MAPD 2025 Meeting Communique

Held April 5, 2025 | JW Marriott Indianapolis

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the 2025 Meeting of Analytics Program Directors (MAPD). For those unable to attend, we are pleased to share this brief summary of key moments and takeaways from a highly engaging and energizing day of professional dialogue, shared learning, and community building.

Event Overview

MAPD 2025 welcomed ~100 attendees from academic institutions, industry, and professional associations. The event kicked off with a networking breakfast presented by The ROAI Institute, followed by a warm welcome from 2025 MAPD Planning Committee Co-Chairs, Naser Nikandish and Matthew Lanham, who emphasized the importance of continuing to connect theory and practice in analytics education.

Program Highlights

Small Group Sessions – "Topic-by-Table"

Attendees engaged in two highly interactive small group sessions, allowing focused conversations on shared challenges and innovations in curriculum development, student engagement, capstone projects, and aligning analytics instruction with market expectations. Feedback showed these sessions were among the most valued parts of the day.

Academic Panel – Experiential Learning

Panelists Babak Zafari (Georgetown), Jennifer Riley (Virginia Tech), Erica Hodes (MIT), and Jay Page (Wisconsin) explored models for incorporating experiential learning into analytics programs. A key theme was how industry partnerships can elevate student outcomes and prepare graduates for the dynamic expectations of data roles.

Data4Good Spotlight

Matthew Lanham shared insights into the Data4Good initiative, including ways to embed social impact into the curriculum. The presentation sparked interest in using real-world nonprofit and civic challenges as vehicles for student learning.

Additionally, Matthew recruited his fellow MAPD colleagues join him in taking on the oversight of the Data4Good competition going forward. Matthew will continue to work with MAPD on how best to utilize this community for student competitions in the future.

AI in the Classroom

Representatives from UCLA Anderson's MSBA program and the ROAI Institute offered a thoughtful overview of how AI tools are shaping instruction and assessment. Rafael Manansala and Laks Srinivasan shared examples of AI-enhanced project work and discussed implications for faculty training and curriculum design.

Premier Sponsor Presentation: Gurobi

Gurobi shared how optimization software continues to advance capabilities in analytics programs and offered academic licensing resources available to instructors. Jerry Yurchisin will provide a high-level overview of our open educational tools and dive deeper into two standout resources:

- Gurobi's free Udemy course, co-developed with Dr. Joel Sokol, Harold E. Smalley Professor at Georgia Tech, which has already seen over 9,000 enrollments worldwide in its first year.
- Our newest Generative AI tools, designed to support students in building better optimization models, faster. He'll close with a short demo of how students can use Gurobi's GenAI-powered assistants, including:
    - Gurobi AI Modeling Documentation – Offers best practices, examples, and curated resources.
    - Prompt Engineer – Helps define optimization-ready problem statements.
    - Modeling Assistant – Generates formulations, Python code, and solutions automatically.

ACM Task Force Update

Jim Cochran gave a timely update on the ACM Computer Data Sciences Task Force, spotlighting recent curricular recommendations and a call for broader participation among analytics educators. Jim will continue to serve as a valuable link to INFORMS and MAPD on this important workstream.

Industry Panel – Curriculum vs. Job Market Alignment

Moderated by Aaron Burciaga (AlphaAI), this session featured perspectives from Rajiv Phougat (KPMG US) and Yao Zhao (Rutgers) on the skills gap between what graduates know and what employers need. The discussion stressed the growing demand for AI fluency, critical thinking, and business acumen alongside technical proficiency.

MAPD Community Updates

In an open discussion, Bill Griffin invited feedback on potential enhancements to MAPD programming. Suggestions included more student engagement, year-round webinars, and deep dives into assessment strategies.

The event closed with a networking reception hosted by the Johns Hopkins Carey Business School, offering participants a relaxed setting to continue conversations and foster new collaborations.

What You Told Us (Survey Highlights)

Thank you to all who completed the post-event survey. Here's a snapshot of what we heard:

• Overall Satisfaction: 92% of respondents rated the event as “Very Good” or “Excellent.”

• Favorite Sessions: Small group discussions, the experiential learning panel, and the AI in the Classroom session were repeatedly cited as the most impactful.

• Suggested Improvements: More structured follow-up opportunities, expanded breakout topics, and session recordings for those who couldn’t attend in person.

• Community Building: A strong desire to keep the MAPD momentum going through a shared resource hub or regular virtual meet-ups.

Looking Ahead

MAPD continues to grow as a space for collaborative growth and innovation in analytics education. We’re grateful for your continued engagement and look forward to building the next chapter of this professional learning community together.

MAPD 2026 will be in the Washington, DC area so plan ahead to join us!



Thank you MAPD Founders and Members!

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