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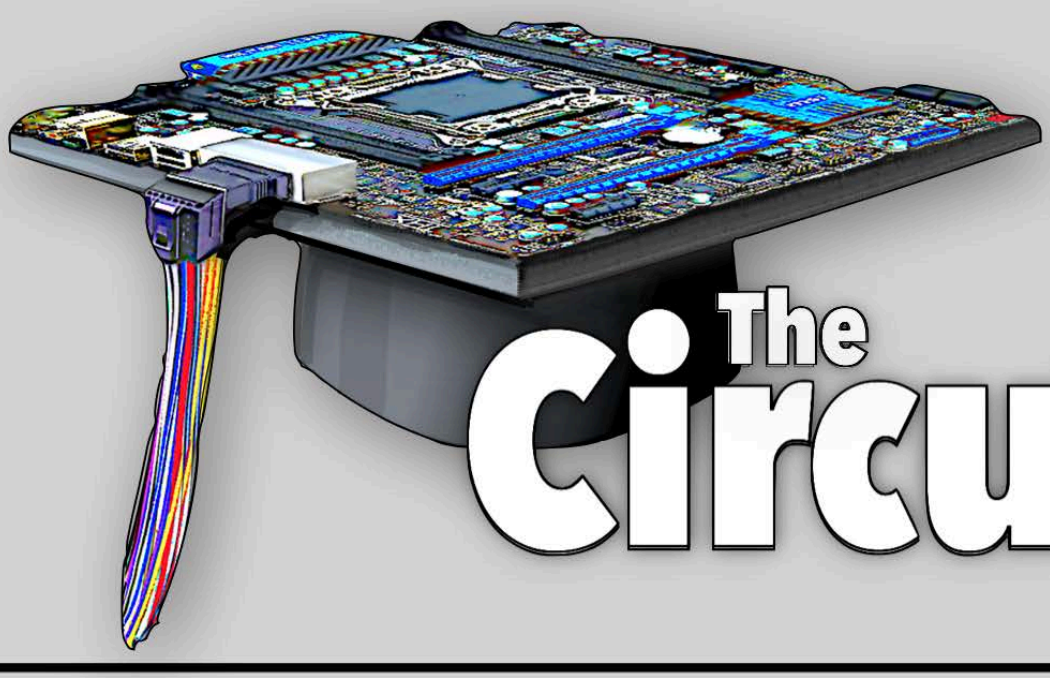


The Circuit

News from the halls of academic engineering & technology

February 2020

Data scientists scramble to keep doctors one step ahead of 'the enemy'

While public-health officials track the spread of the deadly coronavirus, computer scientists are attempting to go one step further: They're developing programs to *predict* the contagion's next moves. According to *IEEE Spectrum*, flagship magazine of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, at least 80 to 100 data-research teams around the world are focused on some aspect of the virus, which causes the respiratory illness COVID-19. Some teams, the publication reports, are doing phylogenetic analyses and mobility modeling; others are "forecasting, now-casting, and doing long-term projection analysis." A team overseen by Alessandro Vespignani, a computer scientist at Boston's Northeastern University, has developed EpiRisk, a tool that estimates the probability that infected individuals will spread the disease via travel. "In our field," Vespignani told *Spectrum*, "there are two different kinds of work: peacetime research, when there are no health emergencies or threats, and then there is what we call 'wartime,' and that's what we're in now. … The fighters of the battle are the doctors, nurses, and public-health people in the field. They are the ones risking their lives. What we do as computer scientists and computational epidemiologists is provide them with intelligence to anticipate the move of the enemy." **READ MORE**

EpiRisk estimates the likelihood that infected individuals will spread disease via travel.

Union College

Texas Instruments CEO Rich Templeton and his wife, Mary, listen to Union College President David R. Harris. The couple said they've been mulling ways to make a difference since 2013, when an accident left Mary paralyzed below the waist.

