



# THE FELLOW

Greetings from the DSSC,

Winter has broken and spring has arrived. We are grateful in this season of hope and renewal and eagerly await the rejuvenation of summer session. Before we say farewell to the 2013-2014 academic year, there are a few remarkable achievements that we should acknowledge.

Congratulations to Marlene Walk for a successful dissertation proposal defense earlier this month! Congratulations also to all the second and third year students who, by the end of this finals period, will have completed all of their required course work. Last, but certainly not least, congratulations to all the first-year students for completing your first year of doctoral studies. You are half way through your required course work, and we all wish you luck as you prepare for your preliminary exams. Good luck to Lauren, Seongho, Kalen, Allison, Travis, and Christina!

The end of year celebration was well attended, and we had special entertainment by the wonderful dancers of the Pennsylvania Chinese Dance Club. Jia Xue and her fellow dancers performed a beautiful dance to honor the contributions of Dean Gelles. We wish Dr. Gelles well in his transition to more intense research on the future of child welfare services. We also prepare to welcome the incoming Dean, Dr. John L. Jackson, Jr. Look for an email about a gathering to welcome Dean Jackson in the fall.

This spring, the DSSC hosted an evening of jazz at the Philadelphia Museum of art and continued its work of building community across student cohorts. This year we anticipate hosting a congratulatory summer event in honor of the first year cohort completing their qualifying exams. DSSC will also host a welcoming event for the two new students joining SP2 this fall.

Last year Marlene Walk and Dexia Kong initiated a very popular forum for students to present research projects. This year, Tutun Chaudhuri joined the organizational efforts in the second year of iTalks and will continue his leadership next year as Marlene is succeeded by Kalen Flynn. Thank you to all who continue to make iTalks possible!

Two other important transitions to note: GAPSA representation will transition from Tutun to Christina Denard, and leadership of The Fellow will transition from Megan Stanton to Eunhae Kim and Allison Thompson. Thank you to both Tutun and Megan for their hard work this year!

Many thanks to all students for attending meetings throughout the year and providing thoughtful engagement and feedback to help our program be the best it can be. It has been a pleasure serving as DSSC co-chairs, and we look forward to next year! Good luck to all as we finish the semester and have a wonderful summer!

DSSC co-chairs,  
Angelina & Ryan

**EDITORIAL BOARD**  
Megan Stanton  
Jeffrey Sharlein  
Dexia Kong  
Jia Xue

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# PEER REVIEW

We all work hard writing papers for classes, and many papers are worthy of more than just a letter grade. The Fellow provides an outlet to share unpublished manuscripts, essays, book reviews and editorials with colleagues in an effort to distribute ideas, spark debates, obtain feedback, encourage journal submissions, and support interdisciplinary collaborations. Full references are available upon request to the authors.

## Writing a multiple-paper dissertation- By Marlene Walk

Over the past weeks I had several conversations with some of you talking about the advantages and disadvantages of writing a multiple-paper dissertation versus writing a conventional dissertation. So, what's the fuss all about? The conventional dissertation looks (more or less) like this

1. Introduction / Background and Significance
2. Literature Review / Hypotheses (maybe an additional chapter on study population or area)
3. Methods
4. Results (may be more than one chapter)
5. Conclusion / Implications for Policy / Future Research

Conventional dissertations are usually longer (up to 8 chapters / 300 pages / 75000 words).

The multiple (usually three) paper dissertation looks like this

1. Introduction / Background on the general topic / Links between the papers
2. First paper
3. Second Paper
4. Third Paper
5. Conclusion / Implications for Policy / Future Research

The three papers are usually related, but are standalone, publishable papers. Multiple-paper dissertations are shorter (app. 150 pages, depending on journal requirements for individual papers / 35000 words).

You might be struck by the fact that the multiple-paper dissertation is a lot shorter (about half the length of the conventional dissertation). But does shorter mean less work? Definitely not! The papers have to be 'publishable' meaning that the language has to be concise and you have to be cognizant of your audience. For instance, depending on your target journal you may presume that they are familiar with the topic area. It is advisable to think about target journals early in the process and to follow their guidelines for formatting and length.

