

Special Session 1: Thinking About Doing a PhD? Insights, Tips, and Resources | Text Transcript | CIRCLE Graduate South Asia Conference

This is a text transcript for recorded special session “Thinking About Doing a PhD? Insights, Tips, and Resources.” The special session was part of CIRCLE’s Graduate South Asia Conference, held from September 29 to October 1, 2022.

Transcript:

Sharada Srinivasan:

So, welcome back everybody, I'm Sharada Srinivasan and I am the director of the Canada India Research Center for Learning and engagement, which is hosting this conference. So, this is a very, very exciting session, it is about inside tips and resources. If you are thinking about doing a PhD and when Dilshan and others were putting this session together, I thought to myself, yeah it would have been very useful to me 25 years ago; but, but yeah, you know it's, it's always nice to look back and share insights.

So, I want to thank our speakers in this session Akshay Chadha, who is a PhD candidate in Computer Science at the University of Guelph and he's also the president of the Graduate Student Association at Guelph. We have Dilshan Fernando, who by now all of you know is a PhD candidate in Sociology, and both Akshay and Dilshan are actually international students and then we have Dr Glen Pyle who is a professor at the Ontario Veterinary College and we will soon be joined by Dr Ben Bradshaw who's a professor in geography, but he will join us and he will speak more from his role as the Assistant vice president, Graduate Studies.

So, we have students, we have faculty, and we have administrators, who oversee grad studies, so, so hopeful this will, this will allow us to capture different perspectives on doing a PhD; more broadly, specifically in Canada but also more specifically at the University of Guelph. So, what we will do is I think each speaker will have about five to six minutes and I will try to keep time, please keep an eye on the chat because that's the way I'm going to alert you when you have two minutes left, so you know you have two minutes to wrap up. And I want to try and save some time for questions and I'm hoping more people will join us as the session progresses. Thank you very much and over to you Akshay.

Akshay Chadha:

Thank you so much, Dr. Sharada for your kind introduction; and I welcome all of the panelists and the attendees of this conference. It's, it's a very good theme that we are discussing here today and I, I, hope it is going to add some value to your attending this conference, in a very positive way especially about when admissions are concerned in Canada, and, when you come here you join here as a PhD student then you also get a chance to get involved in different student activities across the campus and in our society.

So, a bit of introduction about myself I am Akshay Chadha, a PhD candidate, in Department of Computer Science, as Dr Sharada said my research is basically focused on pathogenetic

classification of viruses using machine learning technique. So, viruses mean two different things the virus like Covid and when virus of computer science is also involved so we have anti-software, anti-malwares and all those things. So, presently I'm working with the virus's classification of different biological issues happening around the world like even Influenza virus for poultry and PRRS for pigs and, similarly, we have seen that outbreak in Covid.

So, we are trying to associate the genomic sequence of each virus, each viral stain, with its pathogenicity outcome, whether it is going to be highly pathogenic and low pathogenic, so pretty timely steady over there and apart from my studies and research and academic contributions here. I am also a member of graduate student Association at University of Guelph.

I started my journey as being a member of volunteer for graduate student Association and I saw that opportunity, that how much week as a student can also contribute to our community, to our society, to our student peers, and try to improve their social, academic, financial lives as well. So, this motivated me, and I stepped up as the VP finance and then became the GSA president again as elected last year. So, there, there are going to be a different type of opportunities when you join a program here and you can get involved in taking those leads and become a leader of any organization that is going to work for graduate students.

Basically, we have a very democratic system here, where we want to work for graduate students in our best capacity, and in our responsibility as a GSA President, we are charged with overseeing different legislative policies bylaws regulations and different resolutions at the GSA. You manage different student bodies that are going to be there, and you try to sit on different committees on which wonderful work has been done by different committee members, you try to collaborate more input from graduate students with them and try to make a or foster an environment which is going to be helping out grad students at large.

Also, you as a student leader or a student participant, you can always make your voice reached out to the University Administration about what grad students are looking for, and what they are missing in the existing system and our AVP grad studies Dr Bradshaw from Administration, our student Affairs Interim Vice-Provost Irene Thompson have been very collaborative and very helpful in all those times. I find my discussion with them very, very fruitful and they are more than willing to work for grad students in our collaboration too.

In recent times, there have been different changes around the world, like we had covid, and you know everything changed from in-person to online and there were different type of concerns and situations, we have to deal with on a dynamic basis from day to day; but it does not stop an organization from functioning and what we have learned is as a part of leadership experience you have to always be dynamic and adaptable. It is a general requirement of being part of the society that you need to understand, what students require, and you have to reach out to them to understand what they are expecting your organization to look forward to.

