AMA | SIG
Doctoral Student

BIANNUAL NEWSLETTER · FALL 2026

DocSIG

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AMA DOCTORAL STUDENT SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP



IN THIS ISSUE

04 A Message From the Chair: Our Vision

10 2027 AMA Winter: What's Ahead in New Orleans

12 Highlights From 2026 AMA Summer

25 2026 Recap: Our Members' Contributions to Scholarly Insights

31 The 2026 Who Went Where (WWW) Report

35 A Brand-New docsig.org

Contents

01 LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE

From the Chair: Reflections & Vision 04
A Note From Our Faculty Mentors 06
Contributor's Note 07
Honoring Our Immediate Past Chair: Legacy & Contributions 08

02 CONFERENCES

2027 AMA Winter Academic Conference 10
Recap: Highlights From 2026 AMA Summer Academic Conference 12

03 OUR TEAMS & HIGHLIGHTS

Meet the 2026–27 DocSIG Officers 23
Scholarly Insights 24
Communications 30
Who Went Where Report 31
Webinar 32
Website 35

04 COMMUNITY & SUPPORT

The Monthly Social 37
Survey Winners 38
Sponsorship Opportunities 39
Honoring Our Sponsors 39
Join DocSIG and Stay Connected 40



01

Leadership Perspective

From the Chair: Reflections & Vision 04

A Note From Our Faculty Mentors 06

Contributor's Note 07

Honoring Our Immediate Past Chair: Legacy & Contributions 08

From the Chair: Reflections & Vision



Safa Zahra Karami
Chair, 2026–27
Ph.D. Candidate
University of Wyoming

Welcome to the first newsletter of the 2026–27 academic year.

I am thrilled to serve as your 2026–27 Chair. Since joining DocSIG's communications team in 2024, my goal has been to help doctoral students access research guidance, connect with faculty, and build relationships with peers across universities. This year, as the Chair, I hope to help more students find that support and sense of belonging through DocSIG.

I began my term with three objectives: bring more first- and second-year PhD students into our community, apply real-world marketing practices to strengthen DocSIG's reach and communication, and expand our international presence through virtual engagement.

Together with our Chair-Elect 2027–28, Rafaela Canova Davide, and our dedicated international officers, we are maintaining the high standards set by previous teams while bringing fresh ideas and simpler, smarter ways of working to serve our doctoral community. This fall, we have put that approach into practice through the following initiatives:

01 **Broadening the research conversation:** Our webinar programming continues to focus on delivering high-quality content while expanding into research areas that have received less attention within DocSIG. This year, we strengthened our Track Discovery Series by introducing a three-part series on Sales Research, alongside sessions on Transformative Consumer Research and Consumer Behavior. We also launched a new initiative, "Crafting the Research Paper Series," featuring leading scholars in our field, including Dr. Jeff Covin (University of Wyoming) and Dr. Ajay Kohli (Georgia Institute of Technology), who share their expertise and practical advice on developing strong research papers. Through these initiatives, we've brought distinguished scholars into our community, offering doctoral students fresh perspectives and opportunities to connect with faculty they might not otherwise meet at AMA conferences.

02 **Refreshing DocSIG's brand and communications:** We rebranded DocSIG with a new visual identity that gives our communications a consistent, recognizable look across channels. We launched the Weekly Digest last academic year as Chair-Elect. This year, as Chair, I led its redesign to give greater visibility to the content most relevant to doctoral students. Reader click-throughs have increased since the redesign. On LinkedIn, we've introduced short videos to make our updates clearer and more engaging. We also rebuilt the DocSIG website, so doctoral students have one place to find resources, events, and opportunities.

03 **Collaborating across marketing communities within and beyond the AMA:** To reach more marketing doctoral students, we've expanded our work with other AMA special interest groups and begun collaborating with international marketing associations, including the European Marketing Academy (EMAC).

04 **Welcoming new faculty mentorship:** This year marks DocSIG's first faculty mentor transition in 15 years. We are grateful for the guidance that Dr. Mathew Joseph has brought to our community over his tenure. We are delighted to welcome Dr. Michael Haenlein, President of the AMA Academic Council, and Dr. Amber Epp, Immediate Past President of the AMA Academic Council, as our new faculty mentors. Their experience and perspectives bring fresh energy to our work and open new possibilities for DocSIG's future.

