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WELCOME
MESSAGE FROM
DSSC CHAIRS:
JESS & STEFANIE

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

VIVIANA CHIU-SIK WU

This is Viviana, a fourth-year doctoral candidate at SP2. It is my pleasure to present the new 2019 issue for The Fellow. The Fellow is designed to make space for meaningful information exchange, recognition and celebration, as well as a platform for us to develop professionally through connecting with our outstanding faculty and alumni.

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WELCOME
MESSAGE FROM
PHD DIRECTOR
FEMIDA HANDY

Besides the key agenda of welcoming incoming PhD cohorts and visiting students, this issue includes a new section for **Faculty Connection** featuring three key advice from Dean Bachman and the last part of the experience sharing from our outstanding alumni, Dr. Christina DeNard, who has been working as the second-year Assistant Professor!

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FACULTY
CONNECTION
WITH DEAN
BACHMAN

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome incoming PhD students and visiting students including Hyeri, Meagan, Sharon, Xi Zhao, Xi Chen, Huangjuan and Shirley (names not listed in order), who have completed half of the Fall semester! I hope you enjoy going through this issue of The Fellow and will also send me any suggestions to make it a resource for you!

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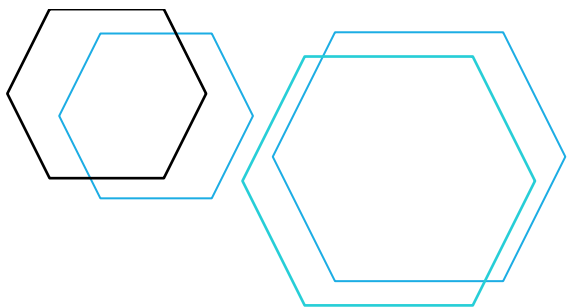
EXPERIENCE
SHARING FROM
ALUMNI:
CHRISTINA
DENARD, PHD

Pg. 8 -10

INTRODUCING
NEW PHD
STUDENTS &
VISITING
STUDENTS

Gratefully yours,

Viviana Wu



WELCOME!

MESSAGE FROM THE DSSC CHAIRS

The Doctoral Student Steering Committee (DSSC) would like to welcome back all the PhD students and candidates of SP2! We really hope the summer was a time to recharge and relax. Congratulations to everyone who passed the Prelims in June!

We would also like to give a warm welcome to the new cohort: Sharon Zanti, Meagan Cusack, and Hyeri Choi! Additionally, we would like to welcome Shirley (Hongzhou) Chen who will be mentored by Bobbie Iversen and Xi Zhao who will be mentored by Amy Baker and Ioana Marinescu during their visit to Penn from The University of Hong Kong.

After two great years of service, Marquisha Lawrence Scott and Megan Farwell will no longer be serving as Doctoral Student Steering Committee (DSSC) co-chairs. We thank them both for how well they served the SP2 PhD community! We are looking for 1-2 people to serve on the DSSC committee for the next two years. This position requires minimal administrative work and looks great on PhD student CVs. If you're interested, please reach out to DSSC (sp2dssc@gmail.com).

We also want to announce that Viviana Wu will be transitioning out of her current role as editor of The Fellow starting in the Spring semester of 2020. To see a sample of The Fellow, please go to <https://bit.ly/2l1b9dm>. The editor is responsible for compiling and sending out the student newsletter once to twice a year (also a great CV addition). If you are interested in serving as the new editor, please reach out to Viviana directly (chiuwu@sp2.upenn.edu).

DSSC strives to cultivate a positive, supportive environment in the PhD program. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us with ideas, suggestions, or concerns about how we can collectively do this. We wish everyone a great semester and a fantastic academic year ahead!

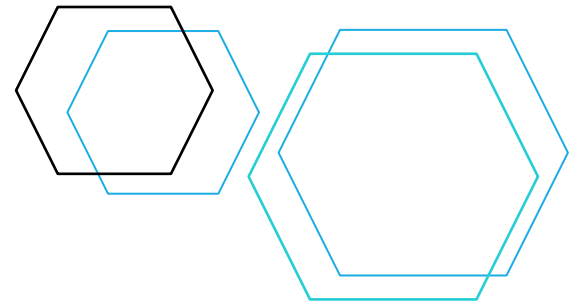
Sincerely,

Jess Kim & Stefanie Ruiz

DSSC Co-Chairs

WELCOME!

