



# COMPUTER SCIENCE

Department of Computer Science | Old Dominion University |  
Bi-annual Newsletter | Spring 2018





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## MESSAGE

# FROM THE CHAIR

**We've had another successful year so far – congratulations!!!**

Dear Alumni, Students, and Friends,

Welcome to the Spring Edition of the Department of Computer Science's biannual newsletter. Our first edition, in Fall 2017, was warmly received by our alumni. Thank you for your feedback.

On the enrollment front, our bachelor's program continues to grow. We currently have more than 880 undergraduate majors. Our graduate enrollment remains steady with 100 M.S. and 37 Ph.D. students. During the 2017-18 academic year, we had a total of 160 CS students graduate: 115 with a B.S., 40 with a M.S., and five with a Ph.D.

Our students have won a number of awards during this spring's College Award Ceremony. This includes the prestigious Lee Entsminger Outstanding Ph.D. Dissertation Award from the College of Sciences won by Dr. Kamesh Armugam (Ph.D.: 2017). Dr. Ranjan and Dr. Zubair were his advisors. Ms. Lalita Sharkey, a senior undergraduate student, received the Anne Everett Scholarship for Outstanding Achievement in Computer Science. Ms. Shreya Varadaraj, a first-year graduate student from India, won ODUOnline's \$3500 scholarship. Our graduate student team placed third in the Hackathon held by Dominion Enterprises. They received a cash award of \$2500. We would like to especially recognize Mr. Sai Ratnakar Nidumolu (M.S.: 2018) for receiving several outstanding leadership awards this spring. He was recognized by several agencies on campus for his yeoman service to the campus community for the last two years.

Our faculty has been very active in research publications and external grants. In this issue, we highlight research conducted in the Web Science and Digital Libraries Group led by Dr. Michael Nelson and Dr. Michele Weigle. Dr. Desh Ranjan and Dr. Alvin Holder (Associate Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry) won a prestigious five-year \$1.5 Million MARC grant from the National Institutes of Health. This is the first time that ODU has won such an award. We congratulate them on winning this competitive award. Two of our faculty were recognized at this year's College Awards Ceremony. Dr. Jing He received the Outstanding Undergraduate Mentor Award and Mr. Lloyd Decker received the Distinguished Teaching Award for Adjunct Faculty. Congratulations to Dr. Andrey Chernikov who has been promoted to Associate Professor with tenure and Dr. Michele Weigle who has been promoted to Professor.

We are proud to feature two of our distinguished alumni, Mr. Pratik Kothari (M.S.: 2004) and Mr. Ankit Kothari (B.S.: 2004), brothers from India, who have become very successful as entrepreneurs.

Dr. Levinstein, who had retired in May 2016, after serving 42 years at ODU as a faculty member, has established the Dr. Irwin Levinstein Scholarship Endowment for graduate students who are currently underrepresented in computer science. We sincerely appreciate Irwin's generosity. If any of you have plans to establish such an endowed scholarship, either as individuals or as a group, please contact me or Ms. Denise Milisitz (amilisit@odu.edu) at the ODU Educational Foundation.

We would like to hear from our alumni and share their progress in our future newsletters. Since we are also in the process of building our alumni database, please take time to submit your information through the link provided on the last page of this issue.

Dr. Ravi Mukkamala



**Dr. Kamesh Arumugam (Ph.D. 2017)**

Lee Entsminger Outstanding PhD Dissertation Award

Kamesh Arumugam received his Bachelor of Engineering degree in Computer Science and Engineering from Visvesvaraya Technological University, India, in 2010. After receiving his bachelor's degree, he worked as Software Developer and Consultant for web-based startup industries in Bangalore, India. In Fall 2011, he joined the Computer Science Department at ODU to pursue a Ph.D. degree. His advisors were Dr. Mohammad Zubair and Dr. Desh Ranjan of the Department of Computer Science and Dr. Balša Terzić of the Department of Physics as a research assistant, developing high-performance parallel algorithms and its implementation on emerging HPC architectures for a wide variety of scientific applications.

