

BIS-ITSA Fall 2024 Student Meet and Greet

At the start of the Fall 2024 Semester, on August 28th from 5:30 to 7:30 pm, the BIS-ITSA club hosted their “Meet and Greet” event to welcome incoming First-Year Students into the BIS Program and help get them acquainted with the BIS-ITSA Club. This session was open to both students of the BIS program and any others who have an interest in the extensive and highly applicable discipline of Business Information Systems. This semester, the club reached an all-time high for attendance with this event, garnering over 50 participants! The Meet and Greet was a casual get-together type event, which allowed students from many different backgrounds, educations, and career aspirations to enjoy pizza and pop, converse freely, and meet members of the club. Alongside this, they got the opportunity to network with upper-level BIS students and gain knowledge about how to navigate through their four years at Eastern and what coursework they should focus on to succeed! This event takes place at the beginning of every fall semester.



BIS-ITSA Club Fair Wednesday September 4th, 5:30 – 7:30

Student Center Patio

The BIS-ITSA Club is dedicated to helping students enhance their career prospects through resume development, mock interviews, networking opportunities, and securing internships and jobs with top companies such as Travelers Insurance, The Hartford, IBM, Google, Pratt & Whitney, and General Dynamics. Business Information Systems (BIS) is the combination of technology, people, and processes used by businesses to collect, process, store, and share information. It helps organizations make better decisions, improve efficiency, and manage data. Competing against large schools, Eastern BIS students win and place very high nationally in IT skill competitions annually. With eyes set on the future, the BIS-ITSA Club is now in the process of adding new events such as community-tied tech service-learning projects and company visits for students.

At the 2024 Fall Student Club Fair, held on Wednesday, September 4th, several BIS E-Board members and club members were present to promote the club and its offerings. Logan French, Abdul Ajmal, Robyn Vetterkind, Jordi Cassar, Sam Hurlburt, Uzi Bhura, Amani Jones, Joe Hines, and Jason Weekes all played a crucial role at our table, engaging with students and highlighting the benefits of joining the BIS ITSA Club, garnering over 70 signatures from students and collecting emails for notifying students of upcoming events.





BIS-ITSA Fall 2024 Resume Preparation Workshop

A few weeks into the Fall 2024 Semester, on Wednesday, September 11, from 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm, the BIS-ITSA club hosted their “Resume Prep” workshop to get both members of the club, and anyone interested in the field of biz-tech a head start on how they can write a resume that both stands out and highlights the best aspects of their education.

Dr. Citurs, led the presentation to a very large crowd of over 50 students, which is the most this event has had since before 2020! Dr. Citurs has a long history in the field of biz-tech and has fostered great connections with a plethora of major companies in Connecticut, who agree that the overall format of the biz-tech resumes from Eastern are superb. The real importance of this workshop will come next week, on September 18th, when former biz-tech alumni who are now company representatives will visit the campus and provide feedback on the newly crafted resumes.

Dr. Citurs gave many valuable insights during the presentation, some of which include: relevant skills, coursework and projects one should present on their resumes, formatting options such as modifying the margins and changing vertical spacing to fit more content on your resume, along with organizing skills and coursework into tables, then deleting the borders to give it a clean and structured look. This workshop is held a few weeks into every semester, along with pizza, cookies, and pop being provided.

