RESEARCH IMPACT REPORT

2026

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA® | Culverhouse College of Business

ACCREDITED

The Culverhouse College of Business has been continuously accredited by AACSB International since 1929. The Culverhouse School of Accountancy holds specialized AACSB accreditation in accounting, part of an elite group of less than 1% of business schools worldwide.

AACSB accreditation ensures that the Culverhouse College of Business provides a high-quality, mission-driven curriculum for our students that is assessed through a rigorous process, professional development for our faculty and staff, and accountability to our stakeholders.

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

It's an exciting time here at Culverhouse. Our latest Research and Impact Report reflects a college that continues to build a strong national reputation for meaningful, forward-thinking scholarship. This year, Culverhouse moved up to 80th place among American business schools in the University of Texas at Dallas' Naveen Jindal School of Management research rankings, and 86th in North America. It marks the fifth consecutive year we've earned a place among the top 100, a testament to the consistency, rigor, and relevance of our faculty's work.

That success begins and ends with our people. Faculty like Peter Harms, recently named a Distinguished Research Professor by The University of Alabama Board of Trustees, exemplify the kind of impactful, sustained scholarship that defines Culverhouse. His work exploring leadership and human behavior in high-stakes environments continues to shape both academic thought and real-world practice.

We are also proud to welcome Philip Ernst, an Endowed Shelby Distinguished Professor and newly named Fellow of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics. His recognition underscores the global caliber of research happening within our college.

At the same time, we are operating at a pivotal moment in business education.

The rapid rise of artificial intelligence is reshaping industries, and we see our role as deeply connected to that transformation. At Culverhouse, AI is not a distant concept. It's already embedded in our classrooms, our research, and our strategy. Through our Institute of Data and Analytics and its dedicated AI lab, along with a growing body of faculty research, we are helping define how these technologies are understood and applied. Equally important, we are preparing students to use these tools responsibly, emphasizing both technical fluency and ethical judgment.

Together, these efforts reflect that we are a college committed to advancing knowledge, preparing leaders, and meeting the moment.

Thanks, and Roll Tide!

Kay M. Palan

Dean Kay M. Palan
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Culverhouse College of Business
The University of Alabama

The rapid rise of artificial intelligence is reshaping industries, and we see our role as deeply connected to that transformation.

Why We Get Inventory Wrong and How to Get It Right

A convenience store manager scans the shelves and has a decision to make. Order more drinks before the weekend rush or play it safe and risk running out.

Too many, and cases sit unsold in the back. Too few, and customers walk out upset and empty-handed. It's a small decision, repeated thousands of times across businesses every day. According to research from the **Bidgood Chair in Economics at Culverhouse, Cary Deck**, it's one people routinely get wrong.

Deck's recent research paper, "Experience Minimizes the Pull-to-Center Effect in Newsvendor Decisions," published in *M&SOM-Manufacturing & Service Operations Management*, revisits a classic challenge in operations known as the "newsvendor problem." This is where businesses must decide how much inventory to order before knowing demand. For decades, researchers found decision-makers consistently miss the mark, failing to account for the asymmetric costs of having too much or too little inventory and instead ordering quantities close to average demand. This is a pattern called the "pull-to-center" effect. Even with experience, the mistake seemed to stick.

"What researchers have found in past laboratory studies is sellers tend to pull their inventory toward the mean of the demand distribution, toward the expected value of that distribution, even when that's not optimal," Deck said. "It might not be optimal because the cost of running out may be a lot bigger than the cost of excess inventory. Or vice versa."

Previous studies tried to understand why. Some pointed to psychological biases, like a reluctance to disappoint customers. Others suggested people were "chasing demand" and adjusting orders based on what happened last period.

Deck took a different approach.

What we did is say, "We're going to let decision makers pick an inventory level and we're going to play out the demand realization process very quickly," he said. "Every few seconds they're getting feedback about how good their strategy is, and then they can adjust that strategy at any point." In this "near-continuous time" environment, subjects in Culverhouse's The Interactive Decision Experiment (TIDE) Lab, which Deck runs, made inventory decisions and quickly saw the profit results, which in turn determined how much money the subject was paid. Instead of a few dozen trials, they experienced hundreds of outcomes in a short span. The difference was striking.

"Our subjects started making more optimal decisions, which is something people had not observed in past newsvendor experiments," Deck said.

The results suggest the pull-to-center problem isn't as permanent as once thought. Instead of being a built-in quirk in how people think about the task, it may just come from not having enough chances to learn in a difficult situation. In slower experiments, a single lucky outcome could reinforce a bad strategy, while a good decision might appear flawed after an unlucky draw. But with rapid, repeated feedback, those distortions fade. Participants begin to see patterns, understand trade-offs, and adjust accordingly.

The implications stretch across industries. From major retailers to neighborhood stores, inventory decisions shape profits and customer satisfaction alike. More broadly, the study highlights the importance of how people learn on the job.

"What we really show is that the way people are going to behave is going to depend on the experience and the feedback that they've had with that setting," Deck said. For managers staring at half-empty or overstocked shelves, that insight is practical. Better decisions may not require better instincts, just better opportunities to learn.

CARY DECK

Position: Bidgood Chair in Economics, Professor of Economics, Director of The Interactive Decision Experiment Laboratory (TIDE Lab)
Education: BS University of Alabama, MS University of Wisconsin, PhD University of Arizona
Key points/interests in your field: Experimental economics, information aggregation in markets, risk attitudes, and mechanism design
Teaching focus: Experimental economics, behavioral economics, microeconomics

Honors and accomplishments: Fulbright Scholar at the University of Economics in the Czech Republic, the Distinguished Rasmuson Chair of Economics at the University of Alaska, and an Erskine Fellow at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. Research Affiliate at the Economic Science Institute at Chapman University and at the Bratislava Behavioral and Experimental Economics Research Lab at the University of Economics in Bratislava.

Why is your field of study important or relevant?
The methodology of experimental economics affords the opportunity to test economic theories and trial run proposed policies and institutions. This enables society to make more informed decisions and better anticipate the economic effects of economic design choices.

How did you get involved in this field of study?
I found my undergraduate economics courses fascinating because they provided a framework to understand strategic behavior and market forces. In graduate school, I worked with Vernon Smith (2002 Nobel Laureate for founding the field of experimental economics) and other prominent experimental economists on a wide variety of projects. Once I saw the potential of laboratory experiments to create replicable microeconomies in which one can study human behavior, I was hooked.

Biggest surprise you have found as it relates to your research?
How subtle changes in an economic setting can generate dramatic changes in behavior.

When the Tax Man Cometh, Audit Risk Shrinks

Auditors play a critical role in capital markets by providing assurance that public company financial statements are reliable. Historically, however, audit reports provided little insight into how auditors assessed risk.

That changed with expanded audit reporting requirements, which mandate disclosure of especially challenging areas of the audit—known in Europe as Key Audit Matters (KAMs).

In the United States, auditors report something similar called Critical Audit Matters (CAMs). Both KAMs and CAMs are designed to provide greater transparency into the audit process and the areas auditors view as involving heightened risk.

The topic of KAMs is at the heart of a research paper from **Assistant Professor of Accounting Jess Filosa**, "Does Tax Enforcement Inform Auditors Risk Assessment? Evidence from KAMs," published in *Contemporary Accounting Research*. The study examines whether auditors incorporate external regulatory oversight, specifically tax enforcement, into their risk assessments, as revealed through KAM disclosures.

"KAMs are a relatively recent regulatory development where, for the first time, auditors have to publicly explain areas of the audit that involve heightened risk or complexity," Filosa said. "Prior to this, audit reports were largely pass-fail opinions. Now, we can see more clearly how auditors are identifying and communicating risk."

While auditors assess financial reporting risk, tax authorities also examine corporate reporting as part of their enforcement efforts. This overlap raises an important question: Do auditors adjust their risk assessments when tax enforcement is stronger?

"Tax authorities and auditors are both scrutinizing corporate reporting, though from different perspectives," Filosa said.

"We wanted to know whether auditors view strong tax enforcement as a complementary form of oversight."

