Phoenix Scholar

PHOENIX SCHOLAR

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Editorial

In the past year the pandemic, civil unrest, and an imbalance of racial and ethnic underpinnings have shaken our nation. However, even with these forces bearing down on us, University of Phoenix (UOPX) has remained steadfast in its commitment to deliver a rigorous education for those ready to make an earnest commitment. And for the past few years, Knowledge Without Boundaries (KWB) has become an important annual academic summit for all UOPX stakeholders, the broader higher education community, and the communities they serve. This year's 2021 summit entitled "Exploring the Nexus of Change in Diversity, Education, & Leadership," to be held virtually in August, will be no different. If you have not yet submitted a proposal there's still time. From researched studies to conceptual models and best practices, each year the scholars at UOPX have worked diligently to produce rigorous research that contributes to their fields and meet the standards of peer reviewed journals for publications.
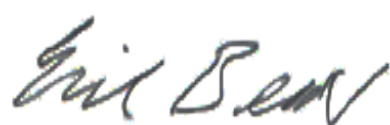
This edition of the Phoenix Scholar celebrates what we've done and where we are headed. It demonstrates the breadth and depth of scholarship with a run-down of last year's KWB presentations and authors. The articles also cover the progression of many projects at various stages that add purpose and value to, and answer a number of immediate questions about, the educational, business, and humanitarian fields. It's obvious we celebrate life-long learning and, as we have always done, we use technology to keep pushing the proverbial envelope that allows our curiosity to continue in the face of adversity. Like a phoenix, we rise!

In this edition examine Dr. Medgar Roberts' article on eLearning, equity, and access; find out what motivates faculty to do what they do in Dr. Ryan Romingers, et al.'s article; and learn how Dr. Erika Burton turned her fellowship study on what motivates doctoral students into a rigorous peer reviewed published journal study through one of the Informing Science journals.

I think you will agree that these, in addition to other enlightening projects our students, faculty, chairs, and alum are doing, are changing lives and helping communities, educational institutions, and organizations. In a matter of a few months we will once again be together as the latest projects accepted for the 2021 KWB Summit are revealed and presented. We hope to see you there!

Sincerely,

Erik Bean, Ed.D.

Associate University Research Chair
Center of Leadership Studies and
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Equity, Access, and eLearning: Lessons from COVID-19

Medgar Roberts, Ed.D.
    Alum
    Center for Educational and Instructional Technology Research

Even in the best of times, education is a complex business. But the seismic shift catalyzed by the coronavirus pandemic is unprecedented and creates significant challenges. As of March 30, 2020, it is estimated that 89.5% of all students worldwide (just over 1.5 billion students) were displaced from school due to this crisis (UNESCO, 2020). That is 188 countries that have closed schools. That initial onslaught continued into 2021. The exponential growth of the virus with no known cure has left health and educational leaders with no other choice than to starve it (Wolfson & Wilson, 2020). Though the United States never took the step of a nationwide closure, several states closed school buildings for three months or more to finish the 2019-2020 school year (Strauss, 2020). Even more schools remained closed into the 2020-21 school year. Prudent leaders in the field of education need to know the impact of these realities.

For many students and families, schools are the great equalizers. Many studies have been done that show the impact summer vacation has on students from low socio-economic areas. Generally, students from middle class homes and up gain a month of learning over a twelve-week break. Students at or below the poverty line typically lose as much as two months of learning over the break (Kuhfeld & Tarasawa, 2020). The implications of having a six-month hiatus from educational opportunities is uncharted territory, especially when the fact that for many schools there was still teaching customarily completed in a nine-month school year that was not complete after six months. Additionally, as many as eight million more people may have joined the ranks of poverty since the beginning of the pandemic (DeParle, 2020). The lack of educational opportunities for less fortunate students could significantly increase an already substantial learning gap between them and students from homes with more income.

During that interruption in the educational process, many schools turned to distance learning or eLearning to provide instruction. To this point, the research that has been completed indicates that online learning opportunities are only effective if students have consistent access to the technological tools necessary, including Internet access, computers, and tablets and if teachers have the training and support necessary to implement meaningful online instruction. The existing literature on the subject indicate that these requirements are not universally met. Compiled over the months leading to January 2021, research indicates that students with average remote learning experiences will lose 3 to 4 months of learning over traditional face to face school (Kuhfield & Tarasawa, 2020). Students with low quality remote learning experiences will lose 7 to 11 months of learning over students who had the opportunity to attend face to face school during the same period. Of course, students who do not attend school at all will lose 12 to 14 months of learning. None of these results consider new learning that students will not experience.

Further impacting the results is the likelihood that students of various backgrounds will have access to quality online learning experiences (Pierre, 2020). Overall, 32% of students have access to average and above average remote instruction. Low quality remote instruction is available to 48% of students with 20% of students having no access to remote instruction at all. But when the results are broken down into the appropriate demographics, the situation is dire. White students have the largest amount of access to quality remote learning at 38%; Hispanic students are next at 21%. Only 14% of Black students have access to quality remote learning with a negligible percentage of students of low socio-economic status (low SES) having consistent access to remote learning. On the other end of the spectrum, only 10% of white students have no instruction available during periods of remote instruction. Hispanic students have no access 30% of the time. Black students and low SES students lack access at 40% each (Dorn, et. Al., 2020; Kuhfield and Tarasawa, 2020). When translated into the overall months of learning lost vs. traditional school, students as a whole have lost 7 months of learning as of January 2021; low SES students have lost almost 13 months in an 11 month span versus traditional school. These results become even more stark when the realization that almost 20% of children in the United States lives under the poverty line (Dorn, et. Al., 2020).

A substantial number of students depend on schools to provide them with sustenance each day. Roughly thirty million students in the United States alone qualify for free or reduced lunch—that's one in every five students (DeGuerin, 2019). In many cases, schools also provide students who qualify with free breakfast and dinner as well. For those students, school closings not only meant a loss of intellectual nourishment, they also deprived students of physical nourishment as well (DeParle, 2020). While there were some school systems that attempted to fill that need through nutritional efforts over the stay-at-home orders, the reality is that many were thwarted by the various efforts to enforce social distancing necessary to stop the spread of the novel coronavirus (Pierre, 2020).

An additional consideration is the extremely important socialization component endemic to schools, particularly in elementary education, but not significantly less so in secondary schools. An extended absence from schools could have some impact on the social and emotional well-being of some students from all backgrounds (Noonoo, 2020). Once again, there are questions of equity involved in getting students from lower income households back into a school setting where they have more of the support necessary to close the developmental gap

that customarily exists (Kuhfeld & Tarasawa, 2020).

Prudent leadership is difficult in the best of times, but in times like these, it is critical to understand the impact of external forces on internal dynamics. The effects of COVID-19 will have lasting repercussions, perhaps for decades. Understanding the impact of the pandemic and eLearning on equity and student learning is paramount.

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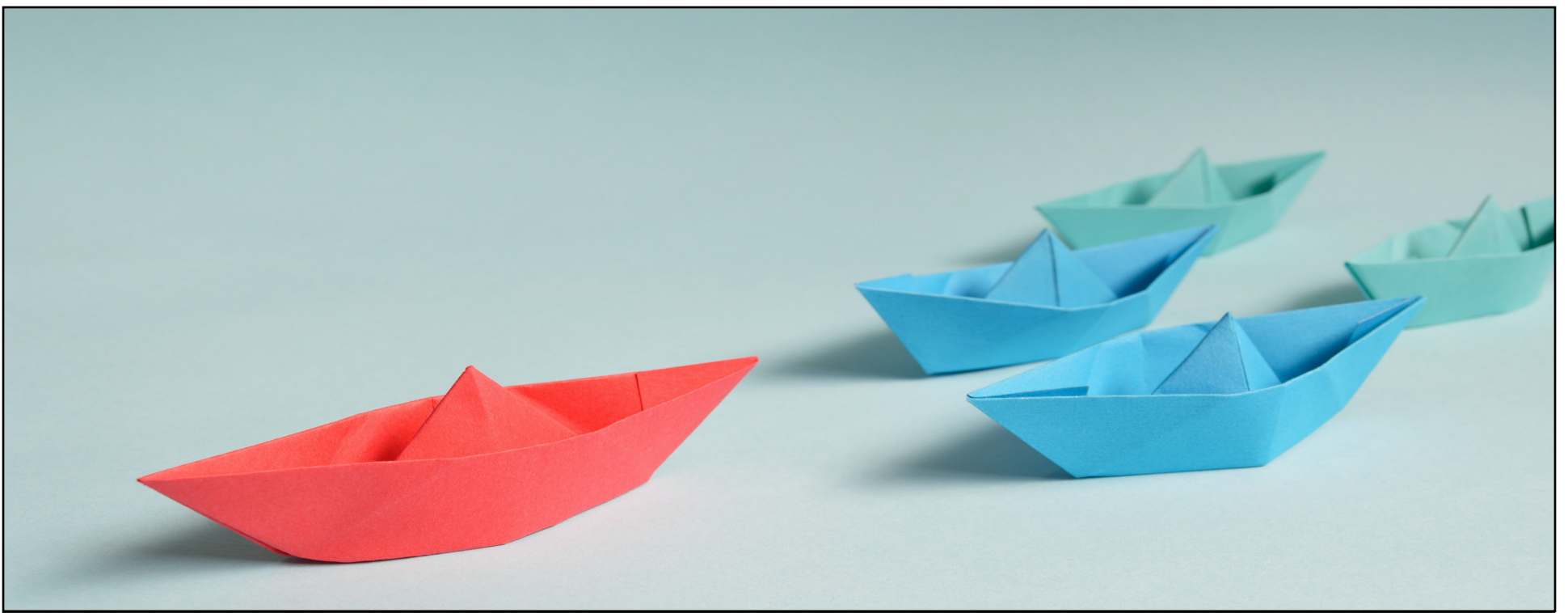
Mis-Leadership

