*, from QuantumBloom.

Read the full article

Al in Health Care Is Advancing Fast – but the System Isn't Ready

At the Axios AI+ SF Summit, health-care and technology leaders warned that while AI is advancing rapidly in areas like diagnostics, drug development, and



operational efficiency, its broader impact is being slowed by a deeply fragmented health-care system. Speakers emphasized that poor data interoperability, unclear AI governance, and inconsistent state-by-state regulations make it difficult to scale AI tools across organizations.

Even companies making progress internally struggle when partners operate under different technical and regulatory standards. Executives, including leaders from AstraZeneca, stressed that meaningful transformation will require stronger collaboration between providers, regulators, and tech firms to align data standards, oversight, and deployment strategies.



Below is a current listing of postings shared with the SDS team or posted on the <u>Career Center's Hire-a-Niner site</u>. If you are interested in sharing a position posting, you can email the information directly to <u>Joshua Hertel (jhertel@charlotte.edu)</u> or access the full UNC Charlotte community through the Career



Featured lob Posting: Sr. ML Optimization Engineer, iCloud (Apple), Multiple locations

Apple is seeking a Senior Machine Learning Optimization Engineer to join its iCloud Services team in Seattle. This role sits at the intersection of machine learning, large-scale optimization, and cloud infrastructure, with a focus on ML-driven forecasting, capacity planning, and resource efficiency. The team plays a critical role in optimizing iCloud's global infrastructure to support billions of devices while advancing Apple's commitment to sustainability and cost-effective operations. This position offers the opportunity to collaborate with top experts and directly impact the performance and efficiency of one of the world's largest cloud platforms. Position closing soon- Submit Resume Here.

More Internships

- Data Science Intern, GoFundMe, San Francisco, CA
- Data Science, AI Intern, BioSpace, Remote
- Student Intern, Atrium Health Charlotte, NC
- Technology, Data and Innovation (TDI) Internship, Deutsche Bank Cary, NC
- Data & Analytics Intern, Met Life, Cary, NC
- Data Science & Analytics Intern, TransUnion, Chicago, IL
- <u>Data Science Intern</u>, Lyft, New York, NY
- <u>Data Science Intern</u>, Tinder, Los Angeles, CA
- <u>Data Science & Analytics Intern</u>, Chicago, IL
- <u>Data Analytics Intern</u>, Colgate Pisacataway, NJ
- ML Research Intern, Dandy New York, NY
- Data Science Intern, Bolton & Meck Mankato, MN

Jobs

- <u>Data Scientist</u>, Sedgwick, Remote
- <u>Business Intelligence Analyst</u>, Corebridge Financial, multiple locations nationwide
- Data Scientist, Amplity, multiple locations nationwide
- Data Analyst, Toyota Plano, TX
- <u>Data Analyst</u> Specialist, Vanguard, multiple locations nationwide
- <u>Business Analyst</u>, Fox Rothschild, multiple locations nationwide

Job Search Resources

NC TECH Job Board

NC TECH is North Carolina's leading technology trade association, providing advocacy, research, and networking to support and advance the state's tech industry. In addition to their monthly IT Job



Trends Report, they also host a jobs board. CCI and the School of Data Science are members, and students have access to the reports and job postings.

Featured Jobs:

- METx Global Technology Internship Program, MetLife
- Sr. Database Reliability Engineer, MetLife
- Senior Integration Platform Engineer, MetLife
- Software Engineer, Cisco
- NetDevOps Associate, Deutsche Bank
- Senior CloudOps Engineer, SAS
- Associate Technical Services Engineer, SoftPro

See the complete listing *HERE*.

CHECK HIRE-A-NINER FOR ADDITIONAL LISTINGS!

Hire-A-Niner is UNC Charlotte's online career platform managed by the <u>University Career Center</u>. It connects students and alumni with job postings, internships, oncampus employment, career fairs, and interview opportunities. Students access it by logging in with their NinerNET credentials, setting up their profile, and uploading documents, such as a resume. Once active, they can search and apply for positions directly through the system. Newly admitted students gain access a few days after admission, although with limited job options initially.



CHECK HIRE-A-NINER FOR ADDITIONAL LISTINGS



Greetings to HIAN, DSBA, SPOA, and DTSC alumni! We are adding new information to our main SDS site, under "About US." We have reports on current enrollment and a new <u>Alumni Report</u>. More data to come, but feel free to peruse and ask

Alumni Recruitment: Share Your Opportunities with SDS Students

Looking to hire talented recent graduates or experienced alumni from the School of Data Science? As an SDS alumnus, you have two easy ways to connect with top candidates:



- Feature Your Job in the SDS Student Newsletter:
 Have a job or internship opening? Send it to Josh
 Hertel at jhertel@charlotte.edu, and we'll include it in the next SDS Student
 Newsletter, reaching over 800 current undergraduates and graduate students, plus 1,000+ SDS alumni.
- Post Through Hire-A-Niner: As an alumnus, you can use UNC Charlotte's Hire-A-Niner platform as an employer, completely free. Post jobs and internships, Target specific majors or program levels (like Data Science, undergrad, or grad). Let us know when your post is live, and we'll promote it to SDS students via our newsletter. Questions? Contact the Career Center's Employer Engagement Team at recruit@charlotte.edu.

Update Alumni Information

Keep your contact information current to ensure you receive the latest updates on SDS alumni events, news, announcements, and more. With more than 100,000 UNC Charlotte alumni and 1000 (and growing) from the School of Data Science, you can connect with other fellow graduates around the globe <u>Click here to update your contact and/or professional information</u>.





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