ANGIE: Welcome back. Thank you for staying with us for the final session.

We have explored the six major doctoral pathways, talked about how to gain experience within your pathway, and discussed how you can communicate your academic and professional skills to employers. And now, during the final session, we will explore ways that you can advance your career plan.

I will now turn it over to our presenter, Dina Bergren.
DINA: In the final session, we will focus on your future as a doctoral student.

Let's go ahead and get started. In addition to your education and professional training, think of these three areas to manage your career: Experience, People and Story. This is the model be adapted from the book, Working Identity, by Herminia Ibarra. As reflected in this model, your career identity evolves through gaining experience, meeting new people, and communicating your career story to others.

You will also notice that all three areas of experience, story and people relate to one another. When you are gaining experience, you are also meeting new people. At the same time, your professional connections may lead you to new experiences, thereby helping you communicate your career story or brand through the new skills you have gained.

So how do you begin building your EPS? You want to start with the end in mind. Stephen Covey author of the book, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, says to think of the end in mind. Ask yourself these important questions: What is your goal for your doctoral degree? Is it to advancement in your current field, taking a career transition into a new field, become the go to person in your professional or academic community, making a broader social impact, or maybe mentoring and teaching others?
In what areas do you shine? Are you great writer, presenter, leader, project manager, teacher? In other words, what areas have you excelled in and what aspects of your program and professional work are you most drawn to? Is it interacting with others, finding solutions to complex research questions, or maybe writing papers?

What difference do you want to make in your field? Do you want to influence change on a broader scale through policy and advocacy work, or become a leading consultant in your area of expertise? Maybe transform organizations through performance improvement? Finally, take time to visualize yourself in your future career. Who will you interact with? What environments do thrive in and in what ways can you pursue your passions?

Whatever career path you decide to pursue, an important part of preparing yourself is being able to quickly communicate how you can add value. This is where your career mantra can come in. A career mantra is a simple, short and memorable statement that outlines your core values and goals.

So take a moment and share your career mantra with us. What is your career mantra related to your pathway? Type this into the question box. An example might be: I empower healthcare employees through servant leadership. I analyze data to make informed, data-driven decisions, may be a mantra for the research and data analysis pathway. Someone interested in policy and advocacy may state, I advocate for global mental health awareness. For higher ed, it could be, I develop educational programs
that lead to student success. A communication and editing example might be, I publish online articles to help readers thrive in a technology-driven world. And finally, a consultant might state, I apply quantitative research skills to help nonprofits make improvements.

I will only read a few submissions because we have such a large audience but I'm happy to see you all are contributing and thinking about your career mantra.

I develop rigorous hands-on opportunities to develop future health professionals.

I develop collaborative strategies for the online K-12 setting.

I develop educational programs that lead to student success.

I develop health education and promotion materials for communities.

I help make data-driven decisions.

I advocate for marriages and families.

I empower individuals with intellectual disabilities to develop their sexuality.

I develop training modules to improve employee efficiency and productivity.
I develop curriculum that empowers teachers and promotes student learning and achievements.

I support and advocate for people with mental health and addictions issues.

There are so many more that are coming in, thank you so much for contributing your mantras. And starting to think about your mantra and what it means to you as a doctoral student and professional.

So, to sum up, the more you know about yourself, the easier it is to create an effective career advancement plan for your future. Because it can help you focus on what is most important and prioritize your efforts.

Before crafting your plan, you need to do your research to understand what experience you need, who you must connect with, and what skills and qualifications you need to build along the way. Your career exploration may involve visiting the Career Services website and utilizing our career exploration resources. It may mean getting involved in professional development activities and seeking out advice and feedback from professionals in your field and members of the Walden community, who also may have worked with in your future role.
After that, you are then ready to build your EPS. So, let’s look at a few ideas of how to build your experience first. Some of these ideas are mentioned in the prior sessions in this conference. And our panelists have also shared these ideas.

