Human and Organizational Learning

Program News

ELP Now Accepting Applications for Cohort 24

The Executive Leadership Doctoral Program in Human and Organizational Learning is a cohort-based program in Ashburn, VA. Would you or someone you know like to join us? Interested candidates are strongly encouraged to visit ELP at the Virginia Science & Technology campus during one of our cohort weekends. Upcoming cohort dates:

- February 10 – 11 and 17 – 18
- March 9 – 10 and 16 – 17
- April 6 – 7 and 13 – 14

Contact our Recruitment Coordinator, Zeynep Ekmekci, at 703-726-3769 or elpnow@gwu.edu to learn more about the Executive Leadership Doctoral Program, arrange a visit, or get details about the admissions process. Applications for ELP Cohort 24 beginning May, 2012, are being accepted throughout the year, and the deadline is March 1, 2012.

Graduate Certificate in Global Leadership in Teams and Organizations

The Certificate in Global Leadership in Teams and Organizations is designed to increase the learning, leadership, and change capacity of individuals and organizations with a global emphasis in Human Resource Development. Theory, research and practice are balanced throughout the curriculum. The upcoming classes are:

- International and Multicultural Issues in Organizations – Beijing, China, March 13 to 17, 2012
- Leadership in Organizations – Buenos Aires, Argentina, March 13 to 17, 2012

Register for the whole certificate program, or sign up for individual classes which can be applied as Master’s or Doctorate level electives. You don’t have to be enrolled in a degree program to participate. Contact Zeynep Ekmekci at elpnow@gwu.edu for more details. Applications are accepted year round.

Cohort 23 Recognizes Dr. John Boswell

During the October, 2011, ELP 23 session, the cohort hosted an appreciation luncheon to honor Dr. John Boswell and his exceptional teaching style. The cohort was so interested in Dr. Boswell, his many exceptional stories, his frankness and his enthusiasm for education, that they wanted an opportunity to visit with him again informally. The cohort hosted a Saturday luncheon to let him know how much he would be missed as the cohort moved forward in their curriculum. Cohort 23 presented gifts (a bow tie with George Washington's signature on it along with a framed picture of Dr. Boswell teaching with signatures from all of the students) to say thank you. The cohort was grateful to hear his parting thoughts and well wishes as the cohort continued onward in their program.
Successful Dissertation Defenses

Congratulations to the following students who recently defended their dissertations:

- **Dr. Rob Bogosian**, Cohort 20 – “Engaging Organizational Voice: A Phenomenological Study of Employees’ Lived Experiences of Silence in Work Group Settings”
- **Dr. Laila Moretto**, Cohort 19 – “Exploring the Nature of the Relationships Between Decision-Driven Scenarios and Decision Confidence in High-Velocity Environments”
- **Dr. Tracy Phillips**, Cohort 15 – “Outsider Within’ Narratives of Diversity Leadership: An Exploratory Case Study of Executive Women of Color”
- **Dr. Annette Rahael**, Cohort 20 – “Co-CEOs: An Exploratory Case Study of Shared Leadership in a Family Owned and Operated”
- **Dr. Rebecca Sawyer**, DC Student – “Institutional Elements and the Identity of the University Housing and Residence Life Profession”
- **Dr. Tiffani Worthy**, Cohort 20 – “Knowledge Sharing Among Community of Project Managers: A Descriptive Case Study Examining the Relationship Between Social Structures and Knowledge Sharing Among Project Managers in a Global Engineering Firm”

Successful Proposal Defenses

Congratulations to the following ABD students who successfully defended their proposals:

- Jim Doiron, Cohort 21
- Bobbie DeLeon, Cohort 21
- Estella Gillette, Cohort 14
- Rose Ong, Cohort 21
- Simon Reese, Cohort 21

Vicki Brown, Cohort 22, Speaks About US Army’s Civilian Education System


Her presentations focused on the newly streamlined version of CES and the opportunities it offers civilians to grow their skills sets and advance their careers.

“The reason I’m here today is to talk to our civilian population about civilian training and leader development, so that they understand how we’ve transitioned our fragmented approach to leader development. Most specifically, CES is our new approach to a deliberate way to develop our civilian workforce,” Brown said.


