



WU INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH FELLOW ACTIVITY REPORT

Research Visit at Stanford University



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ANA GODONOGA

Introduction

This report provides a summary of activities performed during my stay as Visiting Student Researcher at Stanford University. The research visit took place from April 1st to June 30th, 2024 and was hosted by the Scandinavian Consortium for Organisational Research (SCANCOR) at Stanford. The report includes a summary of research activities performed during my stay, courses attended and professional development activities pursued. The report concludes with a personal reflection on this invaluable opportunity.

Research Activities

The three-month research stay at SCANCOR comprised weekly research seminars that allowed SCANCOR scholars, Stanford faculty and researchers from other universities to meet, present and exchange ideas on ongoing research projects. On Mondays each week, I had the opportunity to attend the SCANCOR Lecture Series on Organisations and Institutions, led by Professor Prashant Loyalka, who also serves as Co-Director of SCANCOR. This seminar highlighted research related to organisations and institutions through a speaker series featuring Stanford faculty, visiting scholars, and guests from academic institutions throughout North America and elsewhere. The focus was largely on education, with some presentations also focusing on higher education, which were especially interesting for me given my research background. Lectures that I found especially interesting include *“Algorithms and knowledge work: Organisation scholarship in a world without readers”* by Professor Beth Bechky, UC Davis; *“Who may enter? Qualification and ranking in centralized admission systems to higher education”* by Associate Professor Astrid Sandsør, University of Oslo; and *“What do we teach our children?”* by Assistant Professor Anjali Adukia, University of Chicago.

In addition, I attended the Thursday research seminars, dedicated to SCANCOR scholars (including myself) to present our work. On May 23rd, 2024, I presented the third and final study of my doctoral research, titled *“What influences the adoption of social impact practices in business schools? Findings from a global survey.”* The goal of this study was to understand how business schools adapt their education, research, and service practices to strengthen their societal impact, and the conditions that enable these practices to develop. My presentation lasted for 40 minutes, followed by a 20-minute discussion. I had a fruitful and lively exchange with fellow SCANCORIANS, who shared the experience of their own institutions with societal impact and provided recommendations for relevant literature and ideas for future research. I especially enjoyed learning about Copenhagen Business School’s research project [“Turning theory into action”](#), which traces the impact of management and organisational theories on practice, and the University of Oslo’s mandatory course on [Research Communication](#), which trains doctoral students how to disseminate their research to non-academic audiences.

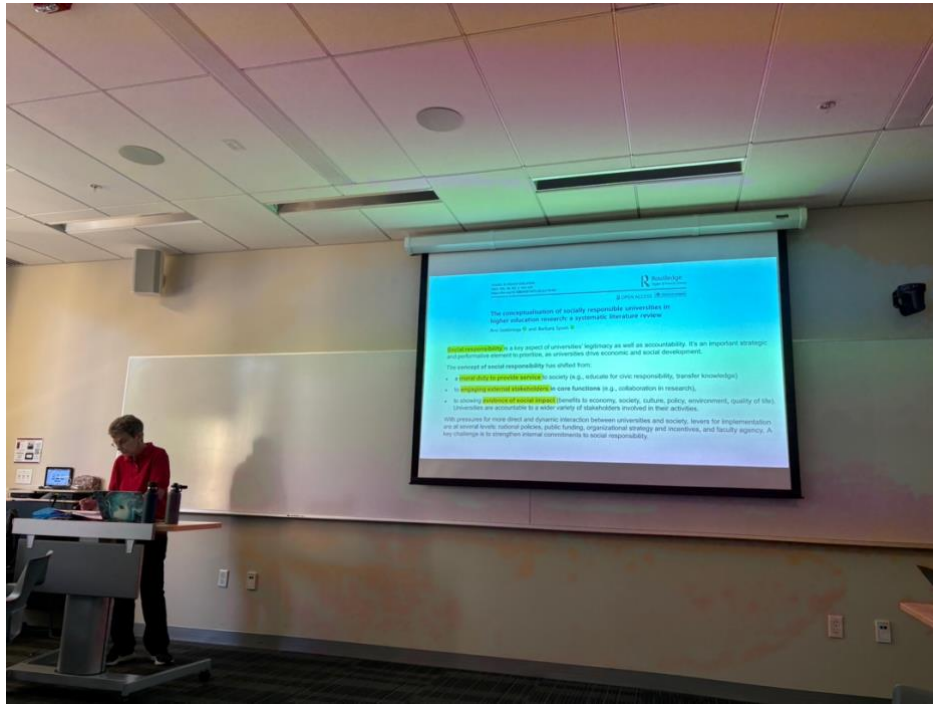
Apart from finalising my third study, I also focused on writing the Introduction and Conclusion chapters of my dissertation, which explain how the three studies are linked and outline the key theoretical and practical contributions of the dissertation as a whole.



My research presentation at SCANCOR, Stanford University, May 23, 2024.

Courses

Apart from writing and presenting my research, I had the opportunity to attend and audit two courses, which addressed contemporary topics in the field of (higher) education. The first course was titled “*Higher Education and Society*”, by Professor Patricia Gumport. The course provided deep insight into the relationship between higher education and society in the United States, adopting a historical perspective and analysing the societal role of three key institutional types – research-intensive universities, comprehensive state universities and community colleges. The course provided helpful insights on topics, such as academic stratification, access, equity and inclusion, sources of continuity and change in higher education and public impact, the latter being especially relevant for my research. The course format included reading of relevant academic and media literature, in-class discussions, group work and simulations, student presentations and a reflection paper. I had a great exchange with Prof. Gumport about the work of our Institute on the impact of higher education, and I was thrilled that she used one of our published articles as background information in class (see picture below). She gave me the opportunity to speak about our work to the students and engaged me in designing a simulation on public impact in class. Before I left, we discussed ideas for collaboration on a research study, which I am very much looking forward to.



