

PHOENIX SCHOLAR SPECIAL EDITION

20TH

ANNIVERSARY



SCHOOL OF ADVANCED STUDIES



PHOENIX SCHOLAR

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It seemed like only yesterday when University of Phoenix endeavored to offer a rigorous and competitive doctoral degree program in a unique online modality, the likes of which stoic traditional higher educational institutes had not attempted before. However, it has been 20 years since our innovative terminal degrees were launched, a generation that demonstrated the efficacy and set a new standard combining theory and practice to documenting relevant issues in leadership, business, healthcare, and higher education. Many of our doctoral graduates (6,000 alum) have been prominently published in competitive peer reviewed journals and can be seen at many first-tier conferences. We are comprised of over 1,200 experienced faculty and researchers, and hundreds of support staff.

As the dean of operations, I am familiar with our alum, their mindset, their endurance, and their passion to provide innovative solutions in their communities and their industries. They have demonstrated problem solving skills that are often imitated but rarely duplicated. This special 20th anniversary of the School of Advanced Studies Phoenix Scholar issue shows the spirit and true grit of our students, faculty, alum, and administrative staff who are committed to the highest level of engagement, ethics, and standards. I thank everyone for their enduring commitment and support!

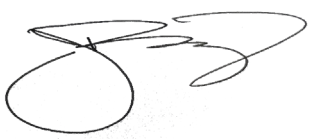
For example, the story entitled, The Melody Behind Enrollment: Othello Rollon, Jr. - An Interview with Rodney Luster and Erik Bean, is a testament to adaptation and support that most schools would agree is unparalleled at any degree level. Othello's story offers an emotional look and valuable insight that the close relationship between students and inside departments; is a must. You also will admire Herman J. van Niekerk, Ph.D. for his interview with Rodney and Erik. He's our associate dean of instruction with a global perspective. As we turn to our most valuable asset, our doctoral students and alum, we see the celebration of a remarkable 20 years!

In the article entitled, Featured Doctoral Alum Earn High Marks in the Community and Professions They Serve, Dr. Erik Bean highlights four unique graduates whose stories were previously featured for those who may have missed their inspirational career milestones and how their doctoral degrees continue to complement their ongoing success. This success, as the article eludes, is the type of success that does not come instantly. The success of our alum is earned and distinguished among the luminaries in their subject matter expertise and we have been driving an international conversation on leadership for more than 11 years through our peer reviewed Journal of Leadership Studies.

Center for Leadership Studies and Organizational Research (CLSOR) Fellow Rita Carver shares a story of two doctoral students - Joyce White and Dr. Darlene Moten - who exemplify our core values in Research with Heart and Purpose: Doctorates Tackle Major Social Issues. And you will want to join the school at its Facebook page - as is highlighted in CLSOR fellow Carol Holland's article. But there's more! More articles about other students who have left their UOPX legacy. With 20 years behind us, we look ahead to other innovations such as a more practitioner centric degree and certificate programs beyond the master's degree or in lieu of a doctorate for those who want to broaden their skillset quickly for a demanding marketplace. So, sit back with your tablet, laptop, or smartphone and enjoy this outstanding edition of the quarterly publication we all look forward to reading, The Phoenix Scholar!

Sincerely,

John Ramirez



Dean of Operations



The 20 Year Journey for the School of Advanced Studies

Rodney Luster, Ph.D.
Associate University Research Chair
School of Advanced Studies

Established in February 1999, the School of Advanced Studies launched the Doctor of Management (DM) program with a total enrollment of 12 students. For the first four years, just one program was offered and enrollment grew to 352 students. In 2003, the new version of DM was launched as well as programs for Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), Doctor of Health Administration (DHA) as well as Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership (EdD).

Since its inception, nearly 6,000 doctoral degrees or certificates have been awarded. CDS graduates serve in leadership positions worldwide in hundreds of organizations in both the public and private sector. CDS has an average annual degree enrollment of 2452 students.

2013 Milestone> The inception of a Research Enterprise

Through the College of Doctoral Studies, there have been over 3,600 research publications to date as well as more than 3,200 scholarly research presentations.

Here are some other fun engagement facts:

- 4,221 Faculty Profiles associated
- 4,238 Research Hub interactions during our National Research Summit
- There are, on average, 15,000 views per month for research.phoenix.edu
- There are research collaborations with 150+ external and noteworthy institutions around the country
- There have been Knowledge Without Boundaries Research Workshops in 12 states annually for the past three years, and over 4,000 attendees cumulative with research interests
- The 2017 inception of a professional research periodical -The Phoenix Scholar- is now in its 6th edition

Happy Anniversary to all the Staff, Faculty, Students and Alumni within the School of Advanced Studies that have made this great landmark happen!





The Melody Behind Enrollement: Othello Rollon, Jr. An Interview with Rodney Luster and Erik Bean

Vitals

Profession: Doctoral Enrollment Representative

Education: B.S. Marketing, MBA, University of Phoenix

Hometown: Phoenix, AZ

Hobby: Musician

Rodney Luster

I want to take a moment to introduce, Othello Rollon, Jr., who is a Doctoral Enrollment Manager for the University of Phoenix doctoral programs. As part of our doctoral program 20th anniversary special edition, we want to share behind the scenes insight on the valuable job the enrollment team serves. Contrary to popular belief, enrollment is not just about recruiting but it is a counseling role as well that helps keep doctoral students on track with a myriad of deadlines and deliverables. But don't just take our word for it, let's "listen" to an individual who has served our advanced degree program well for many years. We hope you will agree that his background and expertise in this space is a big hit, as a matter of fact, a melody of administrative prowess that has led to many long lasting professional relationships. Welcome Othello!

Othello Rollon, Jr.

Thank you, Rodney and Erik. It is a pleasure to be here and to share what we do.

Erik Bean

Let's start with your unusual name. It's not one that you hear every day unless you are reading Shakespeare. How did your family derive it?

Othello Rollon, Jr.

[Laughing] So, I'm named after my dad, I'm a junior. My grandmother read a lot of Shakespeare. My dad by the way, is a musician. He is a retired New York City detective but, on the side, he had a band, he played seven instruments, and he was a music writer. We have several family

artisans and writers. I have a cousin who is a published writer. My dad is a pretty intensive writer - nothing published - but has written four books worth of material. We are always talking about how to help him get published. He has an autobiography that he wrote, something he simply wants to pass down to us. Back to my grandmother, she was an avid reader and loved the name and named her only son based on that Shakespearean character. We do have some unusual names of this family. My brother, for example, is Jan Eric. When said together it sounds like "Generic." I also have a brother with a quite popular name - Anthony - and we call him Tony.

Rodney Luster

it sounds like your dad may have been a pretty big influence in your life?

Othello Rollon, Jr.

He was, and he had a pretty tough life growing up. He's originally from Mississippi and he grew up in the ghettos of East St. Louis. It was a pretty tough neighborhood and he was kind of one of those diamonds in the rough you might say, as he had the intelligence and the drive - and the courage I should say - to eventually get himself out of that situation. Sadly, some people do get caught in that situation and it's very tough to leave. It took much courage for him to leave, but he was willing to try something, so he left to New York to try to make his way. He really didn't know anyone there, but he went to Brooklyn and worked in factories. He then took a civil service exam and eventually became a police officer. And at the same time was exploring all his other creative talents. He

just made a life for himself in New York. So I mentioned the book he was writing, the autobiography, and a lot of that focuses on growing up and how nobody should really ever have to experience life the hard way so he wants to make sure that people focus on education and he always pushed that aspect. Not just being smart but having a good command of the English language. Because he saw the opposite in his own life he wanted to make sure that future family generations could move ahead with fewer constraints.

Erik Bean

With your dad's detective career was your family a fan of the many cop TV shows like Hill Street Blues?

Othello Rollon, Jr.

[Laughing] oh yeah, we saw them all. But in reality, my dad was actually out on the beat when the Son of Sam was roaming the streets. I remember those nights my mom being so afraid for him going out. My younger brother was also a police officer in Baltimore, undercover narcotics. He eventually transferred from Baltimore to Phoenix and is an officer here in the valley today.

Erik Bean

Your dad sounds like a brave and deeply intellectual man who also was so focused on a better life for this family. We want to hear more about the musical side later, but let's focus on the caveat of education for which your dad was a big proponent. How did your career traverse to your important role servicing doctoral students here at University of Phoenix? Please share a synopsis of your journey.

Othello Rollon, Jr.

Well it may not exactly be a synopsis, but here's an abridged version since like many other aspects in life, happenstance and hard work often coincide [laughing]. I am originally from New York and was born in the Bronx. My dad was a New York City detective that moved us out of the Bronx when I was just three years old. We moved to a nice suburb in Larchmont, New York which is pretty much a harbor town, that was right on the coast. After high school I applied to University of Arizona and a few other schools. Myself and four really close friends decided to venture out, we had never been out West and that's what brought me to Arizona in 1987. But I opted to complete my degree here at University of Phoenix in marketing to allow for location flexibility. While attending school, I started working in the fitness industry and I ran a chain of health clubs. I became a personal trainer and I went through the whole fitness range from training to managing and I went back to New York. There I managed Bally Total Fitness in the Bronx. Arizona was calling me and I soon transferred out to Scottsdale and managed a club that was on Pima and Shea. I started managing a variety of health clubs like Mountainside Fitness and World Gym. The hours were long and I still did not have a degree and the pay wasn't great.

It was fun managing health clubs and being a personal trainer, but I had not yet acquired my undergraduate degree and I really felt the urge to do something different. So I ended up going to Insight for computer sales. While this seemed more like a "career" position, I didn't like it very much. However, I met a gentleman named Mike Gonzales. He was a great colleague and friend who had a few buddies that worked at the University of Phoenix (UOPX). So in the early 2000s. Mike had applied to the UOPX and got the job and ultimately reached back to me with an opening as a counselor. That allowed me to continue to work on my degree. He had the wherewithal to explain the position was akin to some of the skills of a personal trainer and the professionalism that could help people reach their career goals too.

I was initially a bit reluctant but went for the interview and was accepted 17 years ago this May! I started as an enrollment representative and became a manager in 2007. I become part of the associate degree team, Consortium team. Here we put alumni in the hands of enrollment representatives to help them move forward and grow from an associates to a bachelor's program in their career trajectory. The Consortium team was designed to really help fill a gap to allow students to gain confidence in achieving an associate's degree. About eight months in to that role I became a manager with the Associate Degree Graduate Team. I managed that team for about seven years, and it was in 2014 I eventually moved into the doctoral programs. The VP at the time felt that moving into the doctoral programs was the right change for me, my next level of growth. Indeed, I continued to grow and

was challenged.

Rodney Luster

I can imagine so with the complexity of the doctoral programs themselves. What was going through your head?

Othello Rollon, Jr.

I was thinking, for the longest time we were so distant from this aspect of the University that I laughed to myself because there was a time where I thought "would anyone ever see me again?" Every so often one of our colleagues would migrate over to the doctoral programs and we never hear from them again which was so funny because they must've loved it so much migrating over to another great part of our University.

Rodney Luster

It sounds like it was this great vortex, the mystical cloudy high peak of the mountain that no one ever ventured to, Olympus or something [laughing].

Othello Rollon, Jr.

Exactly, there was a part of me that knew that it was going to be a challenge just like the VP said because it was a learning curve for me. Fortunately for me there was much experience on the team I was joining, and I'll be honest with you, I learned a lot from that team. I had some great reps like Carolyn Nellis and Debbie Huff who helped really give me a wealth of information about doctoral programs, and not just on the enrollment side, because I was formally used to working strictly with admissions and not so much the academic aspect. What I mean by that, is that in the current role I would now be working alongside and with the scholarly individuals, dean's and program managers of academia. So, I learned quite a bit from these great team members in my first few months of my new role which was stimulating, exciting, and I truly enjoyed it.

Rodney Luster

How many doctoral programs did we have at this time?

Othello Rollon, Jr.

We have eight now with two Certificates. I want to say it was around 12 back then.

Erik Bean

I know firsthand of the importance the enrollment counselor has engaging with the student. More than 10 years ago, my enrollment counselor sent me various program reminders and was so vigilant in making sure I had the opportunity to deliver. I found the communication to be comforting among the stress of attending online classes and helping to decipher program milestones. The enrollment counselor served as an advisory role and held me accountable in very gentle ways, nurturing. It was truly invaluable. Is your role similar today?

Othello Rollon, Jr.

Absolutely, when I first started there was less technical automation that we have now. That automation, however, allows us to be efficient with helping students by giving us tools and resources. Early on we tracked and worked through some very basic functional aspects of the required student deliverables. We were free to create our own administrative designs for connecting with students. This allowed much autonomy and freedom to find out the right ways to connect. So I would watch those counselors who really understood what it meant to connect with students and you would learn from them. They would go the extra mile sending motivational emails, checking themselves to be sure they were truly being compassionate listeners when students were challenged by the academic work and rigor.

We knew how important it was to be there for the student, to remind them, to be their advocates along the way. Sometimes the smallest paybacks made the biggest difference in students with encouraging words like, "Congratulations, you made it through the first week! I know it was challenging but you can do it!" These things really help build strong relationships and we started to see that. Even one of my first students still manages to keep in touch with me to this day. Her life has changed so much over the years where she is a mother to some wonderful children, has been involved in the Peace Corps and who has travelled all over the world. Her and her husband would send me a small gift from whatever country they happened to be in at the time. Just little gifts such as, "just thinking about you and hope you're doing well." She'll say things that always remind me of how important our role is in the university such as "what you did for my husband and myself, guiding us through the enrollment process and staying with us along the way changed our lives."

That is my most important component of this communication skillset that has had a profound impact on me personally and professionally. It's about getting back to that old school mentality, where we make meaning through relationships and people. Technology is great, but this is the fulcrum for me. It's important for us to get to know our students, personally as well as their professional goals, their challenges and their strengths, help them tell their story, keep them motivated towards their goals. And, I got to tell you, my team is good at that! In fact, we built that into our system now almost as a checklist of all the systemic things that we need to do to make sure that we are helping our students daily. For if they are successful, we are successful.

Erik Bean

You know, Othello I would think that the motivation is quite different from bachelors to masters to doctorate. At the doctorate level, we know there is a deeper component regarding why the student is here. They know they have this burning desire to fulfill this component of their life, a very profound element that is also perhaps one of the scariest parts

they confront, knowing that this is about taking everything they've ever learned in moving it into a new mode of learning and discovery. That is a daunting investment of time as well as a financial commitment.

Othello Rollon, Jr.

Oh most definitely! There is a difference between those who are starting out for the first time in school, at the college level, and those who have some school and are moving into a master's program where they are more abstract thinkers are learning to be at least at that level and the ultimate where the doctorate program brings in critical thinking and marries that discovery. For sure, that's quite a difference between the various levels of engagement and how we approach our students. At the doctorate level, this is their terminal degree, which is a different mindset in a different approach and we engage it like this, "you've proven yourself academically, you've armed yourself with education, and now it's your opportunity to give back to your community and industry and to the world of discovery and research where, through our practitioner-based programs, you will begin affecting community right away."

It's important for us to help students touch on that altruistic and proud feeling of having the ability to really change their society, to be heard as scholars where people want to take their ideas and move them into practice. Help them see that they will eventually be able to take that dissertation, take that research and bring it back to their industry or to another industry and help that segment to move further along and they have a body of work that can be published and recognized as a great achievement. It helps them also see that it's not just a degree but also a level of responsibility that comes with that. So yes, that's a very different level of motivation for sure!

Rodney Luster

Othello are there any misconceptions regarding what an enrollment counselor actually is or does at the doctorate level?

Othello Rollon, Jr.

There is a distinct differentiator between how we contact students and other schools that are out there. It probably stems from how people deal with traditional schools where maybe there is more of an absence of a relationship and more of a mechanical or functional process and how students are enrolled at those other institutions. For the counselor here I think it comes down to the level of attention, understanding, and service the student receives. So they may not understand that coming in given their former experiences with other schools perhaps, but quickly I think that's where they are most impressed which is what I see when I get feedback about their experience with our counselors. The most common pattern of comment I see is when a student says, "my enrollment representative helped me understand what I was engaging in, are about to

engage in, and has stayed in contact with me regularly."

When I see that comment that is probably originating about 90% of the time, sort of rings that misconception from the outside to a relevant space of perspective. It's the difference between a very functional enrollment process and one that is very student centric. I have seen this over and over again in that "wait a minute" kind of moment for students where they begin to understand that they're not alone in their journey and that this is a different kind of school where they have somebody with them through the journey. Here we like to know our students and the same holds true where they get know us as Representatives.

