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Strategic Leadership Newsletter

Jefferson School of Continuing and Professional  
Studies

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## Strategic Leadership Newsletter: Volume 4, Number 2

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## *Strategic Leadership Newsletter*

Volume 4 Number 2

June 11, 2018

*Jefferson Strategic Leadership Newsletter* reports information relevant to the Jefferson (Philadelphia University + Thomas Jefferson University) *Doctor of Management Program in Strategic Leadership (DSL)* and its community including personal and professional events and accomplishments, new practices, research, opportunities, and suggestions. You are encouraged to forward the Newsletter to friends and colleagues to expand awareness and to brand yourself as a community member. You are also invited to recommend people or organizations to be added to the mailing list. Contact *Jefferson Strategic Leadership Newsletter* by emailing [starrl@philau.edu](mailto:starrl@philau.edu).

### *Jefferson DSL Commencement #1*

The first milestone occurred **Friday, January 15, 2016** in the University's Lawrence N. Field DEC Center when the members of Cohort 1 attended new student orientation, introduced themselves, and began their doctoral studies. The second milestone occurred **Wednesday, May 9, 2018** at the Philadelphia Convention Center, where the Jefferson (Philadelphia University + Thomas Jefferson University) Commencement was held. Each person was called to the stage to acknowledge their candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Management in Strategic Leadership (DSL).

As part of the celebration of this accomplishment, on the Friday before Commencement, DSL held a party for Cohort 1 students and families, DSL faculty and staff, and senior Jefferson leadership. In addition to a catered dinner, students and faculty received framed *Awards for Exemplary Contribution* to the Jefferson DSL community.

To help celebrate at the institution level, *Jefferson Today* on April 10 highlighted [Adena Johnston](#) and on May 7 Jefferson's Social Media group posted a *Facebook* profile of [Bob Schatz](#).



Cohort 1 Pre-Commencement Social



Awards: Where is Bob Schatz?



Michael, Michelle and Al



Les, Joel, Joe, Rosa, Larry, Jean-Marc, Tom, Dominick, and John



Larry and Dominick preparing for the Ceremony



Doctors in the House: Al, Derek, Adena, Michael, Bob, Michelle and Tina

# Jefferson DSL Welcomes New Mentors

DSL is pleased to welcome to our community *Elliot Cole* and *Allan Braslow*, Doctoral Mentors.

*Elliot Cole*, PhD (Syracuse) is a computer science researcher, entrepreneur, educator, and founder and president of the Institute for Cognitive Prosthetics (ICP) an R&D organization focusing on medical outcomes and the impact of technology and other environmental factors. His academic interest concerns telehealth, particularly modalities that go beyond what can be achieved in the outpatient hospital setting, thereby advancing medical treatment. In his models, the user is always active to a greater or lesser degree.



Elliot Cole

His work at ICP has been the subject of a globally distributed *PBS* documentary; he is author of 100+ papers, presentations, and the book, [Patient-Centered Design](#), which is part of a computer science series. He has been a proposal reviewer for NIH (Study Section member), NSF, DoD, the National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research, and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada.

Elliot's faculty positions have included Drexel University (associate professor of information systems); University of Pennsylvania (research associate and a visiting scholar); Dartmouth Medical School (research associate); and the Maxwell School of Syracuse University (research associate).



*Allan Braslow*, PhD (Illinois) specializes in the study and improvement of education with a special focus on emergency care practice. His experience includes being a Government Expert for the US Department of Justice where he was responsible for evaluating the validity and reliability of emergency care practices in US training programs; R&D scientist for Samaritan Health Services (Phoenix, AZ) under contract with USDOT/NHTSA/EMS; Senior Consultant to Simon & Schuster (Prentice Hall/Brady) publishers tasked with supervising the development of their books and other educational materials directly related to emergency care practice; Senior Consultant to the American Red Cross where he researched and developed a new paradigm for emergency care instruction; co-Principal Investigator for several American Heart Association projects directly related to improving and assessing Basic Life Support, Advanced Cardiac Life Support and Pediatric Advanced Life Support skills and related patient outcomes; EMS advisor for the US Olympic Committee and Indianapolis 500 Motor Speedway; and Research Dissemination Expert at the Federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (formerly AHCPR) where he collaborated with associates to develop

methodologies for disseminating targeted practice research findings to improve provider procedures and related outcomes.



