

Navigating the Data Science Industry: A Bright Future Ahead



(From left to right) Kallyn Hobmann, Dr. Adir Mancebo Jr., Irene Giannoumis, Tony Reina

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Published on
May 1, 2024

It was an inspiring evening of insightful conversations and memorable networking at "Navigating the Data Science Industry" on April 18.

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As a nonprofit dedicated to inspiring and supporting the next generation of data science professionals, we were thrilled to connect with MiraCosta College's student body at our "Navigating the Data Science Industry" event on April 18. In partnership with MiraCosta's Data Scholars Club, DSA hosted an inspiring evening of insightful conversations and memorable networking.

At the beginning of the evening, the courtyard outside the theater was brimming with students and working professionals. They shared thoughtful conversations about their experiences, passions, and perspectives—it was a dynamic exchange between seasoned data science professionals and aspiring students full of wisdom and insight.

DSA and **MiraCosta College's** collective mission was to give students an opportunity to learn from seasoned professionals, and inside the theater, the atmosphere was electric with anticipation. DSA's executive director, **Patricia Lopez**, and MiraCosta professor and lead faculty member **Shawn Firouzian** kicked the night off, welcoming the audience and sharing more about their organizations and projects. MiraCosta alum Dunia Azizi presented a data project she did as a student on the Golden State Warriors, advising current students on how to succeed in their classes and what to expect as they continue through their education and careers. It was inspiring for students to see someone who traveled the same path as them find success and achievement.



Attendees network ahead of the panel discussion.

Eager to learn more, the audience then welcomed the evening's panelists to the stage: **Irene Giannoumis** (Google), **Tony Reina** (Exthymic), and **Dr. Adir Mancebo Jr.** (Data Science Alliance).

The guest speakers began by sharing what sparked their initial interest in data science. They have a wide range of backgrounds, but all shared something in common—when they were the same age as many of the students in the audience, none knew they'd have the jobs they do today. They assured the crowd that their journeys in data science will have unexpected twists and turns, and that's okay. The speakers reminded the audience about adaptability, openness, and drive to pursue new avenues and skills. Reina encouraged students to explore data science now, telling them they don't need to wait for a particular class or degree to discover their interests.



The guest speakers share their insights on the data science industry.

The speakers told those applying for jobs to remember that rejections are just a part of the process.

"You're not being rejected. Someone else is just being accepted."

- Tony Reina, Head of Machine Learning at Exthymic

Practical tips on interviewing and building resumes were also discussed, including the importance of soft skills, such as conflict resolution, creative thinking, and clear communication. The panelists agreed that effectively communicating data-driven ideas is crucial for young data scientists—it helps stakeholders comprehend the strengths and limitations of data science work and enables them to make informed decisions.

The conversation also touched on current trends in the data science industry and the importance of responsible data practices. The panelists shared their own experiences with biases in data and gave advice on how to address similar issues in real-world situations. They also discussed examples of data making a positive impact and stressed how influential students can be as data scientists.

The audience asked the speakers reflective questions, leading to a perceptive dialogue about topics like the different roles within data science, how different degrees (like computer science) can still apply to the industry, and how students can get more hands-on experience outside the classroom.



Students share one-on-one conversations with the guest speakers.

After the panel, students had personal one-on-one conversations with the guest speakers and asked even more inquisitive questions about their experiences and expertise. Even with the unpredictable, ever-evolving nature of data science and tech, our audience members proved what remains steadfast—the next generation of data scientists has a bright future.