Dr. Elizabeth Mahler Contributes Chapter

Cohort 14’s Dr. Elizabeth Mahler contributed a chapter to a book that was edited by Dr. Carol Hoare and published last month: The Oxford Handbook of Reciprocal Adult Development and Learning (2nd edition). Dr. Mahler’s chapter is titled “Midlife Work Role Transitions: Generativity and Learning in 21st Century Careers.”

Dr. Marie Borum, Cohort 6, Interviewed by CNN

CNN.com published an interview with Dr. Marie Borum, Professor of Medicine, on the impact of gluten in cosmetics on celiac patients. [http://bit.ly/yBueST](http://bit.ly/yBueST)
**Dr. Liliana Meneses, Cohort 15, Publishes in Book**

Writing Out of Limbo: The International Childhood Experience of Global Nomads and Third-Culture Kids was published by G.H. Bell-Villada and N. Sichel with F. Eidse and E. Neil Orr, with Dr. Liliana Meneses as contributing author.

Crossing borders and boundaries, countries and cultures, they are the children of the military, diplomatic corps, international business, education and missions communities. They are called Third Culture Kids or Global Nomads, and the many benefits of their lifestyle expanded worldview, multiplicity of languages, tolerance for difference are often mitigated by recurring losses of relationships, of stability, of permanent roots. They are part of an accelerating demographic that is only recently coming into visibility.

In this groundbreaking collection, writers from around the world address issues of language acquisition and identity formation, childhood mobility and adaptation, memory and grief, and the artist’s struggle to articulate the experience of growing up global. And, woven like a thread through the entire collection, runs the individual’s search for belonging and a place called home. This book provides a major leap in understanding what it’s like to grow up among worlds. It is invaluable reading for the new global age.

**Dr. Bill Toms Interim President of Brookdale Community College**

In March 2011, William M. Toms, Ed.D., a 2007 graduate of ELP 16, assumed the position of Interim President of Brookdale Community College in Monmouth County, New Jersey. Brookdale Community College annually enrolls 30,000 students in credit and non-credit courses and employs over 800 persons.

Dr. Toms recently published an article in the *Journal of Enterprise Transformation*. The article, entitled “Planned Radical Change in Organizations: Unintended Consequences on Roles and Continuity,” focused on role conflicts and the ability of an organization’s culture to absorb conflict and change. In 2010, Dr. Toms published “Leadership Behaviors and Learning Styles: Considerations in Leadership Development” in the *International Leadership Journal*, as well as “Scenario-Based Learning Improves Trooper Performance” in *The Public Manager*.

Dr. Toms retired in 2008 from the New Jersey State Police. As a Major in the organization, he was the Commanding Officer of the Intelligence Section and was also the interim Deputy Superintendent of Investigations where he oversaw the investigative and forensic work of approximately 800 members. Dr. Toms held positions in the NJSP where he commanded the organization’s Training Bureau, Human Resources Bureau, as well as the organization’s internal affairs operations.

**John Ebersole, Cohort 9, Publishes**

A new book by Excelsior College President Dr. John F. Ebersole, *Courageous Learning: Finding a New Path through Higher Education*, and co-authored with award-winning writer William Patrick, offers practical assistance to the millions of men and women in the American workforce who want and need to complete their postsecondary education. It also offers crucial insight to educators and policy makers looking for ways to adjust to the economic realities of higher education.

Dr. Ebersole, a leading advocate for adult degree completion and post-traditional solutions to higher education challenges, said, “Courageous Learning was written to say, ‘Yes, you can finish your degree. Yes, you can do it affordably. Yes, you can do it with schools that have excellent credentials. And yes, you can do it on your schedule.’”
Dr. Sydney Savion Releases Book on Life Transitions from the Military

Dr. Sydney Savion, Cohort 18, published a new book, Camouflage to Pinstripes: Learning to Thrive in Civilian Culture. Dr. Savion’s book smartly captures the essence of the lived experience of a culture change from military to civilian life through real people and real research and provides no-nonsense understanding and practical advice for veterans attempting to start anew.

