

Seth Cattanach

Graduation Year: Junior

College: Engineering

Major(s): Computer Engineering

Minors(s): Engineering Corporate Practice

Scholar Group Membership: N/A

Did you received other funding for this project?: N/A

Could you have completed this project without CUSE funding? No

More details on CUSE funding assistance? The total cost for the conference - including registration fees, airfare, and lodging - was over \$800, and there were no other funding sources available specifically for this type of professional conference I had access to. As I rely heavily on financial aid to attend Notre Dame and use internship/on campus work earnings to help pay for tuition, I would not have had the resources available to attend this conference without financial assistance from CUSE.

Project Title: PyData NYC 2018

Project Location: New York, New York

ND Faculty Mentor: Shreya Kumar

Project Type: Conference - Attendance

Why did you undertake this project/experience? Deepen your knowledge of a topic or issue, Prepare for graduate school (MA or PhD), Career discernment and/or preparation

Did your funded experience help you:

[Deepen your understanding of your coursework or field of study]: Very Much

[Discern your interests and post-bac goals]: Very Much

[Become confident in your ability to set and achieve your goals]: A Little

[Gain a more nuanced view of local, national, or global communities]: A Little

[Improve your written and verbal communications skills]: Yes

Tell us about your experience.

On Wednesday and Thursday, I attended presentations, discussion panels, and workshops revolving around data science best practices in a variety of industries. I attended a total of 16 of these events across the two days, and in between sessions, there were opportunities to network with sponsor companies and other conference attendees. I had great discussions about data science in the financial industry - something I had not previously considered - with representatives from Stripe and Goldman Sachs, learned about graduate opportunities from representatives of IBM, and discussed different applications of predictive modelling in the healthcare industry from data scientists at UnitedHealth and FlatIron Health.

On Wednesday evening, there was a formal reception and networking dinner for all conference participants, sponsored by FlatIron and hosted at Microsoft's Times Square office.

Describe the impact this project had, both on you as a student-scholar and on the people you worked with.

Conference attendance at PyData NYC introduced me to skills and projects that are common in today's rapidly-growing data science world - and highlighted how applicable these skills are in many different industries. This was a fantastic opportunity to learn about post-graduation opportunities related to data science: I explored the possibility of a data science M.S. program in much greater depth than I had previously considered, and made connections with many individuals who can potentially introduce me to industry careers once I graduate. Two such industries, healthcare and financial services, were especially interesting; my favorite presentation of the entire conference was about using data science and machine learning techniques to identify, predict, and prevent credit card fraud.

In addition, I was able to represent Notre Dame to a community of international data scientists, many of whom were curious about my program - they asked what classes I had taken or will be taking and what sorts of opportunities I've had in my undergraduate experience. I think there are strong benefits to the Notre Dame community, and especially to the computer science and engineering department, to have this sort of visibility and representation at such a diverse conference.

Describe how this experience is connected to your plans as a student or future professional.

Attendance at PyData made me consider a technical M.S. program to a much greater extent. I learned about masters programs in computational data science at two highly-regarded universities - Carnegie Mellon and MIT - and had the opportunity to speak with many professional who have gone through similar programs. I believe such a program would prepare me for many different data science positions in almost any industry, and I was happy to learn these programs are typically structured to promote professional careers rather than strictly academia and research.

What advice would you give other students who are planning to pursue similar projects?

Take advantage of every opportunity while you're at a conference - make a point to ask at least one question of every presenter, get their contact information, reach out on LinkedIn, and ask them for small pieces of advice. At PyData, everyone was extremely passionate about open-source software, something I've been interested in for a while but have never know how to "get in the door" and begin working on projects. At the conference, every individual I spoke with had an idea for how I could become involved, and already this week, I've begun exploring some of these projects and attempting to make contributions.

I acknowledge that this form has been filled out truthfully and to the best of my ability. I understand that this information will be shared with many different CUSE constituencies. As such, I have provided as much useful information as I was able. I understand that CUSE will not

complete my award disbursement until this form is successfully completed. If I have any questions or concerns, I will contact CUSE before submitting this form. To illustrate that you understand all of these points, please enter your Notre Dame email in the box below.
scattana@nd.edu
