

Dr. Catherine “Cat” McManus
Philadelphia PA
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EDUCATION

The University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education, Philadelphia, PA

Ed.D. Educational Leadership

May 2017

Dissertation: “Higher Education Institutions’ Motivation to Form and Maintain Relationships With College Access Nonprofits”

M.S. Ed., Education, Culture, Society

May 2008

Master’s Paper: “The Experiences of Low-Income Students at Elite Secondary Schools”

Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH

B.A., Anthropology (cum laude)

June 2004

EXPERIENCE

C. McManus Consulting LLC (full-time since August 2020)

2014 - present

College admissions coach

- Independent college coaching & application assistance (ideation, execution, exploration, admissions strategy) with a strong emphasis on developing students’ executive functioning capacities, writing & communication skills, attention to detail, and resiliency
- As sole proprietor, I developed my own website & marketing materials, manage all financials, drive new business development, manage subcontractors & deliver high-quality services
- Serve as invited speaker, collaborator, consultant & thought-partner for a range of entities in the education space (companies, non-profits, community organizations, schools, etc.)

Consultant & researcher (various clients; selected projects below)

- Pro-bono consultant to edtech/education startup founders
- Designed and built survey tool (Qualtrics) to gauge faculty engagement with media (Penn GSE)
- Developed proposal for joint convenings between the Young Presidents’ Organization (membership-based business group) & Penn GSE on higher ed affordability; access & retention; ROI
- Conducted research interviews with state policymakers; researched legislation & rules pertaining to federal student loan forgiveness for students defrauded by their institutions; drafted white paper re: policy recommendations for use in presentation at hearings

The University of Pennsylvania, Penn Carey Law Office of Admissions, Philadelphia, PA

Seasonal external application reader/evaluator

2016 - present

Co-Leader & Certified Tree Tender, *Francisville Tree Tenders*

2023 - present

- Develop volunteer recruitment & retention plan; grow the reach of this community by identifying promising candidates to receive free tuition to complete Tree Tender Certification
- Organize, publicize & lead twice-yearly planting days (April/November) & periodic social events; serve as primary liaison with Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
- Manage ongoing communication with residents who have successfully applied for and received free street trees, including reminders about seasonally appropriate tree care (pruning, watering & mulching); triage inquiries regarding tree problems; increase awareness of City & PHS resources
- Collaborate with nearby TT groups (Sharswood, Brewerytown, Fairmount, Heritage) to pool resources & increase our collective impact on re-growing Philadelphia’s tree canopy to improve city life for all residents

Co-leader, *Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania*, (Juniors Troop 93547)

2021 - present

- Support a troop of 4th & 5th grade girls from Philadelphia private, public and parochial schools
- Facilitate meetings/experiences designed to help girls gain experience & earn badges related to competence in re: civic participation, democracy, jewelry-making, outdoor education; research & invite speakers, organize activities
- Support girls as they develop & execute a 30-hour Bronze Award service project (the highest Junior award)

Benefits Data Trust

2018 - 2020

Development Officer (contractor in 2018)

- As part of a team, ensured BDT was fully funded (\$25M in 2020) to ensure continuity of services & support BDT’s work to transform access to public benefits for low-income people in need across 6 states
- Conducted research & developed strategies to identify & cultivate new business (institutional and individual donors)

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- Direct involvement in securing grants for research, policy & direct service from funders including The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative
- Managed relationships with portfolio of 6- & 7-figure donors

The University of Pennsylvania, Innovation @ Penn Graduate School of Education, Philadelphia, PA

External Relations, Business Development, Communications, Research Assistant 2012 - 2017

- Conceptualized Penn GSE's first Innovation Center (*Catalyst*, launched 2018); selected as sole Grad Student Representative to the faculty development committee (2017); served on Executive Director hiring committee (2017); invited member, Admissions Committee for MSEd in Education Entrepreneurship
- Developed & implemented yearly and event-specific team communication strategy (web, social media, constituent communications)
- Identified fruitful opportunities for partnership and synergy; pitched ideas to internal/external stakeholders
- Developed & executed yearly conference; general volunteer management
- Developed & implemented yearly and event-specific team communication strategy; built & maintained social media presence; maintained regular blog in Forbes
- Served as main point of contact for competition alumni (i.e., edtech startups, social impact companies); built sense of community
- Initiated & maintained social media presence
- Developed, pitched, and wrote twice-monthly blog in Forbes (2015 – 2018)
- Responsible for researching, selecting & managing technology tools for use at yearly conference (mobile app: *Guidebook*, e-polling: *Mentimeter*, Web)
- Build and maintain community among competition alumni (i.e., edtech startups, social impact companies) and other constituents (City officials, startup-adjacent organizations, etc.)

The University of Pennsylvania, Undergraduate Admission Office, Philadelphia, PA

Assistant Dean/Regional Director

2008 - 2012

- Planned & executed 5 weeks staff training for 30+ staff members
- Served on new staff hiring committee ('10-'12)
- Managed team of 8 Admissions Coordinators (office-wide administrative support)
- Team lead for logistics, technology, internal operations, communications related to external partnership with nonprofit connecting low-income students with top colleges
- Conducted workshops, info sessions (as large as 1200+ people); served as a resource for a range of constituents
- Read/evaluated 1300+ applications/year; planned/executed 4-6 weeks of travel per year; managed individual budget

Princeton University, Undergraduate Admission Office, Princeton, NJ

Admission Officer

2004 – 2007

- Managed planning & coordination of all campus visitors (tours, info sessions, meals, overnight visits)
- Designed & executed database, calendar & publicity for Admitted Students' Weekend
- Developed & maintained office's first New Staff Training Guide
- Read/evaluated 1200+ applications/year; planned/executed 4-6 weeks of travel per year; managed individual budget

Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH

Senior Admission Interviewer, Office of Undergraduate Admission

2003 - 2004

Head Writing Assistant, The Composition Center ('03 – '04) & Writing Assistant ('02 – '04)

2002 - 2004

- Recruited, hired, supervised & managed a staff of 47 undergraduates. Trouble-shooting, scheduling, training, & tutoring assistants to improve their teaching and editing skills.

