Ways the Internet Is Shaking Up the Idea of Community

Become a Virtual Volunteer

Inspiring Girls to Study Technology

It Takes a Community to Finish a Ph.D.
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To paraphrase Dean Henline in this issues’ article How Professional Organizations Can Boost Your Career (pg. 25), great teachers are also great students. They remain engaged in learning and contribute to their academic and professional communities on an ongoing basis.

I am particularly proud of the academic endeavors of NCU faculty highlighted in this issue (see School Briefs, pg. 35). In the past few months, core and adjunct faculty members have:

• Published two books and one book chapter;
• Authored 10 articles in peer-reviewed journals;
• Received a research grant;
• And, had two abstracts accepted for presentation.

But, it’s not only the role of the student and teacher to continuously learn. It’s the role of the University as well.

At NCU, we are mindful of taking the time to evaluate the tools and resources we provide to our students and alumni, improving them whenever possible. One example of this is the new Courseroom. More than 2,000 students have transitioned into My.NCU.edu, which provides a more integrated learning experience than our current platform. During this ongoing rollout process, we have surveyed students on their experiences and made design adjustments based on their feedback.

One consistent piece of feedback has been the lack of discussion forums in the new Courseroom. This will change with the rollout of the Virtual Academic Center (VAC). NCU’s development team is hard at work developing this exciting collaborative tool.

Meanwhile, last September, we began implementing Taskstream to ensure that our students are mastering their course and program outcomes (see Using Taskstream to Demonstrate Student Learning, pg. 22). As of early February, Taskstream has been integrated into 10 programs.

Lastly, alumni have access to multiple research databases in the NCU Library. This is a tremendous benefit for graduates who have completed their degree and want to continue researching and publishing in their professional career.

If you’ve used the new Courseroom and/or Taskstream, please feel free to send me an email at provost@ncu.edu. I’d love to know what you think of them as well!

Warmest regards,

Scott Burrus, Ph.D.
Provost and Chief Academic Officer
Like many of us, I find myself juggling several demanding full time roles: running communications and alumni relations here at NCU, mom to 6 and 9 year old girls, and doctoral student. And while I want to give back to my community and model the importance of service for my daughters, when I have those extra moments of downtime all I want to do is take a nap!

So, I was thrilled to learn about Project Linus, an organization that provides sick children with handmade blankets. My older daughter received a knitting kit last year for Christmas and it languished until I picked it up and taught myself how to knit; since then I have become mildly obsessed with knitting blankets. Now, not only can I knit for fun and to de-stress, but I can donate the blankets I make. Charitable mission accomplished without leaving home!

It turns out that this need to give back is one that runs strong within the NCU community. Jan Michael Uy, a fellow D.B.A. student, travels to China each August, with Project Yellow Lantern, to teach local orphans English (pg. 9); while NCU faculty member Dr. Bruce McNellie has been organizing annual medical and dental care trips to Belize for over 20 years (pg. 23). Closer to home, alumna Dr. Lisa Kurth is looking into the correlation between the use of Synthetic Oxytocin in labor and rising ADHD rates (pg. 13), and Ph.D. student Tracey Lanham is on a mission to increase the number of girls studying technology to 50 percent (pg. 33).

Meanwhile, Marissa Poulson had the opportunity to speak with Robert Rosenthal, vice president of communications and marketing at VolunteerMatch.org. Rosenthal shared with Poulson in her article Become a Virtual Volunteer (pg. 15) that over 5 percent of the volunteer positions on their site are virtual, allowing potential volunteers to support organizations irrespective of location and time zone. (There are even opportunities for us knitters on their site!)

I on the other hand, had the chance to interview Richard Milligan who runs Fever Bee Community Consulting about how to create thriving communities, online. Read more about our conversation in my article on the Ways the Internet Is Shaking up the Idea of Community (pg. 5).

I hope you enjoy this issue!

Take care, 
Alanna
WAYS THE INTERNET IS SHAKING UP THE IDEA OF COMMUNITY

BY ALANNA VITUCCI
The Internet has changed the building blocks of community.

“It has shifted our notion of community from an experience that is fundamentally place-based to one that is based on relational ties, creating an unprecedented opportunity for people to connect without geographical constraints,” explains Eva Mika, assistant dean of NCU’s Graduate School.

“Online, the definition of community seems to be stretched to cover all sorts of interactions,” concurs Richard Millington, founder of FeverBee Community Consultancy located in London. “Offline, we know the difference between a crowd, mob and audience by the nature of [the] relationships between the audience(s). Online, we tend to ignore that; our definition is a specific group of people who have developed relationships around a strong common interest.”

It is this communal interest that communities coalesce around online.

Millington has observed that communities tend to fall into one of three types.

The first are groups of people with a shared experience, such as an alumni group, religion or even artists that work in the same medium. The second are groups with a common interest that encompass emotional reactions, such as a political organization. Meanwhile, the third are groups that are relationship-centered; in these instances members have formed a relationship based on mutual trust and sharing.

“Relationships with one another are what separate a community from a crowd or an audience. It’s why Facebook pages and Twitter accounts usually build a strong audience, not a community,” explains Millington.

In many ways, it is easier to join a community online than locally.

“Google almost any topic and it is likely that you will find an online community to meet your needs,” shares Mika. “Many are exclusively online, while some communities…combine online communication and face-to-face interaction.”

Face-to-face interaction does not have to include meeting locally; it can encompass webcams and tools such as GoToMeeting that integrates face and chat functionality.

Millington and Mika both agree that a moderator or community manager is an essential online community resource.

“Having a moderator is a great way to facilitate engagement in online communities; the moderator can establish community boundaries, and watch for toxic dynamics,” notes Mika.

Toxic dynamics are a risk in online communities.

“Online, people tend to be more forthright in their views than they are in person. The ability to hide behind a screen is both positive and negative. It lets people express themselves honestly without fear of being in a socially awkward situation…[as] we’re less concerned about upsetting someone else; it also reduces our empathy towards other people,” says Millington.
IT TAKES A COMMUNITY TO FINISH A PH.D.

COLONEL VINCE LINDENMEYER (PH.D., EDUCATION / TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP, 2013)

BY MARISSA POULSON

Community is everything in the military.

"A soldier cannot operate, much less survive, alone," notes Colonel Vince Lindenmeyer (Ph.D., 2013), senior Army strategist and joint operational planner at the United States Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) in Omaha, Neb. "It takes a 'battle buddy,' a squad and leadership for just one soldier to survive in harsh conditions."

With more than 23 years of commissioned service in the Infantry, Logistics and Strategist career fields at the platoon leader and combatant command levels, Lindenmeyer is no stranger to harsh conditions. His military training, badges and awards include the Expert Infantryman's Badge, Ranger Tab, Senior Parachutist Badge, and the Bronze Star. He has also been deployed multiple times throughout his military career, including twice while completing his Ph.D. in Education from Northcentral University.

"ALL DOCTORAL CANDIDATES NEED A 'BATTLE BUDDY' OR COLLEAGUE WHO IS ALSO NEGOTIATING A PROGRAM OF INSTRUCTION, A SUPPORT NETWORK SIMILAR TO A SQUAD, AND A MENTOR TO HELP GUIDE US TO THE FINISH LINE."

"In hindsight, I am very thankful for the no residency requirement," says Lindenmeyer, who was adamant about finding a regionally accredited university with this unique feature.

