

International Students Journey Across Traditional Sichuan



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As vast and significant as China is to the world, it is not unusual for international students to have a ton of general notions about the country before arriving, which fascinates us. I was one of those people. When I learned that I was about to spend a semester in China, and after a lot of documentary watching and deep research, I was even more charmed by all its culture and natural beauty - and I could not wait to embrace it as soon as I arrived.

Nevertheless, a month passed by and I barely left the concrete smog over the big city cluster that is Shenzhen and its surroundings. As comfortable as it may be to adapt to China in a city full of expats and imported goods from all over the world, Shenzhen lacks the mesmerizing historical and cultural charisma I was expecting.

Having said this, it is not surprising that the opportunity to go on a school trip to the Sichuan province with my fellow international peers from the "China Studies" course sounded like an amazing chance to get to know the real China-- to breathe the fresh air of the countryside, to learn and understand the country's traditional values and, by the end of it, fall even more in love with China.

And so it was; we saw China's black and white celebrities and we felt like celebrities, we learned about Daoism and Confucianism, we ate and breathed the spicy food until our throats went numb - and, most of all, we made a lot of new friends and we've gotten even closer together as a group.

Day 1 - All the way up to the farmers' traditional way of living

After a delayed flight and a late arrival to Yibin airport on Thursday night, we acknowledged we were truly out of the big city. Between a thunderstorm and pretty

much nothing else, we drove through the bumpy darkness with no idea where we were, just seeing glimpses of nature all around us whenever the lightning struck.

But the storm passed through, and we woke up to a beautiful blue sky over Pingshan County, forestalling a charming day in the sun - and it rightly surpassed all our expectations. Our first contact with Sichuan's people was in JinPing Middle School, where we were received as rock stars for an unforgettable morning. It's almost indescribable how these kids looked up to us, being their first time to ever see and meet a foreigner. The group split up in four different classrooms, and we started an open dialogue (with a translator), where we told the children about our countries and our culture, and showed them on a map how far away we are from, and we were asked a lot of questions about us, some in Chinese, some even in English. Some questions were as simple as; "Can you be my friend?". After the class, the show began, where apparently we were the lead artists; the adorable kids were actually lining up to take a picture with us and get our autograph, and there was even a huge poster where they asked each of us to sign. It was overwhelming to feel like such a celebrity, when walking anywhere was a difficult task because of our "fans".

Our visit to JinPing Middle School was much more than a morning of cultural exchange. Professor Haifeng Huang, in the name of Peking University, donated numerous books to the Sichuan school in order to finally open their library, and to guarantee our friendship was not circumstantial, but just the beginning. And indeed it was, as some of the international students already created a group on WeChat to keep in touch with the children and help them learn and practice their English, a connection was growing faster than we would have ever imagined.

Day 2 - Flowing North

Spending 5 hours in a bus can be a mood killer, especially after a long night of KTV, but it can be bearable, especially when you're heading to a splendid city like Chengdu, home of the most adorable Chinese celebrities - the pandas. However, our second day of the trip was devoted to another powerful resource in China: water. On our way north, we first stopped at China's 3rd biggest dam, only 3 years old, where the

huge construction was as impressive as the surrounding rugged scenery, on the boarder of the Sichuan and Yunnan provinces. The gravity dam in Jinsha River is actually the main supplier of the Northwest of the country, and we could testify before our eyes how even inner China is developing itself and modernizing.

It was an interesting experience to witness such modern facilities, especially when our next stop, 5 hours later, was the so called "Treasure of Sichuan", a city over 2300 years old and only 500,000 people (a figure quite impressively low for China), named after its famous irrigation system, Dunjiangyan. However old, it turned out to be even more remarkable how Li Bing's solution for the frequent floods 2.200 years ago is still standing. Actually, the dam is still working, which still plays a crucial role in draining off floodwater, irrigating farms and providing water resources for more than 50 cities in the Sichuan province.

Day 3 - A Black & White World

Halfway through our journey of discovering China out of the big city, the third day was all in black and white. From Yin and Yang all the way to the charming pandas, we were immersed into China's most well-known symbols.

