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Executive Summary: Message from the CEO

Dear AIS Members, Officers, and Administrators,

The Association for Information Systems student chapter at the University of Arkansas’ Sam M. Walton College of Business has always been dedicated to promoting information systems and technologies to all students and enabling them to develop skills, professionalism, and connections beyond classrooms. During the 2019-20 academic year, we proudly continued this tradition by engaging our enthusiastic members in different kinds of events including workshops, information sessions, guest speakers etc. Before the unexpected disruption caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, our student-led chapter has excelled in every possible way and passed a very successful, if not the most successful period in recent years. As the chief executive officer, I had both the honor and privilege of working with an amazing executive team and leading our chapter to new heights. I look forward to seeing its continuous success in upcoming years.

One of the things that we are most proud of is providing all students with the chance to learn about information technology no matter their majors. We started our organizational activities with Walton College Block Party and Fall Kick-off event, through which we were able to reach a diverse talent group to be a part of our organization this year. We had members from nearly all majors within the Walton College of Business, as well as from other colleges, which allowed for a variety of backgrounds at our meetings and created a great learning experience. We made use of any and all resources that the Information Systems department had to offer, and this helped us to grow our membership numbers and raise awareness for our organization. We partnered with other student organizations including the Association for Computer Machinery (ACM) and the Blockchain Registered Student Organization for several events. Most importantly, this year we partnered with the Associate Dean Young Professional Council represented by University of Arkansas alumni who are currently working at local tech giants including Walmart, Tyson, JB Hunt etc. We had a successful workshop with employees of Walmart, and we plan to continue this collaboration in future.

As always, we had representatives from different companies including Phillips66, ConocoPhillips, Koch Industries etc., hosting information sessions about their opportunities. To provide our members a different experience, this year we introduced a new series of tech talk events, where we invited industry leaders to talk about their work culture, their expectations from college students and newly graduates, and competencies that are required for a successful career. Our members loved the opportunity to directly ask questions to those who are experienced and successful in the workforce. Also, this year we emphasized on hosting more hands-on professional development workshops on a wide variety of topics including Blockchain, Power BI, Tableau, Data Analytics, cybersecurity etc. We had highly skilled professors and professionals including Professor Nolan, Professor Nikkhah, and Kathryn Gadberry to lead these workshops, and we are very thankful for their contributions. We also had the opportunity to visit one of the state-of-the-art data centers at our university, which was a great learning experience for everyone.

This marks the end of my four-year journey with AIS, three years as a part of the executive team, and one year as the CEO. I had an incredible time and I cannot express how grateful and honored I am. I had the privilege of working with an incredible executive board and I want to thank you all for everything that you did for our chapter. Specially, I have to thank our faculty advisor, Dr. Susan Bristow, for everything that she did for always guiding us and making sure that we were well taken care of and I cannot thank her enough for everything that she did for us. Every moment that we have had together is one that we will not forget, and we cannot wait to see where this chapter will lead to next.

Respectfully,

S M Nahian Al Sunny

CEO/President, Association for Information Systems
University of Arkansas – Fayetteville
Leadership Team

S M Nahian Al Sunny
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Alyson Schulte
Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Benjamin Martin
Treasurer/Secretary

Harry Nguyen
VP of Programs

Abby Klingensmith
Chief Marketing Officer

Ashton Isaacson
VP of Membership

Paresh Parihar
VP of Community Outreach

Dr. Susan Bristow
Faculty Advisor
Overall Mission

The University of Arkansas AIS Chapter has crafted the mission’s statement “to promote the study and utilization of information systems through programs of professional development, social networking, and community development.” We encourage students of all majors that have even the slightest interest in information systems and technology to join our organization. We are committed to demonstrating how technology can be used across any and all career paths. With events such as skill development workshops, socials, and networking events with well-known leading companies like Phillips 66, ConocoPhillips, IBM, Cerner, Koch Industries, Walmart etc., we followed closely to our mission statement.
Professional Development

Throughout the academic year, we arranged several professional development events for our members. These events were focused on both developing new technological skills and learning about current work culture in IT industries.

