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INSTITUTE OF
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October 15, 2021

Richard (Max) Melstrom
School of Environmental Sustainability
Loyola University Chicago
1032 W. Sheridan Rd.
Chicago, IL 60660
rmelstrom@luc.edu

Dear Max Melstrom:

I am applying for the tenure-track position as an Assistant Professor in Sustainable Management appointed jointly by the School of Environmental Sustainability and Quinlan School of Business at Loyola University Chicago. My Ph.D. will be in Business Administration with a Concentration in Marketing and a Specialization in International Business from Georgia State University. I am currently a fifth year "All But Dissertation" Ph.D. candidate at Georgia State University. I anticipate defending my dissertation and graduating by May 2022. Overall, my research examines ways in which organizations can lead sustainable solutions for economic, environmental, and social advancements through innovative strategies.

Broadly speaking, my research focuses on sustainability and equity in business. These overarching themes guide my research to examine business using theories and perspectives from multiple disciplines to understand macro-societal phenomena through an organizational lens. My dissertation investigates activities and behaviors surrounding organizational food waste to develop theory for this relevant phenomenon. Based on qualitative, abductive case comparisons, my dissertation uses grounded theory to uncover and interpret mechanisms and themes to develop theoretical foundations for a common pool resource in organizations. Developing theory for this global, universal corporate externality offers insights into circular opportunities for strategic operations and marketing. My second research project explores disparities of perceptions compared to realities of demographic characteristics of individuals in organizations. Awareness and appreciation for differences in identity perceptions presents important implications for marketing. Together, these projects explore economic, environmental, and social dimensions of sustainability and equity in business contexts for theoretical and practical advancements.

My teaching style prioritizes the integration of soft skills (e.g., effective communication, giving and receiving criticism, working in diverse teams, thinking critically) with course content.

I incorporate these skills into activities and assignments because they are necessary for success in both professional and personal lives. I taught “Globalization and Business Practices”, an introductory course to international business that was required for all undergraduates majoring in business at Georgia State University. My teaching philosophy integrates my entrepreneurial experience, passion for sustainability and equity, and cultural exposures to guide interdisciplinary and intercultural collaborations in my courses. I incorporate relevant, real-world projects to connect classroom concepts with soft skills necessary to execute outcomes.

I spent a summer volunteering on an aquaponics farm in China and I regularly volunteer with a local organization to recover food from Whole Foods to distribute to low-income and refugee neighborhoods in Atlanta. I am an active community member who has been invited by environmental science and business organizations to share my knowledge on food waste, insects, composting, circular strategies, biomimicry, and entrepreneurship. My industry experiences and expertise on the Sustainability Development Goals allow me to leverage my existing materials for curriculum in Sustainable Business Management, Industrial Ecology, Environmental Science/MBA, Environmental Studies/MBA, and the proposed Sustainable MBA. My steady acquisition of funding from a variety of sources demonstrates my proactive dedication to tackle important societal issues through professional and personal action.

LUC’s commitment to interdisciplinary collaborations offers a fitting atmosphere for my research interests, teaching areas, and personal passions. As a mixed-race woman, I would enjoy actively helping Loyola diversify its faculty and continue its dedication to sustainable programs through social justice, care for our common home, and walking with the excluded. I would love the opportunity to teach existing curriculum as well as develop a nationally renowned research program focused on sustainability management, circular economy, and corporate social responsibility. My consistent professional and personal record of advocating holistic, systems-level strategies for sustainability and social impact position me well to support LUC’s priorities. Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Ku', with a stylized, cursive script.

Sarah Ku

SARAH KU

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EDUCATION

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 2017 – 2022 (expected) | Ph.D. in Business Administration, Concentration – Marketing,
Specialization – International Business
Institute of International Business
Georgia State University (Atlanta, Georgia, USA) |
| 2005 – 2009 | B.B.A. in Marketing, Minor – Art (<i>magna cum laude</i>)
Sales certificate
University of West Georgia (Carrollton, Georgia, USA) |

DISSERTATION

Organizational Food Waste:
Theoretical, Methodological, and Empirical Approaches

Abstract

Depletion of resources, threat of climate change, and social disparities highlight the urgent need to utilize waste as a resource rather than discard it. Individuals have little impact on this global problem and change through policy is challenging due to its slow progression. Yet, firms can lead behavioral changes with extensive speed and magnitude. Businesses everywhere, regardless of industry, size, and geographic location, deal with food waste because every employee eats. Utilizing waste externalities as resources makes economic sense but remains an inactive strategy in business research and operational practice. Existing dominant theories reveal a paradox in the passive use of waste as a resource, despite its abundance, renewability, and value. Waste affects stakeholders both internal and external to firms, yet the governance of this resource is rarely managed by non-shareholding stakeholders. Therefore, I use the context of organizational food waste to explore the broad phenomenon of why sustainable activities are not standard business practice. First, I synthesize dominant business theories to identify key assumptions and how these theories have limited capacity to explain business activities surrounding food waste. Second, I describe how and why a hermeneutic grounded theory approach is a fitting methodology to study organizational food waste. Lastly, I use case comparisons to apply this methodology and empirically examine organizational food waste to develop theory. This research contributes theoretical, methodological, and empirical evidence to show that food waste represents a significant business problem that can be tackled through strategic organizational opportunities.