Right next to Mount Qingcheng, the place where in 142 CE the philosopher Zhang Ling founded the doctrine of Chinese Taoism, it would be a sin not to take the opportunity to hike all the way to the top and learn the deep understanding and respect of nature that Chinese history has. In fact, we got ourselves surrounded by the most essential elements of Taoist culture in every one of the 11 temples across the steps and every memorial, built during the Jin and Tang dynasties.

What's more, you feel as though you're in a magical place when you pass between the stone lions and the usual heavenly king's hall, climbing until you finally reach the mystic pagoda on the top, among the clouds, and although the inside stairs were closed to the public, you know they reach the skies. It is outstanding that even in such a rapidly-developing and industrial country you can still find such well-preserved sights, reflecting the traditional architecture of western Sichuan, and the ancient values of China.

Day 4 - Confucius says...

After visiting Jinping Middle School on the first day of our adventure, it was hard to imagine that any other school could seem just as impressive. It was at this point that we took a short one-hour bus trip to what we thought was the middle of nowhere, to visit the incredible and prestigious Confucius International School. As we had spent some days hiking, we were not equipped with appropriate clothing for this visit, as we quickly realized after being greeted with honourable badges from the school, and formally thanked for coming to visit it. We were instantly overwhelmed and felt very unworthy of being there, but we made sure we showed our utmost gratitude to the teachers and students who guided us on our tour. We were quickly taught about the importance of the school, its independence in China, and the fact that the high school was taught entirely in English. Subjects seemed extensive and we all became jealous by the ways in which the high school students were taught. Apart from learning the traditional ways of Confucianism, the students were taught via the traditional British and American education systems.

Feeling like the day had just started, we were told to get back on the bus for the last time, and the short journey to Chengdu airport begun. Tired but happy, we were all commenting how it was such a great idea to enroll in this trip, as we not only visited Sichuan as tourists, we were immersed in its vigorous ways of life as locals.

All in all, it could not have been a better Spring Festival and Easter celebration. As one of the most important Chinese holidays, we gathered with our own little family, we grew closer together while learning and understanding China, and it ended up being one of our best weekends here so far. Nevertheless, it was good as always to get back to the place you call home, which is now BeiDa campus - how nostalgic is it when we get to Dorm 5, call for the elevator, and hear the magical words "Dianti Shangxing - Going up"? For us, it felt as comfortable as home again.

Reported by Mariana Coimbra

The English Association



We continue our series of interviews with different associations on campus. This time we will be interviewing the president of the English Association, (Yu LiFu) or Emmanuel.

How old is your Association?

The English Association was established in 2007 by several PHBS students.

What is the main purpose of the association?

The main purpose aligns with the goal of our school – to build a first-class international school and world class campus in China. Therefore, the association aims to bridge Chinese and international students through various activities.

What makes your association stand out from others?

All of our activities are open to all on campus, Chinese and internationals alike. In addition, we only use the English language in our activities. We also have a tight relationship with the International Association as we organize events together. The best thing about our association is that you can make new friends that probably have a very different background than you, and we believe that is our most attractive feature.

What kind of functions/events you focus on?

We mainly organize fun activities that express interests of our members and share different cultures and traditions such as “speed tutoring”, “thanks giving dinner”, “Halloween party” and others. We also host language exchange activities. The idea is very simple, we want everyone to relax, have fun and make new friends during our events.

How often are these events organized?

Big events are organized every semester. Ordinary events are organized at least three times each semester. The schedule is quite flexible, but we generally organize our events when our core members have enough free time.

Who can join the association?

Our events are open to anyone so technically all students can join. However, if you want to help us organize the events, then contact our people to be more involved and be considered as a core member. Our core members enjoy what they do and are having a wonderful experience.

How big is the management team and how does it work?

We generally have around 10 active core members and elections are held around November or December.

What made you to join this association?