It's interesting, because even after they graduate, guess who they are always reaching out to as a first contact? It's the person that stayed with them through their entire journey, typically their first enrollment representative. I often here comments like, "if it wasn't for you motivating me, helping me see the potentials, challenging me in getting to know my own goals, helping me understand the program and organizing my time to make it doable amidst my busy lifestyle, I wouldn't have this degree, the promotion or the things that I can do now"

You know, when President Cohen read that letter in his broadcast about the student thanking the representative, that was one of my representatives he was talking about. He read a letter that a student wrote, and it generated so much conversation. I had people from different departments emailing me saying that was one of the most inspirational letters I've ever heard. He wanted us all to hear the letter and did so in one of his widely attended meetings with us which reminds us all of how important it is that we get to be a part of the student's life. We are truly the first contact, first impression, for the University of Phoenix and that's an important role.

Rodney Luster

Thank you, Othello, for putting your role into such a tangible perspective for our readers.

Erik Bean

Let's dive a little deeper into your perspective Othello. If you look back at many traditional higher education schools offering a doctorate, it was nearly impossible to keep one's day job or stay in the community where one resided. Today, these schools (state run, for example) offer many doctorate classes online, but do not appear to comprehensively offer such complete programs. People who seek a doctorate, for example, at a traditional school, I think, pursue a doctorate at our school for the same reason. They are passionate about education and want to make their mark. There's something invaluable to having our unique institutional longevity that brought so much innovation to the delivery of education. The rigor of such online

programs is just as competitive. So, when we came along, we brought a different model and we have demonstrated its efficacy but have not lost touch with being personable.

Othello Rollon, Jr.

Absolutely. That personal touch to me is being able to still pick up the phone and talk to someone live. What we were known for from the beginning was that personal touch. I really believe that we still do this better than anyone else. But year after year I've heard it again and again from those students who have come to us and why they come back for a second or third degree, it includes being personal. Again, I think we're always anticipating the needs of the student way ahead of other competitors. For instance, you think about financial representatives from any other institution and you think about the personality types that you typically see in that profession which there is a tendency to be a bit stoic. And yet, that touchy-feely aspect is something that might be lacking.

We put all of our professionals through training that emphasizes how important that aspect is and how to work towards growing that opportunity in ourselves. Just getting to know the student better. When I hear about recognitions that have people around me, whether they are on the financial side or the enrollment side or the academic side, one of the things that you'll always find is that there is a strong people side, core component of being able to make meaningful experiences with people that is what sets them apart.

Erik Bean

Othello, your insight has been most enlightening. But what of the future? What is the outlook for doctoral degrees and their usefulness in industry?

Othello Rollon, Jr.

I was talking to Rodney earlier and I think - with the programs we have currently - I think it is going to be important especially for business leaders to give back to the community, I think certain specializations are very important and pragmatic, as industry continues to change, technology improves and such. I think staying on track with the needs of students and where things are going as well as the implementation of some of our new certificate programs where students can get that level of education may be in smaller parcels is going to be popular. For example, obtaining a post master's degree certificate can be tremendous for many people who need something somewhere in the middle. It also demonstrates that they're capable of taking classes at the doctoral level and can bolster their credentialing to be more competitive in the marketplace.

Erik Bean

Yes, such certificates can bolster one's C.V. When we think of the doctorate, we've gone from more theory based to one that is geared more towards the practice. That's

where those certificates can complement one's background as well.

Rodney Luster

Othello, you've been with us long enough and you have seen many changes, the flexible education industry, and demonstrated some of the themes we're known for, which really was our point of origin what we came into the higher education arena with, online and have maintained and improved your job and helped many students reach their career goals. But then we started having a lot of imitators, people started looking a lot like us. We even had and still do, traditional universities, state universities that would really paint us in an unfavorable light as Erik eluded to earlier and yet they would end up doing the same thing and really copying with little credit given to us. I have always found that quite frankly, ironic and somewhat hypocritical.

I know because I came from a traditional institution where I taught formally before University of Phoenix. Interestingly, I remember our provost at that state institution asking me, "When are we going to get with the program?" meaning when would the state school move to the future of online.

I replied, "As soon as we get rid of all of the people here who don't believe in it." People often cast aspersions in order to improve their own identity and I worked around a lot of faculty at that institution who simply refused to move into the new world. But today there are many people who do what we do well. They have learned and, in some ways, improved in areas. So Othello, how do we look now to you in your own personal perspective when you compare this to all the other schools are there still areas that make us a primary choice if you want to do your doctorate?

Othello Rollon, Jr.

Yes. I still believe that any industry, any institution that has been doing something for a very long time, I believe still has an advantage amongst their respective newcomer colleagues because they have demonstrated durability and longevity for a reason. For us, we've been through our own ups and downs, I've seen probably almost every scenario you can imagine in this school model play out and I still think we still have the experience, the longevity. I say that because you go back and look at someone, let's use a metaphor here, a new coach for example, brought in to change a team. And people say yeah look, he or she has motivation, he's got the charisma, and he's going to do something with this team. But then you look at somebody, a coach who has been around, and he's been around for a good reason because he has a wisdom, a perspective based on experience. They've been there!

They know how to anticipate many things. Same for us. We know how to engage students. We have learned for many years better than many of the schools around us who are trying to replicate what we have

done. We have the experience of having seen it all, seeing the highs and the lows in this industry, where we have learned from mistakes and we've continued to build on our opportunities to take those elements and turn them into wins. It's simply unrealistic to think that you can be a great company and institution and not have had your challenges otherwise you'd never learned anything. Based on this, the end of the day I think we're always further ahead and terms of the student experience, an experience just as rigorous and challenging at any of the so called traditional institutions and quite frankly our direct competitors.

Rodney Luster

Yes, indeed! I think that's a wonderfully articulated because I do believe like you do, there is something invaluable to durability and longevity. There is a "stick-to-it-ness" that imbues a tremendous amount of a valuable and indispensable commodity which is wisdom. So let take this one a bit further too. You been with the University quite a long time. It's kind of like a marriage, during the investment of the processes and procedures and obligatory areas such as compliance and the like, you learn things. Is there a take away, something you've learned from this professional marriage of sorts between you and your time within the institution?

Othello Rollon, Jr.

Hmm, that's a great question, I want to take a moment to think about this.

Rodney Luster

Sure. If you get a bit Blue October ([Blue October](#), a Texas based 1990s post grunge and slick modern band with emotionally charged melodies) with your answer it's okay, you're in safe hands with Erik and I [laughing] before we turn back to your passion for music.

Othello Rollon, Jr.

[Laughing] I guess I should get my guitar out then! So, ask that question again, I just want to hear it one more time?

Rodney Luster

Certainly. Maybe it's one word, a word that resonates within you when you think about your relationship with the University (all the processes and requirements you have abide to, learned, and improved) over 17 years you've been here. What resonates with you about that 17-year relationship?

Othello Rollon, Jr.

Seeing that you put it that way, I have so much loyalty and love for the school because it is the place that gave me a chance, that employed me. I only have the life that I have, to raise my two kids and a family because of this institution they gave me a chance. I'm about to be an empty nester and I think about that. When I started, my son was four years old, my daughter was 2 and the University of Phoenix had been there with me

throughout it all.

So if people say anything disparaging (like people can say about any institution anywhere for any reason) about the University whether it's outside or inside, it upsets me because I'd been through the ups and downs in this relationship to and I know our potential, the model that was created by Dr. John Sperling. I know it works! And I think, how this role has provided all of this for myself and my family and I know if it ended tomorrow, I would never look back with any regret because I know my job in this organization has provided for me and my family. It has provided so much. I'm sorry I'm getting emotional.

Rodney Luster

Understood Othello. Many would agree with you. I think we also know as parents that whether at home or at work we are all faced with struggles, career, raising our children, it resonates with us, and of course we do the best we can to celebrate when things go well. I applaud your candidness, and this just goes back to the personability you shared with Erik earlier.

Othello Rollon, Jr.

Absolutely. Thank you.

Rodney Luster

That's the answer I was looking for Othello because a response like that is deep within our bones, our time here. Sometimes it's just an emotional response. I'm sorry, it looks like we did get bit Blue October.

Othello Rollon, Jr.

[Laughing] Thank goodness (in this case) this wasn't face-to-face!

Erik Bean

Let's turn to an area we can all get emotional about, your passion for music. I think our readers would like to hear more about your pastime?

Othello Rollon, Jr.

Well, let's see, I'm a musician, have really been into music since I was about age 8. I have a piano so I love to play piano here at the house. I also played drums and guitar which came about my early days of being in a marching band, I was the drummer in that band. As well as in concert bands and in jazz bands. I especially enjoy learning music, like taking any songs I hear on the radio that I really want to play on the piano and taking a few minutes out of my day, maybe 15 to 20 minutes, learning it and then having some fun playing it for my kids when I get home. They get a kick out of me when they hear a song and I say, by the end of the day I'm going to play that song for you. And they say, "well, okay" slightly disbelieving. I have a good ear for music and so I put it together and put the phone next to the piano to record it and my kids would be like "wow" and it's funny they are so impressed by it. I love doing that for my kids. It's fun for me too! As far as music, I appreciate everything from

hip-hop as I grew up in the 80s in New York right when it was hot, to groups like Coldplay, I like a lot of alternative music, the Smiths and I love Morrissey. And of course, Blue October and too many other groups to mention.

Rodney Luster

Blue October is one of my favorite groups! Very emotional songs and they have such a tight fan following. They are right outside of Austin and the senior lives in Wimberley Texas which is very close Austin. They played here a lot. That's so great that you can do that. So your wife has similar taste and must be impressed as well too?

Othello Rollon, Jr.

Ah, well I don't know [Laughing]. I've been married for 21 years. My kids are in college and one graduating from high school. But I have been asked, "Why don't I create a YouTube channel "or "why don't I play in a band? Wouldn't that be exciting?" My wife and I have even talked about things like auditioning for a play together. It's important for us to continue to grow and it's fun to stay busy.

Rodney Luster

So does the creative element in you run through the things that you do professionally at work? I know it does for me as well since I am an artist and a singer-songwriter.

Othello Rollon, Jr.

Absolutely! Thinking about this, my regular role is as a manager providing all the things you should be providing as a manager such as coaching, weekly one-on-one sessions to help improve, escalated issues but I think the biggest thing I do

and one of the reasons I was brought over to doctoral is something my former VP said when she told me "Othello when you transition over, one of the biggest things I need for you to do is to inject some of you into the doctoral representatives there." I knew what she was talking about because she loved my energy and creativity and she was smart to say that because she knew how important it is to be creative and energetic when your meeting people and when you're leading a team. So in other words, we are a work hard, play hard kind of team and I'm always trying to come up with creative ways to do that.

So if you come to my desk you'll find a couple of different things there that I have available. For instance, if I see maybe a small lull in the day I might pick something up from my desk, a game and tell everyone hey, let's take a break for a second and play a little game of whatever, just to get them up and out of their chairs and feeling good because they work hard but that can be an energy drainer without some kind of infusion. And we also put that creativity to work during each major holiday.

Rodney Luster

[Laughing] that is so awesome Othello, and creative! The psychologist in me believes this type of creativity leads to more meaningful communication.

Othello Rollon, Jr.

Certainly. Sometimes I do things a bit unorthodox and they don't always work but that's just who I am, and I think it's important for us to celebrate the things that make us all unique. That's the kind of environment I want to create for my team. I have seen the other side of management styles and I just don't see longevity in

employees in that kind of environment. But if you're recognizing the uniqueness in bringing people together in an environment that is inviting and you're winning then everyone wants to be a part of that.

Rodney Luster

I think we see more of that aspect of what it means to be respected in the workplace these days. I think millennial's have actually taught us about this through their expectations for feeling valued in a workplace. Some of the sociology tells us that if they do not feel valued they will leave an organization but in the same instance if they are valued they will produce great things. I think that has affected the generations around them in a positive way. Which means, we really need to look at how we treat people.

Rodney Luster

[Laughing] "On that note..." I think this is a great place for us to close our interview. Thank you for taking the time with us today and really allowing us to get a bit personal and close up with you. It sounds like you're doing a lot of great things in your department and congratulations on being with the University for 17 years, almost as long as when the first doctoral cohort started!

Erik Bean

Indeed, thank you so much Othello for offering us what can be said as special purpose you and your team serve, the melody of enrollment.

Othello Rollon, Jr.

My pleasure.



Featured Doctoral Alum Earned High Marks in the Community and Professions they Serve

Erik Bean, Ed.D.

Associate University Research Chair

Center for Leadership Studies and Organizational Research

Since its inception in the fall of 2017 the Phoenix Scholar has featured several School of Advanced Studies (SAS) alum. So just in case you overlooked these four interviews - including Rodney Luster, Ph.D., V.P. of innovation and research, myself (2008 UOPX SAS alum), and the alums - this synopsis is just what the "doctor" ordered! Veterans Affairs Administrator Cynthia Jackson; Michigan Senator Michael MacDonald; Industrial Psychologist Bobby Murray; and Cyber Security Expert Jim Rice, shared their subject matter expertise and how their University of Phoenix doctoral degree aspirations complemented their career success. Caution - be prepared to be inspired.

Dr. Cynthia Jackson, Ed.D.

For Dr. Jackson, she and I first met at a 2003 Phoenix cohort, two determined and passionate professionals preparing to set sail on a rigorous five-year journey. We rekindled our academic passion at a 2018 doctoral residency in the Washington, DC area. Like the many doctoral candidates yesterday and today, we knew we were blazing a new trail for the program accessibility and rigor already had a vigorous reputation. During our Phoenix Scholar interview we asked Cynthia to summarize what's transpired since starting and completing the doctoral program. Her response, "I can state that completing my doctorate helped to garner a more competitive work world status and respect. Most importantly, I am in my field of study and that is a great feeling. The degree milestone allowed me to branch out into other areas, using my knowledge and research skills applicably. With data analytics one can broker that knowledge in many ways. How is that for a 15-year summary?" You will want to read more about the full breadth and depth of Dr. Jackson's military background in the original Phoenix Schol-

ar interview published in the winter 2019 edition ([Vol. 2, Issue 1, p. 13](#)). And perhaps you missed her publishing advice in an article she co-wrote with Deborah Levin, D.B.A. dubbed, I Am Ready to Publish, Now What? Researching Journals for Publication Opportunities. Point your browser to ([Vol. 2, Issue 2, p. 20](#)).

Dr. Michael MacDonald, D.H.A.

Senator MacDonald was based out of the Detroit area when he started his online doctoral journey in healthcare administration at University of Phoenix. An articulate and deeply passionate individual who advocates for good health and defense of issues ranging from women and diversity to economics and politics, he was elected as a Michigan state senator in the fall of 2018. In his fall 2018 ([Vol. 1, Issue 4, p. 19](#)) Phoenix Scholar interview he recounted a spark among many that initialized him to continue his doctoral study about women who overcame obesity based partly on their mindset. "I remember diving into the electronic library and other outside media centers spending countless hours searching. The initial spark of fact-finding within my own vertical healthcare expertise as well as consulting with those in the healthcare field propelled me forward. But I acknowledge much credit at my fingertips to the faculty at UOPX and their subject matter expertise (SME)." His ongoing academic work tied to his dissertation has led to his first peer reviewed accepted conference presentation entitled, A Qualitative Study of Women to Assess Coping Mechanisms for Exercise Adherence to Curtail Obesity. Perhaps you may see him at the 11th Annual Qualitative Report Conference (TQR) in [January 2020](#)?

Dr. Bobby Murray, Ph.D.

Her penchant is industrial psychology, but her experience as a retired lieutenant

colonel led her to University of Phoenix a decade ago. Her military career began at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas where she was commissioned as a second lieutenant before she was assigned to combat. She was stationed primarily Texas and South Carolina and then became a human protections administrator, a government service employee with the United States Army Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. Regarding her careful decision upon entering the doctoral program here, she told Dr. Luster and myself, "if I may add, in these important decision-making moments (such as pursuing a Ph.D.) we take chances - calculated risks. Such an endeavor is full of compromise. However, I am also a believer in chance encounters. Those pivotal moments when we encounter an opportunity to really stretch ourselves, to leave behind what we know and work toward the unknown. Here we can see the ideas of Albert Bandura at work. He was a believer in chance encounters and life-path. I had my professional plans in place, and I was managing my individual chain of events. But nowhere along the way did I expect those chains of events to intersect, to create a chance encounter that would lead to such an endeavor." But just who did Dr. Murray meet among many along her doctoral journey for such a Bandura moment. It was Dr. Luster in this instance. "Dr. Luster, before we close, I want to say thank you! You have inspired me on many occasions. You have an art for saying just what is needed to kick me over to the other side (back to action) or get me back on track. You are an excellent listener. You inspire me to do more, do better and go higher. Having you as a facilitator during the program and now as a member on my committee has been and is a blessing!" Indeed, he was very humbled. But it was several people along her doctoral journey that allowed her to persevere. Read more

in the complete interview inside the summer 2018 edition ([Vol.1, Issue 3, p. 14](#)).

