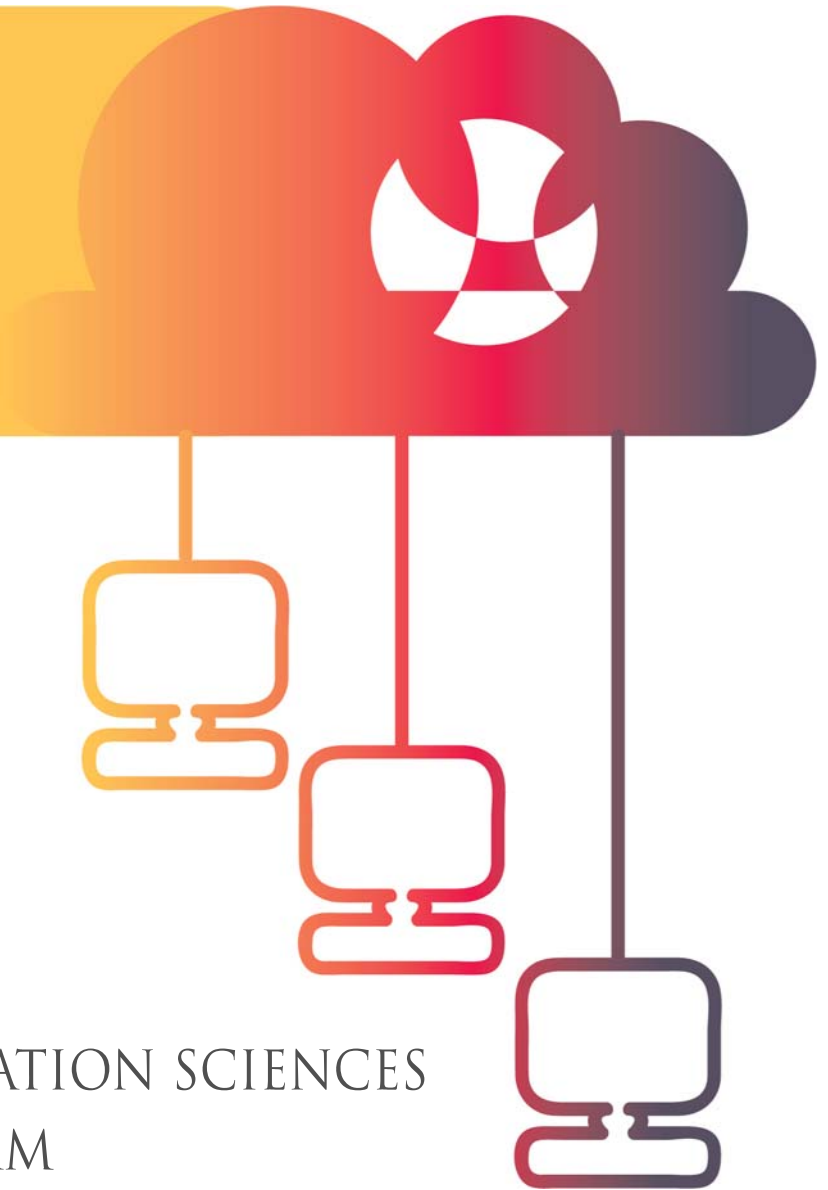# FALL
2018

DEPARTMENT OF
COMPUTER & INFORMATION SCIENCES
INFORMATICS PROGRAM

IU **INDIANA UNIVERSITY** SOUTH BEND
FULFILLING *the* **PROMISE**

A NEWSLETTER EXPLORING THE LIVES AND DREAMS OF THE

Academic Excellence Award

WINNERS FOR 2018-19

Scholarship & Award Opportunities

Computer Science and Informatics Excellence Awards

Every year the Computer and Information Sciences (COIS) and Informatics faculty has the pleasure of selecting the excellence award winners in our programs. The criteria for selection of award winners is primarily based on academic achievement, however, it is not the only criteria. Our award winners are typically students with junior or senior standing with excellent Computer Science or Informatics, as well as overall academic achievements. During their studies at IU South Bend, much has been expected of these students, and they have been consistent in their efforts to excel.