So, when you come to Canada, and you try to get enrolled in our beautiful University, or some other big university, then please always feel free to communicate and collaborate back to the

society; become a volunteer. It also adds to your resume, become a student voice activist, so that, your voice is heard and it reaches out to all different levels of the administration and student bodies.

You can also take a leadership role and if there are elections always do participate in it, so that you get a chance and you participate in a healthy democracy. So, keep an eye on different student leadership experiences that are available on the campus. You can access those platforms and organizations; they all are very open to, reach out to, and if you are interested in becoming a student leader not across the campus but also in outside society too, there are pretty much a lot of opportunities available.

I can definitely, you can definitely, reach out to me, and I'll be happy to point some of the resources to you and there are some other perks too. Like you get to speak on different platforms, you maintain that healthy relationship with different student organizations and different University administrators that you collaborate with. It is a very learning, good learning experience and a positive one, that you increase your skills, and try to also bring them, when you go out of university and try to make that transition into a successful workplace environment and it always is going to build your confidence.

Sometimes, you have to stand for yourself and your grad students and that is how you are going to make a very good progression into this role. So, my best wishes are with you and I see a message in the chat that my time is almost up. I would be happy to take any questions or concerns that any student may have.

Sharada Srinivasan:

Thank you, Akshay. I welcome the audience to type in their questions in the chat and we will allocate some time at the end, for the speaker's responses and for further discussion. So, feel free to punch away your questions over to you Dilshan for you to share your reflections on your experiences so far and what advice you have for people who are thinking of doing their Ph.D.

Dilshan Fernando:

Thank you so much, first of all thank you for, I hope you can hear me right, I'm sitting outside. Thank you for inviting me for this panel. I'm a third PhD student in Sociology, so, hi everyone we're in this room and also probably hi to everyone who'll be listening to this session online if it's posted. So, actually, Akshay mentioned a lot of details about the supports that are available in the University. To be brief, what I'm trying to emphasize, or go through some things, to answer the questions what should I have known better when I joined the Ph.D. program.

These are most of the things, that you might already know, but I'm just going to highlight emphasize, maybe encourage, you to think about those. And my perspective is colored by that I'm an international student as well as a student in Social Sciences. Now, first things first, finding a supervisor for PhD. I think is the first thing to figure out is to find a suitable supervisor, and, that is by your research area.

Now this is something that many people would agree that we have a research area, we have a set of questions, that you're working with, and then there you will look around, search on google for someone in a university that fits in, coincides with the research interests. But I would add to this, to have a hint of a topic that you'd like to work, and think of a topic that is futuristic, that after the end of your Ph.D. in four years, that this topic will have some validity, and has some currency in research, in your field.

As well as, short trajectory, so, you know thinking about the future of your topic, as well as, showing where you have come from will improve your chances of getting into a PhD program. And, having a future and having your trajectory will help you to understand, help you to find the supervisor whose research interests, you know coincide with yours. So, that's my first thing in finding a supervisor, and that's it. There are excellent researchers, here in University of Guelph, as in many of the other Canadian institutions.

Number two, for international students, the most important thing I think is funding. So, we come from a different academic setup, right? Now I, I've, done my undergraduate degree in Sri Lanka, and I've done my master's degree in USA, and now in Canada, it's a different setup. Also, in USA for example, when you get admission to a program you, you already have a funding package, but in Canada, you have to apply for scholarships.

So, it's important to keep in mind that you know, understand and get to know your departmental package, the funding package, that the department will give you and for international students, I'd like to emphasize ask beforehand contact with the graduate program assistant, in the relevant program, ask what they will give and try to figure out whether that will be enough for you in order to survive in Canada as well as to apply for a Visa.

I think there are entrance U of G scholarships, University of Guelph based entrance scholarship, which I had no clue about. I missed all the deadlines. I didn't know that there were scholarships like that, that I could have applied and could have been competitive. So please look up for them. Those entrance scholarships that you can apply after, even after your application is successful and there are of course Canada and Ontario scholarships. I mean there are less you can apply for sure like all those tri-Council, but Ontario graduate scholarship, I didn't know that I could apply for it when I came here.

Thirdly, I would say and lastly that understand the mood of your department. Find all available online sources. Ask people, email people, people, will mostly respond. Connect with key people, I would say not only with people whom you think that you have a coincidence of research interests, but also you know maybe email Akshay and ask how is it going there, or, I could have done, you know those kinds of things. So, I think understanding the implicit rules and how the department functions are also important. I'll stop with that, thank you.