Mark McCaslin, Ph.D.
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Mis-leadership was on full display in 2020. Before going further, there is no political or personal agenda to what follows—only a critical reflection. Through critical reflection, we may become masters of our own thinking, thereby using our ability to reason to ask appropriate questions and to continually be knocking at what we experience with the world for what is real and good.

Critical reflection allows us to become more deeply aware of our purpose and place, as well as the impact of our interactions on others and our environment. Critical reflection gives rise to a more mature way of being in the world. What separates critical reflection from other types of learning or reflection is its deep probing into our individually held assumptions concerning how we interact with others—how we understand the world. It is a very personal practice aimed at revealing a deeper self-awareness. Said more directly, are we the captain of our own life, or are we unsuspectedly being manipulated by misinformation—mis-leadership?

Many would agree that society's very foundations are being eroded by the constant flow of misinformation spawned by positional tactics as it relates to the environment, healthcare, politics, and equality. What we believe and why has now gravitated towards defending those beliefs over open and trusted discourse. It would appear, more and more, that society is becoming, borrowing from Bill Plotkin's Soul Craft, "overly harden and underdeveloped." This essay will not tarry on the damage done but on the practices that may provide aid for individuals serving in leadership roles and their associates in dealing with mis-leadership.

Manipulation, intimidation, coercion, and deception collectively are limiting forces on human potential and organizational effectiveness. Too often, they are used by individuals in leadership roles who have organizational objectives and their own needs for success as their primary motivations to lead. If the organizational objective becomes more important to the leader than their associates, or if the leader's ego becomes more important than the followers' well-being, then the leader is more likely to use some or all of the heavy propositions. In any of these cases, the relationship of trust necessary for constructive personal and organizational growth and/or change becomes greatly diminished.

Manipulation includes: getting what you want from others, even when they are not willing to give it to you; dishonestly getting people to act in a way they may not have chosen on their own; presenting reality the way you want others to see it rather than the way it really is; or maintaining control and power over others, even though they think they have the control and power.

Intimidation includes: threatening to use power or control to get others to do what you want them to do; using verbally, physically, sexually, or emotionally abusive behaviors to get people to do what you want; using physical size, stature, position, or a deceptive relationship to get others to respect and obey you; keeping others loyal to you by threats of pulling back your support, love, caring, interest, or approval of them; or convincing others that you are the only one with enough experience, wisdom, intellect, and insight to give direction.

Coercion includes: the use of force to restrain, dominate, threaten, or bring about the desired means. Coercion is present in many companies. Examples include the threat of position, the promise of advancement, the fear of losing one's job or status, the need to be "well thought of by others," the misuse of positional authority, and the hope for recognition are examples of coercion.

Deception includes: to ensnare, to be false, to fail to fulfill, to cause to accept as true or valid what is false or invalid, to give a false impression, to obscure the truth, and to pursue a course contrary to stated values or practices. In leadership, deception includes not doing what you say you will do, and any communication or act with the intent to deceive, trick or mislead another. Deception would also include telling a mistruth or purposefully leaving out known data to escape blame or gain an end.

A fair question would be; If these heavy propositions are so damaging in the long run to the culture of an organization or community, why use them at all? The answer is quite simple. They are used because they work, at least in the short run. In the long run, they are seeds sown that will surely reap defensiveness, gamesmanship, alienation, survival strategies, entrenchment, and fear.

How do we protect ourselves from the destructive power of mis-leadership? The answer, at least in part, rests with our ability to practice critical reflection. With mis-leadership, because trust is a fragile commodity, a faith-tendency or a truth-tendency progresses. This is an extremely active psychological force that can, under the heavy propositions, outstrip all opposing evidence and dialogue. Without critical reflection, we may indeed deceive ourselves and others. Depending on our position of power and will to believe in organizational leadership, we may find ourselves on the following "truth-ladder" (James 2015) where we would say:

- There is nothing absurd in a certain view of the world being true – I find nothing in this premise that is self-contradictory.

- It might have been true under certain conditions;

- It may be true, even now;

- It is fit to be true;

- It ought to be true;

- It must be true;

- It shall be true; at any rate, it is true for me.

There is no logic in this chain of inferences; however, it does form a slope of goodwill on which larger questions may live and which critical reflection may shape. Questions that can be engaged through dedicated critical reflection ultimately lead to good action flowing from awareness, insight, and discernment (A.I.D.) that may reveal goodwill. As truth now seems mutable in time and space, we may not discover the truth, yet we may reveal what is real. Evoking ontology's sleepy power, practicing critical reflection may be the only good way to disengage from mis-leadership.

Truth now presents an elusive target and, by way of the heavy propositions, falls prey to those evoking mis-leadership. There is no simple solution for addressing mis-leadership. We can, however, begin, through critical reflection, change our response this these tactics. Responses that may include practicing deep understanding, critical reflection, maturity, empowerment, and generativity. These are all elements of what might be called healthy leadership.

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How Tenacity, Resiliency, and Patience Led CLSOR Fellow Dr. Erika Burton to Peer Reviewed Publication: An Interview with Rodney Luster and Erik Bean

Vitals
Name: Erika Burton
Profession: University Faculty, Founder of Stepping Stones, and Co-Founder of Orion's Mind
Degree: Ph.D. in Educational Leadership, Research, and Supervision

Dr. Erika Burton shared with Dr. Rodney Luster and Dr. Erik Bean her background, research interests, and journey culminating with the publication of her work entitled "Factors Leading Educators to Pursue a Doctorate Degree to Meet Professional Development Needs," in the International Journal of Doctoral Studies.

Rodney:

Erika, thank you for joining us today for the interview. Dr. Bean and I were just talking about your impressive C.V., and your long-standing academic career.

Erik:

Indeed Erika, your background is impressive. First, let me also welcome you. It's great to have you on board for this interview for our Phoenix Scholar edition celebrating Knowledge Without Boundaries, our yearly academic summit. As we were constructing this edition, we thought of you immediately for an interview, with the work that you've been doing for the Center for Leadership Studies and Organizational Research. So, let's start off and tell everybody a bit about your background.

Erika:

Sure. I started as an associate faculty here at University of Phoenix in 2003. I can't believe how long it's been. I joined CLSOR as a fellow in 2014.

Erik:

That is a long-time! And what in your background ultimately led you on this path?

Erika:

I started out as an assistant principal in a very blue-collar area of Illinois. And I loved it because it was truly a melting pot. It was like what America stands for in terms of the population, and it worked beautifully. I absolutely loved the community and I got named as the principal. I was deciding if I wanted to do it because there were obviously more responsibilities, but I was in one school district that was really unique and was in charge of all the special education and all student services. I loved that aspect of being able to be in the classrooms every day. And I didn't know, as the principal of one school that I would have a lot more administrative responsibilities attached. The idea of the role had me thinking that it would take me away from what I loved doing best, which was being in the mix of the experiential part of the process.

At the time I had just had a baby, and I decided to go for the job. They named me principal, but I decided it wasn't for me and I ultimately trained another principal who took my place. I stayed with them for an extra month to make the transition smooth, and during this time I started working for the University of Phoenix and I loved this experience. I really wanted to use my doctorate, which I earned in 2004, and University of Phoenix allowed me to utilize those skills. I loved learning and working with research and developing new data to help educators. So, when there was an opportunity to do research through the university and work on a CLSOR fellowship, I obviously gravitated towards it. And I started out working for Dr. McCaslin (retired dean of scholarship and research). He was so well versed in research and the whole thing was an interesting process because I think he was just about to transfer to a new leadership position when my fellowship study was approved. He worked with me and there was a lot to learn in every phase of the project, and a lot of rejection to deal with before acceptance. The process was grueling, but worthwhile in the end. Erik you also were mentoring me when Dr. McCaslin transitioned roles.