I would like to say that I am a diverse person. The reason I chose PHBS is due to its international environment, which is rare in China. The English association has given me a great opportunity to step a little bit further in this environment. Working with people from different cultural backgrounds is crucial in order to be successful in the future. The English Association has given me an environment where I can really practice how to communicate with foreigners, how to understand where

they are coming from, and how to express my ideas in a clear and understandable way for everyone.

Are you satisfied with what the English Association has accomplished over the years?

My answer is both yes and no. From one hand, we have all made a lot of effort to organize more events and lots of them have worked out very well. From the other, there were a number of events that still did not attract many people as we thought it would. Besides, our core members are often busy with studies, which make things more difficult, but we always try our best.

What do you think you have gained the most from this experience?

Definitely friends. I am actually a person with typical Chinese characteristics. For example, I feel uncomfortable when I am talking to strangers, especially foreigners, and I do not know how to start a conversation. The English association helped me communicate better with foreign students. I made friends throughout the process and I would not trade that with for anything else.

Why would you encourage others to join and why?

Of course! Just as I mentioned before, I think there are a lot of Chinese students who want to have international friends, but they might be too shy to do so. So if you want to merge in an international environment, come join us.

What have been the main challenges you have faced?

Finding something that both Chinese and international students enjoy. The Chinese culture is so different from that of other countries and sometimes we feel that it is really hard for us to find something in common. Also we were hoping to organize some visits to local companies in Shenzhen, but we have found it to be troublesome to find and establish good contact with firms.

What is the future for the association? How do you see it developing in the next year or two?

We hope to keep up with the events that we currently have and develop them further. We would like to create some new activities like visits to local companies or have trips to other cities.

I would like to thank Emmanuel and the whole English Association for doing such a great job. I think that they have contributed a lot to the harmony and building friendship on campus between foreign and Chinese students. Also, their events have been very visible, popular and highly appreciated from the students and staff alike. We wish them good luck for the future and hope they will keep up the good work.

Reported by Karlis Lubka

The 2015 Shenzhen International Exchange Conference

The 13th annual conference for the International Exchange of Professionals was hosted by the State Administration of Foreign Expert Affairs and the Municipal Government was held from April 18th in Shenzhen. This conference first held in 2001, is China's only event that caters specifically to foreign experts in China and since its beginning has provided many opportunities for human resources and technology exchanges.

The conference this year covered fifteen modules, including exposition, talent recruitment, project matching, high-level forum, talent training and special topic discussion. Compared with last year's, it is more international and highly specialized with various bright courses.

Bringing innovative projects

Those talented personnel from overseas brought hundreds of innovative projects focusing on new materials, new energy, bio-medicines, IT, energy-saving and innovative finance. The organizing committee held an innovative entrepreneur competition in the overseas student exhibit area and held matchmaking meetings with Chinese companies and financial investment firms.

Shenzhen will offer great post-doc support

Shenzhen's weakness in developing its post-doc programs is its small number of universities and scientific research institute. However, its enterprises stand out all across the country in their post-doc development. This year, the organizing committee had prepared more than 150 job posts for post-doc and has especially had drawn attention from Hong Kong's universities and scientific research institutions. The social bureau's said: "In the future, we hope to invite more talented people from China and broad to join us."

Shenzhen embracing more international personnel

At least 50 overseas Chinese student group have registered for this year's meeting, including the North America Chinese Scholar International Exchange center, (NAEC), Professional Federation of Overseas Chinese Students, North America Association of Canada Asia-Pacific Strategic Entrepreneurial Investment (CASEI), Northeast American Overseas Chinese Student Association, Macao Professional Development Association, and overseas student organizations of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), the Materials Research Society, the American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM), and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME).

Displaying entrepreneurial achievements

It is said that an increasing number of people returning from overseas have come to Shenzhen in recent years. Those returning overseas Chinese have high education levels, many of them from European and US universities and nearly 22 percent from the world's top 100 schools. Some are versatile, with several degrees and proficient in a number of languages and the number from developed countries has increased greatly.