But here are some ways to gain the skills and experience in five specific areas. So, to cultivate your writing skills, consider contributing an article to a professional newsletter or starting a blog on a topic of interest or expertise, pursuing freelance work, which may include partnering with small businesses, nonprofits or consultants on projects. Writing an article on LinkedIn and sharing it with your professional network. Or even self-publishing a book on Amazon.

To apply research skills, reach out to nonprofits in your area and offer to help with a research project. If you are employed currently, start a new project that applies or academic research skills. Or submit research for publication in an academic journal. For public speaking, consider delivering a workshop in your community. Submitting a conference proposal or hosting a webinar on a topic of interest. Build your leadership skills by taking on stretch assignments at work.

For technology skills, you might assist an organization or individual with a technology project, take a course to learn new skills, or even earn a certification.

These, of course, are just a few ideas to help you get started.
Now onto ways to build connections. Through a professional association, you can attend state and national conferences. This was mentioned earlier in today's program. And participate in professional development events. Also, engage in other types of meetings.

You can build your connections using social media platforms, such as LinkedIn and Twitter. Also, join online forums and Facebook groups related to your interest area.

Become an active member of the Walden community by engaging at academic residencies, participating in online discussions, and joining honor societies and other student organizations. And if you are a Walden graduate, join the alumni association.

Students and alumni can network during Walden’s Global Days of Service, coming up in October. So, stay tuned for more information about Global Days of Service.

Volunteering is another great way to build connections. And consider taking on community projects and pursuing skills-based collaborations to help organizations succeed by working with others.

Finally, join special interest groups, such as local Meet Ups, where you can connect with others based on common interests. And Toastmasters groups where you can practice your presentation skills in a group setting. And other groups and clubs.
As you build experience and connections, you will naturally grow and evolve in your career.

Next, consider how you want to communicate your professional brand and tell your new career story. Update your cover letters and career portfolio, and practice face to face and online communication skills for informal networking and for formal interviews. Become a social change agent by building your reputation in your community.

Pay it forward by being a mentor to others and sharing your knowledge and skills in professional communities, organizations and other areas of society.

In the last few slides, we introduced potential activities to help with goal setting. As you develop your future goals, consider using the SMART acronym. These are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time specific goals. By writing down your goals using this format, you are more apt to achieve your goals.

I will now provide an example of a SMART goal for a PhD in Human Services student who is interested in the organizational leadership and development, and the policy and advocacy pathways.

By 2021, I will join the American Public Human Services Association to network with human services policy and operations leaders and serve on one committee to help plan a professional development event.
Now, this example of a goal is SMART because it is specific and measurable. She made a goal to join one committee. The goal is obtainable with enough of a timeframe. It is also relevant to what she would like to accomplish. Finally, it is time specific and includes a deadline of 2021. Next, let's start developing your career advancement plan. This slide includes a helpful career planning template. In addition, a PDF of the template is available in your supplemental materials.

If you have not done so already, download your supplemental materials from the conference.

You can see the first column includes several categories that we discussed today. The goals column is where you want to include your SMART goals related to those categories. You can break down your goals into sub-goals or smaller action steps.

In the next column, you can include resources needed to achieve your goals. These resources could be career sites, people or tools, that would be helpful to you in achieving your goals. Finally, the last column includes your deadlines. Creating a career advancement plan can help you track your career progress, no matter where you are in your doctoral journey. So now, it is your turn. Take a moment to get started by sharing what goals you will add to your career plan. Use the question box to share your goals.
As you share your goals, I do want to provide an example of a goal for a career advancement plan. By 2020, I will connect with three healthcare consultants in the Walden community using LinkedIn, and schedule informational meetings with them over the phone to learn more about becoming an organizational consultant in a healthcare setting.

I am going to go ahead and see if there are other goals that we can share.

Present a poster at an annual meeting in San Francisco. Awesome.

In the year 2021, I will publish an article on theory and high school history curriculum.

By the end of 2019, I would've submitted two abstracts for publication, adding to the oral presentation abstract already accepted.

