NCU STUDENT/ALUMNI NEWS
SUMMER 2013

How to Turn Your Dissertation Into a Book  Applying Faculty Feedback

HIGHER DEGREES

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Letter from the Editor

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APPAREL | HEADWEAR | BUSINESS ACCESSORIES | ALUMNI GEAR
Starting the DBA program here at NCU, I had several questions.

• How can I make the most of the faculty feedback that I receive?
• What’s a good way to stay connected with other NCU students?
• Do my dissertation ideas make any sense?
• Heck, is highlighting still even considered a good studying technique?

This issue of Higher Degrees answers those questions and a few more. (Here’s a hint, highlighting isn’t that effective according to research.)

I also found the articles on turning your dissertation into a book and having your work published in a peer-reviewed journal exciting to contemplate. Once I’m further along in my degree program, I will definitely be rereading those.

So far, one of the things I have enjoyed most about NCU is the global perspective of the University – we have faculty who live in Athens, GA, and Athens, Greece. However, NCU isn’t just about learning and teaching. It’s about engaging in a wider, global, academic dialogue.

In fact, Dr. Heather Frederick and Dr. Barb D’Elia, director of assessment for the School of Psychology, traveled to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in March. Together, they presented at a conference at Effat University in Jeddah. Dr. Frederick’s journal of her trip is a fascinating read. Warning – you may crave hummus after reading it!

That same month, Dr. Greg Bradley, dean of the Graduate School, Dr. Eva Mika, assistant dean of the Graduate School, and Dr. Bill Reay, director of assessment for the School of Psychology traveled to Cuba for an academic exchange. Despite Cuba being so close to the United States, I know little about the culture, so I found their reflections quite interesting.

But our faculty are not the only ones doing interesting things – so are you.

• Dr. John Daab (2008) is investigating art fraud
• Dr. Dan Hurd (2010) transitioned from a soldier to a teacher
• Michael Wachala (M.B.A., 2011) combined engineering and music to create the perfect job
• Jannine Wilmoth (Ph.D. candidate) is preparing emergency plans for the 2015 Super Bowl
• Dr. Cyd Skinner (2013) is giving female picture book characters a voice

Cheers!

Alanna Vitucci
University communications and Alumni Relations
Getting published in a peer-reviewed journal is an affirmation of your expertise, the quality of your research, and your credibility as a scholar. Obviously, the first and most extensive step in the process is developing your manuscript. However, actually getting that manuscript published takes a lot of preparation, a strong attention to detail, and our favorite—time.

The good news is as a Northcentral University student or alum, you have access to NCU faculty and staff who have been published in peer-reviewed journals and some who act as journal reviewers or editors. We touched base with two experienced NCU team members to bring you five important steps in your quest to getting published.

1. JOURNAL SEARCH AND SELECTION
Finding the right journal for your work is an important step in getting published. Irrelevant submissions are often quickly rejected, and you can only apply to one journal at a time, which makes the decision that much more important. Dr. Daphne Halkias, NCU dissertation chair and editor in chief of the International Journal of Teaching and Case Studies, says you should choose a scientific journal with a good reputation and one that closely aligns with your topic.

“Are the editor and editorial board high profile? Is it Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) ranked or ranked highly with other metrics? Do its topic and research goals align with yours? These are all questions you should consider asking when choosing a journal,” says Halkias.

“Once you have a list of a few highly relevant journals, read the journal descriptions,” adds Dr. Tara Lehan, director of research curriculum and practice for the Graduate School at NCU and a reviewer for the Brain Injury, Disability and Rehabilitation Journal. “If your research is applied, you should submit the manuscript to a journal that emphasizes practice. If your research is more theoretical in nature, choose a journal that emphasizes theory.”
2. MANUSCRIPT PREPARATION

“Once you’ve selected the most appropriate journal, read the instructions to authors and follow them exactly when preparing your manuscript,” urges Lehan. Think of it as applying for a job. Just as your résumé and cover letter must be tailored to that specific job, you need to ensure that your manuscript’s formatting and citations match the journal’s guidelines.

Another important part of the preparation process is having someone else review your work. “Be sure your paper has been read by two independent reviewers with an emphasis on any language issues,” advises Halkias.

“Since you know the information so well, you might not realize if parts of the manuscript are unclear or inconsistent,” adds Lehan. “A colleague or friend can help to point out these areas and serve as a preliminary reviewer in this process.”

3. MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION

Seems pretty self-explanatory, right? However, similar to the preparation stage, you also need to follow precise instructions when submitting your manuscript.

“Journals provide details about their submission requirements,” notes Lehan. “For example, you might have to include the name and contact information of the corresponding author and/or an acknowledgment of the funding source(s). Many times, if you do not follow these guidelines, your manuscript will not be considered for publication.”

4. INITIAL RESPONSE

There may be a significant wait period (up to eight months) before you receive a response to your submission. That said, when the day arrives, you can expect a few things:

“You’ll receive an initial disposition (e.g. accept, accept with revisions, revise/resubmit, reject), a letter from the editor, and multiple reviews,” explains Lehan. “Very few manuscripts are accepted without revisions following the first review, so if you receive an invitation to resubmit the manuscript, be sure to fully address any feedback in the document. You might highlight all of the changes and/or create a document that explains how you addressed each issue with a corresponding page number,” she adds.

Reviewing the feedback is important even if your manuscript is rejected. This information can shed light on areas you may need to improve for resubmission or submission to another journal.

5. FINAL RESPONSE

If your manuscript was not rejected or accepted in the initial response, you will receive a final response following revision and/or resubmission of your manuscript (and another wait).

No matter what, remember that getting published is a process. Having your manuscript rejected is common, and you shouldn’t take it personally. Each new submission is a chance to learn and grow from any feedback you receive.
Dr. John Daab became interested in the field of art fraud while checking into the validity of a numbered lithograph in his personal collection. When he called to see who was keeping track of the numbers, he was told “no one.” He learned that there were relatively few regulations designed to protect consumers who were sold fraudulent works of art. He was also startled to discover that those who investigated art fraud often had little to no training.

“While the fraudsters are trained in art, investigators lack even the most basic level of art education,” shares Daab. “When I proposed my first article to a fraud association, I had to practically twist the arm of the editor to convince him that art fraud was a billion dollar plus a year activity; one with no one monitoring to prevent it.”

Daab’s first article has since been followed by an additional one hundred others plus two books: “The Art Fraud Handbook” and “Forensic Applications in Detecting Fine, Decorative, and Collectible Art Fakes.”

So how did a carpenter’s apprentice become a sought after lecturer and Princeton Art Museum Docent?

He stair-stepped his way up through the construction industry while completing a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from Brooklyn College, followed by four master’s degrees earned from the New York Institute of Technology (M.B.A. and M.P.S. in Human Relations), Rutgers (M.A. in Labor Studies) and City University of New York (M.A. in Philosophy).
In 1994, Daab became a Certified Fraud Examiner specializing in art fraud. He started Princeton Art Forensics in 1999, specializing in examining art authentication reports for signs of fraud.

“Art fraud is a $1 billion a year industry.” – Dr. John Daab

Daab completed his Ph.D. in 2008 at NCU, having written his dissertation on “Comparing Auction House, Gallery, and Private Fine Art Presale Presentations on the Internet.” He views his Ph.D. as a personal, rather than economic accomplishment, “proof that I have successfully climbed the highest intellectual mountain.”

Today, Daab is a sought after lecturer on the subject, and has presented at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, Princeton University Art Museum and Windros University, to name a few. He spends his time researching and writing plus lecturing and presenting tours as a Princeton University Art Museum Docent. He also combines his construction and art background to create reinforced concrete sculptures.

If you are not sure any art you own is authentic, Daab suggests having a lab check the makeup of the piece to ensure it was created at the right time or to judge if it’s impossible that the work was made during the time claimed. Secondly, validate the provenance and documentation of the piece. Then, check the style of the piece to confirm that it is in sync with the artist’s traits and there aren’t any anomalies that would expose the piece as a fake.

Credentials, Licensures and Certifications

Lifelong learner John Daab’s pursuit of knowledge is not limited to the higher degrees he has earned, but extends into numerous credentials, licensures and certifications.

“Credentials and certifications require study and testing, demonstrating that the person holding these knowledge badges has at least taken the time to absorb knowledge and has demonstrated this absorption by passing tests,” he explains. “I feel more comfortable having studied, tested out and earned my knowledge badges rather than being merely a poseur.”

Daab’s certifications include:
- CFE – Certified Fraud Examiner
- CFC – Certified Forensic Consultant
- CCI – Certified Criminal Investigator
- CHS-1 – Certified in Homeland Security
- IAC – Certified Intelligence Analyst

He also holds Diplomate status with the American Board of Forensic Examiners (DABFE), and is a CI – Certified Instructor and RI - Registered Investigator with the American College of Forensic Examiners International.
Over 170 NCU students attended our 13th annual commencement ceremony on June 8, 2013 at the Orpheum Theatre in Phoenix, Arizona.

Writer Anya Kamanetz delivered the commencement address, and along with Childhelp co-founders Sara O’Meara and Yvonne Fedderson, received an honorary doctorate from NCU.
Each year, NCU awards the student with the most academically robust dissertation the Dissertation of the Year award. The 2013 recipient was Dr. Rebecca Collins (Ph.D. in Education, Exceptional Student).