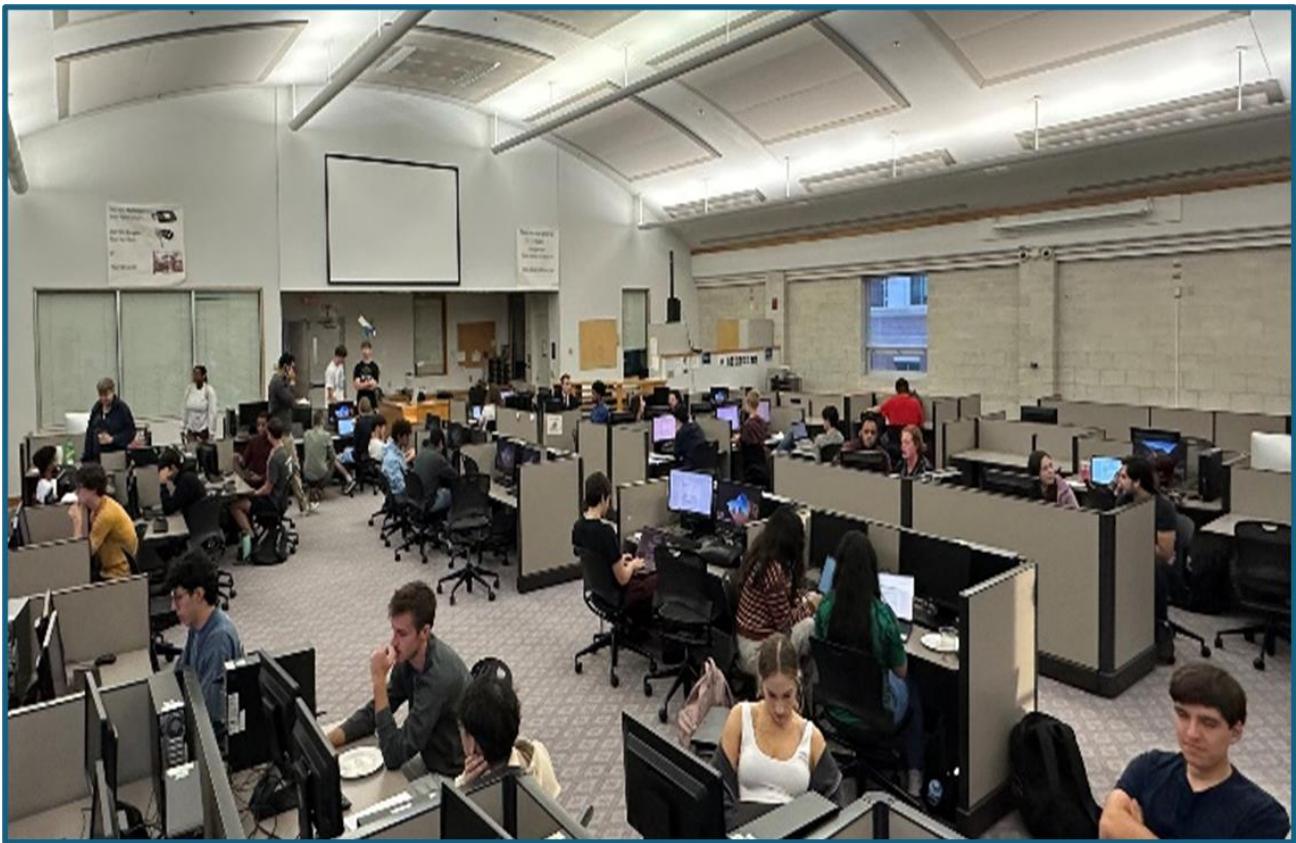


BIS-ITSA Resume Writing Workshop

On Wednesday, September 18th, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm, the BIS-ITSA Club hosted their fall resume writing workshop. This is a follow-up event from the resume preparation workshop, which allows students to further refine their resumes and get professional advice on how to best format and present their accomplishments to employers. This event featured both company representatives and Eastern alumni, who work with several major companies in Connecticut, including The Hartford, Travelers, Arch Insurance Group, Hass Automation, and ISO New England. Those in attendance were granted a unique opportunity to sit down in a personal one-on-one session with an alumnus and receive feedback on the strengths and areas for improvement with their resumes. Along with being given feedback, students were also taught key points for allowing their resumes to really stand out, such as using specific keywords, quantifying their work experience, highlighting biz-tech skillsets, and showcasing projects on their resume from both school and outside of the classroom.

