

■ JULIE E. KENDALL, Feature Editor, School of Business-Camden, Rutgers University



WE'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE A NEW FEATURE SECTION, "Doctoral Student Issues," by feature editor Julie E. Kendall. Dr. Kendall is an associate professor of MIS in the School of Business-Camden, Rutgers University. She has published in, *Decision Sciences*, *MIS Quarterly*, *Information & Management*, *Organization Studies* and many other journals. Additionally, Dr. Kendall has recently co-authored a college textbook with Kenneth E. Kendall, *Systems Analysis and Design*, fourth edition, published by Prentice Hall. She has also co-edited a book entitled *Human, Organizational, and Social Dimensions of Information Systems Development*. Dr. Kendall is a functional editor of MIS for *Interfaces* and has served as an associate editor for *MIS Quarterly*. She is on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Management Systems*, *Journal of Database Management*, the electronic *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, and the editorial review board of the *Information Resource Management Journal*. She reviews for *Decision Sciences*. Dr. Kendall's research interests include developing innovative qualitative approaches for information systems researchers interested in systems analysis and design. She is currently working on hypermedia theory and applications, and Web push and pull technologies. Professor Kendall is Vice President for Communication for the Northeast Decision Sciences Institute. Her interest in doctoral students is ongoing. She has served as the chair of the Doctoral Student Affairs Committee for DSI, and for the past four years has served as co-coordinator for the strategic research planning workshop portion of the annual DSI Doctoral Consortium.



Marcus A. Rothenberger

is a doctoral candidate in computer information systems at the School of Accountancy and Information Management at Arizona State University. He holds an MBA from Arizona State University and he received his undergraduate education in computer science and business from the Technical University of Darmstadt in Germany. Previously he worked for Deutsche Bank AG in the information engineering area. His dissertation research is on software reusability. Other research interests include information systems development, performance measurement, software engineering, and database systems.
marcus.rothenberger@asu.edu



Carlos Jesus Alsua

is a Ph.D. candidate in management at Arizona State University. He holds an MBA from Arizona State University and he holds a B.A. from Brigham Young University. He worked as a consultant and started up several small businesses in Europe. His dissertation research looks at the implementation of quality-related managerial practices in developing economies, and on the psychological empowerment of Mexican workers. Other research interests include goal orientation, leadership and intrinsic motivation in an international context.
carlos.alsua@asu.edu



Natasa Christodoulidou

is a Ph.D. student in supply chain management at the Department of Management at Arizona State University. She holds a master's degree and a bachelor's degree in accountancy both received from Arizona State University. Previously she worked for Arthur Andersen in the Business Consulting division. Her research interests include new product development, services and quality.
natasa.christodoulidou@asu.edu

Mentoring Ph.D. Students: A Student Perspective

Marcus Rothenberger, Carlos Jesus Alsua, and Natasa Christodoulidou, Arizona State University

This article examines duties and expectations of both mentors and Ph.D. students from the Ph.D. students' perspective. Doctoral programs usually focus on placing students in either research institutions, or on schools that emphasize teaching. Even though both types of programs meet different market demands, and they are valuable in their respective niches, we suggest that the teaching/research equation does not necessarily have to be an either/or situation. A quality program should strive to make both competent researchers and teachers. This means that programs with a history of teaching school placements should still emphasize the development of research competence. At the same time, research-centered programs should value and reward the development of teaching skills into the program's objectives. Hence, we feel that the suggestions addressed below apply to both types of Ph.D. programs,

while their importance might vary with the objective of the program they can be applied to.

Issues

Preparation for admission

Interviewing prospective new faculty members is standard procedure at virtually all academic institutions, but only some schools are interviewing their prospective Ph.D. students. We believe that the interview should be part of the Ph.D. application process because it helps evaluate the candidate and his/her fit into the department's culture and research interest. Fit and common interests should be as important for screening Ph.D. applicants as it is for prospective new faculty. A careful screening will insure a smooth and successful completion of the program and the best mutual benefit between the Ph.D. student and the department.

During this interview process, if a match between the prospective candidate and the department has been identified, it is desirable to obtain a faculty member's commitment to mentor that student upon official admission to the program. It often takes a few semesters before a Ph.D. student finds a good and reliable mentor, and it might be too late (i.e., many times the student is almost near completion of the program) for that student. A personality fit is also important here for a proper mentoring relationship to be successful.

In order for the recruitment process to be efficient and effective, it is essential to have a strong Ph.D. program coordinator. Unfortunately, with two or three classes a semester, plus research responsibilities, a professor may have very little time to devote to Ph.D. student recruitment and coaching. We suggest that programs could encourage Ph.D. program coordinator's involvement by substituting that involvement for some of his/her teaching load. This would free up the necessary time for coordination and recruitment of prospective doctoral students.

Finally, orientation sessions for new Ph.D. students during the week before the first semester can be a valuable help to getting a quick start in the program. Part of the orientation should be an introduction to teaching techniques, as well as explanations of student commitments and responsibilities, expectations from the faculty, university procedures, and so on.