Union College technology programs receive $51 million boost from alums

Four decades after they met as undergraduates at a Union College snack bar, Rich and Mary (Haanen) Templeton returned to the Schenectady, New York, campus this month to announce a $51 million donation. The gift, the largest in the school's 225-year history, will support the establishment of the Templeton Institute for Engineering and Computer Science. Rich, who graduated from Union with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering, is chair, president, and CEO of Texas Instruments. Mary, who earned a bachelor's degree in computer science and economics, had a 14-year career with General Electric. "Union is obviously very special to us, and, in retrospect, it is the foundation upon which we started our lives and the foundation on which we raised our family," she said at an announcement ceremony. "We believe we can make a difference for Union by helping to strengthen liberal arts and engineering for generations to come." Rich lauded Union for seeking to meld the sciences and engineering with the arts and humanities. "It doesn't just make sense," he said. "It makes *absolute sense*." Union President David R. Harris said the donation will be used to create a new deanship and 14 faculty positions; introduce additional technology courses; and support an initiative to expand the number of women graduating with engineering and computer-science degrees. Earlier in the day, the college formally dedicated a $100 million, 142,000-square-foot Integrated Science and Engineering Complex. **READ MORE**

Union College

Zineb Hajjaj, a senior majoring in mechanical engineering, speaks at the dedication of Union College's Integrated Science and Engineering Complex. She said the building "complements the vast and rich history of Union College with a touch of brightness and modernity."

UCLA does an about-face on the use of controversial surveillance software

UCLA has dropped plans to use facial-recognition technology for on-campus security surveillance, *Inside Higher Ed* reports. The university first floated the possibility last year as part of a broader security proposal. According to the online news outlet, students raised concerns during a comment period last summer and at several town-hall meetings this school year. To underscore the technology's fallibility, Fight for the Future, a national digital rights advocacy organization, ran photos of more than 400 UCLA athletes and faculty members through a leading facial-recognition program. The subjects in 58 of the images were misidentified as individuals in a mug-shot database, and, in some of those instances, the software claimed to have made the match "with 100 percent confidence." Most of the false positives involved people of color, *Inside Higher Ed* noted. "This victory at UCLA will send a pretty strong message to any other administration who is considering doing this," said Evan Greer, deputy director of Fight for the Future. "It's not going to be worth the backlash." **READ MORE**

Elon University's 10-year strategic plan calls for a new engineering school

Elon University

Elon University President Connie Book says the 2030 strategic plan *Boldly Elon*, unveiled at a kickoff celebration in Alumni Gym on February 11, will dictate the university's actions over the coming decade. The plan, 18 months in the making, incorporated the ideas and suggestions of more than 150 students, faculty members, staffers, alumni, and trustees. Book says 96.9 percent of the goals outlined in the last strategic plan, *The Elon Commitment*, were completed.

Elon University has unveiled an ambitious 10-year strategic plan that outlines various STEM-focused initiatives, including the establishment of new schools of engineering and nursing. "In terms of engineering, nursing, and STEM in general, the programs that students today are looking for, tomorrow we will have," said Jeff Stein, vice president for strategic initiatives and co-chair of the 2030 strategic plan, *Boldly Elon*, released earlier this month. A key element of the plan is an "Innovation Quad" to house the new School of Engineering, which will build upon the four-year engineering degree that the university introduced in fall 2018. Elon President Connie Book said the university will appoint a committee to determine the structure of the new school, including the majors it will offer. "Last time we did a major construction project for STEM was McMichael Science Center — and that was *1998*," Book said. "Since then, the majors in STEM have increased by 300 percent. If you look at the outlook for employment, it is where the employment growth is." The committee that produced the *Boldly Elon* plan sees the planned School of Engineering as a way to compete with established engineering schools such as North Carolina State University. The challenge is that "Elon is starting an engineering program 100 years later than NC State," Book said. On the upside, she said, Elon has the advantage of a clean slate, which will enable it to create innovative spaces that are "more future-oriented" than what other universities have to offer. **READ MORE**

Yale University

"Science Hill," a 36-acre site located just north of Yale University's main campus, is devoted primarily to the physical and biological sciences. Since 2013, the university has spent some $500 million on improvements in the area.