Our research study presented by Prof. Patricia Gumport in her class “Higher Education and Society”, May 21, 2024.

The second course that I audited focused on the role of AI in education, with a particular emphasis on the EdTech sector (course title “*How Will AI Change the EdTech Industry? Challenges & Opportunities Based on Real Business Cases*” by Professor Guilherme Lichand). The course comprised readings and guest lectures working in the education technology sector, including reputable organisations such as the Khan Academy, Duolingo and the Gates Foundation. The lecturers provided different perspectives on the opportunities created by AI from the viewpoint of their organisations, touching upon topics, such as widening access to educational opportunities to disadvantaged groups, improving student assessment and learning outcomes, while reflecting on concerns including the quality of learning and student support, data privacy and impact on educators.



Presentation by Uriel Kejsefman, Senior Product manager, Duolingo

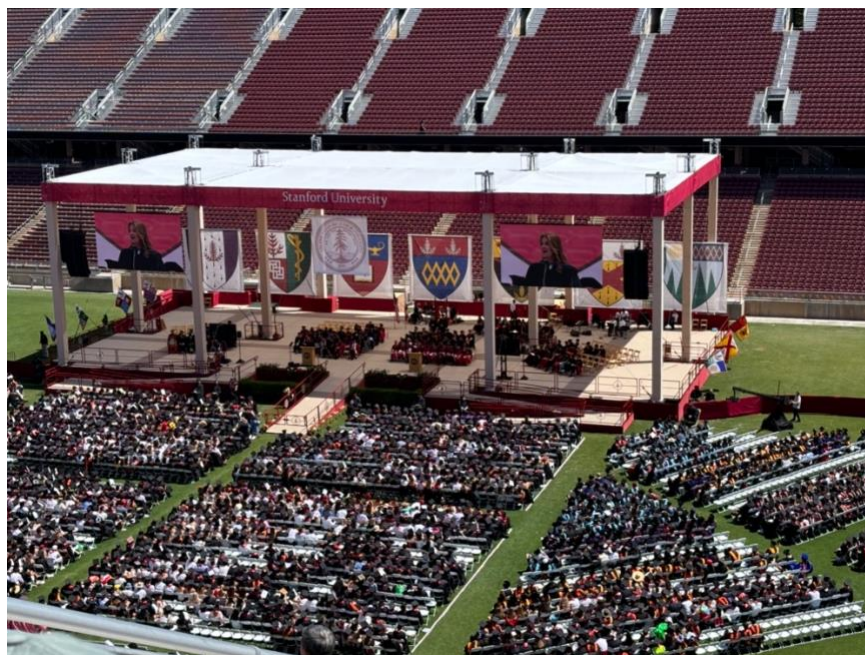
Professional Development Activities and Events

Finally, Stanford University offers a rich portfolio of professional development opportunities for doctoral students, provided by the Office of the Vice-Provost for Graduate Education and the Career Planning Centre. I attended several workshops, which proved very helpful. A list and brief description is provided below:

- **Resume Building for PhDs** (aspects covered: the difference between a Resume and a CV, what sections are required in both and what steps are necessary to tailor one's Resume to different jobs and audiences).
- **Leveraging LinkedIn Workshop** (aspects covered: keeping one's profile updated, using LinkedIn for networking and job search).
- **Gaining Confidence in Public Speaking** (aspects covered: effective storytelling in delivering a speech, the role of body language and voice on stage, handling questions from the audience).
- **Talk Intros** (aspects covered: the role of a strong introduction (to a speech, lecture), how to structure it and what messages should be conveyed).
- **Effective Teaching Statements** (aspects covered: how to write an effective teaching statement when preparing for an academic job, defining teaching philosophy statements).

I also attended several interesting events, including:

- A public lecture on "[The Possibilities of AI](#)" by Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI.
- The [2024 Teaching Commons Conference](#) at Stanford University.
- The book talk "[The New Global Universities--Reinventing Education in the 21st Century](#)".
- [Melinda Gates' speech](#) at Stanford's 2024 Graduation Ceremony.



Melinda French Gates' speech at the Graduation Ceremony, June 16, 2024

Final Reflection

All-in-all, my stay as Visiting Student Researcher at SCANCOR, Stanford University exceeded my expectations. I was fortunate to be affiliated to a great community of scholars with whom I interacted in both formal research settings as well as more informal social events, such as the Thursday socials. The exchange I had was very beneficial for my work and I especially appreciated

the multi-disciplinary nature of projects and perspectives presented. The courses and professional development opportunities that I attended gave me a different view on academic life at Stanford, allowing me to interact with esteemed professors and fellow graduate students. Experiencing the campus life at Stanford, including its public lectures, museum, concert hall, recreational facilities and many diverse activities organised by students allowed me to appreciate even more the wide array of resources and opportunities provided by this distinguished university.

Contact Details

Ana Godonoga

Teaching and Research Associate

Institute for Higher Education Management, Department of Strategy and Innovation

Vienna University of Economics and Business

ana.godonoga@wu.ac.at