Sharada Srinivasan:

Thank you very much, Dilshan, very useful points and I have a lot of questions, hopefully, you know the chat will get busy with questions, so, we have now had two student perspectives. It's

actually international student perspectives on thinking about a PhD, so I want to turn it over to Glen Pyle to offer faculty perspective on thinking about doing a PhD.

Glen Pyle:

So, thanks for, inviting me I'll just start off by giving a quick intro so people understand the, perspective. So, my lab I work in biomedical sciences particularly in heart failure and we look at women's heart health and molecular therapies for heart failure. So, that gives everybody an idea of where I'm coming from, which is a little bit different from some of the other areas have been discussed. Well, also I'll mention to you that I actually was an international student many years ago, because, although, I did my undergrad at Guelph, I went to the States for my PhD in Fellowship.

So, I know a little bit of what it's like to move to a different country and have to deal with you know immigration issues, and so forth. So, from a faculty perspective, I can give you a little bit of advice, as to where I sit now but also the what it was like when I came through the, the system. I'll start off by saying, to build a little bit, on what Dilshan said about identifying an area that you're interested in, I'd say to cast a wide network, only because people seem to think that a lot of the stuff that we do fits in these very narrow boxes and at least, for those of us in in Biological Sciences, that's, not true.

I work in Biomed, here I could work at HHS, I could work in molecular cellular biology, I work in integrative project, I can work in a number of different departments, so if you were interested for example, in heart health you would look across many different departments; so, don't narrow your focus when you, start and also be open to different areas of research. I worked in labs where, I worked alongside for example, a cancer biologist because we had common interests, even though we worked in heart and in cancer.

So, don't be afraid to branch out. Before you do contact somebody. So, look up, what's out there, look at different departments, different universities, different countries, even go through the information that's posted online and do a little bit of research before contacting the people that you're, interested in working with, only so that you can quickly narrow your questions and make them relevant to whatever it is you're interested in, get a lot of emails and when people provide emails or, reach out to contact somebody and they ask a very general question that shows that they really haven't done any sort of investigation of the lab they're interested in some people will dismiss it.

So, be a little careful, about just sending in an email and saying hi I'm interested in grad studies, are you taking anybody? I provide some information why are you interested in that lab, what's caused you to reach out to that person, I would also say though that not to exaggerate, on the other end, so, again with the emails at least that I get people will often cite our papers, and they'll say, I read you know, your paper and they'll quote directly from the paper and say it was, you know, the most interesting paper I've ever read.

Well, we know that's not true, you might be interested in it, but, you know, don't, go over the top, if you contacted me, say hey I'm interested in you know; women's heart health so I see you

work in that area, I've looked at some of the things you do, and it seems like it might be a good match, so, you know what are the opportunities. So, that tells me that you know the area I work in, and why you're contacting me.

Finally, I think the last thing I'll say because I think we should open it to questions to let everybody, you know drive the discussion Dilshan mentioned about looking for a topic that you're interested in, and certainly I would say that's a great place to start, find out what, you have a passion for and an interest in and try to identify people who work in that area but once you find the top topics, that you're interested in and, you've found maybe a handful of labs that or, groups that you think you might want to work with, make sure, you reach out to the trainees in the lab, the PhD students, the postdocs, if you know somebody who's gone through the group, that's a good person to talk to.

Because subjective matters, if you're not interested in it, then you're not going to do well but personalities matter; and I don't just mean are people nice, are they not nice, I mean how they run their group is, very, very, important. I run my group in a particular way, some people work well in that environment, some people do not, and I have colleagues who run it in a very different way, that doesn't mean that that's wrong. It's just the way they do it.

So, if you need to work in a very structured environment, you want to go somewhere where people run their group in a very structured way, if you'd like to be much more independent, try to match that way; you will get that information from the trainees, they will be the most honest people to talk to in this whole process, so reach out to them; and do it, you know manner that the PI or the investigator isn't involved in the conversation, so that people could be honest with their discussion. So, I think those are the points I want to make, I'll throw it back, and see if anybody has questions or I see Ben's here so if he's going to provide any comments.