"The greatest challenge for me in my doctoral journey was acknowledging that I had to put my doctoral work on the back burner (taking two Military Leaves of Absence) for my career," he continues. "I couldn't help but think of my late father, Professor Carl R. Lindenmeyer, who was all-but-dissertation in his field because his teaching career took off and he was too busy to reach the finish line."

It was then that Lindenmeyer realized how important community is for doctoral students as well.
"All doctoral candidates need a ‘battle buddy’ or colleague who is also negotiating a program of instruction, a support network similar to a squad, and a mentor to help guide us to the finish line," he explains.

"Thankfully, I had peers in other doctoral programs for encouragement, including my wife, Reverend Dr. Cynthia Lindenmeyer, a recent graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary’s Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) program."

In fact, building a supportive community is Lindenmeyer's first piece of advice to current doctoral students.

"You can't be afraid to build 'community' around you while you are negotiating your doctoral journey," he encourages. "Reach out to subject matter experts and ask questions of others. You will be surprised at how many international scholars answer your emails. Practice your doctoral ‘elevator speech’ on anyone that will listen. It works; I must have practiced my ‘elevator speech’ hundreds of times while refining it along the way," he laughs.

Lindenmeyer's dissertation research examined relationships among organizational commitment, career intent and retention behavior in a closed personnel systems (U.S. Army Captains) using the Theory of Planned Behavior.

"The retention of highly talented initial-entry and mid-career managers has become a focal point for both corporate and government agencies," he explains. "While [completing] my Northcentral course work and serving in the United States Army Human Resources Command from 2007 to 2009, I recognized a lack of understanding regarding the relationships between organizational commitment and retention behavior among U.S. Army Captains. [I] wanted to explore the possibility of extending the Theory of Planned Behavior to closed personnel systems to illuminate further insights on retention incentive offerings."

"Ultimately, I learned that the United States Army must continue to retain junior officers through engaged leadership, meaningful deployments and training opportunities to remain a ready and resilient force for our Nation’s next national security challenges," he adds.

Today, Lindenmeyer is able to combine his educational experiences with his significant government and military experience to build community as a leader in his field. In his current role as a lead operational planner with USSTRATCOM, he leads teams of subject matter experts to frame problems and develop solutions for complex crises and global situations that arise.

"In the military, community means more than just work. It means living, eating and rowing together as a team," he says. "As a leader, I am not afraid to demonstrate a strong personal work ethic in getting the job done while showing respect for others' intellectual contributions towards the final product."

It's like the saying goes, "We're all in this together." Whether in life, work, or even in educational pursuits like a challenging doctoral journey, we are always part of a larger community.

"The community that you build will keep you sane along the journey," concludes Lindenmeyer. "Most importantly, community will get you to the finish line."
BUILDING FUTURES IN CHONGQING, CHINA

BY ERIN WALSH

Every August, Jan Michael Uy travels with a volunteer group, Project Yellow Lantern, to Central China to spend two weeks teaching English to local orphans. All of the kids have lost either one or both parents. Many of them live with a grandparent, leaving them responsible for becoming the family breadwinner at an early age.

"The main setback facing orphans in Chongqing*, China, today is continued education," explains Uy. "Fewer than 5 percent graduate from high school."

Uy and fellow volunteers make a point to not only educate the kids, but also encourage them to understand how education can help provide a better life.

"During my first visit to China I met an orphan named Su-Chou," recalls Uy. "He would wake up every morning an hour before his classmates, not because he was worried about passing his exams, but because he had to bring home enough money so that his family could eat."

According to Uy, kids like Su-Chou feel additional pressure to serve their families. China’s One Child Policy also means that each individual child is the face of the family, which creates even more stress. For example, students who do not receive top honors in their classes are often considered a disgrace to their families.

"Instead of sharing with me about going out on adventures and asking me what it is like to live in America, Su-Chou talked to me about possibly taking his own life," reveals Uy. "At the time, he considered himself a failure to his family."

Despite these challenges, there is a happy ending to Su-Chou's story. With the help of the volunteers, he went on to become one of the first orphans in the village to be accepted into one of the top 10 universities in China.

"Su-Chou and other kids like him are kind, sweet and humble. They deserve the best just like anybody else in the world. They look to us volunteers as friends, as people they can trust and share stories with. We give them hope."

BUILDING FUTURES IN CHONGQING, CHINA

JAN MICHAEL UY (D.B.A., MANAGEMENT, CANDIDATE)

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While the two weeks in August each year are invaluable, Uy and the other volunteers struggle when it comes time to return home as all communication with the Chinese students disappears.

"The kids do not have access to a computer or the Internet," explains Uy. "They do not have mailboxes for us to mail them letters. It's a challenge for them to continue to learn on their own."

As a solution, the group has partnered with Microsoft (where Uy works as a Microsoft Account Executive), through their Shape the Future program, to help bring in technology resources needed to provide education opportunities throughout the year. Through this partnership, their goal is to build a technology center at the heart of Chongqing and invite students to attend each evening after work so they can learn virtually through Microsoft’s online learning resources.

For Uy, it's the perfect opportunity to live out his master's thesis: “Improving Student Learning in Third World Communities through the Applications of Transformational Leadership and Technology.”

"I know the greatest gift we can provide is simply our presence and being there for them," reveals Uy, "but we want to take it a step further. We want to provide education, help these kids graduate, and ultimately, help them find meaning in their lives."

"When it comes to helping others, I believe the words of philosopher Norman MacEwan who said, 'Happiness is not so much in having as giving. We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give,'" he continues. "Through this project, we hope to build a better future for these students."

*Chongqing is located in Central China and has a population of almost 29 million.

A team picture with all of the orphan students in the Chongqing, China program, along with the Project Yellow Lantern volunteer team.

More information is available at januy5.wix.com/projectyellowlantern#.

About Project Yellow Lantern

The goal of Project Yellow Lantern is to build a technology center at the heart of Chongqing and invite students to attend each evening after work so they have an opportunity to learn virtually through Microsoft’s online learning resources. Currently 50 volunteers from Seattle, Portland, Hawaii and New York are working with 50 orphan students, ages 7 to 18.
Becoming a skilled researcher takes time, patience and a little help from the experts. In an effort to help our online students navigate the sea of resources, Higher Degrees caught up with NCU’s Instructional Design Librarian, Taylor Duncan, and asked for a few tips.

**HD:** What is the most common question you receive about the NCU Library?

**TD:** "How can I contact the NCU Library and what are the Library’s hours of operation?" The great news is all of the Library’s online resources are available 24/7! NCU students can call us, email us, chat with us, or submit a question via Ask a Librarian. I highly recommend that students use Ask a Librarian to submit their questions because all questions and responses are archived for use later in a personal e-filing cabinet called My e-Reference.

**HD:** What advice would you give to new students who are using the NCU Library for the first time?

**TD:** I recommend that you get acquainted with the Library by attending one of our live Library Orientation workshops. Library Orientation is led by an NCU librarian and provides all the library essentials needed to get students off on the right foot.

**HD:** What advice can you give doctoral students who are starting their research?

**TD:** I highly recommend that doctoral students starting their research schedule a one-on-one research consultation with an NCU librarian (see librarian availability on pg. 12). These one-hour research consultations are tailored to each student’s needs and may cover a range of topics—from identifying the best information resources to developing advanced database search techniques. Let us help you navigate the quickest and most efficient path to your published dissertation!