By 2020, I will attend a professional organization in my field and be a presenter. Awesome.

I will publish my first article on rural hospitals in a peer-reviewed journal by March 2020. Very specific SMART goal.

I will join one professional organization by 2020. I will visit the Walden Career Services website and try the Optimal Resume feature.
I encourage all of you to register on Optimal Resume.

I will write one blog story per month for my LinkedIn forum or website. Excellent, so sharing stories and self-publishing on LinkedIn.

At the end of November, I will join a peer-reviewed publication and network with alums in April 2020.

I will read more. I will connect with a professional organization and make some publications by December 2019.

So. a lot of goals related to publishing, joining professional organizations, making a difference, and applying her doctoral skills.

By 2020, I will create a career portfolio that highlights projects for my academic program, professional achievements, and community activities. And share my portfolio with six educational policy experts in the DC area.

Thank you everyone who contributed their SMART goals.

I encourage you to continue to work on your career advancement plan in upcoming days. In this invention, a link to the plan is available in your supplemental materials.
So, make sure after the conference to review the supplemental materials and there’s a lot more available in that handout.

With that, I would now like to introduce our panelists.

Ms. Megan Bledsoe is currently a student at Walden University in the PhD program for Public Health focusing on Community Education. Ms. Bledsoe began her career at PRA Health Sciences as an In-House Clinical Research Associate in 2013. While at PRA, she graduated with her master’s degree in Clinical Research Administration at Walden University. In 2015, Ms. Blesdoe accepted a position at Children’s Mercy Hospital in Kansas City as a research coordinator for the infectious diseases department. She began working on her PhD in 2016 and is currently in the dissertation phase. She serves as the secretary for the Heartland Association for Research Professionals in Kansas City and offers her educational experiences as a peer mentor to those entering the PhD program at Walden University.

With that I would like to welcome Ms. Megan Bledsoe.

>> MEGAN BLEDSOE: Thank you for having me.

>> DINA: Thank you for joining us today. To help get us started, tell us a little bit about your career path.
MEGAN BLEDSOE: So, when I was graduating with my bachelor’s degree in biology, I realized graduation was coming up quickly and I had no related job that had just spent four years on. I happened to stumble upon a career fair at my university; that was where I found the position in health sciences. When I did the interview, I knew nothing about clinical research. Nothing about that world. But for whatever reason, they took an amazing chance on me. For the first 2.5 years that I worked there, I learned so much about the basic ins and outs of doing clinical research.

While I was there, I was on LinkedIn. I was constantly networking with people; any activities that we had after work I was constantly going to so that I could make myself known and make people know who I was.

After about 2.5 years, I decided I did not want to be behind a desk as much anymore so I applied for my research position at Children's Mercy Hospital where I now am in charge of running the studies, recruiting patients and enrolling them, doing study visits and basically all around doing everything I learned at PRA.

DINA: What career planning strategy helped to advance in your career?

MEGAN BLEDSOE: Primarily networking every chance I had. Within clinical research, there are a lot of groups you can join to learn more about your position, to learn more about other jobs out there. I shadowed so I knew I wanted to do something in the medical field. I just wasn't sure what it was, however. I used things like LinkedIn
to network and see what other people in my education pathway were doing with their lives.

>> DINA: Can you tell us more about some of the studies you have worked on and research experience you gained and how your doctoral skills have been applied in the workplace?

>> MEGAN BLEDSOE: Yes. Currently, I'm working in clinical research. We have things called federal studies which are supported financially through the government and industry studies, which are supported by private sponsors. So, I do a mixture of both. A lot of the industry studies are vaccine related, trying to get a vaccine out on the market for kids. My federal studies are grant related. So, for one of my federal studies, I assist in creating and developing grants that we applied for, to help kids and basically bring more clinical trial opportunities to kids in Kansas. There's not a lot of facilities that do that. There's even fewer that target children specifically, to help bring more medications and things that would help them in the long run.