This really is a process to be experienced. It's just like anything else, it's baptism by fire and you kind of have to go through it on your own, and each time you get a little better at it. It was interesting the way I had to engage everything and be ready to pivot. I think that's like the key term for today with COVID and everything, I had to be able to pivot. For example, I wanted to do this enormous study and – just like a newbie who wants to cover all their interests in one study – I wanted to cover everything in a given area, in leadership and everything else.

However, I had to realistically compromise and work on a small scale with a qualitative study. Initially I wanted to do a quantitative study where I could analyze a significant number of the population of the University of Phoenix students to help the University understand what students need to succeed. That interest came from my experience as a student and wanting to give back to the UOPX doctoral community. Because UOPX has been around longer than any other online institution, such research becomes much more relevant to the unique needs in this space. So, I wanted to do this grandiose first study and was feeling excited at the possibility of it as a newbie engaging in this professional research project, but it turned out that this small study was just as meaningful to me because it was truly my first professional post grad research and it was research that I produced on my own.

Erik:

Congratulations again on your 2020 publication Erika through Informing Science. What did you think of the process of being published?

Erika:

Initially, when I shared my proposal, they said, "tell me more," and then you have to walk through the work and your proposal (as well as presenting yourself as a researcher) with a publisher. Of course, your work is judged on many things, such as what's interesting to them. It is also scrutinized by the people who peer review any given article. And although the reviewers may not have the background knowledge, or content knowledge that you do in a given area, they must critique it on very strict standards on quality, writing, prose, and functional positioning. And based on that, most of these kinds of publishers try and give some general feedback. You have to have a thick skin because rejection does happen a lot. You also have to be assertive and sometimes you negotiate with the publishers on parts of your article that need to remain unchanged.

There are gray areas. For example, in the past I followed those minute pieces of advice on such particulars that I didn't even think I needed to support, but they wanted me to. Conversely, there are things you must let go. Initially, when I worked with Dr. McCaslin, the work was more about coming up with a plausible theory that directed the research. In the end, that didn't end up necessarily being as important for me as sharing the voices of doctoral samples I studied. This sharing allowed current students and recent graduates to have a voice about what they felt and what needs they have in academia and their doctoral journey. I learned a lot and, through those findings, I uncovered what was really important to students. However, I still only scratched the surface of something bigger. The research endeavor for me was like building a puzzle, you focus on some pieces that come together but you have to let the entire puzzle go to get that small section. I do like getting involved in a university, especially when education and students can benefit.

Erik:

Speaking of benefiting, we have started exploring other funding options for students in terms of outside grants and even those offered by non-traditional source like other for-profits. Our focus now is taking on this aspirational goal by starting to train faculty on how to write for grants through workshops, and really trying to understand the process as professional researchers ourselves.

Rodney:

Perspectives like yours Erika are important and the research you have contributed in the world of education have helped define some of the things we try and experientially engage in as a university in order to continuously improve. But as Erik mentioned, getting more people involved in research has been a key objective since our first research center opened in 2014. Recently we have been looking at the potential of grant writing. It started during the pandemic with grantsmanship writing, where I was initially trained for several months. In fact, one of our alum, Dr. Cooper, alongside Erik and myself, just recently jumped in and wrote a grant through the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation. So much like what you described as your first post grad research experience Erika, this was also our first grant. And in much the same way, we had to write a proposal, allow it to be judged, take feedback and such. What a great experience. While we did not secure the grant, we learned quite a bit about the competitive nature of funding applications and how to bolster future proposals.

Erik:

Rodney has recounted our experience well and Erika you have been here from the get-go. Your study had the practitioner underpinnings that UOPX strives for, and the Research Centers have been trying to push in member and faculty publications. So, I have to ask, will you share with us more specifics on your research sample?

Erika:

Sure. There is obviously so much to this research I conducted. I feel like there's almost controversy in terms of saturated data around population sampling. For instance, how do you know that you've reached saturation in an effective way? This was especially true for my research because it was a snowball sampling. I started out with the people in academia that I've respected, that were in the education world, who were either in my own district where my kids go to school or who were in my sphere. Then, I started writing letters. I started seeing a consistent theme emerge from my research at that time with students. No matter how many times I sampled, the theme was that they simply wanted to be supported by the university. Mentorships were huge as well for them. They also wanted consistent information and they wanted practical application that was pragmatic to their degrees. They didn't want the theoretical experience so much. They wanted all the classes to lead them to an understanding, but the practical application of ideas was big.

Their experiences of course were counter to mine when it came to theoretical versus practical. I had all these philosophical experiences in my curriculum and I appreciated it but I also was motivated by different variables than a lot of the students today. As a graduate in 2004, I wanted something different at that time. I think it's maybe different for the various generations of students who matriculate every 10 years, which is what I really learned through this experience: that there is change and there is a shift in terms of expectations when it comes not only to doctoral students but students in general. And that's why it's so relevant to constantly survey and interview them and really understand what their needs are, so we can make that shift in the courses that we're offering. And I think our university is doing a good job of that, we are front and center with that understanding. In terms of sampling, it wasn't just in the Chicago area. I went to the West coast and I went to the East coast too, and all of my samples were from different locations with different experiences and amongst differing ethnicities. It was an interesting process that was really consistent and cohesive to student needs.

Erik:

Thank you for that sample insight Erika, much appreciated. Please now summarize the top two or three study takeaways that you believe still hold true today?

Erika:

Absolutely. The first would be having a growth mindset, just constantly evolving and working with like-minded individuals towards a common goal. Secondly, having a passion like what Dr. McCaslin had in helping me see that in this study at that time was valuable. Dr. McCaslin has a lot of experience in action research (and I am a big fan of this research methodology) and that's motivating because you see it applied as potential. I've taught this methodology at University of Phoenix as well as at Roosevelt University and National Louis University. I would also add another takeaway and that would be the idea of collaborating. In schools today, we expect children to collaborate. We expect children to learn from each other, grow, and have a growth mindset. And in universities we collaborate with other likeminded people from different walks of life. That's what makes us grow as well. So, collaboration is important.

Finally, the third and final takeaway, is the value of mentoring. That was a big takeaway from my research, the importance of working together and having a mentor. Which, by the way, we here at University of Phoenix do an excellent job of, and I think it's because the university has developed this mentoring and collaborating spirit. Its weaved throughout the curricula, and fostered amongst students to help them to bridge any gaps that may exist. That way they can have a dynamic experience moving at a pace that is aligned with what they, and faculty/staff, want without becoming stagnant. As a sidenote, this was a big piece of what students said in my interviews: that the university supported them in such a way that they could graduate on time and achieve their goals. That was really important to them. Obviously there were many more takeaways, but these were the highlights at the top of my mind.

Erik:

You have accomplished an academic and professional goal that many desire. What have you set your sights on next?

Erika:

I'm always looking for opportunities to work on research. I think it's important to keep doing research, to strengthen the skillset and mindset. And I think building on those areas that we need to improve on as a researcher is part of growing. I also love that the university holds you accountable each year in fulfilling scholarship activities, which is just simply good practice in building stronger teachers with a good foundation in research.

Rodney:

Erika, talking about the idea of the "research mindset," is that part of your active living or working disposition these days? Did you have to grow into that?

Erika:

Absolutely, it has to be something that you integrate into your daily living and, as I see it, it unfolds in various aspects of both how I work professionally and personally when I write. For instance, I teach graduate school at other universities, and as I mentioned collaboration and research make the process an enhanced one. I see that potential in my students and actively work on instilling that mindset. But the research mindset is a shift. I also do this through inquiry with my students. I constantly throw questions back and forth with them in a volley of sorts. It's not just, "check the box, you completed this assignment," but it can be so much more like "how is this applicable?" And then I ask them to show me, which is why I really enjoy teaching action research. I have my doctorate in leadership, and to me a research mindset is never static, never set. It's constantly growing because you're always being challenged to look for things, that next opportunity to not simply disprove something, but to challenge your own thinking and look between the cracks in the research. I incorporate that in everything I do with teaching. I think without the research mindset, you're missing the boat.

Rodney:

Well said. I can see how it does become an integral component of our daily dispositions. One thing I caught in what has emerged through this interview Erika is your love of action research. I think about this now especially during the coronavirus pandemic. Do you believe action research has become even more viable these days?

Erika:

Absolutely. I think we need to be open to it. There are challenges as we have seen lately with people racing with research to uncover things that may help in a situation like the pandemic we are facing. The challenge includes getting through the IRB or other filtering processes. Quickly finding answers and solutions in a public health crisis is important, however, it is also important to safely and transparently conduct research so that the public can trust in our results. So, research is incredibly important to society as a whole and action research is particularly important now.