Mentoring Process

Peer mentoring

Ph.D. students believe that mentoring is extremely important. Many students that enter a Ph.D. program are faced with an impostor syndrome (also called perceived fraudulence in the personality literature). While newcomers are socialized into the new environment of academia, they often feel lost. Thus, they begin to question their competence. With remarks like "Maybe I'm not good enough for this position," or "When are they going to find out that I don't know what is going on?" the impostor syndrome often induces feelings of low self-efficacy to perform in the Ph.D. program, and thus, it increases the chances that the student will abandon the program. We suggest that peer mentoring may help with

the negative consequences of the impostor syndrome. A second- or third-year student may be appointed as a "big brother/ big sister" (as in the Department of Management at Arizona State University, for example) to give guidance and encouragement. The student mentor will be able to answer questions and concerns, and help the newcomer realize that in the beginning "everybody is in the same boat" and expectations are high—sometimes they are hard to meet—but the new student can be reassured that at one point or another everyone else felt the same, and that those feelings of decreased self-efficacy to perform the program are part of the process and "everything will be all right." The senior student can give peer advice on issues like classes, housing, and other university-related questions.

Professor to Student Mentoring

When a student enters the program, a professor has already committed to be his or her mentor based on the previous interview process. It is the responsibility of both the student and the mentor to maintain that commitment. The most important part of the mentor or advisor-student relationship is mutual interest in the research for the dissertation. To this end, mentors can aid students in course selection beyond specific departmental requirements, and in the formation of program and dissertation committees.

In order for the mentor to be able to perform successfully all these duties, he or she can be relieved from teaching a heavy load. A suggestion is to have a class entitled "Ph.D. Mentoring" where the mentor/advisor could have two or three Ph.D. students under his or her umbrella and still teach one or two additional classes that semester. Ideally this mentoring class would count towards the professor's teaching load, to reward faculty for their commitment as a mentor.

Ideally, a Ph.D. student and the mentor can choose to have weekly meetings in order to ensure consistency in the progress

of the program. Since publications are important for the Ph.D. students seeking placements in research-focused institutions, publications for those students can be heavily emphasized in the program as a desirable outcome. As a general guideline, students should begin working on a publishable research project in their first year with their mentor. In order to encourage the mentor to publish with the student, some universities offer the incentive of promotions. For example, at Michigan State University in order to obtain tenure, or any other kind of promotion (i.e., from associate to full professor), the faculty need to provide evidence that they have published with Ph.D. students in the program.

Student Responsibilities and Expectations

The student, along with his or her mentor, will select the program and the dissertation committee members from the list of eligible faculty members in the department, based on mutual research interests. The committee member selection can be based on potential contributions to the student's research. Students will consider their knowledge and skills during the formulation of the research topic and the completion of the research and dissertation. In order to make informed judgments in this area, students will probably have to make a substantial effort to interact with faculty to become aware of their research interests and areas of expertise.

If the research interests of the student shift, or if a professor who is a mentor leaves the department, then it is the student's responsibility to find another mentor or another committee member. Active and helpful academic involvement, such as volunteering to assist with conferences that the department is organizing or participating in, is an opportunity for the student to show confidence and interest in his or her mentor.

Fit and common interests should be as important for screening Ph.D. applicants as it is for prospective new faculty.

CONTINUED on next page

continued from previous page

Placement

An early selection of targeted schools can improve the chances of the student to be successfully placed. After the student and the mentor have identified target schools, they might also identify which journal publications are recognized at those selected universities. The mentor can also be of valuable help to the student with the construction of the curriculum vitae. Early encouragement to submit to conferences related to the student's area will give the student the necessary exposure in the field. The mentor-student relationship is a lifetime commitment which can develop into a friendship, future co-author publications, conference presentations and much more.

Conclusion

The suggestions provided here are certainly not an exhaustive list of improvements. They only represent the opinions of the authors. We encourage you to share your

experiences and ideas with us as you reflect on your student-mentor relationships.

The panel listed below was part of a forum for discussion of the ideas presented in this article. The panel was presented as part of the Ph.D. Miniconference held during the Decision Sciences Institute meeting in Las Vegas, November 23, 1998.

Panelists

Marcus A. Rothenberger

School of Accountancy and Information Management, Arizona State University

Natasa Christodoulidou

Department of Management, Arizona State University

Carlos J. Alsua

Department of Management, Arizona State University

Gary Stading

INFO Department, Texas A&M University

Janna M. Crews, CPA

MIS Department & CMI, University of Arizona

Richard Johnson

Decision and Information Technologies, University of Maryland ■

Julie E. Kendall

School of Business-Camden
Rutgers University
Camden, NJ 08102
(609)225-6585
fax: (609)424-6157
kendallj@crab.rutgers.edu
<http://www.thekendalls.org>

DSI REGIONS

Southeast Region

Susan Rebstock Williams, Georgia Southern University

Southeast DSI Website

SEDSI now has its own permanent website at:

www.msci.vt.edu/orgs/sedsi

The program for the upcoming SE DSI Annual Meeting and registration information can be found at this site.

Southeast DSI Annual Meeting

The 29th Annual Meeting of the Southeast Region will be held February 24-26, 1999, at the Savannah Hyatt Regency Hotel. Many informative sessions on current research, innovative education, and technology are planned as well as tours of

Gulfstream Aerospace and the Georgia Ports Authority. Visit the website (www.msci.vt.edu/orgs/sedsi) for more information about the meeting.

International Arts Festival in Savannah

If you plan to attend the SE DSI meeting in Savannah, you may be interested in a number of cultural that events will be taking place in Savannah, February 26-March 7, as part of a 10-day International Arts Festival known as Savannah Onstage.

For more information please call (800) 868-3378 or (912) 236-5745, or visit the website at:

www.savannahonstage.org ■