**HD:** What are some of the unique services the NCU Library offers?

**TD:** We offer an interlibrary loan service that allows students to request materials not owned by the NCU Library. We reach out to other lending institutions that participate in resource sharing and make every effort to obtain that resource quickly and at no cost to the student.

**HD:** Tell us about your experience with NCU students and the library.

**TD:** Some students feel intimidated by the online library. They are overwhelmed by the sheer number of resources we offer or perhaps they are struggling to digest the concept of a 100 percent virtual library. To overcome this anxiety, students should reach out to us and take advantage of all the services we offer. We are here to help our students achieve academic success and become valuable contributors to their communities and within their professions.
EXPLORE THE NCU LIBRARY HOMEPAGE

Here are a few of the basics every NCU student should know. For more detailed information or help with a specific library function, reach out to the NCU library team.

NCU LIBRARIAN AVAILABILITY:
Monday through Thursday: 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. (Mountain Standard Time)
Friday through Sunday: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Mountain Standard Time)

Access Ask a Librarian and My e-Reference using the icons at the top.

View a recorded version of the Library Orientation workshop by clicking on Learn the Library!

Request a research consultation under How Do I?

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You have unread messages.

You have received messages.

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RESEARCHING A LINK BETWEEN SYNTHETIC OXYTOCIN & ADHD

LISA KURTH (PH.D., PSYCHOLOGY / HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY AND BEHAVIORAL MEDICINE, 2008)

BY ALEXIS CASTORINA

More children are being diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) than ever before. In fact, recent studies report that one in every 10 children between the ages of 4 and 17 has ADHD, and that trend is increasing annually at a rate of 5.5 percent. Unfortunately, the cause remains unknown. But, NCU alumna Dr. Lisa Kurth and a team of researchers are exploring some interesting correlations.

Dr. Kurth has worked in the field of psychology and mental health as a provider for more than 30 years. She’s currently the clinical director of the Alpine Behavior Therapy Clinic, a private practice in Fort Collins, Colo., that specializes in the assessment and treatment of ADHD in children and adults.

It was through conversations with mothers of the children being brought in for ADHD and other mental health and behavioral evaluations and treatments at her practice that inspired her research.

“We found that over 67 percent of the children with an ADHD diagnosis had been perinatally exposed to Synthetic Oxytocin at the time of their birth; so there was a significant correlation.”

“I would interview mothers during the initial intake of their children who presented with various behavioral disorders. As a part of that process, I would ask about the developmental history of the child. These mothers would independently volunteer their stories of a difficult labor and delivery. Many of them reported they were given Synthetic Oxytocin during labor,” explained Kurth.

Synthetic Oxytocin, also known by the brand names Pitocin or Syntocinon, is a drug used to induce labor in women. The drug is normally administered through an IV, and the dosage can be adjusted based on the needs of the mother during labor. We all have natural oxytocin hormones in our bodies, but when a woman is in labor, the brain creates more of the oxytocin hormone to begin causing contractions. If the contractions are not strong or frequent enough, Synthetic Oxytocin is often used to chemically induce childbirth. In fact, Kurth noted that the drug is used in more than 50 percent of all labors, including elective labors and deliveries across the United States.
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After several years of hearing stories of mothers being given Synthetic Oxytocin during childbirth, and seeing many of those children go on to be diagnosed with ADHD, she decided to study this trend more closely to find out if there was any correlation. Kurth made this effort the dissertation topic for her Ph.D. in Psychology at NCU.

In 2011, Dr. Kurth and Dr. Robert Haussmann (now Dean of NCU’s School of Psychology) published their research article on this topic in the Journal of Attention Disorders. The study, titled “Perinatal Pitocin as an Early ADHD Biomarker: Neurodevelopmental Risk?” looked at a sample of 172 children ages 3 to 25 and compared the medical birth records of children who had a clinically confirmed diagnosis of ADHD against those of children who had no ADHD.

“We found that over 67 percent of the children with an ADHD diagnosis had been perinatally exposed to Synthetic Oxytocin at the time of their birth; so there was a significant correlation,” she explained. “Nearly 70 percent of the children in our sample had this drug during childbirth!”

Since the study was published in 2011, Dr. Kurth has presented at national and international conferences on this topic.

“Our research has been well received, but we’ve encountered some skepticism. So what I began to do a year and a half ago was look at assembling a team of researchers to help me look at this through the lens of an animal model. Any time you have a question about a medication and whether it’s a risk or a benefit, you want to examine it through an animal model.”

Dr. Kurth assembled a team of well-respected researchers with expertise in animal research from the University of Colorado’s School of Medicine. They were excited when she approached them about participating in the study and immediately arranged a faculty appointment for her as a collaborative researcher. Dr. Kurth now holds a faculty appointment as Assistant Clinical Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Colorado’s School of Medicine.

Dr. Kurth’s research team aims to expand their study and secure additional funding so they can better understand how this commonly used labor and delivery medication may interact with other factors that are present during normal and/or complicated childbirth, such as maternal stress. They eventually want to research whether this exposure may have some bearing on other neurodevelopmental outcomes such as Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Contributions to support their research can be made through The CU Foundation or online at www.cufund.org/generationadhd. Dr. Kurth may be contacted at lisa.kurth@ucdenver.edu for more information.
Volunteers are an essential part of any community. But what happens when you want to give back, but don’t know where to start? Maybe the organization you are interested in is far away or there aren’t a lot of volunteer opportunities in your town—what happens then?

Thanks to the rise of virtual volunteering, time and place no longer dictate whether or not you can give back. As long as you have access to the Internet and a computer, you can find a way to volunteer.

Finding Virtual Volunteer Opportunities

It wouldn't be much of a virtual volunteering opportunity if you couldn't find it online! Thanks to websites like VolunteerMatch.org, the Web’s largest volunteer engagement network, you can search for volunteer opportunities anywhere and from wherever you are.

"When we launched VolunteerMatch, we were very interested in using the power of the Internet to not only create brick-and-mortar relationships, but also to unlock the potential of new relationships between good people and good causes that would no longer be dependent on proximity and region," explains Robert Rosenthal, vice president of communications and marketing at VolunteerMatch.

While the bulk of the 80,000+ volunteer opportunities listed on the site at any given time include an actual brick-and-mortar location, there is a small chunk dedicated solely to virtual volunteer opportunities.

"Virtual volunteering opportunities, or those that can be accomplished from virtually anywhere, typically make up about five percent of the overall number of volunteer listings posted by nonprofits at VolunteerMatch.org," reveals Rosenthal. "They remain a popular way for people to get involved and contribute from anywhere."
Virtual Volunteering Snapshot
So what do these virtual volunteer opportunities look like?

A search on VolunteerMatch.org turned up 4,386 virtual volunteer opportunities. Needs ranged from tutors and peer mentors, to writers and web developers. There are options for people who want to serve as advocates in education, those who can serve as helpline volunteers for at-risk individuals, and those who can jumpstart online fundraisers for a good cause. There are even some options for those of you who can knit or sew!

All that’s required is a computer, a needed skill set, and the desire to serve.

Benefits of Volunteering
You may be wondering why you should consider giving up the little bit of free time that you have to volunteer. For one thing, helping people never gets old. Just ask those who do it on a regular basis! There is simply no substitute for putting a smile on someone's face or meeting a need.