NCU honor society members were recognized during our Graduate Recognition Reception on June 7 at the Sheraton Phoenix Downtown.
Feedback is a key element of the one-to-one approach to learning at Northcentral. These tips will help you get the most from feedback in all of your courses.

Realize that feedback and grading are part of the learning process. Completing and submitting an assignment is the first part of your learning.

The second part of your learning is carefully reading and using the feedback from your instructor. Your instructor’s primary responsibility is to give feedback on your work. Your instructor teaches through feedback!

Your instructor offers guidance on useful resources, suggestions on how to improve your work, pointers on how your learning in one assignment or one course can serve you in other courses, and suggestions on what you can do outside of your coursework to develop skills you will need later.

You are spending time and money to learn and to grow as a professional in your field. Appreciating and using the constructive criticism you receive from your instructor is an important first step in your growth. Learn to love feedback! Welcome it! If you don't feel you're getting enough feedback, ask for more.

See your work from your instructor's point of view. If you were an instructor, would you avoid or hold back offering feedback on a student’s work? Would you see just giving a grade and saying a few words as the way in which you would want to share your hard-earned expertise and knowledge and fulfill your responsibility as a faculty.
member at an institution of higher learning? Wouldn’t you want to offer all the help and guidance you reasonably could?

**TIP #3**

Before submitting an assignment, look it over one more time, and judge it as your instructor will:

- Did you follow the instructions?
- Is your writing clear and compelling?
- Did you cite your sources correctly?
- Is your writing correct in punctuation, grammar, word usage, and APA style?
- Did you demonstrate that you used and understood the materials required for the assignment?

If your answer to all these is not an enthusiastic “yes,” revise the assignment so it is the best you can make it.

**TIP #4**

Remember that feedback is aimed at your work, not at you as a person. Instructors value every Northcentral student as an individual and as a member of an intellectual community.

**TIP #5**

Take a rational approach to feedback. As constructive and useful as criticism is, it can be difficult to work long hours on a paper or presentation and receive a less than perfect grade and have errors pointed out.

If you react emotionally when you receive your grade or feedback, give yourself time to cool down before reacting further. Read the grade and the feedback, and then take a break. Come back to the paper and read the feedback one more time. Be sure to ask your instructor for further clarification to eliminate any possible misunderstandings.

**TIP #6**

See feedback as empowering. The purpose of feedback is to help you achieve excellence. Use the feedback as a tool for empowerment. When you begin a course, let the instructor know that you’re looking forward to receiving guidance and the benefits of the instructor’s expertise.

If feedback is unclear, be sure to ask for clarification so that you understand exactly what the instructor had in mind. If at any time you feel you want additional feedback or support from your instructor, ask.

You’ll find that instructors have individual styles of giving feedback, but each one is dedicated to empowering you to be the very best you possibly can be.

**TIP #7**

Make an appointment to contact your instructor. All instructors have office hours and all welcome synchronous contact. See the welcome letter from your instructor for instructions on making an appointment.

**TIP #8**

Enjoy the affirmation and encouragement you get from your instructor! Not all feedback points out problems. Good feedback also tells you what you are doing well and what you have mastered!

“If at any time you feel you want additional feedback or support from your instructor, ask!”
By earning her doctorate with a specialization in Homeland Security, disaster response professional and NCU Ph.D. candidate Jannine Wilmoth hopes to help people in a larger capacity.

Since 9/11, our country has been more sensitive to terrorism than ever before. Most recently, the April 14th bombing at the Boston Marathon reminds us just how vulnerable we are, unknowing of when and where an attack will occur.

Thus, it is no surprise that degrees and careers focusing on protecting our country would be on the rise. According to a 2013 edition of the best colleges by U.S. News and World Report, Homeland Security is among the nine fastest growing areas of study in 2013. Like Wilmoth, individuals working in the homeland security field spend their days strategizing, planning and collecting information in order to prevent and mitigate terrorism attempts on U.S. soil.

Wilmoth is enrolled in NCU’s Ph.D. in Business Administration with a concentration in Homeland Security - Leadership and Policy program. Through this 60-credit program, students study terrorism, strategy, intelligence, emergency management, and critical infrastructure security issues.

Wilmoth always knew she had a passion for helping others in a larger capacity.

“I always knew when I was in nursing school that I had that interest,” she says. “I just wasn’t sure where to put it or where I was going to go with it. So about three years after graduating from nursing school, I started my master’s in public health.”

After receiving her master’s degree in public health with a concentration in disaster management in 2006 from Benedictine University, she moved to Glendale, Ariz., to work as a Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) Coordinator for the Glendale Fire Department.

“It was more interesting to me to look at larger scale responses and anti-terrorism, and focus on different types of responses to catastrophes like chemical or radiological and take care of planning for these potential scenarios,” says Wilmoth.
She does just that in her current role. As MMRS Coordinator, she collaborates with local, state and federal agencies to provide disaster response capabilities. In addition, she serves as the department’s public health subject matter expert, providing guidance on areas such as pandemic influenza.

The MMRS program is a federally-funded mass casualty response program. In the event there is a catastrophic event in a local jurisdiction, the program ensures there are mass scale resources like medical modules, contamination capabilities and other emergency equipment available. Her background enables her to do a little bit of everything, including field work and assisting with planning and operations for seven Fiesta Bowls, two BCS National Championship Games, and the 2008 Super Bowl.

“During the Super Bowl, I was our situation assessment person. As a watch officer, I monitored activity like radio traffic, radio dispatch and video surveillance, capturing all of the information in our emergency management software and sharing that information with state emergency management teams and other agencies that were gathering intelligence going on around the event.”

Wilmoth is now preparing for the 2015 Super Bowl. She indicated it typically takes about 18 months to coordinate emergency plans for large-scale events.

And while she loves her job with the Glendale Fire Department, her goal is to work at the federal level in decision making and policy development as it related to emergency management and homeland security, which is why she’s pursuing her doctoral studies.

“I looked at several schools’ homeland security programs. This is an investment for me, so I wanted to make sure I’m making a good investment in my Ph.D., and I didn’t feel like I would be getting that with the other schools. I feel like I’m making a good investment with NCU,” she says.

Wilmoth ultimately chose NCU because of the one-to-one learning model. This is her first online program, and she wanted a personalized experience and “didn’t want group projects or to have to rely on other people for her grades.”

While her faculty mentor is available to connect via video conferencing, phone calls, Skype and has regular office hours, the self-described adrenaline junkie says email has been the best form of communication to fit her schedule. She also takes advantage of and loves the NCU library and even uses it as a resource for her current job.

“There is a lot of self-learning, self-discipline and motivation that has to be done,” she says. “But that’s how I’m comfortable learning so it’s a perfect fit for me.”

For anyone interested in pursuing studies in homeland security, Wilmoth recommends learning a little bit about everything and the foundations of homeland security and suggests the independent study courses on FEMA’s website.

“Being aware of your environment and understanding your city’s infrastructure and things like the water supply and treatment plants is really what homeland security is all about. It’s not all about catching bad guys like on the TV show Homeland.” – Jannine Wilmoth

Wilmoth, a Benedictine University 40 under 40 alumni, is currently researching her dissertation topic. She has a few ideas and is leaning toward something that would combine public health and homeland security.

“I love my job and love what I do,” she says. “I’m so excited someone pays me to do what I love and to go to school and continue to study—that is even better.”
NCU supports professional development among its team members and is inherently interested in contributing to the scholarly community. Consistent with our Mission, we also strive for a global reach. Dr. Barb D’Elia (director of assessment, School of Psychology) and Dr. Heather Frederick submitted two papers to the 10th Annual Learning and Technology conference (CLOUDSCAPING THE GLOBAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT), sponsored by Effat University in Saudi Arabia. This article details Dr. Frederick’s travels from Arizona to Dubai (where Dr. D’Elia currently resides) and on to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) to attend the conference.

Day 1-Dallas, Texas
Mildly obsessed with visiting the Middle East since consuming “Reading Lolita in Tehran,” I’m excited by the thought of what I will see, smell and taste. The wardrobe—an Abaya and hijab—will also be something I’ve never experienced. I’m most excited about sharing a cup of tea with my colleague and co-presenter Barb, having worked with her remotely for nearly a decade.
Day 2 – Dubai, United Arab Emirates
For the first time in my life, I feel like a minority. It started at the airport during check-in when asked for my final destination. Answering, “The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,” she asked me for my visa.

“It’s meeting me in Dubai,” I explained. She gently noted, “Yes, I understand your problem, but you are a US citizen. You cannot travel without a visa.” I don’t know why she added US citizen – unless you are a Saudi, you need a visa to enter the Kingdom – but it felt odd, like it was a status I had to accept.

Thankfully, I had more than 72 hours in Dubai, which allowed the human to trick the computer into thinking that was my final destination. The 14.5-hour plane ride was uneventful. Among the 550 plus movies I could watch, I picked “Argo;” not sure that was the best choice.

In Dubai International Airport, I pass two prayer rooms before a bathroom and hear every language but English. America feels very far away. It’s a relief to see Barb and head off to the hotel. The contrast of the natural desert dotted with palm trees and the over-the-top structures I saw from the cab was breathtaking. Hard to believe that the Dubai I am viewing from the window is relatively new. Barb aptly refers to it as an “add water and shake” city.