Allan Braslow

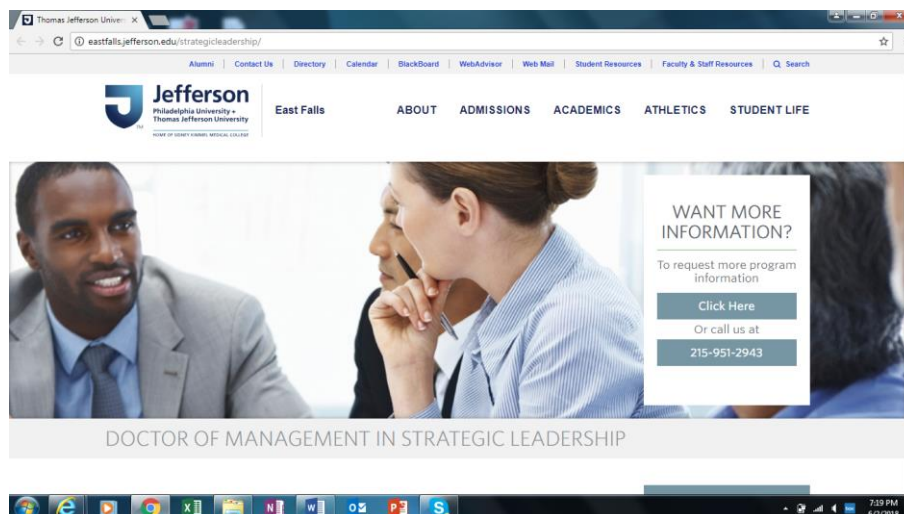
As a researcher and mentor, Allan has been a leader in the study and development of effective training without an instructor by demonstrating the value of a video-based self-instructional system an outcome that has been adopted by major CPR training organizations across the world.

He has held appointments as Visiting Scholar and a leader of the *Special Task Force on Reframing the System of Survival for Sudden Cardiac Arrest* established at University of Pennsylvania (now located at Thomas Jefferson University).



## DSL Website Visits

The Jefferson Marketing Department provided an analytic evaluation of hits/visits to the DSL website.



The report noted:

Between March 2017 and March 2018, the DSL website logged over 25,000 pageviews. Visits to the DSL Homepage accounted for 30 percent of the traffic followed by Meet the Director, Courses, and Curriculum. The FAQ page keeps visitors engaged for approximately 2 minutes suggesting they are seeking more information about the program. The overall average time per page across the site is one minute and twenty-five seconds which is well above the standard for other programs and indicates visitors are interacting, not just “clicking through.” Generally, the amount of time spent on an academic program web page declines with the order of the pages, but this is not the case for DSL.

Most traffic comes from *Google*/web searches, *US News’* Graduate School Rankings, *Facebook*, and the *Executive DBA Council*. Approximately 71 percent of visitors are from the metropolitan Philadelphia area; the remainder come from metropolitan NYC, DC, and other (national and international) sources.

The “of interest” pages - Faculty, Students, and Student Characteristics - perform well compared to similar pages in other programs, particularly the Faculty descriptions. These pages are indeed of interest to DSL web visitors.



## 2018 EDBAC Scholarship and Conference

The [Executive DBA Council’s](#) peer-review journal, [Engaged Management Review](#) has announced new papers written by students and faculty in professional executive doctoral programs similar to Jefferson DSL. The next issue will feature a special issue on “Charting a New Territory: Practitioner-Scholarship in Action.” Please feel free to share these papers with your colleagues.

The EDBAC annual conference, [Engaged Management Scholarship](#), will be held in Philadelphia this year **September 6-9, 2018** hosted by Temple University’s Fox School of Business. All DSL students, faculty, and alumni are invited to attend.