At the same time, there are practical benefits associated with volunteering. If you are considering switching careers, but need to gain additional experience, volunteering is a great way to do it. It’s also a way to get more involved in your current career field.

For example, Dr. Mary Goggins Selke, core curriculum faculty for Northcentral University’s School of Education and founding chair of the Association of Teacher Educators' Special Interest Group (SIG) for Educational Leadership, recently had the opportunity to publish an article in the Southern Journal of Educational Administration with other SIG members.

"It started out as a presentation for a national conference that we attended, but then I received an email call for article proposals and suggested to the team that we convert the paper to an article," she relates. "We met over lunch at the conference and hammered out an article outline and who -needed-to-do-what. I wrote the intro and closing discussion, submitted the article, and the rest is history."

Selke also serves as choir director for a nursing home choir in her hometown, the perfect outlet for utilizing her passion (and undergraduate degree) for music.

"I always thought volunteering was just something you did because my family did lots of it and involved me from the time I was very young," she says. "But the truth is it doesn't matter if it involves professional service or local or global community service in an area of passion apart from one’s profession. Or, if it's done in-person or virtually... volunteering always provides a means to augment the quality of life for people touched by the ripple effect of putting your actions where your beliefs are."

Searching for Virtual Volunteer Opportunities
VolunteerMatch is a national nonprofit based in San Francisco, which serves U.S. communities by bringing together nonprofits and eager volunteers across the country. Its website, VolunteerMatch.org, provides an easy way to locate volunteer opportunities by location, area of expertise and availability.

Here’s how to search for virtual listings:
2. Click on the “Virtual” tab in the middle of the page.
3. Click the red “View All” button.
We understand you may experience hardships that make completing your degree program on the recommended track more difficult. If you're an active student experiencing a particularly difficult time, you should contact your NCU Academic Advisor to discuss your options for an Academic Leave of Absence (ALOA).

At NCU, an ALOA can be defined as "a temporary break from academic registration with a clear intent to return to the program of study." Before you make the decision to apply for an ALOA, make sure you understand the process, which is explained in detail in the NCU Course Catalog. If you're just looking for information for future reference, here are some of the most important details you'll want to remember:

**Length of Leave**
- The length of your leave will be determined on a case-by-case basis by an Academic Liaison.
- The maximum length of leave is 90 calendar days.
- Time spent on leave will count toward program length and when determining if you can complete your program within maximum time to completion limits.

**Number of Leaves**
- Master’s students may take up to two ALOAs.
- Doctoral students may take up to three ALOAs.
- Undergraduate students are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
- Leaves are not permitted for Certificate or Non-Degree students.

NCU also accommodates leaves for military purposes. For more details regarding the Military Leave of Absence (MLOA) process, please visit the NCU Course Catalog or reach out to your NCU Academic Advisor.
I'VE JUST PASSED COMPS!
WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM THE DISSERTATION COURSES?

**Committee Assignments:** You'll receive an email from the Graduate School (GS) outlining your dissertation committee. Your committee will be made up of a dissertation chair and a subject matter expert (SME). The chair has expertise in managing the dissertation process and while they may not share your area of expertise, the SME will have expertise within your field. Please note: dissertation chairs are assigned.

**The Timeline:** Your first assignment in each dissertation course will be a timeline outlining when you hope to accomplish your dissertation milestones during the course. You will update your timeline as you proceed through each course. Some students use Excel, PowerPoint, or put it in a Word document. The key: start thinking realistically about your dissertation and the time it will take to complete each milestone, taking into account your personal schedule, NCU review times, etc. It is important to discuss your degree program with your chair as many students take more than the minimum required dissertation courses. Dissertation research is a naturally dynamic and nonlinear process.

**Your Concept Paper (CP):** The CP is the first dissertation milestone document. It is the foundation for your dissertation research. The draft CP you developed in your research courses was a good start and good practice, but more often than not, it requires substantive revision and editing to ensure the document is aligned and you have a feasible and worthy research problem. Some chairs will ask for a draft of the CP that you worked on to review initially. Others may ask for parts of that CP and review and work on the CP piece by piece. Remember, all dissertation chairs have experience helping doctoral candidates succeed. The process they choose is based on what they believe will help you be most successful. Remember, your chair is your dissertation process expert.

**Weekly Updates and Assignments:** Each dissertation course includes weekly updates. This does not mean that your first CP draft is assignment one, second draft is assignment two, and so on. Your weekly updates will consist of a substantive report to your chair to address what you've been working on and your progress. Remember, dissertation courses are pass/fail (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory). The key is making sure you continue to make progress each week. Work closely with your Chair to ensure your updates are done according to their requirements.

**Submitting Your CP:** Milestone documents are reviewed by the Chair, the SME and will undergo Graduate School (GS) academic review. When your Chair feels your CP is ready to move on, they will send it to your SME for review and feedback. Your SME will likely have comments and edits for you to address. At that point, the CP comes back to you for more work. This process will continue until both your Chair and your SME believe you have succeeded in creating a sound milestone document. At that time, your Chair will submit your document for GS academic review. The review provides additional feedback and comments on your work. The review outcome could allow you to move on to the Dissertation Proposal (DP), provide substantive comments and feedback for you to address, or exclude your document from review because there are foundational or alignment issues that need to be addressed before a full review takes place. After the academic review, the CP will come back to you and your chair.

As you can see, the dissertation process is a detailed one. That's why The Graduate School designed the Doctoral Candidacy Resource Guide (DCRG). It contains lots of useful information, including review times, information about the Change Matrix, and more. You can find the DCRG in the Dissertation Center along with other helpful information.

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**GOOD NEWS!**

You don’t have to wait until the next issue of Higher Degrees to get your answers. Just post your questions on any one of NCU's social media groups or discussion boards, and you're sure to get a helpful response. If it's a question we happen to see frequently, we'll include it in the next issue of Higher Degrees!
For some, becoming an educator is a career path. For others, like Tammy Hutchinson-Harosky, it was a calling. "I decided at a young age that I wanted to be a teacher. Actually, I really wanted to open my own dance studio, but my dance instructor told me that I would need a teaching license to do that, so I decided I would be a teacher instead! I just wanted to make a difference."

That dance instructor provided the spark for a dream, but a family with strong educational values groomed an educator-to-be. "At an early age, my parents instilled in my brothers and me the importance of education," explains Hutchinson-Harosky. "Getting a college degree was not an option – the only choice was where we would go to get it. My parents worked very hard to make sure that my two brothers and I received a college education, and they still encourage us to reach for the stars."

Hutchinson-Harosky chose Carson-Newman College (now University) in Jefferson City, Tenn., as the venue for her first few steps toward the head of the classroom. First, she earned a Bachelor of Arts in English/Secondary Education with a minor in Spanish, which she immediately put to use teaching various levels of English and Spanish for Blount County Schools. And later – while teaching full-time – she returned to Carson-Newman to earn a Master of Arts in Teaching with a focus on English as a Second Language.

"I taught in the public school setting for 19 years," Hutchinson-Harosky explains. "[But] after spending 12 years in the high school setting, I felt I needed to make more of a difference. I decided it was time to move into the ESL field. The students were so eager to learn and appreciative of every bit of knowledge they could gain," she says.