At the hotel, we enjoy a two-hour cup of tea while I get a crash course in Middle Eastern culture, religion, veiled women and their power. Refreshed, we hit the local shops for bargains that simply can’t be found at the Dubai Mall – which offers shopping and skiing.

Day 3 – Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Thanks to technology, I’ve been gone two days and have seen my daughters three times.

I modeled my Abaya for them while they pondered the idea of a woman deciding who gets to see her shape. We were interrupted by the call to prayer that is broadcast through public loud speakers. It gave me goose bumps. I can’t help but wonder why the freedom to pray any time so often leads to non-action. Hearing a deep, lyrical, chanting voice five times a day reminding me to stop and commune with something higher would be nice.

Today, our first stop is the Saudi Arabian Consulate. The flag waving outside the American Embassy nearby gives me comfort. On arrival, I wrap my hair in a scarf and turn over my cell phone and camera as requested. Although I am clothed in an American-made casual dress that reaches my ankles, I feel somewhat naked. A man in a white robe and red/white checkered headpiece (that makes me think of Italian food) and sandals helps us. Barb’s visa is there, but my paperwork is messed up and they sent my visa to Jordan.
Day 3 – Dubai, United Arab Emirates (Cont.)

He says to come back Sunday. Our flight leaves Sunday evening. As if I wasn’t already a bit anxious…

Next, we head off to the University for a meeting about potential international partnerships. Arriving early, we drop in on a woman Barb met at a conference last month. Dressed in her Abaya with her hair hidden behind a scarf, she exudes power—and speaks perfect English.

All the female students around campus are dressed in black Abayats and scarves, while the males wear white robes and a headpiece. I’m struck by the realization that each woman looks different, but the men all look the same (so much for idea of abayas = invisible). It is amazing what you can do with black fabric in terms of textures, patterns and cut; and the colors and patterns on the head scarves. I would take a walk through the University cafeteria over a New York fashion show any day.

That night, I met Barb’s family for a traditional 7-course Middle Eastern meal. The Iranian restaurant owner, who joined us for dessert, loves Tucson and visits every January. I complimented her on the chickpea dessert cookies and left with about seven pounds of them. I have never experienced hospitality like this.

Day 4 – Dubai, United Arab Emirates

It turns out the “Gulf” (I know it as Persian, but here it is referred to as the Arabian) is the Mid-East Hawaii. We had day passes to an exclusive all-woman’s club. I wanted to take photos, but cameras were forbidden (I did sneak one of my toes and the sand on my iPhone). The infinity pools, singing birds, palm fronds tossing in the wind, the ocean crashing on the white sand with women freely exposed—it was sensory overload.

Later, on a bus tour, I saw the world’s tallest building, visited a palm-tree shaped man-made island and saw more palaces than one can imagine. Most are hidden behind walls, a physical manifestation of the cultural value of privacy (covering) that is the opposite of what you see in the States. I can see how this fact plays a key role in the politics of the Middle East. Things that make you go hmmmmm.

Day 5 – Dubai

I donned my Abaya and head covering to tour a masjid. The college-aged tour guide explains that the word mosque originates from the French word for mosquito. Muslims answering the call to prayer resembled mosquitoes swarming to the French. Masjid is preferred.

They talk about traditional dress. The rope that holds a man’s wrapped headpiece has multiple uses, including leashing a camel. Abaya’s are traditionally black. There are lots of theories about why black—from it being the cheapest
We were given the opportunity to ask any questions we wanted. I asked, “If you could tell someone who knows little or nothing about Islam one thing, what would it be?” The answer, “We are more alike than different and please don’t listen to the media.” (It made me think of Dustin Hoffman in “Wag the Dog.”)

**Day 6 – Jeddah, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

Will the Saudi Consulate release my visa? On the way, everyone we pass stops us to ask if we are Muslim. Our light hair is covered in our Abayamas and hijabs, but our light eyes and facial features kind of, um, stand out.

Inside, we explain the visa situation. We have all the paperwork, but there’s a typo by my name. The coordinators of the conference do all they can to correct the situation and after much waiting we are told the visa is approved, and we just have to get it typed. That office is three blocks away. It is hot and my Abaya is synthetic, plus like a novice, I wore jeans and a long sleeve t-shirt underneath, what was I thinking? Once there, the typist tells us he can type out Barb’s, but not mine.

Time is running out. On the walk back to the consulate, I email the University. By the time we arrive, more calls have been made. My visa is, seemingly magically approved. I run through the humidity back to the typing office. Our departure time is dangerously close. With visa finally in hand, we rush back to the hotel for our bags and head to the airport. When we arrive at the gate for our flight, I am blinded by a sea of white. Male pilgrims in white sheets are everywhere. Stitching or belts is forbidden when journeying to Mecca so they just stand there, holding their sheets closed. I’m staring at them and they are staring at me. It makes me uncomfortable and I don’t like it.

Getting out of the Jeddah airport after landing in the KSA is nerve wracking; few things are translated in English. I see what looks like an information booth and ask for help. I explain that my colleague and I are here for a professional conference hosted by Effat University. He points us to the short line.
Day 6 – Jeddah, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Cont.)
The drop in my adrenaline (coursing through my veins since morning) lasts about three minutes. The guy at that counter won’t take our passports and speaks no English. He points us to the right. We turn the corner to find ourselves on other side of the long lines, cutting in front of at least 300 people. The gentleman processing visas doesn’t look happy and everyone’s staring, but now I am getting used to it. It takes 15 minutes to process Barb and another 30 for me – digital finger and thumb prints, photos, and questions we don’t understand.

We eventually locate the Effat shuttle and arrive at the hotel 45 minutes later. When I open the door to my room, I find myself really breathing for the first time all day.

Google chatting with the kids, I am just so glad to see their faces. I’m finally here and all I want to do is leave.

Day 7 – Jeddah, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
My Abaya is wrinkled, but it doesn’t smell. All day yesterday I struggled with my head scarf and I can’t handle that distraction today. Thank goodness for Google and YouTube; I quickly find a video that helps me wrap my hijab correctly (which actually wasn’t so quick).

The van ride to Effat University provides me with my first and only daylight glimpse of the Old City. I check out the drivers and it’s true – no women! Jeddah resembles downtown LA or Phoenix, but the formerly shiny store fronts are dull and dusty. The driver says the wind/sandstorms kick up a lot of junk.

We enter the University through the “Woman’s Entrance.” The Keynote speaker, from the World Bank, is great. The world population is growing, but it’s happening in countries with limited resources. He shows images of a world map with countries expanded or reduced in size based on the topic. Here is what the world looks like considering Internet use; here is what the world looks like considering poverty, etc. Interestingly, in the KSA, 46% of the population is under the age of 30.

The conference is a wonderful mix of academics and other professionals from all over the world (here in the KSA!). We exchange ideas like business cards and share the excitement of how technology is changing how students learn and faculty teach. The highlight of the short two days was when Barb’s paper won “Best Paper of the Conference” - what an honor.

I see evidence of change everywhere. Young girls all have iPhones and tablets and can text, email and call in absence of a chaperone. I also saw a male professor walking across campus with students. This wasn’t allowed even a year ago. Yes, the conference room is divided by a partition (with the men on one side and the women on the other) and some women cover all but their eyes with their hijabs around men, but you also see women shaking men’s hands, and male and female faculty mixing at lunch.
Day 8 – Jeddah, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Phoenix, Arizona

The airport is suffocating. I spend the last of my Saudi money on an iced tea at a Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf. I long for the security of the plane and to hear just one word of English. Onboard, I’m relieved to be sitting next to a young Asian girl, not a man who’s been wrapped in a sheet for days.

In the air, I take some time to reflect. Barb gave an incredible talk yesterday and our workshop got attendees excited about assessment. I was, again, impressed by the caliber of the participants. All smart, articulate, multi-lingual women dressed in black hijabs.

One of the young student volunteers had asked if it was my first visit to Saudi Arabia. I asked her if she had been to the States. She had lived in Kansas during 2nd grade and Pennsylvania during 8th grade and would love to go back. She wants to be an electrical engineer and heard about a program in Utah working on some sort of electrical car.

What’s stopping her - her dad? He says “not without an escort.” I suggested she get married and bring her husband. She laughed. She’s engaged, but not looking forward to marriage. It’s not about oppression or lack of love for her betrothed. She said it was too much responsibility. Sounds like something I would overhear in a Starbucks in Scottsdale, Ariz.

After a short layover in Dubai, I spend the flight to Dallas trying to get back on Arizona time—writing in my journal and watching movies instead of sleeping. I cry when I miss my plane to Phoenix. I desperately need to hold my daughters. When we finally touch down, I notice the Desert of the Sun isn’t that different from the one I left 8,000 miles away – just sans camels and homogenous clothing.

Day 9 - Home in Phoenix

The next four days are a blur thanks to jetlag and a sinus infection/flu monstrosity. I remember the signs I saw in the KSA about the Swine Flu. Yuck. Whatever it was took four different drugs and about 200 hours of sleep to knock it out of my system. But, all told, it was worth it.

I still miss the food and interesting faces. When my longing for the tea becomes too much, I turn my desire to planning a return trip to Dubai… this time with the kids.
Like most professional soldiers, Dan Hurd (D.B.A., 2010) had many different jobs, responsibilities and leadership roles during his time in the US Army (1977-1994). However, it wasn’t until 1993 that this Detroit native added one of the most important credentials to his extensive collection—a college degree.