**Michelle Flanagan (B.S.C.S. 2018)**

Outstanding Undergraduate in CS (Spring 2018)

Michelle Flanagan will be graduating this spring with a bachelor's degree in Computer Science and a minor in cybersecurity, with a GPA of 4.91. She will also be leaving ODU with a Graduate Certificate in Cybersecurity. While at ODU, she worked at the Perry Library in the circulation services department and is now a Team Leader for the ITS Help Desk in the same location. She served as a College of Sciences Student Ambassador since the end of her freshman year and has been actively involved in the computing groups on campus. Michelle has been Secretary for the ACM chapter for the past two years, and this year, she took over the role of President for the ACM Women's chapter on campus. Michelle has accepted a position at the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond in which she will be on the Local Incident Response Team as an Information Security Engineer Associate.

**Kevin Garner (M.S. 2018)**

Computer Science Outstanding Graduate Researcher - Spring 2018 - Advisor: Dr. Chrisochoides

Kevin Garner graduated with B.S. in Computer Science at ODU. He is expected to complete a M.S. in Spring 2018 and has decided to continue in the Ph.D. program at ODU. He is noted as a person with "a strong will to solve any and every problem he encounters, and demonstrated great competence and time management capabilities." Kevin received the ODU Presidential Scholarship and REU Scholarship as an undergraduate student. He received the Virginia Space Grant Consortium Graduate Scholarship in 2016. His research has produced two conference publications.

**Devin Haslam (M.S. 2018)**

Computer Science Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant

Devin Haslam graduated with a B.S. in Computer Science from ODU and is currently pursuing a M.S. degree. Here are a few comments from his instructor: "His greatest abilities lie in his skill to effectively instruct students in both online and face-to-face sections of CS250." Problem Solving and Programming II, a required course in Computer Science. "Devin is a very good TA and it is apparent that students are very happy with his instruction." Besides being a good TA, he has published two conference papers in research: one as an undergraduate student and one as a graduate student. He is expected to graduate in the summer of 2018.

**Adam Hill (B.S.C.S. 2017)**

Outstanding Undergraduate in CS (Fall 2017)

Adam Hill is our Fall Outstanding Undergraduate Student. He graduated Summa Cum Laude in December with a GPA of 3.96. He was honored to be selected as the College of Sciences banner carrier for the commencement ceremony. He selected Ms. Janet Brunelle as his most inspirational faculty member for this honor. Adam plans to continue his education in the near future with graduate studies. He is currently employed at Dominion Enterprises. Most of his academic studies were completed through our distance learning program.

**Tunazzina Islam (M.S. 2018)**

Computer Science Outstanding Graduate Researcher - Fall 2017 - Advisors: Dr. Ranjan, Dr. Zubair

Tunaz Islam is a MS student who joined the program in the fall of 2015. She is noted as "a very enthusiastic and persistent researcher who carries out the tasks assigned to her in a meticulous fashion. Importantly, over the last year, she has also become an increasingly independent and self-reliant researcher." Her poster won second prize at the Tapia Conference (ACM Richard Tapia Celebration of Diversity in Computing) in 2017. She received travel scholarships to the Tapia Conference in both 2016 and 2017. She received a travel scholarship to the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing Conference in 2016. She received travel support to the CRA-W Grad Cohort Workshop in 2016. She has published one journal paper and two conference papers.

**Lalita Sharkey**

Anne Everett Scholarship for Outstanding Achievement

The Suffolk Chapter of the American Association of University Women has selected Lalita Sharkey as the recipient of the Anne Everett Scholarship for Outstanding Achievement in Computer Science. This is the first award of what we hope will be an annual scholarship for ODU computer science majors. Anne Everett is a graduate of ODU's Computer Science program and a distinguished member of this organization. Ms. Sharkey is a second degree seeking student with a GPA of 4.0. She is beginning her senior year as part of our linked B.S./M.S. program and is currently working with Dr. Zubair on a parallel computing research project.