Using cross-country variation in tax enforcement across European countries, Filosa and her co-authors find that auditors report fewer KAMs in countries with stronger tax enforcement, consistent with auditors perceiving lower residual risk. The effect is strongest in high book-tax conformity countries, where financial and tax reporting rules are closely aligned, and among auditors exposed to more complex tax environments.

KAMs are a relatively recent regulatory development where, for the first time, auditors have to publicly explain areas of the audit that involve heightened risk or complexity.

"Essentially, we examined when tax enforcement should matter more," she said. "And that's exactly what we found. Auditors incorporate tax enforcement into their risk assessments when the oversight is more directly relevant to the financial statements."

Because expanded audit reporting requirements are still relatively new, both internationally and in the U.S., the research provides timely evidence to regulators and stakeholders about how these disclosures function in practice.

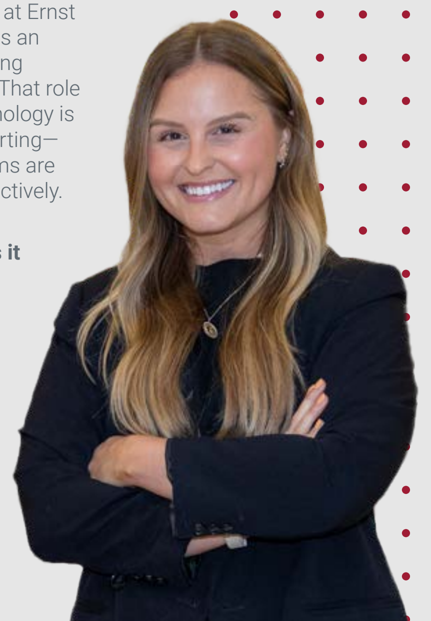
JESS FILOSA

Position: Assistant Professor of Accounting
Education: BS Bowling Green State University; MSA University of Virginia; PhD Virginia Tech
Key points/interests in your field: Auditing, including risks that arise due to technology and other macro-economic factors
Teaching focus: Accounting information systems
Honors and accomplishments: AICPA Foundation William (Bill) Ezzell Scholarship; AAA Outstanding Auditing Dissertation Award; Culverhouse Pedagogical Enhancement Grant (PEG); KPMG Access to Audit Personnel Grant; Deloitte Foundation Doctoral Fellow; VSCPA Graduate Scholarship

Why is your field of study important or relevant?
My research focuses broadly on how auditors assess risk in an environment increasingly shaped by technology and external oversight. As emerging tools like data analytics and generative AI transform how firms operate, auditors must adapt their judgment processes to new types of information and new forms of risk. Because auditing plays a foundational role in capital markets by supporting investor confidence, understanding how auditors integrate technological innovation alongside regulatory change is critical to maintaining audit quality and public trust.

How did you get involved in this field of study?
My professional experience strongly shapes my research agenda. I worked for three years at Ernst & Young in the Richmond, Virginia office as an IT auditor, where I focused on SOC reporting engagements and examining IT controls. That role gave me a close look at how central technology is to company operations and financial reporting—and how much risk can arise when systems are complex or controls are not designed effectively.

What's the biggest surprise you found as it relates to your research?
What has surprised me most is how collaborative the accounting academy truly is. My recent CAR paper brought together tax and audit researchers from multiple universities, and the result was far richer than anything any one of us could have produced alone. It reinforced the value of collaboration and learning from others.



Avoiding Blame and Breaches

No One Wants to Be "That Person"

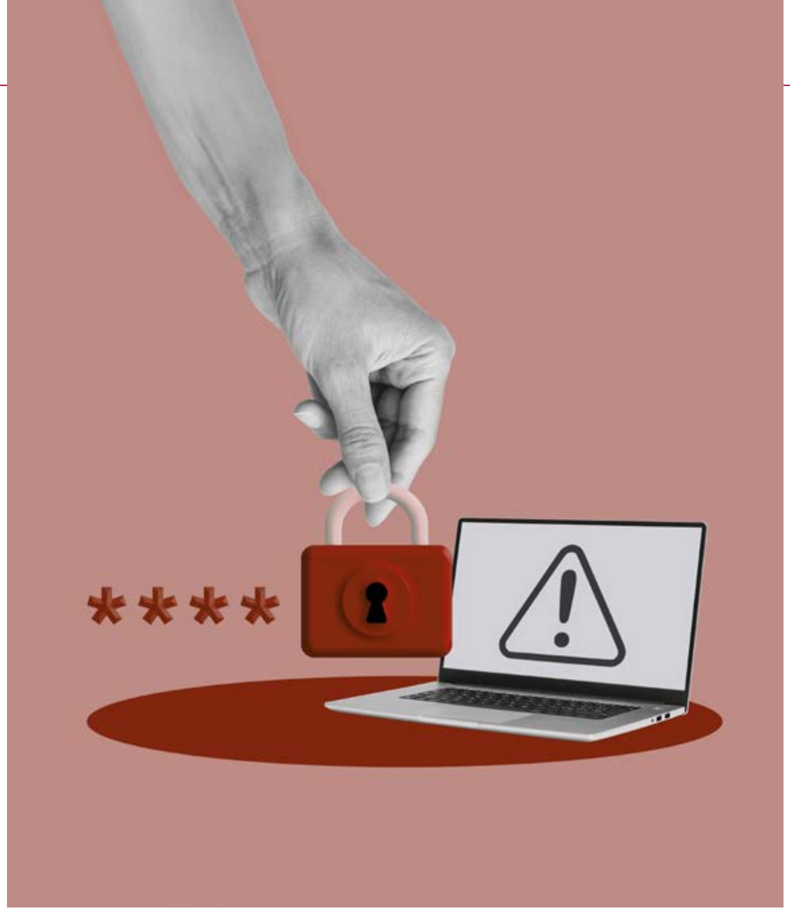
The email from IT hits your inbox. "Suspicious activity detected, change your password immediately." Panic hits. Did the whole office get this message or is this directed at you? What triggered it?

That's a normal response. The reason is because, "[Workers are] afraid of being sanctioned. They're afraid of being called out informally, socially ostracized because they did something that affected their community, their group, or their department," said **Allen Johnston, the Hewson Professor of Cybersecurity** at Culverhouse.

The instinct to avoid being that person whose lapse slows everyone down sits at the heart of Johnston's research. In his *Journal of the Association for Information Systems* research paper, "Understanding Employees' Security Behavior from a Goal Systems Perspective," Johnston and his coauthors examine why workers lock screens, update software, and reset passwords. Is fear really the whole story or is it just the most obvious part of it?

Johnston explored this idea at a research session when he and the group he was with noticed almost all the research being presented covered the same theme. "Employees are doing security behaviors because they're afraid of being punished," Johnston said. "They're afraid of being sanctioned. They're afraid of being called out informally, socially ostracized because they did something that affected their community, their group, or their department."

Walking out of the conference, the group continued



Employees are afraid of being called out informally, socially ostracized because they did something that affected their community, their group or their department.

discussing the issue and thought there's got to be more to it. They wondered whether security might be tied to something more positive, like people's own work goals. "What if security behaviors were integrated into your job, your performance of your job, or your goals?" Johnston said.

What they found went beyond avoiding discipline. Workers talked about wanting to perform well, avoid being blamed for mistakes, and to simply do the right thing for coworkers. "Somebody forgets to log out. Just do right. I'm going to log out for them. No big deal. I'm just doing it because I can be a good citizen," Johnston said as an example of wanting to do the right thing.

Another strong theme was not wanting to be associated with a breach at all. A colleague introduced a German term "Ubekannt," which Johnston summarized as "not being associated or not being known for something." In other words, someone who doesn't want to be "that person" who people point as the reason for massive security violations.

After identifying these motivations qualitatively, the next step was to test them. Some ideas held up more than others. "Performance was the primary," Johnston said, meaning employees were most motivated when security helped them do their jobs well. Avoiding blame was also powerful, though slightly weaker. Surprisingly, the "good citizen" impulse did not show up as strongly in the data. Still, Johnston cautioned, "I don't think our study definitively establishes that it's not a positive driver…I'm going to chalk it off as an exception rather than a rule."