Quickly, the ESL community became Hutchinson-Harosky's newest passion for contribution to the education community.
"There are so many needs in the field of ESL," she asserts. "Even if an individual does not hold a teaching license in ESL, [they] could volunteer to teach adult ESL students basic survival skills such as going to the bank or the doctor. Volunteer programs that reach out to help ESL families are always in need of individuals who are willing to give their time to help the ESL families to adjust to the new culture."

Inspired by the eager students she taught in the classroom, she joined the Tennessee Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) organization in 2007 and continues to attend conferences.

In the years since focusing her efforts on the ESL community, Hutchinson-Harosky has completed her Ed.S. in Curriculum and Instruction at Lincoln Memorial University and is currently pursuing her Ed.D., with a focus on English as a Second Language, at Northcentral University.

Somewhere between earning graduate degrees and certifications, joining professional organizations, and inspiring a generation of students, Hutchinson-Harosky found time for her proudest accomplishment – her family.

"I have been married to my husband, Chris Harosky, for 13 years. I am the very proud mother of two caring, smart and athletic daughters – Hannah and Haley. We also have three furry children – Snowball, Coco and Maggie. I consider [my family] to be my greatest accomplishment."

Now an experienced, passionate educator and mother with strong ties to her community, Hutchinson-Harosky's calling as an educator has taken her to King University in Bristol, Tenn., where she works in the School of Education as the ESL program coordinator and teaches ESL and literacy courses.

"I really work with a fabulous group of educators at King University," she admits. "I hope that as I grow as a college professor I will instill the same love of learning that I see them instilling in the future teachers that we work with."

Like many educators before her, Hutchinson-Harosky continues to find inspiration in the teachers who inspired her commitment to teaching and learning as a lifelong pursuit.

"I can picture in my mind the faces of the wonderful educators that I have had in the past," she reflects. "Phyllis Ratcliffe, who was hard, but fair and presented the material in a way that made me realize I wanted to be an English teacher. Gail Dalton, who encouraged me to never stop learning and still encourages me to continue my education until I [finish] my doctorate."

Moving forward, Hutchinson-Harosky hopes that through her teaching at King University she'll continue to make a difference for children and teachers in the education community, just as her teachers have done for her. "As an educator, there is nothing like seeing that student have [their] ‘ah-ha’ moment and knowing that you were a part of it," she says.

**TAMMY HUTCHINSON-HAROSKY’S ACTIVITIES AND HONORS**

- Member: NCTE, TNTESOL, IATE (secretary/treasurer), TESOL, IRA
- John S. Battle Teacher of the Year, 1999
- Wal-Mart Teacher of the Year, 1999
- Nominated for Washington County Teacher of the Year, 1999
- Nominated for Sallie Mae First Year Teacher of Excellence for Blount County, 1995
- Received 11 Washington County Learn & Serve Grants
- Received one SSI grant
- Received six EPIC grants
- Delta Kappa Gamma – Alpha Alpha Chapter – First Vice President

**ACTIVITIES AND HONORS**

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Lumosity Mobile
Looking to give your brain a workout? Designed by neuroscientists, Lumosity Mobile uses a series of brain training games to improve multiple areas of brain function including memory, attention and speed. The newest version even allows you to share your progress and challenge friends.

Today's Document
The National Archives' first mobile application is actually a daily snapshot of important documents housed in the US National Archives. From letters to presidents to famous photos, you never know what you're going to get. Read about the background of each document to exercise your brain's ability to retain even the smallest detail.

TED
Let's face it – successful people have great things to say and with the TED app, you can hear it all. Browse through talks from leaders in almost any industry, from education to music and business. The app can also notify you when new TEDTalks are added – at a rate of more than 1,400 per week! TED lets you learn from and be inspired by the best in your field, whatever field that may be.

Daily Art
The world's most famous pieces of art all tell a story, and you can learn it through the Daily Art app. Each day you'll get a snapshot of a piece of art and a short description about what makes it relevant. File these tidbits away for the next time you attend a student and alumni mixer and need to impress!

Khan Academy
Need to brush up on your statistics before you start your program? Looking for a refresher on the solar system so you can help your child with their project? Khan Academy has it all. Download videos, track your progress and earn achievements all on the go.
In December, NCU was named a Phoenix “Best Place to Work” in 2013 by the Phoenix Business Journal (large organization category). Northcentral University is the only university in Phoenix to receive this distinction. “At Northcentral University, our dedication to our mission of educating professionals throughout the world, commitment to excellence and our core values, as well as ensuring that NCU provides its students with a richly-engaging, professionally-relevant and academically rigorous program is what has created our unique culture,” shared Scott Burrus, Ph.D., provost and chief academic officer.

Using Taskstream to Demonstrate Student Learning
At NCU, we are committed to providing you with the best educational experience in order to meet your academic and professional goals. In order for us to determine that you are learning and meeting the course and program objectives, in September 2013, we began implementing Taskstream in selected academic programs.

Taskstream is a cutting edge, cloud-based (online) management system with whom NCU contracted to assess student learning. Students in academic programs using the management program are asked to upload selected assignments to Taskstream that best represent course and program outcomes. Faculty members then go into Taskstream and score your assignments. Based on the results, we can determine whether you are reaching your programmatic outcomes or if we need to make adjustments to your course and/or academic programs so you are achieving your goals.

The first academic programs were integrated into Taskstream at the beginning of September. These include the Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.), the Master of Education (M.Ed.), the Master of Psychology (M.A.Psy.) and the Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Therapy. We plan on integrating the next set of programs into Taskstream in February of 2014. This next set of programs includes:

- School of Education: Ed.D. - Doctor of Education; M.Ed. - Principal Leadership Certification Specialization; M.Ed. Non-PK-12 Core
- School of Business: Ph.D. and D.B.A. in Business Administration
- School of Psychology: Ph.D. in Psychology
- School of Marriage and Family Sciences: Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy (M.A.M.F.T.)

As students, it is important to realize what an important initiative Taskstream is for you as well as for accrediting purposes. Being able to demonstrate to our accreditors that you are meeting and mastering your course and program outcomes will be very important for future accreditation evaluations. It shows the high level of integrity we place in our academic programs and how seriously we take student learning. In addition, if you are meeting your goals, NCU can be confident we provide you with a high-level educational experience we can uniformly stand behind.

If you have any questions or concerns or need some additional guidance on using Taskstream, please feel free to contact Melissa Helvey of the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research at: 480.253.4600; or email her at: mhelvey@ncu.edu.
BRINGING MEDICAL CARE TO REMOTE MAYAN COMMUNITIES

Bruce McNellie (Ph.D., Adjunct Faculty, School of Psychology)

BY ERIN WALSH

Twenty-six years ago, NCU faculty member Dr. Bruce McNellie observed a line of obviously pregnant women stretching around the block, waiting in the cold rain to receive limited, state-offered prenatal care. "I was working in Child Protective Services at the time, but I was motivated to help these women," reveals McNellie.

He decided to pursue a Rural Federal Health Care grant to provide prenatal and obstetrical care in the rural community of Nacogdoches, Texas. With the help of friends at other agencies, the grant was written and secured and, in 1987, The East Texas Community Health Clinic opened its doors.

"It was a huge feat," acknowledges McNellie. Naturally, the group decided to celebrate by going on a retreat to Belize. While many are drawn to Belize for its beautiful beaches, great snorkeling and fabulous resorts, McNellie and his partners had something else in mind.