05 **Creating a shared identity for our signature events:** With our new mentors' guidance, we have brought our signature Winter and Summer AMA events under one name: the AMA DocSIG Global Colloquium. Held on Saturday mornings at both conferences, the colloquium will provide a consistent space for doctoral learning, mentorship, and connection. We have also adjusted our logistical arrangements to increase capacity, welcome more doctoral students, and reduce the need for waitlists.

06 **Expanding collaboration across SIGs:** Building on our longstanding partnership with SustSIG, we've expanded our joint receptions to include more SIGs, starting with the 2027 Winter AMA Academic Conference. This collaboration creates a more sustainable approach to hosting receptions while making networking more convenient for attendees. By bringing 5 SIG communities together in one space, participants can connect with colleagues across different research areas without having to move between separate receptions that were often held at the same time.

In the meantime, please keep spreading the word about DocSIG among your fellow Ph.D. students. We hope you enjoy reading this current issue of our newsletter. I'm looking forward to continuing this journey together and hope to see many of you in New Orleans at our 2027 AMA Winter events!

- Safa Zahra Karami

WITH GRATITUDE FROM DOCSIG CHAIR

AMA LEADERSHIP: None of these initiatives would be possible without the incredible support of AMA's leadership team, especially **Matt Weingarden**, **Marilyn Stone**, **Riley Fickett**, and **TJ Anderson**. Their ongoing guidance and support have been instrumental in helping us turn our ideas into meaningful programs for the doctoral community.

FACULTY & PAST CHAIR: I also want to take a moment to thank the many people who have supported us along the way. To all the faculty members who generously accepted and shared their time and mentorship through our in-person and virtual events. A special thanks to our Past Chair, **Ishita Nagpal**, for her continued guidance and advice.

OUR SPONSORS: I'm especially grateful to our longtime sponsor, **the Sheth Foundation**, and particularly **Dr. Jagdish Sheth** and **Dr. Douglas Bowman**, for their continued belief in doctoral student development and their generous support of our events year after year. We're also excited to welcome our newest sponsor, **the Sam M. Walton College of Business at the University of Arkansas**, and sincerely thank **Dr. Jeff Murray** for his generous support.

OUR MEMBERS: Most importantly, to our doctoral students and loyal DocSIG members: thank you for staying connected, participating in our programs, and sharing your thoughts and feedback. Your voices are at the heart of everything we do.

A Note From Our Faculty Mentors



Dr. Michael Haenlein
Marketing Professor · Faculty Mentor
President, AMA Academic Council
ESCP Business School



Dr. Amber Epp
Marketing Professor · Faculty Mentor
Immediate Past President, AMA Academic Council
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Imagine a friend is lost in a forest and asks how to get out quickly. Moving faster helps only if they are heading in the right direction. Otherwise, they may simply get deeper into the forest.

Research is similar. Choosing which question to focus on deserves as much attention as deciding how to answer it. Don't choose solely on the basis of what seems easiest to study or publish. Ask yourself: Who could do what differently because of my research? If your findings could meaningfully change the behavior of a researcher, consumer, policymaker, or manager, that is a worthwhile direction.

Publications matter, especially early in your career. As you learn how to publish, make room for questions you genuinely care about and for conversations with the people your research could benefit.

We look forward to meeting many of you and hearing about your work!

> *"Use DocSIG: share ideas before they feel ready, seek honest feedback, and build relationships with people who will support and challenge you. Your peers can become collaborators and friends for years to come.*
>
> **— DR. HAENLEIN AND DR. EPP**



Rafaela Canova Davide
Chair-Elect 2027–28
Ph.D. Candidate
University of Arkansas

Contributor's Note

As Chair-Elect, I had the opportunity to work on this year's newsletter and build on the strong foundation established through last year's redesign.

My goal was to continue that evolution by creating greater consistency with DocSIG's broader visual identity while making the newsletter feel clean, engaging, and distinctly DocSIG.

This edition also expands how we highlight our initiatives, members, and opportunities, with the hope of making the incredible work happening across our community even more visible.

I'm very grateful to everyone who contributed their time, ideas, and content to bring this edition together.

For this edition, I focused on three ways to continue evolving the newsletter: building greater visual consistency, creating a cleaner reading experience, and bringing even more of the DocSIG community into these pages.