EDBAC’s Journal, *Engaged Management Review*



# *Kay and Harold Ronson Health and Applied Science Center*

While an official groundbreaking will take place in the fall 2018, J. Thomas Becker PE, EFP, CEFP associate vice president for operations announced that preliminary work for the new [Kay and Harold Ronson Health and Applied Science Center](#) began on **Monday, June 4, 2018**. The intended schedule will allow for a soft opening of this building during the fall semester of 2019, with full building completion for the spring 2020 semester. While the building will face Henry Ave., the construction will affect/reduce the number of available parking spaces on the East Falls campus.



Ronson Health and Applied Science Center

For more about benefactor and Trustee [Harold Ronson, read this.](#)



## *Jefferson **Proposed** PhD in Complex Systems Leadership*

The **proposed** Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in *Complex Systems Leadership* has entered the Jefferson new program queue for design, development, and when approved, initiation in 2019.

The **proposed** program would focus on the research opportunities of understanding and navigating the increasingly complex challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), and the continued organizational challenges within the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) environment.

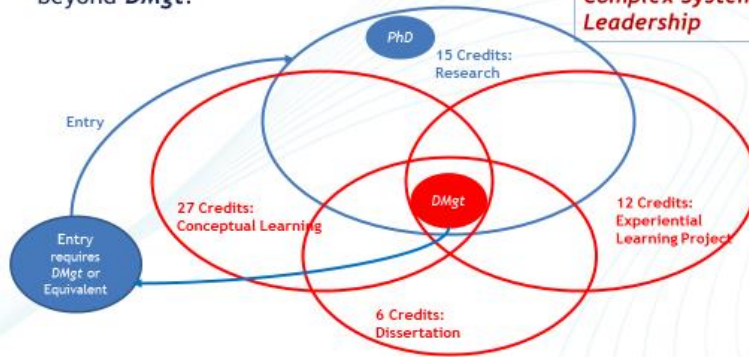
Pure Research ←————→ Pure Practice



Entry into **proposed PhD** requires **DMgt** or equivalent.

**PhD** requires at least 15 credits beyond **DMgt**.

**Proposed Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degree in Complex Systems Leadership**



This **proposed** program is an *advanced doctorate*. Admission requires *an earned a first doctorate in management or equivalent* within which a dissertation was delivered.

The mission of the **proposed** doctorate is *to improve lives by enhancing understanding of the challenges faced by leaders in complex organizational systems*.



# Student Voices

Each DSL student is on a personal and professional journey. To learn about some of their experiences within our program and how these have informed their thinking and practice, we will post in each Newsletter narratives of reflections beginning with **Tina Wiltsee** (Cohort 1), **Jim Plummer** (Cohort 2), and **Robyn Chin** (Cohort 4).



Tina Wiltsee

When I started the program in January 2016, I was pretty ambitious. Not only did I start on my path toward a doctoral degree, I also started a business. Never having been an entrepreneur, I was naive of the challenges that were ahead of me, but I saw a window of opportunity I could not resist. I must say that balancing full-time studies of the doctoral program and the equally full-time obligations of my growing business has been a challenge. Yet, I am so blessed to have found both. The program has really given me better insight into my business and the complexity I find around me.

As an agency working with the State of New Jersey, we face a lot of conflicting priorities exacerbated in my particular domain by a major shift the state is making in how they organize service delivery to those we serve. There are many stakeholders who lack a voice in decisions about the services provided. The most important and most visible are the people who are the recipients of services. I acknowledge that they are the reason we exist, but my interest is also in the other stakeholders who are not be as visible and lack a voice. As a strategic leader my focus is on the service providers, such as my company and my employees, who are impacted by policies and decisions developed without our input.

I've been interested in studying how stakeholders can find a place of influence in a system that is in a state of upheaval and change. In my case, I also need to add the backdrop of the unique systems one needs to navigate when working with government agencies. My Jefferson DSL studies have helped me find perspective and methodologies which can be used to examine the changes that provide my company both opportunity and challenge. I've been able to demonstrate unique insights that have allowed me to be a valuable resource to my state government partners and peers. I've also been fortunate to have exposure to this doctoral program because it has given me the understanding I've needed to identify ways to develop my employees, so they can also successfully navigate this complex environment.