Shenzhen providing rewards for outstanding overseas Chinese. The platform this year has more than 40 million yuan to provide as subsidies for enterprises overseas Chinese set up. Shenzhen has policies to attract professionals from overseas, with subsidies for setting up pioneer and industrial parks. Since 2000, it has provided 10 million yuan every year for innovative environmental construction and development projects, which has helped attract many professionals. By the end of 2012, it had increased its subsidies, of the highest of which was 500,000 yuan, and second-tier, 250,000 yuan, and the third, 150,000 yuan.

Focusing on transnational technology and industrial application. This year, there will be a focus on transnational technology and industrial application in the following area: energy-saving and environment protection, E-technology innovations, 3D printing, microelectronics and chip technology and medical technology.

This is the first time that Peking University Shenzhen Graduate School takes part in the conference on international exchange of professionals, as its aims is to attract more excellent scientific talent to work at PKUSZ. During the two days' exhibition, the staff received more than fifty resumes from overseas talents who showed great interest.

Reported by Chris Lee



PKU Business Insider – A Student Entrepreneur



Paruay Leelawong, a 24 years old graduate from a top university in Thailand, is very passionate about entrepreneurship and wants to share his experience to motivate young entrepreneurs in Peking University. Let us see what business stories he has for us.

What was your motivation in starting a business?

When I was at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand, I did many projects related to cars. So in third year, I had opportunity to do an internship in an American automaker company "Ford Thailand". My internship experience in the mechanical design department dragged me into the automotive industry. After graduation, I worked as a mechanical designer for TEAM Consulting and Engineering Group Co., Ltd. This was one step forward for me to start a business related to exporting car parts all over the world. My goal by doing this was gaining financial freedom to support my family, future spouse and kids.

Honestly, when I was an engineer, I did not have enough time to spend with my family. But I really value work and balance. Work is just that part that supports a happy life.

Please tell us about your business today?

My business is focusing on automotive parts, partnered with Mr. Alan Forsyth, director of Twoals Automotive and Taiwanese business-man Mr. Gary Liu, director of Innovative Impression Technology Co., Ltd. At the moment, we supply high quality, Thailand-made, bolt-on parts for pick-up truck around the world.

My company is currently exporting automotive parts from Thailand to six different countries South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, Taiwan, Hong Kong and the United Kingdom. I also run another separate business (www.soetrading.com) that deals with soap, Thai snacks and other accessories.

What was your motivation in pursuing a master's degree at Peking University even though you had stable business?

Even though I am an engineer, I am also the CEO of my company. This is why I started my master's in management. I want to improve my business skills to sustain my business for longer period of time. In addition, China's role in the world is getting larger and people's buying power is getting better. As a result, I came to Guangzhou because there is where all the automotive factories are located. In the near future, I am planning on producing my own brand of automotive parts.

For me, China is really different from other countries. Apart from just being a large market, it is full of culture and a long history.

What was your biggest obstacle doing business?

When I started my business I did not have many connections to sell my products. I had to spend a lot of time to gain the trust from my supplier and potential buyers. When I think back, it was not an easy time for me, but overall I am a risk-taker, and thinks that "all problems can be solved if I spend time working on them."

Is there a memorable story that you have encountered while doing business that can give little morale to young SME entrepreneurs?

Prior to telling my story, I want to tell young entrepreneurs to stay ready. Being ready does not mean being prepared for a client's need. I am referring to a state of mind for any sudden opportunity.

My story is very simple: when I participated in a social meeting that was run by an SME association, I met a person and he introduced me to automotive wholesalers in Taiwan and Hong Kong where I can sell my automotive part. This story sounds really simple but if I was not ready to sell my product, then nothing would have happened. My mind was

always open and ready for new deals and I was confident I can solve risky situation in the future.

Can tell us about the size of your business?

In Thai BAHT, my revenue is around 2 million BAHT per month, which is less than 400,000 RMB solely on automotive trading. Currently, I am expanding to import and export in China and I will focus on snacks. I do not have the figures yet.

Can you tell us more about the business that you are doing in China?

Currently I am selling coconut chips in China. Actually this is my aunt's product, as she has a factory in Thailand. Currently I am importing it from Thailand and distributing it in various places in China.

