Living in two worlds: Challenges faced by and opportunities for international graduate students and faculty

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ABSTRACT

This panel aims to identify the challenges and opportunities faced by international LIS graduate students and faculty when searching for, securing, and retaining tenure-track academic positions. As graduate students, they are enticed to get their education and/or seek employment in higher education, including research institutions, in North America. They also maintain ties with their culture and contacts back home while immersing in the traditions and cultures of their newly adopted country, thereby living in two worlds. Panellists, who live in two worlds, will focus on the cultural differences, academic and research environments, expectations by employers, and work-life balance.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Education of information professionals; Education programs/schools; Students; Teaching faculty; Education

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

International graduate students; International LIS faculty in North America; Academic job market; Doctorate degrees in North America

INTRODUCTION

This panel is a continuation of interactive panels targeting LIS graduate students at previous ALISE annual meetings. This current panel aims to identify the challenges faced by and opportunities for international, library and information science (LIS) graduate students in North America. As the proverbial land of opportunities for immigrants, it is evident that a good number of graduate students and faculty are enticed to get their education and/or seek employment in higher learning and research institutions.

As a result, they maintain ties with their culture and contacts back home while immersing themselves in the traditions and cultures of their newly adopted country, thereby living in two worlds.
The panelists will share their experiences and insights about doing their PhDs and seeking jobs in academia. The panelists are all international faculty members who graduated from North American universities and are now employed by six LIS schools. Panelists hold & represent all academic ranks (i.e., Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor) and they are in different stages of their careers (i.e., junior, mid-career, or senior faculty).

Panelists will also serve as mentors to current LIS graduate students and faculty who are in different stages in their education and research/teaching careers so that they can pursue successful careers. Panelists will also engage with international doctoral students from several socio-economic and academic backgrounds to help them complete their studies on time. Panelists will address a broad set of issues, typically faced by graduate students and international students in particular. Sample issues include but are not limited to searching for and securing internships, fellowships, and tenure-track academic positions. Panelists will also discuss these issues in the context of living in two worlds, their native countries and North America, and will focus on the cultural differences, academic and research environments, expectations by employers, and work-life balance. In addition, topics such as the role of career counseling, the role of supervisors, career paths, and job opportunities for international students, will also be discussed.

This panel will especially be helpful for international doctoral students and junior faculty members to survive and prosper in highly competitive academic environments in North America. It will also serve as an open discussion forum for faculty and students to discuss challenges and opportunities in academia in the North America. We hope that discussions during this panel and any ideas generated will also sensitize audience members, specifically those who are either international graduate students or faculty and will help them improve their experience and probability of success in North American academic institutions.

**PANEL STYLE**

This panel will last for 90 minutes. We will use the PechaKucha model where each of the six panelists will have about 10 minutes to present. The last 30 minutes will be reserved for an open discussion.