In today's job market, where companies regularly receive hundreds of resumes for a single job position, it is integral to have a well-crafted resume that stands out above the competition. The BIS-ITSA Club hosts this event every semester to give Eastern students an advantage and a sense of confidence when applying for these positions! Alongside being a great professional networking event, it lets the students gain additional insights as to what skillsets are highly sought by Connecticut employers for specific positions.





The Hartford Info Session | Tuesday, September 24th

The Eastern BIS alumni and other Hartford Insurance representatives presented their Early Career Development Program, offering opportunities for all college years:

- **First Year Experience:** Designed to help first year students build their personal brand and gain insights to position themselves for future internships and full-time roles.
- **Sophomore Immersion Program:** A hands-on program where students work on case studies in teams and present their solutions to professionals at The Hartford, gaining practical experience and exposure.
- **Junior Internships:** 10-11 week full-time summer internships that offer meaningful work assignments, mentorship, and opportunities for skill development across various departments.
- **Full-time Rotational Programs for College Graduates:** Graduates rotate through different roles to develop a broad skill set and identify their career interests.

The session highlighted various program areas such as Actuarial, Claims, Enterprise Risk Management, Finance, Investment Management, Operations, and Product Development. All of which involve some information systems and technology skills. Students can expect regular coaching, mentoring, and feedback during their internships.

A popular Leadership Development Program (LDP) called **Tech, Data, Analytics, Cyber, and Operations (TDAC&O)**, as well as **Tech Catalyst**, were discussed. TDAC&O offers rotations in application development, cybersecurity, compliance, data analysis, and software/environmental engineering, while Tech Catalyst participants focus on data or software engineering.

Benefits of working at The Hartford include unique aspects of the programs, meaningful work assignments, training, mentoring, competitive compensation, perks, and executive-level exposure.

Several employees and alumni shared insights on their career paths and the company's offerings, reinforcing The Hartford's reputation as a great place to work and grow professionally.





Mock Interviews with Alumni and Company Representatives

On Wednesday, September 25th, the BIS-ITSA Club hosted their Mock Interview event, this event is catered towards Eastern Students with an interest in the field of Biz-Tech and hoping to sharpen their interviewing skills. The Mock Interview event featured both company representatives and Eastern alumni from several major companies in Connecticut such as The Hartford, Travelers, General Dynamics, Hass Automation, ISO New England, and Boehringer Ingelheim. Many of the alumni who were present at this event have attended this same event in prior years as students and are now frequently part of the interviewing teams for their companies. Thus, the questions asked, and the overall experience of the event are representative of actual interviews at these companies.

This event coincides with the recent Resume Writing Workshop, in that students can present their further refined resumes to their interviewers. The questions they are asked are both based on the content of their resumes, and actual questions that get asked in Biz-Tech interviews. The structure of this interview process models that of the usual first-round interview at the alumni's companies. The students obtain important insights on how they conducted themselves, along with any improvements they could make in their answers.

This event allows students to connect with interviewers from companies that Eastern has a good reputation with. It also gives students a safe environment to gain confidence in being interviewed, test their interviewing skills, as well as obtain constructive feedback. These mock interviews are held every semester in Webb 410, and along with having pizza, pop, and cookies, gives students much needed help and a boost in confidence to succeed in their interviews!





IBM System Z Day Virtual Conference

Tuesday, October 1, 2024, was the annual IBM System Z Day. This year, multiple BIS-ITSA people actively participated in the daylong virtual conference along with over 38,900 viewers/participants from 167 countries around the globe! The primary focuses of the System Z Day Conference was to share best practices and trends on the use of IBM System Z mainframe computers in the 6 conference track areas of: Artificial Intelligence, Data Analytics, Application Modernization, IBM Z Skills Acceleration, Security, and Trends in Academic System Z Educational Opportunities and Best Practices. For Eastern BIS-ITSA students, it made for a very busy day, given that Eastern's Fall 2024 Internship-Career Fair, was being held at the same time in the ECSU Student Center BTR.