MESSAGE FROM SP2 PHD DIRECTOR PROFESSOR FEMIDA HANDY



“And now let us welcome the new year, full of things that never were.” —Rainer Maria Rilke

Welcome to the new academic year!

I cannot find a better quote for the start of the academic year than I did last year, so I quote Rilke again: “And now let us welcome the new year, full of things that never were.” I hope that the new academic year will bring for you the many experiences that ‘never were’.

I hope your summer has been productive and relaxing, in equal parts.

To our new Ph.D. students, your arrival to SP2 marks a tremendous opportunity to learn about and engage with some of the deepest questions and challenges that society faces. It is a fresh start that allows you and our returning students to step in to new courses, new expectations and to reach for new milestones.

But it is also part of the journey and for all of us it is a continuation of self-discovery, questioning our long-held beliefs and critically examining our place in the world with the attendant ‘isms’. And with all the experiences gathered this semester, in class and outside of class, I hope they will not only contribute to your learning and growth as a scholar but also to becoming the best person you can be.

This past year has been a very successful and productive year for our PhD program, with our recent graduates having professional careers, mostly in academia, but elsewhere as well. The current cohort is marching along, with having successfully passed their prelims, and some have proposal defenses under their belts. Many have undertaken the usual level of scholarly activities including attending and presenting at conferences, making applications for research grants, and publishing in peer-reviewed journals! I am extremely proud of all their hard work and commitment as well as the solidarity that exists between them.

Kate Lannan, had a baby as many of you know, and chose to be a stay at home mom for now. After many months of searching, we found the best fit for the job, and offered the position to **Zoe Katz**. I hope you have had a chance to meet her. She comes with extensive experience from SAS (Penn) and has worked with PhD students for the past 12 years. She “knows the ropes” and looks forward to getting to know you all.

I take this opportunity to say goodbye to my previous committee, with whom I have enjoyed working and who helped me achieve so much and be the best person I could be in my role. **Thank** you to my cherished colleagues: **Zvi Gellis**, **Toorjo Ghose**, **Ioana Marinesu** and **Ezekiel Dixon-Ramon**. You have wisely guided me throughout the years and especially during the admissions process.

Now, I have had the pleasure of welcoming my new advisory PhD Committee which include Professors: **Johanna Greeson, Amy Hillier, Roberta Iversen & Irene Wong.**

Three students have been admitted for this year and are well-installed into their first semester. Please take a moment to reach out to them and make them feel welcome!

Hyeri Choi (First year advisor: Ioana Marinescu) hyerchoi@upenn.edu

Hyeri is from South Korea and received her BSW from Stony Brook University, and her **MSW at Columbia**. Her research interests are family and child well-being, child development, poverty and income, family and work balance among low-income working families, and childcare. She has done research in Korea, on the child well-being of Korean immigrant children and at Columbia, in the Center for Research on Fathers.

Meagan Cusack: (First year advisor: Amy Castro-Baker) meagancusack@yahoo.com

Meagan received her BS in Sociology from Portland State University and continued to get her **MS in Political and Social Science** from Pompeu Fabra University in Spain. She worked as a consultant on the evaluation of Philadelphia's Kensington Encampment Closure Resolution Strategy, as well as working as a Program Specialist at the VA.

Sharon Zanti: (First year advisor: Dennis Culhane) sharonzanti@gmail.com

Sharon received her BS in Commerce from University of Virginia and her **MSW at the University of Denver**. She worked at the Colorado Department of Human Services, working with child welfare, juvenile justice, and SNAP programs. Her interests are in Adult Protective Services as well as the child welfare of foster children.

We have had a number of very successful summer and fall graduates. I am very proud of their successes. It is always a pleasure to work with such dedicated and smart people. I wish them the best in their future endeavors in academia and as ongoing agents of social change. Below I list them, their dissertation titles, the chair of the dissertation committee and their current positions.