**Alaaeddine Talab (M.S. 2018)**

Computer Science Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant

Alaaeddine Talab graduated with B.S. in Biochemistry from the University of Michigan and is currently pursuing a M.S. degree in CS. He instructs students in labs and recitations in CS150, Problem Solving and Programming I, a required course in Computer Science. His instructor noted him as a TA with "a friendly and approachable professional demeanor, genuine interest in the success of his students. Alaaeddine's positive proactive attitude and diligence have contributed greatly to the success of the course itself, as well as the entire team of Teaching Assistants that work for me." He is expected to graduate in the spring of 2018.

# International Student Will Use ODU Online Scholarship Funds to Study Data Security

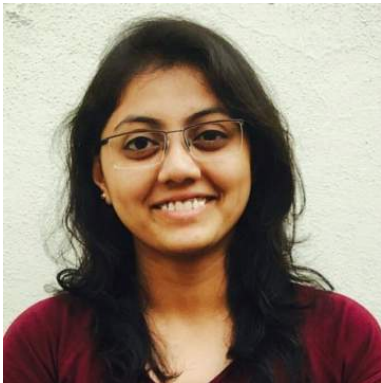
Shreya Varadaraj has been awarded ODUOnline's International Student Scholarship, worth \$3,500, for the summer semester.

ODU has been expanding online options for computer science courses to meet the growing demand for qualified, experienced computer professionals. "Shreya's chosen course, Data Mining and Security, is just one example of the many relevant courses we have available through ODUOnline," Shiokawa said. "Students all over the world may study with Old Dominion University's experts, regardless of whether they set foot on our Norfolk, Virginia, campus."

Andy Casiello, Associate Vice President for distance learning, adds, "International growth and expansion is definitely a focus moving forward for ODUOnline. Technology allows our world-class education options to be available to anyone around the world, no matter where they are."

Varadaraj, who hails from Bangalore, India, took her first online classes from Old Dominion University.

To qualify for the scholarship, Varadaraj wrote a 400-word essay describing how her education will help her realize her career dreams. She focused on her passion for computer applications, saying, "Serving millions of people with a small application is nothing short of a super power."



Shreya Varadaraj

To further her ambitions of app development, Varadaraj applied part of her scholarship money to a data mining and security class this summer. She said, "Despite all the talk about privacy invasion, it is exciting to know that data mining can be effectively used to secure an application with authentication and authorization."

"We are so excited to offer this scholarship to Shreya," Mitsue Shiokawa said, director of ODUOnline International. "Her motivation to learn more about data mining is not only admirable, but critical in today's digital age."

To learn more about ODUOnline's international study options, visit [online.odu.edu/international](http://online.odu.edu/international).

## Sai Ratnakar Nidumolu



- Best Leader of Year-2018, awarded by Student Engagement and Enrollment Services, ODU
- Best Intercultural Leader of the Year-2018, awarded by Student Engagement and Enrollment Services, ODU
- John R. Broderick Diversity Champion Award for Spring 2018, awarded by the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, ODU
- Walk a Mile in Her Shoes award as an appreciation for demonstrating commitment to ending violence and exemplifying the Women's Center mission in their communities, awarded by the Women's Center, ODU
- Received a token of appreciation from Austin Agho, Provost, ODU, for serving the International Student Community through the International Student Advisory Board (ISAB), serving as General Secretary to the Board.
- Placed third at Hackathon by Dominion Enterprises.

## Hackathon U6 By Dominion Enterprise

A five-member team attended under the name "Arrow" at Hackathon U6 by Dominion Enterprise, Norfolk, Virginia. The team received third prize among the nine teams that participated representing different universities around Virginia. This is a two-day Hackathon, which took place February 22-23, 2018 at Dominion Enterprise.

