

# Advising PhD Students

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# Acknowledgments

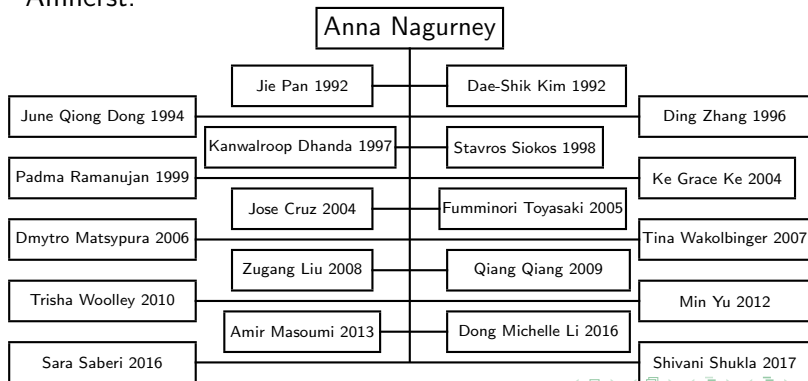
I would like to thank the organizers of this Junior Faculty Interest Group (JFIG) panel, Professors Chrysafis Vogiatzis and Ehsan Salari, for the opportunity to speak with you today on this exciting panel.



# Advising PhD Students

**When I was a junior faculty member I asked Dr. Alexander Rinnooy Kan what advice he had for me and he said, “build your network and do this by graduating PhD students.”**

That advice resonated and has stayed with me. I have had the honor and pleasure of chairing 20 doctoral dissertations at UMass Amherst.



# Center Associates

Many of my former doctoral students continue our collaborations with me and with one another as Center Associates.



**One of the greatest compliments that I ever received was a congratulations from a very senior colleague at a top research university on the success of my doctoral students!**

# Advising PhD Students

**Doctoral students, whose dissertation committees I have chaired, have come from: Austria, Cape Verde, China, Greece, Iran, Japan, India, South Korea, Turkey, Ukraine, and even the USA - like the UN!**

Presently, I have three doctoral students working under my supervision in the Supernetworks Lab.



**A visit by Dr. Michelle Li of Babson College to the Supernetworks Lab and UMass Amherst INFORMS Student Chapter meeting.**

## Some Practical Observations Over My Career:

- I find that having **three or more doctoral students at a time provides a lot of positive synergy.**
- It is important to realize that **students are individuals** and that they may need different approaches from you for motivation and “rewards.” **Do try to get doctoral students with a strong work ethic. Identify a student’s strengths early on and nurture those as well as help to overcome weaknesses.**
- **Diversity is a strength** - having students from different countries is a plus and helps the network grow. Over time, however, there may be changes in the countries that students come from to work with you.
- **Advising PhD students is not just about research** (although that is #1).

# Advising PhD Students

When it comes to research, there are different models for PhD dissertation topic selection. A dissertation research theme/topic may depend on funding, i.e., if your student is funded on a grant or not. It is more common in business schools to have funding through the school, whereas in engineering schools, very often doctoral students are funded by grants awarded to the faculty member supervisor. The former may allow for greater flexibility in terms of topic but there may be more competition for doctoral students because of limited slots.

**It is essential that the PhD student be passionate about the dissertation research topic!**

Also, some students may need regular meetings to progress, whereas others may be more independent.

**Overall, I find that students who regularly engage in face to face brainstorming sessions with advisors tend to be the most successful and the research progresses at an accelerated rate.**

# Other Aspects of Research

- It is important, given the competitive job market landscape (which is great, but, nevertheless, competitive), **to publish with doctoral students.**
- **Doctoral students need to learn patience** - getting an article published in a journal takes time!
- In addition, in developing a scholar, it is critical to have doctoral students get experience in **reviewing papers submitted to journals!**
- And, of course, **taking students to conferences and having them present is imperative.**



**Doctoral students need to realize that to be successful today in academic one has to be able to perform at a very high level in terms of the triad of: research, teaching, and service.** These three areas can be quite complementary and positively reinforcing.

**Also, PhD students need to take care of themselves since without good health one cannot be working optimally!**

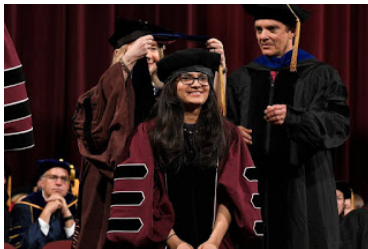
# Advising PhD Students

- **You may lose a student**, for various reasons, whether because of a family issue, changes in interests, or other factors, so try not to take this personally and move on.
- **You may also gain a student** because of an advisor switch or advisor leaving.
- **Keep your standards high.**
- **You are not a doctoral student's parent** (although your students may think of you as their parent). **Do keep a professional distance.**

# Celebrate the Successes of Your Students!

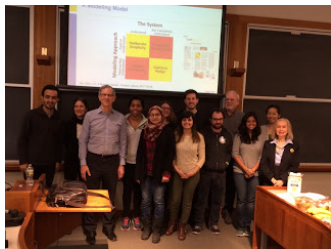


# Including Their PhD Graduations



# Advising PhD Students

In addition to advising PhD students in terms of research, I also believe **in helping the students develop fully professionally**. Since, typically, our PhD graduates of the Isenberg School of Management become faculty members, that implies development in terms of service and related skills. Our doctoral students are required to teach.



**A very important student organization, which allows for many leadership opportunities, is the award-winning UMass Amherst INFORMS Student Chapter.**

# Advising PhD Students

Events and activities that our PhD students are involved in through the UMass Amherst INFORMS Student Chapter are not only professionally rewarding (and help on the job market) but also fun!



Finally, I would like to add that doctoral students who are courteous, respectful, and thankful are the ones that tend to be the most successful long-term, including post-graduation.

**Kindness and good manners matter in every organization!**

**Thank You!**