"We learned that volunteers were needed in the Mayan Indian reservations of the Toledo District of Belize," he notes. "A group of 21 of us, including doctors, dentists, nurses, social workers, friends and family members, traveled to Belize and held dental clinics in these remote Mayan villages."

While it wasn’t easy to get to all those who needed treatment since the terrain in the Toledo District is hilly with lush jungle, and the accommodations were seriously lacking, those five days of clinics significantly outweighed any discomfort.

"We treated 1,500 dental patients who most likely would not have been treated without us," shares McNellie.

After returning to the United States, the core group incorporated as the non-profit Project Belize, Inc. (projectbelize.org) with the mission of making annual trips to Belize to provide critically needed dental and medical care, with a focus on serving the most remote jungle villages. With McNellie as project coordinator, they have returned every year.

"What originally began as a reaction to pregnant women standing in line in the rain has led to the creation of a large and active health clinic and to 25 years of clinics in Belize,” observes McNellie.

The group visits 10 villages during the course of each year’s trip, and sometimes
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The group visits 10 villages during the course of each year’s trip, and sometimes throughout the year they would send money, cards and letters.

The couple, along with other members of the group, helped fund her expenses when she entered college (which involves boarding school and tuition). She graduated in 2012 and is now teaching in the public school system that serves the Mayans in the Toledo District.

She is married and has a new baby. Alma continues to check in on the group each year and brought her baby this last year. It is a rare thing for a Mayan to complete college, and it was quite rewarding to have been a part of Alma’s success.
Membership in professional organizations is an investment in your professional credibility and development. It can help you stay connected to your peers and learn how others in your field are contributing to your profession.

It’s easy to join a professional organization, pay your dues, and indicate you are a member on your resume or CV and LinkedIn profile, but are you really making the most of your membership? Are you making a difference both to yourself and to your community?

Remember when you were (or still are) conducting research for your master’s program or dissertation topic for your doctoral program? Remember all of those articles in academic journals you would retrieve from the library? Now, think about an article you authored turning up in the results. How exciting would that be?

Many professionals give back to their field by publishing their research and writing for academic journals. Numerous members of NCU’s academic leadership and faculty have had articles published in scholarly publications. For instance, Dr. Branden Henline, dean, School of Marriage and Family Sciences, has been published in Family Therapy Magazine, Personal Relationships, the Journal of Marital and Family Therapy as well as Contemporary Family Therapy. Involvement in academic and professional organizations is important to an individual’s continued learning and improvement in his or her field.

“Being a good student or professional requires a commitment to continuous improvement. That means you need to keep learning,” said Dr. Henline.

Even if getting published isn’t a short-term reality, professionals can also consider serving as a guest speaker for organizations relevant to their career. Last year, several members of NCU’s faculty and academic leadership presented at the 19th Annual Sloan Consortium International Conference on Online Learning in Orlando, Fla., from November 20-22. The conference focused on e-learning and practices plus experiences among educators in a number of sectors ranging from PK-12, higher education and other industries like healthcare, not to mention other professional associations. In addition, several members of the School of Marriage and Family Sciences presented at the 2013 American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy Annual Conference in Portland, Ore.

Serving on a board or acting as a mentor is also a way to give back to your professional and academic community. Last year, Dr. James Billings, assistant dean of the School of Marriage and Family Sciences, was elected a member of the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education. In addition, in July 2013, Dr. A. Lee Smith, dean of the School of Business and Technology Management, was selected as President-Elect of the Western Council of Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP Region 7). In these positions, Dr. Billings and Dean Smith can serve as thought leaders for their professional communities.

Most professional associations offer members exclusive benefits. Many websites of professional associations have “members-only” sections. Members can access information not available to the general public like informational databases, message boards, member lists, contact information and other exclusive content. Members can typically attend networking or educational events hosted by the organization free of charge or for a reduced fee.

Depending upon the type of work you do, participation in a professional organization can even help you land a new client! If you are interested in joining a professional organization, really think about why you want to get involved and how you can contribute to the organization’s mission and activities. You will be spending time and energy with your involvement, so it is important to set expectations up front about what you want to gain, how you can contribute, and what new skills you want to acquire that will lend credibility to you, professionally.
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“BEING A GOOD STUDENT OR PROFESSIONAL REQUIRES A COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT THAT MEANS YOU NEED TO KEEP LEARNING.”
STUDENTS

Anthony Q. Bowen (D.B.A., Project Management, candidate) was named Director of Digital Media & Search Marketing and Advertising for Cablevision NY. He also serves as a Graduate Adjunct Faculty at Southern New Hampshire University.

Wolf Halton’s (Ph.D., Business Administration – Computer and Information Security, candidate) article “Network Rediscovery with Kali Linux,” was published in the December 2013 issue of Forensics Magazine.


Samose Mays (Ed.D., Sports Management, candidate) was named Activity Coordinator of the City of Jacksonville, Fla., Parks and Recreation department.


Kim McBride (Ph.D., Marriage and Family Therapy, candidate) was selected Washington Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (WAMFT) Educator of the Year.


Roger Doss’ (Ph.D., Business Administration, candidate) paper “Return Value Adapter Pattern,” was published in the Association of Computing Machinery (ACM) Software Engineering Notes (SEN).

Kimberly Goudy (Ph.D., Business Administration - Management, candidate) presented her paper “Employee Trustworthiness in the Virtual Workplace,” at the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACSBP) inaugural international conference in Brussels, Belgium.
Grace Nava (Ph.D., Education, candidate) published the children’s book Little Peach Pit available for purchase through Amazon.

Alanna Vitucci’s (D.B.A., candidate) abstract “Quality M.Ed. Principal Licensure Degrees + Conscientious Students = Leader Principals,” co-written with Cindy Guillaume (Dean, School of Education), was accepted for presentation at the Oxford Round Table, held in March 2014 at Oxford University in the United Kingdom.

Alumni

Barry Chametzky (Ph.D., Education, 2013) was invited to deliver a guest lecture on “A Primer to Online (E-) Learning,” at Washington & Jefferson College in Washington, Pa.

Deanne Kludy (M.Ed., 2012) is co-presenting on “Moving Online: A Case Study in Converting Your Classroom,” at Learning Solutions 2014.


George E. Nolly (D.B.A., 2011) published the fourth novel in the Hamfist series: Hamfist Out. All four books are available for purchase on Amazon.

John Plifka (M.Ed., 2011) was promoted to Director for Quality Assurance for the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Eustis, Va.

Hazar Shehadeh’s (Ph.D., Education, 2013) paper “Distance Education Efficacy on Biology Education at the Higher Education Level,” was published in The International Journal of Technologies in Learning.

Cynthia J. Wolfe (Ph.D., Business Administration, 2012) earned her Project Management Professional (PMP) certification and was promoted to Business Optimization Lead at MeadWestvaco Corporate.
Higher Degrees recently caught up with D.B.A. student Lee Mangold to learn more about the free Computer Security Camp he started for high school students and was awarded the 2013 Community Service Star Award for.

**HD:** What interests you about computer security?

**LM:** Everything about computer security interests me! Computer and information security crosses every industry and all borders; and there are enough hard problems to solve to keep everyone busy! The problems to be solved also have very real and immediate impacts. Every day new devices are added into our daily lives that are connected, in some way, to other devices. These networks need to be secured to prevent loss of revenues, property, intellectual property, and even loss of life.