Current series of IBM System Z computers have 40 Terabytes of Random Access Memory (RAM) and support thousands of concurrent users. System Zs are used to host massive AI platforms, including the famous computer "Watson", the best Jeopardy gameshow player of all time and data mining applications. IBM System Zs are famous for serving as the integrative backbone computers for large corporations' critical core operational business systems, corporate data warehouses, and business transaction AI driven ultrafast models and apps. Systems Z, with their huge RAM capacity, are famous for hosting huge cutting edge analytical models and complex simulations used in application areas such as advanced manufacturing, cancer research, weather forecasting, financial market research, and global customer analysis. The BIS-ITSA Club typically visits and tours IBM Poughkeepsie, where the System Zs are researched and built every few years.

Both Luis Vazquez (CS major) and Dr. Alex Citurs (BIS faculty and BIS-ITSA club advisor), served as panelist for the Z-Day Conference session of: "Inspire and Empower the Next Generation of IBM Z". Luis Vazquez, Computer Science major and BIS-ITSA Member, currently serves as Eastern's IBM Student Ambassador. Luis spoke about how students can earn IBM certifications and badges, subsequently opening up internship and career opportunities. He encouraged students to leverage the IBM Z Xplore Program and the other free fundamentals and concept badges. Dr. Citurs first started working on IBM System Zs when he worked at the corporate headquarters of State Farm Insurance, where he learned and worked with IBM System Z computer languages of PL/1, JCL, CLIs, as well as the ZOS and ISPF tool suites, and IBM DB2 relational databases. He expanded his IBM System Zs skillsets while working as a developer in the research lab of IBM Rochester, Minnesota. Every few years, large Connecticut employers such as Aetna, Cigna, and Travelers and Eastern alumni, have requested Dr. Citurs to teach independent study groups on writing IBM Cobol business applications utilizing access to IBM System Zs at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York, because of their System Z needs.

Thus, the demand for IBM System Z trained young talent will continue to grow in Connecticut and beyond as the need for ultra-fast, massive memory, data hungry applications in artificial intelligence, business intelligence, and business analytics are increasingly developed and deployed across the business and research worlds.



Left: Luis Vazquez & Dr. Citurs were panelist in the IBM Z-Day session of: "Inspire & Empower the Next Generation of IBM Z".

Right: Sheila McInerney, Sr. Development Manager at Infor, and panelist with Luis Vazquez & Dr. Citurs, discussing application development career opportunities on IBM System Zs at the BIS-ITSA Biz-Tech Career Conversations, October 2, 2024.

BIS-ITSA Fall 2024 Biz-Tech Career Conversations

On Wednesday, October 2nd, the BIS-ITSA club hosted another successful BIZ-Tech and IT Career Conversations event at Eastern's Johnson room in the library. The event, in collaboration with the Office of Career Success, provided students majoring in business and technology with a unique opportunity to engage with professionals and alumni from a wide array of industries. Representatives from companies such as Travelers, Cigna, General Dynamics (Electric Boat), and Hartford Healthcare, as well as many other major organizations, participated in the event.

The career conversations were organized into nine distinct tables, each representing a different field of interest. Students had the chance to rotate among the tables, with a set amount of time at each, allowing them to explore various career paths. The event encouraged in-depth discussions about the career prospects and challenges of each field, with students rotating tables every 12 minutes.

The career paths represented were:

- Cloud Apps and Ecommerce
- Network Administration, Tech Support, & Cybersecurity
- Operations & Supply Chain Techs
- Financial Tech
- Business Intelligence/Analytics, Data Engineering, & AI
- Healthcare IS/IT, Healthcare Info Management
- Database Administration, SQL & Enterprise Architecture
- Business/Systems Analyst, Tech Consultant
- Project Management, Scrum Masters, & Agile Coaches

This event allowed students to gain insights into different areas of business and technology, providing them with valuable information on potential career paths. The structured yet flexible format of rotating between interest fields ensured that students could engage with multiple industries and perspectives, building valuable connections and expanding their understanding of the skills and knowledge required in their fields of interest.