Dr. Jim Rice, D.M.

When it comes to cyber security Dr. Jim Rice will tell you, it all starts with what we choose to post online, and the vulnerability of data stored in the cloud. Dr. Rice works for a systems integration company serving international clientele and he also serves as faculty to students here at University of Phoenix. He is the epitome of a University of Phoenix scholar, one in more than one million, as a matter of fact, who knows how to utilize information in the classroom, including his doctoral degree, to benefit many. During his Phoenix Scholar interview he said, “a university that’s preaching a practical approach to learning should provide students opportunities to

apply what they’re learning. So, you know relationships like we’re discussing that potentially involve external corporations are going to provide our students an opportunity to apply the skills that they’re acquiring and they will be able to come out of school with a degree and experience reinforcing the practitioner model. This makes our students more marketable. It is one thing to graduate with a security certificate, for example, but another to demonstrate that one has already put it to good use. And that is going to put Phoenix head and shoulders above most of the public universities that are out there.” Jim is a prolific conference presenter always pushing the so-called proverbial envelope to inspire people to think more deeply and to challenge his profession. Find out more how he got started and what people and challenges he faced along the way also

within the summer 2018 edition ([Vol.1, Issue 3, p. 20](#)).

We are so grateful to have worked so closely with Cynthia Jackson, Michael MacDonald, Bobby Murray, and Jim Rice. Based on their endurance and track record, we believe they will continue to inspire and make more long-lasting contributions to their field and the communities they serve. To examine all the inspiring stories and the latest in scholarly research best practices, conceptual pieces, and synopsis of published research, download all the back issues of [Phoenix Scholar](#) and stay tuned to future editions. We hope you will agree that the rigor of all those who contribute to the scholarly community and their professions are quite an inspiration, a mainstay of our ongoing successful practitioner mission.



SAS Facebook: A Community of Support for Alumni, Students, and Faculty

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In the age of social networking, the School of Advanced Studies (SAS) has created a place where students, alumni, and faculty – regardless of their location the world-over – can connect, interact, and support one another using Facebook (the world’s largest such platform). In keeping with the mission of University of Phoenix to provide access to higher education opportunities that enable students to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to achieve professional goals, improve the performance within organizations, and provide leadership and service to the communities, the use of Facebook also represents The Core Values, which advance bravery, honesty, and focus, the ideals which supported the idea to launch the SAS Facebook page.

As the Leadership Team of the School of Advanced Studies continues to work tirelessly to implement changes that will improve communication and collaboration for students, Facebook helps with this initiative. In the online community making changes that move the quality of the student experience forward is always a vision. A continued vision to provide twenty-four-hour availability with access to their peers to access information and exchange ideas is paramount.

The student experience initiative was spearheaded in January 2018, by Dr. Shawn C. Boone, the Associate Dean of Instruction for the School of Advanced Studies. Currently, Natalie Henretty is the official SAS Facebook Page administrator. According to Henretty, “making sure students are receiving the correct advice and answers to questions by others on the

Facebook page is the first order.” The SAS Facebook page has already proved to be a real asset and success, currently serving over 1600 active members within a 60-day period. Other benefits include the ability for students to gain information or answers to questions without having to sign into class and await a response.

There is range of student activity daily on the SAS Facebook page including congratulatory remarks and remarks of accomplishment that share the success of passing the oral defense. The positive influence that the other students gain can help students who may be facing barriers, seeing the positive posts can be motivating to re-engage and complete their degree. One student just posted today that she was motivated to complete her program. Students engage in conversations regarding the milestones such as searching for committee members and passing QRM. The comments and words of encouragement are powerful in building perseverance through the dissertation journey, which is what the SAS Facebook page provides in terms of continuity for student engagement that uplifts the students to work consistently through completion.

Thus far, there have been many times that students have been able to obtain the support required during off hours within minutes rather than hours. In an online classroom, faculty are able to respond the next morning; however, on the Facebook page the answers can come in minutes. “Having the ability to receive answers in minutes rather than hours later is a tremendous service to our student,” said Dr. Boone. For

students in the middle of an assignment, the rapid communication is the type of help that could prevent a late assignment or a lack of clarity on the expectations.

There is a monitoring process in place, which includes reviewing each and every Facebook post. The monitoring process is an enormous task. Currently each post is read and acknowledged in some fashion by SAS Facebook page monitoring staff. The Facebook staff respond with a like, a comment, or using a Private Message (PM). The SAS Facebook page monitoring staff are real pioneers for the university in taking innovative steps to address the need to appraise the ongoing content that is being provided to SAS Students.

The SAS Facebook community is expanding daily and expanding the opportunities for engagement. More faculty, staff, and students are beginning to utilize the social media tool that has been established and specially designed to meet the needs of a vast cross section of doctoral students, staff, and faculty. The School of Advanced Studies encourages the school community to use the platform to remain informed on the ongoing quality improvement changes and university advancements that take place periodically. The use of the SAS Facebook page is an essential tool that can be used by the entire community to promote professional engagement all areas including innovative research projects, participation in ongoing professional conferences, and expanding the body of knowledge. To request access to the SAS Facebook page visit [this link](#).



Prudence to Inform Theory and Practice: Bridging the Scholar and Practitioner Gap

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Prudence Can be a Research Strategy

Prudence can be a research strategy for thinking wise to lead and write well. For example, applying prudence to relationship building through networking and collaborating to inform theory and practice. Here is where literature review of scholarly and professional trade sources informs best practices, and where personal communications with leaders can advance the field of practice through implementation (American Psychological Association, 2019).

There is a wise biblical saying that “every purpose is established by counsel; by wise counsel wage war” (Proverbs 20:18). Wage war is analogous to the personal battle in the doctoral journey to write a dissertation of scientific merit with ethical application and quality outcomes. Wise counsel is analogous to key individuals like the Dissertation Chair, Committee Members, faculty, and professionals, including leaders in the field of practice and also ministers of spirituality. The intersection of self-leadership, individual performance, and learning style connects prudence in good judgment (virtue) and common sense for bridging the scholar and practitioner gap (Larrivee & Gini, 2014; Hibbs, 1999).

The battle begins with leading self. Relationship with self is important. How well one leads self will also be evident in prudent decisions made and performance outcomes. Exemplary dissertations have a purposeful and thorough literature review to inform the study’s design, analysis, and interpretation. It’s not enough to just read scholarly literature. Scholar-practitioners need to have conversation with others in the field of practice and those active in research to collaborate and gain new insights and deeper levels of understanding. Theory is good to know. Practice is how it’s done in the field. However, the prudent

researcher will bridge theory and practice to meld a more meaningful scholarly and practitioner perspective.

Prudent Actions to Inform Theory and Practice for Performance Outcomes

First, get the war gear on, that is a prudent mindset to count the cost of time, energy, and resources – do you have enough to finish the doctoral journey? Be realistic, budget time, and assess physical energy level and personal will to get it done. Attitude matters!

Identify your resources (time and money) and those who you can count on for support throughout the doctoral journey. Connect your ability of time, energy, and resources to your vision for the dissertation – its purpose, significance, and articulate how your research inquiry can inform the field of practice. Write a concise elevator speech and practice communicating your message.

Second, develop further the key message by conducting a thorough literature review. Think of the literature review as a holistic summary of related journal articles organized and integrated into a logical justification for the proposed study. Comprehensive literature reviews contain information about specific subjects from many non-biased sources. Grey literature from traditional sources like institutions, organizations, and governmental agencies, can also provide useful information and insight to increase understanding on the topic of interest and research focus. However, keep in mind that grey sources of literature found on the Internet are not always reliable. Researchers must carefully evaluate sources before relying on them to support academic work.

Dissertation Warfare: CRAAP Model

A great weapon of war for the doctoral student arsenal is the CRAAP model – an acronym for Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose – to evaluate sources. Here is what CRAAP stands for:

Currency is about the timing of the information – did it recently happen, or did it happen over a decade or more ago?

Relevance is about how well it relates to the topic of study, situation, location, audience, etc.

Authority is about who is the source of the information – does the person or organization have authority in the subject matter and are they reputable?

Accuracy is about truth and facts of the information.

Purpose is why the information exists. For example, selling or promoting a political agenda, etc. is most likely information of personal bias. While it can be useful to understand the biased perspective, it is not always prudent to justify as your rationale for the study.

Additional information about the CRAAP Model is available at [this link](#).

The Literature Review

The literature review must have purpose to support the problem statement, research methodology and design, and the theoretical/conceptual framework in which the study will be viewed. Start by identifying what has been written on the topic of study. Then read and reflect to synthesize the information and gain new understanding. Map out the relationships between the ideas and the variables. Scope out the context in which the topic/problem will be written. From there, start having meaningful conversations with the Dissertation

Chair, work colleagues, and leaders in the field of practice.

Listen to understand the different perspectives, identify bias views, ask questions, and investigate further any terms and concepts that are unfamiliar. Collaborate on ideas that could transform processes, systems, and the way people work or do certain things. Wage war against the problem being researched with wise counsel and prudent decision-making to produce a literature review that informs theory and practice, bridging the scholar-practitioner gap.

While peer reviewed and relevant databases like the Elton B. Stephenson Company (EBSCO), ProQuest, ProQuest Digital Theses and Dissertations, and ERIC.gov as well as Google Scholar must be included, it

is important to demonstrate effective use of quality key word search terms. Also, to apply prudent examination of input from the practitioners themselves to level theory and practice with contemporary foresight. Practicing these prudent actions can produce literature review success!

The following links provide additional insights on applied prudence in context of scholar-practitioner research. Click on the appropriate link to access the information.

[Prudence in Doctoral Research: An Introduction](#)

[Prudence to Advance Learning and Practical Application](#)

[Prudence as a Construct to Embody Leadership for Peace and Prosperity](#)

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An Interview with Research Dean Mark McCaslin

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It has long seemed to me that Research Dean Mark McCaslin's favorite word must be "potentiating." After having the pleasure of interviewing him on April 23, 2019, I realize that this is no accident. A potentiator, a person who sees potential in people and organizations and then helps them be more effective, is who Dean McCaslin is. In addition to being a dedicated potentiator himself, he recognizes the important role played by the people who saw potential in him and helped him become more effective. Learning more about Dean McCaslin and his role in potentiating research for the University of Phoenix School of Doctoral Studies and its faculty, students, and alumni seems an appropriate topic as we celebrate the twentieth year of the doctoral program at UOPX and look into the future.

In this article, I share some of the stories Dean McCaslin told me about his earlier years, his experiences at UOPX, and his future visions for research as it relates to the UOPX doctoral program. I believe they provide a foundation for understanding his support for us and his encouragement to all of us to be potentiators. Before interviewing him, I knew Dean McCaslin's dissertation chair had been Dr. John Creswell, a research methodologist we are all familiar with because of his research methodology textbooks; what I didn't know was how Creswell came to be Dean McCaslin's chair. That story seems an appropriate way to introduce Dean McCaslin as a potentiator of others and as the benefactor of a great potentiator.

Dean McCaslin entered the workforce as an agricultural science instructor in a high school in rural Wyoming. The school was in a valley not far from Jackson Hole. Jackson Hole's high school was a school of winners. Dean McCaslin's new school did poorly in everything. This made no sense to our future dean. There were only 12 in the agricultural program at the high school when he arrived. When he left three years

later there were 109 in the program and they had just won a third of the state's gold medals from the Future Farmers of America. He had seen potential in the students, the program, and the school and worked to get everyone excited and believing they had potential and then living into that potential.

Not surprisingly, others saw potential in this young man who had just demonstrated how good he was at bringing out the potential in others. Among those favorably impressed were those responsible for the agricultural leadership programs at the University of Wyoming, where Dean McCaslin was enticed to take a year off from teaching high school to earn his master degree, and of the University of Nebraska where he then earned his PhD in agricultural leadership.

The University of Nebraska is a leading research university. There were only seven students in Dean McCaslin's cohort, referred to as the doctoral bullpen. Students were each assigned to one leading faculty member who would serve as the chair of their dissertation committees. Dean McCaslin was assigned to Rick Foster, who left the university while Dean McCaslin was working on his dissertation to be the Program Vice President for the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. John Creswell became his chair. Dean McCaslin had met Creswell when he took a required "nuisance" course introducing qualitative research. Creswell quickly changed Dean McCaslin's mind about both the course and the instructor. Speaking of Creswell, Dean McCaslin told me "the man changed my life. I realized he was here for us to help us be successful." Dean McCaslin admired Creswell for his leadership talents and for his caring persona and realized, "that's who I want to be like – the model I've been looking for." Perhaps it should not be surprising that Dean McCaslin now refers to himself as a methodologist.

Creswell introduced Dean McCaslin to the leading conferences in their field, introduced him to the qualitative research leaders we still follow - such as Norm Denzel - and taught him lessons he has applied in recent years to help us at the University of Phoenix recognize our potential. Dean McCaslin recalls that Creswell used to say that if people want to be published and accepted in their field, they need to get engaged in the conversations in the professional organizations in their field. Creswell emphasized the importance of being known.

There are too many years between Dean McCaslin earning his doctorate and his time at the University of Phoenix to recount in this brief article, but I am including one story from those years as it provides a lesson for academic success we might all learn from.

Along the way, Dean McCaslin's focus formally shifted from agricultural leadership to transpersonal studies, or the study of human potential. While at the University of Idaho, he earned a second master degree and intended to earn a second doctorate in his new field. He balked, however, when the courses he was required to take included some he was already teaching. He dropped out of the doctoral program to be an adjunct instructor, soon became a core faculty member, then the department chair – in the department where he was a doctoral program dropout! Dean McCaslin is not easily discouraged.

So, what enticed him to join us at the University of Phoenix? In January 2013 he was the second research chair hired, two days after the first one, with the opportunity to develop a research center from the start; he could make it be whatever he wished, a pretty unique and exciting opportunity. Additionally, he saw potential in us. The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) had just changed the game by plac-

ing our doctoral program on notice, observing that as doctoral faculty who had earned research doctorates, were experienced practitioners, and strong teachers we also needed to be active scholars and researchers. Dean McCaslin saw his role as providing support so we could do this effectively.

Dean McCaslin noted, it is one thing to put in place academic reviews and tell people they need to be publishing, it's another thing to help them find things to write about! He decided to focus on developing opportunities. Today, with far fewer faculty members we have radically increased our publication volume and many of us have become part of the leadership in our disciplines – all in less than five years. We are living up to our potential!

During the interview, we discussed several of the programs initiated to support our growth as researchers, specifically the research hub, the Knowledge without Boundaries activities, and the University of Phoenix research summits. Perhaps some of you have noticed that the research hub is in the process of being redesigned, with the goal to have the value propositions in the forefront. The old hub had become a treasure trove of valuable information, but finding the needed information in what had become a bit of a "pile" as research activities grew over the years and everything made its way to the hub had become too challenging.

Dean McCaslin reviewed the evolution of what he called the Knowledge Without Boundaries (KWB) enterprise. When it was started, UOPX had many more campuses and the new research center director team began visiting each center, talking about

themselves and their centers. Several of the directors recognized the need to do more than talk. As they pondered how to make their location visits more valuable, more potentiating, luck brought them an opportunity to try something new. An unrelated university event scheduled in Houston was cancelled at the last minute, so hotel facilities were available to the team at no cost.

The team set up a Friday, Saturday, Sunday event. Friday night was a panel discussion; but on Saturday they broke attending faculty members into groups to help them develop their ideas for research and scholarship. When 60 faculty members returned to the hotel on Sunday to continue their work, the team knew it had found a good product, one that truly was providing support to our faculty members as we sought to be researchers and scholars. Future KWB events were two days long and held at the local campuses. The KWB Academy, as it came to be called, was very successful. However, as we lost physical campuses, moving around became less productive. Center Director Kimberly Underwood is now working to move the KWB Academy online with Just-In-Time training on various elements of research and scholarship. The online academy is expected to launch this summer; making it into a certificate program is being considered.

The third program we discussed is the annual Research Summit, which last year became an online summit rather than a gathering in Phoenix, making it accessible to far more participants. The Call for Proposals for this third summit has been issued and proposals were due on May 5.

As is evident in each of the research and scholarship support activities, evolution is a critical aspect of our research and scholarship enterprise. Thus, it seemed appropriate to ask Dean McCaslin what his vision is for the future of this enterprise.

He noted that he is seeing the potential for a research association that might be valuable for other academic institutions in the practitioner space, where we are a leading contributor to research and scholarship. He noted we have the Phoenix Scholar and research-related webinars in addition to the programs we'd just discussed. He suggested we might add a peer-reviewed journal to our offerings. Dean McCaslin noted that his focus is on finding needs to fill rather than on competing with existing leaders, such as the leading research universities. He noted that if approximately a million people have master degrees but only 6% of them go on to earn doctorates, the other 94% also need to continue to develop their professional skills. He also observed that being able to problematize and form research agendas, which are research skills, have power in the world of work. He further indicated there is a robust opportunity if we can help people meet these needs, particularly if we find a way to meet them in such a way that the certificates gained in the process are stackable, perhaps contributing to earning a practitioner doctorate.

