The Digital Revolution

MIS department head, Dave Olsen, says that the department saw the revolution coming.

“We have had an agricultural revolution, industrial revolution, and information revolution, and now an as of yet to be named, digital revolution,” Dr. Olsen said. A few years ago the department started offering more data and analytic classes and hired faculty with a focus of research in these areas. The department now offers eight data/analytic classes instead of the original two. These classes teach the complete spectrum of data – from acquiring to mining to questioning, and then to the visual and verbal presentation of the data.

And now the investment is paying off.

The Huntsman MIS department is gaining national attention in various avenues, the first of which is through student success. For the past two years, Huntsman students have won top awards from the Association for Information Systems (AIS) Student Chapter National Competition. Graduates of the program are also being hired at top companies with some of the highest starting salaries in business for recent graduates.

“As we go to local and national competitions we hear people say, ‘here comes the Utah State team,’” Dr. Olsen said. “We are easily recognized.”

Faculty members are also gaining attention. Professor Kathy Chudoba was recently invited to be a contributing editor for MIS Quarterly, the premier research journal in the MIS field. She also just completed a Fulbright Fellowship in Brazil. And just this month another professor, Pam Dupin-Bryant, was awarded the International Association for Computer Information Systems (IACIS) Ben Bauman Award for Excellence, which recognizes a faculty member who has compiled an outstanding record of professional service, teaching, and scholarship, and has made significant contributions to their university and their profession.

“I’m convinced that all Huntsman students must be prepared and enlightened to this new digital revolution so that our best and brightest can compete in this arena,” Dr. Olsen continued.
One of many student success stories is that of Sriram Varadan. Sri graduated with his MBA in 2002 and built his career in the Middle East where he did CRM/marketing for a host of top brands. As his career grew, so did the importance of data. Sri determined that he needed to gain a better understanding of data and chose the Huntsman School Master of Management Information Systems program because of its focus on how technology can be leveraged in business. This seemed perfect for Sri as a business/marketing professional.

Sri was an outstanding student and upon graduation this spring, he accepted a position at Amazon as their Senior Digital Marketing Manager for the Amazon app store. Sri says that the two most valuable things he took away from his time at the Huntsman School was the knowledge of how to better mine and analyze data and how to investigate every detail to see how it can contribute to the bigger picture.

“Today I have landed a dream job that pays me over $200,000 thanks to a well-structured MIS program at the Huntsman School,” Sri said. “I can't thank my professors and Utah State enough. Their unflinching support and world-class program helped give my career a dream start in the United States. Thank you!”

Dr. Olsen says that the success story of Sri is one of many that the department hopes to replicate many times over.