Grad Students & Data+: Project Management

Data+ Project Managers are Duke grad students and post docs from a wide variety of disciplines, who liaise between the Data+ project client and the Data+ project team of undergraduate students. Project Managers help to translate client expectations to students, and to translate team challenges to the client. Project Managers also provide expertise from their disciplines to project teams.

In return for their contributions to the Data+ program, Project Managers are eligible for a $2,500 professional development reimbursement grant that can be used for conference travel, educational materials, texts, and more within one year of program completion.

Data+ Project Managers also get the opportunity for professional contacts and skill building in project management. Most Data+ Project Managers are managing projects for the first time – a skill that employers look for that students do not often have. Project Managers also learn from each other in a low-pressure, communal environment. With about 24 other Project Managers doing a similar thing with their project teams, there is a cohort to discuss challenges and solutions in project management. Additionally, Project Managers gain opportunities to present their team's work to industry and university partners and leadership (including Durham City Council).

Past Data+ Project Managers have reported the Data+ experience being not only formative and valuable, but frequently helping them in finding a job after leaving Duke. Project Management on a Data+ team is something employers are very interested in!

Please contact Paul Bendich at bendich@math.duke.edu if you would like to discuss being a Data+ project manager.

Read further to hear what some of our past Project Managers have to say about Data+:

Willem van den Boom, Statistics, Controlled Substance Monitoring Visualization:
It changed my perception of how a large variety of skill sets can work together to solve a data science problem.

Greg Malen, Statistics, MyHealthTeams Data Exploration and Visualization:
It was really my first experience working with data, and I found the challenges my students ran into in trying to clean our data surprising. Implementing the code for our primary visualization turned out to be the easiest part of the whole process.

Isaac Lavine, Statistics, Quantifying Rare Diseases in Duke Health System:
I've gained an appreciation for the all-important data "pre-processing" that takes up the vast majority of the effort when working with health data.

Stefan Waldschmidt, English, Quantified Feminism and the Bechdel Test:
I gained valuable program management experience. Given that after the program was over I was hired as a consultant manager at CollegeVine, I'd say it paid off.

Anonymous Electrical Engineering mentor:

I gained firsthand experience doing research in a small team and really valued having the opportunity to give input into the direction of our project. I also learned a lot firsthand about managing the work of other people.

Anonymous Statistics mentor:
I am so impressed with my students; if anything, I have gained an idea of what the participants are capable of with little guidance from me. Don't get me wrong, I also put in a lot of work! But my students did a fantastic job of working independently, and they were diligent about coming to me with questions only after they had exhaustively searched many possible solutions first.