“To often individuals exiting, especially those retiring from the military experience growing frustration with the civilian culture—more than likely, feelings of fear, vulnerability, irritability, or even a sense of being overlooked, “ said Dr. Savion. “Not to mention, after years of serving and protecting our nation, it is often difficult to pinpoint an enduring contribution in civilian life that is equally as glorious as military life. This is precisely where Camouflage to Pinstripes can help,” she added.

Dr. Savion retired as a commissioned officer after twenty years of distinguished reserve and active service in the US Air Force and received her doctorate in human and organizational studies from George Washington University. For more information go to: www.camouflagetopinstripes.com

Dr. Steve Moyer, Cohort 12, Serving as Facilitator for Advisors for Family Businesses Program

The S. Dale High Center for Family Business at Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, PA, is now accepting registrations for its new, best-in-class Family Business Advisor Program.

This intensive two-day workshop is designed for professionals providing products and services to family businesses, including consulting and training. It is scheduled for two consecutive Wednesdays, June 6 and June 13, 2012.

More information and a complimentary e-book called “Eight Tips for Family Business Advisors” is available at this link.

Feel free to contact the High Center with any questions at 717-361-1275 or at fbc@etown.edu. Dr. Moyer can be contacted at steve@netfamilybusiness.com.

Dr. Carol Hoare – Best Books of 2011 by the Center of Optimal Adult Development

Dr. Carol Hoare’s recently published book, The Oxford Handbook of Reciprocal Adult Development and Learning (2nd Edition), was named one of the Best Books of 2011 from the Center for Optimal Adult Development.

Drs. Casey and Goldman to Consult with US Army

Drs. Andrea Casey and Ellen Goldman have been named Senior Consortium Research Fellows to the Fort Leavenworth Research Unit of the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavior and Social Sciences. They are part of a small group of academic and military individuals providing expertise to an effort to improve strategic thinking among the forces. Dr. Casey is developing materials regarding developing organizational cultures to support strategy thinking. Dr. Goldman is developing materials on the requirements, development and assessment of an individual’s ability to think strategically. Both will prepare and present concept papers that will be published in an Army monograph.
Announcing the First Issue of Dr. Shaista Khilji’s South Asian Journal of Global Business Research

The inaugural issue of the *South Asian Journal of Global Business Research* will be officially released in print in early March, 2012, with articles available online via EarlyCite in January. Dr. Shaista Khilji is the founding editor-in-chief of the journal, which featured an inaugural theme of “Does South Asia Matter?” as well as articles by HOL students Walter DeMartis, Kelly Harper and Candice Matthews. Matthews also served as editorial coordinator for the issue. View a sneak peek at the first issue’s table of contents here.

GSEHD Faculty Selected for CGIU Committee

Colin Green, Laura Engel, Shaista Khilji, Maia Sheppard, Sam Steen, Jim Williams and Travis Wright were appointed to an ad-hoc faculty committee designed to provide support for GW students applying to participate in the Clinton Global Initiative University 2012, hosted at GW. The committee will be chaired by Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning Stephen Ehrmann.

Keynote Address Given by Dr. Mike Marquardt in Malaysia

Dr. Michael Marquardt delivered the keynote address for the 10th annual Asia Academy of Human Resource Development Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. His presentation was titled “Breakthrough Problem Solving with Action Learning.” He also spoke on the topic of action-learning at the America-Japan Chamber of Commerce meeting in Tokyo.

Marquardt Article Deemed Outstanding Paper

Dr. Mike Marquardt's article "The Coach as Catalyst for Action Learning" was voted outstanding paper of 2011 by the Editorial Advisory Board of *Training and Management Development Methods*.

Dr. Diana Burley On GW Panel

Dr. Diana Burley spoke at a GW event hosted by President Knapp in October at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City. The panel discussion focused on cyber security and was moderated by David Dolling, Dean, School of Engineering and Applied Science. Panelists included:

Dr. Diana Burley, associate professor for the Graduate School of Education and Human Development’s Executive Leadership Doctoral Program.

Dr. Lance Hoffman, distinguished research professor and professor emeritus at SEAS, and director of the Cyber Security Policy and Research Institute (CSPRI).

Dr. Julie Ryan, chair, Department of Engineering Management and Systems Engineering at SEAS.

Sumit Sehgal, director of Information Security, GW Hospital.