“One thing that I’ve learned and know for sure is that if you work hard, apply yourself, trust God and get educated, you will be successful,” explains Hurd.

While most of his military experience was in communications and electronics, Hurd decided to extend his education beyond the bachelor’s level and pursue a master’s of counseling degree after retiring from the Army in 1994 as a Chief Warrant Officer. As fascinating and applicable as the subject was, Hurd eventually got back into communications and task management as a defense contractor with the Department of Defense (DoD).

“I was hired on at the Joint Interoperability Test Command (JITC) at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., in 2001,” recalls Hurd. “Probably the biggest and most well-known project I worked on was the DoD Teleport System. From 2001 to 2005, I was responsible for ensuring that the system was operationally tested. Then from 2005 to 2011, I was the JITC High Frequency lab manager and DoD Teleport interoperability test director.”

During his time with the DoD, Hurd held various other job titles, including Information Technology Specialist, Computer Scientist and Operations Research Analyst, where he served in the operations evaluation cell trying to prepare the best strategies for planning, testing and reporting on operational test activities. To further support his career, he earned a Master of Science in Information Systems Engineering at Western International University before pursuing his D.B.A.
Management Information Systems (MIS) at Northcentral University.

“With my job schedule and travel requirements, I knew it would be difficult to attend class,” he explains. “After Northcentral received accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission, I discovered the D.B.A. program with a specialization in MIS that served my personal and professional goals.”

“My specialty, at least what I liked doing as a soldier and government civilian, was SATCOM systems analysis and testing,” Hurd continues. “It was probably my D.B.A. that opened the door for me to become an Operations Research Analyst while serving the DoD in this capacity.”

Just a few months before retiring from the Department of Defense in 2013, Hurd had the chance to present at the Operations Analyst Forum for the U.S. Government.

““With my background, education and military/DoD experience, I could have continued into senior positions with the government or contracting, but I think becoming an instructor suits me more at this time in my life, and it is a good opportunity to put all my degrees and experience to use.” – Dr. Dan Hurd

Even with so many different and demanding experiences under his belt, taking on a doctoral program was a whole new challenge for Hurd.

“With work, travel, vacations, family time…challenges abounded,” he recalls. “I would say although I tried to plan effectively, sometimes the work days were too long and the planned study time too short. I never wanted to procrastinate, but there were times when I had to delay. Ironically, sometimes these delays resulted in better or clearer ideas to help address assignments. NCU provided enough time to finish the assignments, but procrastination was detrimental if it became routine. With me, I am happy it did not.”

This wisdom is certainly something Hurd can pass on to his current students now that he’s a CIS instructor for Cochise Community College in the prison system.

“Since the DoD was considering drawing down, I thought

“With my background, education and military/DoD experience, I could have continued into senior positions with the government or contracting, but I think becoming an instructor suits me more at this time in my life, and it is a good opportunity to put all my degrees and experience to use.” – Dr. Dan Hurd

“When I was asked to present, I was pretty nervous,” he laughs. “Being the first person to do this from my organization, I really wanted to do a good job and present at a doctoral level. I had thought about the topic, put the information into a PowerPoint presentation, and rehearsed it, but then I did what does not come naturally for me; I asked for help. I asked my fellow analysts to review it, my supervisor, my team leader, and finally a fine researcher from the OA forum (Mr. Greg Hutto). Following the presentation, I received some nice comments from experienced and senior representatives. It was just a wonderful experience and I highly recommend these types of events, especially if you want to help your organization, increase your visibility to other professionals, add data to existing research, or just continue to learn.”

In early April, Hurd submitted his presentation for the Presenting Author Excellence Award from Northcentral’s Lambda Eta Chapter of the Delta Mu Delta honor society and came away the winner.

“I have many degrees, awards and certificates, but I am really proud to receive this award,” admits Hurd. “At the same time, it was nice just to be considered.”

Hurd was recognized for his award at the Academic Recognition Reception on Friday, June 7, prior to NCU’s 2013 Commencement festivities on June 8.

“Stay focused, work hard, avoid procrastination, and plan your study periods. When you are stuck, find something that relaxes you. Some of my best ideas came when I took a step back from the assignment. Embrace the timely ideas as a gift from the Lord and do not be too hard on yourself.”

In early April, Hurd submitted his presentation for the Presenting Author Excellence Award from Northcentral’s Lambda Eta Chapter of the Delta Mu Delta honor society and came away the winner.

““There are some challenges, but the inmates are receptive and I really look forward to hopefully making a difference in their lives and reducing future recidivism,” continues Hurd. “The benefit they have is that they are under greater supervision and can apply themselves since they do not have the same kind of distractions that a typical college student would.”

As for current and prospective NCU students who find themselves with more responsibilities and less free time, Hurd suggests planning out your time as much as possible.

“Stay focused, work hard, avoid procrastination, and plan your study periods. When you are stuck, find something that relaxes you. Some of my best ideas came when I took a step back from the assignment. Embrace the timely ideas as a gift from the Lord and do not be too hard on yourself.”
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heer chance. That’s what led Dr. Cyd Skinner (Ph.D., 2013) to her dissertation topic for her Ph.D. in Psychology program at Northcentral University. Now, having successfully presented her dissertation findings in a poster session at the Association for Psychological Science’s Annual Convention in Washington, DC, (May 23-26), Skinner fondly reflects on the circumstances that led to her dissertation, aptly titled: Gender and Language in Best-selling Children’s Picture Books: Who Gets to Speak?

“Several years ago, I was finishing a statistics class and needed to create data for a hypothetical study for an assignment,” she recalls. “I also had to babysit my nephew Jack for the weekend and was prepping to write a class on Gender Psychology for work (Skinner is an assistant professor of psychology at a community college in northeastern Pennsylvania).”

A perfect storm broke when Skinner’s nephew left a copy of “The Cat in the Hat” out and she tossed it onto a desk next to Carol Gilligan’s “In a Different Voice.”

“In that moment, these two completely unrelated books did my work for me. All I had to do was ask the question: ‘What voice do female characters use in picture books?’ As I read through The Cat in the Hat, I was shocked to find that Sally doesn’t speak at all! Not just a different voice, but no voice!” relates Skinner. “She floats through the story like a ghost—appearing on almost every page, but mute throughout. I had read this book as a child, read it to my own children, and just that day to my nephew and I had never noticed!”

From there, everything fell into place. Skinner’s discovery led to a pilot study for her statistics class, and eventually, her dissertation.
“The results of my content analysis of bestselling picture books found that females account for 36% of the illustrations, but only 17% of the words spoken by male and female characters,” reveals Skinner. “I know that research is still a success if a relationship is not found, but it was exciting to see these numbers unfold from an idea into research into the final dissertation.”

Of course, she never dreamed at the time that she would be presenting these findings at a national convention.

“Once or twice over the years, I’ve had yearly APS student memberships, but I have to thank my dissertation committee for strongly encouraging me to submit a poster presentation proposal for the annual conference,” shares Skinner. “When I was prepping for my defense, every friend and colleague seemed to have some awful war story about their dissertation. I feel so fortunate to have had a lovely, supportive, passionate committee who, in the wrap-up to my defense, were an absolute cheering squad for my work and suggested I submit to APS.”

That’s not to say Skinner isn’t confident about her work.

“Since I have never published or presented at this level of a conference, I simply thought the APS Annual Convention was shooting too high, but the confidence and excitement I heard about my work from Drs. Haussmann, Stones and Keller was absolutely infectious. I ended up applying about two hours before the deadline,” she laughs.

While it may sound as if Skinner’s doctoral journey was a walk in the park, reality sets in when she starts listing everything that transpired in her personal and professional life during her years at NCU.

“When I started the program, I was in the process of divorcing, had just spent my first tough year as a full-time faculty member, and was raising two almost teenagers very much on my own,” she begins. “Since then, I’ve earned tenure and promotion; kept a household afloat; taught 100+ college classes to 3000+ students; got cancer, had a double mastectomy, chemo and radiation; bought three used cars; flooded my basement twice; chased flying squirrels and bats around my house with a racquetball racquet; fostered eight dogs and one Danish exchange student; tried to learn to play the harmonica, and I’m sure there have been a hundred other things that I don’t even remember as having been challenges at this point,” she says, catching her breath.

With such a busy life and the closest university with an acceptable Ph.D. program about four hours away round trip, it made sense for Skinner to choose NCU’s online doctoral program. Her decision paid off in more ways than she could have imagined.

“My experience at NCU has been overwhelmingly positive!” shares Skinner. “I have been lucky enough to have Dr. Haussmann as my dissertation chair, and I can’t thank him enough. The respect with which the faculty and advisors have treated me and my ideas allowed me to develop work that I have genuinely enjoyed, and has led to a much richer education than I ever could have foreseen at the start.”

While Skinner plans to apply for a full-year sabbatical from teaching, she’s not completely certain what she will do with so much time on her hands. As for any challenges on the horizon, Skinner is unfazed by what the future may hold.

“I wish I could say that determination and hard work and the knowledge that you can do it will win the day… but life can be tricky,” she muses. “At any rate, the cancer doesn’t seem to be coming back, but the Danish exchange student just called and he’ll be back this summer!”
Massive open online courses are game changers for higher education. Over the last few years, both traditional and online universities have been opening up their classrooms for free to the world. Even some of the most recognizable universities in the United States are now hosting MOOCs.

