

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

This column is a retrospective, a thank you, and a forecast for the future value of the Ph.D. degree all rolled into one. I began serving as feature editor for the doctoral student issues column in 1998 at the generous request of Barb Flynn, the past editor of *Decision Line*. Now that I am taking on new duties for the Decision Science Institute as treasurer, I have asked Keong Leong, the new editor, if I could make this my farewell column. He graciously agreed.

Four Years of Doctoral Studies: Time to Move Forward

by Julie E. Kendall, Feature Editor

Doctoral students should finish within four years. It is not always possible, but it is in your best interests to do so. After four years, doctoral students need a change. You may be comfortable in your surroundings and pleased with your activities, but if you are going to accomplish more, it is time to move onward.

So it is also with editors of columns about doctoral student issues. It has been a wonderful four years!

Demographics of Contributors

Many column contributors have generously donated their time to the important task of communicating with Ph.D. students and Ph.D. advisors over this period. The demographics of the column contributors are, in themselves, somewhat revealing of how many people are actively engaged in getting or granting a Ph.D. The column authors came from the U.S., Canada, and Jordan, and they were based in 13 different Ph.D.-granting universities, a nonprofit foundation, and a law firm. The column contributors included people of many different nationalities including Greeks and Jordanians, men and women, and people of many different races. Most of the columns were single-authored, but some carried joint authorship. The column authors ranged in experience from first-year Ph.D. students to full, chaired professors who are considered the founders of their fields.

Looking for Columns

My typical *modus operandi* was to identify potential column authors who I knew cared passionately about doctoral student issues

and then ask them to write a column that would be useful to our community. I tried to be “noninterventionist” in handling the authors of the columns, giving them only deadlines and required word counts; not meting out topics. In addition, I asked them for photos and bio sketches to run with their columns. Fortunately, with the superb help of the managing editor of *Decision Line*, Hal Jacobs, and the past editor, Barb Flynn, it was possible to complete the entire editing process online. That being said, it is hard to over-estimate the importance of face-to-face contact with a colleague during a Ph.D. event such as the DSI Doctoral Consortium. These encounters provided the perfect setting for me to solicit a column devoted to doctoral advice.

Columns—On Time & On Target

Working with the authors of the columns was a true joy. I can honestly say that no one missed a deadline (although sometimes we stretched it a wee bit). Generally, the level of response and the commitment to complete the column were remarkable. I have served on many editorial boards for scholarly journals and have never encountered the responsiveness exhibited by the column writers for the doctoral student affairs column. Their genuine commitment to the column is a telling indicator of their true passion for mentoring Ph.D. students. There was a shared sense of community, and a special spirit that infused the relationships I established with those who wrote the columns. Incidentally, the column was widely read and readers often commented on it. The good news was that our audience was as engaged as we were.



Julie E. Kendall

is an associate professor of MIS in the School of Business-Camden, Rutgers University. Professor Kendall has published in *MIS Quarterly*, *Decision Sciences*, *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. 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 AIS*, the *Journal of Management Systems* and the *Journal of Database Management*, and is on the editorial review board of the *Information Resource Management Journal*. She was recently elected to serve as treasurer for *Decision Sciences Institute*. Dr. Kendall's research interests include developing innovative qualitative approaches for information systems researchers interested in systems analysis and design. She is researching societal implications of push and pull technologies.

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The Ph.D. Experience

Even though I permitted authors a relatively free reign in choosing their topics, the columns over the past four years eventually covered a critical collection of topics, stakeholder opinions, and perspectives that will remain important to Ph.D. students and their professors far into the future. For instance, we examined what happens at the DSI doctoral seminar in the strategic research planning workshop; how to choose an advisor; what students want from their mentors; writing the doctoral dissertation; mistakes students make; a bill of rights for Ph.D. students; and the process of getting a position in academia once the Ph.D. is completed. We also examined the impact of technology on the Ph.D. education with a two-column debate about the merits of doing an online Ph.D. versus viewing the online Ph.D. as computer-supported work.

Numerous Stakeholder Perspectives

In addition to many diverse topics, many stakeholders' perspectives were shared through the columns. We had the perspective of a newly funded Fulbright scholar; the views of a student just beginning a Ph.D. program; the assessment of the fu-

ture of the Ph.D. from an accrediting body; the social agenda of a foundation devoted to the fostering of minority Ph.D. candidates; and of course, perspectives from well-known researchers on how to write the dissertation and how to keep on writing afterward.

There are many new and emerging topics that deserve column space—I wish someone had volunteered to write them. These include a column on "How to Decide to Enter a Ph.D. Program," one from a student to a professor talking about "The Five Most Valuable Lessons I Learned From My Mentor," and the logical response ("The Five Most Valuable Lessons I Learned from My Ph.D. Students.") On the human side of the equation, "An Open Thank You Letter to Each Partner Who Selflessly Supports a Ph.D. Candidate," would have been a worthwhile column to see in print.

"Get It Done"

Many years ago when I was struggling to finish my Ph.D., mentors of mine, Dr. John Neter (past president of DSI and professor emeritus of the University of Georgia) and his wonderful wife, Dottie, kept encouraging me with the words, "Get it done. It will

open untold doors for you." When you are in the throes of collecting data, or struggling with data analysis, or juggling teaching and a personal life through the pain of writing the dissertation, this advice is hard to fathom. Now I understand what it means. It means that when you have completed your Ph.D. dissertation, you have a reason to be self-confident. People will respect you. Furthermore, after all of that, you can be what you decide to be. And you can have fun doing it!

Thank You One and All

I would like to thank all of the doctoral students and professors who have specifically contributed to this column, as well as my own Ph.D. students and those I have had the opportunity to mentor via the DSI doctoral consortium. You have taught me an immense amount.

If you would like to read some of the recent past columns on doctoral student issues, you can go to the DSI Web site at http://www.decisionsciences.org/doc_col.htm and find links to the originals articles (in pdf format). ■

NAMES IN THE NEWS

CAROL LATTA, Feature Editor, Home Office, Georgia State University



J. P. Shim, a John Grisham Faculty Excellence award winner at Mississippi State University, has received a grant from the National Science Foundation regarding cross-cultural study on e-Commerce and M-Commerce to hold a joint workshop in Japan this fall. Ten MIS faculty members from various institutions in the U.S. have been selected to participate in the conference and present their research papers, along with a dozen Japanese IS faculty members (sponsored by Japan NSF). During the conference, the participants will tour the site of NTT DoCoMo's i-Mode wireless Internet service. Professor Shim has recently served on the NSF panel on grant proposals.



Linda G. Sprague, FDSI, FIOM, has accepted an offer from the China Europe International Business School (CEIBS) in Shanghai to become a full-time professor of manufacturing and operations management. She will serve as faculty advisor to CEIBS' new Case Development Program, and will be working on the design and startup of a manufacturing management center. She is also co-chair with Prof. Kee Young Kim of Yonsei University for the 7th International DSI Conference. Dr. Sprague, a Fellow of DSI, has been a visiting professor at CEIBS since 1997 and has been a faculty member at the Whittemore School of Business and Economics, University of New Hampshire, since 1969. CEIBS is a joint venture between

the European Union and the Municipality of Shanghai, and offers MBA and Executive MBA programs as well as a number of executive development programs. The CEIBS Exec MBA program is rated #1 in China, #2 in Asia, and #29 world-wide by the *Financial Times*. Each year, exchange students from London Business School, Ivey at Western Ontario, UCLA, the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill, Cranfield University, The Darden School, and IESE (Barcelona) spend terms at CEIBS while CEIBS students visit these institutions.

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