01

Strengthening our visual identity

Building greater consistency across the newsletter and DocSIG's broader communications.

02

Refining the reader experience

Creating a structure that makes content easier to navigate and enjoy.

03

Bringing more of DocSIG

Expanding how we highlight our initiatives, members, opportunities, and community.

My heartfelt thanks to all of the DocSIG officers who contributed their content, updates, and highlights to this edition. Your work and involvement are what bring the newsletter—and the DocSIG community—to life.

- Rafaela Canova Davide

Honoring Our Immediate Past Chair: Legacy & Contributions



Ishita Nagpal
Immediate Past Chair
Ph.D. Candidate
Georgia State University

A year of innovation, connection, and growth at AMA DocSIG

When I began my term as Chair, my vision was simple: to listen, create meaningful opportunities, and build a stronger, more connected DocSIG community.

Looking back, I am incredibly proud of what we accomplished together and deeply grateful to everyone who made this journey so special.

As I prepare to enter the 2027 academic job market, I hope our collective efforts have made a lasting impact, fostered meaningful relationships, and inspired our community to embrace the opportunities that lie ahead with renewed energy and enthusiasm.

It has been a truly rewarding chapter of my PhD journey. Thank you for your trust, support, and commitment throughout this incredible year. Here's to continued growth, meaningful connections, and an even brighter future for DocSIG!

- Ishita Nagpal

Under Ishita's leadership, DocSIG achieved these milestones

01 Strengthened sponsorships
Secured new partnerships and expanded financial support, creating more opportunities for meaningful DocSIG programming and events.

02 Expanded webinars
Launched the Track Discovery Series and expanded expert-led webinars, offering doctoral students valuable insights into research, career development, and the academic job market.

03 Reimagined faculty mentorship
Transformed the traditional Breakfast with Mentors into an interactive DocSIG colloquium, fostering deeper conversations and meaningful connections between doctoral students and faculty.

04 Expanded DocSIG's global presence
Strengthened DocSIG's international reach through successful programming at the first international Winter AMA Academic Conference in Madrid, connecting doctoral students and scholars across borders.



02

Conferences

2027 AMA Winter Academic Conference · New Orleans, LA · February 12–14, 2027 10

Recap: Highlights From 2026 AMA Summer Academic Conference · Denver, CO · July 24–26, 2026 12

2027 AMA Winter Academic Conference



DOCSIG AT WINTER AMA

New Orleans, LA

FEB 12 2027	**FEB 13 2027**	FEB 14 2027

The **2027 AMA Winter Academic Conference** takes place February 12–14 in New Orleans, Louisiana, bringing together marketing scholars from around the world.

This year, DocSIG is bringing two signature events to the conference, both on Saturday, February 13. Together, they give doctoral students the chance to connect with leading scholars, mentors, and peers from around the world, and to build the relationships that shape an academic career.

TWO SIGNATURE EVENTS · SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13

MORNING

DocSIG Global Colloquium

7:00–11:30 AM CST

A morning of mentorship, professional development, and research conversations.

EVENING

Joint SIG Reception

5:15 PM CST

Co-hosted by 5 AMA SIGs, the reception offers attendees a relaxed setting to network with colleagues across marketing communities.

DocSIG · SUSTSIG · AI SIG · Branding SIG · SERVSIG

Details of the Two DocSIG Signature Events at the 2027 AMA Winter Academic Conference

01 DocSIG Global Colloquium

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13 · 7:00–11:30 AM CST

SESSION 1	7:00–8:30 AM	**AMA DocSIG–Sheth Foundation Mentors Breakfast**
SESSION 2	8:30–9:30 AM	**AI in Marketing Pedagogy**
SESSION 3	9:30–10:30 AM	**Meet the Editors: Publishing in the Age of AI**
SESSION 4	10:30–11:30 AM	**Research Mentorship From Our World-Class Mentors**

REGISTRATION

Free with registration for the 2027 AMA Winter Academic Conference. Due to strong demand, we have increased capacity this year, but space remains limited. Registration is first-come, first-served and closes once we reach capacity; there is no waitlist, so please register as early as possible.

Register here →

02 Joint SIG Reception

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13 · 5:15 PM CST

Close the day with drinks, snacks, and great conversation with scholars from across the participating SIGs. During the reception, DocSIG will present the 2027 Mathew Joseph Mentor Award, while other collaborating SIGs will also have other award ceremonies. No registration required.