What are the advantages of a multiple-paper dissertation? The most important advantage is the ability to easily convert your dissertation papers into manuscripts for journal submission. You might even consider submitting some or all papers before your dissertation defense. Comments from journal reviewers might be helpful in shaping your ideas and improving your work. Ultimately, it helps your publication record and prospects on the job market as – hopefully – the process of having your work published will be shorter than writing a conventional dissertation first and converting it into papers after you have defended. An important note about co-authored papers: since it is your dissertation work, it should be clear that this is really your work. Be aware: This might be more complicated to justify in case of multiple authors. It is advisable to discuss these issues with your advisor and committee members when making the decision for or against a multiple-paper dissertation.

What are the disadvantages of a multiple-paper dissertation? Sometimes it might be difficult to decide how to break down your dissertation into multiple papers. In fact, doing that was difficult for me and I had a tendency to put everything I knew about the topic into the papers. But, you don't want to overburden your audience – one idea per paper is advisable. And nothing keeps you from opening up a new word document titled “paper ideas post-dissertation”. Other disadvantages might be that your advisor and committee members might be unfamiliar with the structure and procedure. Also, if you are working on smaller projects, timing might not always work out in your favor and it might take you longer to finish.

How to make your decision? There are a couple of questions you might want to consider: What is the nature of your dissertation? Are you working on a larger project that requires lengthy or complex analysis? Are you involved in a couple of smaller projects that could lead to a single paper each? Does your advisor have a preference? What are your future career goals? Do you want to stay in academia? How much have you published? Ultimately, there is no right and wrong answer – it all depends on what is right for you and your work.

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Kim Nieves, Ph.D

## **Tell us about your work as the Director of Research and Statistics at the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.**

For all the courts in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Department of Research and Statistics collects transactional data on the number of new cases filed, the types of cases, how they are processed, and how long it takes to process the various case types. In addition to statewide caseload statistics, I oversee topical research and evaluation studies that examine court operations, and seek to build the much sought “evidence base” for “best practices.” These include building performance measures for processing custody cases through the family courts, detecting the flow, volume, and pace of dependency cases in the courts, surveying how state courts supervise appointed guardians of incapacitated persons and elders, as well as enduring criminal and delinquency questions.

## **What were your key considerations in deciding to take a position as the Director of Research and Statistics at The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania?**

I was hired as a student intern during my doctoral program with the expectation that I would apply my social policy knowledge and research methods skills to conduct a county-by-county survey of juvenile justice practices across the state for a delinquency policy group.

I discovered that the social welfare and legal perspectives were vastly different viewpoints, with distinct objectives and decision logic. The ongoing challenge of this job has always been to synthesize the legal and social work values, whether it be delinquency, dependency, criminal, civil, or elders in the court, and it is an irresistible intersection to work in. While I am charged with bringing a social justice component to statewide judicial initiatives, I am also in a perpetual learning mode about the legal paradigms that stake as much of a claim to the welfare of these

populations as does the social work paradigm. It's this dynamic that appealed to me.

## **Tell us about your transition from being a graduate student to a Research Director. What, if anything, has been challenging about this transition?**

I have the benefit of gathering with my doctoral cohort every year since we finished classes almost 15 years ago. We just gathered this past March! We've compared notes over the years and have recognized that the transition from grad student to full time professional life is just one of many. While we didn't see it as it was happening, in retrospect we agree our trajectories have been very similar. When you enter your field, ongoing learning is prolific via hands-on producing the work, and experimenting with different approaches and ideas; then you elevate to a supervisory position where you oversee the work production and quality, but have your hands on much less of it; now I am in a position to make decisions about agency objectives, facilitate professional development of staff, participate in setting the judicial policy agenda, and other considerations that define the goals and context of the work. So I don't really hold the point of view that there is a momentous, challenging transition point- it's probably healthier to invest in the notion that the ground will be moving under our feet forevermore after graduate school concludes.

## **Do you have any advice for current SP2 Ph.D. students vis-à-vis the job market and their career prospects and options?**

Have faith in the happy accident. Follow curiosity and passion, even if it's in unexpected places, and the creativity and personal dedication needed for success will emerge from you effortlessly.

### Publications

**Shier, M.L., & Graham, J.R.** (2014). Social policy in Canada. In C. Franklin (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of social work* online. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

**Shier, M.L., Graham, J.R., Goitam, M., & Eisenstat, M.** (2014). Young adult experiences with employment: How perceived and actual discrimination hinder labour market attachment. *Canadian Review of Social Policy*, 70(1), 48-63.