Dr. Diana Burley Discusses STEM

"Girls in Science" in *I am Modern* magazine is an interview between GSEHD faculty members Dr. Susan Swayze and Dr. Diana Burley. The article discusses STEM: science, technology, engineering & math careers & curricula for girls. [http://www.iammodern.com/girls-in-science.html](http://www.iammodern.com/girls-in-science.html)

Dr. Susan Swayze Publishes on Cyber Security


The interview with Dr. Diana Burley discusses why cyber security continues to garner so much business attention and how cyber threats differentially affect small businesses.
Dr. Margaret Gorman Has Conference Paper Accepted

Dr. Gorman has had a paper accepted for the International Conference OLKC (Organizational Learning Knowledge Capacity). The conference will be held the last week in April in Valencia, Spain. http://olkc2012.com/

Dr. Burley Publishing in IEEE


Dr. Diana Burley’s Paper Accepted at AERA

Dr. Burley’s paper, "Higher Education Consortia as an Occasion for Organizational Learning," has been accepted for the 2012 AERA Annual Meeting. AERA received more than 11,000 submissions this year. To ensure the highest quality papers presented at the Annual Meeting, Dr. Burley’s submission was reviewed by highly qualified reviewers serving on a review panel constituted by the Division J - Post-secondary Education/Section 3: Organization, Management, and Leadership.

Information and Resources

Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Scholarship

Announcing the launch of the 2012 Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Dissertation Fellowship in support of advanced doctoral candidates in a variety of fields, including education and the social sciences. At the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, we assist high-achieving low-income students, from middle school to graduate school, in reaching their full potential through education.

We have created the dissertation fellowships for doctoral candidates who are researching the population of students we serve in order to advance our understanding of the factors and contexts that help low-income students to overcome personal adversity and challenging socioeconomic circumstances to excel academically. We plan to use this knowledge to design programs and interventions that will help more low-income students identified as high-achieving in their primary and secondary school years to sustain their achievement levels through college and beyond.

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation will award four fellowships of up to $25,000 in 2012 with plans to increase the number of fellowships in the coming years.

Although applicants must be candidates for a doctoral degree at a graduate school in the United States, they need not be US citizens. Please note that the applicants' graduate study may be in a diverse range of academic disciplines but their topic must be tied to the educational experiences of low-income, high-achieving students.

Links to the application requirements and guidelines are posted on our website; the application and other materials must be submitted by February 3, 2012. Please visit the Fellowship site http://bit.ly/Ak84XJ for more information about the fellowship, the application instruction, and the Foundation. See the program flyer at http://bit.ly/yoJltq or contact Louis Caldera, Vice President of Programs, The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, www.jkcf.org, or 703-723-8000 for more information.

Form a Research Partnership with the Center for the Study of Learning. Visit www.gwu.edu/csl.
GW@AERA Vancouver Participation Poll: Who’s Going?

Plans are already underway to make GW@AERA Vancouver a success! We’re eager to know if you’ll be joining us at AERA in Vancouver on April 13-17, 2012. Please fill out the poll at this link: http://bit.ly/y4rkgR to let us know your plans. If you are presenting, please leave your name and the title of your presentation in the comments section – responses will only be viewed by Emily Robbins, Assistant Director, Office of Partnerships and External Relations, GSEHD. 202-994-1953 or erobbins@gwu.edu.

Transformative Learning Theory Conference Proceedings

Following is a link to the newly released conference proceedings of the 11th Transformative Learning Theory Conference held in Athens in the spring of 2011. http://bit.ly/AxMkoB. The conference features recent studies using transformative learning theory and the new theoretical extensions of the theory. You will find papers related to these topics in the proceedings.

The 12th TLT conference will be held in the Spring of 2013. The location has not yet been determined.

AoM

At the Academy of Management meeting in Boston, MA, August 3-9, 2012, Dr. Jim Hazy, ELP Cohort 10, is planning a symposium to explore the emerging field of human interaction dynamics (HID) for management and leadership research. This approach uses complexity-informed methods to explore fine-grained interactions among individuals, and how these enable emergent forms and structures that constitute firms, organizations, and institutions. Further, it explores how these coarse-grained structures in turn influence fine-grained interactions.