Seongho An (May 2019) *Effective advocacy on social media: Results from a national study of homelessness nonprofits in the United States.* (Chair: Chao Guo)

- **Assistant Professor appointment: University of Central Florida, School of Public Administration**

Ashley Fuss (May 2019) *The prevention of depression: a machine learning approach.* (Chair: Malitta Engstrom)

- **Research Scientist in Data Analytics: New York University**

Dan Heist (May 2019) *Understanding donor-advised funds: The behavioral economics, macroeconomics, and public policies relating to an emerging trend in philanthropy.* (Chair: Ram Cnaan)

- Assistant Professor appointment: University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Department of Public & International Affairs

Marquisha Lawrence Scott (August 2019) *Crossing tracks and ponds: Preparing youth for a global society.* (Chair: Ram Cnaan)

- Assistant Professor appointment: University of Denver, Graduate School of Social Work

Ama Nyame-Mensah (May 2019) *Generating the other: An exploration of the relationship between item response and immigrant generational status in a sample of black and latinx children.* (Chair: Ezekiel Dixon-Ramon)

- Post-Doc appointment: University of Pennsylvania, The School of Social Policy and Practice

Allison Russell (May 2019) *Volunteering in retirement and retirement from Volunteering: three papers on volunteering in older Adulthood.* (Chair: Femida Handy)

- Post-Doc appointment University of Pennsylvania, The School of Social Policy and Practice

Further news:

All current students who wrote their preliminary exams passed. **Congratulations!**

An updated list of job market candidates can be found at this link:

<https://www.sp2.upenn.edu/academics/phd-in-social-welfare/resources/current-academic-job-market-candidates/>

Congratulations to all of your achievements, hard work and persistence.

Please feel free to email me and set up an appointment to discuss **anything** that may facilitate (or hinder) your successes. **Or to simply share a cup of tea or coffee or go for a short walk!**

All my very best wishes for this coming academic year,

Femida

FACULTY CONNECTION

BY DEAN BACHMAN

Dear Doctoral Students,

Viviana Wu invited me to write to you to **share three pieces of advice about doctoral study**. Thank you for this kind invitation. Although you all have supportive faculty advisors to guide you, and they have many additional ideas to help you succeed, I am happy to propose three points to help guide you as you pursue your doctoral education.

First, doctoral study is an identity formation process. Between the time you enroll as a doctoral student and the time you finish your degree, you necessarily become a different person. You learn to think theoretically, to apply conceptual models, to critically analyze social problems and to make persuasive arguments, supported by ideas and data. This type of growth is hard. I advise you to embrace this process of transformation.

Second, because doctoral study is a process, success is connected to tenacity and perseverance. Although pursuing a PhD is hard work, try not to be overwhelmed by the amount and type of work you need to do to finish your degree. Take one step at a time, and reward yourself along the way, each time you accomplish a milestone.

Finally, listen to your advisors. Although you are developing your own ideas and pursuing your own research, your advisors play the important role of guiding you as you grow. Your advisors may give you advice that is difficult to hear. When this happens, try to be open to the feedback, understanding why they are giving you the advice, and what they are trying to teach you. Remember that they want you to be successful.

I look forward to meeting you and getting to know you while you are studying with us at SP2. And, I wish you much success as you pursue your PhD with us. We will be proud of your accomplishments while you are at SP2 and after you leave us to pursue the next phase of your career.

Best wishes,

Sally Bachman

Sara S. Bachman, Ph.D.
Dean
School of Social Policy & Practice
University of Pennsylvania
3701 Locust Walk
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104

ALUMNI EXPERIENCE

BY CHRISTINA DENARD, PHD



Transitioning to Assistant Professor Life...

The road is rough. Graduating over the summer, moving to a new city, solo teaching for the first time (hence why I recommend teaching during your PhD program) was an adjustment to say the least. I found myself feeling unsure and longing for the familiar practice of consuming knowledge instead of producing it. Prepping for class took way too much time and I lost time trying to manage my new IRB with Penn's IRB. I enjoyed getting to know my students and teaching them, but teaching doesn't get you tenure at an R1 university.

That said, the most important lesson that I took away from my first year fumbles is that **Flexible/Unstructured does not mean infinite**. One of the perks of academia is having a flexible schedule and at many universities, there is no requirement to report to work daily. You show up for meetings, for class, for office hours and for times when you need your work computer for analyses. No one is telling you how to spend your time otherwise. You are literally not held accountable (outside of teaching) for your other activities until the end of the academic year when you submit a report of everything you did during the year. This is similar to the process at Penn- kudos to them for preparing you. While this freedom may allow you to write in your pajamas and work on building relationships in the community, it can also land you in the trap of not writing. This is particularly true if you tend to be deadline- driven like I am. By deadlines, I mean external deadlines. As an assistant professor, there are no assignment due dates, no chair setting your schedule to keep you productive on your scholarly work. You should start to be the senior leader on projects and papers, so you set the deadlines for yourself and others. This was quite an adjustment for me and might be for you too.

