



Institute of Systems Wisdom

Fellows Newsletter

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January 12, 2024

Institute of Systems Wisdom is an innovative social-academic-practice community that emerged in 2013 (and published a [Newsletter](#) beginning in 2014) as a result of applied consulting and research projects hosted within the Organizational Dynamics MS and MPhil programs at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn). When project members (faculty, scholars, practitioners, and students) moved from Penn to the Thomas Jefferson University Doctor of Management in Strategic Leadership and Doctor of Philosophy in Complex Systems Leadership programs, a co-laboratory relationship between the Institute and Jefferson was established. When Jefferson closed both leadership doctorates in 2021 then the School of Continuing and Professional Studies in 2023, the community continued within the ***Institute of Systems Wisdom*** where many were *Fellows*. For information contact Larrymtarr@gmail.com (Editor) or visit: <https://www.systemswisdom.com/institute-systems-wisdom>.

Alumni Milestones and Updates

Dear Larry, John, and DK Malhotra,

I hope this email finds you all well. I am writing to share some exciting news with you. In July of this year (2023), my dissertation was mentioned in a news article, as highlighted on the *PlumX Metrics* platform. This recognition is not only a personal milestone but also a testament to the invaluable guidance and support I received during my time at Jefferson University

Thank you once again for all the support and guidance you provided during my time as a student. It has played a significant role in my professional journey, and I am grateful for the foundation it has laid for my career.

P.S Link for the News Article:

https://plu.mx/plum/a/?repo_url=https://jdc.jefferson.edu/diss_masters/29&theme=plum-bigben-theme

Warm regards,
Dr. Syed Kazmi



The Real Deal: Doctor of Management in Strategic Leadership

Zimbabwe, my country of birth, was in recession even before Covid-19. According to the African Development Bank (2021), in 2019, the country's economy had contracted by 6.0% with output falling because of economic instability, removal of subsidies on maize-meal (the country's staple-food), fuel and electricity prices, suppressed foreign exchange earnings and excessive money creation. Against this context, I formulated a problem: how would I best be able to meet my professional interests and family responsibilities within Zimbabwe's VUCA context? I identified only two options: remain and struggle in Zimbabwe under stringent economic conditions, deprived of a decent means of survival, or leave, i.e., relocate to a context where the economy was stronger, with better healthcare and education, and a higher standard of living. I chose the latter and in January 2019 decided to move to the United States.

At this point when it became certain that relocation was no longer an option but a reality for me, I struggled with the idea of restarting life including my career. I had learnt from friends and family that in preparation for relocation, I should psych up my mind towards a complete change of life and lifestyle. For example, the fact that I worked at a director level position in my birth country did not guarantee me a lateral transition to a similar level position in the United States. I did not have any networks, neither did I understand the corporate landscape. Based on my experience working in global professional firms, like PwC Audit and Assurance, and KPMG International, I appreciated that relocating to another country required an understanding of the labor relations laws and cultural prescriptions.

Well before relocating to the United States, I was making applications for opportunities in HR. I spoke with more than a dozen recruiters without yielding positive results. This came as a surprise to me given that in Zimbabwe, my situation was the opposite: employers *head-hunted* me for HR leadership positions. Engaging with recruiters in United States revealed to me differences in talent acquisition approaches and methodologies. The reality of one regret letter after the other led to deep reflection on my part. I got very worried about how I was going to fit in at the right level and with the right companies. I decided that the only route that could help me was via in-person career development program. I needed the right level networks. I already had a master's degree so the next level was the doctoral level. I applied to a few universities that met my criteria and I got an offer from Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for the Doctor of Management in Strategic Leadership Degree (DMgt). What an apt offer! I accepted! Subsequently moving approximately 12,500 km (7800 miles) to a new city and country.

My strategy worked! The in-person DMgt helped me to meet up not only with great influential leaders (both professors and my peers) but also individuals who are very personable, genuine and helpful. I got referred to great opportunities and landed Director jobs in small to medium healthcare companies. This provided a safe landing pad for me as I got to learn all the critical aspects in an environment ideal for me as a first-time immigrant.

In February of 2023 I landed an interesting opportunity as a Talent Director, responsible for partnering with business units guiding on talent management strategy and operations consultancy services. The DMgt paved the way for me to this exciting opportunity which I

believe my learnings around application of systems thinking and design thinking in HRM will enable application of interactive planning to deliver holistic solutions against today's VUCA environment.