Blockchain 101

On October 9th, 2019, the Association for Information Systems partnered with the Blockchain Registered Student Organization at the University of Arkansas to host a “Blockchain 101” informational session with Kathryn Gadberry, the Senior Managing Director of the Blockchain Center of Excellence at our university. Kathryn explained the concept of Blockchain and discussed its impacts on industries all over the globe.

Data Analytics and SQL Workshop

On October 24th, 2019, we held an “Introduction to Data Analytics and SQL” informational session led by Walton College professor, Steve Nolan. He emphasized how important Analytics is in today’s workforce and how regardless of any major, analytics is a useful area of study to become familiar with. He talked about different resources that students can use to further our learning outside the classroom. He then transitioned into talking about C# and SQL. This was one of our most popular informational sessions of the semester and we decided to make a workshop series in upcoming semesters.

Introduction to Blockchain and Cryptocurrency

On October 29th, 2019, we hosted an information session on “Introduction to Blockchain and Cryptocurrency” by Kathryn Gadberry. In this session, our members were introduced to the concept of Blockchain, its potentials and challenges in different business sectors, and a brief overview of cryptocurrency. This was a great opportunity for our
members to learn about this emerging technology and prepare for 2019 Blockchain Hackathon organized by University of Arkansas. We had about 15 attendees and dinner were provided.

**Analytics in Tableau Workshop**

After our great success with Professor Steve Nolan’s Analytics information session, we organized a Tableau workshop with him on February 12th, 2020. He not only talked about the importance of Analytics in the workplace, but also how to create different visuals on Tableau. He used a dataset which all students have access to in a shared folder. This was very informative for members as they had hand-on experience with the
Software under his watchful supervision. He taught the members how to create certain visuals and also how to interpret them and tell a story with the data. This was again a very well-liked workshop as the topic seemed to be very popular with our members.

**Cybersecurity – Information Session**

On February 18, 2020, we hosted a cybersecurity workshop led by Professor Hamid Nikkah of the Sam M. Walton College of Business. During the workshop, he provided a basic overview of cybersecurity, went over some certificates and courses in cybersecurity including those that are provided outside of the University of Arkansas, and briefly talked about some career paths in cybersecurity. There were 13 attendees, and dinner was served at the meeting. Seeing the enthusiasm of the attendees, we have decided to continue this info session into a series of workshops in upcoming semesters.

**Tech Talk with Scott Crenshaw**

Inspired by our last career fair tech talk panel, we invited Scott Crenshaw, Senior Director of Enterprise Apps at Simmons Foods, to a tech talk event on February 26, 2020. The topic of his talk was “Competencies that new technologists need to learn outside the classroom in 2020 to be successful”. Mr. Crenshaw discussed how students should prepare themselves before joining the workforce and highlighted key competencies that
can help them in distinguishing themselves from other candidates. He also mentioned potential hiring opportunities at his company. Our members really enjoyed the discussion and bombarded him with questions afterwards! Mr. Crenshaw also expressed interest in future events. About 20 members were present and dinner was served to them.

**Power BI Workshop**

On March 4, 2020, we collaborated with Associate Dean Young Professional Council to host a Power BI workshop. This council is represented by University of Arkansas alumni who are currently working at local tech giants including Walmart, Tyson, JB Hunt etc. Three Walmart associates, who also graduated from UofA, presided over the workshop. First, they briefly introduced Microsoft Power BI software and its advantages. Then a hands-on tutorial was presented where attendees learnt to create different types of graphs and charts from a given dataset. Power BI is widely used in industries, but students seldom get chances to learn it during their academic studies. Overall, the workshop was a huge success, as all attendees were able to finish the tutorial properly. About 20 members were present and dinner was served. We have been communicating with Walmart and the Council about future collaboration.
Data Center Tour