Sharada Srinivasan:

Thanks, thanks Glen. You know, I think, we are we are seeing some clear themes and ideas coming through this conversation. Over to you Ben, welcome Ben to this session we have heard Akshay Chadha and Dilshan Fernando, both of whom you know, and then you also know Glen who gave a faculty perspective. So, we have heard student perspectives, faculty perspective and while you are a faculty member; I think what we would be interested is hearing more the administrative perspective, in your role as the Assistant Vice-President, Grad Studies. Thank you so much, you have about five to six minutes for your brief intervention.

Ben Bradshaw:

Thank you, Sharada, and I apologize for being late joining you. I'm in the middle of a dermatology appointment and if anyone knows about Dermatology, you know that that getting an appointment is a rarity. So, I'm about to have a small biopsy but this will be a perfect distraction. It's nice to be able to join you, and again I'm sorry for joining late. Thinking about resources, that are available, and especially, financial resources, I was reflecting on the fact that

that many doctoral students looking for overseas studies are naturally drawn to the United States, which of course has a great reputation at many of its institutions.

But it also benefits from tuition waivers, it's quite standard for graduate students, especially doctoral students to secure tuition waiver and then a funding package on top of that. Canadian Universities have been very hard to compete with that, but it's challenging, there are no Canadian universities that I know that can simply waive tuition, what they do instead is put together a funding package to cover the cost of tuition and it might be helpful to know that, the Ontario government in the case of the University of Guelph provides us grant funding for our domestic doctoral students that equates to anywhere from \$21,000 to \$25,000 per year for four years for that Canadian doctoral student; and so coupled with in tuition the university has at its disposal about \$28,000, to work with, to train that student.

International students do not generate grant funding, in fact they generate a head tax if you will, \$750 test for each international student we enroll and so putting together good financial packages can sometimes be challenging for Canadian universities. I think other research-intensive universities, we offer a scholarship to cover the difference in tuition between international students and domestic students, which is worth about twelve thousand five hundred, after that fact, the numbers, like Dr Pyle have to put together a package that will support those international students, and so, certainly I would encourage doctoral students who are looking for a home to advance their [inaudible]

Sharada Srinivasan:

So, we can't hear you then maybe you could turn off the video.

Ben Bradshaw:

Okay, absolutely, you know try this as well.

Sharada Srinivasan:

Yeah, your voice is breaking.

Ben Bradshaw:

Okay, so, certainly, I would encourage doctoral students, International doctoral students to join a lab that genuinely wants them and shows that desire in a financial package that can enable them to focus on their studies. Now of course the graduate teaching assistantship is a reasonable bit of work at 10 hours per week, but beyond that, you need to be focused on your studies.

So, certainly look for those labs that truly want you, and are willing to put together a four-year package of support; beyond that I would simply echo what Dr Pyle had said about in terms of showing off talents, in terms of resources, though I would want to stress that once a student joins us, it's really important that they access so many of the great resources that exist on campus both through student life, and also through professional development opportunities.

So, I would simply encourage them once they get on campus take advantage of what exists beyond just their own lab. Thanks so much, Sharada.

Sharada Srinivasan:

Thanks, thanks, Ben. You know, I think you focused on the heart of the concerns, that international students, typically have. I, see a you know one major question from Poojan, so maybe, I'm going to get Dilshan, to say something first, because Dilshan, I'm aware that you have to run to class, so maybe you can start with talking about what sort of careers are you guys looking, you know when I mean when you come into a PhD program and now what sort of options are you considering, so and then maybe Akshay, I know actually you typed in your response, but if you if you still want to say something you can say. Over to you Dilshan.

Dilshan Fernando:

Yeah, that's a very good question. I think when I joined my PhD program in 2020, there was a new report that came in, I think from the tri-council, looking at the career prospects for Ph.D. students in Canada in the Academia. And the report basically said that the academic positions are at a standstill, or PhD students need to look at the industry and you know work outside the Academia. I think that's a challenge as well as an opportunity.

I myself have worked in a think tank in Sri Lanka, before I came here, and also was with several research organizations, and think tanks in India. Therefore, work in think tanks, research the firms, even in the private sector organizations are lucrative in these times. But that doesn't mean that there aren't any faculty positions. Academia, is not just limited to Canada.

If you have a PhD in your field we can always think about other countries, not to mention South Asia or in the United States; and so, there are academic jobs, there are those teaching jobs which could transition to research positions, but yeah, I'd say keeping both options open is a must as a PhD student these days. I'll stop at that then.

Sharada Srinivasan:

Okay, thank you Dilshan and good luck with your PhD project and everything else, that's lined up after. Akshay, do you want to add anything to what you have said in the chat.