There's an influx most especially – and rightly so – of a lot of online research being conducted. And there's so many students right now who have had to make the move online. But working online does not mean the rigor is less. We need to be sure we are even more rigorous. At the same time, you have to change with the times, or you're stuck. And I do believe that. It is a massive period of change and a period of adjustment that'll eventually feel normal, and there will be some positive outcomes as well.

Rodney:

I do see all the changes we have had to adapt to, even as researchers. I think this is where our annual Knowledge Without Boundaries (KWB) Virtual Summit for research will be interesting as we look at what all this change means for us as researchers. I have one last question for you, Erika. What would I learn from you if I took a class with you? What could I expect?

Erika:

Ha! Okay, well, I think I bring a really unique perspective to you as a student. I think that arises because I was a different kind of learner than most. I struggled to learn how to read, and that helped to drive me to develop a pre-emergent literacy program eventually. And I also started a supplemental education company for kids in impoverished areas that really were not understanding things in traditional ways (called Stepping Stones Together). So, I think that I provide this in my teaching, because I have had to learn to be innovative, to do things

a bit differently, to see things a bit differently. I approach the class with a set of experiences that have had to open the potential to see things differently.

Erik:

Since we met, I have witnessed in you Erika such tenacity, resiliency, and patience, the likes of which have added to your persona of an academic research marathon runner. It was rewarding for me and others at our centers including Rodney, Drs. McCaslin and Rominger, to work with you especially during the long home stretch to publication. You really are the persona of an academic research marathon runner. Your desire to get your study published, for example, and your willingness to work on and incorporate feedback and work that back into it, and I feel you use that to your advantage.

Erika:

Yeah. I think that getting published required a "stick-to-it-ness" because I had four, no five different iterations of my research proposal before I was eventually published. You have to get good at dealing with rejection in publishing. A rejection letter might end up in your inbox at two in the morning, you just never know and you have to keep revising and trying again. It is a marathon, not a sprint, to turn it around or find another place to submit to. Sometimes it may mean pivoting just a bit, even within a particular publishing house, to get an acceptance, or finding a journal that might be better suited. This is the real part of publishing, right? I probably went to 15 publishing houses prior to getting approval. You have to keep trying and you utilize the people at your disposal to help you find the right publisher. And sometimes you have to move away from it for a while; meditate or use yoga like I do for refocusing and recentering. Determination is key!

Erik:

Thank you, Erika, for talking with us today. Your candid thoughts should be most useful to all our Phoenix Scholar readers.

Rodney:

Yes, thank you Erika! I hope we get a chance to work together again.

Erika:

Thank you for inviting me as well!

Lemon+Aid Collective: Developing a Pilot Towards Improving Student Well-Being with Artificial Intelligence and Creating a Resiliency Resource Network

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In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a growing acknowledgement of the importance of providing mental health support. Within the context of education, educators and students both are experiencing increased mental distress due to multiple factors including personal and family-member well-being, educational restructuring, and the impact on research projects. The Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) found in their Health Tracking Poll in July 2020 that 36% of adults in the U.S. reported difficulty sleeping, 32% reported difficulty eating, 12% reported increased use of alcohol or substances, and 12% reported worsening chronic conditions directly due to worry and anxiety surrounding the coronavirus (Panchal, Kamal, Cox & Garfield, 2021). More people are experiencing negative impacts on their mental health and wellbeing as the pandemic progresses. The shift into virtual learning and virtual health services has added to life stressors and requires a level of adjustment for educators, students, and all health professionals to make.

As leaders seek to help students adapt, one significant concern is how students who were already socioeconomically disadvantaged are faring, compared to their peers. Restricting human connection to virtual mediums may be having a greater negative impact on students of color, those with a physical or mental disability, for example. Though universities may offer counseling services, students are struggling with mental health and how to find these resources or any information about their local mental health services. It is important that academic leadership ensure due attention to diversity and inclusion initiatives and how to support these students, in particular so that this pandemic does not undo years of prior effort towards equality and inclusion.

A University of Phoenix alumni, Dr. Alice Vo Edwards, previously developed an overarching conceptual model for using artificial intelligence (AI) to support scalability of connecting people to the right resources across the lifespan and multiple domains of wellbeing as her University of Phoenix capstone project for her Master's degree. This proposed model is called "Assisted Life Intelligence, Coaching, and Education" (ALICE) (Edwards & Citea, 2018). In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Edwards conceived a method for piloting ALICE as an AI supportive technology tool to support gaps in the community in supporting mental health challenges. Dr. Edwards felt that developing a pilot of this tool could also help demonstrate how wellbeing interventions can benefit from using an interdisciplinary mindset and applying business, marketing, and psychological concepts such as "growth hacking," "user interface design" and psychological capital.

When people are given the right tools and information, they are more likely to seek help and positively impact their individual development. This aligns with the concept of psychological capital (PsyCap) developed by Fred Luthans and his colleagues in 2003 within the overarching concept of positive organizational behavior. PsyCap is composed of four components – hope, efficacy, resiliency, and optimism (HERO) – that have either a positive or negative correlation depending on how they are nurtured in the individual's life (Luthans & Youssef, 2013). PsyCap can be developed to improve the individual's performance and satisfaction levels, which reflects the idea that there is a positive impact in focusing on mental health and wellbeing improvement efforts. In this context, Dr. Edwards seeks to research and quantify the strength of relationship between HERO scores and wellbeing and improving technological tools available to individuals using interdisciplinary methods to improve HERO scores and wellbeing outcomes.

The Project

 The first demonstration of the conceptual design, called the Lemon+Aid Collective (2020), was developed and launched in collaboration with Arizona State University Engineering and Healthcare Compliance and Regulations student interns on November 10th, 2020. This initial model outlines the framework for the component parts and provides the team with the ability to do further research with its intended users into their needs and how AI could best help them navigate their wellbeing and assist in achieving better outcomes. This design, focused on students, is called "The Lemon+Aid Collective." (The Lemon+Aid Collective, 2020). This name alludes to two main concepts

that underpin the product design: 1) the focus of improving education about, access to, and comfort level with using existing resources within the collective community, rather than reinventing the wheel and making new ones, and 2) encouraging users to take charge of their problems and find solutions by reminding the phrase many have heard from parents, "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade". The target audience of this initial product development is students who are struggling with one of the top five wellbeing challenges the initial research identified, and targets their peers and family members who may be seeking to help them.

The product currently being developed is geared towards preventing suicide, reducing anxiety, stress and depression, and addressing other top student health concerns. It is hypothesized this type of product could also have positive impacts on student organizational commitment, public perception of the organization, and possibly impact recruiting and retention through how organizational use and reporting on taking positive, preventative actions such as developing and using such tools might influence how a school is perceived.

While many resources and supports exist that seek to help individuals, many in need struggle to access these resources and in many cases, do not know they exist, or how to find them if they have heard of them before. As Dr. Edwards often tells the students, "You can't search in Google for something you don't know exists," a problem she feels to be indicative of the importance of social capital in seeking to improve wellbeing. Thus, the software concept and methodology is intended to use technology to create a "resilience resource network" that can act as a software agent to provide expanded social capital to its users. Though the university student demographic is where the issue of lacking mental health support services is predominantly focused in the current pilot, it could be customized for other audiences, such as government or corporate employees, residents within a city, or high-risk or high-need sub-groups such as veterans, homeless, or new employees.

Dr. Edwards's team performed market research through mental health students and university mental health services stakeholder interviews, field research on prominent mental health issues in university students, and surveying of current mental health services available to them. The findings revealed those obvious gaps in getting people connected to the necessary resources, as students and stakeholders expressed their struggles with mental health and the increase in difficulty dealing with these issues due to the current pandemic.

The intervention is an applied science project implemented to promote translation of academic concepts in the field. The intervention is intended to apply knowledge gained from the body of research on predictors of suicidal ideation, psychological capital, social capital, peer support and metacognition in supporting wellbeing outcomes. Dr. Edwards applied her interdisciplinary background in mental health and technology to propose and lead the team in the development of this evidence-informed intervention. This intervention is designed to provide access to a "resiliency resource network" and act as a personalized hub where the user can find and access mental health resources through a phone or computer.