SKILLS

Strategic Partnerships, External/Community Relations, Public Speaking & Social Media

- Developed & maintained a network of entrepreneurs, funders, educators & researchers (in person/digitally) dedicated to developing startups in the educational technology field.
- Socialized new Innovation @ Penn GSE initiatives/programs; built & executed communications and PR strategy for Innovation team, including blogs, advertising, Twitter presence & campaigns (2012 - 2018), strategic event attendance; general communications to constituents, public speaking to diverse audiences.
- As an admissions officer, addressed crowds of 1200+; facilitated workshops.

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Proposal Writing, Program Development, Project Management

- Conceptualized initial proposal for Catalyst @ PennGSE; (innovation center established in late 2017)
- Researched, proposed, and refined new programs, curricular offerings & initiatives, then executed. Selected initiatives: Milken-Penn GSE Education Business Plan Competition; The Education Design Studio, Inc. (EdTech incubator); Education Entrepreneurship MSED & Virtual Online Teaching certificate

Research & Analysis; Writing & Editing

- Designed and executed a mixed-methods dissertation using SPSS (quantitative analysis software), and HyperRESEARCH (qualitative analysis software); designed and conducted qualitative, interview- and document-based research projects as part of Innovation @ Penn GSE
- Developed and executed research and conference proposals, white papers, book reviews, and mass media articles on a variety of education, technology & startup-related topics; with advisor, maintain regular blog in *Forbes.com* on education, technology, social impact & startups
- **Co-Editor**, *Perspectives on Urban Education* [<http://www.urbanedjournal.org>] ('13 - '15): Managed submission process; developed issue topics; recruited & managed volunteer student reviewers; reviewed submissions & gave written feedback; managed and maintained website; wrote editorials. **Editorial Review Team Member** ('12 - '13)

**PRESENTING
& SPEAKING**

Speaker/Solo Presenter, Philadelphia City Council [Public Comment in support of fully funding Philly Tree Plan] ('25) Kyros.Ai ('25); Fairmount Girl Scout Seniors/Ambassadors ('24); Philadelphia Social Innovations Journal ('18); National College Access Network Conference and Webinar ('17); Philadelphia College Prep Roundtable ('17); Open Access Philly ('13 - '15); Chester County (PA) Intermediate Unit In-Service ('12)
Panelist, FundingPost Women Investor & Entrepreneur event ('13, '15); Ellevest Network women's investment event ('15); IVY+ Admissions conference @ Yale, 2011 (attendee, '05); QuestBridge Conference @ Yale ('09 -'11)
College Admissions Case Studies Facilitator, Brooks School (MA); Springside Chestnut Hill Academy (PA); QuestBridge counselors group (nation-wide); Penn Admissions Faculty-Staff Programs (PA)
Event/program development: Milken-Penn GSE Education Business Plan conference ('12 - '17); *SxSWedu panel developer* ("An Ecosystem to Scale Educational Innovation," '14), *EduCon2014 panel developer* ("What Do Teachers Want from EdTech?"). *Organizer*: The Big Think ('13); EdTech Startup EXPO (Philly Tech Week '15).

**SELECTED
WRITINGS**

Kurshan, B. & **McManus, C.** (2018, January 23). Many Birds With One Stone: A Social Impact Entity for Education, Inclusion, and Data. *Philadelphia Social Innovations Journal* [website]
Kurshan, B. & **McManus, C.** (2017, October 3). What Comes After 'Doing Well By Doing Good'? Redefining What We Mean By Impact. *Forbes.com* [website]
Kurshan, B. & **McManus, C.** (2017, July 18). Teaching 21st Century Skills For 21st Century Success Requires An Ecosystem Approach. *Forbes.com* [website].
McManus, C., Ebby-Rosin, R., & Kurshan, B. (2014). Opportunities, Obstacles and Outcomes in Educational Gaming: Teaching to the Common Core, 21st-Century Skills and Beyond. *Philadelphia Social Innovations Journal* (2014). [website].
Kurshan, B. & **McManus, C.** (2013). The Easiest Way to Fix Our Education System: Tell Entrepreneurs to Do Their Homework. *PolicyMic.com* [website].
McManus, C. (2012). Living in a Digital World We Don't Understand: Teaching 21st-century Skills for 21st-century Jobs. *EdTechDigest.com* [website].
McManus, C. (March 2014). *These Kids: Identity, Agency, and Social Justice at a Last Chance High School* [book review]. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 45(1), 124-126; DOI: 10.1111/aeq.12052
McManus, C. (June 2013). *Networks, New Governance & Education* [book review]. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 44(2), 218-219. DOI: 10.1111/aeq.12021
McManus, C. (May 2013). *Giving Our Children a Fighting Chance: Poverty, Literacy, and the Development of Information Capital* [book review]. *Democracy & Education*, 21(1), 1-2.

ADDITIONAL

Member, The Franklin Institute, Philadelphia Museum of Art, WHYY, WXPB
Board of Elections Poll Worker (volunteer, 15-13), *City of Philadelphia* (2014 - present)
Judge, *Milken-Penn GSE Education Business Plan Competition* (2012 - 2018), Wharton-QS Stars Competition: Reimagine Education Awards (2016, 2017)