Dean McCaslin ended the interview with the observation that we are not short on opportunities; the challenge is determining how to best use our limited resources. There is much potential; how fortunate we are to have a potentiator as our research dean!



Dr. Thomas Clark, CSM, USA (Ret.), DM

Vitals:

Executive Director

Alliance for Fort Gordon

Graduate of University of Phoenix SAS, 2018

Elizabeth A. Young, Ed.D.

Dissertation Chair

Center for Educational and Instructional Technology Research

This is the story of Dr. Thomas Clark, an Army alumnus of the University of Phoenix and how he chose to use his war arena leadership experiences to better the safety and well being of young soldiers deployed in combat regions. Dr. Clark, Command Sergeant Major (ret), served over 32 years in the Army, culminating his service as the Army's Signal Regimental Command Sergeant Major, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon in Augusta, Georgia. During his military career, Thomas deployed multiple times, leading soldiers in combat in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as the Command Sergeant Major of the 440th Signal Battalion in 2004 and again in 2006 as the Signal Task Force Command Sergeant Major for the country of Iraq while assigned to the 22nd Signal Brigade.

Dr. Clark holds undergraduate degrees from Central Texas College and Excelsior College, a masters' degree in adult education from Troy University, and a doctorate in management and organizational leadership from the School of Advanced Studies at the University of Phoenix.

While in the Army, Dr. Clark held a variety of leadership positions in tactical signal units in Korea, Germany, Iraq and the United States. As the Signal Regimental CSM and post CSM, he was the senior enlisted advisor to the Chief of the Army Signal Corps and Commanding General of Fort Gordon. He served in this position for over three years, educating and

informing the signal regiment and playing important roles in the development of doctrine, the strategic planning for future communications capabilities, and the professional education, training and leader development programs for the 60,000 communications and computer operations personnel in the Active, Guard, and Reserve Army.

Prompted by his experience leading Millennial soldiers in battle during several deployments as Command Major in Iraq, as a UOPX doctoral student, Tom chose to conduct a Delphi study to analyze perceived reasons for Millennial soldiers lacking effective face-to-face communication skills. For edification, Dr. Clark defines Millennial soldiers loosely as soldiers who were born between 1982 and 2010. Millennials are noted to have had their lives shaped differently than previous generations and are multi-task driven by technological devices. Dr. Clark recognizes that in the combat arena, effective communication skills are vital and have the potential of producing life or death situation. The aim of Dr. Clark's study was to gain a consensus of opinion on what constitutes successful face-to-face combat communication skills for Millennials soldiers. Dr. Clark projected the data would become a baseline for developing communication training that could be delivered prior to combat deployment and implemented as required training for all new recruits. Experience-based, rich data drawn from

conversations with 16 high ranking battle-arena Army leaders over a period of six weeks were collected. The results can be summed by consensus, that Millennial soldiers lacked effective and meaningful face-to-face communication to integrate facial expressions, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, listening and team building skills which enforced Dr. Clark's intention to develop a communication training program.

As an accomplished and experienced U.S. Military Educator and Training Manager with a commendable track record of providing leadership and direction for Fort Gordon's IT/Signal Training School Program, Dr. Clark has accumulated multiple awards inclusive of the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, two Bronze Stars, as well as the Air Assault and Combat Action Badges. Dr. Clark currently serves as the Executive Director for a non-profit organization where he promotes, coordinates, and advocates investment in cyber growth to capitalize on opportunities for the benefit of all within the Fort Gordon Cyber District.

Most recently, Dr. Clark was named one of the 100 Most Influential Georgians by Georgia Trend and James Magazines (2019).

The University of Phoenix is proud of Dr. Thomas Clark's service, and proud to have had such a fine and distinguished gentleman as a doctoral student in the School of Advanced Studies.



Thinking Globally, Acting Locally, Instructional Dean Herman J. van Niekerk: An Interview with Rodney Luster and Erik Bean

Vitals

Name: Herman J. van Niekerk

Profession: Associate Dean of Instruction

Degree: Ph.D.

Rodney Luster

Well Associate Dean van Niekerk, welcome and thanks so much for being with us today. You have a great story - an international one I might add - and a unique administrative perspective that Erik and I have much anticipated for this interview, and our readers will too. So, let's get started!

Associate Dean van Niekerk

That sounds good to me.

Rodney Luster

I'm going to let Erik take the first question.

Erik Bean

Dean van Niekerk, let's start with a profile of your background which I understand has an international influence.

Associate Dean van Niekerk

I was born and raised in South Africa. My ancestors moved to South Africa around the 1700s. At that time religious persecution occurred in many parts of Europe. I am a mix between Dutch and German and my home language is Afrikaans. So, my ancestors arrived in Cape Town around the 1700s as I mentioned. I was able to trace my ancestry back quite a ways and did some research to help authenticate this to our war museums. We have a similar history there, much as America fought the British, we also fought the British in the early 1900s. I grew up in a very small, rural, country town. I was the kind of kid who played a lot of sports, and I was encouraged to do well at school. My parents never did go to university. In fact, none of my family ever went except for my sister but I was part of the first generation to have attend a high-

er education institute. As well, I was the first one to receive a doctoral degree in my family. In that sense, I know what it feels like to work for what you have. I was very blessed to receive a scholarship in sports and part of that was due to where I worked as well. All my post-graduate degrees were completed while I was working.

South Africa had compulsory military service and as part of that I attended officer military school. I was also operationally deployed during that time, at the height of the Cold War. There was serious fighting for supremacy in Southern Africa with lots of support from Russia and Cuba to expand communism in the region during 1975-1990 which ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall. When I finished my tour of duty, I assumed a role as a high school teacher for about three years.

Shortly after I decided to join our foreign affairs, spent two years posted in Stockholm, Sweden. It was a difficult period to be a South African diplomat because of increasing international isolation due to apartheid. At the same time it was an interesting point in world history because I experienced the fall of the Berlin Wall, we experienced the night when we heard the news Nicolae Ceausescu was killed. Swedish journalists had excellent access to what was happening and so we heard and saw this on TV first hand. So, some interesting events in world history were happening at that time. In 1991 I was transferred. From Stockholm to the United Nations. I spent four years in New York. But, quite frankly, I never had a desire to come to the United States. Let me explain why. I'm a bit of a country boy so the perception that was created by the movies I saw when I was a kid was that in the United States

you had eight lanes of traffic in both directions. I believed it to be a concrete jungle. As a country boy I couldn't see myself living in a concrete jungle. However, my wife who had visited the U.S. said, "you will like it!" But the concrete highways eluded me [Laughing].

Rodney Luster

Yes, indeed, that must've been a bit intimidating given what you thought it was.

Associate Dean van Niekerk

Now here's the compelling part of this. After four years in New York I literally cried when I left. My eldest child was born in Manhattan. So the day we moved out of our house I actually went back to one of the rooms and sat there, looked around and thought about how blessed I was to be here and what a great country this is! And there in that moment, honestly, I cried.

Rodney Luster

Wow, a very moving moment for you Dean van Niekerk, one that some might take for granted.

Associate Dean van Niekerk

Yes it was moving. So in any case, we returned to South Africa. At that point it was obvious that many things changed when we returned. I spent the next 18 months there training the new diplomatic corps. I realized that if I wanted to move forward in my life I had to leave again. It wasn't anything political, it was just simply practical. So we moved from Pretoria where we were then based in Cape Town. And at that time we started our own business. A restaurant that was around for about seven years,

although I was only involved heavily for the first year. Setting up a business, being an entrepreneur, you learn some things. When I think back, I know I learned much about human behavior in college but truly I think I learned much more in four months in the military than I ever learned about human behavior during those four years at college. And I will tell you one other thing, I learned more about customer service experience in four weeks in the restaurant industry than any other time in my life.

Ah but that's a different story. So, we bought a foreclosed business as were absolutely novices. My wife wasn't even a chef or a cook but she did get some training. We were also part of a partnership for the first few years. Actually that was with a fellow that was with me during my time at the United Nations. It was during this time in my life that there was a guy who came into our restaurant one evening, a Dutch gentleman who I struck up a conversation with that was in the process of bringing a business school to South Africa. In 1996 he did just that and it was called Business School Netherlands, BSN.

It was during our conversation that he asked if I could step into one of his classes because he had an important trip coming up to go to Holland. He said the class was about the softer skills in business, like listening and negotiation skills. At that time we called them "soft skills" but in my view - in a technologically driven environment - these soft skills have now become hard skills. Listening, communicating, have all become something that is much needed where technology eclipsed these things and subsequently created a gap.

As part of that conversation he asked if I wanted to join him. I was always interested in management, education, and executive leadership development, things like that. So one thing led to another and I became the director of the MBA program at the school. You know, he was very much like our university founder with that same entrepreneurial spirit. This man was an HR director of a prominent company in the Netherlands. This is where he saw a huge gap when he went out to look for training programs for his employees, he just couldn't find what he was looking for. So, he decided to set up this business school on the basis of "action" learning. I subsequently became very interested in the topic of information because you must remember that in government that is what you mostly rely on, information and information management, organizational learning, and knowledge management.

That also prompted me to do my Ph.D. at University of Stellenbosch, one of the premier universities in South Africa, AACSB accredited. My focus was on organizational learning and knowledge management around the whole integration between management and organizations, their respective information processes and learning, and how to optimize information assets to ensure that organizations remain and become more competitive. That brings me to leadership and leadership decision-making and how we need

to move forward with things like decision making. So, I stayed on for five years and then started a niche consulting business.

I had just completed my PhD and with another partner we decided to set up our own consulting business. It was a small niche consulting business, essentially focusing on what I had been doing which was knowledge management.

These experiences and my education drew me towards information as a science. I realized that for personal and professional reasons I needed a change and I told my wife, "I want to go back to America, that's the place where I want to be!"

Rodney Luster

So you were committed to coming back then because America now resonated with you like never before?

Associate Dean van Niekerk

I always wanted to come back since 1996 when we left. I always had a longing to come back, but it is not that easy. There is currently a lot of talk about immigration. We applied for seven years for the green card lottery or diversity visa. This process allows both you and your wife to apply. We applied every year since 2007 and in 2014 my wife finally was fortunate enough to get it. That allowed us to legally immigrate and to find a job without any sponsorships.

Rodney Luster

Sounds like there was a series of functional challenges you and your wife were navigating to get back. Many can sympathize with this.

Associate Dean van Niekerk

Yes, very real challenges. I mentioned before that my first daughter was born here in the USA. She completed her degree in South Africa but when we were applying, she was just over 21 and it is only you and your dependents under 21 that can get the green card. So, my wife and I got it. My second daughter was on a swimming scholarship at Youngstown State University in 2012. So, she was already in the States, but on a student visa, and my son - who is now 20 - was still at school.

I can't tell you how many CV's I must have sent out, how many calls I made, and how much I tried to network, tried to use LinkedIn. I eventually landed an interview at James Madison University, but to my dismay I was not able to land that position

Rodney Luster

Your background demonstrates much fortitude and flexibility, the type that only your travels and overseas vantage points can garner.

Associate Dean van Niekerk

I really wanted to get the job at the time, to be working here in America. I was inspired and felt I had much to contribute. But when you make such a dramatic move it's challenging as well, and it's extremely

difficult to move and take the risks associated.

Rodney Luster

Certainly, I can imagine especially from those outside America.

Associate Dean van Niekerk

But the green card allowed me to move with most of the full benefits of being an American citizen, except the ability to vote. I started looking online at jobs, and that same night I came across the position I have now. So I applied online and I thought, if I am lucky enough to get an interview then I need to know a little bit more about this organization. You know, I had heard about the University of Phoenix, but I wasn't sure what it was all about.

Rodney Luster

So what year was that Dean van Niekerk?

Associate Dean van Niekerk

That would be in the spring of 2015. So, I researched Apollo Education Group and noticed that they had a subsidiary in South Africa. Now that's interesting because I know the school very well there because it was one of my competitors when I was working there at another business school. So, I decided to inquire a bit more and called up the director. I thought maybe she knows someone at University of Phoenix. She did and said she could introduce me to some people. I guess I was still very cautious from my prior encounters with so many institutions because I had heard the same things before and been let down a few times along the way. But you know, she meant what she said, and she followed up with me! A few days later a recruiter called me and within a few weeks I was hired as associate dean of instruction!

Rodney Luster

It's important for our readers to know some of this international legacy you have provided. I'm going to pass the baton to Erik who has been digesting your extraordinary career journey across several continents. Erik you're up!

Erik Bean

Thank you Rodney. Dean van Niekerk your international background is fascinating from several perspectives, culture, its ethnocentrism, your business experience, and the leadership skills you acquired along the way. It's no wonder your skillset complements the dynamics of the programs that we offer at University of Phoenix, particularly our doctoral degree programs. First of all, I want to thank you for being active in the Research Hub, your [profile](#) encapsulates your unique background and your [blog](#) focusing on communication and leadership offers valuable lessons for all our stakeholders. You have cleverly referenced contemporary leaders like Bill Gates, people like that, but are there other charismatic leaders in the business world that you feel we can draw useful lessons or approaches?

Associate Dean van Niekerk

Business-wise, I have always had tremendous respect for Jack Welch, CEO of General Electric. I read [his book](#) and the reason why this book was even more interesting to me is because he was a guy that was extremely interested in action learning and they implemented action learning at the executive business development programs at Crotonville, which is their corporate university in upstate New York. And in his book, Welch had several things to say on action learning. But what is fascinating is if you really understand the nuances of that term and look at how they implemented it then you begin to see the relevance of why his management approach was successful.

Many experts claim that he was so successful at GE because of the way that he approached organizational learning and why they approached and used growth as a corporate university and the way that they did this was just fascinating from a business perspective. So Jack Welch stands out for me. You know, I'm interested in kind of looking at the people with those proven leadership skills, their tenacity and things like that. That kind of tenacity had me looking at explorers like Livingston and Stanley, those early explorers who ventured into the deeper parts of Africa. That interest also led me to look at more modern day explorers like Shackleton, and his race for the South Pole with Amundsen the Norwegian. Mike Horn from South Africa was actually the first person that circumnavigated the North Pole in 27 months. And it's fascinating to read about his adventures, his thoughts, especially when he was all alone out there, the fates of nature he faced is absolutely amazing, the human spirit is simply amazing! This spirit reminds me of the desire our students possess as well. I witness similar stories right here that mark the student's life, their exploration and challenges, their human spirit to achieve their dream of a doctorate degree. It's not easy, ask me! I've done it! So that idea of the "human spirit" to be challenged, to remain resilient, to overcome, is something I am always attracted to reading and understanding more about.

Another leader comes to mind, especially when we look at the divisive times we are living in these days is Nelson Mandela. Fascinating person. You know, he did so much for South Africa to unify the country. Mandela really succeeded in uniting people across all racial groups. People had great respect for him as a leader. He had the emotional intelligence and attributes to realize that if you want to make South Africa a great country, everyone was important regardless of their background, he developed the "rainbow nation" and he succeeded. I honor and respect him so much as a leader.

Erik Bean

Mandela visited the Detroit area where I am currently based in 1990. Many had the pleasure of seeing him speak at Tiger Stadium. It was just incredible to see the outpouring of people that really admired him

and the sacrifices that he made including his long imprisonment.

Associate Dean van Niekerk

Absolutely. He spent 27 years in jail and wrote about those profound moments in his life. He was compassionate and understood that we need to come together. There's great wisdom in that.

This reminds of a word from my country, a Zulu word, Ubuntu (not to be confused with a popular open source Linux operating system). It means, "I am the person you make out of me." Or in other words, you make me the person I am. It's all about how we treat each other as people. There's some sense in that traditional culture that is important, which is where the term originated. Like in the way we say "Good Morning" which is "Sawubona" which means "I recognize you." You know, I recognize you as a fellow human being. I think it's important how we see each other. That's why leadership and its study is an important practice in my life.

Erik Bean

Your focus on people and respect reminds me of the famous cognitive psychologist Bandura, who said that even fortuitous relationships can have significant meaning on our lives and how we behave. Does this also hold true for students who, for example, encounter a new faculty member or chair? And I am sure Rodney will want to touch upon how these interactions shape our doctoral residency experience.

Associate Dean van Niekerk

Absolutely they do!

Rodney Luster

Exactly Erik! Dean van Niekerk, how do you see that in doctoral residency regarding how we shape behaviors? Please elaborate.