Because of my experience in doing a lot of technical writing and things like that through Walden, I was well-suited for working on the ground and using my research background and thinking of obstacles and barriers we could encounter while carrying out what we promise to do.
DINA: What advice would you have for other Walden doctoral students who are interested in research and data analysis careers?

MEGAN BLEDSOE: Honestly, I would just say that networking is probably going to be your best bet, especially doing things like serving as the secretary for the Heartland Association for Research Professionals. Every year we have an annual conference that anyone can join and we have speakers talk about what is new in research or talk about new methods and practices and techniques. And interacting with patients and coworkers to help you be successful in your research career.

But in your area, whatever geographical area you are in, there has to be some sort of research support group that you can join that will give you career ideas, they will give insights into what is going on in your field of research. And then also just joining things like Twitter or Facebook groups, that utilize the hash tags for the research you are interested in.

DINA: Wonderful. Thank you so much, Ms. Bledsoe you offer great tips for making the transition into research and analysis.

Now I would like to introduce our final panelist Ms. Rachel de los Reyes.

Tell us more about yourself and your career path.
RACHEL DE LOS REYES: I started working in higher ed right after college. I started in an entry-level position at the registrar's office. From there, I got a position in the financial aid office as a financial aid advisor. I stayed in that position for nine years. Those two positions gave me a good understanding of higher education operations and student affairs. During the time that I was in the financial aid office, I started my master’s program in higher education. After I completed my master’s, I applied and was hired in a Dean's office. So I was hired at a Dean's office as an academic advisor working with undergraduate students in the College of Letters and Sciences, in the division of math and physical sciences.

I loved this job also because it gave me experience in the academic affairs side of the house. Six months ago, I did a career shift and now I started a position as a senior academic advisor for graduate students. So, I not only advise students now, but I advocate for them by advising the Dean and the program leaders on strategies to help students succeed.

I also help with research. Since a lot of my work in higher ed is student-centered, I wanted to know more about student success and student development. So, pursuing a PhD gave me skills to help with assessment and research, to help me better my work. And it led to opportunities at the University, like I conduct research with a professor who is studying chemistry education. And I use some of my qualitative and quantitative skills that I have learned at Walden to help him conduct his research. The study I helped him
with looks at how teachers use technology to teach chemistry and how technology fosters group discussion and learning.

The professor records the students and I listen and translate the transcripts, and then code the transcripts based on the coding we use from the conceptual framework. And I learned how to code the transcripts in my qualitative courses here at Walden. Throughout the years, I have realized that in higher education, you need a PhD or EDD to be considered or to be promoted. So, if I wanted to get a director level position in the future, I would need a doctoral degree to be competitive.

That is why I am pursuing a PhD now. Someday I would love to be a director of an advising office. I love advising students. And now advising faculty. But my dream job would be to move into a higher position where I can create and manage those advising programs.

>> DINA: What career planning strategies helped you to advance in your career?

>> RACHEL DE LOS REYES: Goal setting, joining professional associations, networking and traveling. Those have definitely been the best strategies to help advance my career. So here at Walden, in my program, we had to attend residencies, and we were given the opportunity to attend international residencies. So, for my second residency, I went to Madrid. And I went to Amsterdam this past summer. My
biggest takeaway from those experiences was that higher education is bigger than the bubble I work and live in in California. Higher Ed is worldwide.

This realization helps me think bigger about my career opportunities and networking beyond my state and even the US.

After the academic residencies, I set two specific goals for myself to advance my career and my scope. I set the goals of presenting at an international conference and seeking out opportunities to gain international experience.

Last year, I attended a few conferences for my own professional development. I went to the global community for academic advising, I also joined a group for student affairs administrators in higher education, and I also went to a couple other UC-related conferences. And through those conferences, I got to meet people. I got to see presentations and that experience motivated me to want to present at a conference.