The most important takeaway is practical. Organizations, Johnston said, should rethink how they frame security training. "They need to think about security, as not solely a compliance issue, but also a capability issue," he explained. "It becomes a competency issue as opposed to merely a compliance issue."

That shift shows up in simple tools like password managers. Johnston pointed out that the University provides one yet few people use it. Encouraging employees to adopt those tools, he argued, lets security support productivity rather than interrupt it. As he put it, "if you have a separate password for every website and then you keep it in a password manager you don't deal with [trying to remember them all]."

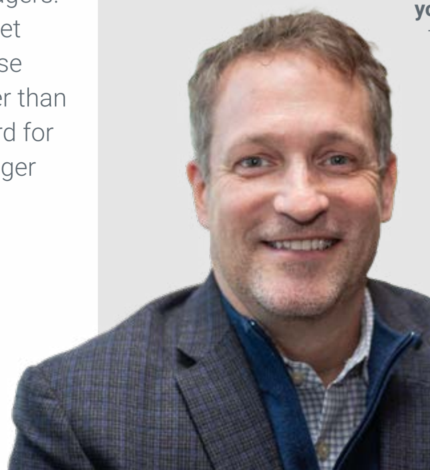
ALLEN JOHNSTON

Position: Hewson Professor of Cybersecurity
Education: BS Louisiana State University, MSIS Mississippi State University, PhD Mississippi State University
Key points/interests in your field: Behavioral cybersecurity, focused primarily on persuasive security mechanisms, deception, sanction responses, and policy compliance motivation/behaviors
Teaching focus: Organizational cybersecurity and enterprise networks and security
Honors and accomplishments: Named the Hewson Professorship of Cybersecurity

Why is your field of study important or relevant?
Modern organizations fundamentally depend on digital systems, yet many of their greatest risks come not from technology failures, but from how people interact with those systems. Cybersecurity is no longer just a technical problem; it is an organizational, behavioral, and governance challenge. My research helps explain why well-designed security policies, tools, and controls often fail in practice, and how organizational environments, leadership practices, and emerging technologies like AI shape security behavior. By grounding cybersecurity in real organizational contexts, this work supports more effective, sustainable approaches to managing digital risk.

How did you get involved in this field of study?
I became involved in this field through an early interest in how organizations use technology to coordinate complex work. As I studied information systems, I became increasingly drawn to security issues because they revealed a gap between formal controls and everyday practice. I saw that many security failures were not caused by ignorance or malice, but by conflicting incentives, workload pressures, and ambiguous expectations. This mirrored my observed experiences in my professional career, and led me to focus on cybersecurity as a social and organizational phenomenon, rather than simply a technical one.

Biggest surprise you have found as it relates to your research?
The biggest surprise in my research has been how consistently well-intentioned professionals violate security policies, not because they do not care about security, but because they are just trying to do their jobs. Across studies, I have found that employees, managers, and even security professionals often face structural pressures that make strict compliance unrealistic.



In Private Markets, Staying Quiet Raises More Capital

For nearly a century, companies raising money from investors were not allowed to advertise. The rules go back to the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, created in the wake of the Great Depression. The goal was to protect investors by requiring clear financial information.

That changed in 2012 when Congress passed the Jumpstart Our Business Startups Act (JOBS Act), signed by President Barack Obama. Title II of the law allows for private companies to advertise their investment offerings, both debt and equity, to potential investors, often online.

The idea sounded logical. If more people see the opportunity, more people might invest. "You would think that advertising would broaden the market, and firms would be able to raise more capital," said **Professor of Finance Anup Agrawal**.

The data showed something different. Agrawal's recent paper, "Does General Solicitation Improve Access to Equity Capital for Small Businesses? Evidence from the JOBS Act," published in the *Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis*, compares companies that advertise their private offerings with those that do not. He, along with co-author Yuree Lim of Texas Woman's University, looked at five measures of success:

- How much money the company raises
- The extent to which the fundraising effort succeeds
- Whether the company eventually gets venture capital funding
- How many rounds of venture capital funding it receives
- Whether the company eventually goes public or gets bought out

On every measure, companies that advertise perform worse. "We find that if they choose not to advertise… they do better in every dimension," Agrawal said.

Why would advertising hurt? Agrawal says it appears to send the wrong signal. Investors might think if this deal was so good, it wouldn't need to be advertised in the first place.

Private investing is already risky and many of these companies do not have long financial histories. As Agrawal puts it, investors are sometimes giving money to "a black box." Because of that risk, investors generally prefer to back local startups they can keep tabs on. Online ads may reach more people but carry less personal connection and trust.

Plus, firms that advertise their offering need to verify that each investor who invests in the offering is "accredited" per the SEC's definition. Such verification is a cumbersome and expensive process.

There are two exceptions. Advertising seems to help new companies entering this funding market for the first time, and firms that use registered brokers because they, "owe a fiduciary duty to their investors," Agrawal said. This adds credibility. Title II took effect Sept. 30, 2013. Agrawal said companies tried it right away and then it tapered off. Most firms raising private capital still choose not to advertise.

The findings are surprising. Advertising usually helps sell products but in private investing it may do the opposite. Sometimes, saying less says more.

ANUP AGRAWAL

Position: Professor and Powell Chair of Finance
Education: BS Sydenham College, MBA XLRI Jamshedpur (India), PhD University of Pittsburgh
Key points/interests in your field: Corporate finance, corporate governance, executive compensation, mergers & acquisitions, corporate fraud, investments, insider trading, security analysts
Teaching focus: Corporate finance, investments
Honors and accomplishments: Named the Powell Chair of Finance

Why is your field of study important or relevant?
Jumpstart Our Business Startups (JOBS) Act of 2012 was adopted to help startup firms raise capital from a broader investor pool. Under Title II of the JOBS Act, which became effective September 23, 2013, small businesses can advertise and sell securities in private placements via general solicitation, such as advertising in newspapers or on the internet, as long as the sales are made only to accredited investors, verified using a detailed process. Empirical evidence on Title II's effect on small business funding is quite limited. This paper aims to fill this gap by examining how Title II of the JOBS Act affects the financing of small businesses by allowing them to publicly advertise their securities offerings.

Biggest surprise you have found as it relates to your research?
Usually, we think of advertising as having a positive effect on sales because it informs consumers about a product or service that they may not be aware of. But in the investment context, a firm's need to resort to advertising a new issue can send a negative signal about the quality of the offering. What is surprising is that even after we control for this selection effect in a variety of ways, advertising still seems to have a negative effect on various outcomes for a startup firm: success of the financing itself, its ability to get VC funding as an intermediate outcome, and the early-stage investors' ability to eventually exit successfully via IPO or acquisition. But advertising does appear to help new entrants in the private placement market and offerings that use registered brokers, who have a fiduciary duty to their customers and can serve a certification role about the quality of the issue. So, there is partial evidence of success of this new law.

Detecting Cystic Fibrosis Earlier, Without Breaking the Bank

In a testing lab, tiny blood samples sit in neat rows, each one representing a newborn baby. Most of those babies are healthy. But hidden among them could be a child with cystic fibrosis, a serious genetic disease that can cause life-threatening lung and digestive issues if not treated early.

Newborn screening for cystic fibrosis, or CF, is "a state-level public health initiative that is universal across the U.S. and many other nations," said **Doug Bish, Professor of Operations Management** at Culverhouse. "Our goal is to improve it."

Doug and **Ebru Bish, also a Professor of Operations Management**, recently published a paper, "Improving Cystic Fibrosis Screening Through a Novel Testing Design," in *Production and Operations Management*. Their research introduces a data-driven framework for a more accurate and efficient CF newborn screening protocol, specifically designed to navigate the complex economic and logistical constraints faced by individual state health departments.

The challenge begins with cost. "Because comprehensive genetic testing is both high-cost and capacity-constrained, newborn screening must follow a tiered approach. Each state starts its CF protocol with an inexpensive biochemical test that measures immunoreactive trypsinogen (IRT) levels," Doug explained.

