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Message from SIM

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Message from the SIM Chief Executive

The SIM Academic Council has organized three research subgroups to identify research opportunities which address the Key Trends and Issues in the 2019 SIM IT Trends Study. These three research subgroups are focusing on: (1) Cybersecurity; (2) CIO leadership; and (3) Data analytics.

The Cybersecurity sub-group, led by a team consisting of Dan Mazzola (Arizona State), Keri Pearson (MIT), Chris Maurer (University of Virginia), Tom Kaczmarek (Marquette) and Mary Sumner (Southern Illinois University Edwardsville), has developed an on-line survey to identify cybersecurity skills, knowledge and competencies for both entry-level candidates and early-career professionals (with 5 - 7 years' experience). The survey includes an assessment of technical skills and soft skills.

To date, SIM leaders in the St. Louis, Milwaukee, and Austin, Texas Chapters have provided input into the cybersecurity skills study, with 32 responses. In each of these SIM Chapters, the findings have created an opportunity for dialogues between academic leaders and industry leaders to discuss the talent gap in cybersecurity. In upcoming months, the SIM Chapters in Phoenix, Houston, and Dallas-Fort Worth will contribute their input to the cybersecurity skills survey.

Findings from the St. Louis, Milwaukee, and Austin Chapters indicate:

- Top in-demand technical cybersecurity skills for entry-level people include vulnerability assessment, knowledge of cybersecurity frameworks, tools to detect issues (SIEM), and incident response.
- Top-in-demand professional skills for entry-level candidates include critical thinking skills, attention to detail, and problem-solving skills.
- In terms of "early-career" technical skills for cybersecurity, knowledge of cybersecurity frameworks, vulnerability

assessment, and risk assessment maintained precedence.

- In terms of "early-career" professional skills for cybersecurity professionals, critical thinking and problem solving skills maintained precedence; time management and project management skills moved up in importance, along with relationship management.

In the months' ahead, the Cybersecurity Research Group will continue to collect data and populate the findings with additional responses. This input will help determine the gaps in skills and knowledge so that academic leaders can plan and design courses and programs to provide the cybersecurity talent that industry leaders are looking for.

The CIO Leadership research sub-group, led by Tony Gerth (University of North Texas), is addressing the IT Trends Study finding that an increasing percentage of CIO's are coming from the business side of organizations, as contrasted with internal IT. The CIO Leadership research team is organizing roundtables in the SIM Chapters in Texas to collect qualitative data about what gaps need to be bridged in preparing IT professionals for the "top job" in IT. The CIO leadership team also includes Mike Eom (University of Portland), Vess Johnson (University of North Texas), Ephriam McClean (Georgia State), Michael Raisinghani (Texas Women's), and Dan Mazzola (Arizona State).

The Data Analytics sub-group, led by Rashmi Jain (Montclair State) is investigating avenues to bring industry practitioners, academia, and students together to improve the understanding of data analytics needs. The group is organizing a SIM-sponsored panel discussion to determine which data analytics skills have grown in importance as a result of the COVID19 pandemic. This panel will feature IT industry leaders and SIM academic leaders. The Data Analytics group includes Ulrike Schultz (Southern Methodist), Hope Koch (Baylor University), and Anna Sidorova (University of North Texas).

These SIM academic teams provide opportunities for academic leaders and IT

Editors' Comments

industry leaders in SIM to identify the skills, knowledge and competencies needed for roles in cybersecurity, IT leadership, and data analytics. These dialogues will enable academic professionals to better prepare graduates with the talent that industry is looking for. For more information about these groups, please contact Mary Sumner, SIM Academic Lead, at msumner@siue.edu.

Mark Taylor, SIM CEO
SIM - Society for Information Management