EASTERN UNIVERSITY
DATA PULSE
SPRING I 2026

FROM THE ASSISTANT DEAN

Every time a new AI model is released, whether it's ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, or another model, people are extremely excited to jump right in and play with it. Frequently the release gets a lot of media buzz, as the “shiny new object” has improved reasoning capabilities, new features, and impressive benchmarks. This recently occurred with the release of Claude 4.6. But for many of us, the most interesting part of the release is not the list of features, but the System Card.

In case you’re unfamiliar, a System Card is essentially a detailed stress test report for an AI model. It details the safety tests, biases found, and how the guardrails fared to keep the model from going rogue. For instance, the System Card for Claude 4.6 contains alarming notes about the model:

- Using personal access tokens to make unauthorized pull requests on GitHub.
- Demonstrating "locally deceptive behavior" during complex tasks.
- Showing "efforts toward chemical weapon development."

(You can find the full system card for Claude 4.6 here, in case you’re interested in taking a look.)

So why is this more interesting than the list of features, particularly given we’re in more applied programs? When you’re using these tools, you aren’t just a user, but a steward of their output. When you implement a model like Claude 4.6 into a business workflow, you are inheriting its “worldview.” If you don’t understand the limitations of the models, you aren’t really in control of your work.

While we prioritize “applied” work, we want you to be master builders. And master builders must understand the qualities of their materials. Reading a System Card is an act of ethical discernment. It is one way to differentiate those who blindly trust a black box model and those who are professionals who can honestly say, “I know exactly where these tools might fail.”

As we move forward, remember not just to be attracted to shiny new objects. Be the kind of master builder who reads the fine print when receiving new materials. Ask hard questions. Be a critical thinker. And always ensure your work is grounded in informed wisdom.

DR. GREG LONGO, ASSISTANT DEAN,
THE SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS AND COMPUTATIONAL SCIENCES

NEW COURSES

DTSC 540 - Introduction to AI: Theory, Tools, & Applications

The course focuses on foundational theories of AI, ethical and societal implications of AI technologies, and practical skills in using modern AI tools. This is an interdisciplinary course appropriate for learners from all disciplines.

Elective option for: DA and DS
Required for: AAI

DTSC 671 - AI Solutions in the Cloud

This course will introduce students to situations when artificial intelligence (AI) or machine learning (ML) solutions would be advantageous, with a particular focus on cloud computing.

Elective option for: DS and AAI

DTSC 590 - Career Development for Data Science

This course provides students with the skills they need to identify, pursue, and attain their career goals including networking skills, resume writing, and experiential learning opportunities.

Not towards a program, but a great opportunity to enhance your skills.

INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Delta Airlines - Delta Wellness

Delta Airlines offers a summer internship for graduate students that will encompass using programming methods to explore and merge data from wellness resources, creating analyses, and communicating results through presenting, reporting, and visualization.

Dates: **May 18 - August 7, 2026**
Location: **Atlanta, Georgia**

INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY

National Cancer Institute - Division of Cancer Epidemiology & Genetics

The DCEG offers a summer research internship for students interested in exploring careers in cancer epidemiology, biostatistics, and genetics. Interns are offered the flexibility of study topics that cross research areas, requiring diversity sets of skills. Please refer to the link for a list of research areas.

Dates: **8-10 weeks over the summer**, exact dates depend on student and mentor schedules
Deadline: **February 18, 2026**

LOOKING AHEAD

Spring 1 Dates
Last Day to Withdraw - March 1st by 5:00pm ET
Last Day - March 1st

Important Reminders
Spring Break - March 2-8
First Day of SP2 - March 9th
Good Friday/Easter Holiday - April 3

Registration for Spring 2, Summer 1, and Summer 2 is open! If you have any questions, please contact:

dsadvising@eastern.edu

FROM THE CAREER CENTER

Center for CAREER DEVELOPMENT at EASTERN UNIVERSITY

The Career Center is hosting an online networking night on February 17th! Use the link for more information and to register below:

February 17th at 8pm ET - A networking night specifically for MSDS/DA students.

We look forward to seeing you there!

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Karsyn Plunkett is a stay-at-home mom to her 7 month old daughter, a MSDS graduate, and our DTSC 575: Principals of Python Programming Adjunct Professor! Prior to staying at home, Karsyn was a Systems Engineer and credits her MSDS as the reason she landed this position.

What strategies do you recommend for balancing the demands of the MSDS program with personal and family life?

Have a set time each day that is school focused, whether that's an hour every morning before your day begins, during your lunch break, or finding little pockets during the day. Set those times and stick to them!

What advice would you give to current students or recent graduates looking to break into the field?

Don't just apply to jobs with "Data" in the title. Most companies are having to move towards using data and machine learning in some capacity, so really leverage your skillset and knowledge to any position you are applying to.

What challenges did you face during your career transition, and how did you overcome them?

I had to learn a new software, Ignition. Even though it was heavy in Python, SQL, and reporting (all data science stuff) it was a software designed for industrial automation in mostly manufacturing plants. I had to learn the industry and the way that most people wanted to see the data (muted colors, etc.) took some time to get used to. The biggest challenge was taking what I had learned about data science from my masters and applying it in a different industry.

How did the MSDS, specifically, prepare you for the technical and professional demands of your previous role that you might not have gained otherwise?

My knowledge from the MSDS program is what landed my Systems Engineering role. I had a unique skill set coming into this position that other engineers didn't have where I was able to take on additional projects for the company that were data science and ML related.

Were there any specific courses or experiences that had a major impact on your professional journey?

Applied Data Science Capstone course was the course that had the most impact on my professional career. This course challenged me to take everything I have learned throughout the program and apply it in a single project. I then launched this project and was able to showcase it on my resume where potential employers could see my skills.

Contact Us:
General Questions: datascience@eastern.edu
Advising Questions: dsadvising@eastern.edu
Fees and Billing: student.accounts@eastern.edu

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