“MOOCs provide students the opportunity to expand their knowledge and pursue their interests without dedicating fixed periods of time to fit a college or university schedule,” explains Dr. Marla Kelsey, full-time faculty member for NCU’s School of Education. “The MOOC format gives the ‘average learner’ access to elite faculty and curriculum from prestigious higher education institutions.”

Like Dr. Kelsey, MOOC educators are passionate about providing educational resources to those who might not otherwise be able to afford college. They recognize they are significantly changing the lives of some individuals. And, while most would agree that providing access to education to people all around the world is positive, the benefits do come with challenges.

What is a MOOC?
A MOOC is a massive open online course. The course is open in the sense that you can take the course without paying for it; however, you might have to pay the university if you want credit for it. The work done within the course is shared among every-one participating. You get to keep your work and everyone else gets to learn from it. Participants don’t complete specific assignments, but participants engage with one another and network. There’s no right or wrong way to complete the course. MOOCs promote independence among learners, but through course participation you can make connections with your peers for your professional network outside of the class.

Dr. Darren Adamson, director of curriculum development for NCU’s School of Marriage and Family Sciences says, “The online classroom can be as engaging as any traditional classroom if the teacher and the student are willing to deal with the challenge of rapid and broad-ranging technology changes.”

How to find MOOCs
An Internet search will turn up hundreds, if not thousands, of results for free online courses. Want to see if an Ivy League school offers a free online course? Just search the school name + free courses and you’ll be surprised to see how many courses are offered for free by some of the most respected universities across America.

In addition to conducting a search engine query on free online courses, there are also a number of companies that serve as curators for free online courses.

Currently, the top players in the MOOC space are Coursera, Udacity, and edX. These MOOC providers have roots in some of today’s top colleges and universities providing access to courses and professors without any formal admissions process outside of registering for the class. Popular MOOC topics include mathematics, computer science and business. However, courses can address everything from physics and electronics to medicine and the humanities—it all depends on which MOOC provider you use.
The Challenges of MOOCs

Even though there are numerous benefits to MOOCs, they do come with challenges. The biggest argument against MOOCs is the fact that most of them are free and do not count for academic credit. However, the practice of awarding certificates of completion, sometimes for a fee, is becoming more common.

According to Kelsey, it’s still too early to tell how a MOOC education can impact a job seeker or professional seeking career advancement.

“It will be interesting to see from an employer’s perspective, if they will accept certificates or ‘badges’ as something they feel demonstrates skill in place of the traditional degree,” she notes. “Mozilla Open Badge Backpack and Khan Academy allow participants to store their badges and related skill sets in ways for employers and others to make some type of evaluation. In some ways, these skills may be easier for employers to understand: a badge in word processing skills or databases may have more meaning to the non-academic world than a posted degree in business or information systems. Employers may be more likely to accept MOOCs as a form of professional development or continuing education for merit increases.”

In addition to earning credit, another challenge is policing cheating. There are measures put in place at other traditional and online universities to deter cheating like source citation tools, IP address detection and more, but with MOOCs, it’s a bit more relaxed due to the free model.

“MOOCs currently use some form of a quiz or test for those students who want to earn a certificate of completion, but they are not proctored or monitored in a way that can ensure definitively who is authoring that work,” says Kelsey.

Expanding your Education with MOOCs

Despite the ease of use, there are a few things you should keep in mind if you decide to enroll in a MOOC. First, if you are the type of student interested in MOOCs for potential credit, you will need to work very closely with your school to find out whether or not you can get transfer credit for your efforts. Second, if there is a way to get course credit or a certificate, you will probably have to pay for it.

The Future of MOOCs

MOOCs have certainly expanded the possibilities of online education, and everyone seems to have their own idea of what the MOOC space will look like in the future.

“Distance learning is filling a real need for learners that are remote, who may travel for their jobs or who just cannot make it to a brick and mortar classroom due to their lifestyles,” acknowledges Kelsey. “On the other hand, some experiences will always be better ‘face-to-face,’ such as with practical learning experiences for teachers, nurses, and some math and sciences classes that include wet labs and those courses that require a hands-on approach to ensure learning outcomes are met. It really will depend on the individual student’s needs and the desired learning outcomes.”
A Study on How We Study

BY ERIN WALSH

Recite the states in the United States alphabetically, list all the presidents of the U.S. from George Washington to the occupant of the White House (when you were in grade school), and share the date of the battles of Lexington and Concord.

For most of us, of our early education consisted of memory assignments. Personally, I never forgot the mnemonic “my very educated mother just served us nine pickles” (Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto – alas poor Pluto has since been demoted from planet status).

Why? Because according to common belief, memorizing and repeating information, leads to greater learning outcomes. But, it turns out that many studies, dating as far back as 1890 (that would be President Benjamin Harrison), refute this. What else has been proven not to work? Re-reading, highlighting, and our favorite, funny mnemonics.

Henry L. Roediger published an article in the Association for Psychological Science in the Public Interest entitled “Applying Cognitive Psychology to Education: Translational Educational Science,” which points out that, contrary to these studies, the practices listed above continue to be quite common.

So what has science proven really works? According to the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and Dr. Rebecca Adams, associate director of faculty training at NCU, there are five proven study techniques:

1. Distributed Practice is the opposite of cramming for a test. Shorter and diverse study sessions – covering several topics that are distributed over a period of time, are more successful.

2. Retrieval Practice or Testing focuses on taking practice tests. By testing yourself, you practice retrieving information that is kept in an accessible state in your brain.

3. Interleaved Practice is a form of studying that mixes up different kinds of problems or materials in one study session. Multiple associations may be formed within a single study session that can then be recalled by a variety of cues. And, because the study tasks change frequently, studying this way is more engaging and less boring.

4. Elaborative Interrogation isn’t a technique from a Law & Order episode. The technique works by explaining why a fact or concept is true. This helps students make a connection between the new information they are learning and information they have previously learned. It is a strategy that works particularly well when comprehension is the focus, and students have pre-existing knowledge of the topic.

5. Self-explanation encourages students to explain how new information is related to known information, or to verbally explain the steps followed when solving a problem.
Finding Your Study Space

BY KARA HAWKING

Seeking out the perfect study space for your needs is a great first step to ensuring your academic success! Every student is different, but keeping a few things in mind when selecting your space can help even the most reluctant scholar.

FIGURE OUT WHAT MAKES YOU TICK AND USE IT!

Use what you know about yourself to select the best setting for your success.

Some students prefer complete silence, while others enjoy a little background noise. Then there are those like NCU student Carolann Carruthers Hampton (Ed.D.), who can pull it off in a room full of family! Hampton manages to combine school and family time by studying “on the couch with headphones and classical music. This way [she] can still be with [her] children!”

MAKE THE BEST OF WHAT YOU’VE GOT!

Take a look around your home and think creatively.

Many students don’t have enough space in their homes to dedicate an entire room to studying, so becoming resourceful is a must. Current NCU student Lisa Stitzel Brown (M.A.Psy) shares, “I do most of my reading in the laundry room while doing laundry.”

IF ALL ELSE FAILS, DO IT ON THE GO!

Evaluate your day for hidden down-time and take advantage of it.

Almost everyone spends time waiting for food at a restaurant, sitting in a stylist’s chair, or riding in the car to work. Use this time to listen to a lecture or take a few notes (but not while driving!). This seemingly useless time adds up by the end of the week!

If you’re still struggling with finding the perfect space, keep in mind that your options are endless. As an online student at NCU, you’re not confined to the four walls of the library or lecture hall – your studies are wherever you choose to be.

We asked where YOU STUDY on the NCU Facebook page. Here is what you said!

Matt Potter: “I actually created a reading nook in my bedroom where I do most of my studying and paper writing. Living in NYC, you learn to maximize every corner and space possible!”

Debby Jowersfolson: “My home office at my desk. In the good Michigan weather, I study in a flower house in my backyard. That is the BEST!”

Jennifer O’Boyle Black: “On the bleachers of my daughters’ high school football field. One is a cheerleader; one is a soccer player, so they are at that field 6 months of the year. I want to be there for them, but I’m not a huge fan of football so I’m there with my books and taking notes for my activities. Been doing this since they were very little and I was starting my BA in 2004 and now working on my doctorate.”

Emilie Bell: “I study at the library where I earned my master’s, The Universities at Shady Grove.”

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WHO DOESN’T LOVE MUSIC?

As infants, we snoozed to the soothing melodies of our mothers’ lullabies. Now as adults, no matter how your taste in music evolved over the years, it seems there is a musical genre for everyone (how about some Indian classical music or a little avant-garde metal?). Despite this universal love of music, only a small number of us actually get to build a career in music. One of these lucky few is NCU M.B.A. (2011) graduate and current D.B.A. student, Michael Wachala.

“I have always loved music so being able to develop musical instruments at one of the largest musical instrument manufacturers in the world definitely makes my job more meaningful to me,” he reveals.

That’s right; Wachala is the vice president of research and development at Fender Musical Instruments, a job that perfectly combines his two passions—engineering and music.