The team received a shield and a \$2500 cash prize. The Vice President and the administration staff at Dominion Enterprise were impressed with the workflow and the presentation by ODU student team.



Sai Ratnakar Nidumolu, Chandrasekhar Reddy Muthyala, Monica Marisetty, Girish Kathireddy, Aniket Shrikant Chandak





## FEATURED RESEARCH

# THE WEB SCIENCE AND DIGITAL LIBRARIES RESEARCH GROUP IS EXPANDING!

Currently led by Professors Michael L. Nelson ([http://twitter.com/phonedude\\_mln](http://twitter.com/phonedude_mln)) and Michele C. Weigle (<http://twitter.com/weiglemc>), the WS-DL group will welcome two new faculty members in Fall 2018:

Dr. Jian Wu (<https://twitter.com/fanchyna>) will join as an assistant professor and comes to us from the Lee Giles's group at Penn State, where he was best known for being the technical lead for CiteSeer (<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/index>). His research expertise includes data science, applied machine learning, and text mining of scholarly big data.

Dr. Sampath Jayarathna (<https://twitter.com/OpenMaze>) will join as an assistant professor and comes to us from Cal Poly Pomona. Before that, he was with Frank Shipman's group at TAMU/CSDL. His interests include data science, information science, machine learning and human-computer interaction (HCI).

With the arrival of two new faculty members and the departure of several Spring graduates, WS-DL will have:

- 4 faculty
- 11 Ph.D. students
- 2 M.S. students

We have been extremely successful at all levels of our endeavors, to include:

- Extensive features in TV, radio, and newspapers; for coverage of our work in the recent Joy Reid blog case, see the ODU news story which aggregates many of the appearances: <http://www.odu.edu/about/odu-publications/insideodu/2018/05/03/topstory1>



- \$6 million in total research funding over the last 10 years.
- Over 100 refereed publications over the last 10 years
- Ph.D. and M.S. alumni placed at Los Alamos National Laboratory, Stanford University, Emory University, UCLA, UC Berkeley, Library of Congress, MITRE, Google, Microsoft, and others.

We are actively seeking motivated Ph.D., M.S., and B.S. students looking to explore undergraduate research opportunities. If you would like to join, or are just interested in following our progress, please see:

- Our twitter feed for breaking announcements: <https://twitter.com/WebSciDL>
- Our blog for more in-depth discussions, announcements, reviews, etc.: <http://ws-dl.blogspot.com/>
- Our GitHub page for data and code: <https://github.com/oduwsdl>
- Our home page for all of the above: <https://ws-dl.cs.odu.edu/>



## FACULTY RECOGNITION

# Hitting the MARC

**Written By: Amy Matzke-Fawcett  
Web Communication Specialist  
Old Dominion University Research  
Foundation**

A multidisciplinary collaboration led by two Old Dominion University professors has netted a \$1.5 million National Institutes of Health grant aimed at training undergraduate underrepresented minority students in STEM fields to go on to careers in Biomedical and Behavioral Sciences research.

This is the first time the university has been awarded a Maximizing Access to Research Careers grant (MARC), but the process of bringing the prestigious award has been years in the making for Alvin Holder, an associate professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry, and Desh Ranjan, an endowed professor in the Computer Science Department.

The MARC grant, which will spread over five years, helps provide tuition for qualifying junior and senior undergraduates in biological sciences, chemistry and biochemistry, computer science, and psychology. High-performing ODU students will be encouraged to apply at the end of their sophomore year, and must keep a 3.0 or higher GPA and engage in research during their tenure in the program. The program prepares them for graduate school through a well-structured set of activities that includes training in a combination of research and real-world skills.

Students will receive tuition assistance, a yearly stipend, and be paired with a mentor to engage in extensive research in labs around campus. But it's more than a research program, the professors say. Students supported by the program, many of whom are likely to be first-generation college students, will learn about research etiquette, engage in research training, and develop mentoring relationships with professors and other students. The program also pays for a 10-week research opportunity at a research extensive university, and includes funding for travel to national conferences, including the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS) to disseminate their research findings and published works.