Stage

Iteratively collecting, analyzing, probing, and interrogating data

PUBLICATIONS

Refereed journal articles

- Ku, S., Cavusgil, S. T., Ozkan, K., Pinho, C., Pinho, M. L., Poliakova, E., Sanguineti, F., Sharma, S.** (2020). The Great Lockdown Recession and International Business. *Rutgers Business Review*, 5(1), 113–134.
- Ku, D. N., Ku, S. K., Helfman, B., McCarty, N. A., Wolff, B. J., Winchell, J. M., & Anderson, L. J.** (2016). Ability of device to collect bacteria from cough aerosols generated by adults with cystic fibrosis. *F1000Research*, 5.

Manuscripts in preparation

- Ku, S.** (2022). *From dissertation*: Synthesis and Critical Review of Theoretical Foundations for Organizational Food Waste.
- Ku, S.** (2022). *From dissertation*: Methodological Approaches for Organizational Food Waste.
- Ku, S.** (2022). *From dissertation*: Developing Hermeneutic Grounded Theory from Case Studies of Organizational Food Waste.
- Ku, S., Liu, L.A., Hong, Y.-y., Ng, E.** (2022). Your Perception is Not My Reality: A Critical Review and Proposal to Update the Conceptualization of Demographic Variables.

- Ku, S.** (2021). Corporate Composting: MNE Opportunities to Lead Global Sustainable Development Through Circular Strategies.
- Napier, E., **Ku, S.**, Riesenberger, J. (2021). Enhancing Student Engagement Through Student Goal-Centered Syllabus© Design.
- Ku, S.** (2021). Collaborations Through Composting: A Protocol for Collective Cooperative Engagement in International Business Education and Research.
- Napier, E., **Ku, S.** (2021). Global, Green, and Glamorous: International Marketing of Food Waste for Fashion.
- Ku, S.**, Ozkan, K., Pinho, C., Pinho, M. L., Poliakova, E. (2021). Culture and Cognition: An Extension Study.

Refereed conference proceedings

- Ku, S.**, Liu, L.A., Hong, Y.-y., & Ng, E. (2021). Rethinking the Basics: A Critical Review of How and Why to Update the Use of Demographic Variables [paper presentation]. *Academy of Management conference*, online.
- Ku, S.** (2021). Theoretical Development of Stakeholder Governance Through Waste Management [paper presentation]. *Academy of International Business conference*, online.
- Ku, S.** (2021). Bugs in Schools: Universities Using Insects to Valorize Food Waste [paper presentation]. *Insects to Feed the World conference*, online.
- Napier, E. & **Ku, S.** (2020). One Man's Trash is Another Man's Trousers: Food Waste for Sustainable Fashion [paper presentation]. *American Marketing Association conference*, online.
- Ku, S.**, Liu, L.A., Hong, Y.-y., & Ng, E. (2020). Demographic Characteristics in International Business Research: Review, Analysis, and Future Directions [paper presentation]. *Academy of International Business conference*, online.
- Ku, S.** (2020). Organic Waste: A Profitable Paradox [paper presentation]. *Academy of International Business conference*, online.
- Ku, S.** & Liu, L.A. (2019). Choice and Visibility: An Inclusive Perspective of Multiculturalism [paper presentation]. *Academy of International Business – US Southeast chapter conference*, San Antonio, Texas, USA.
- Ku, S.** (2019). An International Comparison of Food Waste Disposal Policies [paper presentation]. *Academy of International Business conference*, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Ku, S.** (2019). Bug Business: International Case Studies of Organic Waste Management Using Insects [paper presentation]. *Consortium for International Marketing Research conference*, Ankara, Turkey.