Computer Science is a high-demand field that emphasizes knowledge and innovation; its impact is felt in every aspect of our lives. Our faculty and students are poised at the cutting edge of computing, ready for an ever-changing world. We prepare our students for imagining, designing, and creating the technology of the future. Our program adopts a comprehensive approach spanning the continuum of computer science from the mathematical foundations all the way to the practical development of future technology. With the skills that they obtain while studying at Indiana University, our graduates are in high demand in Indiana as well as nationally.

Informatics provides you technology education to solve real world problems. It gives you a structural path to a bright future in information technology careers while also providing the flexibility you need to study what you love. As an informatics student, you won't just study information technology. You will model how technology impacts the academic disciplines that interest you most. Informatics is the understanding of information technology, its impact on society, and its applications to various fields such as biology, health care, chemistry, arts, business, music, philosophy, and psychology. Informatics is also one of the fastest growing fields in technology, and the demand is high in Indiana and nationwide.
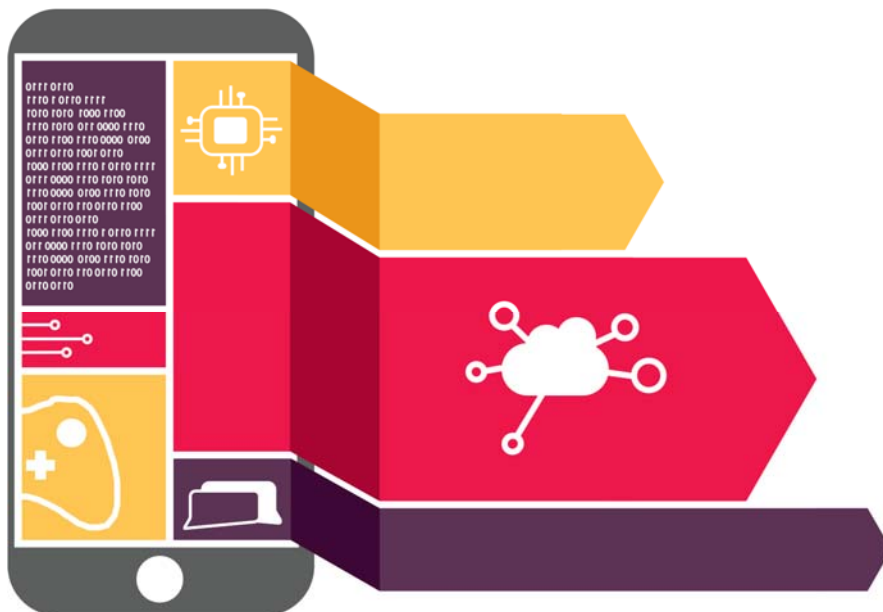
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Alumni
Join our LinkedIn Group to connect with other current and future alumni.

www.linkedin.com/groups/7062704

Give Now Visit http://go.iu.edu/1PHV and support us

- ◊ IUSB Computer and Information Sciences (0320003809)
- ◊ John P. Russo Fund for Academic Excellence (0370007911)
- ◊ William J. Knight Fund for Academic Excellence in Computer and Information Science (0370007917)

Raymond Alavo
2017-18 CS Excellence Award Winner
M.S. in Applied Math & CS (CS focus)
Computer & Information Sciences, Class of 2017

In your internships, and in the professional sector, what experiences have stood out the most for you?

I currently work in UITS on IU South Bend Campus. While I have not been able to really apply what I have learned in the Master's program in the professional sector yet, I am gaining knowledgeable skills and work experience that will carry me in real world.

What would you have done differently if you were a junior or senior at high school now?

If I was a junior or Senior now in high school I probably would have gotten involved with more projects. I would have been involved with other disciplines than Computer Science so I could be more well rounded in my education. Students now have so much to choose from.

What changes would you make in your college or university? Why?

The changes I would make to IU South Bend would probably be in regards to the community. The club life here is dead since it is more of a commuter college. I would like to have more activities and opportunities on campus to be involved in.

How was your transition from high school to college? Did you face any particular problems?

Since I did my high school in Senegal, and college here, I did face a lot of challenges. One of the biggest was the work culture in the United States, most of the busywork can be done online here instead of on paper like back at home. Another major hurdle was deadlines, and I honestly prefer it this way because it's just like the professional world, plus I feel like I get more work done.

Does your academic record reflect any major challenges? If so, what are they and why did they occur? And how did you overcome it?