I really wanted to provide healthy snacks around the country. My product contains no sugar or salt, nor any artificial flavors. It is just dried coconut slices. I really recommend my coconuts snacks to chip lovers who are feeling guilty about eating chips after their workout. My product is healthy, so rather than some peanuts while drinking beer, I recommend coconut chips.

How are PHBS courses from management helping your business?

Most of ideas and strategies I apply in my business come from Professor Chastagner's courses: Strategic Management and Entrepreneurship. These course focus on case studies. The daily application of this knowledge improved my business skills. I truly believe Professor Chastagner's classes were vital for the expansion of my business in China.

Is there anything you want to say to our readers?

I really thank PHBS for letting me be in a beautiful country like China, which also offers with a lot of opportunities. I really appreciate Peking University Shenzhen PHBS for opening its doors to foreign students. I have met great friends, professors and good business partners.

Reported by Jin Ho Bang and Stella Kyuyoung Park



The Science of Happiness

What does Harvard's most popular course have in common with our day to day decisions? Does the popularity of this course show humans' all time intrinsic need to determine what they can do that will help bring them happiness? The course we are referring to has completely revolutionized the field of psychology, from focusing on human ailments into asking 'What makes human beings flourish?' It is called Positive Psychology: The Science of Happiness.

What makes you happy? Hanging out with friends? Getting your degree? Psychologists have scientifically proven that one of the greatest factors contributing to our happiness is how much gratitude we show. Appreciating people around us, as experiences and opportunities make us happier. Also having answers to questions such as 'what gives me meaning?', 'what gives me pleasure?', and 'what are my strengths?' as these enable us to pursue our calling and ultimately what brings us the most pleasure.

Sometimes, we end up heading towards a path we had not foreseen in the past with the most rewarding of results. In my life's journey before making a particular choice, the big question is always whether that direction will bring me the most happiness and allow me to fulfil some goals I have set for myself. This brings me to my current destination, China. I did not plan coming here, yet here I am wishing I had even come here for my undergraduate degree. The joy of learning new cultures, making new friends, trying exotic food, visiting different places, the list is endless. This experience ticks this box for me 'Happiness must combine both pleasure and meaning, providing both present and future gain'. This experience has changed me forever both academically and internally by altering my perceptions towards a lot of things.

Adrienne, an exchange student from Australia had this to say about her experiences: 'China has built me as a person through its beautiful culture and atmosphere. I feel at home here; the people are peaceful and happy, I only wish I could have experienced this sooner'. Her experiences have shown that happiness is not an end state rather it is a journey not a destination. A lot of doors will open leading to different paths in life and they all keep heightening your happiness, as you will carry these memories and experiences forever.

People build up on their happiness in different ways and Alexandra a full time Management student from the United States had this to say: 'Living in China has not only helped me grow as a person but has also helped me realize what truly matters most in life. Life is about the people you meet and the lifelong connections you form with others. I have met so many incredible people during my studies and travels in China. Immersing yourself in another culture really opens your eyes and encourages you to expand your horizons. Stepping outside of my comfort zone (learning Chinese, travelling and interacting with locals, trying new foods) has all shaped me into the person I am today.'

Alexandra has worked on identifying happiness boosters into her life which are things she enjoys doing and works on doing them. Hence her happiness levels are always up. Having a sense of accomplishment helps our happiness and answers our question on what gives me meaning, and what actions and attitudes should we take to make us happier. Megan, our International Affairs Manager said 'It has always been my goal to work abroad, so for me just being here feels like I have checked something off my list and that alone makes everything more joyous. Moreover, it is exciting to experience the daily life in China amidst a group of great people'.

Felix, a first year management student from Belgium sums it up nicely by saying 'What I like most about China is the people and the weather. If one is not nice, the other will be'.

A happy person allows himself to feel an array of emotions and acknowledges the highs and lows of life without losing his overall state of being positive. We should always keep in mind that happiness is mostly dependent on our state of mind. Consider happiness to be the ultimate currency. Always ask yourself what you are trading it for.