Other publications

- Ku, S.** (2021, March 17). Spread the Love – Decentralizing Sustainability Solutions. *Drawdown Georgia*.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2020	Instructor Evaluations: 5.0 / 5.0 [University evaluations not conducted due to Covid-19 pandemic] Globalization and Business Practices [undergraduate]
2017 – 2019	Teaching Assistant Doing Business in World Regions [graduate]
2018	Teaching Assistant International Business Negotiation [graduate]

TEACHING AREAS

Sustainability in Business • Corporate Social Responsibility • International Business Marketing • Strategy • Management • Entrepreneurship • Sales • Business Ethics

GRANTS | FELLOWSHIPS | SCHOLARSHIPS [Total: \$117,445.89]

2017 – Present	Second Century Initiative Doctoral Fellowship Amount: \$22,000/yr [\$110,000 total] Source: Georgia State University
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2021	Research and teaching project Amount: \$3,027.18 Source: Center for International Business Education and Research at Georgia State University
2021	Composting on Campus Project Amount: \$2,019.71 Source: Georgia State University – Sustainability Fee Funds Committee
2021	Clyde Kitchens / Thoben Elrod / Delta Sigma Pi Doctoral Fellow Amount: \$2,399.00 Source: Georgia State University Foundation Scholarship

AWARDS | HONORS

2019 – 2020	Best Reviewer Academy of International Business
2019 – 2020	Best Student Reviewer Nominee Academy of International Business – US Southeast chapter
2018	Best Student Reviewer Academy of International Business – US Southeast chapter

MEDIA COVERAGE

2021	Waste Audit Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport
2020	Locust Plague Prompts GSU PhD Student to Consider Alternative Food Source Global Atlanta
2019	GSU PhD Candidate Seeks to Ally Insects With Humans to Cure the Earth's Ills Global Atlanta
2019	Second Century Initiative Fellow Uses Next Generation Program International Business Degree Program to Solve Waste Management Issues in the U.S. Georgia State University – Office of the Provost

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

2021	Organizational Food Waste Global Environment of Business [2 undergraduate course sections] University of Toledo (Toledo, Ohio, USA)
2021	Sustainable Business Practices Science for Georgia (online)
2021	Bugs IRL: There's No Debugging These Bugs Capgemini – CARES Sustainability Council (online)
2021	Bug Biz Cutting Edge Technologies [undergraduate course] Georgia Institute of Technology (online)
2020	You Can Compost That?! Capgemini – CARES Sustainability Council (online)
2019	Food Business Medicine Doctor of Nursing Practice [graduate course] Emory University (Atlanta, Georgia, USA)
2013 – 2018	Insights from an Entrepreneur Financial Planning for Projects [graduate course] Georgia Institute of Technology (Atlanta, Georgia, USA)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2017 – Present	Graduate Research and Teaching Assistant Georgia State University (Atlanta, Georgia, USA)
2009 – 2019	Co-Founder Marketing and Sales Manager Co-Inventor MD Innovate, Inc. (Decatur, Georgia, USA)

2016 – 2017	Patent PCT/US2011/061187 Proofreader Human Resources Analyst Aprio (Atlanta, Georgia, USA)
2015 – 2016	Retail Demonstrator Cutco Cutlery (USA)
2007 – 2009	Marketing and Consumer Relations Intern University of West Georgia – Auxiliary Services (Carrollton, Georgia, USA)
2006	Field Sales Manager Vector Marketing (Norcross, Georgia, USA)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS | AFFILIATIONS

2020 – Present	North American Coalition for Insect Agriculture
2019 – Present	Academy of International Business Sustainability Shared Interest Group
2018 – Present	Academy of Marketing
2017 – Present	Academy of International Business
2017 – Present	Academy of Management
2009 – Present	Beta Gamma Sigma
2009 – Present	Omicron Delta Kappa

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

2021 – Present	Communications officer; founding member [The Circular Economy in an IB Context] Academy of International Business Sustainability Shared Interest Group
2021 – Present	Reviewer Asian Business & Management
2020 – Present	Leadership Circle member RCE Greater Atlanta – Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development
2019 – Present	Reviewer Journal of Business Research
2019 – Present	Reviewer Journal of Teaching in International Business
2018 – Present	Conference reviewer Academy of International Business
2018 – Present	Conference reviewer American Marketing Association
2017 – Present	Conference reviewer Academy of Management
2020	Scientific committee member International Conference on Sustainable Development

CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

Invited panelist

2021	Collaborations for Campus Composting Global Conference on Sustainability in Higher Education (online)
2020	Sustainability Shared Interest Group inaugural event Academy of International Business – Canada chapter (online)
2020	Insects for Sustainable Solutions Insectival (online)
2020	Food Production, Waste Management and the Circular Economy International Conference on Sustainable Development (online)
2020	The Role of International Marketing in Encouraging Responsible Production and Consumption Academy of International Business (online)

Session chair

- 2021 Academy of International Business (online)
 2020 Academy of International Business – US Southeast chapter (online)
 2019 Academy of International Business – US Southeast chapter (San Antonio, Texas, USA)