Today, all babies receive this low-cost IRT test. Only babies with elevated IRT levels (based on a certain cutoff) move on to second-tier genetic testing, which can look for many of the over 1,000 known genetic variants that can cause CF. The problem is, the IRT test has its limits. "When used as the first-tier test in the screening protocol, the IRT biomarker is not perfectly reliable on its own, and risks missing CF cases," Ebru noted.

"A state's clinical infrastructure and budget typically only allow for comprehensive genetic testing for only about 5% of their newborn population, or less, which creates a bottleneck in the screening process," Ebru added. "Our research provides a data-driven framework to ensure that this 5% is comprised of the highest-risk infants. By optimizing the selection criteria for the second tier of testing, we can maximize the detection of CF cases within the specific laboratory and budgetary limits of any given state."

Their innovative solution? "Adding a small-panel low-cost genetic test to the first tier of the protocol, which targets a few high-prevalence variants," Doug explained.

About 70% of CF cases are linked to just one or two common variants. "While a limited genetic panel lacks the breadth to serve as a standalone screening tool, it becomes incredibly powerful when integrated with the existing IRT biochemical test," Doug noted. "By combining these two distinct data points, the protein levels from the blood and the presence or absence of common genetic variants, we can significantly increase the positive predictive value. This means we can more accurately identify which infants should undergo comprehensive genetic testing, reducing both false-positives and missed diagnoses."

Using data from states like New York and California, they tested how different combinations of IRT cutoffs and limited genetic panels would perform. One thing surprised Ebru along the way. "I was struck by the lack of standardization in CF screening processes across the country," Ebru noted. "Even for the standard IRT test, cutoff points and screening protocols vary from state to state. Currently, many of these 'rules' lack a clear, data-driven justification."

Ebru acknowledges that because states differ in their demographics and laboratory capacities, a single national standard might not be the answer. "States have unique resource constraints, so they don't necessarily need identical systems, but they do need a rigorous framework to guide their policy choices," she explained.

"Our research introduces a decision support system that allows policymakers to intentionally balance screening efficiency with accuracy. We are moving away from arbitrary rules toward an optimized approach where the choice of a cutoff and screening protocol are backed by mathematical evidence," Doug added.

At its core, this research leverages data-driven optimization to solve a key public health challenge: making smarter, data-driven decisions within the reality of limited medical resources. By optimizing the CF screening process, the study ensures that more infants with cystic fibrosis are identified at the earliest possible stage, providing a vital window for medical intervention when treatment can make the most difference in a child's life.

DR. EBRU BISH

Position: Professor of Operations Management
Education: BS and MS Bogazici University (Turkey), PhD Northwestern University
Key points/interests in your field: Data science, operations research, and decision-making under uncertainty, with focus on public health screening, healthcare system design and management
Teaching focus: Inventory, supply chain, and operations management; data analytics; health systems engineering; operations research
Honors and accomplishments: Reese Phifer Fellow, INFORMS Health Applications Society Distinguished Speaker Award, INFORMS Senior Member, INFORMS Seth Bonder Scholarship in Applied Operations Research in Health Services, IISE Pritsker Doctoral Dissertation Award

DR. DOUG BISH

Position: Professor of Operations Management
Education: BS California Polytechnic State University, MS Northwestern University, PhD Virginia Tech
Key points/interests in your field: Mathematical modeling, data analytics, and optimization, with focus on public health screening, disaster management and planning, and humanitarian supply chains
Teaching focus: Supply chain management; Logistics; Operations management; Optimization
Honors and accomplishments: National Science Foundation CAREER Award; INFORMS Pierskalla Award for the Best Paper in Healthcare, INFORMS PSOR Best Paper Award, IISE Transactions Best Applications Paper Award, INFORMS Seth Bonder Scholarship in Applied Operations Research in Health Services, IISE Pritsker Doctoral Dissertation Award

Why is your field of study important or relevant?
Our field addresses a critical challenge in public health: how to effectively screen large populations for infectious diseases and genetic disorders with limited testing resources. From safeguarding blood supplies against transfusion-transmittable infections like HIV and hepatitis, to identifying genetic disorders in newborns, to surveillance of emerging diseases like COVID-19, accurate detection is vital for early intervention and improved health outcomes.

How did you get involved in this field of study?
We were drawn to this field through our background in mathematical modeling, data analytics, and optimization, coupled with a commitment to solving problems with significant societal benefits. Public health emerged as an ideal area where these mathematical tools could make a tangible difference by addressing the tremendous need for system optimization. We specifically targeted public health screening because we saw substantial opportunities to enhance efficiency.

Biggest surprise you have found as it relates to your research?
One of the biggest surprises in our research has been discovering just how much variation exists in testing protocols across different organizations screening for the same diseases.

Fighting Fire with Local Knowledge

In the American West, wildfire seasons keep getting longer, hotter, and more destructive. But according to University of Alabama **Management Assistant Professor Devin Stein**, the key to reducing those losses may not lie with federal agencies, private fire crews, or insurance companies.

Instead, it may come from neighbors, who are ordinary people armed with local knowledge and a willingness to work together.

Stein's new research, "Distributed Knowledge and the Creation of Public Value: Community-Based Organizing and Wildfire Management in Northern California," published in *Academy of Management Journal*, is drawn from a 20-year study of wildfire-prone communities in Northern California. It shows when residents get involved in prevention efforts, property losses go down. It's not because communities fight the fires themselves, but because they understand something that outside experts often don't: the everyday details of where they live.

Stein began this project after spending years out in the American West and watching wildfires escalate. "You couldn't point to any one actor—government, private firefighting, insurance—and say they were solving the problem," he said. "We expanded the lens to look at communities as a whole."

Historical data was gathered from 1998 to 2018, a period when modern community-led fire prevention started to take shape. The research tracks the spread of community fire plans, the strategies created by residents to reduce fuel, prepare for emergencies, and share crucial information. The clearest measure of success? Whether homes burned.

"Property loss is an objective indicator," Stein said. "If houses aren't burning down, something's working."

What stood out in the data wasn't just the physical work like clearing brush, organizing "chipper days," or creating firebreaks, but the hyper-local knowledge communities had. Residents knew the neighbor who always launched fireworks, the hidden homeless encampment up the canyon, the private roads chained behind gates, and even which homes had swimming pools firefighters could use as emergency water sources. None of this shows up in a federal database.

Stein cites one striking example from the Mattole Valley in Northern California. Several small communities there teamed up to create a detailed "firefighters' atlas" listing back roads, unsafe bridges, reliable water sources, and more. "It helped firefighters respond faster and smarter when a fire hit," he said.

Still, maintaining community engagement is hard. Many wildfire-prone areas are rural and aging, with fewer young volunteers able to devote time. But small populations can also be an advantage. Residents know one another, making it easier to organize.

Stein believes the lessons extend far beyond wildfires. Tornado-prone Alabama, hurricane-tested Louisiana, even communities grappling with healthcare gaps or school needs all benefit when locals stay engaged and share what they know.

"We assume information is easily accessible today," Stein said. "But a lot of it isn't. Knowing your neighbors still matters."

His takeaway is simple. Government agencies should work with communities long before disaster hits, not just deliver one-size-fits-all plans. When professionals combine their expertise with the intimate knowledge of the people who live there, response becomes faster, smarter, and more effective.

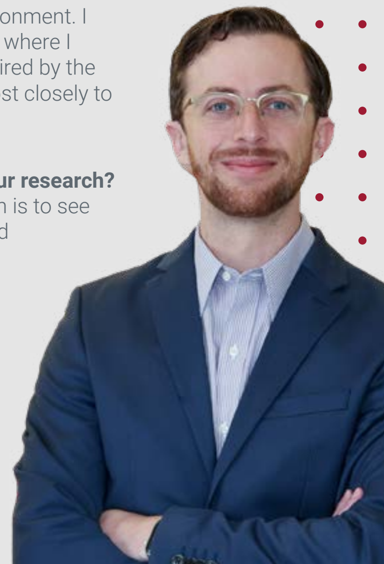
DEVIN STEIN

Position: Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship
Education: BS Utah State University, MS Utah State University, PhD Syracuse University
Key points/interests in the field: Public-private collaborations; sustainable organizing; community entrepreneurship; collaborative governance; stakeholder dynamics
Teaching focus: Entrepreneurship, strategic management, non-market strategies
Honors and accomplishments: Associate with the Alabama Entrepreneurship Institute; Research fellow with the Institute for an Entrepreneurial Society at Syracuse University; former Smith Fellow with the Institute for Humane Studies and Bastiat Fellow with the Mercatus Center

Why is your field of study important or relevant?
The intersection of entrepreneurship and strategic management are incredibly important and relevant given their focuses on individual agency and the power of purpose and good decision making.
There are very few other fields of study that are as well-equipped to drive change and impact in the real world directly. Entrepreneurs, businesses, and other organizations in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors are among the most valuable tools we have to create meaningful change and shape the world we want to live in. Every societal accomplishment is the direct result of successful ways of organizing human activity.

