



Information Technology Research Institute

My Info: Name: Eric | **Membership Status:** Annual Faculty Staff |
Employer: University of Arkansas | [Information not correct? Update it today!](#)



Information Technology Showcase

On October 31, ITRI board representatives from Arvest, Acxiom, Dillard's, J.B. Hunt, Teradata and Walmart engaged in one-on-one discussions with students to answer the question, 'What is IT?' The idea of the IT Showcase is to expose students to the different types of jobs available in the field of technology. The partnering organizations covered individual jobs including business analysts, IT managers, database administrators, programmers, developers and information security analysts. The IT Showcase was unique from other engagement opportunities because students obtained a perspective of one position title from a variety of companies. Whether it is the IT Executive Forum, Executives in the Classroom, the IT Showcase or IT Day, the events hosted by ITRI bring industry professionals and students together in an atmosphere that fosters opportunity.



NWA Tech Summit

On October 7, Eric T. Bradford and Elizabeth McCorcle of the ITRI attended the NWA Tech Summit along with eight University of Arkansas Information Systems and Computer Science Computer Engineering students. The summit offered session topics such as Women in Technology, Analytics & Education: a Two-way Street, Creating Opportunities for Jr. Developers in NWA and How IT Executives become Business Leaders.



Arkansas STEM Coalition

On October 6, Eric T. Bradford, managing director of the ITRI attended the Arkansas STEM Coalition meeting to discuss the vision for STEM in Northwest Arkansas. The topics discussed were cogent to the mission of the ITRI.

Girls in IT



The ITRI hosted its 4th Girls in IT event on December 2 to introduce information technology careers to high school girls. Approximately 150 young women from 14 different high schools in Northwest Arkansas participated in the event featuring 70 professional women as speakers, panelists and mentors. The event was sponsored by Tyson Foods, Inc. and was held at its corporate offices in Springdale. The purpose of Girls in IT is to encourage young women to pursue career opportunities in the field of information technology where women are woefully under-represented.

This five-hour event kicked off with an inspiring presentation by Tyson Foods, Inc., senior director of IS Applications Annitre' Edison. Annitre' encouraged young women to try new experiences. She attributed her success to a variety of factors including aligning herself with other women, having several mentors, and being honest and true to herself. She encouraged the participants to do the same thing. The audience was motivated and empowered by her authenticity.

Carey Webb, the senior human resource manager at Tyson Foods, Inc. facilitated a salary activity that engaged all 150 students. The activity created by Rita Littrell, director of the Bessie B. Moore Center for Economic Education at the University of Arkansas, illustrated how lucrative a career in IT can be. This exercise helped to demystify positions in IT.

Helena Gadison, vice president of Sales and Merchandising at International Intimates, Inc. led the participants in a personal branding activity that revealed impressions their individual attitudes gave to others, how eye contact, body language and tone of voice all influence others perceptions and the importance of a personal brand.



Amy Robinson, the founder of Tribe of Women, moderated a panel of professional IT women from J.B. Hunt, Tyson Foods, Inc., Acxiom and Walmart. Panelists responded to inquiries regarding industry salaries, work-life balance and career motivators. The participants enjoyed this opportunity to get a variety of perspectives on issues pertinent to their decisions about their future.

During lunch, participants worked on an activity created by Susan Bristow, clinical assistant professor of Information Systems at the University of Arkansas that tasks students with creating a new technology that solves a problem. Students had the opportunity to work in a team, brainstorm and create a product, service or app and then pitch their ideas to the audience. This exercise helped boost their confidence, work on teamwork, leadership and presentation skills while simultaneously driving home the point that a career in the field of IT is not just coding.

Survey results from some participants said the event was life changing, empowering and inspiring.



ITRI Board Member Interviews

ITRI board members offer their personal insights into information technology careers, workplace diversity, affiliation with the University of Arkansas and the importance of information technology to business. Industry professionals advise the ITRI in our efforts to educate students about information technology careers. [Watch the video clips.](#)

- [Why should students pursue a career in information technology?](#)
- [Why is diversity in information technology a good business practice?](#)
- [Why is it important to be connected to the UofA and the ITRI?](#)
- [Why is information technology important to business?](#)



NCWIT Aspirations in Computing Award

The ITRI is an Academic Alliance member of the National Center for Women in Information Technology (NCWIT) and the Arkansas regional affiliate for the NCWIT Aspirations in Computing Award. This award honors high school women who are active and interested in computing and technology and encourages them to pursue their passions. ITRI received 29 completed applications which are currently under review by the NCWIT Aspirations national volunteer review team. The Arkansas affiliate winners will be announced in the

Spring and the award announcement will be April 11 from 6-8 p.m. on the University of Arkansas campus. [Learn more.](#)

Sam M. Walton College of Business & Information Systems Department News

Eric T. Bradford has accepted an invitation to sit on the Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Committee for the Sam M. Walton College of Business. This committee will review and recommend enhanced ideas for the faculty and staff diversity awards, assist with developing measures to determine the climate for diversity and inclusion in the Walton College, analyze the results and make recommendations to the dean, develop a value statement for diversity and inclusion, monitor progress on diversity and inclusion goals and make recommendations.

The Walton College has achieved record enrollments for the 2016-17 academic year with more than 6,000 students seeking a Walton degree. This fall we have 519 non-business minor students from the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences, Dale Bumpers College of Agriculture, Food and Life Sciences, College of Engineering, College of Education and Health Professions and Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design. The most popular business minors are general business, marketing and management.

Did you know the Walton College offers an interdisciplinary minor in business analytics? Analytics are currently used by many companies for applications ranging from strategic managements of data, daily operations, customer insights, and retail analytics which all assist in developing and maintaining a competitive edge. [Learn more.](#)

Ron Freeze, clinical associate professor in Information Systems is working with the ITRI to obtain data from our board member companies for his seminar in applied business analytics.

Personnel News

Dinesh Gauri, professor and Wal-Mart Chair in Marketing, will now also serve in a new position as the executive director of Retail Information for the Walton College.

Julie Stagner was hired in October as the assistant director of recruitment in the Graduate School of Business.

Jamie Kern was hired in the Undergraduate Programs Office as an academic counselor in October.

AIS - Association for Information Systems - News

The AIS IT Guiding Principles workshop series kicked off in November with a discussion on multi-speed model/agile transformation by Rachel Johnston from Walmart. Patrick Edmunds of Walmart presented on Business Intelligence &

Analytics. The next workshops will occur in February on Innovation & Digital Transformation and Rationalization & Modernization of Applications. Email ais@walton.uark.edu for more information.

ACM - Association for Computing Machinery - News

ACM members volunteer at monthly Lil Miss Coder, a group started by Morgan Johnston, a former Girls in IT participant and an NCWIT Aspirations in Computing Award recipient.

Coming up in the next quarter

[Business Forecast Luncheon, January 27, 2017](#)

[Business Career Fair, February 28, 2017](#)

[IT Day in Newport, Arkansas, March 3, 2017](#)



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