On December 3rd, 2019, Michael Gibbs gave the Association for Information Systems members a tour of one of the University of Arkansas data centers and discussed how the University stores and manages its tremendous amount of data and also hosts different virtual services not only for Uark students, but also for users around the globe. Our members were given the opportunity to see state-of-the-art technologies including Mainframe, big data repository, virtual machine host servers from IBM, Teradata, Dell etc. at work. It was a very unique and fascinating experience for the attendees, as we always hear about data centers, but hardly have ever visited one. Due to busy schedules, seven members were able to attend the tour, but considering the significant amount of interest among the members, we plan to host this on a yearly basis in future.
Advancing IS as a Profession

A little-known fact about the University of Arkansas is that several Fortune 500 companies are located within a 50-mile radius of our campus. This is due to Walmart being headquartered just a short drive north of our campus in Bentonville, Arkansas. Walmart mandates that all vendors of the company have a satellite office within 50 miles of the home office. This creates an environment that is rich in career potential and we are lucky to have this opportunity at the University of Arkansas. We tried our best to bring back companies that previously had sessions with AIS and also add new ones to the list. When various companies came to speak to us, many of them also talked about the variety of internships and full-time positions that were available and/or applicable to the Information Systems field. The scope of companies we brought to present to our members about how Information Technology affected their careers was also diverse. We hosted multiple skill development workshops to introduce our members to new skillsets and sharpen their existing skill levels as well.

Members of our AIS Chapter has landed jobs all around the country this past year. We have had students go to companies such as Walmart, General Motors, ConocoPhillips, Phillips 66, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Cerner, and Koch Industries. We are blessed to have to connections and resources to be able to land these dream jobs and we look forward to the continued relationship between these companies.

Phillips66 – Information session

Employees from Phillips 66 came and talked to AIS and Association for Computing Machinery members on September 18th. They mainly touched on how important data is
to their business, especially in terms of cyber security and cloud automation. They also talked about available job and internship opportunities.

**ConocoPhillips – Information Session**

On September 23rd, 2019, the Association for Information Systems held an informational session with ConocoPhillips. The recruiters talked about possible job opportunities and internships within the company. We had two AIS members attend, members of the Blockchain club were also present.

**Career Fair Panel**

Usually UARK AIS hosts information sessions with representatives from different companies during the Career Fair week at the University. This year we decided to introduce something new and hosted a “Career Fair Panel” event for the first time. Following the career fair, on Tuesday, September 24th, 2019, we organized a panel in which employers from Credera, Koch Industries, and Affirma came to speak with and answer questions asked by our members. The recruiters not only talked about opportunities at their companies but also answered specific questions about their work culture, experience, expectations, etc. It turned out to be a great event with about 25 attendees. We aim to continue this tradition in upcoming years and involve more companies in the panel.

**Master’s in information systems**

On October 15th, 2019, our members attended an informational session to learn about what getting their master’s in information systems looks like and how it would benefit their future. The students learned about the expectations for grad school and asked questions to learn more about scholarships, work schedule, class schedule, etc.
Community Service

For our community service this year we hosted all skill development workshops for anyone to attend for free. These workshops were very helpful in helping people learn basic technical skills to apply to both their personal and professional lives. Also, our members volunteered to help faculty and staff from Walton College of Business to organize the “University of Arkansas Annual Blockchain Hackathon 2019”. To aid our local community, we called our members to participate in a canned food drive for a local shelter just before Thanksgiving. We intend to add more community service events to our future agenda.