CO-HOSTED BY DocSIG · SUSTSIG · AI SIG · Branding SIG · SERVSIG

WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR SPONSORS

SHETH FOUNDATION

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS | Sam M. Walton College of Business

Highlights From the 2026 AMA Summer Academic Conference



2026 AMA Summer featured four exciting DocSIG events. We kicked off the events virtually with the Who Went Where session, followed by three memorable gatherings in Denver: the Pre-Conference, the Job Market Panel, and a special celebration of 30 Years of DocSIG!

EVENT 1
Mon, July 20 · Virtual

Virtual Session
Presenting the findings of the 2025–26 Who Went Where (WWW) Report

EVENT 2
Fri, July 24 · Denver

DocSIG Pre-Conference
Breakfast with Mentors | Ph.D. Journey Series | Faculty Mentoring Roundtables

EVENT 3
Sat, July 25 · Denver

Job Market Panel
Behind the Hire: Faculty Perspectives on the Marketing Job Market

EVENT 4
Sat, July 25 · Denver

30 Years of DocSIG Celebration
A special reception celebrating DocSIG's 30th anniversary

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

PRE-CONFERENCE

Gold sponsors

- University of Denver, Daniels College of Business and DU Sales Leadership Center
- University of Virginia, Darden School of Business
- Interpretive Simulations
- Texas State University, McCoy College of Business

Individual sponsor

- Prof. Michael Haenlein, ESCP Business School

30TH ANNIVERSARY RECEPTION

- The Sheth Foundation
- Marketplace Simulations
- AMA Marketing for Higher Education SIG
- AMA Sustainable Marketing and Innovation SIG

Event 1: Virtual Session: From PhD to Placement
Insights From the 2025–26 WWW Survey



This year, our previous team took a new step by presenting our Who Went Where (WWW) Report in a virtual session rather than the traditional in-person format on July 20, 2026.

Our goal was to make this valuable resource accessible to more doctoral students, including those unable to attend the conference.

This virtual event kicked off DocSIG's programming for the 2026 AMA Summer Academic Conference and received an overwhelmingly positive response from our community.

WHAT WE COVERED

01	Placement trends
02	Key survey insights
03	Interactive Q&A

Read the 2025–26 WWW report →

THANKS TO OUR 2025–26 OFFICERS

Reza Pedarpour
Presenter · Kent State University

Mona Safizadeh
Presenter · University of Rhode Island

Ishita Nagpal
Chair · Georgia State University

Xiaoying Feng
Moderator · Syracuse University

Event 2: DocSIG Pre-Conference · Phases 1 & 2
PhD Journey Series: Decisions That Define Your Impact



PHASE 1 · LEARNING FROM DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARS

The Pre-Conference kicked off Friday morning with an inspiring PhD Journey Series, featuring three distinguished scholars who shared candid reflections, pivotal career decisions, and lessons learned along their academic journeys.

DR. MARK HOUSTON

What most PhDs get wrong early (and why it matters)

Research success comes less from raw talent than from persistence: make time, take ownership, seek out criticism, and never let a career cost you your family.

DR. MARTIN MENDE

What separates good scholars from impactful scholars?

Real-world relevance shouldn't be tacked on at 2 AM under review but built in from the first idea. Study consequential phenomena, bring stakeholders in early, and never let importance excuse skipping rigor.

DR. LINDA PRICE

If I could redo my PhD...

A joyful yes, not to fix mistakes but to savor it all again. Chase problems you can actually catch, don't wait to be asked, and give help as often as you ask for it.



PHASE 2 · IN CONVERSATION

The conversation continued in Phase 2, as doctoral students engaged directly with the speakers, asked questions, and reflected on how these insights could shape their own PhD journeys.

Event 2: DocSIG Pre-Conference · Phase 3
Mentoring Roundtables with Faculty Mentors

After the morning talks, our doctoral students rolled up their sleeves. Students pitched; faculty gave feedback.






THE CHALLENGE: MAKE IT COUNT IN 4½ MINUTES

30 sec	2 min	2 min	0
Introduction	**Research pitch**	**Teaching pitch**	**Slides or notes**

> *"It was never about perfection. It was about practicing the conversations you'll have at conferences, over cocktails, and throughout your academic career, building confidence one conversation at a time."*

Event 3: DocSIG Job Market Panel

Behind the Hire: Faculty Perspectives on the Marketing Job Market

Distinguished faculty who have served on hiring committees across leading universities pulled back the curtain on what really happens on the other side of the academic job market, sharing candid perspectives and practical advice.