The grant pays for 60 percent of a student's costs and the university will pay the other 40 percent, allowing students to fully focus on their studies.

"It's a unique opportunity because we have strong research programs in sciences and a good pool of minority students who will qualify for the program," Ranjan said. "We want to help address a national need for diversity in STEM graduate education and especially in biomedical research."

It's estimated that around 33 percent of ODU's undergraduate students are classified as underrepresented minorities, a factor that weighed heavily in the decision to apply for the grant. However, the number of minority students drops significantly in graduate schools across the country, something the grant is designed to change.

The MARC program is the "gold standard for undergraduate research programs," Gail Dodge, dean of the College of Sciences, said.

"We are thrilled at the success of Dr. Holder and Dr. Ranjan in securing one of these very competitive MARC grants," Dodge said. "One of our priorities for the college is to increase opportunities for undergraduate research, and so we are happy to provide financial and logistical support for the MARC program."

"The idea is to see a culture shift both at the university and beyond," Holder said.

"It was hard work to get the grant, but the real hard work begins now," both Holder and Ranjan said. "It will be hard work for all involved because we want to prepare the students not only to go on to graduate school, but to succeed there. The program will be transformational not only for the individual students but ODU itself as it will significantly change the culture of involving undergraduate students, especially STEM minority students, in research."

The award will benefit students across campus, according to Austin Agho, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.





## FACULTY RECOGNITION

# CONGRATULATIONS

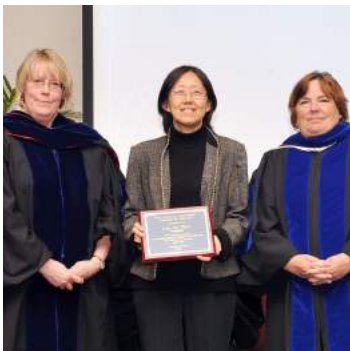
### Promotion & Tenure Announcements:



**Dr. Andrey Chernikov**  
Promoted to Associate Professor  
with tenure.



**Dr. Michele Weigle**  
Promoted to Professor.



### Dr. Jing He Outstanding Undergraduate Research Mentor

Dr. Jing He has guided 11 undergraduate students in individual research projects over the last three years. All of them were supported by the National Science Foundation research grant in computational development for cryo-electron microscopy data, scholarships of ODU and the Virginia Space Grant Consortium. Stephanie Zeil, Devin Haslam, and Michael Poteat each has a first-author journal or peer-reviewed conference paper as an undergraduate student. Five of the 11 students are co-authors of seven publications and contributed to three software tools.

1. Zeil, S., Kovacs, J., Wriggers, W., He, J. "A Method to Compare an Atomic Model and Its Cryo-EM Image at the Central Axis of a Helix" *Journal of Computational Biology*, 24(1), 52-67, 2017.

2. Poteat, M., He, J. "Modeling Beta-sheets using Iterative Bezier Surface Fitting on Cryo-EM Density maps" *Molecular Based Mathematical Biology*, 5, 31-9, 2017.

3. Haslam, D., Zubair, M., Ranjan, D., He, J. "Challenges in Matching Secondary Structures in Cryo-EM – an Exploration" *IEEE International Conference of Bioinformatics and Biomedicine (BIBM) Workshops*, Shenzhen, China, 1719-24, December 15-18, 2016.



### Mr. Lloyd Decker Distinguished Teaching Award - Adjunct Faculty

For the past two years Mr. Decker has served as adjunct faculty member, teaching CS 150 and CS 300T. Mr. Decker graduated with a Master's in Computer Science in May 2018 and will begin his doctoral studies this summer under advisor Dr. Stephen Olariu.