Reported by Fortune Sanyanga



Master's Thesis— All It Takes Is Commitment and Hard Work

"Relax.. It is only a big homework project" –
Terrill Frantz, PhD

Many argue that writing a master's thesis is a massive undertaking and one that is not to be taken lightly. Writing a master's thesis can feel like running a marathon, as working on the same topic for a year is laborious and can be quite exhausting! But there are many people who can be of assistance during this unique experience.

In our last issue, I interviewed two second year students at Peking University HSBC Business School, Kristina Penzaz from Russia who is majoring in Quantitative Finance and Federico Paolucci from Italy, proceeding with a master degree in Management - who were kind enough to share their experience and insight about their thesis preparation.

Besides your friends and colleagues, there are many professors who are eager to assist students at all times. In the following sections, We will go over some important recommendations from four distinguished professors at PKU HSBC Business School, on how to efficiently work on your thesis.

Professor Kevin Chastagner

"If a student wants to create a timeline and have me make sure they stick to it, I will."



If you are a student interested in learning, which involves showing some initiative by looking into some of the literature on your own, coming up with questions, and having a good attitude about the process, then Assistant Professor Kevin Chastagner, PhD is a great choice for you..

Professor Kevin got his PhD in Business Administration from Washington University, Pullman, WA, in 2012. His main research interests include Corporate Strategy and International Business.

When asked about the best strategies students should focus on, he was very precise and forthcoming. "Read" – he said; It seems like students struggle with what to do and they let this hold them back until the last minute. A large part of the process is reading, reading background literature, reading key theories, reading methods, all of these are things that can be done when you feel stuck that may help you get new ideas about what you can do in your own work. The problem that usually develops from all this reading is how to focus in a specific topic.

In response to this issue, Professor Chastagner provides flexible work process "depending on the student. If a student wants to create a timeline and have me make sure they stick to it, I will. If they want to work mainly on their own and come to me with questions that is fine as well. I feel that it is important for the student to learn how to effectively manage their own work process while knowing that, if they ask, I will do what I can to help."

Many students struggle choosing a topic. Prof. Chastagner suggests that we think about what our goals are with the thesis. Some students want a thesis that may help them get a job in a certain area, while others are looking to do something that is interesting enough that they can survive the thesis defense. "From there, I think it is important for the student to identify a paper from a top-level journal that is close to their interest, so that they can get an idea of what they will need to be able to do" – he said.

Working on the paper is only one part, another part is thesis defense. "Sometimes it appears that students try to focus on a complex model or a hot area of research in an effort to impress the defense committee. What I want to see is that the students know what they are talking about and this comes from having a solid understanding of their area" – said prof. Kevin. Most importantly he suggests that students be able to answer the question "why?" for everything they do. Why does your theory explain the expected relationships?

Why is your work important? Why are you measuring the variable the way you are? Why do you run the version of regression that you do compare to another? Why is 0.05 your cutoff for a p-value? Being able to answer these questions shows that the students know what they are doing and understand conceptually what it means. It can also help demonstrate that the student knows more than simply how to run the statistics – he added.

Professor Christopher Balding

"Look at the world around you and start from interesting puzzles and questions you see around you"



Associate Professor Christopher Balding got his PhD in Political Economics from the University of California Irvine in 2009. He joined PHBS in 2012 and his main research areas include International Economics and Political Economics.

He has very flexible criteria for his advisees: "Who ever knocks on my door" – he says and believes strongly in encouraging students to follow their own intellectual passion or some topic that can be useful in their future career. The one non-negotiable when working with him is that he expects students to work hard on their topic.

When asked about the best action plan for the thesis student he replied the following: "First, data. Start with interesting data and everything becomes a lot easier. Second, start with a research question. Too many students try to start with a methodology or even answer. Research should be driven by questions. Third, hard work. There is no substitute to hard work and students don't apply enough to their thesis." A good strategy to pick according to Prof. Balding is to focus on creativity and ideas. Advanced techniques mean nothing when not used properly and nothing can replace the determination and willingness to put in the time and hard work, which most students forget.