Fundraising

The University of Arkansas AIS Chapter has been very blessed to have the Information Systems Department to assist in all of our monetary needs. We are a departmental organization and have access to departmental funds. Due to this, we did not host any fundraisers this past year, but we did receive additional funds from our benefactors at ConocoPhillips and Phillips66 including scholarship funds for our active members. This generous contribution allowed us to make our skill development workshops free to attend, unlike previous years, which truly helped our members to explore all opportunities that are available to them. We thank ConocoPhillips, Phillips66, and the Information Systems Department for their generous contribution to our chapter. Dr. Rajiv Sabherwal, the Chair of the Information Systems department, was generous enough to sponsor our annual membership fee for the upcoming year.
Membership

Like previous year, we continued to diligently work toward increasing our member count. For the Fall 2019 semester, we provided membership to 57 students for our Fall 2019 semester and 33 in the spring. Overall, we had 69 individual members throughout the year. Our membership is free to students and we encourage them to attend meetings to learn about Information Systems and network with potential employers.

As always, we used a point system to determine which members are “Active” to qualify for potential scholarships and enjoy other benefits of AIS. To become an active member in AIS one must accumulate 10 points over the course of the academic year. Our chapter is primarily made up of juniors and seniors because a lot of our focus is on exploring job opportunities and internships with companies that come and present to the group. We also had significant number of sophomores, specially in our skill development workshops. We have had varying levels of attendance throughout the year, our Fall 2019 Kickoff brought in 52 new members. Our average attendance at meetings has increased from previous years to around 17 members a meeting. We tried our best to represent and promote our chapter in different events happening at the university and also in social media platforms throughout the year.

Walton Block Party

On August 28th, 2019 the Association of Information Systems participated in the annual Walton College block party from 11am-1pm. We had three members of our executive team working our booth, in which we provided informational pamphlets describing who we are and what it is we do. We also collected 32 emails from students interested in joining our organization and received topic ideas that students would be
interested in learning about throughout the semester. The event was a success and allowed us to contact many students interested in joining our organization while raising awareness about our organization.

**AIS Kickoff Meeting – Fall**

To address the club members and group leadership for the start of a new semester and it’s ensuing activities, UARK AIS held a kickoff meeting on September 10th, 2019. Our leadership team introduced themselves to the attendees and presented the duties of the club on top of talking about events we would be holding and participating in throughout the semester. We also discussed our point-based membership system. Dinner was served. Around 50 people showed up and the kickoff meeting was a success.

**AIS Kickoff Meeting – Spring**

After an eventful Fall semester, we were eager to continue our success and started our Spring 2020 events with the usual AIS Kickoff Meeting on January 29, 2020. As always, our leadership team introduced themselves to the attendees and explained the duties and objectives. We also talked about our point-based membership system and presented an overview of our future events in our Google semester calendar. Dinner was served. About 30 members attended our meeting and we had dinner together at the end.

**Chapter Operations**

This year, we redefined our chapter leadership team organization and roles. Our chapter had a leadership team of 7 student members. Four of us were also part of previous leadership team, remaining three were selected through election. We aimed to bring more diversity in our hosted events to boost our members’ interest and enthusiasm. Every other week, the leadership team met to discuss and plan for the upcoming weeks
for the chapter. These leadership meetings lasted anywhere from 1-2 hours in length and we worked through all logistical problems that we could think of. We always encouraged feedback from our members and listened to what they were wanting to see in the AIS. Meetings were opened by our CEO or COO and usually were handed to another leadership member depending on the subject matter. We used the “GroupMe” app for maintaining communication among leadership members and with general members. We often used polls by GroupMe and Google Docs to receive feedback from our members on different matters such as, preferable day and time of events, type of food, location of socials etc. We maintained Google Calendar to keep everyone up to date.