My life has been transformed significantly since I entered the Doctor of Management in Strategic Leadership program in Fall 2016. The mere fact that I have met so many brilliant minds on both sides of the classroom, student and faculty, has been worth the journey. The faculty are all excellent facilitators, so much so that they directed pathways that led to many riveting discussions and learning experiences. My fellow students so diverse and all so remarkable in their own rights, have made navigating through this program stimulating and fresh.



**James Plummer**

Professionally, I have changed positions since I have started. I am working as a Senior Health Services Consultant, doing what I love to do, acting as a Coach and Mentor to help transform primary care practices to Value-Based Care. I am officially on the rolls at Villanova University as part of their Mentoring Program and I unofficially mentor students at Eastern University and Delaware County Community College. I love to support and guide prospective students (young and mature) to choose their path in their own educational journey. I hope teaching at some point will be in my future as a result of being in this program.

Personally, just recently, I celebrated my Fortieth Wedding Anniversary with my childhood sweetheart. I saw my first two grandchildren come into this world in the past two years. They are the loves of my life and I am looking forward to seeing them blossom. When I walk at Graduation next year I will fulfill a promise I made to myself and my Mom that started in 2007 when I began my Higher Education passage at the ripe old age of 53. I vowed I would not stop until I had achieved all that was possible in the educational world.

I have seen my mode of thinking altered by this program. I now cannot imagine coming upon any situation personally or professionally without examining it through a system and design thinking lens. I also cannot imagine my life without some form of educational pursuit, so I am thinking there might be more opportunity to learn; my doctorate may not be the end.

Western education has stressed the importance of scientific method and analytic thinking and so students are taught the importance of being able to break things down into parts, analyze the segments and then make a decision. Due to this way of thinking, we are programmed to view problems in isolation. The flaw in this thinking, however, is that in the real world, problems do not occur in isolation.

As a trained accountant and a person who learned to think analytically, my go-to process method is to compartmentalize. While this method has value, we live in a world where there are constant changes and moving parts; therefore, it is also valuable to be able to understand situations from a holistic perspective.



Robyn Chin

Before taking any class in the DSL program, I would often express to colleagues and friends that I was interested in this program because I needed to learn how to think differently and vary my approach to problem-solving. After completing my first year, I have realized that my way of processing has indeed changed. For example, before taking DSL classes, if I wanted to make changes in a specific department, I would focus on that department or one issue within the department separately from all other operations of the organization. However, after a few classes, I now think about the interactions among elements and how making a change could affect not just that department but also how the change would affect the other areas including the mission of the organization.

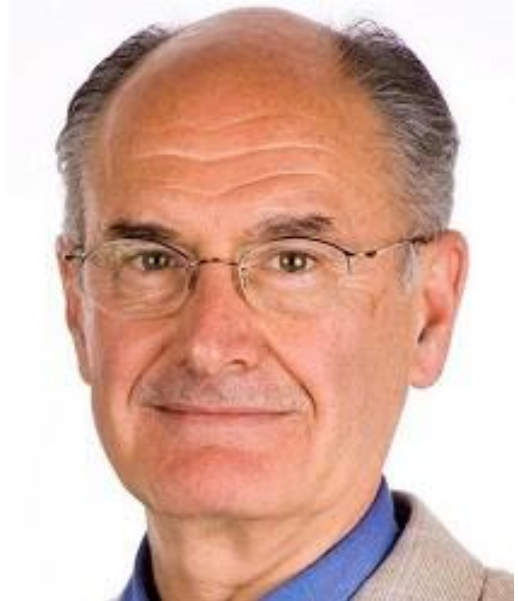
I find much value in systems thinking and changing my mindset to think differently not only in business but also in personal endeavors. There is a proverb that states: “As a man thinketh so is he” which means actions reflect our thinking processes. When I learned to make decisions holistically and not focus only on parts, my decision making became more impactful and efficient. Systems thinking allows me the opportunity and foresight to appreciate how one decision can impact various aspects of a situation. The scientific method way of thinking has its value and place for some kinds of challenges; but, learning also how to think with the systems approach has added depth to my toolbox of problem-solving techniques.