### Dr. Ravi Mukkamala

#### Faculty of the Year, International Student Advisory Board

Dr. Ravi Mukkamala received his PhD in Computer Science from the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, in 1987. He also received his MBA from Old Dominion University in 1993. Since 1987, he has been a faculty member with the CS Department where he is currently a Professor and Chair.



### Dr. Irwin B. Levinstein Scholarship Endowment

Our dear friend and long term colleague, Dr. Irwin Levinstein, retired in May 2016, after serving ODU in several capacities for 42 years, of which 32 years were in the Computer Science Department. His service as Assistant Chair of the department was remarkable. Graduate students in Computer Science knew him as the one who they should contact to get assistantships. He was also known for being the sole instructor for CS 450/550, the Database Concepts course, for over a decade. After his long association with the department and students, Irwin has now established an endowment to award a scholarship to graduate students who are currently underrepresented in the field of computer science. The department will start awarding this scholarship from 2019. Our sincere thanks to Irwin for his generosity and commitment to the CS department and its graduate students.



# ALL IN THE FAMILY

## Leaving Home

In the fall of 2003, Pratik Kothari left his family in India to pursue a Master's in Computer Science in the United States. It was fortunate for him that he landed in Norfolk, Virginia, at Old Dominion University, where he would find his niche and build his network.

Although he was far from his hometown, Pratik soon began to feel at home in the new city, particularly within the Computer Science department at the university. Ajay Gupta was very supportive from day one, giving initial assignments which connected the eager student with the Digital Library Research Group at ODU.

## ODU Highlights

The time spent with the research group was life-changing. Studying and working hard, Pratik's academic performance earned him the coveted and prestigious Dominion Scholarship.

Under the guidance and mentorship of then-Department Chair Dr. Kurt Maly and Dr. Mohammed Zubair, Pratik continued learning and expanding his research, going on to publish research papers such as "Grid Based Federated Digital Library." He enjoyed the tutelage of Computer Databases Professor Dr. Levinstein, Computer Networks Professor Dr. Mukkamala, and studied under the expert guidance of Dr. Stephan Olariu.

## Graduation

Pratik graduated from ODU with a 4.0 GPA. The experience, education, and supportive environment were invaluable, providing both critical knowledge as well as an intellectual network of great minds.

In 2004, while working on his master's, an internship at a company called reQUIRE opened new doors for Pratik. This startup enabled him to build a stellar development team to provide technical expertise around process automation and workflow processes for businesses. Pratik quickly rose to the position of Chief Technology Officer. This proved to be a learning experience that has been priceless for Pratik in his professional career.

## A New Home

Even as his friends from ODU moved away to bigger cities and opportunities, Pratik continued to enjoy life here in Hampton Roads, growing professionally with a local company that he loved. He decided to put down roots here and started his own business in 2012. His dream of opening an innovative digital agency located in the heart of downtown Norfolk came true when he started TechArk Solutions.

TechArk specializes in designing websites, developing software applications, and delivering creative marketing. Starting with only a handful of employees and clients, TechArk has grown to a global company of more than 50 employees with offices in both Norfolk and abroad. The company's dedication to client satisfaction is keeping their portfolio of clients growing—as is their reputation. Most recently, TechArk was the recipient of the Retail Alliance's Southside Service Award, and Pratik has been named one of CoVa BIZ's Millennials on the Move.

As Founder and CEO, Pratik takes his leadership role very seriously. Just as his mentors at Old Dominion University helped him, Pratik strives to do the same for others. In 2018, he joined the Entrepreneurs' Organization and will be in CIVIC Hampton Roads rising Class of 2019.

Pratik was fortunate enough to marry his high school sweetheart from India, Jinal, now an architect and proud owner of OneSpace Design Studio. They have two boys who keep them very busy. From humble beginnings to owning a commercial building in the historic Freemason District, the Kotharis are very proud of all that they've accomplished and the city they call home.

Always seeking new ways to learn and grow, Pratik is always looking to move forward, tackle new challenges, and strives to become a better person and a strong leader.



