Report on the Use of Advisory Board funds in 2017

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 My current field of study centers on the impact that data analytics has on the decision-making processes of an organization. Data analytics is an umbrella term that covers any kind of analysis performed on large, complex, and quickly changing data. This is sometimes referred to as Big Data. The tools used to perform these analytics are highly complex and specialized, and often pose a real challenge to those organizations that adopt them as well as the management team that must act upon the results of these tools. We have seen these types of tools spread from the financial services industry across many other industries including insurance, healthcare, education and various forms of manufacturing.

 The tools that have been created to perform these analyses, as well as the underlying mathematical and statistical processes, are highly complex and very dynamic. Keeping up to date with the latest technologies is difficult and time consuming. However, there are an increasing number of conferences and other gatherings at which these emerging tools and technologies are all brought together, and that was how I put the Advisory Grant to use. These conferences are aimed primarily at industry, not academia, and so they are very expensive. Luckily, the premier conference on data analytics took place in New York last summer, making it a more cost effective option. For four days, I was able to learn from, and ask questions of, industry-leading developers and vendors. I was able to draw a great deal of knowledge and insight from this experience. I also made a number of contacts in industry that have proven to be useful in performing subsequent research.