Topics of interest include the bidirectional links between individual interactions and: dynamic and operational capabilities, strategies and strategic initiatives, innovation and entrepreneurial ventures. Agent models, social network approaches and dynamical systems analyses are welcome as are empirical studies that support the theme.

The boundaries of this area are only now forming so exploratory studies and theoretical analyses are encouraged.

Those interested in learning more about this growing area may contact Dr. Hazy at hazy@adelphi.edu. Also, please visit the new site of the Institute for Research in Complexity and Society (IRCS) at www.complexityandsociety.com. We invite your active participation in this new initiative.

ESRI

ESRI is a scholarly conference hosted by the Graduate School of Education and Human Development March 2 and 3, 2012 at the Marvin Center. It provides an occasion for participants (professionals, students, alumni, and others) to present their original work in a variety of formats, to receive feedback and support from colleagues and professors, and to strengthen their work for future conferences and publication.

Registration Deadline - February 14, 2012

QUESTIONS: Contact 2012esri@gmail.com
Student Chair: Markesha McWilliams (2012esri@gmail.com)
Faculty Representative: Rick Jakeman
Website: http://gsehd.gwu.edu/research/esri

Attend Dr. Jim Hazy’s Symposium on Human Interaction Dynamics at AoM.
Call for Papers - Special Issue of the OD Practitioner - Summer 2012

OD’s Role in Improving Mergers and Acquisitions

Special Issue Editors: Jim Sanders, ELP Cohort 4, and David Jamieson

The success rate for mergers and acquisitions (M&A) continues to be a problem despite increased activity and awareness of the importance of human, organizational, and culture aspects of M&A in improving financial, organization, and individual outcomes.

Organization development provides a broad range of methods, practices, and approaches that are relevant to M&A and organization restructuring. However, the utilization of OD approaches and the understanding of effective practices are inconsistent.

This special issue is designed to respond to that gap with two intended outcomes:

- Improve the practice of OD approaches in M&A by documenting specific methods and practices that have high impact.
- Increase the utilization of OD approaches by documenting the value, roles, activities, and outcomes of OD approaches.

Potential topics include, but are not limited to the following areas:

**Organizing the effort:** How are OD approaches deployed in the M&A effort? Who provides the OD perspective? When are OD perspectives included in the M&A process? How is the OD perspective included across the functional areas involved in the M&A activity?

**Strategy phase:** What is OD’s role in strategy and initial acquisition identification? How does the organization develop a strategy that provides a complete view of strategic fit? What are the characteristics of fit? How do you determine fit? What specific methods and practices improve elements within the strategy phase? How do you prepare the organization? What is the role of leader coaching, supervisor training, and organizational readiness?

**Targeting and initial communications phase:** How is initial interest established? What is the method to establish the benefit of a relationship? How do you decide who to involve? How do you manage the restrictions of public company disclosure while communicating with multiple levels of the organization?

**Due diligence phase:** What are OD approaches to due diligence? How do you assess culture, talent, and organization design fit? How do you work with the restrictions in access to data involved with competitive auctions and legal constraints on engagement pre-closing?

**Closing and announcement:** How do you communicate the M&A decision to stakeholders?

**Integration:** How is the transition team organized? What is the method of team member selection, composition, leadership, and operation? What interventions work best in building transition team effectiveness? How do you ensure access to the value offering which motivates the relationship? How do you make organization design decisions, talent retention or exit decisions, and determine new roles? How do you create long term motivation, alignment, and focus and reduce unwanted turnover?

**Culture:** How do you manage differences in organization culture, national culture, language, and organizational histories?

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Call for Papers- Special Issue of the OD Practitioner - Summer 2012

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Organization learning and improvement: How do you create organization readiness for M&A, learning and improvement from M&A activities, organizational competence in performing M&A? What roles, skills, or practices improve effectiveness for serial acquirers?

Submission Instructions

Abstracts of proposed papers due date: January 31. Full papers due date: April 23.

