

UPWARDS Seminar Series – Fall 2026

Title: *What's Next? What Can You Learn from a 40+-Year Technical Career*

Speaker: Paula S. deWitte, J.D., Ph.D., P.E., Adjunct Professor of Law, Texas A&M University Law School; Professor of Practice Emerita, Computer Science & Engineering, Texas A&M University. Date:

Wednesday, September 30, 2026; Time (EST): 12:00 PM–1:00 PM

Venue: Academic Building 1, Conference Room 4402 (Alexandria Campus); Whittemore Hall, Room 457A (Blacksburg)



Bio:

Paula S. deWitte, J.D., Ph.D., P.E. is an Adjunct Professor of Law at the Texas A&M University Law School and Professor of Practice Emerita in Computer Science & Engineering at Texas A&M University. Her expertise includes cybersecurity risk, law, policy, and governance. She holds a Ph.D. in Computer Science from Texas A&M University, a J.D. from St. Mary's University School of Law, and Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Purdue University. She is a licensed Texas attorney and registered patent attorney with the USPTO.

She designed the Cybersecurity Law & Policy Track at Texas A&M and continues to teach courses in cybersecurity law, enterprise risk, and data analytics. Before returning to Texas A&M in 2017, she founded and led several technology businesses, including U.S. operations for an

Israeli-owned company in Austin. She holds a patent (US 8812236 B1)

in drilling fluids optimization and has served as PI or co-PI on NSF and DHS-funded projects involving robots and drones in COVID response and U.S. Coast Guard supply chain resiliency.

Abstract:

What's next? Dr. Paula S. deWitte saw that on a hand-written sign (in English) in 2023 during a hiking trip through part of The Camino in Spain. It was meaningful because of impending retirement. Preparing for "What's next?" is applicable throughout a career.

This talk will review a 40+ year career beginning at a time when a woman with a high SAT mathematics score was expected to pursue a career as a teacher. Instead, Dr. deWitte began as a high school teacher (one year) before working at university research institutes, founding and running small companies, and holding executive positions in Austin high tech. At an "older than most" age, she went to law school and ended her career as a Professor of Practice advocating for more legal education in engineering programs.

This career wasn't all success, but along the way, failures also presented opportunities. This talk will be instructive to younger students (and faculty) who face a challenging environment throughout their careers.

There will also be a short discussion on why cybersecurity professionals and engineers need to know cybersecurity law. Dr. deWitte's mission is not to create more lawyers, but legal-savvy technical workers.

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