“My undergraduate degree is in engineering and my jobs have always focused on technology,” explains Wachala. “I’ve now been managing technology groups for over 12 years, which is why I got my Project Management Professional (PMP) certification through the Project Management Institute a few years ago.”

It was his project management experience that led to his employment at Fender, where he was hired as a project manager in 2007. At that point, he decided to earn his M.B.A. to further expand his growing list of credentials.
“I was looking for a school where I could complete my M.B.A. and move right into a doctoral program,” he explains. “Northcentral was ideal for what I needed.”

Wachala was able to complete his M.B.A. with a specialization in Project Management in less than two years before transitioning to NCU’s Doctor of Business Administration degree with a specialization in Management of Engineering and Technology in 2011.

“Although the doctorate is relevant to my work, I am really pursuing the degree more for a personal goal,” he adds. “I have always wanted a doctoral-level degree and Northcentral has allowed me to pursue my goal. I chose the D.B.A. over a Ph.D. because the applied nature of the D.B.A. was more in line with my goals and what I do for my job. I wanted to be able to apply my knowledge from my job to my degree and vice versa.”

A musician in his own right (guitar, of course!), one of the ways that Wachala’s job has prepared him for the D.B.A. program is by providing him with topics that are relevant to his research.

“Every day I am trying to improve what we do at work and that philosophy has extended into my research,” notes Wachala. “Most people at Fender have a passion for the product that just doesn’t exist in most other companies.”

In fact, Wachala has had research on the brain for quite some time now, especially his dissertation.

“I have been thinking about my dissertation since I was in my M.B.A. program,” he laugh. “Since the dissertation is such a large part of a doctoral program, I wanted to have an idea of what my topic would be before I even entered the program. In fact, I wasn’t going to start a doctoral program unless I had a topic in mind.”

With just one content course left before his Doctoral Comprehensive Exam, Wachala is glad he was prepared.

“I think having a topic idea at the beginning of the program has helped me to focus my coursework on topics relevant to my dissertation topic,” he notes. “I’ve been able to build a large database of sources for my dissertation and narrow and focus my topic.”

His preparation also extends to how he’s managed being a working professional, a husband and father, plus a doctoral student.

“One of my primary requirements when I was looking for a school was flexibility,” he explains. “I needed a school that would work with my schedule, which includes a lot of travel at times.”

NCU’s flexibility has allowed Wachala to plan ahead and complete his weekly assignments when he has the time.

“I have found that by looking ahead at what is required for each activity, I was able to plan what I needed to do and when. Planning allows me to get a head start on assignments during weeks that I have minimal other commitments so that I don’t fall behind during the busier weeks.”

Wachala believes that solid time management and organizational skills are paramount for any busy working professional who is looking into an advanced degree program.

“My experience has been great, but if you can’t effectively balance school with everything else, then things are going to be a lot more difficult for you.”

“Although the doctorate is relevant to my work, I am really pursuing the degree more for a personal goal. I have always wanted a doctoral-level degree and Northcentral has allowed me to pursue my goal.” – Michael Wachala
Picking a Dissertation Topic is a BIG Decision.

“You will spend a great deal of time reading, researching, thinking, writing and talking about your dissertation topic,” says Dr. Heather Frederick. “To pick a topic that you are only vaguely interested in is like marrying someone you only kind of like.”

Additionally, picking a topic that is too close to home (for example, the impact of divorce while going through a divorce) can make it very difficult for you to maintain a scholarly voice. Dr. Frederick’s advice - “Just don’t do it!”

Your initial dissertation idea(s) may change as you begin conducting your literature review and writing your concept paper. However, you should be able to answer yes to these six questions:
How Other Students Selected Their Dissertation Topic

We asked how students and alumni came up with their dissertation research idea on the NCU Facebook page. Here is what they said:

Sarah Edens Kranz: “Inspired by a houseful of preteens.”

Kevin Scott: “I formed and selected my dissertation topic from the experiences in hand-to-hand combat and assault situations I faced while in law enforcement and my passion for martial arts.”

Gabrielle Dumas McBath: “I thought about the issues that a future hiring committee at a university would ask me.”

Yolanda K. Harvin: “My specialization is international education and I hope to discover some ways to close the achievement gap between minority and white students. I am looking into whether multicultural and/or international education programs could be one way.”

Warner Castillo: “After 25 years in the Marine Corps and during my first combat tour in Iraq, we applied the community policing concept "Partnerships, Problem Solving, and Prevention" in several small towns in Iraq. The community members began to trust us and revealed several insurgents within their communities. I chose to conduct a study between these relationships that could be applied as an anti-terrorism doctrine in the United States... I am fortunate because I am also a full-time LAPD lieutenant, and as a practitioner, am able to see this application on a day-to-day basis on crime reduction as well. I just completed my first dissertation course and am done with my concept paper.”

Rene Swa: “I made a list of topics that interested me in my field, which I was curious to know more about. Then, I read other journal articles and dissertations about the topic to see where future research needed to be done or where knowledge gaps showed up.”

Lori Mooney-Rosing: “My topic was chosen because my husband is terminally ill from a rare disease with no cure and [I] needed to research it. I thought it would make a good topic to see if there is something we can do to help, or also help others that struggle with his disease.”

Amber Vaill: “I selected a topic that was relevant to my career, would yield data that would be useful to the college where I work, and honestly, would be easy to get access to collect the data.”

Doreen Packer: “I chose an area that I had a strong interest in and that would benefit the students and school district that I work for. I not only enjoyed doing the research, but the results have been very helpful in [the] planning and implementation of research-based best practices.”

Price Baker: “I read the professional journal I/O Psychology produces quarterly and looked at the themes and trends within. Then, I tried to match that with my interests to see if a gap existed.”

1. Am I passionate about this topic?
2. Do I enjoy talking about this topic with others?
3. Do I really want to become an expert in this area?
4. Can I study this and still be interested in it a year from now?
5. Can I study this area from an objective standpoint?
6. Am I objective about this topic in general?

If you have answered yes to all six questions, then you may have a winner!

What’s next? Read as much as you can about your general research area. Ideas for dissertation research do not materialize out of thin air. Rather, a good idea will come after you have conducted a fair amount of reading in an area and then thought about the next logical step in a sequence of research.
BY ALANNA VITUCCI

You’ve spent hundreds of hours and many months writing your dissertation. Now having obtained your degree, it’s only natural to ask what’s next. For many, it’s turning that dissertation into a book.

NCU faculty member Dr. Melanie Shaw’s decision to turn her dissertation into a book was a pragmatic one. “I was looking to increase the number of publications on my curriculum vitae (CV). I had also recently presented my dissertation findings at the International Learning Conference at the University of Illinois,” shares Shaw. “Turning my dissertation into a book seemed like the logical next step.”
Shaw’s research topic was timely. It addressed the impact of alternative certification on teacher shortages.

“As a doctoral student, I was interested in seeing if nontraditional routes to teacher certification resulted in more educators, reducing teacher shortages in subject areas reported as chronically understaffed,” explains Shaw. She found that not only did these programs reduce teacher shortages, but nontraditional teachers stayed in the field longer, and were often from underrepresented groups like males and minorities.


During the process of working on her book, and with the support of Neal, Shaw was inspired to start her own publishing company. “I decided to look into journal publishing; I obtained an ISSN from the Library of Congress and published the first volume of the Journal of Interdisciplinary Collaboration,” explains a still thrilled Shaw.

Dr. Mitchell Morrison, on the other hand, had wanted to write a book for years, ever since finishing his master’s thesis.

“During my oral defense, my dissertation chair and committee asked if I wanted to keep writing in my field, which further piqued my interest in publishing,” explains Morrison. His dissertation was titled Exploring Health Care's Safety Culture Transformation: A Phenomenological Study of Error-Mitigation through Aviation Teamwork.

When considering options for publishing, Morrison looked at both traditional and self-publishing options.

“I submitted my manuscript to a publisher who reviewed it and sent me an offer using a self-published model. The publisher is a small consulting business owner who I had worked with in the past, and I felt comfortable sending him my transcript. Although I had one other firm in mind with lower costs, I went with the more expensive option because of familiarity and trust,” says Morrison.

The theme of Morrison’s book is personal and organizational discovery and change. While the content closely tracks his dissertation, overall, the presentation focus and narrative style differs.

The publishing process has been challenging, but Morrison and his publisher have found a synergy. “The writing itself has always been something I enjoy, and writing in my tone of voice was a nice change,” notes Morrison.
## 2013 Alumni Survey

### 50% of Alumni Are Interested in Attending Alumni Events

**Alumni are interested in attending the following types of events:**

- 35% Professional Networking
- 25% Educational Events
- 16% Dinners
- 9% Family Friendly Events
- 7% Volunteer Events
- 6% Sports Games

### Alumni Prefer Events on Saturdays 68%

**Alumni would like to read the following kind of articles in higher degrees:**

- 22% Articles on Academic Publishing
- 20% News about NCU
- 19% Career Centric Articles
- 16% Profiles of Fellow Alumni
- 11% Interviews with NCU Faculty
- 8% Messages from NCU Deans
- 64% of Alumni are interested in being profiled in higher degrees.