### Conference Presentations

**Schepens, A.**(March, 2014).Effect of Continuing Care for Cocaine Dependence on HIV sex risk behaviors. Poster session presented at the Collaborative Perspectives on Addiction Conference, Atlanta, GA.

**Shier, M.L., Graham, J.R., Nicholas, D., & Newberry, A.** (2014, January). Explaining occupational health outcomes for human service workers: The effect of workplace variables. Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) 2014 Annual Conference, San Antonio, Texas, USA.

**Stanton, M., Wong, Y.L., Sands, R.** (2014, January). Constructing Individuals' Lived Experiences in Shaping Social Inclusion: Voices of Persons in Recovery From Mental Illness (Oral Presentation). Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) 2014 Annual Conference, San Antonio, Texas, USA.

**Walk, M., Beck, A., Maykus, S., Schinnenburg, H., Werding E.** (2014, March): Inclusive Education – Challenges for Teachers (Inklusive Bildung – Herausforderung für Lehrkräfte). Poster presentation at the 24<sup>th</sup> German Educational Research Association Conference, Berlin (Germany).

**Xue, J., Fang, G.** (January, 2014). An Exploratory Study of Rape Myth Acceptance Among College Students in China (Oral Presentation). Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) 2014 Annual Conference, San Antonio, Texas, USA.

### Awards and Funding

**Micheal Shier** was awarded the ANSER-ARES Graduate Student Research Award, Association for Nonprofit and Social Economy Research.

**Jia Xue** was awarded the Research Student GAPSA Travel Grant Award. January, 2014.



## Not Social Welfare

Jeffrey Sharlein interviews SP2's own Jia Xue about Chinese dance and the Pennsylvania Chinese Dance Club

### ***How did you get involved in Pennsylvania Chinese Dance Club?***

Pennsylvania Chinese Dance Club (we always call it PCDC) has a dance performance at the Chinese Spring Festival Gala at Irvine Auditorium every year. Seeing them at the gala my first year was how I first learned about them. I officially joined PCDC when I was invited by one of my friends who was also a member in PCDC.

### ***How long have you been dancing for?***

I joined PCDC in my second year, so I have been in this dance group for two years. Before coming to the U.S., I did belly dancing and yoga for a long time in China.

### ***What kind of performances does the troupe do?***

PCDC is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting Chinese culture and art through traditional Chinese dance, including Chinese classic dance, Chinese folk, and ethnic dances such as Uyghur dance, Dai dance, and Tibetan Dance. PCDC aims to reflect Chinese dance culture by performing for the community, schools, festivals, social activities and events, such as International Students & Scholars Welcome Reception at Penn.

### ***What's the rehearsal schedule like?***

Sunday afternoon is our routine practice time (1pm to 5pm) to learn new and practice old and new dances. The rehearsal time is flexible due to the time of different performances. For instance, we had three dance performances one week in April (April 15<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>) for Wharton E-Real Estate Forum, SP2's end-of-year-party, and Philly Factor fundraiser events, so we did a continuous rehearsal as early as 8am in the morning every day. It was a tough week but we were glad that we did a good job at these events.

### ***What makes Chinese dance unique? Tell me about the dance you performed at the program's end-of-year party?***

Like a language, Chinese dance has its own unique language that the Chinese dancers use to express feelings or tell stories on the stage. Take Chinese classic dance for example: it has been passed down from ancient China, and

encompasses the heritage of 5,000 years of Chinese culture. Chinese classic dance has its own requirements, style, and movement techniques, thus having its unique identity. But more importantly, it is not all about posture. It is more about the elegance, beauty of the body, inner meaning and essence in body movements.

The dance we performed at the end-of-year-party was called Peach Blossom (Tao yao), based on the oldest existing collection of Chinese poetry, *The Book of Poetry* (from sometime in the 11<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BC). This traditional dance depicts young ladies and their beauty as peach blossoms in ancient China, which is also described in the poem. We tried to present the grace, strength, elegance and dynamic moves in the dance *Peach Blossom*.

### ***Is there anything else you want to share about the troupe or your experience in it?***

PCDC is always calling for talents. If you or anyone you know is interested in performing Chinese dance, you are more than welcome to join us! PCDC is like a family with members who are motivated and have a very close relationship with each other. Additionally, PCDC is also welcoming people's and organizations' donations to support our young dance group's growth to help us improve and better give back to the community.