How did you get involved in this field of study?
I have always been strongly motivated to do work that drives meaningful impact both for society and for the environment. I began my career in public policy assuming that was where I could create the largest impact, but was deeply inspired by the actions of individuals and organizations working most closely to the issues we were trying to address.

Biggest surprise you have found as it relates to your research?
The biggest surprise I've encountered in my research is to see how often positive outcomes are actually unintended consequences of pursuing other motivations.
Not everyone needs to be a self-declared "social entrepreneur" to generate social impact. There are many cases where organizations do good for the world simply by focusing on their own interests, so long as those interests are congruent with the values of society at large.



Reading Between the Data

On any given day, people leave behind patterns without realizing it. It could be the order of websites they visit, the sequence of life events they experience, or even the way they structure sentences when they write. To most of us, it's just noise. To **Professor of Statistics Volodymyr Melnykov**, it's a puzzle waiting to be solved.

Melnykov studies how to group similar patterns together, a process known as clustering. His recent study, "Model based clustering of multivariate categorical sequences," was published in *Pattern Recognition*. He tackles how to make sense of data that isn't made up of neat, clean numbers, a problem many traditional clustering methods struggle with.

"Statistics is about providing inference based on samples," Melnykov said. "Samples are drawn from populations. But in reality, populations are much more complicated than what we usually cover in our introductory statistics courses. They may consist of various subpopulations representing different ages, health conditions, lifestyles, and other characteristics. Clusters can be viewed as samples from these subpopulations."

Clustering helps researchers find hidden groups within data. Most existing clustering methods work well when the data is numerical, such as height, weight, or speed. But much of the real world is made up of categories like job titles, political parties, or life events like marriage, graduation, or illness.

The challenge becomes even more complex when those categories appear as sequences over time. For example, a person's life is not just a list of events, but an ordered story. Graduating before starting a career often leads to a very different path than working first and returning to school later.

"Sequence has to be preserved," he said of sequence data. "The very specific order… tells a lot about the individual. It's not just what happened, but when it happened and what came before or after. If you change the order, you change the interpretation."

Melnykov's research goes a step further by looking at multiple sequences at once. Instead of just tracking one aspect of a person's life, like health, his method can analyze several dimensions simultaneously, such as health, employment, and financial status. "Each sequence… can impact each other," he said. "If a person got sick… probably financial well-being will be also affected."

His model captures these interactions and uses them to better group similar patterns together. The result is a realistic and flexible way to analyze complex data.

One example from the paper involves analyzing writing styles. By breaking text into sequences such as parts of speech or word length researchers can compare authors in surprising ways. "You can actually represent the style of a writer using these data," Melnykov said.

That approach can even help answer long-standing debates. Melnykov and co-author Yingying Zhang explored whether the Russian novel "And Quiet Flows the Don" was written by someone other than Mikhail Sholokhov, who won the Nobel Prize in Literature for the book, by comparing stylistic patterns.

But the reach of this work doesn't stop at literature. Melnykov points to projects involving climate science, ancient philosophy, and even volcanic eruptions by using similar statistical ideas.

At its core, his research reflects that real-world data is messy, layered and full of hidden structure. By finding better ways to uncover those patterns, Melnykov hopes to help researchers across fields make sense of the stories buried inside it.

VOLODYMYR MELNYKOV

Position: Professor of Statistics
Education: BS Kharkiv State Polytechnic University (Ukraine), MS Bowling Green State University, PhD Iowa State University
Key points/interests in your field: Cluster analysis and classification, multivariate analysis
Honors and accomplishments: Rogers-Spivey Faculty Fellow, ISI Elected Member, President-Elect of The Classification Society (North America), Associate Editor for Journal of Classification and Sankhya: Series B

Why is your field of study important or relevant?
Every time we analyze data, it's never homogeneous. There are these subpopulations. There is always variability between data. There are groups of data within samples. If we want to analyze data properly, we need to identify those groups. This is what model-based clustering is about, basically. It's about incorporating the idea of heterogeneity in the analysis of data. Without this, you assume that your data are homogeneous. But in real life, when you analyze the real data, it's never the case.

How did you get involved in this field of study?
When I went to Iowa State, I had experience in programming, quite extensive experience from my undergraduate degree, and from my master's degree I had experience in applied statistics. My area is computational statistics, broadly defined, and that was a natural match.

Biggest surprise you have found as it relates to your research? I think the biggest surprise is with an appropriate model you can resolve lots of real life puzzles or problems. You can address anything. I have papers about stylometry (text mining) and the style of writing, about physics and mass spectrometry, about proteomics. Yes, you can apply it to absolutely any field. I think the overall surprise to me was how successfully you can address real life questions. I'm still surprised.

Patience Is Sweet

How Sustainability Makes Waiting Easier

It's hard to resist a slice of chocolate cake, especially when it's sitting in front of you. It looks delicious and you want it right now. That simple image of a cake within arm's reach captures something powerful about consumer behavior.

This idea of how subtle cues shape our decisions is at the heart of **Assistant Professor of Marketing Rafay Siddiqui's** latest research. But instead of dessert, he's studying sustainability.

In a new paper, "Sustainability Cues Can Delay Consumption," published in the *Journal of Consumer Research*, Siddiqui and his co-authors examine how sustainability cues like labels, messages, or even articles that highlight environmental responsibility, influence the way consumers make trade-offs over time.

The project grew out of a simple question.

"What we wanted to look at was when consumers encounter sustainability related information in the environment, which may serve as a sustainability cue, what impact does that have on their decisions?" Siddiqui said.

Sustainability messaging can nudge people toward greener products, but Siddiqui wanted to know whether it affects "intertemporal choice," which is the struggle between getting something smaller now or something better later.

He points to the example of paying extra for overnight shipping versus waiting a week for free delivery. Or buying the current smartphone model today versus waiting three months for an upgraded version at the same price.

In the research, Siddiqui and his colleagues found sustainability cues made people more willing to wait for the larger, later reward because sustainability makes people think about the future.

"When people think about sustainability, it leads to a shift in temporal focus. What does sustainability mean? It means we want to protect the environment for the future. We want to prevent deterioration of the environment, or we want to help future generations," he said.

That future-focused mindset changes how time feels. Siddiqui said encountering that sustainability cue, at least momentarily, while making product decisions, can shift temporal focus relatively more toward the future. This has an effect on time perception, because the more we think toward the future, the more a given unit of time starts to feel shorter.

In other words, when temporal focus shifts toward the future, a seven-day wait doesn't feel quite as long. Three months until the new phone launches seem more manageable. As the perceived wait time shrinks, patience grows.

The effect does not appear among consumers who already hold strong environmental values. For such consumers, sustainability cues don't meaningfully shift their time perspective because they're already thinking that way.

For everyday consumers, Siddiqui says awareness is key. "Being aware about how encountering sustainability information might affect decisions may help consumers make more informed decisions," he said.

In many cases, that extra patience is a good thing. Waiting for free shipping or a better product can benefit consumers financially. "In most cases, traditionally, patience has been treated as a virtue," he said.

But for companies, the findings are more complex. A firm trying to clear out inventory might unintentionally encourage customers to wait for the next model by emphasizing sustainability. The solution for companies could be to frame sustainability as an urgent, present-day issue to keep consumers focused on the present rather than the distant future.