I actually submitted a proposal last year to present on a chemistry peer or mentoring program that I oversee here at UC Davis for underrepresented undergraduate students. And I submitted the proposal to NACADA -International, which was accepted. And I got a chance to present in Belgium this summer. I got to meet so many interesting people. And I have discussed with them different ways I can review journals. And then talking to more people about possibly applying for Fulbright so that I may have a chance to work or network abroad in the next few years.
DINA: Congratulations on presenting for NACADA International; that is a huge achievement. What advice would you have for other Walden students interested in higher education careers?

RACHEL DE LOS REYES: Yes, I would say what everybody else has been saying, network, network, network. Join professional groups; it is a great way to meet other people with similar interests. I would take advantage of the graduate student rate or even ask your work if they would be willing to help pay for the membership fees as part of your professional development.

Another thing that I would say is mentoring. So, finding mentors to support you, whether formal or informal mentoring. Finding mentors to help support you in various capacities, to help you with your intellectual knowledge, give you academic feedback, or even mentors just to advocate for you and to help you find opportunities.

I also have mentors that are just there to emotionally support me through my program and my career. So, I think that has been key. My university offers a great program that connects us with the executive leaders, and we were able to shadow the executive leaders, learn about their career paths and how they got there. So, if you have something like that at your work, I highly recommend it.
And if you do not have any opportunities like that, I would recommend that maybe you create it for yourself. Or find people that want something like that at your work and create it. I am actually a chair at a mentoring program at Davis that matches advisors with more seasoned advisors, to support each other through professional development.

>> DINA: Those are great tips. Thank you for sharing your experience with mentoring. We have many members of our audience who are interested in higher education careers. So, thank you again for joining us.

Now I would like to hand it over to Angie to field our remaining questions.

>> ANGIE: Thank you, Dina. It's now time for some questions. And this is a reminder, these questions can be for any of our presenters. Let's get started. We have a question for Ms. Bledsoe, as a research coordinator, are you actively involved in data analysis or is it more administrative, or both?

>> MEGAN BLEDSOE: It depends on the study I am doing. When I do the investigator-initiated studies, maybe there is a small grant within the hospital that might help with the data analysis part of it. And a lot of that has been in my experience qualitative because they have been interviews and discussions like that.

When it is industry sponsored, I am just collecting the data and enrolling patients. With the federal, I do a little bit of both.
>> ANGIE: Thank you. We have a question -- would you recommend taking a non-teaching position at a university as a way to get your foot in the door if you ultimately want to be an instructor?

>> RACHEL DE LOS REYES: Yes. Right now, as a staff administrator, there are opportunities I have to teach. I also teach first-year seminars which are open to staff. So that gives you experience in the teaching environment and to show that you have the ability to instruct students. So, I would say, yes, to get your foot in the door and also to make those connections with faculty.

>> ANGIE: Thank you. Have a question for you, Dina, one of our attendees is pursuing her degree. But she has been a homemaker for the past few years. Do you have any tips to help her get back into the workplace?

>> DINA: Excellent. Thank you. Well, first of all, gaining recent experience is really key. So, getting out there, and many of our panelists have shared this feedback, along with Katy Peper. Finding a nonprofit organization, finding an organization in the community, and getting involved in volunteering. Really using her doctoral skills: writing skills and research skills.

As Denise mentioned earlier, skills-based volunteering.
There are many organizations out there that need help and just contacting them and trying to meet with some of their leaders and seeing what they need help with. Maybe they need some help with research or data analysis. Maybe they need some help providing and giving a presentation to their employees.

Also, another thing she could be doing, of course, is joining a professional association. When attending professional events, network with people and share your introduction or career mantra or your interest or ways you can add value. Try to find individuals who might need some help; they can maybe be independent consultants, or maybe they are working in the workplace and may be working on a project, or it may be that they are volunteering, themselves. Or planning a conference presentation. And finding ways that she can help them with projects. And be of value to them.

Through these types of strategies, she would be able to gain skills, gain experience and gain connections to be able to reinterpret her story. To be able to update her resume and cover letter, and create maybe a career portfolio of projects she had worked on.