Associate Dean van Niekerk

As a university, we are fortunate enough to have a diverse population. People bring their strengths to residency, right? Students work side by side, collaboratively helping influence one another, motivate one another. For me and my interactions with students, I have seen nothing but respect from them for me as a faculty, as a professional. I have seen our students work both online and at residency and I have to say...I am impressed! I think many people underestimate our students and what they can do. Never underestimate our students I mean, realistically, all schools move through helping students to try and achieve and some find that college is not their track and that's okay. But, for the most part, we have some really great students in our doctoral program who want to excel in their professions. Then there are those that may have risen, you know, professionally they have established themselves like CEO's from Silicon Valley. So collectively the interactions build new and challenging experiences and learning opportunities for everyone.

Rodney Luster

I recently taught a residency class and was also so very impressed professionally at the caliber and intellectual horsepower that moves through our student body. I ended up telling the students by the end of the class that I have been through some noteworthy institutions both as a student and faculty, but as far as students go, I would hold them up against any of those institutions based on what I have seen them do in class. With the effort, diligence, and pursuit, it's very inspiring. I think that's some of what you have been addressing here too Dean van Niekerk?

Associate Dean van Niekerk

Yes. Exactly. I am not ashamed to say I grew up poor. And I have learned a few things in life as a result such as you should never judge a book by its cover. A doctorate degree for instance doesn't make a person "special" as much as it builds a skillset, but it is the person that ultimately makes the degree work.

Erik Bean

That makes sense to me Dean van Niekerk. I'm looking here at one of your latest papers, [Significant factors for enabling knowledge sharing between government agencies within South Africa](#). Can you tell our readers a little bit about what inspired you to do that kind of research?

Associate Dean van Niekerk

Well it wasn't my research to be accurate. I was serving as an academic chair for a student and he was doing his degree at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and he was one of the senior guys at an equivalent entity like the IRS here in America but for South Africa. He was doing his studies in management. That study was focused on trying to share knowledge where there have been problems in various department not sharing information. In South Africa with some of our own inherent issues with wildlife poaching, syndicates, money laundering and the like, where information silos exist. Truly, you cannot fight crime effectively where communication silos exist. So, my student was doing research on this and I was just his supervisor to the research endeavor. It was important for me to help him understand the merits of his research and to help shape it around this topic of communication silos and information sharing. So, helping serve as his chair, it was a good study to pursue. This goes back to my own specialty of how we use information to optimize effectiveness in our decision-making business and industry.

Erik Bean

Excellent. Dean van Niekerk, we only have a few minutes left in this interview. therefore, when you think of our doctoral programs, as an associate instructor dean, what is the biggest misconception that people might have about our program that you'd like to share?

Associate Dean van Niekerk

Well, I think that people think because the program is application driven, and look at the scholar practitioner leadership model the word “practitioner” may connote misconceptions. Those people who might judge us critically forget to understand and really look at our depth and rigor when it comes to scholarly understanding and scholarly skills. The big difference here is that we want students to apply their degree, to actually use it to inform their decision making, to inform the actions and that is where this “practitioner” part comes from, which is so much needed in today’s world with the needs of students to be able to apply what they learn. I always say if you cut the word practitioner down to its root word of “act” and use it as an acronym, it says Action Changes Things. So, we need to stress this more with doctoral learners at any institution. Why learn what you can’t apply? So, in the end, the critic who sees a PhD program based on research rigor and the various depths of research related to such philosophically oriented degrees would perhaps misjudge or miss the depths of a practitioner rooted degree which imbues all that and more.

Erik Bean

Well said! I think we should all “ACT” upon your philosophy. Rodney, the baton is back to you!

Rodney Luster

Dean van Niekerk, let’s close this with one last question. A bit lighthearted. Aside from Jack Walsh, if we looked on your bookshelf right now what would we find that are you reading?

Associate Dean van Niekerk

I am getting much more into the work of Jurgen Habermas, one of the most outstanding philosophers of our time. His works on “The power of community action” and how the role of language in alternative realities, in creating different things. I honestly do think that we completely underestimate at this point in time, the power of language.

We see this every single day in politics, in economics, we see it across the world. And, unfortunately, I see that much of the realization of our lack of harnessing communication effectively has resulted in reducing facts and evidence to a relative state. I believe that this post-modernist view of intellectual endeavors have serious implications for scholars and practitioners and we need to address it from a research perspective. This will allow more opportunities for research and how we approach research and methodologies.

Erik Bean

Misinformation (alternative facts) is one of the most prolific challenges today. But your thoughtfulness and global perceptions of our doctoral program resonate

loudly and we are so grateful that you shared your meaningful perspective. So, I had to chime in for one last question. What does the dean of instruction do when he has free time?

Associate Dean van Niekerk

[Laughing] I’m much of an outdoors person and love nature. I love camping, hiking, and exploring the many off-road trails in Arizona. I find my peace and refresh my mind in the solitude that nature offers and there are many such opportunities here in Arizona.

Erik Bean

Very nice.

Rodney Luster

Dean van Niekerk, thank you again, it’s always an honor and so we are grateful for your taking the time to be here for our 20th anniversary of our doctoral arm of the university and this special edition. It is obvious your global perspective has had much local impact on our program and the stakeholders we serve.

Associate Dean van Niekerk

Thank you and I am honored to serve the University of Phoenix and our students.



Under the Microscope: Transitioning within the Traditional Organizations

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Introduction

The term “transgender” is commonly used to refer to individuals who do not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth or with standard societal expectations of the male and female gender roles (American Psychological Association, 2019). While the focus on inclusion of transgender employees in the workplace has increased in the past few years, these individuals often suffer from discrimination in many areas of their lives, including employment. For example, over one quarter (27%) of transgender people who held or applied for a job in 2017 reported being fired, not hired, or denied a promotion due to their gender identity (Out and Equal, 2017). In addition, more than three-quarters of transgender employees take steps to avoid mistreatment in the workplace. As a result of these types of situations, extreme levels of unemployment and poverty lead one in eight to become involved in underground economies – such as sex and drug work – in order to survive. However, seventy-eight percent of transgender people felt more comfortable at work after transition, and believe their workplace performance improved (Out and Equal, 2017).

The topic of transgender individuals has become mainstreamed through topics such as transgender individuals in the military, public restrooms for transgender

individuals, and rights and welfare in the workplace. Specifically, for many companies in the United States workforce, leaders and human resources personnel often struggle in terms of policy creation and support of transgender individuals (Barr, Budge, & Adelson, 2016; GLADD, 2019). Currently, there is no federal statute explicitly banning employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity (Society of Human Resources Management, 2019), although the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has provided some valuable guidance through their rulings supporting indirect protections under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

For instance, in *Macy v. Holder* (2012), the EEOC stated that intentionally discriminating against an individual on the basis of the person’s gender identity, change of sex, or transgender status is a form of sex discrimination. Further, in *Lusardi v. Department of the Army* (2015), the EEOC ruled that (1) a federal agency that denied an employee equal access to a common bathroom/facility corresponding to the employee’s gender identity discriminated on the basis of sex; (2) the agency could not condition this right on the employee undergoing or providing proof of surgery or any other medical procedure; and (3) the agency could not avoid the

requirement to provide equal access to a common bathroom facility by restricting a transgender employee to a single-user restroom instead (though the employer can make a single-user restroom available to all employees who might choose to use it). Unfortunately, even with these landmark decisions, laws vary greatly by state. For example, in 28 states a person can get fired – without cause – for being lesbian, bisexual, or gay, and in thirty states a person can be fired for being transgender (Out and Equal, 2017).

Our Study

Through a recent research project within the Center for Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Research (CWDIR), we explored the lived experiences of 24 transgender individuals who entered into their transition processes while employed within traditional workplaces. For clarification, traditional workplaces, for the purpose of this study, excludes workplaces and organizations that are LGBTQIA-focused (i.e., community centers, social service agencies, policy development agencies). Specifically, the purpose of this study was to create a collective narrative of voices representing transgender individuals who have transitioned in the workplace, including their pre-and post-transition experiences.

Our objective was to analyze these vital

narratives to identify collective themes and patterns that may assist in better understanding the phenomenon detailed above and explore the experiences of transitioning employees through their individual lenses. As we close out this research project, we believe it is important to share a few key findings below.

Self-Reflections of Transitioning Employees

Our results revealed that the experiences of these 24 individuals were industry-dependent. For example, those who were in traditionally male occupations, such as law enforcement, and had transitioned from male-to-female experienced more discrimination and negativity from co-workers. One of the most stringent comments from a participant indicated that the transition was a “shit show, but I persevered.” In contrast, those who were employed in more liberal occupations, such as higher education, had more positive experiences, regardless of transition type.

Most participants noted a high level of anxiety and nervousness surrounding the process of “coming out” within the workplace. In addition, some exhibited frustration about the length of time it took to work out the transition details and notifications with management and human resources. In some instances, the process was put on hold by the employer as they determined appropriate courses of action. As one participant expressed, she had “to be patient because the transition wasn’t happening on my time.”

We further identified that transitioning provided an opportunity for the individual to express his or her true gender identity in a meaningful and open way. Many stressed the importance for colleagues to use the correct pronouns and chosen names, reflecting their new identity. Comments like “I want to be called ‘Miss’ instead of ‘Mister’” or “I want others to use my new preferred name and preferred pronouns” abounded. While the participants recognized that occasional mistakes were likely to occur, they also expressed frustration when their requests were repeatedly ignored. They indicated that it was “upsetting” and questioned “How much leeway to give people to adjust to this (pronoun misuse)?”

Many employees repeatedly discussed the importance of acceptance by those in their organization. Although there were instances noted where co-workers and management were unsupportive (shunning, harassing, not acknowledging the transition), the majority felt more comfortable at work after their transition and believe their workplace performance improved. Many noted the freedom of being able to be their “true self” even though some within their

organization may struggle with accepting them in their new roles. They expressed feelings, such as “Trans individuals can work as themselves and not waste energy trying to fit into gender that doesn’t suit them” and “I believe I am finally who I was meant to be.”

Human Resources and Organizational Policies

The experiences of these individuals highlighted that, while many workplaces have initiated policies that specifically address transgender and transitioning individuals, these policies are often emergent and changeable depending on the situation. In workplaces without specific policies, much of the process (such as name change, timelines for physical transformation, and notification to co-workers) was self-guided, as many employees noted they were given the responsibility to direct and inform others within the process. For example, one participant noted that the “company was creating guidelines as process went along,” and another stated that he was the one who “sent emails to colleagues” to notify them of and provide guidance about his transition.

Many noted they provided many of the informational resources to their human resources representative for the development of their understanding of the transition process and to distribute to co-workers and management. Further, some were tasked to lead the meetings informing others about their transitions. From a management perspective, this may be viewed as a negative aspect of the process. Yet, those who were tasked with guiding their transition process noted a sense of empowerment, as they felt they were in control of the process and could determine the appropriate timeline for the notification of others and presenting (both physically through clothing and, in some instances, surgically) within their new gender identity.

One of the most substantive issues was the use of restrooms. Those who transitioned were often asked to use a unisex bathroom so that coworkers were more comfortable. However, this type of restriction created a layer of angst for those transitioning. One participant ended up “using the women’s bathroom in basement (so that he could) “present as masculine before using men’s bathroom,” and another was “asked to use disabled toilet instead of ladies’ toilet because her boss was afraid that she would offend other females.”

Leadership and Managerial Support

The participants were clear that procedural and emotional support was needed during and after the transition. Most of them received this type of support from their supervisors and other organizational

leaders, but were also dismayed that processes and policies were not more clearly defined. Many noted their managers needed to contact human resources before engaging in dialogue about applicable policies related to the employees’ transition processes. As one employee noted, his manager stated he needed “to find company policies to see if they acknowledge transgenders.” Although many noted overwhelming support from human resources personnel and organizational leadership, there were some instances where employees experienced negative interactions following their transitions. One employee noted his manager stated that he “wasn’t considered for promotion because his status was too ‘controversial.’”

Conclusion

When one considers that transgender individuals often suffer discrimination in various aspects of their lives, including employment, courage is required, not only for these individuals to transition in the workplace, but for workplaces to develop and implement policies that embrace the talents of each person and encourage their contributions, while protecting them from intolerance and bias. While these study participants expressed their desire to be accepted for who they are and noted that procedural and emotional support was needed, these types of feelings are common to all of us, as human beings.

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Alumni Stories: Cheryl McAuley

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UOPX Alumni Dr. Cheryl McAuley is also known as retired Lieutenant Colonel McAuley in the United States Army. Dr. McAuley recently celebrated her 65th birthday and two scholarly accomplishments. Dr. McAuley authored *Asante Sana*, a book about her experience climbing Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa with her husband John, a retired Army chief warrant officer. The book was released for sale on Amazon in mid-January and her first book-signing was the week before her birthday. Two days after her birthday, Dr. McAuley's article, developed from her dissertation, was accepted for publication by the *Performance Improvement Journal* published by Wiley.

With the recent release of her book, *Asante Sana (Thank you very much!): Life Lessons from Kili*, Dr. McAuley is embarking on a book signing tour. All proceeds from book sales will go to Compassion International, a non-profit organization that among other things, provides clean water, healthy sanitation, and education for African families. Dr. McAuley had previously raised \$3,500 toward a total of \$41,000 raised by her fellow Kilimanjaro Causetrekkingers for Compassion. The money will be used to develop wells providing clean water, without the wells people walked miles to collect potable drinking water. Compassion International also supports sponsorships for

individual children in 25 countries around the world.

McAuley is pleased that people who have read the book are interested in sponsoring kids through Compassion International. Dr. McAuley is scheduled for more book signings and presentations through the rest of the year.

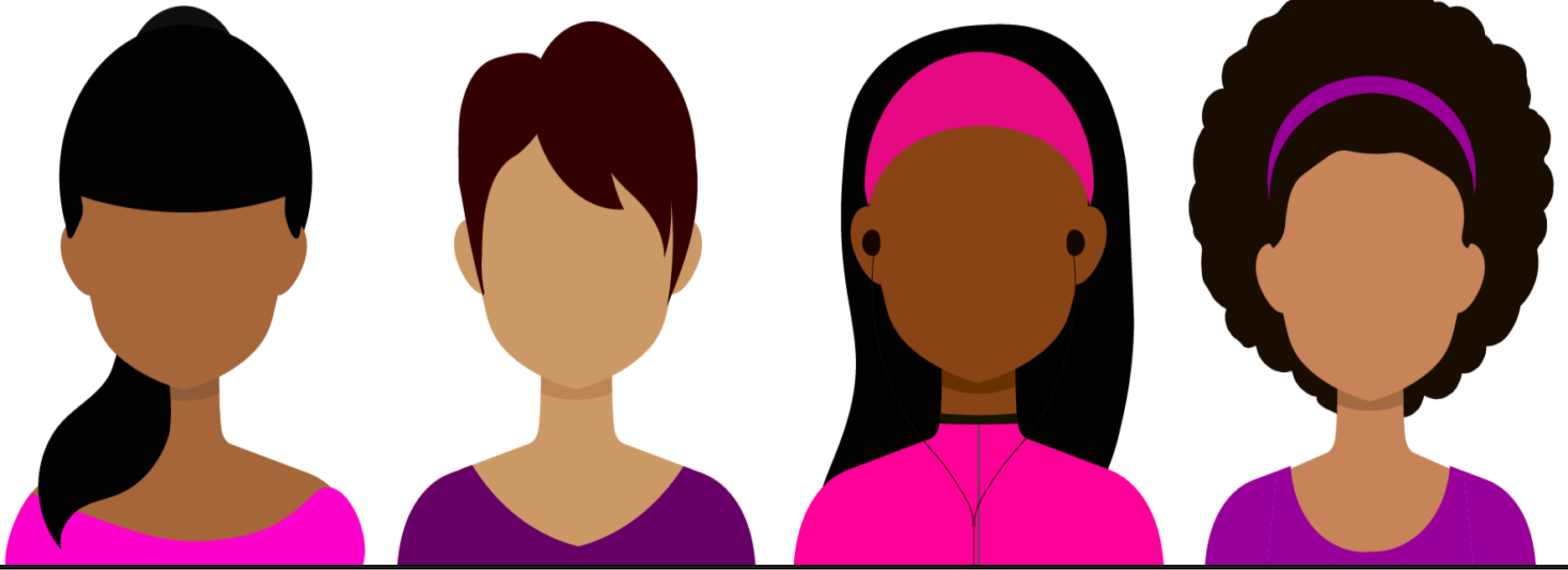
On March 7, Dr. McAuley received final confirmation that her article, "Relationships Matter – Ideas for Transforming the Nonprofit Boardroom," had been accepted for publication by "Performance Improvement Journal" published by Wiley. The article has been assigned to Volume: 58 Issue: 4. The abstract is included below.