Much like the cake on the table, small cues in our environment quietly shape what we choose and how long we're willing to wait for something better.

RAFAY SIDDIQUI

Position: Assistant Professor of Marketing
Education: BSc (honors) Lahore University of Management Sciences (India), MBA University of Alabama, PhD University of South Carolina
Key points/interests in your field: Consumer judgment and decision making, particularly related to time: time perception, self-control, patience
Teaching focus: Marketing research, consumer behavior

Why is your field of study important or relevant?
Studying consumer behavior allows us to understand what the underlying drivers of consumer decisions are, and consequently what situational and chronic factors can affect a consumer's decision. A simple example is that of choosing between an immediate reward (e.g., buy a product right now) and a delayed (but better) reward (e.g., wait to buy the same product in 2 months when it goes on sale). Studying consumer behavior allows us to learn the factors that may push the consumer either towards the immediate reward, or towards the better delayed reward, which is informative for both the marketer and also the consumer as such decisions can affect a consumer's well-being.

How did you get involved in this field of study?
I was interested in learning how people make decisions. That motivated me to pursue a PhD in Marketing with a focus on consumer behavior.

Biggest surprise you have found as it relates to your research?
I am not sure if I would call it a surprise, but the most fascinating thing I have found is how susceptible we are as individuals to small changes in the framing of information. For instance, representing a wait time as either "30 days" or "one month" can affect perceptions of how long the wait feels, and consequently affect people's decisions, even though objectively 30 days should be perceived the same as one month.

From London to Tuscaloosa

Philip Ernst's move to The University of Alabama marks the beginning of a new chapter in an already accomplished career.

Ernst, an Institute of Mathematics Statistics Fellow and an Endowed Shelby Distinguished Professor, joined the Culverhouse College of Business as a professor of statistics in fall of 2025. He brings with him a rare blend of experiences across business, engineering, and the mathematical sciences.

He most recently taught at Imperial College London, one of the world's leading research universities, where he was a faculty member in the Department of Mathematics. Previously, he rose through the academic ranks at Rice University, from assistant professor to full professor in statistics within the university's George R. Brown School of Engineering.

That varied path, beginning with a PhD in statistics at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, has shaped the kind of work Ernst pursues today. He describes himself as an "applied probabilist," someone who develops mathematical theory to tackle real-world problems. His research lies at the crossroads of probability, statistics, data science, and operations research, fields that different universities often house in different schools. "Depending on the institution, people like me might be in engineering, natural sciences, or business," Ernst said. "At Alabama, I'm excited to be back in a business school setting, where the connections to operations management and decision-making are especially strong."

That excitement is matched by his enthusiasm for what lies ahead at Alabama. The Shelby Chair provides him a platform and a responsibility to help elevate the research profile of Culverhouse and the University at large. "Alabama becoming an R1 university was a huge milestone," Ernst said. "Now the challenge is raising our level within that designation and improving our graduate programs, attracting outstanding Ph.D. students, and making this a destination for top research."

The appeal for Ernst to teach at Alabama is the opportunity to contribute to growth. "At a place like Imperial, you're surrounded by excellence, but there are limits to how much more you can improve it," he said. "Here, I see the chance to help build something, to raise the rankings, recruit outstanding students, and create the kind of environment that people across the country and around the world will take notice of."

Teaching and mentoring are central to that vision. Several of his doctoral students from Rice are now thriving in their own academic careers, a track record he hopes to continue at Alabama. "Recruiting top PhD students is a lot like football recruiting," he said. "The better your program's reputation, the easier it becomes to attract the very best."

Collaboration is another priority. Ernst hopes to strengthen ties between the statistics and operations management programs within Culverhouse, while also forging connections with faculty across campus. He is already scheduled to speak at "Math Across the Tides," a university-wide seminar series hosted by the Department of Mathematics and sees such opportunities as a way to spark cross-disciplinary work.

Alabama becoming an R1 university was a huge milestone. Now the challenge is raising our level within that designation and improving our graduate programs, attracting outstanding Ph.D. students, and making this a destination for top research.

The move to Alabama is also a personal one. Ernst and his wife, both New Yorkers by birth, are settling into life in Birmingham with their young daughter. "We wanted a place with great quality of life, a strong community, and opportunities for growth," he says. "Alabama checked all the boxes."

Ernst is looking ahead and his ambitions for Culverhouse are big. "When people think of leading research universities in the South, I want Alabama to be on that list," he said. "That's the goal. And I'm excited to get to work."

CULVERHOUSE HIGHLIGHTS

Peter Harms Receives Top UA Researcher Designation

Peter Harms

Peter Harms has spent his career studying what drives people, especially in complex, high-stakes environments. Now, that work has earned **Harms, who is the Frank Schultz Professor at Culverhouse**, one of The University of Alabama's highest honors, the Distinguished Research Professor designation.

Bestowed by the UA Board of Trustees, the designation recognizes faculty whose scholarship has brought distinction to the University through sustained excellence in their discipline.

For Harms, the honor is less about one big achievement. "It is about sustained, big picture impact," he said. "It's not for a single paper or something like that, more about the entire body of work. It's a nice acknowledgment of prior efforts. The work I've done has received plenty of honors and accolades external to the university… but I'm grateful to have my work recognized by the people I work with on a day-to-day basis as well."

That "prior effort" covers a lot of ground. His research focuses on leadership, personality, and resilience, often in settings where the stakes are especially high. Over the years, he has worked with organizations such as the U.S. Army and NASA, studying everything from leadership in combat zones to mental health on deep space missions.

At the core of it all is a simple goal. "I try to do research that matters, research that has an impact," he said. "At the end of your career… who really cares if you got a whole bunch of publications? I want to be able to say that the work I did made a difference in people's lives."

That mindset shows up in his current work. One of his biggest ongoing projects is a study tracking 6,500 small business owners displaced by the war in Ukraine. "It's probably the first longitudinal study of people in a war zone where they're still there in the combat area and facing mortal risks," he said. The project aims to better understand how people rebuild their lives while enduring, and surviving, extraordinary hardship over time.

Harms is also working on a leadership textbook set to come out in 2027 and a new popular press book about CEO derailment. He's also helping launch a CEO research center in Montréal, recently supported by a $3 million gift.

With all his projects, Harms keeps coming back to the same idea of making a difference. His work has also tackled tough topics like suicide prevention, substance abuse, and sexual harassment, issues he sees as difficult but deeply consequential.

"If we can prevent those things, that's far more meaningful than a handful of citations," he said. "I can't say that the work I do has always been enjoyable. Much of it tends to be about understanding the worst parts of human nature and behavior. It can really wear on the soul. But looking back, I wouldn't change a thing."

Russell Matthews Named Fulbright Scholar

Russell Matthews, **the John Miller Professor of Management at Culverhouse**, has been selected as a recipient of the prestigious Fulbright U.S. Scholarship to Canada. The Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program offers more than 380 awards in more than 120 countries for U.S. citizens to teach, conduct research, and carry out professional projects around the world. College and university faculty, research and development professionals, as well as artists and professional practitioners from a wide range of fields come away with enhanced skills, new connections, and greater mutual understanding. Matthews' research is focused on employee well-being, neurodiversity at work, research methodology, work-place interface, and workplace mistreatment.

Cochran Named AAAS Fellow

Dr. James J. Cochran

Dr. James J. Cochran, Professor of Applied Statistics and the Mike and Kathy Mouron Chair, at Culverhouse, has been elected a 2025 Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Cochran was among the nearly 500 scientists, engineers, and innovators who have been recognized for their scientifically and socially distinguished achievements by one of the world's largest general scientific societies and publisher of the Science family of journals.

Cochran was elected an AAAS fellow in recognition of his groundbreaking research at the interface of statistics and operations research, improving the quality of statistics education in developing nations, and fostering application of statistics to societal and humanitarian problems.

"This recognition is especially meaningful because it reflects the value of sustained scientific inquiry, collaboration and service to the scientific community," Cochran said. "I have been fortunate to work with many outstanding colleagues, students, and mentors on and off The University of Alabama campus, and I share this honor with them. I am grateful for the opportunities I have had to contribute to work that I hope advances science and benefits society."

