



AI Institute for Advances in Optimization

Opt-In Newsletter | November 2024

In October, AI4OPT celebrated its third anniversary, marking the conclusion of a year filled with scientific breakthroughs and real-world impacts at the intersection of AI and optimization. The fourth year is already off to a strong start.

AI4OPT held its annual TechFest this month, Dorit Hochbaum received the Khachiyan Prize at the INFORMS Annual Meeting, and Bistra Dilkina organized a Dagstuhl workshop that brought together more than 40 researchers in AI and optimization. In collaboration with the nonprofit HerWILL, AI4OPT also hosted the AI for Equality Workshops and Datathon, which drew more than 300 participants from around the world. The start of the fourth year also brings an opportunity to update AI4OPT's structure to reflect its evolving research. These updates will impact how the Institute brands itself, fosters collaboration, and communicates externally.

A prime example is the new AI4OPT website, which features a fresh look and organizes the Institute's methodological thrusts into five themes that better represent its research. Despite these changes, AI4OPT's mission remains the

same: to fuse AI and optimization to deliver outcomes neither field could achieve independently.

- Pascal Van Hentenryck

AI4OPT Member Spotlight



"I'm Renee McCoy, the AI4OPT Logistics Manager and a senior lecturer in the Decision Science Department at Clark Atlanta University. I teach undergraduate courses in accounting and decision science. With over 15 years of corporate professional experience, I've worked as a project manager and IT strategy consultant for IBM Global Services, serving clients across banking, telecommunications, and public sector industries."

A Journey in Faculty Training and Leadership

Charles Pierre, the Lead Principal Investigator for AIHUB@CAU and Analytics Associate Professor in the Department of Mathematical Sciences at Clark Atlanta University, introduced me to an incredible opportunity to collaborate with him on an NSF grant.

This collaboration led me to join the AI4OPT Faculty Training Program. My roles include serving as the program's logistics manager and as a faculty participant. I handle travel arrangements and lodging for participants, plan engaging weekend activities, prepare travel and reimbursement reports, and contribute to course meetings and presentations. Supporting the program's operations and engaging in meaningful collaboration has been a truly rewarding experience.

Through the Faculty Training Program and AIHUB@CAU, I've brought new knowledge and perspectives back to my classroom at Clark Atlanta University. One of the highlights of my work with AI4OPT was participating in the SAIL Summit, which offered valuable insights into leadership styles and strategies for fostering innovation in academia. I left the event more confident in applying these skills and was honored to serve as a panelist for one of the EXAIL workshop sessions. It was both inspiring and rewarding, and I highly recommend the experience to anyone seeking professional growth. When I'm not working, I enjoy spending time with my family, traveling, and cheering on my favorite sports teams.

AI4OPT Management Spotlight



“Hi, I’m Camille Douglass—though most people call me ‘Cami.’ I am the Executive Assistant at AI4OPT, a role I’ve proudly held since the institute’s inception in 2021. Born and raised in Arizona, I earned my B.S. in Family Studies from Brigham Young University. My journey into administration began during my undergraduate studies, where I discovered my passion for supporting organizational operations—a passion that continues to drive my career.”

Heart of AI4OPT Operations

At AI4OPT, I handle everything from travel coordination and event planning to onboarding and calendar management. My day-to-day work also includes troubleshooting last-minute hiccups, managing institute policies, and even stocking a candy dispenser for quick morale boosts!

One of my favorite projects has been supporting the Faculty Training Program (FTP), which equips faculty from HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) and MSIs (Minority Serving Institutions) with tools to create data science programs at their institutions. It’s incredibly rewarding to see their impact extend beyond Georgia Tech. I’m proud to contribute to AI4OPT’s mission of using AI to address societal challenges, and I love supporting the incredible research and education happening here.

Outside of Work



I’m a music enthusiast with perfect pitch. I sing with the Emory University Chorus, teach music at my church, and have an ever-growing playlist for every occasion. My husband Brandon and I also love traveling, cooking, and binge-watching shows like Community and Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood.

News and Featured Events



Prof. Dorit Hochbaum 2024 Khachiyan Prize Recipient



AI4OPT Members Attend INFORMS 2024 Annual Meeting in Seattle



AI4OPT Photo Highlights from the Summit for AI Institutes Leadership 2024

From Oct. 7-9, 2024, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, hosted the Summit for AI Institutes Leadership (SAIL) as well as the inaugural NSF ExpandAI Leadership Workshop (EXAIL), bringing together representatives from all 27 NSF AI Institutes. Members of AI4OPT actively participated in this gathering of AI leaders to exchange insights, showcase advancements, and discuss the future of AI research, communications, marketing, and education. The event concluded with Expo Day October 10, a space for each institute to highlight research, projects, and AI innovation.



Pascal Van Hentenryck Presents AI for Societal Impact at Johns Hopkins



AIHUB@CAU Launches, Paving the Way for Diverse AI Innovation



AI4OPT Students and Researchers Tour, Build Connections at CAU

TechFest 2024



The NSF AI Institute for Advances in Optimization (AI4OPT) hosted its highly anticipated TechFest on Nov. 14, 2024, at the Georgia Tech Global Learning Center. The event brought together academic and industry leaders to explore the intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and mathematical optimization.

The day included a variety of presentations focusing on the evolving landscape of AI and optimization. Attendees had the opportunity to learn about AI research, trends, and developments shaping the field.

The event also featured a student poster session and reception, providing a platform for emerging talent to showcase their work and engage with industry professionals. This interactive setting encouraged networking and the exchange of ideas among participants.



AI4OPT partner HerWILL's booth at TechFest 2024.

TechFest 2024 highlighted AI4OPT's contributions to advancing AI research and showcasing the transformative impact of AI-powered optimization across industries such as healthcare, finance, and energy, illustrating how it is revolutionizing decision-making processes and addressing complex, real-world challenges.

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Publications

AI4OPT publications available on [Google Scholar](#).

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