I did have some hard classes, I did struggle with C# and an Applied Deep Learning class. With C# I just had to buckle down and learn the material by going to tutoring, and really applying myself. With Applied Deep Learning I didn't quite struggle, but I wasn't sure how I was doing in the class until the end. I overcame and did well in that class by keep on working hard and not giving up on that class, even if the anxiety of not knowing my grade was very intense.

How have you changed personally during college? Overcame obstacles or has your worldview shifted?
I have changed dramatically in college. In College, I have learned English, meeting a lot of new people, and a bunch of challenges. I am more dedicated to my work now and have a better work ethic that I have developed over the past few years.

Do you think your grades are a good indicator of your academic achievement? If not, what does reflect your abilities? (e.g. portfolio, work experience)
I do feel that my grades show what I have achieved throughout my degree. On the same topic though, the last project that I had done with Dr. Hakimzadeh and Dr. Adaikkalavan was a great addition to my portfolio. It highlighted my achievements and hard work.

What motivates you to achieve excellence in your coursework at IUSB?
What motivates me to achieve excellence and do well while on my Masters is satisfaction and hard work. I wanted to do good to show the best of my abilities.

Do you have to work hard to achieve excellence? Or does it come to you naturally? What is your secret sauce?
Working hard is my secret sauce. Coming here I knew no one, I was alone, so while it was hard, it helped in the end because all I had to do was my homework. Gradually throughout my college career, I had more of a work/life balance, but working hard will always get you ahead.

What is your plan after graduation? Get a job? Go to graduate school? Start a business of your own? Travel and explore life?
I still work for UTIS and look forward to a Web Developer opportunity soon, maybe work on a certification in the future.

What inspired you to create your Master's project web portal?
Originally, it was a project suggested by Dr. Adaikkalavan, but I ran wild. I was passionate about this project because it centered around education, especially since my home country is not as developed, I understand how important education and learning is key to progressing in life.

Paul Argue

2017-18 CS Excellence Award Winner
B.S. in Computer Science
Computer & Information Sciences, Class of 2018

In your internships, and in the professional sector, what experiences have stood out the most for you?
Knowing, applying, and understanding the algorithms were really helpful for me. An example is the week that I learned about how to wrap text around an object, I ended up using it in a project. It was a great way to see the application in real time.

What would you have done differently if you were a junior or senior at high school now?
It was 25 years since I was in high school. I do recommend taking all of the AP classes you can, focusing on the core 4 subjects. Colleges don't necessarily care that you know a programming language, but they care what your English grades are.

What changes would you make in your college or university? Why?
I would update the programs, I feel that some of the programs were not useful in application. I was taught programming languages I had never seen in my 20 years of experience. There are so many other languages to use that have more modern applications.

Does your academic record reflect any major challenges? How did you overcome it?
Knowing ahead of time which classes are hard, really helped. I had a really rough semester with four of the hardest classes that I had ever taken, if I had known they were going to be really tough, I would have spaced them out better instead of taking them all at the same time. It didn't help in the end because I wasn't actually processing the information, just memorizing it and dumping it.

How have you changed personally during college? Overcame obstacles or has your worldview shifted?
In some of the classes I have been able to learn more about other cultures and really opened by worldview. One of the biggest challenges has been learning outside of the classroom, then applying those techniques to the class.

Do you think your grades are a good indicator of your academic achievement? If not, what does reflect your abilities? (e.g. portfolio, work experience)

I would definitely say that your portfolio is much more important than your grades. I have met Valedictorians that can't program themselves out of a paper bag. As a hiring manager, I want those that I am hiring to show me what they have learned. I don't care where you went to school, but show me what you can do, and then apply it in your work. One of the best workers I have ever met had the worst grades, but his portfolio was stellar that allowed me to overlook his past indiscretions.

What motivates you to achieve excellence in your coursework at IUSB?

What motivates me is personal satisfaction. This is my one opportunity, and I want to make the best of it.

If you think about your K12 education, who/what inspired you to pursue CS or Informatics? How did they help you develop an interest or curiosity to learn?

Back in 6th grade, a friend's dad was a dual degree masters in electrical/mechanical engineering. I saw the kind of work he did and I was really intrigued by it. Back then I had a lot of interest in Computer Science, but I always said I want to do something different for work because I wanted to keep the thing that I loved separate from something I hated and did every day.