To combat unstructured time getting the best of me, I am making more of an effort to come to work regularly, write for at least 30 minutes a day and to develop a semester plan that outlines each paper/project and the steps that I want to accomplish. I learned these skills through the Faculty Success Program by the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity, which I recommend participating in if you can. It gives you strategies to identify barriers to productivity and mitigate them. For me, that was learning how to create structure in my job. Whatever your barrier is, I recommend identifying it quickly, as time does fly while on the tenure track.

In sum... I hope you found my tips and experiences helpful. Know that if you ever have any additional questions or would like more insight, feel free to keep in touch. I'm always happy to help!

Christina DeNard, PhD

Assistant Professor
Jane Addams College of Social Work
University of Illinois at Chicago
Email: christ5@uic.edu

INCOMING PHD STUDENTS & VISITING STUDENTS

Hyeri Choi is a PhD student at the School of Social Policy and Practice and her advisor is Dr. Ioana Marinescu. Her research focuses on low-income working parents' economic instability and work-family conflict. In particular, she is interested in how parental labor market experiences and income have an impact on a child's well-being. She believes that it is imperative to reduce parents' economic pressure, enhance their employment stability, and provide higher-quality early childcare to improve a child's well-being.



Hyeri received her Master's degree in Social Work from Columbia University and dual Bachelor's degrees in Social Work from Stony Brook University, New York and University of Seoul, South Korea. Prior to seeking a doctorate, she gained research experience in the Center for Research on Fathers, Children and Family Well-Being at Columbia University and Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs (KIHASA). She was born and raised in South Korea and lived in the U.K. for five years. She expects to contribute her cultural background and educational opportunities to social and economic justice through research intervention. In her spare time, she enjoys exploring cities, cooking, and being active in church.



Meagan Cusack Having grown up in the area, Meagan Cusack returned to Philadelphia, the city that she loves, in 2012 after embarking on some interesting travel adventures—including backpacking through Europe, traveling cross-country, and living in a cloud-covered Volkswagen van in Mexico—and graduating with a bachelors in Sociology, with a minor in Community Development, from Portland State University in Portland, OR and a masters in Political and Social Sciences from Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona, CT, Spain, and soaking up the sun—and the music scene—in Austin, TX. Meagan has over a decade of experience working on quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods research studies and evaluations on diverse topics, including

community college quality, student engagement, and student retention; conflict resolution; criminal justice; early childhood interventions; homelessness and housing instability; intimate partner violence; social determinants of health; and suicide. At SP2, she will be working under the supervision of Dr. Amy Castro Baker and plans to pursue a certificate in Urban Studies. She will also continue in her role as a project manager at the US Department of Veteran Affairs Center for Health Equity Research and Promotion. Meagan is an avid cyclist who advocates for better bike infrastructure and organizes social rides to bring the cycling community together as well as an ardent supporter of the performing arts, volunteering for theater companies across the city.

Sharon Zanti grew up outside of Washington, DC in a town called Leesburg, VA. She also spent seven years in Charlottesville, VA where she went to college, worked for a small software company, and discovered her love of salsa dancing. Sharon and her husband, Jordan, most recently lived in Denver, CO before coming to Philly. In Denver, Sharon completed her Master's in Social Work, spent lots of time out in the sun (and snow!), and worked for the Colorado Department of Human Services. She also loved interning and volunteering at The Gender Identity Center of Colorado.



At SP2, Sharon is working with Dr. Dennis Culhane and Actionable Intelligence for Social Policy (AISP) to study the implementation and research application of Integrated Data Systems. She is excited about the ways in which state and local governments use these systems to transform their policy-making and ultimately improve the social welfare of their clients. Her interest in this area stems from her experience working in state government as a Performance Analyst for children, youth and family programs and working closely with county human services agencies.

In her spare time, Sharon enjoys cooking, crossword puzzles, checking off her Philly food bucket list, and exploring the local salsa and west coast swing dance scene.