**HD:** How did you get the idea to create a free summer camp?

**LM:** In 2013, I joined forces with a group of information security professionals who all shared a passion for computer security and teaching. We wanted to provide a competitive environment in which to teach real-world computer security at the high school level and a summer camp was the ideal way to do it.

**HD:** What intrigued you about the idea for a free summer camp?

**LM:** I enjoy sharing what I know and what I'm passionate about with students. While the educational opportunities in computer security are growing, they are still largely unknown or cost prohibitive. Being able to share a real-world and structured curriculum for free is very rewarding. Daytona State College and the National Science Foundation gave us the financial resources we needed to make that happen.

**HD:** What does the summer camp cover?

**LM:** The summer camp covers topics such as introduction to security, operating systems security (Windows and Linux), computer forensics and much more. Over the course of three days, students had the opportunity to learn about security in hands-on labs, learn from industry keynote speakers, and compete in team-based computer security challenges. Our challenge winners were awarded with more than $2,000 in donated prizes for their work.

**HD:** Can you share a bit more about the Community Service Star Award?

**LM:** The Community Service Star Award is a special recognition under the (ISC)2 Information Security Leadership Awards. The award is given to an individual whose computer security contributions merit special recognition.

**HD:** How would you define the idea of community in an online world?

**LM:** Online communities have the distinct advantage of allowing disparate groups of people to gather and share knowledge, without being bound by geography. This is obviously good, but keeping members engaged and feeling like they have a vested interested in the community is extremely challenging.

**HD:** Why did you choose to pursue a D.B.A. at NCU?

**LM:** NCU offers an accredited, online, applied doctorate degree that is perfect for my situation! I needed a more flexible learning environment and a doctoral program geared towards the practicing professional. NCU offers that and more!

**HD:** What are you researching for your dissertation?

**LM:** I'm researching the psychological side of computer security training. Traditionally, we train people to identify and respond to security threats. Based on a lot of recent evidence, this just isn't enough. What we never really think about is, for example, whether the trainee even cares about security in the first place! If we're able to understand the factors that lead to "caring" about security, we may be better able to breed a more security-minded culture within organizations.

**HD:** Can you share a bit about your career?

**LM:** I am an Information Assurance Security Officer for the US Army, where I've worked on contract for 13 years. This has allowed me to get involved in a lot of areas (including security) that I never thought I would. Most recently, I co-founded the Florida Cyber Alliance (www.floridacyberalliance.org). It is a non-profit organization that provides and facilitates cyber security education and research opportunities to the residents of Central Florida. One of the big efforts under FCA is the CyberCamp.
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**HD:** What are you researching for your dissertation?

**LM:** I'm researching the psychological side of computer security training. Traditionally, we train people to identify and respond to security threats. Based on a lot of recent evidence, this just isn't enough. What we never really think about is, for example, whether the trainee even cares about security in the first place! If we're able to understand the factors that lead to "caring" about security, we may be better able to breed a more security-minded culture within organizations.

**HD:** Can you share a bit about your career?

**LM:** I am an Information Assurance Security Officer for the US Army, where I've worked on contract for 13 years. This has allowed me to get involved in a lot of areas (including security) that I never thought I would. Most recently, I co-founded the Florida Cyber Alliance (www.floridacyberalliance.org). It is a non-profit organization that provides and facilitates cyber security education and research opportunities to the residents of Central Florida. One of the big efforts under FCA is the CyberCamp.

**HD:** What is the best advice you were ever given?

**LM:** "You will always find time for what you really want to do." I think this probably rings true with the majority of community volunteers!

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**About (ISC)²**

The International Information Systems Security Certification Consortium (ISC)² is an international non-profit organization for security professionals. With more than 90,000 members, it is the world's largest single group of computer security professionals.
WHYNCU AND #NCUTHANKATEACHER
WE’VE BEEN HAVING A LOT OF FUN HOSTING SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS AND GETTING TO KNOW MORE OF OUR STUDENTS AND ALUMNI THESE PAST FEW MONTHS.

ON FACEBOOK, WE ASKED HOW NCU STUDENTS AND ALUMNI GIVE BACK IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES. HERE’S WHAT YOU SHARED.

“I work for the Federal Bureau of Prisons as a Paralegal Specialist.”
– Dominick DeSanto (Ph.D., Business Administration/Criminal Justice, candidate)

“I do relationship trainings for individuals with developmental disabilities. I volunteer to present to groups like M.A.S.S. advocates [Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong].”
– Connie Agin (M.A.Psy., Industrial Organizational Psychology, candidate)

“I am on the following board of directors in Pensacola, Fla.: Baptist Healthcare Foundation, WSRE Foundation, Gulf Coast Kid’s House Future Fund, and the Suburban West Rotary Foundation. Additionally, I am a Rotarian (Past President), Secretary of the Estate Planning Council of NW Florida, and Governor in the Historic Port of Pensacola Propeller Club.”
– Rick Lambert (Ph.D., Business Administration/Financial Management, candidate)
THE 19TH
ANNUAL SLOAN
CONSORTIUM

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON ONLINE LEARNING IN
ORLANDO WAS A BIG EVENT
FOR NCU, WITH FACULTY AND
ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP
PRESENTING IN THEIR AREAS
OF EXPERTISE.

CONFERENCE
PRESENTERS INCLUDED:

Dr. Scott Burrus
Provost and Chief Academic
Officer

Dr. Melanie Shaw
University Ombudsperson

Dr. Renee Aitken
Director of Assessment, SoE

Dr. Karen Ferguson
Assistant Dean, SoE

Dr. Pam Carter
Director of Curriculum
Development, SBTM

Dr. Jodine Burchell
Adjunct Faculty, SBTM

Dr. Greg Hickman
Dissertation Chair,
The Graduate School

PHILADELPHIA
STUDENT AND ALUMNI MIXER
JANUARY 18

WE WELCOMED 41 ATTENDEES AT OUR JANUARY NCU MIXER IN PHILADELPHIA, 
COHOSTED BY DR. ROBERT HAUSSMANN (DEAN, SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY). 
HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDED SIX STUDENTS WHO TRAVELED LONG DISTANCES TO ATTEND, 
INCLUDING THREE FROM MARYLAND, TWO FROM NEW JERSEY, AND ONE FROM 
PITTSBURGH.
If Tracey Lanham (Ph.D., Business Administration/Computer and Information Security, candidate) has it her way, there will be an equal number of men and women studying information technology by 2020. According to the National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT), computer science has the lowest representation of girls and women out of all areas of technology. With computing and information technology being among the fastest growing industries, there are significant opportunities available for men and women alike.

“It’s just now that it’s getting to the point where businesses are realizing and understanding what they’re missing because they don’t have diversity at the drawing table when they’re developing technologies, and they’re really missing a huge market to couple a woman’s way of thinking with a man’s,” Lanham explained.

So why are there more men than women studying and working in the field of computer science and information technology?

“What seems to be the issue is that girls don’t have enough confidence in themselves with technology,” says Lanham. “You have boys, who when they’re not in school, are using technology by playing video games, are on the computer, and are pulling things apart and putting them back together. Girls aren’t encouraged to use technology in that sense.”

Even for Lanham, computer information technology was never a field she considered. Initially, she was working toward an accounting degree, but when she went to register for classes after transferring to Hodges University, she scored very highly on her math entrance exam, and her advisor encouraged her to consider studying computer information technology. At the time, she was the only woman in the master’s in computer information technology program.
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“IT was a very haphazard stroke of chance that got me into the field, but it was the field itself that kept me there,” Lanham says.