Akshay Chadha:

Sure, Sharada, thank you for that question, Poojan and I now get a little bit of more background about the question in Social Sciences, but I would say Poojan is, I have seen ample opportunities, of the lack of applications, and measurable platforms available in society for implications of social science-based projects. So even for your Postdoc or maybe for someone doing PhD.

If you can work on something related to IT and get something measurable that is actually implementable, and gives a good gesture of social science-based projects, about how something is happening, for example, we talk about saving environment a lot, but how do we actually measure it is still not captured at the very root level and the benefit of IT is you can

make a scalable solution which is available on each device and it can reach out to every pocket in this world.

So, try to use those type of opportunities and find a project, maybe you can all start your own Startup, maybe you can go to an organization and present your skills over there, and I see the big four companies are right now very much focused on those type of projects too. And there is always going to be ample opportunity of getting a job outside of Academia, in case academy is not readily available when you graduate. It's, it's, always an opportunity, to switch your career later on when, you try to explore different tracks or career path tracks. So, I see a very bright future for Social Science students too, with a little bit of more exploration, on what the gap analysis is in the job market. Thank you.

Sharada Srinivasan:

Thanks, Akshay. I, think I'll wait for questions in the chat but Glen I, just have more a comment than a question. Having lived and studied in South Asia and then moving on to Europe and now in Canada, I realize you know a lot of times when people say this is like the best paper that I've ever read in the field, a lot of it is also cultural right. So, how do you mean, I think we deal with this with reference letters as well, you know there are cultural differences in how some, some cultures actually exaggerate certain things and some are like just so low-key in talking about an achievement. So, any tips on how to handle that, Glen.

Glen Pyle:

I, think, it's just the awareness of who you're talking to and so, I certainly am aware what you just said that, there are some places in the world, some cultures that do that sometimes. It's because of the position I hold that they feel, you know that they need to say nice things to me and I'm not that, you should say nice things to people, but they feel that I'm in a position, where they should provide these compliments. So, for me it certainly doesn't bother me. I just always find it amusing when someone says how wonderful my work is, and it comes across where they've put quotes in.

Some people will dismiss it, saying well you're not being honest, you're being fake, and so I, think that's equally wrong. But I just want people to know that sometimes who you're targeting, they may respond in that way and just dismiss it; and say well you know you're just trying to say things that you're trying to suck up to me and they'll take it in a bad way. But maybe that's a way that's a good thing right you're going to weed out advisors who are not concerned about where you've come from, and what your culture is.

Sharada Srinivasan:

Akshay any thoughts on that I mean when you've been applying from India how do you deal with these sorts of issues.

Akshay Chadha:

So, there were different processes when applying for a PhD program here, and I, was particularly interested in AI and machine learning. So, I was very focused on looking at different

professors who work in this domain and I reached out to all of them, and I have read through their papers too.

So, the best paper in your field in their domain or someone else there is always going to be a technical clarification some readers are more focused on mathematics and someone is less on like when you try to do interdisciplinary work you have to be more of explanatory in your nature so those sort of cultural differences also happen not within the countries and geographic regions but also in the nature of your applied discipline; where and what program you are in and what, I have found Sharada, but I was not expecting when I was joining the PhD program, is you have to cater your audience so you have to also know the culture of your audience that you are writing to, and you have to be communicative so to them.

So, it's a process for everyone to learn and whatever you think you are going to do before PhD suddenly changes with the time and you have to adapt and continue to address the field you are going to be an expert in. So, those sorts of cultural changes are also brought into yourself when you join a PhD program and you start to write and address those problems.

Sharada Srinivasan:

Yeah, that's a great Insight Akshay, thank you. Any questions for our speakers. Thank you I have a question for you Ben maybe two. Sure, I'm assessing the reason why American universities are able to waive tuition is because of the private sort of funding that's available within universities so. So, maybe you can talk a little bit about it but the other thing that, Dilshan pointed out, when he was speaking about it is, you know when you are outside before you get into the university and if you are used to a different education system, it's very hard to know what kind of funding opportunities are available.

So, is there some resource that you would suggest, that those prospective students who are trying to get into a PhD program in Canada can look up to? So, some advice on that would be very helpful thank you.

Ben Bradshaw:

Yeah, now certainly the reasons why some U.S. schools are able to waive tuition are highly varied, but I think one of the most important ones is many of the historical universities have rich endowments and also, we all know that undergraduate tuition in the United States is well it's outlandish. And so clearly there's some cross subsidizing going on between undergraduate studies and graduate studies.