Pratik Kothari



**Ankit Kothari**

Ankit Kothari, an inventor and an accomplished author, is an alumnus of Old Dominion University where he pursued a Bachelor of Computer Science degree from 2001-2004. When Ankit moved from India to the U.S. in 2001, he was able to proudly call ODU's Computer Science department his second home, where he received tremendous support from his professors and other fellow students to create a solid foundation for a bright future. Ankit currently works at Capital One Bank, where he manages and leads the application resiliency efforts for more than 2,300 applications. Ankit is also the Co-Founder and Director of Innovation & Emerging Technologies at Be Topnotch, LLC, where he is in charge of inventions and research related to the latest technologies including self-driving vehicles, virtual reality, etc. Ankit has been featured in many newspapers nationally and internationally including the Richmond Times Dispatch, Inside Business, etc. as well as many NBC news features around the U.S. for his creative innovations.

There are three primary things Ankit learned within ODU's Computer Science department, which he is highly grateful for and recognizes them as the pillars of his success:

1. Problem solving abilities – ODU's Computer Science department not only taught him how to code or how to accomplish technical tasks but more importantly taught him how to handle any unexpected problems and at the same time come up with smart solutions to those problems. Ankit still remembers the part-time System Administrator job where he worked with Ajay Gupta at the Computer Science department while studying at ODU, which not only provided him the real-life work experience but also gave him the foundation to solve any unexpected problems without any hesitations.

2. Think out of the box – ODU's Computer Science professors always encouraged Ankit as well as other students to think innovatively and out of the box, which paved the way for Ankit to develop an innovative mindset being able to pursue so many inventions. Professors such as Ajay Gupta, Ravi Mukkamala, Jay Morris, Larry Wilson, Janet Brunelle, Kurt Maly, Irvin Levinstein, and Stephan Olario were truly instrumental in advising, guiding, and mentoring throughout his bachelor's degree program at ODU.

3. Outstanding focus on research & development – ODU's Computer Science department provided many opportunities for Ankit to pursue research and development activities as an undergraduate student. Ankit also worked with Dr. Kurt Maly, Department chair at the time, and Ajay Gupta on a IRI-h project sponsored by big companies around the world. Ankit also worked on the Oracle Financials project and many other groundbreaking projects. In addition, Ankit also worked with Professor Jay Morris on the Cluster research project and received an Honors college research grant for the same. Participation in such amazing research activities helped Ankit to learn from other master's as well as Ph.D. students and contributed in developing his interest towards research and development.

While pursuing his bachelor's degree in Computer Science at Old Dominion University, Ankit was recognized with the following awards:

- Outstanding Graduate of Computer Science – College of Sciences, ODU
- Electronic Document Systems Foundation Scholarship – EDSF (26 awards - worldwide)
- All-American Scholar Collegiate Award – United States Achievement Academy
- International Student Leadership Award – Four consecutive years
- Who's Who American Universities & Colleges award – Two years
- Nomination for USA Today's All-USA College Academic Team Awards – Nominated by ODU
- Quiet Influence Award, Student Services, Old Dominion University
- National Dean's List Award, National Dean's List – Two consecutive years
- The Cranmer-Skinner Honors Scholarship, Honors College, ODU
- Meghan O' Connor Award, Honors College, ODU
- Student Leader of the Month, Office of Student Activities & Leadership
- Dean's Perfect Scholar Award, College of Sciences, ODU
- Outstanding Academic Achievement Award, Office of International Programs, ODU

Undoubtedly, the environment at ODU and especially ODU's Computer Science department played a big role in providing a solid foundation for Ankit's career growth. Currently Ankit has multiple USPTO granted inventions of his own, including patents related to smartphones, autonomous self-driving vehicles, etc. Some people love to play golf or tennis as their hobby, similarly Ankit Kothari has a passion for inventions, wherein he loves to invent as well as appreciating other people's inventions.