### 65% of Alumni Read Higher Degrees

**Alumni are interested in:**

- 26% Discounts for Alumni
- 24% Providing Career Mentoring to Students
- 22% Serving on an Alumni Advisory Panel
- 18% Serving as an Alumni Ambassador
- 11% Providing Career Mentoring to Fellow Alumni

### 68% of Alumni Read Higher Degrees
NCU.EDU

VISUAL BENEFITS:

1. AREAS OF EXPERTISE
2. DISSERTATION TOPICS
3. PUBLICATIONS
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ENHANCED FLEXIBILITY FOR USERS WITH MOBILE DEVICES SUCH AS:

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NCU Dean and Faculty Members Travel to Cuba to Attend the 2013 Academic Research Delegation Hosted by the American Orthopsychiatric Association

In March, Dr. Greg Bradley, dean of the Graduate School, Dr. Eva Mika, assistant dean of the Graduate School, and Dr. William Reay, director of academic program development for the School of Psychology, attended a March 2013 academic exchange in Cuba organized by the American Orthopsychiatric Association (AOA).

The academic exchange focused on mental health and related issues. Drs. Bradley, Mika and Reay visited a community-based mental health center, a rural mental health center in the Sierra del Rosario region, as well as the Child and Mental Health Service of the Policlínico Pedro Borrás.

“The purpose of the exchange was to visit various Cuban health, mental health and social service systems to see how their philosophy and policies are implemented on a day-to-day basis in both urban and rural settings. These areas will face future challenges as the Cuban population continues to age and their birth rate declines,” notes Reay.

The exchange concluded with a panel presentation on mental healthcare in Cuba, specifically, the Cuban Health Care System at the Consejo Nacional de Sociedades Ceintíficas de Salud. Bradley presented his observations of the current and future Cuban economic structure from a free market perspective, while Reay shared his reflections on this visit versus a prior visit to Cuba in 2010.

Additional presenters included the President of the Cuban Society of Psychiatry; Chair of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Group of the Ministry of Public Health (MINSA), who is also responsible for international relations of the Cuban Society of Psychiatry; and Alexis Lorenzo, president of the Cuban Society of Psychology and vice president of the Cuban Society of Health Psychology.
Tentative Steps towards a Free Market

“The week in Cuba was incredibly informative and academically enriching,” shares Bradley. “While I read voraciously on the economic changes and the current environment in Cuba prior to the academic exchange, there is no way to appropriately assimilate this information without visiting the country and experiencing it.”

“I was surprised by the amount of entrepreneurship visible in Havana,” he adds. “On our trip, Bill noted a significant increase in individual economic activity since his last visit just three years ago. The entrepreneurial spirit of young Cubans stood out to me the most; they’re serving as change agents. And, they are more than willing to compete for business in this new environment.”

However, despite the velocity of economic change, the Cuban system is not ready to handle a significant volume of individual entrepreneurial activity. For example, their legal system does not include a mechanism for handling tort claims.

“That issue alone indicates to me that this economic evolution will be relatively slow and deliberate once it reaches a certain scale of activity,” says Bradley.

Experiencing the Cuban Culture

Reay notes that Cuba is a beautiful, fascinating and diverse country. While the Cuban infrastructure is in serious need of repair, the flower gardens alone are spectacular.

“Cuba strikes me as a paradox. On one hand, Cuba’s history is filled with revolution and upheaval. On the other, it appears frozen in time,” shares Mika. “A store-front entitled United Colors of Benetton peered out from Havana’s dilapidated streets and buildings!”

“Cuba has a long and rich history of integrating multiple cultures and ethnic groups, which has resulted in physical characteristics that are unique to their island,” explains Reay. “African and European influences have resulted in a complex culture that is expressed beautifully in local dance, music, religion, and cuisine. Cubans are also some of the most friendly, expressive and beautiful people I have met,” he adds.

Ongoing Academic Collaboration

“Our hosts were very gracious in sharing information, and we were able to open communication channels that should lead to ongoing, valuable collaboration and research,” concludes Reay.

“What I detected from my interaction with the Cuban people is an intense curiosity and desire to connect, Mika agrees. “This will serve us well as we continue our academic exchange.”
As a current NCU student or alum, you recognize the flexibility and other benefits of online education. But, at times you may feel a little disconnected from faculty, fellow students and alumni. This can be especially true if you pursued your undergraduate and/or graduate degree at a brick and mortar university where group projects and face-to-face interaction were standard. However, there are a number of resources outside of email that you can take advantage of to maintain a stronger bond with the NCU family.

SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES
Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are all excellent tools for staying connected.

NCU’s Facebook page is a hub for photos, videos, events, curriculum changes, career resources, and information on faculty, students and alumni. (Facebook.com/NorthcentralU)

Twitter is a link to everything NCU – in 140 characters or less. (@NorthcentralU)

NCU’s LinkedIn group offers discussion and sub groups specifically for students, alumni and faculty. To find NCU on LinkedIn, search for Northcentral University in groups. If there’s not a sub group already created for an area you’re interested in, start your own and invite others to join.

COURSEROOM CONNECTIONS
In each Courseroom, you can click on the “Learner’s” tab. It lists those currently taking the class, and those who have completed it in the past year. Click on the plus sign and you can use Compass email to contact them.

ALUMNI CONNECTIONS
To learn more about NCU’s Alumni Association, visit our Alumni Association page or contact Alanna Vitucci, University Communications & Alumni Relations, at avitucci@ncu.edu or alumni@ncu.edu

How to Say 'Hi' on LinkedIn
So you want to network and make new connections on LinkedIn, but what exactly should you say in your introduction?

When you reach out, do so in a professional and respectful manner. Don’t use the boilerplate language LinkedIn auto-populates. Instead, send a simple and personal message, keeping in mind there is a 300 character text field limit.

Here are some ideas on how you can personalize the message you include with your connection invitation:
• “As a mutual connection of Jane Doe’s, I’d like to connect and learn about your role in your organization.”
• “Since we are both students at NCU, I’d love to connect and stay in touch.”
• “Hello, I am a fellow NCU alum who lives in Phoenix and also works in the higher education field.”
Here are some of the top professional associations by field and school of study, though there are many more:

**School of Business and Technology Management:**
- Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP)
- Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)
- Project Management Institute (PMI)

**School of Psychology:**
- American Psychological Association (APA)
- Association for Psychological Science (APS)
- Psychonomic Society

**School of Marriage and Family Sciences:**
- American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT)
- International Family Therapy Association (IFTA)

**School of Education:**
- American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)
- American Association of School Administrators (AASA)
- American Educational Research Association (AERA)
- American Educational Studies Association (AESA)
- American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
- Association of Teacher Educators (ATE)
- Children's Defense Fund (CDF)
- Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)
- National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)
- National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)
- National Education Association (NEA)
- American Association for Higher Education & Accreditation (AAHEA)

**NCU Honor Societies:**
- Delta Mu Delta
- Alpha Phi Sigma
- Kappa Delta Pi
- Golden Key International Honour Society
- Delta Kappa

**TOP PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**
SCHOOL OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY SCIENCES

Dr. Peter Bradley and Dr. Chuck West, both valuable faculty members, have resigned to pursue new academic roles in their local communities. The School of Marriage and Family Sciences (SMFS) wishes them the best of luck in their new endeavors. Also, Dean Henline is pleased to announce the following faculty promotions:

- Dr. Darren Adamson, director of curriculum development
- Dr. Lisa Kelley, director of engagement and retention
- Dr. Wayne Perry, director of clinical training
- Dr. Yulia Watters, full-time faculty
- Dr. Annabelle Goodwin, full-time faculty
- Dr. Jared DuPree, director of assessment

SMFS is also excited to announce a new honor society for students in the Master of Arts program in Marriage and Family Therapy. Delta Kappa - The International Marriage and Family Therapy Honor Society was developed in 1998 and extends membership only to COAMFTE accredited marriage and family therapy programs. Having recently achieved this accreditation in December of 2012, it is with great pleasure that we announce our approval as the Iota Chapter of Delta Kappa.

Membership in this honor society is offered to our master’s students who have completed at least 12 semester hours in their program and maintained a grade point average of 3.7 or higher. We will hold a formal initial induction for Delta Kappa at this year’s national conference for the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy in Portland, Oregon, in October, and we will look forward to an annual induction during the graduation ceremonies at NCU each year in the future.
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SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT
On May 1, the School of Business and Technology Management hosted a webinar for students on: Firearm Assaults and the Second Amendment: Are the Two Inevitably Connected? The webinar featured a panel discussion moderated by Dean Smith with NCU faculty experts who are professionally involved in the subject:

Dr. Yvette Aguiar, president of a private investigative and security firm has extensive knowledge of law enforcement, the U.S. Criminal Justice System and Homeland Security. Dr. Aguiar was also a first responder during the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Dr. John House, a retired colonel who served 26 years in command and staff positions in the United States, Germany, South Korea, and Southwest Asia serving in Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

Dr. Scott Ebbrecht, a school superintendent, organizational leadership consultant and public speaker on the topics of school improvement planning, conflict management and conducting cultural analyses within organizations.

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY
Dr. Barb D’Elia has accepted the position of director of assessment while Dr. Jeannine Klein has accepted the position of curriculum director.

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
The School of Education (SOE) is excited to report updates on several ongoing initiatives including a new specialization proposal, piloting of NCU’s new Courseroom, and seeking new accreditation.