As part of the exploratory research, ASU student, Madelyn B. worked with Dr. Edwards to research and identify the top five challenges college students struggle with that the product design could include. The top five areas of greatest need identified were: depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, eating disorders and time management. In-depth interviews conducted with five students provided a qualitative, in-depth understanding of where breakdowns occur between a) the point where a student encounters a problem and b) getting the student help. Collectively, students seemed to possess the same idea that stress is normal in their daily life and don't need to reach out for help. One student interview touched on this idea more comprehensively, stating that the normal stressors in their life like family member illnesses and school-work has made them so accustomed to stress that seeking external mental health support didn't seem necessary. The students expressing their acknowledgement of daily stressors and how normal it felt for them to be stressed exemplifies the issue of a culture that discredits mental health issues and normalizes the impacts of stress on overall wellbeing. It was also clear from the student interviews that counseling services on university campuses and extended COVID-19 resources are not widely known nor utilized by them. These findings also confirmed the importance of PsyCap and HERO, as highlighted that need for product design to focus on helping users find resources and also help them be willing and able to use them by increasing their HERO scores.

Further development is needed before the product will be fully viable. On the software development side, the team is working on additional research and development. The team is also researching funding opportunities to obtain direct or collaborative funding to further the project beyond the end of the engineering student team's capstone project timeframe, which ends May 2021. Partnership opportunities and lines of funding will enhance Dr. Edwards and her team's efforts in connecting people with the right sources and tools to increase their ability to thrive. The product's focus on the wellbeing and mental health at the individual level will contribute to the individual's success and ultimately influence their ability to thrive in a team environment. Mental health and wellbeing are areas that impact the individual's performance and capabilities overall. The team believes that many opportunities exist to support the efforts of existing organizations, from schools, governments, employers, and military leaders, to use the Lemon+Aid collective design to enhance existing mental health support services.

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Black Female Education Leaders and Intersections of Leadership, Race, Gender, Power, and Social Justice

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The U.S. is in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, a plague that has disproportionately affected people of color. This biological threat has operated concomitantly with Black Lives Matter (BLM), a cultural reaction to systemic racism escalated by the killings of George Floyd and others. Although the inaugurations of Joe Biden as U.S. president and Kamala Harris as the first African American vice president offer new hope, many are numbed by the destruction wrought by an invasion of the U.S. Capitol by domestic terrorists touting Confederate flags and other icons of White Supremacy.

These disruptions have intensified efforts to promote social justice. Central are Black female education leaders, placed at the intersections of leadership, race, gender, power, and social justice. They hold positions of influence and power in the schools they lead and the communities they serve. They face their own challenges and suffer their own racial abuses as they work to bridge the divide of racial and social injustice to create a productive learning environment for their students.

Intersectionality as Conceptual Framework

We applied the concept of Intersectionality to understand our participant's responses. Collins (2008) notes that intersectionality is "inherently comparative, a dynamic chain of similarities and differences that enable us to see points of overlap, convergence, and divergence among what are conceptualized as separate entities but that collectively comprise one entity" (p. 71). She notes that intersectionality typically examines elements of race, class and gender as "intersecting systems of power" (p. 69). Boylorn explains,

> Intersectionality offers a multidimensional way to think about how black women are often seen in contradictory ways because of their lived experiences as members of marginalized social groups.… When black women experience discrimination, it is often unclear if it is because of their race, sex, class, or all three at the same time. (Boylorn & Erbe 2014, p. 131).

Methodology

Black females make up approximately 13% of all public-school principals (NCES, 2021) and 5% of all college presidents (Gray, Howard, & Chessman, 2018). We used purposive sampling to choose eight Black female education leaders who held a variety of leadership positions, including principals, college deans, college presidents, and a K-5 curriculum specialist. Two of us were included in this group that participated in individual interviews or focus groups, and completed individual follow-up reflective narratives. We asked them to describe the ways that intersections of race, gender, power, class, family, and social justice have shaped their identities as educational leaders before and during the coronavirus pandemic and Black Lives Matter movement. We used these initial categories to code and analyze the data for themes.

Results

The challenge of Black female education leaders has been to lead during an unprecedented era of disruption. The initial purpose of this study was to better understand how intersections of leadership, race, gender, power, and social justice have shaped the identities of these Black female education leaders during the BLM movement and coronavirus pandemic. Results indicated, however, that these social elements magnified but did not create the challenges these leaders faced daily as they navigated the intersections of their various roles.

Race has played a significant intersectional role in the professional lives of our participants. Most believed they were placed in their position because they are Black. Some believed their race has restricted their service to high poverty and high ethnicity schools.

They noted examples of systemic racism built into the perceptions and structures of staff and governing groups. One principal observed

that her male counterparts had fewer challenges and more resources. "As a woman of color, if I have a misstep, I probably am totally out the door. But if my white counterpart males have a misstep, they can return to another role and be just fine."

Gender emerged second only to race as a significant role. While none believed they gained their positions because they are women, they felt that being a woman makes their interactions with key stakeholders more difficult. Many believed they have been victims to negative stereotypes. A specific trope is the angry black woman (Davis & Afifi, 2019), which they have turned to their advantage. One shared, "That just means that you are strong enough to make it happen."

Power emerged as both transactional and transformational. Several mentioned, for example, innovative staff training programs they adopted to orient teachers to the life scenarios of minority and impoverished children. One shared that professional challenges "necessitate the need to be creative – to make do with what you have."

Intersecting with power was the role of an educational leader, reflected in their passionate care and advocacy for their students. One shared, "The hardest thing to change is the mindset that all kids cannot learn." Each saw herself as a role model for all children, but especially for those who look like them. One noted, "I know the power of having strong educators in front of the kids to show them that they too can do it."

Class also intersected with these roles. Several mentioned that some Black parents were skeptical that a Black female could hold a position of power and class. Several said they must regularly prove they are worthy to hold their position. In an especially disturbing example, a college president described a local blog in which a White former mayor distributed disinformation about her credentials.

Social justice intersected with the roles of power and leader to demonstrate how these leaders applied the tools their roles afford. Surprisingly, the Black Lives Matter movement did not emerge as a significant theme, perhaps because these leaders embrace the concept of social justice in every decision they make. This seems also true of the challenge to operate schools amid the pandemic. They intersect with the responsibilities that come with a leader's work. The biggest concern related to the roles of leadership and social justice appeared in two categories: Students without access to technology for distance learning; and those missing school meals. School meals are often the only substantial food students who live in poverty receive.

Although Family did not emerge as a theme, Spirituality did emerge as a strong influence. Results suggest the two roles may intersect to influence the decisions these leaders make and the ways that they lead.

Participants felt sharing their stories was therapeutic. One leader appreciated the chance "to release some of this and know that what we are doing is right." Our results reinforce the need for further research. The voices of strong women of color must be heard. One shared, "I tell my stories to make sure people see that I'm human. It doesn't matter what color you are. Your blood don't come out green."

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Leadership Lacking Health Equality in the Wake of the Pandemic

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There has been considerable trauma, adversity and discussion since the summer of 2020 surrounding positive social change, equity, diversity, healthcare and how leadership could or should respond. The realities of the coronavirus pandemic and the social unrest over the past year have sparked copious debate about two topics of interest, socioeconomic status or conditions and equity. Before equity can be confronted socioeconomics must be explored.

Socioeconomics has been defined multiple ways but, in this context, it can be considered to mean the social, political, and cultural conditions that form lives and inform behaviors. Lifestyle drift explains the trend in public health to emphasize individual behaviors, that have been proven to cause health inequity such as drug and alcohol use, smoking, and poor diet but continue ignoring conditions that drive the behaviors. Notwithstanding lifestyle considerations, many socioeconomic factors such as discrimination or bias, living below the poverty level, and social determinants of health are systemic and contribute to the equity gap.

Social Determinants of Health

Social determinants of health have assumed center stage in current health policy debate. Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks (DHHS n.d.). The US Department of Health and Human Services denotes that SDOH are comprised of secure housing, transportation, and communities; racism, discrimination and violence; education, job opportunities, and income. Reflect on how a person's lack of access to basic human needs impacts every aspect of daily living. Think of a homeless person with no access to clean water and a food insecure child living below the poverty level. How does the homeless person begin to look for employment until the need for secure shelter is met and access to clean drinking water is realized? What level of concentration or academic productivity can be achieved by a school aged child who is hungry or suffering from malnutrition? Continued exposure to these adverse conditions is harmful to individuals but could have the potential for long term negative generational implications on low-income families and communities of color.

Tackling social determinants is important to improve health and reduce established disparities in health and health care. There is increased recognition that improving health and achieving health equity requires a broader approach that speaks to social, economic, and environmental factors that affect health. Behaviors, policies and practices in sectors not related to health impact health and health equity. For example, a person living in an area with no available public transportation would also have limited access to employment, affordable healthy food choices, and adequate health care. It is becoming increasing understood that a person's zip code can provide a sound indicator of health than their genetic code (HealthyPeople, 2020).

What is Health Equity?