Ankit Kothari is also a co-founder of Positive Pasta Publishing and the author of the Positive Learning for Kids book series (four books in the series are currently available on Amazon.com, and other Amazon websites in Canada, India, Europe, BN.com, etc.). The intent of his children's book series is to teach positive concepts, good habits, and values to children at an early age. Rather than A is for Apple, B is for Ball, C is for Cat, etc., he intends to teach kids A is for Ambition, B is for Brave, C is for Confidence, etc. at an early age, so children can have a solid foundation and attain success in their future.

Ankit married Hemanki Kothari in 2008, where she has whole-heartedly supported and partnered with Ankit in all initiatives and currently leads both Be Topnotch, LLC and Positive Pasta Publishing as CEO for both family-owned companies. Hemanki is also an inventor herself and was also recognized as one of two recipients in 2017 for the Breakthrough Technology award from RVATECH's Women in Technology organization. Ankit and Hemanki have two young children, 3 and 6, who are enjoying their childhood and love of pursuing creative craft activities. Ankit often tells stories from his ODU days to his children about how his life changed for the better after attending Old Dominion University and the amazing time he had at the Computer Science department at ODU.





# GRADUATION

On May 4, 2018 we celebrated our 40 MS and 5 PhD graduates for the 2017-2018 academic year (Fall 2017 - Summer 2018).

We invited family and friends to our annual ceremony, where each student received a certificate and recognition by the faculty.

Of our 40 MS graduates, five received a MS with concentration in Computer Information Systems, two completed the MS degree fully online, and four completed the research-based MS thesis track. MS thesis graduate, Lloyd Decker, will be continuing his graduate studies in the PhD program here, working with Dr. Olariu.

Our five PhD graduates have all found excellent positions in industry or academia:  
-Dr. Kamesh Arumugam (advisors: Dr. Zubair, Dr. Ranjan) - is now Developer Technology Engineer at NVIDIA

- Dr. Abdulla Alasaadi (advisor: Dr. Nadeem) is now Assistant Professor at the University of Bahrain

- Dr. Ibrahim Ben Mustafa (advisor: Dr. Nadeem) is now Assistant Professor at the University of North Georgia

- Dr. Ahmed Salam (advisor: Dr. Nadeem) is now Software Engineer at Amazon Web Services

- Dr. Maha Abdelrasoul (advisor: Dr. Li) is now Assistant Professor at West Chester University

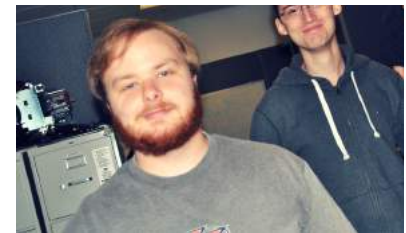
The entire department extends a heartfelt congratulations to all of our 2017-2018 graduates. We wish you all the best in your future endeavors. Please keep in touch and come back to visit!



## Thanks To Our Staff



(From left to right) Josh Farr, Nihal Benkraine, Ms. Phyllis Woods, and Ms. Ariel Sturtevant



Nick Cason

**We couldn't have done it without you.**

## Stay in the loop...

The Department of Computer Science is working to improve our communications with our alumni.

Please fill out the survey at  
<https://graduate.cs.odu.edu/alumni/>

We'd love to hear any other comments about your job or the job search process that might help future graduates





**PLEASE JOIN**

*Hampton Roads*

*CS Alumni*

AT O'CONNOR BREWING CO.

**ENJOY SPEAKERS, INTRODUCTIONS OF STAFF,  
AND MIXING & MINGLING WITH FELLOW ALUMNI**

**Date:** Thursday, November 8th

**Location:** O'Connor Brewing Co.

211 W. 24th Street

Norfolk, VA 23517

**Time:** 6:00pm - 8:00pm

**RSVP:** Please Register online by October 26th. Click the link below

<http://www.odualumni.org/s/1672/index.aspx?>

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