Besides the great networks I now have, the DMgt did not only help me get a job at the right level, but also has equipped me with new perspective of handling emerging challenges in a VUCA context. The program gave me a complete mindset evolution and applying systems thinking in real organization challenges is ushering new ways of problem resolution. THE DOCTOR OF MANAGEMENT IN STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP DEGREE IS THE REAL DEAL!

Thank you Larry, John, Tom, and all the professors for putting together a powerful program that enabled my smooth relocation as well as my cohort peers Bibi, Sung won, and Carol for hand holding me into corporate America!

Dr. Regina Tendayi



Hi Larry,

Yesterday I finished **teaching** my first class at Thomas Jefferson University: MGMT301 Principles of Management. Of course, I shared the tools I learned from you and the DSL program.

I am so impressed with the students I had in my class. The mix of Engineering, Accounting, PA, Fashion Merchandising students was amazing. And, to be standing in a class teaching where I actually had a DSL class in was a great experience.

Thanks,

Dr. Mark L. Pisacane
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mark_pisacane@campbellussales.com



Date: February 20, 2023 at 11:10:51 AM EST

To: jp2consult@aol.com

Subject: TIME SENSITIVE INVITATION - To join a dialogue with Mike Jackson.

Dear John,

I'm not sure if you are aware that we (Mike Jackson and I) have developed a programme for executives with the same title as his book: "*An Introduction to Critical Systems Thinking and the Management of Complexity.*"

It is an 8-week programme for a global audience that include a mix of pre-recorded content and live dialogues with Mike and a guest.

Mike has asked that **I invite you to join him** for a dialogue at 4pm (UK time) on March 21. The session is an hour long and includes a 20minute moderated dialogue, plus a 30minute moderated audience Q&A

Module 5 of the programme covers "The Purposeful Systems Approach" including:

- Human Systems Are Different;
- Determining Purposes;
- Reaching Accommodations;
- Soft Systems Methodology;
- Avoiding 'Groupthink';
- Strategic Assumption Surfacing & testing;
- Red Team Thinking

In this context we hope you will share your views on Ackoff's perspectives and your own thoughts. We can have a prep call with Mike to agree exactly what gets covered, and to agree a set of questions. Please let me know if you are willing and able to make this as soon as possible, then we can arrange next steps.

Best Regards

Paul

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[Twitter](#)

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Dear friends.

I will be holding a reading of my play titled, "*Grief: A love story*" on April 17, 6 PM at the Venice Island Theater in Philadelphia. (<https://theatrephiladelphia.org/whats-on-stage/venues/the-venice-island-performing-arts-center>)

The play is situated in my childhood milieu, a refugee community of observant and non-observant Jews in New York City, circa 1951. The play considers such themes as the aftermath of the holocaust, peoples' relationship to God, and the impact of tragedy on intimate relationships. And, I assure you that there are some light moments in the play as well.

I understand that for those of you who do not live in Philadelphia a trip to the city might be too much. But since you are all dear to me, I had to invite you.

Please let me know **if in principle** you and/or your partner will be able to attend.

We will meet at 6 pm for Pizza and drinks and the reading will begin at 6:30. There will be an opportunity for you to give me, the director, and the actors feedback on the reading after its completion. I so look forward to your attending.

Larry

Larry Hirschhorn

CFAR, Inc.

Principal



Brian Phillip Propp is a Canadian former professional ice hockey left winger who played 15 seasons in the National Hockey League, from 1979 to 1994. He was a National Hockey League All-Star, legendary Philadelphia Flyer, former sports broadcaster, entrepreneur, business relationship and development guru, philanthropist in his community, and he won the 1987 Canada Cup with Team Canada.

In the attached photo, he is **proudly wearing a DSL t-shirt** which he received after serving as the **External Reader on my Dissertation Committee**.

Dr. Derek Hunsberger

Brian P Propp was tagged.



Eileen McCay Propp is with
Brian P Propp and 5 others.



4h · 🧑🏻‍🧑🏻‍🧑🏻

Fun night kids! Great seeing you all! Gotta love the Jersey shore!



👍❤️ 56

5 comments

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➦ Send



July 1, 2023

**Celebrating Canada Day, DSL/CSL Graduation, and the
Program Closing Parties**





Dr. Jerin Juby and family at Jefferson Commencement



Dr. Sagar Sharma and Dr. Andrew Braverman at the Braverman Graduation Party



**Elana Starr, Dr. Steve Freeman, Dr. Jim Plummer
Dr. Jerin Juby**



**Dr. Darshi Mody, Larry
but not Molson**



Drs. Carol Haines, Larry and Valerie Andrews



Thank you to Drs. Mark Pisacane and Robyn Chin – the planning (and delivery) committee for this event!