Equity is a just principle and agrees with and relates to human rights principles (Starfield, 2001). Health denotes both physical and mental security, not just the lack of disease (WHO, 1946). There are numerous levels upon which equity can be discussed. The first thought of most turns to racial equity. Race equity is a huge systemic problem, and probably the most talked or written about but others are pressing too. In the United States issues of equity are present and can be seen in every realm across the board in gender, sexual orientation, economy, religion, ethnicity, and wages. While all instances of lack of equity should be critically addressed, health equity is the topic herein explored. Health equity can be defined as the absence of systematic disparities in health or social determinants between groups of people in different positions of social hierarchy or privilege (Starfield, 2001). Privilege can be described as power, wealth and prestige.

The notions of health disparities and health equity are embedded in American social morals and tenets and in ethical and human rights principles. Health disparities are systemic, that is, not isolated or remarkable findings. Health disparities are systematically linked with social disadvantage and persist over generations (Starfield, 2001).

Multiple studies have tried to assess the influence of social factors on health. The analysis of studies revealed higher income earners have greater life expectancy than lower income earners in all fifty states in the US (Braveman & Gottlieb, 2014). The gap in life expectancy between the richest 1% and poorest 1% of individuals was 14.6 years % (Bambino et al., 2021). Inequality in life expectancy increased over

time. Between 2001 and 2014, life expectancy increased by 2.34 years for men and 2.91 years for women in the top 5% but increased by only 0.32 years for men and 0.04 years for women in the bottom 5% (Bambino et al., 2021).

COVID-19: Hesitancy and the Vaccination Gap

Structural racism has created barriers that have resulted in deep health disparities for African Americans and other races as well. However African Americans are in a unique position with a valid suspicion specifically of vaccines and more generally the overall health system. One such blatant example is the COVID-19 vaccine program. Still etched in the memory of many African Americans is the Tuskegee experiment. In the Tuskegee experiment poor African American men were intentionally deceived by the individuals running the study, and were later kept from life-saving care when it was discovered.

Data shows, white residents are being vaccinated at higher rates than Black residents, often at double the rate or greater. White people account for or have received vaccinations at a rate of more than three times the rate of all minorities combined. For the first dose non-minority people have received 66.1% while all minorities combined have received only 19.4% of vaccinations in the United States (CDC, 2021). Sixty-eight percent of non-minority people have been fully vaccinated or have received the second dose while only 27.3% all minorities combined are fully vaccinated. What this data reveals are the huge gaps in getting vaccines in arms of minority populations.

Yet throughout the U.S., non-Hispanic Black Americans have 1.4 times greater chance to contract COVID, and 2.8 times more prone to die of it, than white Americans (CDC, 2021). So why is it that the ratio of those vaccinated who are Black is much lower than their numbers represented in the overall population in every state? Is this vaccine hesitancy or a vaccine gap?

A Look at Leadership

The pandemic has created a clear need for the nation to address health equity. Racial and ethnic disparities are perhaps the most persistent inequities in health over time. As such, leaders when adopting health equity solutions should consider the social, political and historical context of race and ethnicity in the United States. Leaders at the local, state, and federal levels, including those leading business and educational institutions, must act in concert as it will take an all systems all citizens approach to begin to correct these deep rooted and long-standing systems of inequity. Leaders should be guided by policy, regulation, legislation and democratic discourse to promote equity of outcomes.

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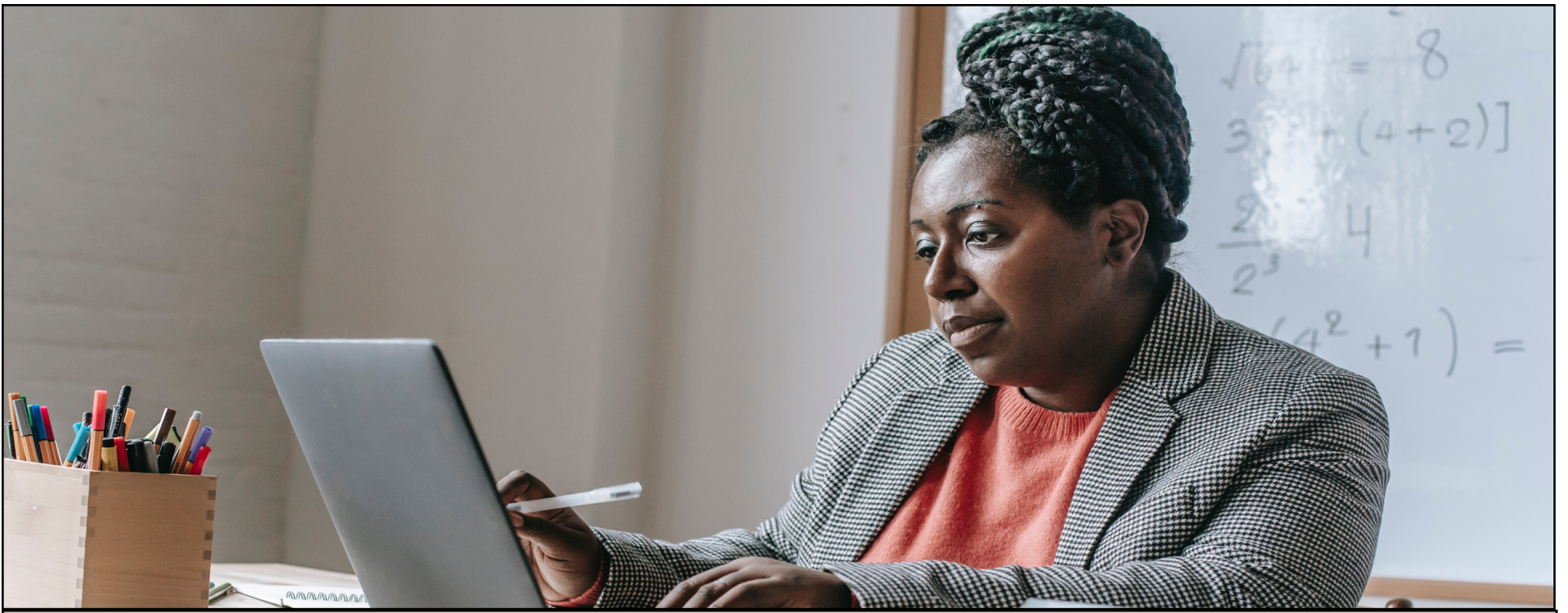
Faculty Motivation Study: Building an Understanding of What Keeps Us Going

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Through 2020 our CEITR Research Labs team of researchers engaged a topic that is not only personally meaningful, but also quite pertinent in this time of a Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing: what keeps us teaching? The mixed methods study, more formally called a study on faculty motivation, sought to identify what motivates different faculty groups to keep logging in, keep reading papers well into the night, and to keep engaged with the scholarly endeavor.

Identifying what motivates a person to teach provides insight into better understanding teacher attrition, including job satisfaction, professional development and how to integrate best practices, how to improve school conditions, like determining what resources teachers need among others. The term, motivation, is a well-studied moniker for defining what drives people to do what they do. The present study was based on two main motivational theories: Expectancy-Value theory (Eccles, 2009) and Self-Determination theory (Gagne, et al., 2015). Both theories identify the relationships between intrinsic (or internal) and extrinsic (or external) factors which might provide a motivation within the workplace. Usually, intrinsic motivators align with concepts such as identity and self-perceived desire to conduct a task, while extrinsic motivators align with concepts related to work in exchange for money, prestige, and praise from one's superiors.

The current mixed methods study sought to identify which of these motivators are most prominent within college faculty teaching at a practitioner-oriented, for-profit school. In total 355 faculty from all colleges within the University of Phoenix participated in the survey part of the study, and 41 faculty participated in the qualitative interviews. The qualitative strand was informed by Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008), with codes, categories, and themes generated from the interview data. The surveys used were, in addition to basic demographics questions and questions regarding teaching, surveys specifically designed to assess work motivation. The Factors Influencing Teaching-Choice (FIT-Choice; Padhy, 2015) survey was specifically designed, in alignment with the Expectancy-Value theory to assess what motivates teachers to keep performing their jobs. The other survey used, the Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (MWMS; Gagne, et al., 2015), was developed based on the Self-Determination theory as was originally less teaching focused and more general employee focused but was adapted in this study for the teaching environment.

Of the 355 participants, we identified four main faculty groups: Professional faculty (45); Retired practitioner faculty (66); Practitioner faculty (89); and Scholar-practitioner faculty (155). Those in the "Professional" faculty group were not retired, had teaching as their main source of income, and also taught at more than one university. Those in the "Retired practitioner" faculty group identified themselves as retired from their primary career jobs and were now teaching at the university level. Those in the "Practitioner" faculty group were part time teachers, teaching only 1-5 classes a year, and were not retired from their primary career. Finally, those who were "Scholar-practitioner" faculty taught 6 or more classes per year and were not retired, indicating they were engaged in both scholarly activities as a faculty member as well as their primary career. Additionally, more than half of the participants indicated they taught at more than one university (54%), a majority were over the age of 55 (57%), and most indicated that teaching was not their main source of income (82%). The group was split fairly evenly between teaching 1-5 courses (31%), 6-9 classes (28%), and teaching 10 or more classes (40%).