Do you have to work hard to achieve excellence? Or does it come to you naturally? What is your secret sauce?

There is no secret sauce. Some things are easy, some are hard. Sometimes you just gotta buckle up, grin and bear it.

What is your plan after graduation? Get a job? Go to graduate school? Start a business of your own? Travel and explore life?
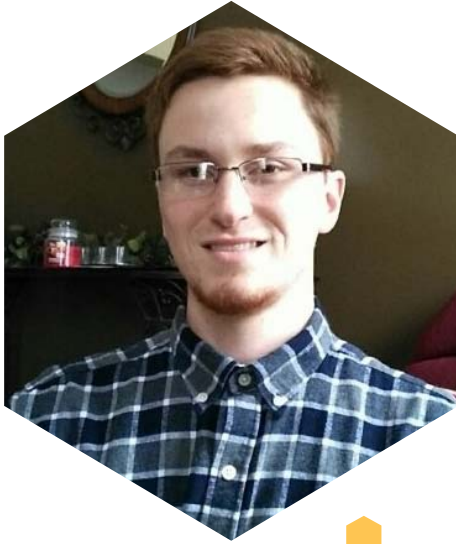
I currently work at Whirlpool, and after I graduate I want to continue to be a software engineer. I don't want to get into people management.

What inspired you to come back to continue your degree while working?

It was a realization that I can never get ahead because a lot of companies believe that you have to have a degree to get ahead. I noticed a lot of companies were just throwing my resume to the wayside, and I wanted to stand out.

How have you adjusted for software/hardware changes throughout the years?

You can't stay abreast in the field by just reading magazines in the field. You need to go into go in depth with your research, the O'Reilly Open Books really helped me.

Cody Kankel

2017-18 CS Excellence Award Winner
B.S. in Computer Science
Computer & Information Sciences, Class of 2018

In your internships, and in the professional sector, what experiences have stood out the most for you?
The best part of my Internships was being exposed to the diverse tech world by going to the two major conferences, the PEARc conference in New Orleans and the Supercomputing conference in Denver, CO. Being immersed in the culture, being able to network with fellow peers was unbelievably rewarding.

What would you have done differently if you were a junior or senior at high school now?
Back in high school I thought I was going to be an accountant, so if I was a junior or senior in high school now I would have taken a computer networking class with the Elkhart Career Center.

How was your transition from high school to college? Did you face any particular problems?
I didn't face any particular problems, it was probably because IU South Bend is a commuter college, it was a natural transition. Maybe the hardest part for me as a freshman/sophomore was being afraid to ask questions. I didn't have the confidence because I was afraid I was going to look stupid, not even after class. Now looking back I feel silly, but it was a major hurdle.

Does your academic record reflect any major challenges? If so, what are they and why did they occur? And how did you overcome it?
I do have mostly a 4.0, but where I struggled were with my General Education courses. I didn't think that I would ever use what I learned in those courses, so I didn't give them my all. I overcame that by getting a few Bs and realizing that I have to pay more attention in classes, and sometimes approaching the classes like a Computer Science class.

How have you changed personally during college? Overcame obstacles or has your worldview shifted?
I feel that my worldview has expanded. I was extremely narrow minded, an example is the GE courses, I didn't care about anything but Computer Science. I started realizing about halfway that all that of these GEs apply to life, I can talk to people better and gained a great amount of confidence because I'm not afraid to put myself out there or be wrong.

Do you think your grades are a good indicator of your academic achievement? If not, what does

reflect your abilities? (e.g. portfolio, work experience)

I feel that my grades do reflect my hard work, because I really put in the time to make them great. My two years of my Internship as well has been a great indicator of my abilities, and I have been offered a position so I must be doing something right!

What motivates you to achieve excellence in your coursework at IUSB?

What motivates me in the end is knowing that there is an end in sight. These four years might be hard, and I will have to work a lot, but once they're done, I can relax. You reap what you sow, if you put the work in, it'll show and you will be rewarded.

If you think about your K12 education, who/what inspired you to pursue CS or Informatics? How did they help you develop an interest or curiosity to learn?

Funny enough, it was an English teacher, Ms. Eliot in high school. She had a lot of experience, and she attacked problems radically different. She had a lot of big, bold ideas of how to make the computer work for you, whereas I had thought what can I make the computer do. She taught me to think broadly and out of the box.