# *DSL Community Research*

Be alert for email being sent to the DSL community from [Darshi Mody](#) (Cohort 2) who is being supervised by [Dominick Volini](#) to understand how we all can collectively address some of the DSL academic and social issues that have emerged as the program has developed.



Darshi



Dominick

As you may know, Darshi's passion is high-performance education and this topic fits perfectly with her long-term career goals. She has been working with Dominick to develop some common understandings of how we can adjust the DSL platform to better address everyone's needs. She will now be seeking community thoughts on the current structure of the DSL program, so she can document these then to collectively offer improvement ideas. By working together with administration and faculty, we can make our Doctorate experience and learning more worthwhile.



## *Preparing for Cohort 6 and Fall 2018*

An Information Session (22 people registered) was held Tuesday June 5 on the Center City campus for those interested in applying to DSL. The application deadline to begin DSL studies in fall 2018 is July 15.

As of this writing, for fall - Cohort 6 - there have been 97 application contacts, three people have been admitted, and six are currently under final review. Many more are in the pre-evaluation queue waiting for final documents to arrive.

As we prepare for the fall semester, we anticipate a DSL community of approximately 50 students working with our 18 faculty, scholars, coaches and mentors.



Here are significant dates listed in the current [2017-2018 East Falls Academic Calendar](#) and the [2018-2019 Jefferson East Falls Campus Academic Calendar](#):

**Friday August 3** - Summer semester classes end

**Monday August 6** - Summer grades are posted

**Friday August 17 and Saturday August 18** - Cohort 6  
New Student Orientation

**Thursday August 23** - all DSL students begin fall  
semester classes

**Tuesday August 28** - Last day to add a fall class

**Monday December 3** - Fall semester classes end

**Friday December 14** - Fall grades are posted

# DSL Professional and Academic Activity

[Tom Guggino](#), Communication Coach, served as moderator for an information session for a proposed new water bottling facility to be built for [Nestle Waters](#) (Pellegrino, Perrier, etc.) in Pleasant Gap, PA.

“More than 400 people gathered to hear what Nestle Waters had to say at its informational meeting March 12, more than two months after the company announced potential plans to open a water bottling facility in either Spring or Benner township. The crowd had many questions about the impact of the bottling facility going into the meeting, and the company did its best to answer them, but many feel questions remain. A group of protestors from the Sierra Club Moshannon Group and the Nittany Valley Environmental Coalition stood outside before the meeting with informational paperwork and signs that read “No to Nestle,” along with other slogans against the company.”



Tom selecting questions for the panel at the Nestle Waters information session

Tom selected the questions submitted by the community through email and from those attending the information session. Many of the questions dealt with how the Nestle Waters project would impact the environmental and how the facility would affect the community.

As reported in the *Centre County Gazette*, “The economic impact study that was completed suggests the factory would pay more than \$712,000 in local and state taxes annually and have a \$58 million annual economic impact on the area. With 50 new jobs available to the public that pay on average \$58,000 a year, people seemed eager to hear that these jobs would include forklift operators, office staff and others.”

State Senator Jake Corman, R-Bellefonte, said the presentation was helpful and thinks if all the science checks out, it can be good for the community. “We have a room full of passionate people with a lot of good questions. I think this has the potential to be a positive for the community and it is good that some many people are interested in it,” said Corman.”

DSL and School of Business **Professor Les Sztandera** reported that his 30 Innovation MBA students divided in 5 teams, took on 5 industry-sponsored projects (Under Armour - ePTFE fiber, Under Armour - backpacks, Federal Mogul, Orthex, and Jefferson Gutman Library). He stressed it was a great honor and a responsibility to mentor and teach these students due to a diversity of industry sponsors and corresponding challenges.

