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HDSI Welcomes New Partnership with Viasat

Communications firm invests in data science education and research

A new partnership was announced today aiming to strengthen data science educational resources delivered through the [Halicioğlu Data Science Institute](#) (HDSI), the data science hub at the University of California San Diego, as the year-old Institute welcomed the global communications company [Viasat Inc.](#) (NASDAQ: VSAT) as one of its first Founding Industry Partners.

Under the partnership, the Carlsbad-based Viasat will contribute the equivalent of \$500,000 in combined monetary and in-kind donation, bringing vital real-world applications in industry to HDSI's efforts working with students at all levels and engaging with researchers. The partnership ranks among the most significant levels of support for the independent Institute since it launched in March 2018.

Viasat will invest in HDSI programs, including operation of one of the largest data science education programs in the nation. The partnership calls for close collaboration, which Institute leaders hope will establish deeply embedded research connections and enhanced education, as well as offer a job-training pipeline for students.

Working with a complex technology company like Viasat will bring great access to data science in front lines, according to HDSI Director Rajesh Gupta. Viasat, known for its popular in-flight wifi service, is a global manufacturer of satellite and wireless technology, provider of high-speed satellite broadband services and secure networking systems covering military and commercial markets.

“This partnership will mean unique resources and knowledge accessible to our students and faculty, and we look forward to what we can accomplish working together in meaningful ways with a technology leader,” said Gupta, a distinguished professor of Computer Science and Engineering. An added benefit, he notes, is the potential inspiration to students by partnering with a major company founded and led by UC San Diego alumni, including two of the Company's co-founders Steve Hart ('80) and Mark Miller ('81).



Data science Institute brings new resources to campus with foundational partnership with Viasat, a leading tech firm specializing in satellite communications. Photo by Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego Publications

Viasat officials say they look forward to contributing to the future of data science education as the HDSI program grows, and assisting in the development of translational programs ranging from short-term training programs to longer-term engagements with industry developing data science-engineered solutions.

“Data science and analytics are critical to Viasat’s success and continued growth,” said Kristi Jaska, vice president of Engineering at Viasat. “We’re thoughtfully making investments in data science and human-centered design to shift how we design products, operate our services and evolve our approach to customer engagement. By investing in UC San Diego’s HDSI initiative, we have an opportunity to raise students’ interests in data science disciplines, and to increase both the number and the quality of new graduates in these fields.”

Under the three-year initial partnership, Viasat will support HDSI programs with input on curriculum relevant to industry, provide project ideas and mentorship to university students, participate in lectures and workshops as well as career fairs, and work together on seeking research topics for seed funding. As a new independent institute at UC San Diego, HDSI connects with virtually every academic discipline and department on campus to train students and engage with faculty in the most effective data science techniques, and to transform massive amounts of data generated from research across the institution.

One highlight of the program has been HDSI’s Visiting Industry Fellowships, offering in-residence campus offices to partners like Viasat with access faculty and students in order to streamline collaboration opportunities. HDSI will provide Viasat personnel direct connection to an interdisciplinary group of top faculty and their students working in data science areas. Under the partnership, Viasat will contribute by helping students and staff with career advising, serving as mentors for student-run research projects, and offering them the opportunity to develop professional relationships that can provide job training and careers for graduating data science students.

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