Master of Education Specialization in PK-12 Principal Leadership
Proposal documents for the Master of Education Specialization in PK-12 Principal Leadership were submitted to the AZ Department of Education on January 14, 2013. Special thanks to Dr. Mary Goggins Selke, Dr. Karen Ferguson, Dr. Tom Pucci, Dr. Renee Aitken, and Pam Sallee, who worked tirelessly on this endeavor.

NCU’s New Courseroom
Bachelor of Education students and faculty have begun piloting NCU’s new Courseroom. Each week, students and faculty starting new courses are introduced to the new Courseroom. The SOE is excited to be part this opportunity to continue to improve the quality of each student’s experience at NCU.

Teacher Educator Accreditation Council (TEAC)
The SOE has received accreditation for its 8 M.Ed. K-12 specializations from the Teacher Educator Accreditation Council (TEAC).

Rubric Assessment Goes to College: Objective, Comprehensive Evaluation of Student Work
In addition to her work on initiatives in the SOE, Dr. Mary J. Goggins Selke has accomplished the feat of publishing a book! Rubric Assessment Goes to College: Objective, Comprehensive Evaluation of Student Work, is one of the first books to focus on college level rubric assessment and can be found on Amazon.com.

Promotions
Dr. Karen Ferguson has been named assistant dean of the School of Education, while Dr. Renee Aitken has accepted the position of director of assessment also in the School of Education.
New NCU Lambda Eta Chapter Website
The NCU Lambda Eta Chapter of Delta Mu Delta has a new website - www.lambdaeta.org. The website now includes a member spotlight, news section, current and prospective member Information, and Lambda Eta Chapter initiatives. Networking through LinkedIn is also now available.

Delta Mu Delta is the International Honor Society for business programs accredited by the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) at the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral levels.

NCU Alumni Association Website Launches
We just launched our new Alumni Association website. Make sure you bookmark the site to stay up-to-date on your alumni benefits (more being added), alumni events, to read Higher Degrees and shop the student and alumni store.

NCU Launches Student and Alumni Store
Show your NCU pride with student and alumni merchandise, available online at the new NCU Student and Alumni Store. You can purchase NCU-branded t-shirts, polo shirts, e-reader / iPad padfolios, digital picture frames, visors and caps, as well as travel mugs and DVDs of the 2013 Commencement Ceremony.

Student, Alumni and Faculty Mixers
In April, more than 60 NCU students, faculty and alumni attended a mixer at Arizona’s Steakhouse in Lithonia, Ga. It was a chance for members of the NCU community to meet face-to-face. The NCU Alumni Association is hosting mixers, monthly, across the country for NCU students, faculty and alumni, including:

- September 21, 2013 – Phoenix, Arizona
- October 2013 – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- November 2013 – New England
- December 2013 – Phoenix, Arizona
- January 2014 – Northern Florida
- February 2014 – Southern California
- March 2014 – Washington DC / Maryland /Virginia
- April 2014 – Atlanta, Georgia
- May 2014 – Northern California
- June 2014 – Tennessee

Please note, these locations are tentative and subject to change. To ensure you receive an invitation to events in your local area, please confirm your physical and email addresses are up to date with NCU.
**FACULTY**

Dr. Mary J. Goggins Selke, School of Education, published Rubric Assessment Goes to College: Objective, Comprehensive Evaluation of Student Work. This is one of the first books to focus on college-level rubric assessment and can be found on Amazon.com.

Dr. Barry Grant, Dr. Jeannette Lovern, Dr. Rebecca Adams, Dr. Tracey Johnson, Dr. Noreen Moore, and Dr. Bettina Shapira’s proposal, Teaching in the Available spaces: Faculty Development for Effective Online Teaching, was accepted for the 29th Annual Conference on Distance Teaching & Learning, which took place in August in Madison, Wis.

Dissertation chair Dr. Robin Buckley published Dissertation and Research Success: Hands-on Coaching for Doctoral Success Before, along with Dr. Tim Delicath.

Dissertation chair Dr. Robin Throne was named the fourth recipient of the Midwest Writing Center's David R. Collins Literary Achievement Award.

Dr. Barb D’Elia received the best paper award at the 10th annual Learning and Technology conference (CLOUDSCAPING THE GLOBAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT), sponsored by Effat University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Research specialist Dr. Heather Hussey has had a poster session entitled, Creating an Active Learning Environment in Psychology Statistics with a Flipped Course Design, turned into a peer-reviewed chapter in the upcoming book Promoting Active Learning Through the Flipped Classroom Model (J. Keengwe, G. Onchwari, & J. Oigara, Eds.).

**STUDENTS**

Delaware State Teacher of the Year John Sell (Ed.D., Educational Leadership) was honored with the other state teachers of the year and the National Teacher of the Year by President Obama in Washington D.C. Sell was also promoted to Assistant Principal at Sussex Technical High School.

Doctoral candidates John Watson and Samantha Duhn, and alumni Drs. Marla Rogers, Mary Lannon, Andrew Michael, and Danny Hurd were honored in the inaugural Author Excellence Awards for NCU’s Lambda Eta Chapter of Delta Mu Delta.

Tim Wilson (Ph.D., Business Administration, Sports Management & Leadership) presented at the 6th Annual College Sport Research Institute Conference.

Karen Dukes (Ed.D., Exceptional Students) was interviewed on Higher Consciousness, a blog talk radio show for her work as the founder of Dukeway Academy, an academic and community service program for children of all ages and consulting service for foster care programs and daycare centers.
Rita O’Brien (Ph.D., Education, Educational Technology and E-Learning) was named a finalist for the Teaching Excellence Award at Navarro College.

Leland Holmquest (D.B.A., Industrial/Organizational Psychology) served as the guest speaker at the RADNUG (Rappahannock Area Developers.NET Users Group) April Meeting.

Pia Woodley (D.B.A., Health Care Administration) served as keynote speaker for Florida A&M University’s annual Honor’s Convocation.

Sharina Smith (Ph.D., Business Administration) has accepted a position as Vice President of Marketing for the U.S. division of Enactus (formerly SIFE).

Curtis J. Ksenak, (Ph.D., Business Administration & Management Information Systems), accepted the position of IT Consultant for Responsive Network Services (RNS) in Chicago, Illinois.

Juwon Crowell (M.Ed., Athletic Administration) was featured in a story in the Winston Salem Chronicle for his work as a basketball coach for a team of special needs students at Lowrance Middle School.

Rachel Farinelli (Ph.D., Business Administration) was awarded the Ms. Gulf Coast America Title 2013 by the Ms. America® Pageant.

David A. Czuba (Ed.D., Leadership in Higher Education) had a presentation accepted at the 2012 - 100 Year Starship Symposium in Houston, Texas.

Jim S. Cawood (Ph.D., Psychology) has been appointed for a five year term to the editorial board of the new APA journal: Journal of Threat Assessment and Management.

Bernice Purcell (D.B.A., Management Information Systems) presented Big Data and the Cloud at the AABRI Conference this past January. The Journal of Technology Research also published an article under the same name. Purcell is Associate Dean of the School of Business Administration at Holy Family University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

ALUMNI

Dr. Anna Stanfield (Ph.D., 2008) was named Title I Specialist – Curriculum, Division of Teaching and Learning, Muscogee County School District in Columbus, Ga.


Dr. John Daab’s (Ph.D., 2008) article “Daubertizing the Art Expert, and The Lord Byron Forgery: Where is the Questioned Document Examination?” was published in the Journal of Art Crime.

Michael R. Lindsey (M.Ed., 2012) was reelected for a second term as President of the American Society of Rio de Janeiro.

Dr. Michael Roty (Ph.D., 2008) received the 2013 Mercer University College of Continuing and Professional Studies Excellence in Teaching Award in addition to being promoted to Associate Professor of Mathematics in the Mercer University College of Continuing and Professional Studies.
Dr. Kristy Plander's (Ph.D., 2011) article “Checking accounts: Communication privacy management and familial financial caregiving” was published in the Journal of Family Communication.

Dr. Stuart Jones (Ph.D., Education, Higher Education Leadership, 2009) was hired as VP for Enrollment Management at Trine University.

Dr. Becky Collins (Ph.D., Education, Exceptional Student Education, 2012) presented her dissertation findings at the Wisconsin Council of Administrators of Special Services (WCASS) spring conference.

Dr. Larendra Duley (Ph.D., Psychology, General Psychology, 2012) was featured in Florida Today for her work with war veterans.

Chris Roberts (M.B.A., Criminal Justice, 2012) was hired as the corrections chief of the Collier County Sheriff’s Office in Florida.

Dr. April Arvan (Ph.D., Education, Sports Management and Leadership, 2012) was named interim athletic director of Lakeland College.


Dr. Harrison Watts (Ph.D., Business Administration, 2010) has coauthored a text book “Law and Society: An Introduction” to be published in October of 2013.

Dr. Ron Biggs (D.B.A. in Organizational Leadership, 2011) has been named Director for the College of Continuing Studies at St. Gregory's University College of Working Adults in Oklahoma.

Dr. Cormekki Whitley (Ph.D., Business Administration, Financial Management, 2010) has been appointed Trustee of The Prince George’s County Memorial Library System Board of Trustees in Maryland. Whitley is currently the Chief Operating Officer at the Center for Law and Social Policy in Washington, DC.


Dr. Tracy Spencer (Ph.D., Education, Exceptional Student, 2013) has been selected to present at the national qualitative conference hosted by The Qualitative Report.