Many students stayed after the formal rotations ended to continue conversations, illustrating the success of the event in fostering meaningful interactions between students and industry professionals.















Travelers BI&A Info Session, Thursday October 3rd

On October 3rd, students from the BIS program attended the Travelers BI&A Info Session to learn about internship and career opportunities within the Business Insights and Analytics (BI&A) Leadership Development Program. The event featured representatives from Travelers who shared their experiences and insights on various career paths, including roles in Business Analysis, Data Engineering, Data Management, Information Delivery, Geospatial, and Project Coordination.

The session provided attendees with detailed information about the skills and technologies most valued at Travelers, such as Python, SQL, AWS, and Snowflake. Students were able to explore how their academic work in areas like data analytics, business intelligence, and project management can be applied in real-world settings.

After the presentation, attendees had the opportunity to ask questions and engage in networking with the presenters, while enjoying pizza and refreshments.

This session offered a valuable perspective on careers in BI&A, giving students a clearer understanding of the opportunities available at Travelers and how they can align their skills to meet industry demands.





Advanced Manufacturing, IT, and Operations ECSU Alumni

On October 23, 2024, the ECSU BIS-ITSA club hosted a panel event featuring alumni from top Connecticut advanced manufacturing companies, including Pratt & Whitney, SPIROL, and Electric Boat. Notable BIS alumni Mike Trapp as a Supply Chain Manager at Pratt & Whitney, Henry Bigl as a Business Intelligence Developer at SPIROL, Ryan Conley as a Systems Engineer at General Dynamics Electric Boat, and John Conley as a Commodity Integration Manager Raytheon Pratt & Whitney, shared insights into their roles and highlighted how courses at Eastern, such as Enterprise Resource Planning (BIS 430), Agile (BIS 437), and Business Database Management (SQL) prepared them for success in their careers.

The panel emphasized the importance of diversifying skill sets, encouraging students to step out of their comfort zones by joining unfamiliar clubs or courses. They discussed the significance of balancing technical and soft skills, particularly in roles that require collaboration across various fields. Company leadership development programs (LDPs), including those in various types of engineering, business, and applied user groups, were highlighted as essential for students seeking growth, especially in companies with rotational roles, as these programs help navigate shifting technologies while enhancing both technical and social skill sets.

The key message of the event was to embrace risks, stay adaptable to new technologies, and remain open to new opportunities—there is no single “right” path to career success. The panelists collectively stressed the importance of technical skills, such as data management and data wrangling alongside soft skills like communication and resilience under pressure. Overall, the event provided valuable insights into opportunities in advanced manufacturing and operations for BIS students, and attendees enjoyed networking with the speakers over pizza and refreshments with over 50 students attending during the two-and-a-half-hour period the event took place.





BIS-ITSA Fall Social

The BIS Program and BIS-ITSA Club hosted their fall social gathering on October 25th, 2024, in the Fine Arts Instructional Center Lobby. The event brought together over 50 participants, including current students, faculty, and alumni, showcasing the strong community within Eastern's BIS program. Dr. Citurs opened the evening with updates on the program's growth, highlighting increased enrollment and new partnerships with leading technology companies. He emphasized how the curriculum continues evolving to meet industry demands, particularly in areas such as artificial intelligence, data analytics, and cybersecurity. As well as being modified to more closely follow the Information Systems 2020 recommended international IS curriculum guidelines.

During the networking portion, alumni shared invaluable insights about current industry trends and essential technologies driving business innovation. They emphasized the growing importance of Generative AI in transforming business processes and decision-making. Alumni discussed their experiences with various database platforms, as well as Snowflake for data warehousing and as data sources for advanced analytics and business intelligence. The alumni also brought out how some of the database platforms like PostgreSQL, SQL Server, and DB2 are being used for databases and business processes. Plus, they brought out how cloud computing platforms like AWS and to a lesser degree MS Azure are becoming fundamental to modern business operations.