In terms of finding opportunities, some of the other presenters, already spoken to being genuine in your outreach and targeting those that you truly want to work with, as opposed to some sort of blanket, you know I get lots of emails that show no particular interest in the University of Guelph or me, and so if you take the approach that there are a few labs in North America that you're keen to join; well then that should also incentivize you to go to the financial resources scholarship pages of each of those universities.

So, the University of Guelph, we have a dedicated section within the website from the office of grad studies that outlines every scholarship opportunity including those that are directed to international students. Canada's top external Awards like the Vanier are open to international students.

[Inaudible] would have some specialty awards including for example in the University of Guelph the Brock doctoral scholarship, the Arrell scholarships we have one international doctoral student presently with us, who won an Arrell award at 50000 per year, that's pretty good. It's a matter of applying, putting your record out there, certainly a strong record counts of course, but to spend the time to get onto the website and then reach out to finance to a scholarship officer with a very particular question not a generic one and you'll get a good response. Thank you.

Sharada Srinivasan:

Thanks, Ben. I'm going to wait for a couple more minutes to see if there are any more questions, maybe I'll just give each of the speakers a chance to make closing remarks, Akshay, closing, last burning thoughts.

Akshay Chadha:

Thank you, Sharada. I would like to thank you to all the panelists and all the attendees. I would say that it's always going to be a very good experience at University of Guelph and doing a PhD and Masters in Canada. Do come, do it, and there is a lot of opportunity to network there is a lot of opportunity to explore the world; and we would be more than happy to collaborate with anyone who is interested in developing their leadership skills, trying to volunteer here, and it's always good to get involved.

You develop a skill during your Master's and PhD that is always going to help you out. And in terms of leadership skills, they are also going to be transferred to the industry or academia you are going to join next after, completion of your program. So, my closing remarks are always stay focused, stay positive, be optimistic and things are going to work well with time, thank you.

Sharada Srinivasan:

Thanks, Akshay. Glen.

Glen Pyle:

Yeah, so echo the thanks for the opportunity, to come, and talk about things here, and certainly if anybody has questions afterwards you can just reach out to me, my email address is on the website. So, feel free to look me up and, and send something out. I'll just add one last thing and, and I'm not trying to discourage people from coming to Guelph, so that's not the intent here, but this is a great time for people to branch out right, so if you're from another country and you want to come to Canada, it's a great opportunity to certainly come and learn at some really good academic institutions; but it also gives you the opportunity to immerse yourself in a different culture and live in a different environment.

You don't get that many chances, as you go on in life obviously, you get a little more settled in your career, so, the opportunity to go and do a PhD somewhere else where you're not is literally a once in a lifetime opportunity and so I would encourage people to, to cast a wide net and take the opportunity to go and experience different parts of the world.

Sharada Srinivasan:

Great, thanks Glen for that. Ben last thoughts.

Ben Bradshaw:

Wonderful, thank you for inviting me to join, I guess the last thing, I want to note is the thoughtful point that I actually made about having an interest but also being flexible and I have to say, I have great sympathy for international students because of the challenge of culture and it's probably hardest in terms of [inaudible] to direct your research in a way that is true to your interests and talent, but also to be able to fit into a lab that has a particular culture a larger research program, and so, I think being adaptive and flexible but true to self is a balancing act and I commend those who have made that move.

It's not easy to study in a different culture, and to maybe address it explicitly with your advisor, to recognize that they want you to be successful and so, being quite explicit about your interests and needs even when it feels culturally awkward. Thanks so much.

Sharada Srinivasan:

I am assessing you have completed Ben because there was some audio disruption.

Ben Bradshaw:

So, I'm so sorry, yeah, I just took kudos to those who do it, it's not easy, but of course it's rewarding, and, the University of Guelph, and other Canadian universities are enriched by the presence of international doctoral students, so thank you.

Sharada Srinivasan:

Thanks Ben, thanks Akshay and Glen and Dilshan, who's who had to run away for a tutorial. I think, I mean, even though we didn't have too many people in the virtual room, I think, because we have recorded this session, it might actually be very helpful as the admission season time starts, because this is sort of the time that a lot of people are thinking of applying, so we will promote it via CIRCLE, and through social media.

Thanks everybody for joining the session, a shout out to Poojan Joshi, who's our tech student volunteer, for making sure things are going smoothly, and I welcome you to the last session of today which is focused on health and there will be five PhD presentations, students from Canada and South Asian universities. Thank you very much everybody take care.

[End of transcript]