Since earning her master’s degree, Lanham has worked in a number of IT capacities from network engineering and website development, to setting up an ecommerce store. She’s now back at Hodge’s University as a full-time faculty member teaching computer and information technology courses and is on track to assume a roll as program chair next year for the Fisher School of Technology.

“My Ph.D. from NCU will enable me to become a program chair. The research skills I’ve learned at NCU have helped me so much in areas like researching different programs for my school and applying for different grants.”

It was Lanham's research and grant writing skills that landed her funding for a program to teach middle school girls programming. She used the funding to create and supervise a programming camp AspireIT Program: Making a Difference – Girls, Technology, and Social Change.

"We had 17 girls from 14 different middle schools, and they spent 10 consecutive Saturdays learning how to create phone apps and Xbox games," she explains. "By the end of the camp, each girl had created either an Android phone app or Xbox game. It was one of the most amazing experiences in my life!"

Along with teaching at Hodges University, Lanham works as the regional coordinator for the Aspirations in Computing Award for the Southwest Florida region where she speaks to girls in local high schools about the importance of learning technology. The Aspirations in Computer Award is a national award from NCWIT with the purpose of rewarding girls that excel in technology and leadership within their communities.

Lanham says there’s not necessarily a specific personality profile that would lend well to a career in the computer and information technology field, but there are some shared commonalities. For example, someone who is good in math would likely be good at computer programming and jobs that are more hands-on. Conversely, someone who is good with people and likes to integrate technology with management functions could be well suited for a career in information systems management.

“There’s such a gap right now in gender equality in this field,” she asserts. "Encourage every girl you know to go out there and get that knowledge. There’s so much kids can learn online for free.”

Some of the resources Lanham recommends are Code.org, NWCIT, and the Anita Borg Institute.

“Regardless of the career area someone wants to go in, technology will be integrated into it in some way,” Lanham says. “The better handle you have on technology, the better you’re going to excel at your career.”

“WOMEN ARE HUGE CONSUMERS OF TECHNOLOGY, BUT WE’RE NOT HUGE DEVELOPERS OF IT.”
THE SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY


Debra Circo, Ph.D., (Adjunct Faculty) received a research award grant from the University of Nebraska Medical Center Pediatrics to gather pilot data on the experiences of parents of a child with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) when genetic testing is done.

Miguel Fernandez, Ph.D. (Adjunct Faculty) attended the APA Conference in Hawai’i. He also presented “The Use of Narrative Therapy to Manage Emotional and Existential Distress in the Oncology Setting,” at the International Psycho-Oncology Society Conference in Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Jill Keller, Ph.D., (Adjunct Faculty) and Daniel Weigland’s, Ph.D. (Adjunct Faculty) paper “Vicarious Trauma and Reduced Sexual Desire: a Hidden Hazard of Helping Others,” was published in Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, & Policy.

Daniel Weigand, Ph.D., (Adjunct Faculty) chaired the annual meeting of the Journal of Applied Sport Psychology (as editor-in-chief) and has accepted a position as a performance psychologist for IMG to train special operations forces at the U.S. Army JFK Special Warfare School at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina.

Angela Sikorski, Ph.D. (Adjunct Faculty) co-authored the book “A Counselor’s Introduction to Neuroscience” along with Dr. Bill McHenry and Dr. Jim McHenry, which was published in August by Routledge.
THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Mary Goggins Selke’s, Ph.D., (Program Director - Educational Leadership) paper “Graduate Program Redesign for the Preparation of 21st Century Educational Leaders,” was published in the Southern Journal of Educational Administration.

Cindy K. Guillaume’s, Ed.D., (Dean) abstract “Quality M.Ed. Principal Licensure Degrees + Conscientious Students = Leader Principals,” co-written with NCU doctoral student Alanna Vitucci, was accepted for presentation at the Oxford Round Table, held in March 2014 at Oxford University in the United Kingdom.

Leslie A. Oja, Ph.D., (Adjunct Faculty) was appointed to the Professional Practice Advisory Team (2013-2014) of the National Association for Healthcare Quality (NAHQ).

THE SCHOOL OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY SCIENCES

The SMFS administrative and core faculty team members attended the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) conference in Portland, Ore., October 17-20. Highlights included an all Faculty Dinner, Student and Alumni Mixer, MFT Honor Society inauguration, an AAMFT Showcase spotlight of the NCU MFT program, and two NCU presentations including Dr. James Billings facilitating the COAMFTE Site Visitor Training, along with Dr. Branden Henline and Dr. Georgie Winter, who discussed experiences of online education.

Bill Northey, Ph.D., (MFT Director of Clinical Field Placements) had an article published in the Journal of Contemporary Family Therapy titled “Ecosystemic Structural Family Therapy: Theoretical and Clinical Foundations.”


Annabelle Goodwin, Ph.D., (Core Faculty) had an article published in the Journal of Feminist Family Therapy titled “An Exploration of Feminist Family Therapists’ Resistance to and Collusion with Oppression.”

William DuPree, Ph.D., (Core Faculty) co-authored the article “Developing culturally competent Marriage and Family Therapists: Guidelines for Working with Asian American Couples,” published in the American Journal of Family Therapy.

Darren Adamson, Ph.D. (Director of Curriculum Development) presented “Failure to Launch: How to Encourage an Adult Child to be an Adult – Clinical Implications, a presentation” at the Critical Issues Facing Children and Adolescents 2013 Conference, sponsored by the University of Utah Neuropsychiatry Institute and Primary Children’s Medical Center in Salt Lake City, Utah, October 30 and 31.
THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

Robert Fleck, Ph.D., (Curriculum Director), was appointed Interim Assistant Dean for the School of Business and Technology Management. He also attended the MidSE ACM 2013 Conference in Gatlinburg, Tenn. and presented a paper on using a modified Delphi technique to revise an applied BBA computer science curriculum.

Barry Dickinson, Ph.D. was named a core faculty member in the School of Business and Technology Management.

Namhee Kim, Ph.D., (Core Faculty) will present at the Academy of Human Resource Development Research conference in Houston, in February 2014 on “Exploring a Theoretical Foundation for HRD in Society: Toward a Model of Stakeholder-Based HRD.”

Pam Carter, Ph.D., (Director of Curriculum Development) presented her research titled “Curricular Leadership through Online Curriculum Network Governance,” at the 19th Annual Sloan Consortium International Conference on Online Learning held in Orlando, Fla.

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Jennifer O’Connor Duffy’s, Ph.D., (Dissertation Chair) book “Historical Research Methods in Higher Education” will be published in 2014.

Kristen O’Byrne, Ph.D., (Dissertation Chair) and Heather Rasmussen, Ph.D. (Director of Research) presented a symposium at the American Psychological Association in August.

Heather Rasmussen’s, Ph.D., (Director of Research) book chapter titled “Broad definitions of culture in the field of multicultural psychology,” will be published in Perspectives on the Intersection of Positive Psychology and Multiculturalism.

Heather Hussey’s, Ph.D., (Director of Research) article “Using Social Media to Enhance Instruction in Higher Education,” was published in Research Perspectives and Best Practices in Educational Technology Integration. She presented the same article at the National Institute for the Teaching of Psychology.

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