A significant portion of the discussion focused on project management methodologies, with alumni highlighting how Agile practices thoroughly dominate IT and cross-functional projects across IT and other business/e-commerce sectors. Although some organizations still utilize Waterfall, and some have adopted Kanban approaches depending on specific project requirements. They shared their experiences with various project management tools, including JIRA, Rally, Microsoft Project, Trello, and custom-built solutions. Alumni stressed the importance of student project portfolios that demonstrate practical applications of these technologies and methodologies. They also discussed emerging IT trends, highlighting the growing use of GenAI, custom cloud services, SQL, analytics, critical thinking skills, and the importance of adaptability to new tools and trends, as well as the value of having GitHub portfolios. Some alumni brought out that certifications matter only if supported by applied projects. The event concluded with announcements of upcoming BIS-ITSA initiatives, including technical workshops and professional development sessions focused on these in-demand skills and technologies.



Prince Tech High School IT Students Have College Day Hosted by Eastern BIS Program & BIS-ITSA Club Students

Getting well into the Fall 2024 semester, on October 29th, from 9:15am to 1:00pm, students from A.I. Prince Technical High School, Hartford, Connecticut visited Eastern for a college day. The Prince Tech IT students were hosted by the BIS Program and the BIS-ITSA Student Club. BIS Associate Professor Dr. Citurs serves on the Prince Tech High School IT Advisory Board. The day started out with an Admission Office guided tour around campus buildings, with accompanying BIS students providing additional insights relevant to biz-tech interested students. The students were given a presentation of various biz-tech related academic program options by Dr. Citurs in a Science Building computer lab. Majors, minors and courses presented and discussed were from the Business Information Systems, Computer Science and Data Science Programs as well as Geographical Information Systems. The Prince IT students then attended a BIS 205 – Information Management class section session of Prof. Kevin Donohue's, where they focused in on data forms, reports and charts.

For lunch, the Prince IT students met in Web 358 for Pizza, Pop, and Cookies to eat while discussing amongst themselves and with the BIS-ITSA Club members (BIS/CS/Data Science) students about the programs at Eastern and career development options. The Eastern BIS-ITSA students navigated through the different tables in a rotational manner, getting to know all of the visiting high school students. Discussing issues related to the high school students' interests, and trying to narrow in on what their future options holds for them. A reoccurring future interest of students seemed to be Game Design! After exploring everyone's circumstances, giving recommendations, and sharing a meal together, the students from Prince Tech shared appreciations and departed back to Hartford.



BIS-ITSA Fall 2024 Eastern-In-4 Advising Workshop

Reaching the halfway point in the Fall 2024 semester, on Wednesday, October 30, from 5:30 to 7:00pm, the BIS-ITSA club hosted their first Eastern-In-4 ELAC (Enhanced Liberal Arts Curriculum) advising workshop for new BIS Program related students and transfers interested in the BIS Programs and other related programs. This was so they may be more adequately prepared for their next four years of advising and course registration.

Dr. Citurs led the demonstration of the recently improved Eastern-In-4 Worksheet for all the attending first-years, sophomores, and transfers. Earlier in the year, Dr. Citurs became aware of the trouble that new ELAC students were having at their normally schedules Eastern-In-4 sessions when planning out their four years of coursework. To hopefully ease the process, he spearheaded a new project that incorporates additional functionalities as well as numerous quality-of-life features. This is the first event of its kind for the BIS-ITSA Club, serving as an examination and pilot appraisal group for the new worksheet developed over the summer. The session and tool, met with great success, all of the attending students commented or made note of the efficiency and benefits that came with the new planning tool.

With the introduction of the new ELAC requirements, Dr. Citurs gave valuable insight and direction during the demonstration. This included how to plan around having a second major or minor(s). Plus, he stressed the importance of taking key classes early, how to strategically double count courses, and what to expect with ELAC requirements.

