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Undergraduate Course on Business Intelligence at the Wright State University Raj Soin College of Business

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Business intelligence (BI) tools enable senior, middle, and line managers to better understand their current operations and determine future strategies. There is a growing recognition among business professionals that the practices relating to BI are crucial for evaluating organizational performance, charting new directions, and everyday decision-making. According to Ziff Davis Enterprise, BI experts are ranked as the #1 job in the information technology sector for 2009.

Organizations can apply BI in a variety of areas. For instance, for the purposes of managing their supply chain, they can utilize customer relationship management (CRM) and enterprise resource planning (ERP). BI enables organizations to obtain a unified and holistic view of the enterprise operations across its many facilities and divisions such that organizational managers are empowered to make informed decisions. Decision-making is informed and enhanced by such BI staples as dynamic visualizations, enterprise dashboards, and performance scorecards in near real-time, powered by data warehouses containing information on the organization's CRM or ERP-supported activities.

Beginning January 2009, Raj Soin College of Business at Wright State University offers a course on BI for undergraduate business majors. The course introduces students to a variety of topics related to BI such as business analytics, data visualization, reports and queries, scorecards and dashboards, online analytical processing, data cubes, star schemas, data warehousing, data mining, multidimensional databases, and business performance management. Students are also introduced to various BI software tools such as MicroStrategy, Teradata, and Tableau. The course enables students to get hands-on training on various tools and be able to create high-impact visualizations, dashboards, and analy-

tics for executive and operational decision-making. Student learning was also enhanced by the online resources of the Teradata Student Network, made available gratis to students pursuing BI and data warehouse knowledge. Further, students also had the opportunity to use data mining software as well as anonymized real-world databases containing data on several millions of records from organizations such as Sams Club (55 million records) and Dillards (128 million records) made available gratis for learning purposes by the Walton College of Business at the University of Arkansas.

Students are also exposed to cutting edge industry practices through the academe/industry connections with leading proponents of BI practices. During the

Winter quarter, for instance, subject matter experts from two organizations — Teradata Corporation and QBase LLC in Dayton — visited Wright State University and shared their insights and experiences in the field of BI. Alison Torres, Director at Teradata Corporation in New Jersey, introduced students to the world of Teradata warehouses; ways in which enterprise data warehouses can be conceived, developed, and maintained; how organizations can engage in active enterprise intelligence; ways in which enterprise data warehouses can be mined; and how enterprise analytics may be used by organizational managers. Calvin Barber, Vice President of Data Analytics at QBase, and Chuck Backus, Chief Technology Officer at QBase, introduced students to the actual processes and activities, such as data cleansing, normalization, and transform, involved in setting up the data warehouses with acceptable data and a single version of the truth; and demonstrated their proprietary products: QBase Data Discovery and QBase Data Transformer.

Industry reports project that the demand for BI experts will continue to grow as organizations realize the power of BI.

If you are interested in learning more about the BI course, please contact Anand Jeyaraj at anand.jeyaraj@wright.edu.