This session was moderated by Dr. Mark Peterson (University of Wyoming), and the panelists shared valuable insights and words of wisdom on navigating the academic job market. Below are some of the key takeaways from the session.



Panelists and DocSIG officers.

---

01 Positioning yourself

Dr. Linda Alkire (Texas State University): Position yourself to the institution, not just the discipline, and let a personal story show who you are.

Dr. Mark Houston (TCU): It's a two-sided match: prepare a 30-second and a 2-minute version of who you are as a scholar, and above all, be authentic.

---

02 Interviewing

Dr. Ali Besharat (University of Denver): Read the room, know your committee, and defend your ideas without being defensive.

Dr. Marc Fischer (University of Cologne): Prepare without overkill, play your own game, and be ready for the unexpected question.

Dr. Alixandra Barasch (University of Colorado – Boulder): Committees care how you think, not whether you have the "right" answer, so show real curiosity.

---

03 Resilience

Dr. Robin Coulter (UConn): The market is a waiting game full of rejection: be realistic about who you are and lean on your advisor and committee.

Dr. Denish Shah (Georgia State University): Resilience equals survival. Outcomes across interviews aren't correlated, so focus on effort and lean into small discomforts.

DocSIG Pre-Conference & Job Market Panel

The Faculty Behind the Impact

36 faculty speakers, panelists, and mentors who gave their time, candor, and care to doctoral students in Denver.

FACULTY AMBASSADORS



Kimberly Whitler
University of Virginia



Martin Mende
Arizona State University



Ali Besharat
University of Denver



Alixandra Barasch
University of Colorado Boulder



Ana B. Rosario
University of Denver



Anders Gustafsson
BI Norwegian Business School



Angeline Scheinbaum
Clemson University



Bernie Jaworski
Claremont Graduate University



Chris Berry
Colorado State University



Colleen Harmeling
University of Kentucky



Denish Shah
Georgia State University



Jan-Benedict Steenkamp
University of North Carolina



K. Sivakumar
Lehigh University



Katrijn Gielens
Tilburg University



Kelly Martin
Colorado State University



Linda Alkire
Texas State University



Linda Ferrell
Auburn University



Linda Price
University of Wyoming



Marc Fischer
University of Cologne



Mark Houston
Texas Christian University



Mark Peterson
University of Wyoming



Murali K. Mantrala
University of Kansas



Nita Umashankar
San Diego State University



O.C. Ferrell
Auburn University



Paul Farris
University of Virginia



Praveen Kopalle
Dartmouth College



Rajeev Batra
University of Michigan



Rebeca Perren
Cal State San Marcos



Riley T. Krotz
Florida State University



Robin Coulter
University of Connecticut



Saeed Janani
University of Denver



Samantha Cross
Babson College



Tarun Kushwaha
University of Wisconsin



Vamsi Kanuri
University of Notre Dame



Werner Reinartz
University of Cologne



Yashar Atefi
University of Denver

Event 4: 30 Years of DocSIG Celebration

30 Years. One Community. Countless Lives Impacted.





Doctoral students, faculty, Past Chairs, mentors, sponsors, and friends came together to celebrate three decades of a community that has supported generations of marketing scholars.

It began with a simple question from our 2025–26 Chair, Ishita Nagpal: "When did AMA DocSIG actually start?" Uncovering DocSIG's history with Matt Weingarden, Marilyn Stone, Riley Fickett, Prof. Mathew Joseph, and Chair-Elect Safa Zahra Karami revealed a milestone worth celebrating. The evening featured remarks from Bennie F. Johnson, CEO of the AMA, Prof. Jagdish Sheth, and former DocSIG Chairs.

A sincere thank you to our generous sponsors, The Sheth Foundation (Prof. Jagdish Sheth and Prof. Doug Bowman), Marketplace Simulations (Prof. Ernie Cadotte and Marilyn Stone), AMA HigherED SIG (Prof. Divya Ramachandran and Prof. Mathew Joseph), and AMA SUSTSIG (Prof. Neil Bendle and Prof. Dionne Nickerson, for making this celebration possible.