Yale weighs a facility for quantum science, engineering, and materials research

Yale University is poised to develop a state-of-the-art facility that it says could transform the pursuit of quantum science, engineering, and materials research. Earlier this month, Provost Scott A. Strobel created two working groups to examine Yale's "Science Hill" as the site for the envisioned building. One will explore how the new space could best integrate existing resources from various engineering and physical-science disciplines. The other group will advise the university on the technology and instrumentation that should be included in a new facility. Both groups are expected to submit their initial recommendations this spring, officials said. In 2018, the University Science Strategy Committee identified quantum science, engineering, and materials research as a "high-priority investment area" for Yale. "Bringing separate disciplines together to work on a related area of strength will build important momentum," Strobel said. "The development of novel technologies strengthens this approach and can also influence or inspire other disciplines." Since 2013, Yale has invested some $500 million in new buildings and renovations on Science Hill. **READ MORE**

UC-Berkeley's new data division gets a name intended to reflect its breadth

Fifteen months after its creation, the University of California-Berkeley's interdisciplinary division has a permanent name: the Division of Computing, Data Science, and Society (CDSS). The division encompasses the Data Science Education Program, the School of Information, and the Berkeley Institute for Data Science, and it incorporates elements of the Departments of Statistics and Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences. It also will feature the Data Science Commons, designed to advance promising cross-disciplinary programs. "The name Computing, Data Science, and Society reflects the Division's substance, range, and ambitions," Paul Alivisatos, executive vice chancellor and provost, and Jennifer Chayes, associate provost for CDSS, wrote in this month's formal announcement. The administrators said the university gathered "valuable input from a wide range of stakeholders" across the campus before settling on the moniker. **READ MORE**

Innovators podcast

"Building elegant technological solutions to complex scientific problems"

Klemen Zupancic, PhD

CEO of SciNote, producer of an electronic lab platform for academia and industry

RECENT *INNOVATORS* PODCASTS

- "How to deliver expanded research opportunities at medical institutions," featuring Jeffrey Joyce, PhD, senior associate dean for research and graduate programs at Florida State University **LISTEN**
- "Tearing down walls – one relationship at a time," featuring Raquel Tamez, JD, CEO of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers **LISTEN**
- "The role of the land-grant university," featuring Susan Fritz, PhD, executive vice president and provost of the University of Nebraska **LISTEN**
- "Beware the weakest link: Global food security depends on a sound supply chain," featuring Eleftherios Iakovou, PhD, director of manufacturing and logistics innovation initiatives at Texas A&M's Engineering Experiment Station **LISTEN**
- "One Health: the *other* universal healthcare," featuring Michael D. Lairmore, DVM, PhD, dean of the University of California-Davis School of Veterinary Medicine **LISTEN**
- "Attracting international students to U.S. engineering program," featuring Leo Kempel, PhD, dean of the College of Engineering at Michigan State University **LISTEN**
- "The importance of partnerships in academia and healthcare," featuring Charles Taylor, PharmD, provost and executive vice president of academic affairs at the University of North Texas **LISTEN**

In Transition

Raj Acharya, PhD, dean of Indiana University's Luddy School of Informatics, Computing and Engineering, will become associate vice president for research and AI innovation on March 16. In his new role, Acharya will develop the Indiana AI Collaboration Center, which will work with industry and the military to develop practical AI applications in areas such as cybersecurity, supply chain integrity, and fraud detection.

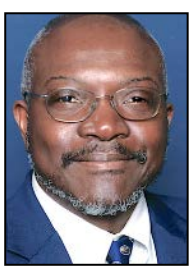
Theodore A. Betley, PhD, the Erving Professor of Chemistry in Harvard University's Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, will serve as the department's interim co-chair. Betley, a member of Harvard's faculty since 2007, leads the Betley Research Group, which focuses on synthetic inorganic chemistry. He received the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers in 2013.