**Communications**

In any organization, communication is vital for the overall success of the chapter. The AIS Leadership Team has strategically used communication channels that would effectively reach students, making sure that they were informed, aware, and encouraged to attend events and opportunities in which they can involve themselves. We used emails, flyers, social media, and word of mouth as primary channels of reaching students. As always, we used our university email account as the primary point of all communications with our members and networking and event partners. Emails were sent from a listserv to the entire Walton College of Business, as well as all AIS members. We continued the last year’s routine of sending weekly emails with a list of upcoming events every Wednesday. To better maintain and promote our schedule, we utilized Google Calendar marking all semester events beforehand, color coded each event based on points earned for attendance and made that available to all members. Oftentimes, students did not have
the same schedules week to week, so we posted on social media platforms including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and also sent messages on GroupMe a few days before the events. Our Vice President of Communications, Abby, did a fabulous job creating exquisite and attractive flyers for all events. For some events, a new flyer was created and posted all around the business and IT buildings. Since the University of Arkansas’ AIS Chapter has close relationships with their students, oftentimes word of mouth is the best way to reach students. We have classes with many members and always made sure to get them as excited as we were about attending events. For each event that we held, we made sure to send out notifications well in advance. We always aimed to send out an email with at least 3 business days’ notice. We always tried to ensure that our members were well informed about our activities.

Financial Statement

During 2019-20 academic year, our revenue came from last year’s revenue rolled over as well as additional funds received from ConocoPhillips, Phillips66, and the Department of Information Systems, increasing our beginning balance to $13,248.43. Our operating expenses resulted from organizing food for members in our events for
$1,598.10 as well as $387.43 for our AIS chapter t-shirts. There were no travel expenses because the AIS Leadership Conference was suspended as well as a Walmart data cafe visit that we had scheduled due to Covid-19 that could have incurred expenses. From those expenses we did have a reported ending balance of $11,262.90. Below is a breakdown of those expenses.

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<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning Balance:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Ending Balance:</strong></td>
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Metrics/Demographics

We had 7 events during the Fall 2019 Semester and averaged around 17 students. In the Spring 2020 Semester we had 3 events and averaged around 18 students at each meeting. Overall, we had 17 active members of 69 total members.
List of Events

Walton Block Party: an event that recruits new members for our chapter
Estimated Attendance: 40

Fall Kick Off: the first meeting to inform students of who we are and what we do
Estimated Attendance: 50

Phillips66 Information Session: Representatives talked about career opportunities
Estimated Attendance: 10

ConocoPhillips Information Session: Representatives talked about career opportunities
Estimated Attendance: 7

Career Fair Panel: Representatives from three companies discussed their work culture
Estimated Attendance: 25

Blockchain 101 Workshop: Introductory workshop about trending Blockchain Technology
Estimated Attendance: 10

Master’s in Information systems: Information session about graduate degree in the Information Systems department
Estimated Attendance: 10

Data Analytics and SQL Workshop: Introductory workshop about prospects of data analytics and SQL for IS students
Estimated Attendance: 22

Introduction to Blockchain & Cryptocurrency: Overview of potentials and challenges of Blockchain technology and cryptocurrency
Estimated Attendance: 15

Data Center Tour: Visit to one of the University of Arkansas data centers
Estimated Attendance: 13

Spring Kick Off: the first meeting to inform students of who we are and what we do
Estimated Attendance: 30

Analytics in Tableau Workshop: Introductory workshop about how to use Tableau
Estimated Attendance: 12

Cybersecurity Info session: Overview of opportunities in cybersecurity for IS students
Estimated Attendance: 13

Tech Talk with Scott Crenshaw: Guest speaker talking about necessary competencies
Estimated Attendance: 19

Power BI workshop: Hands-on introductory workshop on using Power BI
Estimated Attendance: 21
T-shirts

After two academic years, we decided to make organizational t-shirts for our members again. For the first time ever, we arranged a t-shirt design contest where our members submitted their own creative designs. Based on popularity, the design shown below was chosen, courtesy of B-unlimited. Each t-shirt was $20, the amount earned was added to our treasury. Active members within our chapter (10 points per semester) received a free shirt. We had positive response from our members regarding this. We hope that this new look and design will attract more members to join our chapter!

Contact Information

On behalf of the University of Arkansas chapter of AIS and the Department of Information Systems, thank you for your time and consideration. For questions or concerns, please contact the following:

**Faculty Contact**
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**Student Contact**
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