A NEW LEADERSHIP TEAM

In keeping with DocSIG's tradition of passing leadership to the incoming team at the AMA Summer Academic Conference, **Ishita Nagpal** officially passed the torch to **Safa Zahra Karami** at the 2026 conference. Safa will serve as our 2026–27 Chair. We also welcomed **Rafaela Canova Davide** as Chair-Elect for the 2027–28 chair term.

A special thank you to Ishita and all our **2025–26 officers** for their dedication, hard work, and contributions to our doctoral community throughout the past academic year.

Awards Presented at the 30 Years of DocSIG Celebration



The 30th anniversary reception also honored scholars whose research, service, and leadership have shaped our community.



Prof. Aritra Bhattacharya

2026 DocSIG "Mathew Joseph" Emerging Scholar Award

Indian School of Business



Xiaoying Feng

AMA DocSIG Outstanding Service & Impact Award

Syracuse University



Prof. Jagdish Sheth

Lifetime Achievement Award, AMA HigherEd SIG

Emory University



Prof. Rajan Varadarajan

Lifetime Achievement Award, AMA SUSTSIG

Texas A&M University

2026 AMA Summer Academic Conference in Denver: The Numbers Behind the Impact

30

Years of AMA DocSIG, celebrated with a 30th Anniversary Reception

11

Countries represented among the doctoral students in the room

36

Faculty mentors giving feedback throughout the events

3

Distinguished scholars opening Phase 1 with the PhD Journey Series

4½

Minutes per pitch: a 30-second intro, a 2-minute research pitch, and a 2-minute teaching pitch

7

Faculty panelists sharing what happens “Behind the Hire,” across 3 themes

5

Pre-Conference sponsors: four Gold Sponsors and one Individual Sponsor

4

Awards celebrated at the anniversary reception, including the 2026 Mathew Joseph Award

2

Faculty Ambassadors helping shape the Pre-Conference experience

6

Onsite DocSIG officers making the Pre-Conference run smoothly

Off the Record: Snapshots & Smiles

Every great conference has its behind-the-scenes stories: the smiles, laughter, and unforgettable moments that make DocSIG feel like family.











03

Our Teams & Highlights

Meet the 2026–27 DocSIG Officers	23
Scholarly Insights	24
Communications	30
Who Went Where Report	31
Webinar	32
Website	35

Meet the 2026–27 DocSIG Officers



Safa Zahra Karami
Chair
University of Wyoming

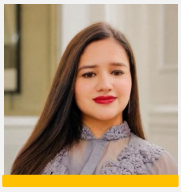


Rafaela Canova Davide
Chair-Elect 2027-28
University of Arkansas

Scholarly Insights (SI)



Japmman Pahuja
Vice Chair
Georgia State University



Anusheh Ali Gauhar
Assistant Vice Chair
Concordia University

Communications

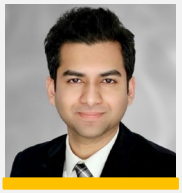


Nyota Ferguson
Vice Chair
Pace University



Yinghao (Rosa) Zhang
Assistant Vice Chair
Georgia State University

Who Went Where (WWW)



Annur Sifat
Vice Chair
Georgia State University

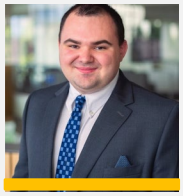


Yijia (Vita) Cao
Assistant Vice Chair
Wilfrid Laurier University

Webinar



Indeesh Mukhopadhyay
Vice Chair
The Ohio State University



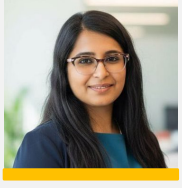
Colin Bisbee
Assistant Vice Chair
Louisiana State University

Website



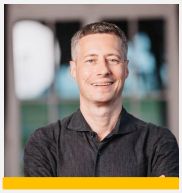
Amio Galib Chowdhury
Vice Chair
The University of Texas at Arlington

Immediate Past Chair

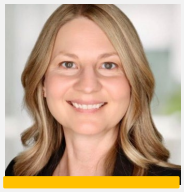


Ishita Nagpal
Immediate Past Chair
Georgia State University

Faculty Mentors



Dr. Michael Haenlein
Faculty Mentor
ESCP Business School



Dr. Amber Epp
Faculty Mentor
University of Wisconsin–Madison

Scholarly Insights



Japmman Pahuja
Vice Chair
Ph.D. student · Georgia State University
jpahuja1@student.gsu.edu