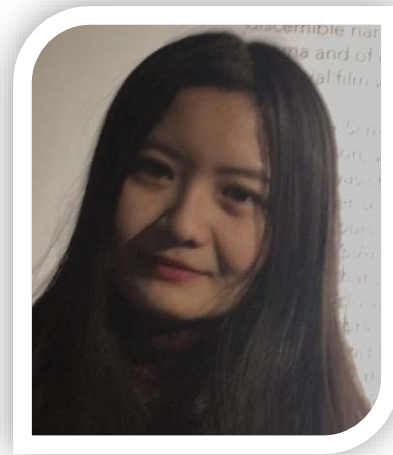
Xi Zhao is a third-year PhD candidate of The University of Hong Kong and a visiting student of SP2, her advisors in SP2 are Dr. Ioana Marinescu and Dr. Amy Castro Baker. Xi is broadly interested in poverty and economic inequality, social welfare regimes, and evidence-based policy research, with a particular focus on the causal effects of cash transfer programs on child and family well-being of urban low-income families. She is currently using mixed approaches to address issues about poverty dynamics and safety nets across mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the U.S. Prior to PhD program, Xi got her bachelor's degree and master's degree in labor and social security discipline.

I'm Shirly **Hongzhou Chen**, exchange PhD student from HKU. I study in population ageing, how childless rural residents make their decision in china. Before I launched the HKU journey - a struggling one, I have to admit - I work with local government as an administrator in related with cultural field. I have a Master degree of social work in The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Bachelor in Anhui Normal University. I'm kind of person who always on the way in terms of work and life.

The trip in the U.S is fascinating, still trying to get use to sandwiches and burgers. But the weather in town in marvelous, I've never witnessed such fantastic falling in Hong Kong or Mainland China.

It's very nice to meet you and to join the Penn SP2 Community.

Xi Chen This is Xi Chen from Renmin University of China. I am a third year Ph.D candidate at the school of public administration and policy of RUC and this academic year I am a visiting student at SP2. It is nice to meet you! I am gonna introduce myself briefly. My hometown is called Tangshan which is a small city close to Beijing. It is the cradle of modern Chinese industry. The first railway of China, the first steam engine and the first cement factory were built there. And of course the city is famous for the earthquake in 1976. People in my hometown are very strong and save the city from the disaster. I was born and raised there and I am proud of my hometown.



I finished my master degree in Northeastern University in Shenyang, China in 2017. I have no working experiences, but I once applied an internship at department of science and technology of Liaoning province. This experience helped me open up the horizons and offer me the opportunity to get access to some precious documents.

Now as a third year Ph.D candidate, I am interested in philanthropy non-profit organizations especially internet philanthropy. Significant changes in philanthropy have taken place compared to the counterparts especially after we stepped into the age of mobile internet. I am curious how many changes have happened and explore why they happened. And I'd love to exchange the points with you if you are interested in the internet philanthropy too. In addition to academic life, I like watching all kinds of movies and playing badminton. Maybe I am not an expert but I am crazy about them ^ ^ I am so happy to join in the SP2 community. Thank you so much and I look forward to meeting you in person!



Huangjuan Liu Hello Everyone, I am glad to introduce myself to you and enter your big warm family. My name is Huangjuan Liu, and you can also call me Amyer Liu. I am from Renmin University of China, participating in UPenn as a visiting student this year and Dr. Chao Guo is my advisor. My hometown is Huanggang City of Hubei Province where is famous as the hometown of generals while the kinds of Azaleas have seen their heroic deeds.

As for my research field, I am very interested in Social Network and relationship flow in organizations. If you find some newest papers about these topics, please tell me freely. I am doing a research program about university fundraising for the university fund is a special kind of social organization and the university fundraising from alumni is a quite important topic that is extremely needed to develop in China now and in the future.

In my spare time, I do like to get close to nature or do something literary youth like to do, for example, drawing painting, visiting art exhibition, taking part in writer meeting and so on. I will be happy if others invite me to go hiking, playing kinds of balls, doing yoga together. Nice to meet you and I believe it will be a wonderful time with you. Please contact me freely by calling me on +1(267)721-1740 or sending an email to me at liuhj@upenn.edu. And here is my photo so that you can recognize me next time.