Submissions to the special issue should be sent to the two special issue editors and the ODP editor (jvogelsang@earthlink.net). The submissions should follow the OD Practitioner manuscript submission guidelines; details at www.odenetwork.net/publications/practitioner/guidelines.php. The special issue editors will screen and provide feedback. Final papers will be reviewed by two members of the editorial board. General guidance: articles are usually 4,000 words with liberal use of graphics and charts. Case studies, OD intervention descriptions, new conceptual thinking, and interviews are encouraged.

Call for Student Member Conference Registration Desk and Technology Volunteers

AHRD is calling for student member volunteers to assist with Registration Desk support and Technology Support for various sessions at the AHRD 2012 International Research Conference in the Americas. Volunteers for either position will have their conference fees reimbursed in accordance with their work hours as follows:

- 5 hours = $50 reimbursement
- 10 hours = $100 reimbursement
- 15 hours = Full reimbursement (Up to $235). IMPORTANT: You must register prior to the early bird deadline of January 30 to receive full reimbursement for the conference. If you register after January 30, the maximum reimbursement will be $235.00, so this would not cover the late fee.

Reimbursements will be provided once the conference is complete and your total number of volunteer hours has been determined.

The primary responsibilities at the Registration Desk will include assisting people with check-in, registration, providing materials, and general AHRD staff assistance. AHRD will have a staff member present at the registration desk at all times to provide guidance, answer questions, etc.

The volunteer times we have available for the desk are:

- Tuesday, February 28 from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm – Registration set-up
- Wednesday, February 29 from 6:30 am to 5:00 pm
- Thursday, March 1 from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm
- Friday, March 2 from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm
- Saturday, March 3 from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm – Includes registration tear down

A Technical Support volunteer must possess knowledge and skill in setting up an LCD projector and laptop in a session room and troubleshooting connectivity and PowerPoint presentations for presenters. He or she must also be able to commit to work for at least one morning or afternoon block of sessions.

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Call for Student Member Conference Registration Desk or Technology Support Volunteers

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If you are interested in volunteering for one of these positions, please complete the online form no later than February 3. We will make the selections and get back to you the week of February 13.

If you have any specific questions about this opportunity, please contact Scott Franzmeier at scottf@ahrd.org.

How to Drive Home Your Science with a Visually Pleasing Poster

The posting below gives some great tips on preparing posters for professional meetings, and not just for scientists. It is by Edyta Zielinska and it appeared in the August 31, 2011. Careers issue of The Scientist: Magazine of the Life Science http://www.the-scientist.com/toc/2011/03/. © Copyright 2011, The Scientist, Inc. All rights reserved.

After many years of walking through poster sessions, Colin Purrington, a professor of evolutionary biology at Swarthmore College, noticed a trend. Usually, as he wandered the aisles looking for something to spark his interest, he’d see a lot of badly designed posters that buried their scientific messages. Although occasionally there would be visually pleasing posters that promoted less-than-stellar science, Purrington usually found that “the attractiveness of a poster is highly correlated with the quality of the science,” he said. Graphic design and scientific inquiry require different skills, but oddly enough, it appeared that “the people who understood the beauty of fonts had a sense of pitching their science,” he said.

Scientists have a lot of good reasons for making bad-looking posters. Mentors often tell students to go into the hallway and make a poster like the ones hanging there; posters present preliminary data, which is sometimes collected up to the last moment before a conference, making poster design and layout a last-minute affair. Finally, visual and graphic design is a specialty unto itself, and one that researchers rarely study.

However, there are important reasons for making concise, well-presented, and eye-catching posters. “We have really big brains, and a big part of that brain is dedicated to sight. If the poster doesn’t fit in some nice visual sense, it just doesn’t work,” and viewers are likely to move on, says Purrington, who has written an extensive online primer on scientific poster-making.

The Scientist talked to researchers who have sharpened their scientific pitches, as well as to graphic designers who understand the rationale behind color, font, and layout choices. Here’s their advice for making a better poster.

TIPS FOR DESIGN AND Formatting

- **Shorten your text lines.** Long lines of text are more difficult to read, which is why magazines and newspapers always break up their text into narrower columns. If your poster has a landscape orientation, consider breaking your text into four columns.

- **Justify the right way: to the left.** While justifying text on both the right and left (i.e., full justification) makes for very neat-looking columns, designers are beginning to move away from the practice, says Nichole Jonas, a graphics specialist at the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. It can cause distracting vertical “rivers” of spaces down the page. Left justifying text makes for an easier read.