Cochran is the founding editor of two research series, a body of knowledge for operations research, and an eight-volume operations research encyclopedia. He has organized international teaching colloquia in 19 countries and received numerous awards for his research, teaching, and service. Among Cochran's most recent honors are the Advocacy Governance Committee Public Engagement Award from the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences and the Samuel S. Wilks Memorial Award from the American Statistical Association. He is also a Fellow of the American Statistical Association, the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences, and the African Academy of Sciences.

CULVERHOUSE HIGHLIGHTS

New Faculty Appointments

CULVERHOUSE SCHOOL OF ACCOUNTANCY

Amaurii Parker
Instructor of Accounting
MAcc from The University of Alabama

ECONOMICS, FINANCE, AND LEGAL STUDIES

Emmanuel Tsyawo
Assistant Professor of Economics
PhD in economics from Temple University

Eshwar Venugopal
Assistant Professor of Finance
PhD in finance from the University of Houston

William (Bill) Swymer
Instructor of Real Estate
PhD in real estate from the University of Georgia

Luxi (Lucy) Wang
Assistant Professor of Finance
PhD in finance from the University of Pittsburgh

INFORMATION SYSTEMS, STATISTICS, AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCE

Xiangru Chen
Assistant Professor of MIS
PhD in business from Iowa State University

Philip Ernst
Professor of Statistics
Endowed Shelby Distinguished Professor
PhD in statistics from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania

Ryan Tramp
Instructor of Operations Management
PhD in operations management from The University of Alabama

MANAGEMENT

Carolina Forero
Instructor of Management
MBA from the University of Delaware

Suho Han
Assistant Professor of Management
PhD in management from the University of Texas at Austin

Andrea Hodge
Assistant Professor of Management
PhD in business administration from Florida State University

Ben Perkins
Assistant Professor of Management
PhD in management from the University of Arizona

MARKETING

Timothy Butler
Instructor and Sales Program Director of Corporate Engagement
PhD in marketing from The University of Alabama

Denny Huynh
Assistant Professor of Marketing
PhD from Duke University

Bill Koleszar
Instructor of Marketing
MBA in marketing from the University of Central Florida

Tongyao Shen
Assistant Professor of Marketing
PhD from Pennsylvania State University

Rafay Siddiqui
Assistant Professor of Marketing
PhD in marketing from the University of South Carolina

Yufei Zhang
Assistant Professor of Marketing
PhD in marketing from Michigan State University

Institute of Data and Analytics

Institute of Data and Analytics Director Jason Parton welcoming attendees to the Culverhouse Analytics Summit symposium.

Operating within the Institute of Data and Analytics, the **Southern Regional Drug Data Research Center (SR DDRC) has launched a new web platform** to help law enforcement, government agencies, researchers, and community organizations better combat drug trafficking across the Southeast. The platform integrates data to identify cross border patterns in substance use, trafficking, overdoses, and related socioeconomic factors, enabling more informed policy decisions and targeted interventions. Funded by a three year, $3.5 million cooperative agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance, the SR DDRC serves as a secure, multistate hub for drug data integration and research. **The Institute of Data & Analytics hosted a multi-day series of events in October highlighting the power of data-informed decision-making.** The Oct. 10 Business Analytics Symposium served as the anchor event, bringing together industry leaders and academics for keynote talks, panels, and networking. Featured speakers included Juan Gorricho, former executive product owner for data strategy at Toronto-Dominion Bank; Dr. Frances Boykin, director of advanced analytics at AT&T; and Brooks Bourland, head of global digital fraud data science at TransUnion, alongside experts from the NBA, Snorkel AI, and KPMG. Sessions explored emerging topics such as generative AI and real-world analytics applications. The symposium built on earlier programming, including the two-day executive education workshop, as well as a research poster competition, and SR-DDRC presentations that showcased applied analytics and opportunities for collaboration across industry and academia.

RESEARCH & OUTREACH CENTERS AT CULVERHOUSE

- Alabama Center for Real Estate
- Alabama Entrepreneurship Institute
- Alabama Productivity Center
- Center for Business and Economic Research
- Center For Risk And Insurance Research
- Culverhouse LIFT
- Fitzpatrick Center for Value Investing
- Human Resources Institute
- Institute of Data and Analytics
- Selma Resilience Initiative

The Alabama Entrepreneurship Institute is located at the off-campus EDGE business incubator.

SELECTED UPDATES FROM CULVERHOUSE OUTREACH AND RESEARCH CENTERS

Alabama Productivity Center

During FY2025, Impact Alabama and the Alabama Productivity Center delivered substantial, measurable value to businesses across the state, generating **$22.5 million in documented economic impact**. These results reflected gains in increased and retained sales, cost avoidance, time and cost reductions, and new or avoided capital investments, underscoring the effectiveness of APC's applied, project based engagement model.

APC's reach extended broadly across Alabama, with **131 industry projects completed in 13 counties**, including focused engagement in rural and underserved communities. By maintaining a strong on-the-ground presence in areas such as Hale, Houston, Elmore, Talladega, and Cullman counties, the center reinforced its role as a statewide partner in economic and workforce development. In April 2026, **APC was awarded the Work-Based Learning Seal of Excellence** at the Alabama Summit of Talent Retention & Work-Based Learning hosted by the Alabama Department of Workforce and the Alabama Office of Apprenticeships.

A central driver of APC's impact continued to be its emphasis on experiential learning. In FY2025, **97 undergraduate and graduate students representing 17 academic majors** participated in APC supported internships, earning more than **$606,000 in student payroll** while translating classroom knowledge into real world business solutions. These experiences strengthened students' career readiness while directly supporting Alabama employers.

Selma Resilience Initiative

Carly Titus now leads the Selma Resilience Initiative (SRI) as Community Outreach Coordinator, bringing a strong background in community engagement, program development, and student-focused outreach. A recent MBA graduate from The University of Alabama, Titus has extensive experience building partnerships with nonprofits, schools, and civic organizations, previously coordinating large-scale initiatives through the University's Center for Community-Based Partnerships. In her current role, she oversees collaboration among faculty, students, and community stakeholders while leading programs and service-based learning opportunities. Her work focuses on strengthening connections between the university and Selma to support sustainable economic development and meaningful community impact.

The SRI advanced a full slate of programming through the year in Selma focused on student engagement, community partnerships, and experiential learning. Key initiatives included a university campus visit for Keith Middle/High School students, multiple "ripple trips" that brought UA students, faculty, and staff to town to work on projects, and the Selma River Pitch on March 12. Additional programming, such as a planned social media workshop and regular visits tied to a spring marketing class, further connected students with real-world projects and local stakeholders.

These efforts were supported by ongoing relationship building with community partners and leaders, including coordination with newly elected city officials and continued collaboration with organizations such as Wallace Community College–Selma.

Alabama Center for Real Estate

The Alabama Center for Real Estate creates opportunities for UA students to connect with and learn from industry leaders through networking events like Transformational Tuesdays. Above, Trey Echols, co-founder and partner at Canvasback Capital, with members of the Culverhouse Real Estate Society after sharing insights with students.

The Alabama Center for Real Estate (ACRE) named **Stuart Norton as its new director**, bringing a strong background in real estate research, data analytics, and industry engagement. Norton previously held multiple roles at ACRE, including research coordinator, data analytics coordinator, and associate director, and spent nearly a decade in education while also teaching in the Culverhouse College of Business. His work has focused on housing market analysis and building connections with industry professionals, students, and communities across the state. As director, Norton plans to expand ACRE's industry partnerships, professional development programs, and statewide outreach with priorities such as hosting industry events and creating hands-on learning opportunities that connect students with Alabama's real estate community.

Wes Herring, ACRE's Workforce and Professional Development Program Director, led a four-student team—Faith Turner, Asa Moran, Lindsey Brewer, and Andrew Mannion—**to a first-ever victory for both the Rance M. Sanders Real Estate Program and ACRE** in the ICSC Virtual Case Competition in November 2025. Building on that success, ACRE took a team of 10 students to the ICSC Las Vegas Convention in May 2026, where they came in second place in the ICSC & UNC Retail Real Estate Case Competition.