The results? Two Jefferson student teams presented their final products at the **21<sup>st</sup> Product Development Program Gala** at Aalto University in Helsinki, Finland mid- May.



Les

Despite being adventurous and ever-vigilant for technology innovation (and because the *Gala* was exhausting), Les failed to corroborate the [CNN News report of the Burger King Sauna in Helsinki](#) that has, "the latest innovation we never knew we needed: a 15-person sauna, shower room, locker room and media lounge with TV and gaming facilities. Guests can spread out on blue and red benches in the sauna, perhaps covering their modesty with a Burger King towel or robe and watch TV or play video games while basking in the steam. And if all that pore-flushing is making you hungry, servers from the outlet visit the sauna to take food and beverage orders."



**Professor [John Pourdehnad](#)** has been invited to give a paper at the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the [Operational Research Society](#) to be held September 11-13, 2018 at Lancaster University in the Lake District - one of the most picturesque regions of the UK. Lancaster University is famous for being the institutional home of Peter Checkland, the originator of Soft Systems Methodology. Peter has been invited to give the opening keynote address to the conference.



The conference organizers noted, “The context today is significantly different from previously, and it makes this the right time for a new initiative. In 2017, the United Nations (UN), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) all formally declared systems thinking to be a key leadership skill that is necessary to deal with the fundamental interconnectedness of complex, local-to-global economic, social and environmental issues. This recognition of our field by major international agencies represents an open door to new opportunities to make a difference in both local communities and global governance.”

John’s paper is [Case Study in Applications of Systems Thinking and Design Methodologies Toward Emergent Self-Governance Models](#).





# Ackoff 100 Celebration

All DSL students learn the systems approach and implications on leadership and management. While in 2017, the UN, WHO, and OECD formally declared systems thinking to be a key leadership skill,” many DSL faculty learned the importance of systems thinking and practice because they studied and/or worked on projects with University of Pennsylvania Professor, Russell L. Ackoff. When Russ died in 2009, [he was regarded](#) as “Renaissance Man, architect, city planner, philosopher, behavioral scientist, trailblazer in the field of organizational operations, the pre-eminent authority on organizational systems theory, best-selling author, world traveler—even a humorist.”

Russ also established the word “mess,” referred to by Dr. Klasko, as a management term: “Managers are not confronted with problems that are independent of each other, but with dynamic situations that consists of complex systems of changing problems that interact with each other. I call such situations *messes*. Problems are abstractions extracted from messes by analysis; they are to messes as atoms are to tables and charts ... Managers do not solve problems, they manage messes” Ackoff (1979, s. 93).



Russ Ackoff

To celebrate the Ackoff legacy, Jefferson DSL is planning an “Ackoff 100” birthday event for spring-summer 2019. Preliminary plans include invitations to the global community of those who studied and were influenced by him to come to Philadelphia for a social event, submission of a collection of papers and other scholarship - practice influenced by his thinking and teaching, and other activities.

If you are interested and willing to become involved in the planning or participation, please send email to [starrl@philau.edu](mailto:starrl@philau.edu) using the subject header Ackoff 100.

Here are some links about Russ:

From [The Economist](#)

From [Fast Company](#)

From [The Telegraph](#)

His [Bell Laboratories](#) story

# Summer Reading

In his third book ([Bless this Mess](#)), *Stephen Klasko*, MD, MBA, president and CEO of Thomas Jefferson University and Jefferson Health - who was recently named by [Fast Company as one of the most creative leaders](#) in business - sketches the “mess” of healthcare in America and tours the galaxy to find planets where different decisions led to radically different outcomes. With illustrator Chrissie Bonner, Dr. Klasko asks what will be obvious in the future and challenges us to do those things now.



Dr. Klasko with Captain James T. Kirk (William Shatner, a [Canadian actor](#)) who was a motivator for writing this science-fiction book.

# DSL National Ranking



**Jefferson (Philadelphia University + Thomas Jefferson University)  
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