Q: Any suggestions on how to prepare for thesis defense?

A: "Very simple: over prepare. First, in the body of your presentation prepare a maximum of 12 slides. Second, include 20-40 "Appendix" slides that go into much greater detail about issues that are not of primary importance but may be questions posed by the thesis committee. This helps you prepare and demonstrate your preparation".

Professor JooYoung Park

"Practice. If possible, please practice in front of others (classmates, advisor, etc.). Remember what you did and what you wrote"



Associate Professor JooYoung Park joined Peking University HSBC Business School in 2014. She got a PhD in Marketing (Business Administration) from the University of Iowa in May 2014. Her research areas include Marketing, Consumer Information Processing, Consumer Motivation and Self-Regulation, Embodied Cognition and Brand Management.

When choosing an advisee, she considers how much she can help the student. "I do not limit students to particular research topics. I think students should work on a topic that is either interesting for them or relevant to their future career/study" – she said. If students' research topic is related to psychology and individuals' behavior, she is definitely happy to help them. However, if their research questions require complex programming or Econometrics/Economics background, she encourages them to find another person who can help them more. "Personally, I prefer students who are motivated and interested in their research to those

who just want to pass the defense" – added Prof. Park. Knowing what students are interested in is very important when working with advisors. Students can "find this from their experience (at work, at school, of in their daily life) or from papers" – says Prof. Park. Once students have specific ideas, process becomes much simpler. Discussing about how to collect data and what is required for data analyses is the next step. "I think the process is quite consistent, but the amount of time I spare for each step differs across students. For instance, some come to see me with a clear idea, and some don't. I need to spend more time discussing research questions and models with those who do not have clear ideas about their research questions" – Prof. JooYoung Park said.

There is no universal advice on how to perfect your thesis work process, but starting early definitely helps. Prof. Park found many students returned to school without any research ideas three or four months before their thesis defense, which limits things she can do for them, and in these situations, students also feel a lot of pressure. "Students may have their research hypotheses before leaving for work/internship. This will help them find some ways to collect data while they are working" – suggested Prof. Park.

Professor Terrill Frantz

"Appreciate that thesis is a process - the deliverables are not the reason-to-be, and it is entirely a mental process; and, start early!"



Professor Terrill Frantz, with broad and very diversified industry experience, got his PhD from the School of Computer Science, Carnegie Mellon University, in 2014. His research areas include Organization Behavior, International & China Business, Mergers & Acquisitions, Post-Merger Integration, Social Networks and Computer Software & Programming.

He has a fairly simple requirement for his advisees; as long as they speak English, his door is open entirely to all PHBS students.

Professor Frantz offers his broad and deep experience and insight. "Specifically, the process I have is I am there to assist in whatever way that they need, however, I steadfastly refuse to make decisions or do the work for them. The thesis is the student's project entirely, not mine. Whatever process they desire I accommodate. I give them my attention and access to my experience and insights."

Similar to Prof. Balding, Prof. Frantz also suggests that the best first step to take for the student who is aiming to go to the industry, is to find the data: "Start with locating the source of data, period."

He suggests three possible options on how to find the data:
Option 1: For secondary data, financial lab databases are very useful (PHBS invests a huge amount of money for such resources and they should be utilized). "Explore, experiment, and play... creative ideas always come from play!" – he said.
Option 2: For primary data, students should develop (or borrow) a survey instrument to collect data from subjects.
Option 3: Utilizing a virtual laboratory, aka computer simulations or mathematical models to generate data are another way to go. "For details, come chat with me - I would welcome such boldness in any academic!" – Prof. Terrill said.

As for thesis defense, he suggests attending others' oral defenses the year before; practicing the week before our own, especially the night before and in the very same classroom; "but do not over-rehearse!"

There are no simple and eternal truths about how to write a good thesis, but I hope this article will help you better prepare yourself for the relatively long process that requires commitment and determination. As prof. Terrill Frantz said: "Relax. It is only a big homework project".

Reported by Sophiko Tsotskolauri