Nonprofit board members can display a range of leader and follower characteristics when serving in successful organizations. Attracting board members may depend on servant leader or exemplary follower characteristics and the degree of trust board members have in an organization, the leadership, and between each other. Examining the relationship, if any, between servant leader, exemplary follower, and organizational trust within 12 contemporary performing arts nonprofit boards will contribute original research on a population of volunteers not studied in depth previously.

The goal of this empirical research was to examine whether or not servant leader and exemplary follower styles each relate to organizational trust. The theoretical framework stemmed from research in leadership, management, organizational theory, philosophy, and psychology. The theoretical foundation of this research included Greenleaf's (1970) servant leader theory, Kelley's (1992) exemplary follower-ship style research, and the work of Nyhan and Marlowe (1997) regarding organizational trust.

Dr. McAuley responded to the question: What do your accomplishments mean for others who are celebrating retirement and the new opportunities that might become available?

Many Americans are now entering a third age of life with good health and expectations of an expanded lifespan. Dr. McAuley's responses for others who are entering a new third age of life is succinct but worth considering. First, be available and open to new ideas that might be out of your comfort zone. There is more to do regardless of your personal situation. Then, focusing on others in need may be why we are on this earth. Don't waste opportunities when you could be making a difference in someone else's life.



Having Our Say: Reflections from Women of Color in the School of Advanced Studies

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Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years is a book detailing the amazing lives of African-American sisters, Sarah "Sadie" L. Delany and A. Elizabeth "Bessie" Delany. Born to a former slave, the Delaney sisters both lived to be over 100 years of age (109 and 104 respectively), were successful career women, and civil right activists (Hearth, A. H., Delany, S., & Delany, A., 1993). Both sisters earned advanced degrees and were successful in their careers within education and medicine (beginning in the 1920s until their retirement). Perseverance and determination are notable themes within each chapter. How did these women of color navigate through the post-slavery, Great Depression, and

Civil Rights eras, while surviving encounters with sexism and racism and championing for equity? The answer is evidenced through these sisters' commitment to persevering through presented obstacles and creating pathways for others to follow.

As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the School of Advanced Studies (SAS), we recognize the importance of this program for its continuous commitment to providing quality learning experiences for all students. The focus of this article is to provide insight on the experiences of women of color, as they navigate through this process. Through the voices of students, an alum, a faculty member, and an adminis-

trator, this article allows for the reflection and presentation of the insight of women of color as they exist (and persist) in their various roles within the College.

Regina Earl, Doctoral Student

My experiences, as an African-American woman in the civil service field, motivated me to further my education. The University of Phoenix eliminated the limitations that prevented me from obtaining a degree from a traditional college. University of Phoenix has allowed me to expand my knowledge, connect with like-minded individuals, and build the confidence needed to excel in my per-

sonal and professional life.

I continue to persevere in my academic journey, as women of color are often overlooked, stereotyped, and are not always viewed as valuable assets, without an education. Even with education, women of color often face the need to go over and beyond to prove that they are worthy, capable, and knowledgeable. As a woman of color, I continue to thrive academically to make known we are valuable assets in the workforce, we are worthy of equal pay, and to challenge the negative stereotyping often facing women of color, as angry and uneducated. Above all, my academic journey allows me to pave a clear pathway to future educational successes for my three daughters and my son.

Dr. Hilary Johnson-Lutz, Faculty

When I started with UOP as a faculty member over 15 years ago, my goal had nothing to do with being a woman of color but simply wanting an opportunity to learn while earning a little extra income. As I progressed through my career, I learned to appreciate the opportunity that I had to inspire others to pursue their dreams of earning a degree.

This is why I persist. It is an honor and a privilege to have a part in so many lives and so many educational journeys. Many of my students are the first to go to college in their families or are finally getting back to school after years of having to put it to the side. Many are women of color, like myself, who know they have to be ten times better than their counterparts to get ahead. I recently read that women of color are enrolling in higher education at higher rates than any other group yet hold the lowest number of leadership roles in the workforce. I find these statistics disturbing yet encouraging as a faculty member. This means that my work is not done. There are more women of color to educate, mentor and inspire and that they are ready and willing to receive it. While I know that I am mostly anonymous to my students, I also know that many of them are inspired and encouraged by having a woman of color as their instructor. They are inspired by my background and my accomplishments, which inspires me to keep going.

In my personal and professional life, I have been discounted, disrespected, disregarded...dissed in every way. I have not allowed that to take me down or out. It is not an option. This is an attitude that I try to convey to my students as a faculty member as well. 'Down' and 'out' are not synonymous. You can keep going. You must keep going. I know the challenges of a non-traditional student as I was one for a long time. I know the challenges of being a woman of color. I persist as a faculty member because I want to help students through those rough patches get to reach their goals.

Dr. Jessica Jones, Alum

I always knew I wanted to be a doctor.

I loved helping people, and I assumed I would be a microbiologist or a pediatrician. However, as a young child, I played "school" for years not realizing that years of "play" led me to real world experiences that were the ultimate path in helping people: Education. The University of Phoenix afforded me the accessibility I needed to pursue a doctorate in higher education administration. I am also a graduate of traditional brick and mortar universities. However, as an educator certified in Quality Matters online teaching and course design, I knew firsthand the value of online education as a conduit for endless opportunities.

The University of Phoenix connected me to premiere faculty, who were leaders in their fields and in the community. I remained engaged in every course, which led to lifelong connections and lasting friendships with peers from all around the world. I received a quality education that has contributed tremendously to various promotions and leadership opportunities. Most importantly, my educational experiences at The University of Phoenix have led to social and economic empowerment. As a result, I am able to provide for my daughter and lift up others by giving back, cultivating resilience, and creating diverse pathways for women and people of color.

The University of Phoenix continues to fulfill the inaugural mission of Dr. John Sperling, where any individual, regardless of background or pathway, can have access to more—a life filled with abundance. I am Resilient. I am a Phoenix, and I continue to Rise.

Shandra Stewart, Doctoral Student

The decision to become a part of a doctoral program was not made easily. I knew that restarting school after receiving a Master of Business Administration 10 years prior would take a lot of sacrifice. However, I also knew that the reward of donning the title "Dr. Shandra Stewart" was well worth any obstacles that would come my way. My decision was firmly made while visiting the National Museum of African American History and Culture, in Washington, D.C., where I saw a plaque that stated, "I am the hope and dream of the slave," by author and poet Maya Angelou. The words spoke profoundly to me and made me remember that my ancestors had paid a dear price so that I would have many of the opportunities that they could only dream about for future generations. That was my sign to dream big, and gaining a doctoral degree was in my dreams.

Choosing the University of Phoenix was an easy choice. My experience with the college while gaining my MBA was wonderful. I chose University of Phoenix because it offers a doctoral program that will help me to reach my future aspirations in leadership and motivation. The online platform allows me to maintain a full-time job and meet the needs of my family and other social responsibilities. The University of Phoenix offers an ideal

learning environment that is diverse in demographics, age and career experiences, making it an ideal place to learn, thrive and grow.

Dr. Kimberly Underwood, Administrator and Faculty

Throughout my career, having a doctorate has opened doors to opportunities I would not have had otherwise. Therefore, I recognize the value of SAS and the service it provides to so many students. Reflecting back to my experience in my own doctoral program, I often longed for faculty who looked like me, as I desired an understanding of academe through the lens of women of color. How does one successfully navigate through this world as a woman of color? As I move through spaces at University of Phoenix, I understand the importance of my visibility. Given the diversity within our doctoral student population, it is vital to continue to ensure a diverse collection of faculty and administrators. There is a popular quote which proclaims, "If you can see it, you can achieve it."

Many years ago, I started my academic journey as a non-traditional student. I am female and African-American. I was also older than many of the students in most classes and the first in my family to graduate from college. Sometimes, I felt like the unicorn in spaces that should have been diverse and inclusive. This is why I am extremely appreciative of the various demographics represented within our student population.

In April, I taught my first residency course and was truly humbled and honored to be in the presence of such exceptional students. At the end of five days, as grateful as they were for the experience, I was equally grateful. The ability to teach and mentor served as a reminder of why I persist as a faculty member and administrator. I have been a "Phoenix" for ten years and remain committed to the success of all of our students.

Carmen Vegastevens, Doctoral Student

Once I decided to pursue a doctoral journey, I began an online search to find a perfect program. After contacting several universities, I came across University of Phoenix. Bravely. I bravely made the call to admissions and expressed my academic interests. I remember asking a lot of questions and the person on the other end patiently responding to each and every one. Given this level of attention, I quickly realized this university was different from all the others. In retrospect, I did not choose University of Phoenix. Instead, they chose me. The representative identified my hunger for academic growth and helped me to mentally prepare for this academic challenge.

As a Latina woman of color, I was taught early that nothing is ever simply given. Every personal and professional accomplishment, thus far, has required dedication and hard work. Therefore, I persist in this academic journey because I know

nothing else. As a woman of color, the struggle has been and continues to be real for me. My corporate climb within leadership positions within the health-care field have been met with both a gracious welcome and much scrutiny. Having faced microaggressions and, on occasion, blatant hostilities, it would seem that it is easier to hide in the shadows and blend in. Yet, I visibly stand persist because I am keenly aware of my

skills and my worth. My personal mantra is “No one can stop what is already meant to be yours” and this is how I approach my journey to a doctoral degree.

We recognize each one of us holds a unique role within the SAS. As the University of Phoenix and the College continue to advance the vision of providing opportunities for educational attainment for all, we hope the value of all voices continue to

be considered and utilized. Looking ahead, we wish the SAS another twenty years of academic excellence, as an essential landing place for many women of color.

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Some Recent Advances in Time Series Analysis

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My last piece focused on time series; discussing what a time series is and why doing time series analysis presents data in a way that is easy to work with and straightforward. But, as I delved in that piece I discovered that it is not easy to do. This piece will build upon the last one by examining the more recent advances in time series analysis which also hints that developing time series are still not easy to do. The recent advances looks at issues beyond the standard cointegration, vector autoregression models (VAR), and vector error correction models (VECM). Since the advent of cointegration by Granger showing co-movements between low frequency series to reveal common movements; as a result, there was a spike in the work on cointegration in the late 1980s and 1990s that yielded several types of tests of cointegration. However, cointegration has received less emphasis with the development of more advanced techniques that do not necessarily require such methods.

I recently took a continuing education course on time series econometrics delivered by James Stock and Mark Watson after the American Economics Association annual meetings in January 2019 in Atlanta, Georgia. Mark Watson, who is a colleague of Christopher Sims (the father of VAR) at Princeton University, and Christopher Sims indicated that most time series models can be done via the VAR. They would classify the models which will be presented as dubious models. I will discuss why Mark Watson feels that not all time series models can be done via VAR. There could some disputes in what time series models should be used for and how to address the specific policy questions that arise. This article will include recent advances in time series models causal inference, structural vector autoregressions, dynamic factor models and "Big Data." The role of "Big Data" in time series modelling is becoming a new frontier.

Causal Inference and Structural Vector Autoregressions

An ongoing question in empirical macroeconomics is how to determine the causal effect of a policy change. As an example, what happens if there is an unexpected a monetary policy shock - on output, prices, and other macroeconomic variables by the Federal Reserve? After earlier models lost credibility, Sims (1980) proposed the structural vector autoregression (SVAR) model as an alternative time series approach to model macroeconomic systems. A VAR or technically the structural VAR could show these impacts based on the idea that the unanticipated movements in the variables or their forecast errors would be induced by the structural shocks and show some causal impacts. In a technical sense, the goal of the structural vector autoregressions would be to impose sufficient restrictions so one or more structural shocks that can be identified and to show causal inference. However, SVAR received considerable scrutiny in the 1980s and 1990s, and some macroeconomists never accepted the structural VAR. At the core, the problem is the neglect of the simultaneous causality in VAR and other time series specifications. In other words, the federal funds interest rate depends on changes in real GDP through a monetary policy rule, and GDP depends on the federal funds interest rate through induced changes in investment, consumption, and other macroeconomic variables. In the early days of time series, the researcher would lag the interest rate on the right-hand side in a regression equation to explain GDP (the dependent variable) and add a few variables on the right-hand-side that could explain GDP. This was considered a suitable time series model! But what about the exogenous variation in the federal funds interest rate that could occur? A sophisticated journal referee could point this out, and the researcher would not have a clue how to fix this simple specification. So new ap-

proaches were devised to remediate this problem.

The SVAR addresses causality in time series analysis which do not fit neatly into the potential outcomes framework with a discrete treatment variable (Rubin, 1974; Imbens, 2014). In essence, the approach in causality in time series was borrowed from the cross-sectional analysis. (Perhaps my future piece could delve into the cross-sectional aspects.) Both time series and cross-sectional analysis have multiple continuous variables that are serially correlated or mutually dependent. The structure of SVAR is imposed on this vector of endogenous variables to define the shocks, which are interpreted as the exogenous components. Shocks mark the beginning of treatments and play the role of "randomly assigned" treatments. The impulse response functions (IRFs) quantify the effects of each shock on each variable, referred to as "dynamic causal effects" (Stock and Watson, 2016). These IRFs that are derived from this dynamic system showing the short- and long-run effects. They provide a richer view of the relationship between the shocks and the variables than the regular single treatment effect.

Dynamic Factor Models and "Big Data"

The idea of using a large number of series to understand macroeconomic fluctuations is an old one, dating back at least as far as the economic indexes and forecasts of the Harvard Economic Service in the 1920s and to Burns and Mitchell's (1946) use of 1,277 time series to study business cycles of the United States. The challenge of using large numbers of series is the proliferation of parameters in standard time series models. While there were large macroeconomic models developed in the 1960s, the restrictions that reduced the number of parameters in those models were heavily criticized because these parameters had little statistical and econom-

ic foundations. By the mid-1990's the development of the low-dimensional vector autoregressions became a standard empirical approach. This approach presented a new challenge of how to incorporate more variables to improve forecasting and to span a wider range of forecast errors. The empirical approaches cited would not be able to handle the proliferation of variables and reasonably provide forecast errors and determine structural shocks. Consequently, different time series approaches would need to be developed to handle which led to the development of the dynamic factor models (DFM).

Why use DFM? If researchers knew the factors are normally distributed, they can make efficient forecasts using the population regression of that variable on the lagged factors and lags of that variable. Consequently, the forecaster obtains benefit from using all N variables by using only x factors, where x is smaller than N . More important, DFM impose parametric restrictions in a way that is consistent with empirical evidence. In general, the parameters and factors of the DFM can be estimated using nonparametric methods related to

principal components analysis (PCA) or by parametric state-space methods. Stock and Watson (2016) provides a nice discussion of these approaches to estimate these parameters in DFM. So what is a DFM in practice? The premise of a DFM is that a few latent dynamic factors drive the co-movements of high-dimensional vector of time-series variables. These are also affected by idiosyncratic disturbances, which arise from measurement error and from special features that are specific to an individual series, e.g., the effect of a Salmonella scare on employment in restaurants. The latent factors would follow a time series process, which is would be a VAR. There is no one approach to estimate the DFM, and there are several variations of the DFM, e.g., generalized principal components, dynamic principle components, state space model with static factors etc.

Over the past decade the theoretical research on DFMs and causal inference and structural vector autoregressions has improved time series models. For the DFM, a variety of empirical methods are available for the estimation of the factors and

the number of factors. Time series is not as easy as it issues outlined in this piece need to be addressed to have a robust time series model.

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How to Publish within a Year: From Fear to Fun

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In the Research Hub, the mission is to support faculty, alumni, and doctoral student scholarship as they write for publication. Authors are encouraged to write articles for publication in peer-reviewed journals and to present at academic conferences and conventions. As a beginning researcher, I reached out to Dr. Mansureh Kebritchi in the Research Hub, Center of Educational and Instructional Technology Research (CEITR) to inquire about joining a research team and writing for publication. After our conversation, I decided to move forward and became involved with Teaching and Learning in the Arts Research (TLAR), headed by Dr. Elizabeth Johnston. Dr. Johnston's influential role as the leader of the diversity and teaching and learning with arts research labs to enhance the author's writing and publishing made a profound impact on my moving forward into new territory as a researcher and writer to publish.

Here is my story:

Fear was the first reaction to the need to publish. As an educator, I wondered how could my writing contribute to the process of teaching and learning? I had been successful at dissertation writing; how difficult could writing a scholarly article be? Not knowing where to begin, I navigated to the Research Hub as a first step. There, I was placed on a team whose area of interest was cutting-edge, of interest for educators and students, and would foster teaching and learning. I decided that I could do this.

After committing to serve, a shift in my thinking was surprising. I moved from proceeding alone, to collaborating; from stressing over what to do, to asking, "what can I do?" The process was about people, the experience, the continued support, and the published article. Initially, I had no idea how to move forward, so prior to our week-

ly meetings, I did what I do – researched sources. I was excited to see my work blend with one of our team member's previous efforts annotating articles and producing categories that framed our study.

