ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

QUESTIONS

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SHIVIKA BISEN

What is the favorite part of your current role?

"I enjoy building end-to-end data tools using Machine Learning modeling & insightful dashboard visualizations. These tools identify a trend in Pharma logistics to prevent an adverse event during the transportation of sensitive items like vaccines. I also really enjoy the data, the tools, evaluations & the dashboards. To summarize, I love helping find trends or patterns in a large data set. "

What made you choose the Statistics Program?

" The Data Science program is a joint program with Statistics & Computer Science & Engineering (CSE). I chose this program because the Applied Research opportunities from various colleges on campus gave me a lot of exposure to explore & be part of projects that interested me. Also, I liked that I could explore a lot of the applications of data science. The program is designed with a good balance of CSE & Stats to build a strong foundation. "

Shivika Bisen acquired her Masters in the LSA Statistics Data Science Program in 2020. She is currently a Data Scientist at PAXAFE, Inc, a startup that develops Data Science/Machine Learning tools.
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What was your favorite part of your experience in the program?

" Research opportunities. My favorite part was being part of 2 amazing industry research projects in Machine Learning for good. In my 1st year of MS, I was part of the Social Innovation Group (SIG). It was a Natural Language processing research role on a Google.org funded Family Independence Initiative project (Oakland, CA) in partnership with the University of Michigan. I developed a Machine Learning model to understand & classify texts/posts on social networking sites called Untogether. In my 2nd year of MS, my capstone project was to build a search engine for the UN & NGOs at the Data4Good center."

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What was your Capstone Project? And who was your Faculty Mentor?

"My capstone project was to help create a search engine for United Nations (UN) & Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) reports. My supervisor was Professor Edward Happ of Data4Good center, UMSI (University of Michigan School of Information) (MIDAS faculty). This search engine was built for the program managers in UN & NGO agencies to help them design new programs. Since popular search engines can be biased toward sponsored & opinionated media articles, we developed the Cheetah Search engine that retrieves reliable/fact-based documents & understands jargons used in UN/NGOs. It ultimately taught me how to build a tool from start to end."

What is the best piece of advice you'd give current students?

"Use your time at the University of Michigan to be part of state of the art industry research projects. This is an amazing opportunity to learn from real-world projects & get mentored by some of the brightest Professors. Since statistics has applications in many fields, enroll for a student research job in different schools & labs. Becoming good at coding/programming because the application of data science requires coding. Taking more Project based (applied) courses will make you industry ready as opposed to just the theoretical ones. "

What is your Favorite Quote/Words of Wisdom that you take with you & why?

"Always remember to train yourself & not just your Machine Learning models. With Data Science it is very important to keep learning actively in order to update your knowledge. Even though I graduated 1 1/2 years ago, I'm still learning through articles, books & conferences. With new tools emerging and data science maturing as a field, it is a joy to learn & get trained on different aspects like data pipeline, cloud, visualization/dashboards, Natural language processing, & machine learning, etc."

Would you like to add anything?

"Try to understand research & end-to-end implementation in your projects. While in university, it is easier to understand different stages of data science from collecting/labeling data, & developing Machine learning models & insights, to cloud & Application Programming Interface (API) implementation, so leverage this opportunity. Coursework/ Research projects are excellent ways to understand full-stack data science. If you take project heavy courses, when you join industry you will know how to work."