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- **Consider your font.** You don’t have to stick with just one. Adding a little variety, and even downloading a font that isn’t available on PowerPoint, can make your poster stand out. But never use more than two or three fonts, says Jonas. She suggests using sans serif fonts like Helvetica or Gill Sans for the body and a serif for the titles. (Other designers prefer serif fonts for the body, as they “can help guide the eye through the word,” said Jonas.) “Anything but Comic Sans,” she says, as it tends to look amateurish.

- **Don’t put conclusions on the floor.** Even though it’s the most important part of the poster, the conclusion is often placed “at the bottom, [where] it’s at people’s feet,” says Graves. She suggests placing it at top of the rightmost column—or, if you feel daring, start the body of the poster with it.

- **Bigger is better.** “People have this weird love of small font,” says Purrington. “They think it looks professional and that large fonts are for children.” But that’s not the case, he says. In low light conditions, or when scientists are reading over other people’s shoulders, larger fonts are essential. LiLynn Graves, graphic and web designer at the Cornell Center for Materials Research at Cornell University, suggests a font size of 85pt for the title, 36–44 for the headers, and 24–34 for the body text.

- **Dump PowerPoint’s color palette.** Many people use PowerPoint to create their poster, but the program was designed for projecting images in a darkened room. The deep blues and fluorescent greens that look good in that setting often produce posters that are too dark and difficult to read, says Graves. Stay away from primary colors on primary colors (no reds on blues, or reds on yellows). Instead, Jonas suggests a background in a muted color—one that is closer to white on the color spectrum—for a more professional tone.

- **Sundries.** Check for readability at 6 feet; print out a small copy to better judge your layout choices; use a ruler to make sure all columns are aligned; stick with black as the text color.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR DATA EASY ON THE EYES

- **Title with a message.** Titles are the best way to quickly tell readers what they are supposed to take away from your data. Always title your graphs, says Purrington.

- **Make your findings obvious.** Highlight the peak, trough, or other comparison of interest with an arrow containing the value of that data point. It’s better than making a reader work out the value from the axes.

- **Include the method.** While many posters do include a methods section, it is almost always useful to include a simple description of how you got the data you’re presenting near the graph, says biochemist Joseph Provost of Minnesota State University Moorhead, a frequent judge of student posters. Without a simple caption that describes the experimental method, “it’s hard to understand how an experiment was done,” he says.

- **Temporarily dump your text.** A good way to test to see whether your graphics are serving their intended purpose: “If you removed all the info besides the graphics, the poster should still be pretty good,” says Purrington. “Scientists are lazy, they don’t read,” says marine biologist Nando Boero, from the Università del Salento in Lecce, Italy. The graphs should tell the whole story, he says. (Continued on next page.)
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- **Banish the legend.** Legends or keys to multicolored line graphs give a viewer one more thing to interpret. If possible, annotate your data with labels directly on the image, says Purrington.

- **Sundries.** Use graphs rather than tables; avoid cluttered figures; arrange experiments to tell a story, not in the order they were performed; include enough data to defend your hypothesis; keep about a 50/50 ratio of graphics to text.

**IMPROVE YOUR BODY**

- **Link images and text.** Unlike journal articles, where tables and graphs are often located at a distance from their description in the text, “In a poster, the words must be near the visual aid,” says Boero. “You have that possibility, so use it.”

- **Cut your text.** Once you’ve created your content, read it again to see how many words you can cut, says Boero. Pretend you’re writing a telegram, and paying for every word, he suggests.

- **Make killer bullets.** Limit bulleted lists to the conclusion section, if possible. There, lay out 4–5 summary statements that capture what your data means and its wider implications.

- **Answer your hypothesis.** Make sure your conclusion is more than a restatement of your results. It should directly address the hypothesis you lay out in the intro or abstract.

**THE CHECKLIST: WHAT TO DO BEFORE YOU PRINT**

- **Give it a test run.** In his experience, Wallert says, “You find [mistakes] when you’re standing in front of your poster” at the conference. To save yourself the embarrassment, project your poster on the wall of your lab and run through your presentation, he suggests.