Reginald S. Blaylock, EdD, special assistant for student success partnerships at California State Polytechnic University-Pomona, has been appointed presidential associate for community, campus partnerships and student experience. Blaylock's new responsibilities will include "expanding connections and partnerships with historically underserved communities," the university said in a news release.

Kathryn J. Boor, PhD, the Ronald P. Lynch Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University, will step down when her second term ends in June. Boor has held the position for the past 10 years, overseeing 3,800 undergraduate students, 1,000 graduate students, and 23 majors. Boor joined Cornell in 1994 as the first female faculty member in the Food Science Department.

Curtis D. Byrd, EdD, has been named special adviser to the provost at Georgia State University. An expert on diversity, equity, and inclusion in higher education, Byrd most recently served as research associate and consultant for the HBCU STEM Undergraduate Success Center at Morehouse College. He also served as assistant dean of graduate enrollment at Clark Atlanta University.

Lance Collins, PhD, the Joseph Silbert Dean of Engineering at Cornell University, will join Virginia Tech as inaugural vice president and executive director of its Innovation Campus, scheduled to open in Alexandria in 2024. Collins, who will start on August 1, was instrumental in Cornell's establishment of Cornell Tech, a graduate campus that opened in 2017 on New York's Roosevelt Island.



Ron Darbeau, PhD, dean of the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith (UAFS) College of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics and interim dean of the College of Health Sciences, has been named provost and vice president for academic affairs at Pennsylvania's Lock Haven University. Darbeau previously spent 19 years at McNeese State University, where he chaired the Department of Chemistry and Physics.

Steve Gammon, PhD, has been named provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at Montana Tech in Butte. Gammon will replace Douglas Abbott, who is returning to teaching in the university's Business & Information Technology Department. Gammon most recently served as dean of Montana Tech's College of Letters, Sciences, and Professional Studies.

Dennis P. Groth, PhD, vice provost for undergraduate education at Indiana University (IU), has been named interim dean of the Luddy School of Informatics, Computing and Engineering, effective March 16. Groth, a computer scientist by training, is a professor of informatics at IU. Luddy Dean Raj Acharya, PhD, is assuming a newly created leadership role within IU's Office of the Vice President for Research.

Kenneth (Chris) Holford, PhD, has been appointed provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs at Purdue University Northwest. He has served the university for more than 18 years, most recently as dean of the College of Engineering and Sciences and as a professor of biology. Previously, Holford was dean of the College of Sciences and chair of the Department of Biology and Chemistry at Purdue University North Central.

Tristan Johnson, PhD, has joined Boston College's Woods College of Advancing Studies as associate dean for graduate programs. Johnson most recently served at Northeastern University's College of Engineering, where he was assistant dean of multidisciplinary graduate education and digital learning. At Boston College, he will oversee Woods' portfolio of professionally oriented degree and certificate programs.

Zoranna Jones, PhD, has been named inaugural assistant dean for the School of Interdisciplinary Studies at Texas Christian University (TCU) in Fort Worth, Texas. Jones most recently as director of the Academic Resource Center at TCU's Harris College of Nursing & Health Sciences, and director of TCU's STEM Scholar Program, which she established for TCU and will continue to oversee in her new role.

Daniel Kahne, PhD, the Higgins Professor of Chemistry and Chemical Biology at Harvard University's Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, will serve as the department's interim co-chair. Kahne, who joined Harvard's faculty in 2004, studies antibiotic resistance. He was elected to the National Academy of Sciences last May and presented with the Gordon Hammes Lectureship Award in July.

Ravi Krovi, PhD, has been named provost and vice president of academic affairs at Utah's Weber State University, effective March 1. Krovi, whose research focus is information management, comes from the University of Akron, where he served as a professor, director of the Center for Information Technologies and eBusiness, chair of the Department of Management, and dean of the College of Business Administration.

Charles M. Lieber, PhD, chair of Harvard University's Department of Chemistry and Chemical Biology, has been placed on "indefinite" paid administrative leave after being charged in federal court with failing to disclose funding from the Chinese government, the *Harvard Crimson* reports. Lieber reportedly lied to the Defense Department and the National Institutes of Health about ties to China's Thousand Talents Plan.