ACRE hosted continuing education and professional development conferences in Dothan, Huntsville, Montgomery, and Birmingham. These conferences were attended by over 900 industry professionals working in real estate and related fields. ACRE's inaugural Real Estate Alumni Conference in Tuscaloosa in November 2025 was attended by 160 alumni and 25 UA students, with Mike Mouron presenting the keynote address.

Selected Faculty Publications

A Branch-and-Benders Cut Algorithm for a Stochastic Service Network Design with Crowdsourced Capacity
Transportation Science
Ozgur Satici, **Iman Dayarian**

A Systematic Literature Review on Companies' Auditor Selection Processes
Auditing: A Journal of Practice and Theory
Kris Hardies, Jonas Vandenniewenhuysen, **Kris Hoang**, Marie-Laure Vandenhaute

Analyst Effects on Intangible Investment: Evidence from Corporate Political Investments
Review of Quantitative Finance and Accounting
Douglas O. Cook, Dae Woung Choi, Jinwook Hong, Marc Tony Via

Board Gender Diversity and Equity-Based Compensation
Journal of Banking and Finance
Kyeong Hun Lee, Matthew Imes, Kose John, Amir Shoham, Emma Xu

C2SLM: A Correlation-based Clustering-assisted Sparse Learning Model for Electric Vehicle Market Demand Forecasting
Pattern Recognition
Mesut Yavuz, Muting Ma, **Matthew Hudnall**, **Qin Wang**

Customer Success: Conceptualizing an Customer Success: An Interorganizational Performance Concept in Business Markets
Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science
Andreas Eggert, Anna Gehring, Wolfgang Ulaga, **Bryan Hochstein**

Disentangling Overall Audit Inspection Risk: The Effects of Inspection Focus and Inspection Likelihood (Rnd 1 R&R)
Accounting Horizons
Jenny Brown-McCallen, Heather Carrasco, **Marcus Doxey**, Yoon Ju Kang, **Richard Houston**

Do the Effects of Nudges Persist? Theory and Evidence from 38 Natural Field Experiments
Review of Economic Studies
Alec Brandon, Paul Ferraro, John List, Robert Metcalfe, **Michael Price**, Florian Rundhammer

Does Idea Justification Improve Brainstorming Sessions
Accounting Horizons
Kelsey Brasel, Heather Carrasco, **Marcus Doxey**, **Gary Taylor**

FACULTY

Does It Matter Who 'Toots the Horn' on Facebook and X? The Differential Effects of Owned and Earned Social Media on Customers' Perceptions of Firms
Internet Research
Forrest Morgeson, **Yufei Zhang**, **Pratyush N. Sharma**, Tomas Hult, Sunil Mithas

Does Litigation Risk Deter Insider Trading? Evidence from Universal Demand Laws
Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis
Binay K Adhikari, **Anup Agrawal**, Bina Sharma

Double-layer conditional mixture model for model-based clustering and automatic component merging
Journal of Classification
Hung Tong, **Xuwen Zhu**, **Yana Melnykov**

Dynamic Store Fulfillment with Collaborative Robots and In-Store Customers
IISE Transactions
Joyjit Bhowmick, Jennifer Ann Pazour, **Iman Dayarian**

Effectiveness of 'Retail Business-Development Specialists' (RBDS): Examining the Impact of Selected Traits, Customer Interaction Strategy, and Relationship Management Behaviors as Drivers of Performance
Industrial Marketing Management
Christopher Plouffe, Michael Peasley, **Carlos Bauer**, David Matthis

Evaluating the Efficacy of Providers' Compensation Contracts in Improving Participant Retention for Clinical Studies
Management Science
Xueze Song, Mili Mehrotra, Tharanga Rajapakshe

Examining the Use of Trait Skepticism Feedback in Auditor Training
Accounting Horizons
Mary Kate Dodgson, **Marcus Doxey**, Aaron Saiewitz

Experience Minimizes the Pull-to-Center Effect in Newsvendor Decisions
Manufacturing and Service Operations Management
Cary Deck, Jana Peliova, Zuzana Brokesova

Female Management Representation and Corporate Financial Fraud: Do Local Gender Norms Play a Role?
Journal of Business Ethics
Shan Xue, Honghui Chen, **Vishal Gupta**, **Sandra Mortal**

Good Intentions, Flawed Execution, Perfect Storm? Early Observations of CPA Evolution
Accounting Horizons
Steven Buchheit, Jess Filosa, Linda Parsons, Troy Pollard

Joint Estimation and Bandwidth Selection in a Partially Parametric Model
Journal of Applied Econometrics
Daniel Henderson, C Parmeter, Nadine McCloud

Mergers and Acquisitions in the Inter-state Trade Network
The Financial Review
Lei Kong, Xinyan Yan

Model-based clustering of multivariate categorical sequences
Pattern Recognition
Yingying Zhang, **Volodymyr Melnykov**

Nonexecutive Directors at Early-Stage Startups
Review of Corporate Finance Studies
Vijay Yerramilli, **Buvaneshwaran Venugopal**

Paralanguage and the Charismatic Spokesperson: The Impact of Vocal Amplitude on Charisma, Auditory Looming, and Customer Engagement
Journal of Business Research
Christine Ringler, Nancy Jeanne Sirianni

Pollution Liability Insurance and Corporate Environmental Compliance in China
Journal of Risk and Insurance
Alecia Cassidy, Fan Wu, Zhang Yiyuan

FACULTY

Prebisch Singer Hypothesis and Comovements of Commodity Prices
Journal of International Money and Finance
Junsoo Lee

Putting Words in Their Mouths: Firm-Generated User Content and Consumer Sharing Behavior
Journal of Marketing
Jonathan Beck, **Clay Voorhees**, Paul Fombelle, Katherine Lemon

Questioning a security assumption: are unique passwords harder to remember than reused or modified passwords?
Computers & Security
Naomi Woods, **Mikko Siponen**

Revenue Persistence and Public Service Delivery
Economic Journal
Traviss Cassidy

Roadblocks: Evaluating the impact of fines-related driver's license suspension on work-related outcomes for socioeconomically disadvantaged workers.
Journal of Applied Psychology
Maura Mills, Matthew J Dolliver, **Russell Matthews**, Leah Nelson, Peter Jones, Marshall L. White

Sectoral Comovement and Conglomerate Networks
Review of Finance
Kenneth Ahern, **Lei Kong**, Xinyan Yan

SMOTE enhanced cumulative moment estimation for sufficient dimension reduction
Computational Statistics
Qin Wang, Yvette Feng

Some Practical Issues Regarding Phase II Implementation of the Isolation Forest EWMA Control Chart
Statistics and Computing
Giovanni Celano, Theodore Perdikis, **Subhabrata Chakraborti**

Strategic Design of Parcel Locker Networks for Urban Delivery
Transportation Research Part E
Ali Sabzevari Zadeh, **Iman Dayarian**

Talking to New Auditors About Client Service
Accounting Horizons
Mike Ricci, **Richard Hatfield**, **Kris Hoang**, Eddie Thomas

The Effects of Unconditional Gifts on Customer-Firm Relationships
Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science
Paul Fombelle, **Clay Voorhees**, Anders Gustafsson, Lars Wittell, Amie Gustafsson

The Emergence of Digital Innovations in the Pre-emergence Phase of Self-Sovereign Identity in Finland
Information and Organization
Gabriella Laatikainen, **Mikko Siponen**

The k-Traveling Repairman Problem with Stochastic Service Request Times
Transportation Science
Bryant Cassidey, **Iman Dayarian**

The Spillover Effect of Dismissals on Audit Partners' Current Engagement Fees and Quality
Auditing: A Journal of Practice and Theory
Keval Amin, Robert Felix, **Kris Hoang**

The Visual Moderation Effect: How the Representation of Loyalty Reward Progress Affects Consumer Judgments and Behaviors
Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science
Carlos Bauer, Mansur Khamitov, Matthew Issac, Julio Sevilla

Uncertain model selection criteria for mixture modeling
Statistics and Computing
Volodymyr Melnykov, Salvatore Ingrassia

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Journal of the Association for Information Systems
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