- **Check your file size.** Make sure you haven’t inserted a 500 MB image, or one that’s low resolution. “If a person has never done a poster, they’ll probably make one of those mistakes,” says Purrington

- **Are your axes labeled?** Oddly enough, missing axis labels are something that poster judges Wallert and Provost see often.

- **Check your message.** Once you’ve made your poster look its best, give it one more read-through to make sure that it presents the point of your research in the most convincing light.

- **Color check.** Make sure the colors you’ve chosen are readable in low light. It’s hard to predict where your poster will be placed, so make sure your choices work in different settings.

- **Check dimensions.** Although this should really be the first thing you do, not the last, it’s a good idea to make sure your poster conforms to the meeting’s size and orientation specifications.

- **Resources.** Get feedback on your science. Post your poster on Faculty of 1000 (posters.f1000.com) to get feedback from experts (F1000 is The Scientist’s sister company). More tips at posters.f1000.com/postertips.

- **Buy software that does it for you.** Check out Poster Genius, a program that formats your content into a clean layout. You simply enter your text and figures, and it selects the right font and tests for optimal readability under conference hall conditions. www.postergenius.com/cms/index.php
How to Drive Home Your Science with a Visually Pleasing Poster
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- **Buy software that does it for you.** Check out Poster Genius, a program that formats your content into a clean layout. You simply enter your text and figures, and it selects the right font and tests for optimal readability under conference-hall conditions. www.postergenius.com/cms/index.php

- **Add technology.** Add a QR (Quick Response) code, the multimedia bar code, for access to your video or sound files (or a digital handout of your poster). Pros: you can add those cool videos of your fluorescing C. elegans. Cons: they only work for smart-phone owners. Download QR codes at www.qrstuff.com or qrcode.kaywa.com.

- **Scientific Poster Design.** A visual how-to for improving posters, with many examples: www.cns.cornell.edu/documents/ScientificPosters.pdf

- **Elements of Style.** Graphic design elements as they apply to scientific posters: Science.nih.gov/confluence/display/~Jonasnic/Elements+of+Style

- **Better Posters.** Great blog with constantly updated resources for better poster-making: betterposters.blogspot.com

NOTE: Anyone can subscribe to the Tomorrows-Professor Mailing List by going to: https://mailman.stanford.edu/mailman/listinfo/tomorrows-professor.

GSEHD Office of Career Services - Serving the Career Needs of Alumni

Nationwide, there is a growing trend of alumni engagement in career services at colleges and universities. In GSEHD, we have seen a significant increase in alumni requests for services, workshops, and appointments since our opening in June 2010. Please contact Robin Cleveland at robinc@gwmail.gwu.edu or Thomas Stowell at tstowell@gwu.edu for GSEHD career information. 202-994-5860, http://gsehd.gwu.edu/students/careerservices.

**Online Search Tool at the GW Library**

If you have not visited the library website in a while, you will want to read about the newest feature for searching for library materials… ArticlesPlus!

The single search box for ArticlesPlus is located on a tab in the upper right hand corner of the GW Libraries website. http://www.library.gwu.edu/ With it, you can search a large variety of library resources including journal and newspaper articles, books, e-books and special collections material, all at the same time.

What can I use ArticlesPlus for?
- The Google-like search box allows you to search using a variety of terms.
- Launching your search for articles and books on a topic.
- Exploring the availability of research on multi-disciplinary topics.

What is ArticlesPlus NOT used for?
- Doing a comprehensive literature search – ArticlesPlus only searches a limited number of popular databases for articles on a topic. To find the most appropriate research databases to use, go to: Databases by Subject Area and A-Z
- Trying to locate a copy of a book that you have the title or author for – use the library catalog (Surveyor) for this
- Identifying journals available at GW (or the consortium); Use the E-Journal Search to locate online versions of journals.

For more information, go to: http://www.gelman.gwu.edu/help/ DIY/
Updates and Info

For your reference, this newsletter is also posted on our website at http://www.gwu.edu/elp/news. If you have any contributions, address changes or feedback, contact Marge Niedzwicz at mniedzwicz@va.gwu.edu, or contact the ELP office at 703-726-8396.

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