Camille Lizarríbar, PhD, JD, dean of student affairs at Yale University and senior associate dean of Yale College since 2015, will leave her position at the end of the spring semester to become dean of student affairs and chief student affairs officer for the Schools of Arts & Sciences and Engineering at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts.

Pedro J. Mago, PhD, has been named the Glen H. Hiner Dean of the Benjamin M. Statler College of Engineering and Mineral Resources at West Virginia University, effective July 1. Mago has served as PACCAR Chair Professor and head of the Mechanical Engineering Department at Mississippi State University's Bagley College of Engineering, the third-largest department at the university, since 2014.

Theresa Mayer, PhD, executive vice president for research and partnerships at Purdue University, has been appointed to the U.S. President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST). The Purdue alumna returned to her alma mater in August, after spending three years as vice president for research and innovation and professor of electrical and computer engineering at Virginia Tech.

Katia Passerini, PhD, an authority on information and decision systems, has been appointed provost and executive vice president of Seton Hall University, effective on July 1. Passerini is currently dean of the Lesley H. and William L. Collins College of Professional Studies at St. John's University. Previously, Passerini served as dean of the Albert Dorman Honors College at the New Jersey Institute of Technology.

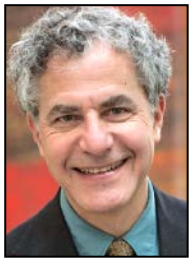
Darryll J. Pines, PhD, the Nariman Farvardin Professor of Aerospace Engineering and dean of the Clark School of Engineering at the University of Maryland since 2009, has been named the university's president, effective July 1. Pines, who joined Maryland's faculty in 1995, will succeed Wallace Loh, PhD, JD, who announced in October 2018 that he would step down; Loh subsequently delayed his retirement.

Reeta Prusty Rao, PhD, professor of biology and biotechnology at Massachusetts' Worcester Polytechnic Institute, has been appointed the university's associate dean of graduate studies. In this new role, Rao, a member of Worcester's faculty since 2005, will focus on developing graduate curriculum and professional programs. Her own research is focused on understanding and managing fungal diseases.

Suzanne Rivera, PhD, has been named 17th president of Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. Rivera, who will start this summer, is currently vice president for research and technology management at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. She previously held administrative posts at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center and the University of California-Irvine.

Timothy Sherwood, PhD, has been named vice president for academic affairs, at Maryland's Harford Community College. Sherwood comes from Oakland Community College in Michigan, where he was dean of mathematics and sciences and later associate vice chancellor for academic affairs. He taught for 22 years, first at Arkansas Tech University and subsequently at Pennsylvania's Westminster College.

Carmen Simone, PhD, has been named the sixth president of Western Nebraska Community College in Scottsbluff. Simone, a chemist by training, most recently served as founding vice president and dean at the University of South Dakota Community College for Sioux Falls. She previously held posts at Trinidad State Junior College, Lewis-Clark State College, and Casper College.



Michael Sipser, PhD, will step down as dean of the MIT School of Science after a six-year tenure marked by the launch of key initiatives and the upgrading of facilities across the school's six academic departments. With 280 faculty members, the school is MIT's second-largest. On June 30, Sipser, a theoretical computer scientist, will return to the faculty, where he is the Donner Professor of Mathematics.

Hazel Sive, PhD, a developmental biologist, will become dean of Northeastern University's College of Science in June. Sive has been a member of the faculty of the MIT Department of Biology since 1991. The South Africa native, who also is active in the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research, founded the MIT-Africa Initiative and MISTI-Africa Internships, which sends students to multiple African countries.

Laura J. Steinberg, PhD, has been named the inaugural Seidner Family Executive Director of the Schiller Institute for Integrated Science and Society at Boston College. Steinberg, who will start in May, is currently interim executive director of the Syracuse Center of Excellence for Environmental and Energy Systems at Syracuse University and founding director of that university's Infrastructure Institute.