Results indicated that the most prominent motivational factors were associated with intrinsic motivations (autonomous motivation such as sense of volition) and social utility motivations (Shape future of student, enhance social equity). The highest motivation factors for all faculty groups were intrinsic motivation of faculty (perceived teaching abilities) and autonomous motivation of faculty (identified the activity's importance and performed the behavior autonomously). Professional faculty, who exclusively taught, had a significantly higher mean than other practitioner faculty on motivators of Personal Utility (Job security, time for family), Task Demand (Expert career), and

Extrinsic and Introjected (Influenced by contexts outside oneself). Retired faculty also demonstrated a higher focus on Social Utility than the other three groups of faculty. Faculty Extrinsic motivator demonstrated a significantly difference (p =. 027) among the seven UOPX colleges but was also the lowest motivator with Amotivation the only motivator category scoring lower. Financial rewards and recognition were also meaningful for faculty. More extrinsic motivators presented at the start of one's career while faculty wished for extrinsic factors such as pay, changes in structure, more classes, and professional development throughout their career. Most cited intrinsic motivator for continued teaching was satisfaction at contributing to students' success. For example, a number of faculty shared stories of seeing a student walk across the stage at graduation or receiving a Thank You card from the students as the most meaningful aspect of teaching. Other factors were the desire for more connections with other faculty and managers. Finally, faculty yearned for an experience of community where practices and unique voices were shared and celebrated. Faculty wished for a greater voice, through teaching the next generation, being 'heard' by the institution, contribution to curriculum, talking (not emailing) with supervisors directly, or contributing to a community of colleagues.

The results of this study clearly outline what keeps faculty engaged in the teaching endeavor. In some cases, different faculty groups demonstrated slightly different motivating factors. The more a university can foster the inherent motivations for different groups of faculty, the more those same faculty will stay engaged, keep teaching, and remain employed at the school.

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Knowledge Witout Boundaries: What's In It For Me?

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This August dozens upon dozens of University of Phoenix stakeholders will once again assemble at the 2021 Knowledge Without Boundaries (KWB) Summit. The yearly academic conference is a showcase of best practices, conceptual models, and a variety of quantitative and qualitative research studies relevant to solving real-world problems that align with the academy, industry, as well as communities. This year's theme, Exploring the Nexus of Change in Diversity, Education & Leadership, is more important than ever for several reasons.

First, we are still embroiled in global pandemic that has left its impact on our lives. Secondly, our country is experiencing a cultural shift and civil unrest, the likes of which is for the history books. Democratic norms have been challenged that not only affect the stability of our nation, but how countries interact with the U.S. All the while here and abroad, the workforce is being re-imagined not only in terms of those who continue to work from home, but regarding types of jobs and the qualified people to fill them. Finally, let's not forget the psychological and physical impact and stress we all experienced as socialization levels dropped and staying at home contributed to more sedentary lifestyles.

Last year's KWB summit took place as the country and international communities raced to develop a COVID-19 vaccine and while every single school system was tested on if and when it would reopen and in what capacities. Modern science came to the rescue in mid-December with the production of the vaccines and by the time this Phoenix Scholar edition is published, nearly 45 percent of all Americans will have received their first dose. During the long shelter in place summer of 2020 many University of Phoenix scholars stepped out of their comfort zone and heeded the call to examine and answer many real-world issues associated with our new reality. Following is a sample of the presentations we saw at the last summit.

What We Can Learn From The COVID-19 Pandemic: How Educational Leadership Can Best Support Teachers In Responding To Emergencies To Reduce Negative Impacts on Teacher Wellbeing

By Alice Vo Edwards

Tele-mental Health Counselor Therapeutic Alliance in Session-Limited Depression Treatment: A Phenomenological Study

By Monique Thompson

Why Covid-19 Education Earned an F and What Can be Learned From That

By Olivia Miller

Online Faculty Perceptions of Professional Development to Support Personal Academic Growth

By Patricia Steele

Online Education: A Silver Lining Amidst the Challenges of the Pandemic in India

By Lionel de Souza

Managing COVID-19 Stress: Strategies and Tips for Everyone

By Louise Underdahl

Changes in Education During COVID19: The Approach to a K12 Hybrid Model

By Lequisha Brown-Joseph

Intersectionality and the Challenges Female Black Educational Leaders Face Amid COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter

By James Lane

Fast forward to the summer of 2021. The tragic toll of the pandemic is yet to subside in many parts of the world, and in the U.S., we are still working to get all adults vaccinated while trying to help other countries at the same time. So, while we are hopeful to see an upward trajectory, we tread lightly, and I am eager to see what our University of Phoenix scholarly community will yield. Because as scholars we may ask "what's in it for me?" but we know the answer lies in helping others. By highlighting your work at this year's KWB you will be documenting your critical thinking and collaborating with likeminded professionals who want to make a positive impact, just like those who chose any other helping professions.

Our passion lies in spending time benchmarking, tracking, assessing, studying, honing, and reporting. We then hypothesize the results and try to project the impact that makes our research useful and publishable. You already knew what's in for you. And in a matter of weeks, the world will know what's in it for them!

Call for Proposals Deadline is May 31st, 2021, for the August Annual Summit

We are formally inviting all to submit for the 2021 Annual Research Summit occurring in August this year. The deadline for submitting your application is May 31st, 2021, and we welcome faculty, staff, alumni, and doctoral students to submit to be presenters.

The Summit provides a channel for faculty to present and speak on topics that are part of their passion and specialization in their respective fields. Being a presenter also helps fulfill a faculty's requirements around scholarship for their profile while also helping build their credentials by authenticating their role in a professional conference. The annual event showcases the potentials of our university faculty, staff, alumni, and students and presents relevant action-based research, where participants can join us worldwide to take part in the conference.

The mission of Knowledge Without Boundaries (KWB) Summit is to provide opportunities that enable University of Phoenix faculty, students, and alumni, to develop and achieve their professional research and scholarship goals and, through scholarly leadership, improve the performance of the organizations and communities they serve. The 2021 KWB Annual Research Summit is a continuation of this mission to uphold the intended vision to encourage and recognize scholarship.

The theme of this year's conference is around the "Nexus of Change" and our emergence through a series of unprecedented events that have impacted the way we live, work and socialize.

Submitting to be a presenter is easy. We simply need a short and long abstract of your research presentation topic. You can find details here on requirements. We also encourage submissions from all content areas based upon research, action research, and best practices around teaching. Proposals will be accepted from faculty, students, and alumni. Presenter proposals are typically under two tracks:

    1. Research - Share the results of qualitative and/or quantitative research.

    2. Innovative Practice - Provide the opportunity for discussions of a project, program, or practice tool/strategy-related research conducted by faculty/students/alumni.

This event is powered by Blackboard Collaborate for easy online access so you can enjoy and efficiently engage your presentation from the convenience of where you are whether it is at home or work.

We look forward to receiving all submissions.

Quick Links:

KWB Homepage

Call for Proposals Home Page: Proposal Info

Eventbright Registration

Knowledge Without Boundaries 2020 Presentations

Best Practices Within Diversity & Inclusion Management	Dr. Remi Odoemena
Equity, Access, & eLearning: Lessons from COVID-19	Dr. J. Medgar Roberts
Diversification and Socialization within K-12 Classrooms	Dr. Kimberly Underwood Dr. Joy Taylor Dr. Sandra Sessoms-Penny
Engagement in Asynchronous Online Courses	Dr. Steven Baule
Educators' Perceptions of Ethics in Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs)	Dr. Patricia Steele Dr. Elizabeth Young Dr. Cheryl Burleigh
Best Practices for Building Rapport in an Online Classroom: A Delphi Study Conducted at the University of Phoenix	Dr. Debra Tucker Dr. Nye Clinton
Why Covid-19 Education Earned an F and What Can be Learned From That	Dr. Olivia Miller
Who's Zooming Who? Parents' Competence and Confidence in Their Ability to Assist in Online Learning During COVID	Dr. Katherine Temple Dr. Lanissa Freeman Dr. Linda Pikett Dr. Satya Johnson
Changes in Education During COVID19: The Approach to a K12 Hybrid Model	Dr. Lequisha Brown-Joseph Dr. Michelle Susbery Hill
Bibliometrics: A Descriptive Case Study to Explore the Quality of Doctorate of Nursing Practice Projects	Dr. Christa Seagren Dr. Rob Olding Dr. Maureen Marzano Dr. Alverna Champion
Tele-mental Health Counselor Therapeutic Alliance in Session-Limited Depression Treatment: A Phenomenological Study	Dr. Monique Thompson Dr. Maureen Marzano Dr. Louise Underdahl Dr. Donna Smith
Root Cause of Pre-Analytical Errors in Laboratory Testing	Dr. Zahra Bolandbala Dr. Maureen Marzano
Support System Coordination Challenges: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study of Residential Care Administrators	Dr. Aderonke Adejuyigbe
Epilepsy Diagnosis: The Direct and Indirect Costs	Dr. Gwendolyn Avington

