

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

May 2026

## QUESTIONS

**How did the statistics program prepare you for your experiences?**

"The program did more than prepare me technically but it expanded what I believed I was capable of attempting.

Coursework foundation was essential in both my capstone on phylodynamic inference and our conformal prediction work presented at MSSISS.

Just as importantly, the department created access. Faculty mentorship, collaborative spaces, research seminars, and symposium opportunities opened doors I would not have known how to knock on independently. Presenting at MSSISS and participating in King Talks were not isolated achievements, they were made possible by an ecosystem that encourages students to engage beyond the classroom.

Without those resources, I would not have imagined managing research, presentation, and public engagement simultaneously.

The program didn't just give me tools. It gave me range."

## ANJALI ARORA



Anjali Arora is a current graduate pursuing a Master's of Data Science from the LSA Department of Statistics.

She recently participated in the capstone project "Efficiency Evaluation of Deep Learning-based Phylodynamic Inference across Epidemiological Models" under Prof. Edward Ionides and Prof. Aaron King. She also presented at the MLK Symposium King Talks 2026. Additionally, she presented her abstract "Conformal prediction for Non-Stationary Time Series" in collaboration with other DS cohort in MSSISS Symposium 2026.

**LinkedIn:**

[www.linkedin.com/in/anjali-arora-b361b7228](https://www.linkedin.com/in/anjali-arora-b361b7228)

## What is your favorite part of your experiences?

"My favorite part is the moment when abstraction turns visible.

At MSSISS, that translation from theory to behavior had to be articulated clearly. That sharpening process was deeply satisfying.

At King Talks, I experienced a different form of translation, converting lived experience into language that resonated with others. After the talk, students approached not competitively, but reflectively. That quiet recognition felt similar to a well-behaved model: alignment without force.

Both moments are about clarity emerging."

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## QUESTIONS

### What made you choose these experiences?

"If you walk into a statistics department late in the evening, you'll find something interesting. The lights are soft. Code is running. Simulations unfold quietly. It looks calm. But inside those models, entire epidemics are being simulated, parameters estimated, uncertainty measured.

That is where I found myself this year.

After my first semester immersed in machine learning, I realized I didn't want those skills to remain just technical tools. I needed one real opportunity to blend what I had learned in ML with the statistical foundation that shaped how I think. Statistics trained me to pause, to question assumptions, to care about efficiency and identifiability. Machine learning trained me to build at scale.

The capstone project: Efficiency evaluation of Deep Learning based phylodynamic inference across Epidemiological Models under the guidance of Prof. Edward Ionides and Prof. Aaron King became the bridge between those worlds. I was no longer just running models. I was interrogating them.

Around the same time, our team's work on "State-Aware Sequential Conformal Prediction for Nonstationary Time Series" was selected for presentation at the MSSISS Symposium. That project asked a different but equally fundamental question: how should uncertainty behave when the data itself shifts? By integrating latent regime structure into conformal prediction, we allowed prediction intervals to adapt to the state rather than simply time.

And then there was another kind of room entirely.

At King Talks 2026, as a part of the MLK Symposium, I stepped onto a stage not to present equations but to tell a story. I spoke about resilience, stillness, and the quiet architecture of courage. What struck me most was not the applause, but what happened afterward. Students approached not with competition in their eyes, but with recognition. Conversations unfolded about doubt, identity, and growth. I observed posture soften. I noticed that silence became shared rather than awkward.

In the lab, I was studying uncertainty in models. On stage, I was witnessing uncertainty in people.

Both spaces demanded the same thing: clarity without arrogance, structure without rigidity, and the courage to question what is assumed stable. That is why I chose these experiences. Not to accumulate lines on a resume but to stand at the intersection of rigor and humanity and learn how to move between them with integrity."

### Best piece of advice you'd give other students

"I believe I'm still learning and not someone who is on other side of the table yet I would definitely mention that pay attention to the rooms you enter, basically read the room.

Notice what energizes you. Notice what challenges you. Choose experiences that stretch your intellect and steady your character. Do not let comparison shrink your character. Someone else's brilliance does not diminish your trajectory. When you uplift others, you are strengthening the environment that sustains you. In short:

Build depth. Build clarity. Build community."

