Greetings from the DSSC!

Greetings from the DSSC! As we near the end of the first semester of this academic year, we want to congratulate Ama, Allison, Dan, and Fritz on the completion of their first semester. We hope that your transition into the program has gone well, and we wish you the best as you continue to move forward.

This summer and fall, we celebrated the arrival of three babies born to students in our program. Congratulations Alex, Dan, and Chenyi!

We would also like to recognize fellow PhD students and candidates who presented at major conferences, such as the American Public Health Association and the Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood, published their work in prominent journals and chapters, and were invited for job talks. Best of luck to those presenting at the upcoming 2016 Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) conference in Washington DC next month! For those of you attending SSWR, we invite you to join us for a DSSC-sponsored coffee with SP2 faculty and PhD students and alumni. More details to come.

As we reflect back over the past semester, we appreciate those of you who participated and helped out with our community building events, including the happy hours and apple picking at Linvilla Orchards. We will finish off the semester with a celebratory dinner at Pattaya Thai in a couple of weeks, and we hope many of you are able to join us. We look forward to continuing to organize events and opportunities to foster connections among the PhD student community and with others from within the larger SP2 community. As always, we welcome your ideas for events and activities that may further these goals!

We wish each of you a restful winter break and hope that you return rejuvenated for the next semester!

DSSC co-chairs,
Allison and Kalen
Journey in Progress

Philadelphia has always been like a second home to me, so when it came time for me to decide where to go for my doctoral studies, Penn was an easy choice. Being able to enroll in the School of Social Policy and Practice (SP2) was like the icing on a proverbial cake. However, not being educated at an Ivy League School for my undergraduate and master's degrees, I was skeptical of how I would be received at Penn. After four (long) months of school, I can honestly say I am pleasantly surprised at how Penn and SP2 faculty, staff, and students have made the transition for me from a full-time researcher to Ph.D. student a positive experience. While the journey thus far has not been without its bumps and hurdles, I welcome tomorrow's challenges and am hopeful for what lies ahead.

My advice to future/new Ph.D. students would be to:

1) Never be afraid to ask questions and always be willing to seek out the answer(s); and

2) Lean on your cohort. They will be your greatest allies, strongest supporters, and wisest critics.

For when the days are tough, and yet you are not broken, remember these words:

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

—L. Hughes
Tell us about your work as an Assistant Professor at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis?

This is my first semester at the School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA) at IUPUI and it has been great so far! My colleagues are very welcoming and helpful in navigating a new school and university. And even though everyone warned me how busy the first semester as assistant professor would be, I had no idea HOW busy it would actually get.

I have a 1-2 teaching load for the first three years; as I focused on research during my PhD, getting in the swing of teaching has been quite a ride. I teach Human Resource Management in Nonprofit Organizations for graduate students. Most of SPEAs graduate students are working full-time, which means that classes are offered at night and most of my students are older than I am. Even though I am fairly new to teaching, it has been a very rewarding experience this semester. Most of my students have a lot of work experience, which makes for great discussions.

As part of my contract, SPEA pays for a research assistant for 20hrs/week and I have to say: this is so cool! Even though it has been a little bit strange to delegate tasks to someone else, it already has been of huge help! For instance, my research assistant helped me conduct a literature search and review for a book chapter on performance management in nonprofit organizations that will be a part of a new HR textbook.

What impact do you hope your work will have on the field?

This is hard to tell as I just started. As for the near future, I am making a conscious effort to engage with the local community. A few organizations have approached me after I wrote a practitioner-oriented article on volunteer retention for a local nonprofit newsletter. I am excited and eager to learn more about the nonprofit community in Indianapolis.

In the long run, I am hoping to carve out a distinct niche for my work in the three main areas of interest (human resource management in nonprofits, volunteering and volunteer management as well as employee reactions to organizational change).

What experiences at Penn were the most valuable in preparing you to be a successful researcher and academic?

As someone who was completely new to research, I enjoyed taking advantage of the statistics classes that were offered through GSE and Sociology. I also benefited greatly from the great community in the doctoral program, especially due to the heterogeneous backgrounds of the students that made for great interdisciplinary conversations.

Thanks to SP2’s professional development fund and GAPSA travel grants, I was able to present at a variety of domestic and international conferences during my time at Penn. These presentations were helpful to share my work, but also to network with researchers in the field.

As a PhD student you had multiple publications. Do you have any advice for current PhD students on how to graduate with a healthy number of publications?
I believe collaborations are key: find colleagues who share your research interest and who you like to work with. A very cool example in my case was that I met a fellow doctoral student from Belgium during a conference and—after chatting for some time—we discovered shared interests. A year later we presented our first project during the same conference, which resulted in a publication in the following year.

Is there anything else you think current PhD students should know?

I discovered this very late—during my final year of the PhD program—but now I am obsessed with my writing group. We are 6 doctoral students/post-docs/assistant professors, who meet once a week through google hangout discussing each other’s work. The group has been the key to finishing my dissertation and I am sure my writing group colleagues will help me proceed with journal submissions in the future.

Click on the link if you are interested in learning more about the benefits of a writing group: http://aom-mocd.informz.net/informzdataservice/onlineversion/ind/bWFpbGluZ2lu3RhbmNlaWQ9NDM4ODkxOCZzdWJzY3JpYmVyaWQ9ODE5NTM1OTE0

Publications


Presentations


**Awards & Fellowships**

Seongho An: Association for Research on Nonprofit Organization and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), Conference Scholarship and Travel Grant Award.

Alexandra Wimberly: Dorbrecht Grant of the Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund from the National Coalition of Independent Scholars. Principal Investigator ($1,800), Yoga Intervention for Substance Use and Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) Adherence in Community Reentry.
Congratulations! New Additions to Our Families

Parent: Alex, Baby: Xavier

Parent: Chenyi, Baby: Chloe

Parent: Dan T., Baby: George

If you have any inquiries or suggestions about the Fellow, please contact Eunhae Kim (eunhaek@sp2.upenn.edu) or Travis Labrum (tlabrum@sp2.upenn.edu) Thank you!