Quality Early Care and Learning: Exploring Child-ownership Pedagogy A Qualitative Multi-case Study	Dr. June Cade Dr. Jan Ott Dr. Francis Wardle
Intersectionality and the Challenges Female Black Educational Leaders Face Amid COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter	Dr. James Lane Dr. Shaquanah Robinson Dr. Alyncia Bowen
Female Perceptions of Obstacles Towards Advancement in the Department of Defense	Dr. Dianna Black Dr. Christine Enslin
Career Challenges for African American Women Leaders: A Narrative Inquiry	Dr. Colette Charles
Career Ready Education at the Doctoral Level: Are Universities Really Living Up to the Slogan?	Dr. Gwendolyn Avington
Factors Leading Educators to Pursue a Doctorate Degree to Meet Professional Development Needs	Dr. Erika Burton
Hear Me, Be Me, See Me: The Backstory Behind One Dissertation	Dr. Janice Cardwell Dr. Teresa Shirley
Exploring Dissertation to Publication Workshop	Dr. Mansureh Kebritchi Dr. Elizabeth Johnston
Introducing College of Doctoral Studies Alumni Special Interest Group	Dr. Mansureh Kebritchi
First Impression Challenges When Interviewing Candidates	Dr. Ada Booker
Managing COVID-19 Stress: Strategies and Tips for Everyone	Dr. Barb Kennedy Dr. Mary Jo Brinkman Dr. Holly Sawyer Dr. Mary Robbins Dr. Kelechi Mezu
Human Resource Adaptations in Remote Covid-19 Employee Transitions	Dr. Lionel de Souza
Online Education: A Silver Lining Amidst the Challenges of the Pandemic in India	Dr. Lionel de Souza
Mis-Leadership	Dr. Mark McCaslin
Four Pillars of Leadership in the 21st Century	Dr. Les Huffman
Socially Intelligent Leaders	Dr. Kelly Alvarado Dr. Roxanne Williams
The Future of Urban Mobility: Exploring Automation for the City of Chicago	Dr. Donte Vaughn
Change Matters	Dr. Helen Schleckser Dr. Elisabeth Weinbaum
Parental Involvement in a Predominantly Hispanic School: A Qualitative Case Study	Dr. Mary Beth Nunez Gomez Dr. Mishaleen Allen Dr. Sean W. Kearney
The Relationship of Attitude, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavioral Control, and Perceived Threat on The Mammography Behavior of Women in Three Rural Southeast Louisiana Parishes	Dr. Susan Steele-Moses
Will I Stay, or Will I Go? Antecedents Influencing Retention of Healthcare Employees in the U.S.	Dr. Daniel Kelly Dr. Karen Johnson
Cross-border Knowledge Sharing: A Social Capital View	Dr. Ken Murphy
Understanding Faculty Motivations to Teach	Dr. Ryan Rominger Dr. Mansureh Kebritchi Dr. Elizabeth Johnston Dr. Danielle Sixsmith

The Impact of Grit Promotion Teaching Strategies on Retention Rate and Course Management Skills of Adult Learners in Undergraduate Higher Education: A Quasi Experimental Study	Dr. Mansureh Kebritchi Dr. Ryan Rominger Dr. Danielle Sixsmith
Increasing Doctoral Student Retention: A Correlational Analysis of Dissertation Preparedness	Dr. Louise Underdahl Dr. Rheanna Reed Dr. Alice Edwards
Cultural competency: Educators Transferring the Values of Acceptance, Cultural Awareness and Equality in the Classroom	Dr. Katherine Temple Dr. Lanissa Freedman
Exploring the Navigation of Middle and High School Educators within Communities Impacted by Widely Publicized Instances of Police Violence	Dr. Kimberly Underwood
Reducing Gender and Race Gaps in STEM Careers: Discussion of The Development of an Interventional Design for the Practice of Studying and Performing Statistics Analysis To Increase Math Self-Efficacy	Dr. Alice Edwards
Courage to be Prudent: An Atomic Structure in Leadership Decision-Making	Dr. LauraAnn Migliore Dr. Erik Bean
Partnering with Industry	Dr. LauraAnn Migliore Dr. Patricia Akojie
Leading and Socializing Millennials in Multi-Generational Organizations	Dr. Donna Smith Dr. Miriam Frolow
Online Faculty Perceptions of Professional Development to Support Personal Academic Growth	Dr. Patricia Steele Dr. Cheryl Burleigh Dr. Grace Gwitira Dr. Marie Smith
Transform Educators into Courageous International Change Agents	Dr. Katherine Temple Dr. Linda Pinkett Dr. Patterson
Creative Writing and Critically Thinking Students	Dr. Shannon Wood
The Uncertain Aftermath of COVID-19 in Brazil	Dr. Margaret Vianna Dr. Elizabeth Young
Piloting Use of a Novel Mental Health Mobile Application to Provide Virtual COVID-19 Mental Health Support: Potential Application to Teacher and Student Well-being	Dr. Alice Edwards
Forensic Accountants and Corporate Fraud	Dr. Marvin Campbell Dr. Louise Underdahl
Male Chaplains and Female Soldiers: Are There Gender and Denominational Differences in Military Pastoral Care?	Dr. Daniel Roberts Dr. Joann Kovacich
Moral Injury in Women Veterans: A Grounded Theory Study	Dr. Daniel Roberts Dr. Joann Kovacich
Enabling Start-Up Success: The Action Learning Model	Dr. Louise Underdahl Dr. Wendy van Schalkwyk Dr. Herman van Niekerk
Full-time Telecommuting Information Systems Strategy: An Exploratory Case Study	Dr. Fernando Acosta Dr. Anastasia Metros
Perceptions of Applied/21st Century Skills in Higher Education: A Case Study	Dr. Greg Stefanelli Dr. Anastasia Metros
Recruitment and Retention Factors Important to RNs Employed on Acute Care Medical Surgical Units	Dr. Susan Steele-Moses
Strategies to Improve Employee Retention in the Small Retail Industry	Dr. Martin Owusu Dr. Daniel Smith

Workplace Stress and Loss of Motivation as Key Indicators of Turnover: A Case Study of Middle Managers in the U.S. Landscape Industry	Dr. Jason Stroman Dr. Crystal Lupo
Value of a Professional Doctorate	Dr. Cheryl Anderson
Empowering Families to Create Engaged Learning Experiences Through Everyday Interactions	Dr. David Proudfoot
Support System Coordination Challenges: A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study of Residential Care Administrators	Dr. Aderonke Adejuyigbe

Upcoming Events

Date	Topic
May 20, 2021	4pm - 5pm Webinar: UOPX doctoral graduate guest speaker: Dr. Simone Arnold
May 27, 2021	4pm - 5pm Webinar: Alignment in Research (Part 2)
June 4-8, 2021	8am - 5pm Virtual Residency DOC/733R
June 8, 2021	4pm - 5pm Webinar: Getting to know your APA manual 7th Ed.
June 9-11, 2021	8am - 5pm Virtual Residency DOC/734R
June 10, 2021	4pm - 5pm Webinar: How to conduct appreciative inquiry research design
June 24, 2021	4pm - 5pm Webinar: How to collect data from journals/newspapers and other print data
July 8, 2021	4pm - 5pm Webinar: Synthesizing Literature for Scholarly Writing
July 22, 2021	4pm - 5pm Webinar: How to Access and Use Existing/Archived Databases/Data sets
August 12-16, 2021	All day KWB Research Summit
August 19, 2021	4pm - 5pm Webinar: UOPX doctoral graduate guest speaker: TBA
August 26, 2021	4pm - 5pm Webinar: How to collect observational data
September 23, 2021	4pm - 5pm Webinar: How to conduct a factor analysis statistical test
October 28, 2021	4pm - 5pm Webinar: Reporting Qualitative Research Findings
November 11, 2021	5pm - 6pm Webinar: How to Handle Requests for Sharing Data: Ethics beyond getting IRB approval
November 18, 2021	5pm - 6pm Webinar: UOPX doctoral graduate guest speaker: Dr. Scott Drexler

Join us on the Research Hub for all
Center activities, KWB dates, and
new research information!

Research.Phoenix.Edu