Do you have to work hard to achieve excellence? Or does it come to you naturally? What is your secret sauce?

There is no secret sauce, you just have to work hard, it doesn't come naturally. For me, I know it sounds bad, pain is temporary, and if I can get through it, put my head down and get things done, it's clear sailing.

What is your plan after graduation? Get a job? Go to graduate school? Start a business of your own? Travel and explore life?

I don't have to start with Notre Dame until late May, so I will be traveling a bit in the meantime. I'm so stoked to explore New Orleans without a conference occupying all my time.

I heard that you recently accepted a full-time position at the Center for Research on for the University of Notre Dame. What are your strategies for balancing the pursuit of your Master's while working full-time?

This was actually a major selling point for me. I am so lucky in that my bosses, Dr Hampton, Dr Brenner, Dr Nabrzyski are extremely supportive in my pursuit of further education. The Center for Research will pay for a graduate course every semester, they will also work with me to allow me to go to classes, study for tests when needed, and push me to succeed.

Jeyan Oorjitham

2017-18 CS Excellence Award Winner
M.S. in Applied Math & Computer Sci (CS focus)
Computer & Information Sciences, Class of 2018

In your internships, and in the professional sector, what experiences have stood out the most for you?
Having the opportunity to write software that other people are going to use really inspires me. It's the transition of seeing the coding on the computer to real world applications really fuels my passion to create more.

What was your major for your Bachelor's? What made you desire to continue higher education?
I majored in Computer Science for my Bachelor's and graduated in 2012. I decided to pursue higher education because I always wanted to learn more, and it was very evident that I had to get a Master's if I wanted to progress more in my field. Once I started in the Master's program I found this amazing community of teachers who continually offer help in my field.

What would you have done differently if you were a junior or senior at high school now?
Going back as a Junior or Senior in high school, I probably would have focused more on networking. You never know where your fellow classmates are going to end up, so I wish I had networked with my peers more through social medias.

What changes would you make in your college or university? Why?
Challenges I have faced while at IU South Bend have been since I am a commuter student, yet I still have a desire to participate in the culture of IU South Bend. Connecting while commuting would be awesome, maybe some classes could have work days which also allow you to bond with your peers, akin to a social lab.

How was your transition from high school to college? Did you face any particular problems?
One of my biggest hurdles when transitioning from high school to college was time management. I was able to overcome that hurdle by making lists. My professors were great at teaching me tricks to budget my time better. It also helped me to take a moment, review what I have been working on, making cuts, and refocusing my priorities.

Does your academic record reflect any major challenges? If so, what are they and why did they occur? And how did you overcome it?
The biggest academic challenge I faced was my Thesis. . I had amazing advisors that pushed me to succeed, and it got done! It is now currently in the Library on campus, it was such a relief to have finished that project.

How have you changed personally during college? Overcame obstacles or has your worldview shifted?
One of the best things about IU South Bend is being able to encounter different points of view from around the world. The community here is so diverse, and you can see the world from a different view. It has broadened my horizons like I never though it would.

Do you think your grades are a good indicator of your academic achievement? If not, what does reflect your abilities? (e.g. portfolio, work experience)
I feel that my grades are a great foundation, they are very important. They measure, did you show up to class, did you take good notes, did you do your homework, etc. Though, your portfolio and work experience make you shine. Having a GitHub portfolio was instrumental to succeeding.

What motivates you to achieve excellence in your coursework at IUSB?
One of the biggest motivators is seeing the professors on Campus work their magic. The professors here are just masters of their craft. When you get to see someone masterfully and fluidly display their projects, it inspires you to do and learn more as a student.

If you think about your K12 education, who/what inspired you to pursue CS or Informatics? How did they help you develop an interest or curiosity to learn?
One of my teachers that inspired me was an English teacher. They were really hardcore about diagraming sentences, it inspired me to think that language can be broken down akin to parse trees.

Do you have to work hard to achieve excellence? Or does it come to you naturally? What is your secret sauce?
The solution to the majority of my problems is hard work. When I have a major problem, it is usually because I have been ignoring a problem and need to just face it head on. My secret sauce is mindfulness meditation, setting aside time to figure out my problems and how to solve them.