Once we were meeting weekly via conference calls, collaboration accelerated. Diversity Lab Team 3 was an extraordinary combination of interlocking skills where everyone played critical roles. Team 3 was a collegial group, and our social interactions enhanced our educational goals (Ceruleo, 2016). In reflecting on team 3's experience, the following components were present and embraced as essential to our success in writing for publication.

Attitude and communication: be willing and happy to communicate. First, one needs support and room to create a product of an area of your interest. Many thanks go to Dr. Mansureh Kebritchi with CEITR, who was available for support and advice when needed. In her quiet, kind manner, Dr. Kebritchi was able to encourage, make suggestions, give advice, and offer help any time, anywhere. Her leadership is greatly appreciated. Regular, and sometimes daily communication among team members was the norm. We respected and supported each other's input and had room to voice ideas, concerns, and solutions. We were a collegial team. Still, after publishing, we stay in touch, and some were members of the next team.

Understanding: writing is easier if you are excited about your subject. Because virtual and augmented reality (AR/VR) applications were the focus of the study, we were encouraged to experience AR/VR for ourselves. For me, a virtual encounter with a Blue Whale was inspirational and gave understanding as to educational potential, which led to the next article. That excitement continued throughout writing the ar-

ticle and as I write this reflection.

Skills: everyone has them, and it is good if you know what yours are. Each team member displayed a unique area of expertise: writer, researcher, methodologist, APA expert, tremendous IT talents. Everyone proactively did more than expected each week, resulting in a dovetailing of skills throughout the process. Our team consisted of five multi-talented individuals who had room to be creative as individuals, while appreciating and deferring to each other's individual area of strength needed to accomplish our goal. From the start, Dr. Elizabeth Johnston, Dr. Gerald Olivas, Dr. Liston Bailey, Cassandra Smith, and I experienced freedom for input as to how we could contribute to make the process flow.

Organization: during the first meeting we agreed as to who would do what, depending on skills and desire to take on specific roles. Once we determined the audience, a previously published article of a similar, timely subject influenced our choice of topic. Agreement on details, such as timelines, general expectations for and between conference call meetings, deadlines, and attendance contributed to maintaining a steady path toward submitting for publication. Strategies were developed for writing and editing, to avoid confusion as to who wrote what and when (Ryan, 2012). Google DOCS allowed for relating to a single document, while viewing each one's comments and questions, and Google Sheets aided in communications during data collection and analysis.

Determination and persistence: remember the tortoise and the hare? Writing to publish is a commitment. Weekly meetings via phone kept us on track. Oh, there were interruptions and emergencies, life happens. It was not unusual for a loyal team member to make a conference call from

their car after a late day at work, or from a hotel because of fires near home. In all, Team 3 did an excellent job, resulting in a timely peer-reviewed article that was submitted, reviewed, published, and presented at an international educational conference within one year. After submitting for publication, Team 3 also wrote a book chapter, targeting educators who wanted to implement AR/VR. That book chapter was published the following year (2018).

Only teamwork can achieve success on this level in one year. An individual would be overwhelmed.

Patience: patience is a virtue, and writing to publish is great exercise in its development. Occasionally, I would ask if there were any word as to a decision about our article's acceptance by the peer-reviewed journal. As we waited and waited for word from the publisher, our team leader would say, "I just believe it will be published." And it was.

My first year in CEITR was training in group dynamics and procedures for writing, submitting, presenting, and ultimately, publishing. Then, I was asked to lead Team 6. Dr. Eliabeth Johnston, Dr. Andrew Lawler, Cassandra Smith, Sonja Lamppa, and I moved forward writing an article, inspired by the previous one - same subject - taken further into specifics of teaching and learning in visual contexts and creative and cognitive thinking skills. We followed the same path, the same procedures, the same collegiality and expertise, and wrote and published a second article within a year. Team 6 went on to write a second article as regards implementing VR/AR from district to classroom level. This article is

being prepared for submission.

Locating journals: journal searches served two purposes, finding appropriate journals for publishing subject matter and seeing what was out there so as not duplicate articles. Key word searches in Cabell, JANE, and EBSCO host also aided in finding additional sources from sources in appropriate journals' references. Prior to submitting, a good idea is to check to see that the journal is still available. Look for journals in your sources. It is good to have sources in your article that also were cited in the journal of choice. Before submitting, remember turnitin.

Submitting to a journal: locate the desired journal early on in the process to become acquainted with guidelines as you write the article. For the first submission, receive assistance from an experienced colleague. Gather necessary information, including team members' bios. Follow journal guidelines step by step, noting specifics. Note: if your article is not accepted by one journal and you plan to submit to another, keep moving! Check for any new guidelines for formatting and submit to next new journal (Katz, 2016).

Take a break: keeping deadlines can be stressful. So, if needed, close your laptop and go for a walk. It is amazing how a brain can be renewed with a little fresh air.

Be flexible: now, I find myself leading a new team. This is different, with new responsibilities, new skills needed. Fortunately, I lead an amazing team of individuals who go above and beyond in every way, but now I am a writer - not so much the researcher - the writer. I mean, how many work for

three hours writing one paragraph! Isn't it fun to be stretched? Learn to be flexible because you never know what opportunity is just around the corner.

In reflection: why write to publish? At first, I wrote to publish for recognition within our organization. But there was so much more. Experiencing teamwork via technology in a collegial setting, producing an educational article of timely importance, and having an opportunity to be part of a place of instructional expertise and support are the rewards. Understanding the process of writing for publication enlarged my concept of teaching and learning. By recognizing my own areas of expertise, identifying and respecting the strengths of other authors became easier. My eyes were opened to various ways to write for educational purpose.

Enjoy the process!

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[Blue Whale Encounter](#)



Mindfulness Based Therapies and Older Adults

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Current literature on mindfulness-based therapies (MBT) is quite extensive, studies use a plethora of research methods ranging from clinical trials to survey studies, and qualitative research exploring the lived experience with specific disorders. There have even developed a host of meta-analyses of meta-analyses. This mountain of research begs the question: if so much is being written, are there any new or developing arenas within mindfulness-based research?

In short, yes, there are still a number of new frontiers within MBT research. One such frontier is that of using MBT to address medical and psychological issues within older adults and the elderly (for example, Helmes & Ward, 2017; Perez-Blasco et al., 2016). In a recent chapter titled “Healthy Brain and Quality of Life in the Aging Population” submitted for publication in Pucha and Sloboda’s (2019) edited book *Interactive Factors Between Physical Health, Mental Health and A Long Quality Life*, I along with two other co-authors expound upon the growing research supporting use of MBT with this population (Rominger, Lindinger-Sternart, & Kaur, in press).

Mindfulness Based Therapies (MBT) and Mental Health

Mindfulness based therapies are a group of mental health interventions which share a common denominator: the use of mindfulness, which is the practice of non-judgmental, compassionate moment-to-moment awareness (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). This practice is most often referred to as a ‘sitting and breathing practice,’ however this is an oversimplification due to the cognitive and emotion regulation components related to the practice of non-judgmental and compassionate orientations. Mindfulness may be practiced during movement exercises such as walking or yoga and

during other daily activities. In fact, with practice a practitioner can become aware of emotional states and thinking patterns as they occur throughout the day.

A number of mindfulness-based therapies have emerged since the introduction of mindfulness and the start of Kabat-Zinn’s mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) groups (Helmes & Ward, 2017; Stephenson, Simpson, Martinez, & Kearney, 2017). Some of the most prominent are mindfulness-based cognitive therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, and dialectical behavior therapy. These varying interventions, incorporate mindfulness to some extent, have been used to help clients deal with stress, anxiety, depression, personality disorders, substance abuse and chronic pain.

MBT, Older Adults, and the Elderly

While earlier studies targeted adolescents and adults, recent studies are investigating the effects of using MBT with older adults (55+) and the elderly (70+) (Helmes & Ward, 2017; Perez-Blasco, Sales, Meléndez, & Mayordomo, 2016). One set of research focuses on illnesses common within older populations, such as diabetes, decreased mobility due to injury, and incontinence. MBT studies largely find that mindfulness interventions help older adults and the elderly cope with symptoms of decreasing health or injury (such as pain), promote non-judgmental self-compassion for one’s aging body, and increase social interaction (especially if the mindfulness intervention is group based) (ex., Perez-Blasco, Sales, Meléndez, & Mayordomo, 2016). Through decreases of pain, increasing self-acceptance and context-acceptance, and increasing social interaction older adults and the elderly likely to report a positive attitude and increased life satisfaction.

The second set of MBT research focuses on using mindfulness as a direct mental health intervention. Helmes and Ward’s (2017) study is a prime example; they investigated the use of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy to help older adults in residential care deal with anxiety. In this case, the use of intervention, MBCT, produced a positive. This finding can have a significant impact, the Center for Disease Control reports that roughly 20% of those 55 and older encounter mental health challenges, often due to decreasing ability to live on one’s own, decreasing mobility or physical activity, decreasing health, or increasing isolation. These issues can lead to secondary problems such as substance abuse and family conflict (CDC, 2016). However, when mindfulness is integrated with primary care, the distress experienced by older adults and the elderly can be alleviated.

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CEITR Faculty and Alumni Newsletter

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Senior Research Fellow

Center for Educational and Instructional Technology Research

In this article, we highlight some of the achievements and successes of our faculty in an effort to make appreciation more of a continuing condition rather than an event. Remember the newsletter presents a brief version of the news; click on the link to read further details in the Research Hub news center. Our intention was and is to recognize the pivotal role that faculty members play in the success of School of Advanced Studies (SAS) students and ultimately the larger university community. A second purpose is to strengthen our research community. To that effect, we are adding some updates about some of the CEITR center groups. We are also adding a new section that celebrates our alumni. And now for the news!

Updates on CEITR center groups

The Dissertation to Publication (D2P) spring, 2019 workshop is now well underway with just two more meetings of the entire group. A call for participation in the fall, 2019 D2P workshop will go out later this year but interested graduates or near to graduation may apply now. University of Phoenix affiliates, including faculty, staff, graduated doctoral students, and doctoral students close to graduation who are interested in publishing their doctoral dissertations (in all disciplines) are encouraged to participate. Dissertation chairs/committee members may participate with their doctoral students. Spring 2019 Workshop Meeting Dates are: March 27, 2019; Submission to the target journals: April 17, 2019. For more information visit [this page](#).

The Alumni SIG brings in successful SAS alumni to talk informally about their experiences as doctoral students and graduates. Visit [this page](#) to see more about the achievements and celebrations of our SAS graduates and for more information about the program.

Research Methodology Group (RMG) The RMG provides materials, webinars, and

links to articles or other resources. Every month, new topics are presented for discussion. Visit [this page](#) for the schedule.

Upcoming events are: March 28, 2019: Dr. Michelle Hill-Descriptive Causal Comparative Design April 4, 2019: Dr. Phil Davidson-The "Expert" and validity of the Delphi Technique April 18th, 2019: Dr. Ryan Rominger-Mixed Methods

Faculty Scholarship of Discovery Publications

Dr. Patricia Steele, Dr. Elizabeth Johnston, Dr. Andrew Lawlor, Dr. Cassandra Smith, and Sonja Lamppa published an article on educational possibilities in virtual reality applications. Steele, Johnston, and Lawlor are faculty members in SAS, Smith is a SAS graduate, and Lamppa teaches in the College of Education.

Abstract:

In the 21st century, easy access to visually rich, immersive, student-centered, virtual applications could augment or replace text-based learning. However, the new developments are offset by the lack of insight into pedagogies needed to guide educators through a visual learning environment. The purpose of this directed content analysis was to provide an awareness about opportunities for learning cognitive and creative thinking skills in virtual applications. Analysis showed opportunities to develop one or more skills in 34 selected virtual educational apps. Educators in many subjects could apply insights from the conclusions and recommendations for using virtual applications within established curricula.

Steele, P., Johnston, E., Lawlor, A., Smith, C., & Lamppa, S. (2019). Arts-Based Instructional and Curricular Strategies for Working With Virtual Educational Applications. *Journal of Educational Technol-*

ogy Systems, 47(3), 411–432. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047239518803286>

SAS faculty member, Dr. Steven Watkins has published [an article](#) on artificial intelligence in the Symposium section of the December, 2018 *Journal of Leadership Studies*. As the century moves forward artificial intelligence (AI) will exert a tremendous impact on human life, particularly in the field of education. Butler-Adam (2018) noted that the presence of AI could be "extensive"—both regarding what universities can (or should) contribute to the advance of AI and its applications and how curricula and learning will need to change. Stevenson (2018) shared that AI did not start in the 1940s with individuals such as Alan Turing, but goes all the way back to the late 18th century in Paris. Now, computer-assisted courses with computer tutoring labs and programs are aiding in education, with AI potential offered as a teaching substitute or as an integral part of educational leadership. What issues might arise that influence, hinder, or forward the use of AI in educational leadership?

Watkins, S. (2018). Artificial intelligence: A boon or a bane for educational leaders in educational research. *Journal of leadership studies*, (12) 3, pp 74-75. © 2018 University of Phoenix. DOI:10.1002/jls.21601

SAS faculty members, Dr. Rita J. Hartman, Dr. Jim Lane, and Dr. Cheryl Burleigh have successfully concluded a research study and produced a [manuscript](#) titled, "School Leaders' Reflective Blogs Inspire Systemic Change: A Narrative Inquiry," The article has been accepted as a chapter in the upcoming book, "Improving education through multi-level community relations and engagement."

SAS faculty member Rita J. Hartman, and alumni Dr. Mary Townsend, and Dr. Marlo Jackson have submitted their [research article](#), "Educators' Perceptions of Technology Integration into the Classroom: A

Descriptive Case Study,” to the Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching and Learning. Members of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology who transitioned from a traditional learning environment to a learning environment integrating technology shared reflections on their experiences during the change process.

Scholarship of Application

Dr. Marilyn Simon, SAS faculty member, has been working with educators in American Samoa (AS) to help improve the educational system there. Dr. Simon [conducted seminars](#) in Action Research and in Mathematics Education. Simon is working with 10 teachers/administrators that have received grants to conduct Action Research to improve classroom praxis. Simon has been to AS twice this year and will be returning in a few months. Funds are made available through the Department of the Interior’s Office of Insular Affairs (OIA). Funds are awarded once OIA receives appropriations from the U.S. Congress until they are exhausted.

Scholarship of Discovery Presentations - Faculty

Two CEITR teams will present at the TLT 2019: Teaching and Learning Technology Conference at the Missouri University of Science & Technology on March 14, 2019. The theme of the 2019 conference is Assessments. The teams were formed through the Research Hub under the leadership of Dr. Mansureh Kebritchi. One team has been presenting and publishing together since 2016 and the other is a brand-new team that came together in October 2018.

Dr. Michelle Susberry Hill is the team leader for one of the Diversity Teams of CEITR in the Research Hub. The title of their presentation is *Its not Beethoven anymore: Opening new territories for assessments by integrating music*. The team members presenting with Dr. Hill will be Dr. Jennifer Calito and Dr. Shanel Harris. The contributing members are: Dr. Jennifer Calito, Dr. Fortune Taylor, Dr. Shanel Harris, Dr. Jacques Alexander, and Dr. Michelle Susberry Hill.

While submitting her current team’s proposal, Dr. Hill brought the call for proposals to her long-term team of researchers (they call themselves the Dream Team!), who also decided to submit for another [presentation](#) and were accepted. Team members, Dr. Karen Johnson, Dr. Medgar Roberts, Dr. Mary “Mimi” Stout, Dr. Michelle Susberry Hill, and Dr. Lisa Wells will present “Cell Phones for Assessment: Not a Classroom Distraction.” In this presentation, the team will share their experiences of student use of a cell phones in the classroom, the recent literature on the topic, and demonstrations of cell phone applications that can be used for formative assessments.

CEITR researchers Robert Sparks and Dr. Hildegard Selig have submitted a [propo-](#)

[al](#) to AECT, 2019. Sparks is a faculty member with the UOPX School of Education online and plans to apply some of the research based insights in his practice as an educator. Sparks and Selig are also working on an article for publication, which is foreshadowed in the presentation. The title of the presentation is: *The Importance of the Faculty-Student Connection: The Impact of Immediacy on the Quantity and Quality of Online Student Course Evaluations*.

Dr. Cheryl Burleigh and Dr. Rhonda Gregg [present](#) research on ethics and education in Hawaii, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, Atlanta, Georgia and Sacramento, California.

Scholarship of Discovery Presentations – Alumni

UOPX Alumni Dr. Imani Akin and Dr. Masha Murrell Jones [presented](#) December 5, 2018, 12:00 p.m. at the International conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education held at the University of Sydney. The presentation focus was about their UOP Alumni Fellow research project: *Exploring the Beliefs and Professional Experiences Impacting the Building of Scholarship for Doctoral Degree Graduates*

Additionally, Dr. Imani Akin responded to the request to develop and present a symposium and recruited a colleague and professor emeritus as well as one of her doctoral candidates to participate. Their symposium was accepted, and the four of them presented December 5, at 10:30 a.m.