DEPARTMENTAL | UNIVERSITY PRESENTATIONS

- 2021 [Website Tutorial](#)
 Robinson College of Business PhD Fellows (online)
 2021 [Perspectives from Early Career International Business Faculty](#) [moderated]
 Center for International Business Education and Research (online)
 2020 [The Student Goal-Centered Syllabus©](#) [with Elizabeth Napier and John Riesenberger]
 Center for International Business Education and Research (online)
 2019 Conference Tips
 Robinson College of Business PhD Fellows (Atlanta, Georgia, USA)
 2018 Panel on the PhD Journey
 Robinson College of Business PhD Fellows (Atlanta, Georgia, USA)
 2018 A multidisciplinary discussion of business at Bottom of the Pyramid, microfinancing,
 microfranchising, and agribusiness
 Robinson College of Business Research Symposium (Atlanta, Georgia, USA)

DEPARTMENTAL | UNIVERSITY SERVICE

- 2021 – Present Sustainability fee fund committee member
 Sustainability Initiatives
 2020 – Present Guest judge / mentor
 WomenLead Poster Presentations (online)
 2019 – 2021 Board member [Vice President | Secretary]
 Robinson College of Business PhD Fellows
 2018 – 2020 Volunteer
 International Business Pedagogy Workshop (Atlanta, Georgia, USA)

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Teaching

- 2020 Mastering Online Teaching certification
 Georgia State University (online)

Research

- 2020 Conference attendee
 Circularity 20 (online)
 2018 Conference attendee
 Insects to Feed the World (Wuhan, China)

Doctoral consortiums

- 2020 Academy of International Business – US Southeast chapter (online)
 2019 Product Development & Management Association (Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, USA)
 2019 Academy of International Business – US Southeast chapter (San Antonio, Texas, USA)
 2019 Academy of International Business (Copenhagen, Denmark)
 2018 Academy of International Business – US Southeast chapter (Nashville, Tennessee, USA)
 2018 Academy of International Business (Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA)

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT | OUTREACH

- 2020 – Present Volunteer, board member
 Change to Humanity (Atlanta, Georgia, USA)
 2018 Volunteer
 Eating Insects Athens (Athens, Georgia, USA)

TEACHING EVALUATIONS

Student feedback

I did not receive formal university evaluations due to the pandemic circumstances. However, I asked my students to evaluate me candidly through [Rate My Professor](#) in order to have some form of measurement of my teaching abilities. Since students come from different cultures and experiences, I also explored alternative techniques of assessment to include a variety of formats. I asked them (after the course was over to reduce bias) if they would be willing to send me [video testimonials of the course and my teaching style](#). I received many videos even though they no longer had any obligations to me or the course. Their response rate and content suggest that my students are receptive to our interactions and that they experienced an effective learning atmosphere. This feedback encourages me to continue to show empathy, compassion, and concern for my students.

Invited speaker feedback

I am regularly invited to present at international and national conferences, corporate settings, and community events. I request [testimonials from invited presentations](#) to provide further metrics of my pedagogical tactics.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

Business in global economies and markets requires constant collaborations with multiple stakeholders that have different cultures, backgrounds, and experiences. These relationships occur within the firm and outside the firm with other organizations, governments, communities, and individuals. This cooperative foundation guides my teaching principles to incorporate resources and tools from outside of my field to connect course concepts with relevant situations. Students can learn anything via the internet these days, but what they often lack are concrete scenarios in which they can practice and polish the knowledge and skills they learn. My teaching focuses on helping students develop soft skills, such as effective communication, giving and receiving criticism, working in diverse teams, and thinking critically, along with hard skills that are course specific. This integrative teaching style provides a relatable and engaging environment for students to apply skills to practical circumstances.

Bridging concepts from inside the classroom to scenarios outside the classroom transforms learning to real-world problem solving instead of arbitrary and abstract assignments. My additional strategies include asking lots of questions, utilizing visual designs in materials, leveraging current events and technologies, and sharing my own experiences to gain and sustain student attention. These strategies manifest before the first day of class through my course syllabi. I use a website browser platform rather than static text documents to provide living/liquid syllabi that I can update quickly and regularly. I also poll students, share external materials, and interact with them through this consistent platform that also exposes my personality. I share my individuality to demonstrate a willingness to be vulnerable, which increases trust. I believe that when students feel safe, they are more receptive to learning and participating.

I ask for feedback throughout the semester to continually gauge my student environment. I do this to not only help me identify challenging areas in my teaching methods with each class but to also show that I care what they think and am willing to adapt to their needs. Every class presents idiosyncrasies, particularly in an increasingly diverse and technological world, and I welcome opportunities to address them in real time. I am currently developing a pedagogical protocol to empower interdisciplinary and community synergies for on-site composting of organizational food loss and waste that can be applied on- and off-campus, which directly relates to my dissertation research. This tool can be used to facilitate students to work with others and practice hard and soft skills through course projects for practical impacts that they can tangibly witness. My teaching philosophy reflects a commitment to incorporating practical soft skills to apply course content through hands-on assignments. In sum, my pedagogical procedures are dedicated to developing students professionally and personally to contribute to more sustainable activities and equitable behavior in business and society.