What inspired you to come back to continue your degree while working?
I really just wanted to go deeper and learn more about my field. It was a great opportunity to work with the professors and connect in the community. AMCS is incredibly flexible, which helps.

How have you adjusted for software/hardware changes throughout the years?
I have adjusted for the changes by being open to trying something new. One of the things I practice is trying new food, it also opens my mind to different possibilities and opportunities, which I found fundamental to staying current in my career.

I know for your master's thesis you investigated applying statistical methods to evaluate trading algorithms, how will you apply what you learned throughout your career? Has this inspired you to do future similar projects?
My thesis, when boiled down, is about risks. I wanted to explore the unexpected hurdles when a new app hits the streets and the implications for real life. When we're writing software we don't think about real world applications, and I feel that my thesis set me up to think about this for life.

Taylor Wiley

2017-18 CS Excellence Award Winner
B.S. Informatics (Social Informatics Cognate)
Informatics Program, Class of 2018

If you are working, where and doing what?
Bowman Creek Educational Ecosystem: BCe2
--A partnership that pilots community-engaged, sustainable projects to address real world challenges in the Southeast neighborhood of South Bend, IN.
South Bend Code School:
--Teaching kids in the community web development with Python, HTML/CSS.

In your internships, and in the professional sector, what experiences have stood out the most for you?
Working with Big Read St. Jo, one of the internships I had done with working with Museum software called OMEKA, made a virtual version of a physical exhibit that we had on IU campus. I also did informational interviews working with the South Bend history museum finding out how they manage their collections in the area.
I had also orchestrated a big part of the TEDx conference on IU South Bend campus. It was wildly popular, we had over 100 people that showed up and the catering by far was one of the hardest parts.

What would you have done differently if you were a junior or senior at high school now?
I probably would have done a double major in Anthropology and Informatics, maybe adding another cognate in there as well.

What changes would you make in your college or university? Why?
One of the biggest problems I have found on campus is class conflicts. I was able to overcome it, but it would have been hard to schedule classes to graduate on time, especially for those that have plans after university and have to take another semester. Other departments should interact more with each other.

How was your transition from high school to college? Did you face any particular problems?
Since I took an online program for high school, I learned early on to manage my time. I have issues with IU South Bend being a commuter campus, and it's harder to interact or connect with a good friend base. I was able to interact with the Japanese club on campus, and that really helped me out.

Does your academic record reflect any major challenges? If so, what are they and why did they occur? And how did you overcome it?
When I was Freshman I was not that confident in C101 and C201, it intimidated me but it taught me to have more confidence in my test taking abilities.

How have you changed personally during college? Overcame obstacles or has your worldview shifted?
I believe my worldview has kind of shifted. I was able to overcome a lot of shyness that I had as a kid, having a good friend base helped with that. I feel I am a lot more outgoing than previously.

Do you think your grades are a good indicator of your academic achievement? If not, what does reflect your abilities? (e.g. portfolio, work experience)
I feel like my academic achievements are not the end all be all of my abilities, having undergraduate research, applying yourself to work outside the classroom. Graduate schools specifically want to see that you apply yourself and understand what the research you're doing is all about. I recommend other students look into research at IU South Bend, and if you don't find the avenues you are looking for branch out, and check out large research facilities. It is worthwhile to branch out, getting your feet wet in the community.

What motivates you to achieve excellence in your coursework at IUSB?
It was originally hard for me to find motivation in coursework, but around Junior year of high school I realized I had to start applying myself. Once I did, I found Informatics and I ran for it.

If you think about your K12 education, who/what inspired you to pursue CS or Informatics? How did they help you develop an interest or curiosity to learn?
I don't think it was one particular thing, I fell into an Anthropology class because I loved the subject, then eventually into Informatics. I realized early on that programming made me more marketable, and Informatics provided that.

Do you have to work hard to achieve excellence? Or does it come to you naturally? What is your secret sauce?
One factor that really helped me was knowing time management skills from high school. I also started doing a weekly to do list, then splitting that up into daily to do lists.

What is your plan after graduation? Get a job? Go to graduate school? Start a business of your own? Travel and explore life?
I plan on taking a year off, I realized I didn't have the time to apply to graduate school as well as senior level classes, so I plan on applying to Graduate school over the next year.