

Up Close and Personal: Panel Discussion with Grad Alumni in Industry II.



Tuesday, Oct 27, 5:30-7:00pm

What you always wanted to know but didn't know whom to ask

Kaushik Das works as a senior software engineer at VulcanForms, Inc. VulcanForms is commercializing the first fully scalable, industrial metal additive manufacturing (AM) solution. Before joining VulcanForms, Kaushik worked as a development manager at Dassault Systemes Simulia Corp., where he worked on the Abaqus finite element analysis software development for eight years. Kaushik completed his post-doctoral research from the aerospace engineering department at Texas A&M University, College Station, TX. He graduated from Virginia Tech with a Ph.D. in engineering mechanics in 2009. He grew up in West Bengal India and attended NIT, Durgapur, and IIT, Kanpur for his undergraduate and graduate studies, respectively. When he is not working, Kaushik loves spending time with his toddler son and wife. He also likes to travel and trying out his hand in photography.

Civil engineer **Martha Gross** was a mid-career graduate student upon arriving in Blacksburg in 2007 for a four-year PhD/MBA journey, researching how we pay for major infrastructure projects. Although she received an academic job offer as a tenure-track assistant professor in 2011, she opted instead for post-graduation employment with a consulting firm in Washington, DC and later New York City. In 2016 she moved back south for a job with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), leading their major -projects work in Hampton Roads, and had the luxury of directly applying her dissertation research in developing the state's largest highway project to date. Currently she is VDOT's Technical Director for construction of this \$3.8 billion harbor crossing and continues to find the Virginia Tech graduate experience invaluable for its transferable skills in crafting solutions to each new challenge.

Carissa James earned a PhD in Translational Biology, Medicine, and Health at Virginia Tech, where she investigated the role of an alternatively translated isoform of Connexin43 encompassing the C-terminus, in cancer progression. Her research discovery and her interest in translational biology led her to FirstString Research, where she is focused on the development of therapeutics that capitalize on the translational potential of the Cx43 C-terminus. Carissa is the Head of Discovery at FirstString, where she leads the design and implementation of studies for drug discovery and validation of therapeutic potential. In this role she guides the preclinical development of therapeutics that target intercellular junctions through strategic planning and regulatory interactions with the FDA.

Marquea King is the Director of the Office of Scientific Quality Review (OSQR) at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Research Service (ARS). She communicates and enforces Agency policy and requirements regarding the quality peer review over three distinct programmatic areas. Marquea completed her B.S. degree in Chemistry from Delaware State University and a Ph.D. in Toxicology from Virginia Tech, where she was trained in immune-toxicology and heavy metals. She is an active 20+ year member of the Society of Toxicology. She is positively involved in community outreach and mentoring and is often sought after as a motivational speaker. She is the board Vice-President at her local Boys & Girls Club. She is also a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated and a hands-on mother of three zealous sons.

Mimosa Sarma works as a scientist at 10x Genomics in Pleasanton, California. She graduated in 2019 with a Ph.D. in chemical engineering. Her research involved the design of microfluidic devices for single-cell -omic studies. At VT, she was also involved with the International Student Advisory Board, Graduate Student Assembly, and was the President of the Spanish Dance Club. She was awarded 'Outstanding Graduate Student Leader of the Year' in 2019. At 10x Genomics, she enjoys her customer-facing role where she helps her customers plan experiments and troubleshoot their experiments with an expert understanding of the company's products. She also serves on numerous product development teams where she brings in the voice of the customer to make products customer-friendly and sees the product from concept via launch to post-launch support. Outside of work, she loves keeping active and exploring the many hikes with beautiful ocean views that the Bay Area has to offer.