Also, gain references, because if she has been out of the workplace, she might need recent references. So that is another way to become more marketable and be able to reenter the workplace. And contact career services because we are here to assist, and we have a great website with information to help her market her skills.
ANGIE: Thank you. I have a question that is directed at both of our presenters. Natalie says, each of the speakers have continued to say that we should get involved in leadership organizations, but the faculty emphasizes that we need to spend most of our time on our presentation. When is the right time to start joining organizations versus pulling away to prioritize writing a dissertation? Rachel, do you want to go first?

RACHEL DE LOS REYES: I would say that I just started recently joining professional associations, and in my dissertation writing as well. And being able to manage expectations as well as manage time. I could be one of those that often says, yes, to too many things, so it is being able to manage your priorities. So, yes, dissertation writing is important but also making the connections as well. Making those connections to get your dissertation published and the dissertation are priorities for me. So I make time to do both within those professional associations.

ANGIE: Megan?

MEGAN BLEDSOE: Getting involved with a network does not mean you will hold office. Like for me, I attended the Heartland conferences for two or three years before I decided I wanted to run for it as secretary. When I did join as a secretary, I severely underestimated how much time it would take on my part to be in the organization. But at the same time, as long as you are upfront with your leadership and say these things
are going on for me and I can't take on as much, I feel like everybody's pretty understanding of a busy workload.

But I would not put off working on networking until you are done with your dissertation. That is something you could definitely be getting done now.

>> ANGIE: Thank you. I have another question from Blanche to Dina. How do you make sure your application is not overlooked when you apply online?

>> DINA: That is a great question. You always want to tailor your materials to the specific opportunity that you are targeting. So, your skills and qualifications, they need to match what the job is requiring. Or what the position is requiring. The closer the match, the more opportunities there are for you to advance in the screening process.

You want to think of your resume not so much as getting you the job, because interview really get to the job. You want to think about your resume as part of a screening process, whether it screens you in or out.

You really want to use the tools from the Career Services Center, for instance. Today we talked about a skills match table. Writing down what the employer's needs are. Or a client's needs if you are a consultant. And then what her qualifications are. And really formulating strong accomplishment statements on your resume or CV. So not only
telling that you have great communication skills for instance, but really showing through specific examples.

And being specific, showing how you can add value, infusing your document with specific specialized skills that are most relevant to your target audience will help set you apart.

>> ANGIE: Excellent. Our final question is twofold and it will be for Megan. Questions we had were how to find opportunities to participate in research but they also want to know what is the name of your local research group that you had mentioned?

>> ANGIE: The name of the local research group is HARP, the Heartland Association for Research Professionals. But also within Kansas City, there is an ACRP chapter, that's a very big research group throughout the whole nation. They have huge conferences.

They are great. They cost a little bit to get involved. HARP is not that expensive; it's just paying to get the CEU's for the conference.

>> ANGIE: I want to thank you and both of our excellent guest speakers who did such a good job.
I also want to thank the audience for asking such great questions. I would like to share some final thoughts about today's conference.

As we have learned today, a doctoral degree can take you in many career directions. However, doctoral career pathways often intersect. Your career exploration is an ongoing process and you should start preparing for your future today. A great way to do this is to communicate with faculty, mentors and other professionals key to your success. Say yes to opportunities that will help you gain experience and skills and remember, as others lift you up, lift others up and share your experience and success.

We would like to share some references with you. On this slide, we have included several books that can help you further explore career pathways and navigate your career. As a reminder, please take advantage of our extensive resources which can be found on the career services site. Stay connected with us; please join us on LinkedIn, follow us on Twitter and Facebook, subscribe to our YouTube channel and read the success stories on our blog. After the presentation, those who attended the full conference will receive a certification and a resource guide.

With that, we want to thank you sincerely for being such an amazing audience and we wish you the very best as you explore your career pathways. We look forward to supporting you.