The title of the [symposium](#): *Developing the Student-to-Scholar for Research to Influence Real World Change*, addressed the journey of student-to-scholar that occurs in multiple disciplines and phases.

Alumni news, including publications and presentations

UOP alumni, Dr. Cheryl McAuley, a participant in the fall D2P workshop, has published a [book](#) about her experiences traveling in Africa, climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, and meeting a young woman she and her husband had sponsored for many years. Will they make it to the Roof of Africa? Their inspirational travelogue began with a planned meeting with their sponsored child, Beatrice, a young teenager they’d written to for nine years. Share in their six-day trek in Tanzania, Africa on the Rongai Route with two dozen other Compassion Sponsors.

McAuley, C. (2019). *Asante Sana (Thank you Very Much!): Life Lessons from Kili*. Columbia, SC: Kindle Direct Publishing.

UOPX Alumni, Dr. Nola Veazie’s [paper](#) titled “Women’s Satisfaction and Job Roles” has been selected for publication in Vol. 9 issue 1 of the AAYAM: AKGIM Journal of Management. Dr. Veazie developed this article during the fall, 2018 Dissertation to Publication workshop.

Abstract:

Social structure influences gender roles and stereotypes that encourage and model desired behaviors with the aim of internalizing these values. Formulaic gender-based characteristics guide men and women into stereotypically male and female congruent job roles based on communal and agentic characteristics associated with masculinity and femininity. Social role, role congruity and self-categorization theories guided this investigation. The current quantitative correlational study sought to investigate the extent to which self-reported job satisfaction subscales related to stereotypical job roles; the study used statistical analysis to determine if any significant relationship existed between stereotypical job roles and the perception of job satisfaction among women in the workplace. A sample of 113 women working in a California nonprofit organization tested the hypothesis in the present study and found no significant relationship between women’s perception of job satisfaction and stereotypical job roles. However, significant correlations were found between job satisfaction and fringe benefits, and pay.

Alumni Stories

UOP alumni, Dr. Burl Randolph shares his experience in Dissertation to Publications with mentor Dr. Kim Nesbitt. An [article](#), that was developed out of Dr. Ives’ dissertation will be published in the May/June 2019 edition of *Global Business and Organizational Excellence (GBOE)* and was selected as the Feature Article. GBOE is published through Wiley Publishing, which maintains rigorous standards for publication. Dr. Randolph will also be the Featured Speaker at the CEITR monthly webinar on March 28, 2019. His topic will be *Staying Focused on Your Doctoral Journey*. (Check the Alumni special interest group (SIG) for details).

UOP Alumni (2016) [Dr. Cheryl McAuley](#) is also known as retired Lieutenant Colonel McAuley in the United States Army. Retired since 2010, she recently celebrated her 65th birthday and three scholarly accomplishments about the same time. Dr. McAuley authored a book, had an article developed in a Dissertation to Publication workshop accepted for publication in a peer reviewed journal, and was accepted as a presenter at Regent University’s Servant Leader Round Table in Virginia Beach. In May 2019.

Dr. McAuley has some thoughts to share with others who are entering a new third age of life. First, Every day is a gift. Be available and open to new ideas that might be out of your comfort zone. There is more to do regardless of your personal situation. Then, focusing on others in need may be why we are on this earth. Don’t waste opportunities when you could be making a difference in someone else’s life.



Research with Heart and Purpose: Doctorates Joyce White and Darlene Moten Tackle Major Social Issues

Rita White Carver, Ph.D.

Publication Fellow

Center for Leadership Studies and Organizational Research

Today University of Phoenix doctoral students are choosing to focus their dissertations on social issues with the goal of filling the gaps in literature and contributing to the professions. This article centers on two of University of Phoenix's doctoral students, Dr. Darlene Moten and Joyce White. Their research involves foster children and the homeless. Getting to know them demonstrates our core values, having passion for learning, embracing innovation, treating others as we would like to be treated, improving society, acting with integrity, and empowering excellence.

The "Leadership Moment"

Michael Useem (1998) writes how would-be leaders are often given a moment in time which helps define who they are authentically, at their core – a moment when an individual is given the choice to take a major step and make the difference, or to close one's eyes on the problem and remain in anonymity.

Darlene Moten's passion centered on foster children. She became involved with foster kids when in 1976 she learned of a family of siblings who had been removed from their home because of abuse. The kids desperately needed a family in order to keep the siblings together. Moten was living with her mother at the time, and suggested, "Let's do it." She and her mom became a licensed foster home through the State of Arizona, and never looked back. Moten, who has now been a foster parent for 43 years, has opened both her heart and her home to over 200 hurting children. The children ranged in age from seven days old to 16 years of age.

In addition to serving as a foster parent, Moten worked for over 30 years as a

middle school teacher in Arizona. Both her undergraduate degree and master's degree are from the University of Arizona in secondary education. When Moten decided to go back to school for her doctorate degree, she chose the University of Phoenix. "I needed a program that would fit into my schedule and allow me to be at home when my foster kids were not in school." She knew her passion was to use her education to make a difference in the lives of foster kids.

Joyce White's passion centered on serving the homeless. Her concern for the homeless grew out of her personal experiences of being homeless not once, but twice. In both situations, she had lost her marriage due to domestic violence and abuse; then she lost everything. Fortunately for White, her family was geographically nearby. For part of the time, she slept on the floor at her sister's home while her mother kept her young daughter. After the second time of experiencing homelessness, White made the conscious choice to rebuild her life, going back to school to focus on social work.

Her undergraduate degree is from the University of Missouri. Her master's degree is in social and economic development through Washington University in St. Louis. Today she is working on her Doctor of Management in Organizational Leadership through the University of Phoenix. She originally chose the University of Phoenix because she had taught as an adjunct professor in the School of Social Work beginning in 2008 through 2018. She also worked with the Dallas Housing Authority from 2006 through 2010. White works with the Dallas County Criminal Justice Department managing a program that works with justice-involved clients who

are homeless, some who suffer from mental illness. White has spent her career helping create programs that allow people to improve their lives.

Learning to Care and Love Others

Starting at the age of five, Darlene Moten had teachers, including a male cousin, who invested in her and told her "You can!" The individuals taught Moten to believe in herself. Moten's mother was also an inspiration and role model showing love to everyone. During Moten's growing up years, their home became the neighborhood hangout. Everybody was welcomed.

Throughout the last 43 years while serving as a foster parent, Moten has observed the untold tragedy foster children sometimes endure. She received a child who was covered with cigarette burns where her mother had put out her cigarettes on the child's body; she has cried with a nine-year-old who was sexually abused by her mother's boyfriend; and she has nursed back to health and happiness a nine-month old baby whose mom was trying to starve her. "I just love children," Moten explains, "and I am as excited to serve the children today as I was when I first became a foster parent."

When Joyce White was only nine, her mother opened a daycare center which was licensed to take in foster care children whenever there was a need – 24 hours a day, seven days a week. "I saw my mom really love people," White stated. "She also told me time and again, 'I need you to help me,' and so I helped. I never knew most nine-year-old kids did not become program directors and assist their moms in creating activities for children who came at all hours of the day and night to

stay in your home. I just learned to love folks.” Both women attribute their faith with giving them a strong foundation to reach out and love others.

Defining a Problem

When Moten began focusing on her dissertation, she knew she wanted to zero in on foster care, but what aspect should she choose? She chose to view the problem from the perspective of the foster teens who knew firsthand what it is like to age out of foster care. Moten had personally watched young people struggle. According to Moten, many youth who are aging out of foster care programs are not equipped financially, mentally, or physically. They are not prepared to live life as productive adults. Moten’s research study focused on seeing the problem through the eyes of the young people, ages 18 to 25, who were aging out of the foster care system.

Her purpose was twofold: 1) “To examine the lived experience of former foster youth who have aged out of the foster care system and understand the struggles, successes,

and risks” involved in the process; and 2) To provide “leaders with information to implement programs conducive to the needs” of these youth. To accomplish her study, she personally interviewed five aged-out former foster young people.

White, on the other hand, chose to view homelessness from the perspective of community leaders. Her research question is focused on how leaders from government, nonprofit entities, private business, and other community stakeholders perceive their roles of working with community collaborative efforts to address homelessness in Dallas County. As other leaders have observed, too many programs work in silos without coordinating their efforts. White’s goal for her study is to help improve the role coordination of various organizational partnerships in order to improve community outcomes.

Both women chose to conduct phenomenological studies. Moten completed her study and successfully presented her findings in May 2019. White

is looking forward to completing her research study later this year.

Next Steps

Moten is looking forward to opportunities to present her findings at various conferences that focus on foster care. She also is being asked to join committees and networks throughout Arizona focused on finding solution to the problems of aging out of foster care. White is working with several mentors in Dallas County who are helping to ensure her study will meet the needs of the homeless community and provide tangible benefits. University of Phoenix is committed to preparing our students and graduates to live out their education as they help make our world a better place.

References

Useem, M. (1998). *The Leadership moment: Nine true stories of triumph and disaster and their lessons for us all*. New York: Three Rivers Press.



Upcoming Events

Date	Topic
June 20, 2019	<p>Correlational Designs, leaders: Dr. Armando Paladino</p> <p>Brief description/agenda: Introduce use of correlational designs as used within dissertations.</p> <p>Webinar Time: 4-5 pm AZ Time</p> <p>Platform: WebEx or Skype for Business; Event links will be uploaded to RMG group site. The webinar links are available here.</p>
July 18, 2019	<p>Phenomenology, leader: Dr. Karen Johnson</p> <p>Brief description/agenda: Examples of phenomenological dissertations will be discussed and evaluated.</p> <p>Webinar Time: 4-5 pm AZ Time</p> <p>Platform: WebEx or Skype for Business; Event links will be uploaded to RMG group site. The webinar links are available here.</p>
August 1, 2019	<p>Program Evaluation: TBD</p> <p>Brief description/agenda: Introduce use of program evaluation designs as used within dissertations.</p> <p>Webinar Time: 4-5 pm AZ Time</p> <p>Platform: WebEx or Skype for Business; Event links will be uploaded to RMG group site. The webinar links are available here.</p>
August 15, 2019	<p>Auto Ethnography, leader: Dr. Jim Lane</p> <p>Brief description/agenda: Introduce use of ethnography designs as used within dissertations.</p> <p>Webinar Time: 4-5 pm AZ Time</p> <p>Platform: WebEx or Skype for Business; Event links will be uploaded to RMG group site. The webinar links are available here.</p>
Sep 5, 2019	<p>Grounded Theory, leader: Dr. Mark McCaslin</p> <p>Brief description/agenda: Introduce use of grounded theory designs as used within dissertations.</p> <p>Webinar Time: 4-5 pm AZ Time</p> <p>Platform: WebEx or Skype for Business; Event links will be uploaded to RMG group site. The webinar links are available here.</p>
September 10, 2019	<p>Professional Engagement to Publication (PEP) Two-Part Workshop (Both Sessions Required). Looking to get professionally published in your field aside from your doctorate? Learn how to best submit your article ideas to reputable mass media and trade publication markets, shorter more concise pieces with a sense of immediacy that still represent your subject matter expertise (SME) and academic work. Build more career credibility as you help shape the conversation in your profession. Partake in the Professional Engagement to Publication (PEP) workshop run by Erik Bean, Ed.D., Center for Leadership Studies and Organizational Research (CLSOR) chair and Dr. Carol A. Holland, CLSER publication fellow. The Workshop is 7 to 8 p.m., EDT. To register up until 72 hours prior, send an email to deadline@email.phoenix.edu with your name, relationship to UOPX, your preferred email address, and indicate Fall 2019 Session.</p> <p>PART 1: 7 TO 8 PM, EDT (Part 2 is on October 8, 2019)</p>
Sep 19, 2019	<p>Narrative Inquiry, leaders: Dr. Ryan Rominger and Dr. Jim Lane</p> <p>Brief description/agenda: Narrative Inquiry (NI) will be discussed within the context of graduate dissertations. Topics will include benefits and disadvantages of the method, suggestions for Chairs who have students using the method, and examples of NI dissertations which have been completed.</p> <p>Webinar Time: 4-5 pm AZ Time</p> <p>Platform: WebEx or Skype for Business; Event links will be uploaded to RMG group site. The webinar links are available here.</p>

Oct 3, 2019	<p>Survey study. Quantitative Measurement Development of Surveys, leader: TBD</p> <p>Brief description/agenda: Introduce use of survey designs as used within dissertations.</p> <p>Webinar Time: 4-5 pm AZ Time</p> <p>Platform: WebEx or Skype for Business; Event links will be uploaded to RMG group site. The webinar links are available here.</p>
October 8, 2019	<p>Professional Engagement to Publication (PEP) Two-Part Workshop (Both Sessions Required). Looking to get professionally published in your field aside from your doctorate? Learn how to best submit your article ideas to reputable mass media and trade publication markets, shorter more concise pieces with a sense of immediacy that still represent your subject matter expertise (SME) and academic work. Build more career credibility as you help shape the conversation in your profession. Partake in the Professional Engagement to Publication (PEP) workshop run by Erik Bean, Ed.D., Center for Leadership Studies and Organizational Research (CLSOR) chair and Dr. Carol A. Holland, CLSER publication fellow. The Workshop is 7 to 8 p.m., EDT. To register up until 72 hours prior, send an email to deadline@email.phoenix.edu with your name, relationship to UOPX, your preferred email address, and indicate Fall 2019 Session.</p> <p>PART 2: 7 TO 8 PM, EDT</p>
Oct 24, 2019	<p>Action Research, leader: Dr. Mansureh Kebritchi</p> <p>Brief description/agenda: Application of action research in doctoral dissertations/studies; how to develop a research prospectus and a proposal for an action research.</p> <p>Webinar Time: 4-5 pm AZ Time</p> <p>Platform: WebEx or Skype for Business; Event links will be uploaded to RMG group site The webinar links are available here.</p>

Monthly Writing Challenge presented by the Center for Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Research

The Monthly Writing Challenge provides an opportunity for participants to experiment the daily academic writing and supportive accountability. This challenge is open to all members of the University of Phoenix community and you can write on anything you choose. The goal is simply to make some progress while developing a beneficial habit. Writing challenges begin on the first Tuesday of every month. Participation in the Monthly Writing Challenge is simple:

- You start with making a commitment to writing every week for at least 30 minutes a day (or more if desired or necessary) for five (5) days each week.
- Once a week, log into our Phoenix Connect group and post your progress. This process also allows you to engage with others who are focused on the common goal of making progress on their individual writing project(s).

Whether you are a student, staff member, faculty, or alum, this challenge provides an opportunity to get into the habit of regularly writing. And, as a collective group, we are able to make progress together! If you are up to the challenge, we hope you will join us! Each Monthly Writing Challenge has twenty (20) spots available. If you would like to join us in a Monthly Writing Challenge, please email us at workplacediversity@phoenix.edu. For more information visit [this page](#).

Dissertation to Publication Fall 2019 Workshop Registration is Open!

As conducted in the past, the Fall 2019 (August) Dissertation to Publication workshop will be hosted by the Chair of the Center for Educational and Instructional Technology Research (CEITR), Dr. Mansureh Kebritchi, Ph.D. In this web-based workshop, participants will learn how to publish their doctoral dissertation in a peer reviewed journal. Due to the popular demand for the workshop, pre-registration has been established for the Fall 2019 (August) session.

Pre-Registration Form

The official registration window is open from August 1, 2019 to August 25, 2019. Participants will be selected on a first come, first serve basis once the entire registration process has been completed. Seats in this workshop are limited so please register early during the registration window to increase your chances of being registered.

It is very important that you are available to attend all sessions within this workshop. Please check the following dates to ensure you are available prior to registering:

Workshop Meeting and Important Dates

- Official registration window: August 1, 2019 to August 25, 2019
- Roster is finalized: August 25, 2019
- Participants receive an article about how to select an appropriate journal to begin the workshop
- First Web-based and due date for target journals selection by participant: September 4, 2019
- Second Web-based session: September 25, 2019
- Third Web-based session: October 16, 2019
- Fourth Web-based session: November 6, 2019
- Fifth/final Web-based session; Submission to the target journals: December 4, 2019

The meeting times will be 4-5 pm Arizona Time. Interested participants may pre-register for the Fall 2019 workshop by clicking on this link to the [registration form](#).

NEXT EDITION!



*The Bosch Collaborative
A Service Learning Experiment*

Results from the 2019 KWB Summit

An Interview with IBM

Join us on the Research Hub for all
Center activities, KWBA dates, and
new research information!

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