Scott A. Strobel, PhD, became provost of Yale University last month. Strobel, the Henry Ford II Professor of Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry, has held numerous posts at Yale, including chair of the Department of Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry (2006-2009), deputy provost for teaching and learning (2014-2019), and vice provost for science initiatives (2019).

Simran Trana, MBA, has been named associate vice president of Indiana University's Innovation and Commercialization Office. Trana, a plant geneticist by training, has 15 years of experience in product development and licensing, most recently with Corteva Agriscience (formerly Dow AgroSciences), a division of DowDuPont. She previously was director of technology commercialization for the Purdue Research Foundation.

Darin Van Pelt, BSME, has joined the University of Mississippi School of Engineering as director of engineering engagement. In his new role, Van Pelt also will work closely with the Center for Manufacturing Excellence (CME). Van Pelt, an Ole Miss alumnus, spent more than 18 years in aerospace engineering, most recently as a co-founder of ABL Space Systems. He previously worked with Elon Musk's SpaceX.

Gregory Washington, PhD, dean of the Henry Samueli School of Engineering at the University of California-Irvine, will become George Mason University's first African-American president on July 1. Washington, a researcher specializing in dynamic systems, will succeed Ángel Cabrera, who left in August to become president of Georgia Tech. Former state Education Secretary Anne Holton is interim president.

Christine Wilson, PhD, director of undergraduate programs for Kansas State University's Agricultural Economics Department, has been appointed associate dean and director of academic programs for Purdue University's College of Agriculture. She succeeds Marcos Fernandez, PhD, who served in the position for eight years before stepping down to join the faculty in the college's Department of Animal Sciences.

Lisa Wood, PhD, clinical associate professor in the Department of Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences at the University of Arkansas' Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences, has been named assistant dean for international and honors programs. Wood, a member of Arkansas' faculty since 2012, had served as director of Bumpers College's international programs since January 2018.

S. David Wu, PhD, provost and executive vice president of Virginia's George Mason University, will become the eighth president of Baruch College on July 1. He will be the first Asian-American to lead a City University of New York (CUNY) college. Before joining George Mason in 2014, Wu was dean of the P.C. Rossin College of Engineering & Applied Science at Pennsylvania's Lehigh University.

C.K. Ken Yang, PhD, a professor of electrical and computer engineering at UCLA's Samueli School of Engineering, has been appointed chair of the school's Electrical and Computer Engineering Department, effective July 1. He succeeds Greg Pottie, department chair since 2015. Yang, who joined Samueli in 1998, is an expert on mixed analog-and-digital circuit design.

Our headlines

University at Buffalo enlists Harris Search Associates to guide the search for the director of the school's Institute for Computational Data Sciences

Harris Search Associates recruits North Carolina Central University's Mildred A. Pointer, PhD, as chair of the Department of Biology at Howard University

University of North Texas Health Science Center turns to Harris Search Associates to find its next associate dean for academic affairs

Harris Search Associates recruits Michael Markiewicz, DDS, MD, as chair of the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at the University at Buffalo

Harris Search Associates recruits Ernest Minton, PhD, as dean of agriculture and director of research and extension at Kansas State University

Harris Search Associates recruits William A. Prescott Jr., PharmD, as chair of the Department of Pharmacy Practice at the University at Buffalo

Learn how Harris Search Associates can help you and your institution

Last word

"It worked for the Egyptians, so it will work for us."

— **A competitor** in the Johns Hopkins Whiting School of Engineering's annual "Tower of Power" challenge, in which teams from Baltimore-area middle schools celebrate National Engineers Week by competing to erect the tallest structure — using only marshmallows and uncooked spaghetti

(The results: The aforementioned builder, part of the team from Friends School of Baltimore, ended up winning with a pyramid measuring 67 inches.)

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4236 Tuller Road
Dublin, OH 43017
Phone: 614-798-8500

SOUTHERN REGION OFFICE
13155 Noel Road
Dallas, TX 75240
Phone: 972-686-0030

WESTERN REGION OFFICE
388 Market Street
San Francisco, CA 94111
Phone: 415-817-9000

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