Anusheh Ali Gauhar
Asst. Vice Chair
Ph.D. student · Concordia University
anusheh.gauhar@concordia.ca



Since 2020, DocSIG has partnered with the Journal of Marketing Research on JMR Scholarly Insights by AMA DocSIG. In this blog series, doctoral students develop questions and interview the authors of recent JMR articles to highlight each article's contribution and spark insightful discussion. Written in accessible, non-academic language, the posts bring cutting-edge marketing research to a broader audience of practitioners, students, and anyone curious about marketing, beyond academia. The blog posts are published on the AMA website.

A RECORD YEAR

Twice

as many articles as 2024–25

18 are published, and more are in progress.

30+

new student authors

Joined the series this year, from eight countries around the world.

Faster

publication with AMA

This academic year, DocSIG worked with AMA to shorten publication times for Scholarly Insight blog posts in response to strong interest from doctoral students eager to contribute.

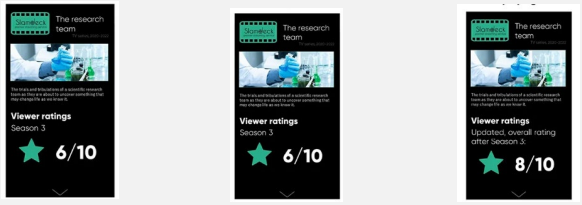
OUR NEW AUTHORS COME FROM

USA · France · Canada · India · Switzerland · Australia · Turkey · South Africa

Interested in contributing?

Keep an eye out for updates on our next call for participation on our website. You can explore previous blog posts here.

2026 Blog Posts by DocSIG Members



The Psychology of Feedback Design: How the Same Ratings Look Better (or Worse) Depending on Format

Mostofa Wahid Soykoth (Louisiana State University) and **Japmman Pahuja** (Georgia State University) wrote a blog post on how presenting performance scores in cumulative versus incremental formats can significantly alter consumer perceptions, with cumulative formats softening the impact of negative ratings and incremental formats making each score stand out more sharply. **Read more →**



Should Your Business Bet on Great^{1000} Grandma's Taste Using Genetic Data?

Xiaoying Feng (Syracuse University) and **Safa Zahra Karami** (University of Wyoming) wrote a blog post on how genetic data can predict consumer taste preferences and when it makes business sense for marketers to leverage this data to reach customers before they discover their own cravings. **Read more →**



Referral Contagion: Capturing the Full ROI of Referral Programs

Rohan Kar (IIM Ahmedabad) and **Andrea Bublitz** (University of Basel) wrote a blog post on how referred customers are significantly more likely to refer others, creating a "referral contagion" multiplier effect that firms have largely overlooked in calculating the true ROI of their referral programs. **Read more →**



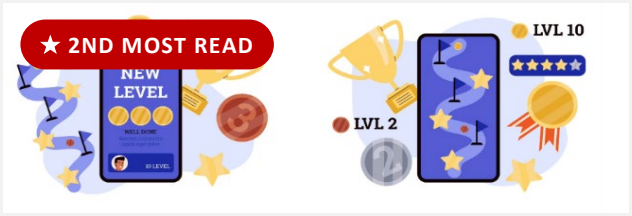
Linked for Success: How Board Interlocks Influence Marketing Power

Aadya Sanwal (Pennsylvania State University) and **Mostofa Wahid Soykoth** (Louisiana State University) wrote a blog post on how a firm's connections through shared board directors (board interlocks) can shape the strategic power and influence of its marketing department. **Read more →**



When a Trust Badge Changes What Sellers Do

Annur Islam Sifat (Georgia State University) and **Md Nurul Alam** (Louisiana State University) wrote a blog post on how eBay's redesign of its Top-Rated Seller badge, shifting criteria from consumer feedback to administrative performance metrics, changed how sellers allocate effort and how buyers interpret trust signals across different product categories. Read more →



When Gamification Pays Off—and When It Doesn't: Driving Engagement Without Losing Value

Atike Ugurlu (Istanbul Bilgi University) and **Mostofa Wahid Soykoth** (Louisiana State University) wrote a blog post on gamification in mobile apps. The paper shows that game rewards boost engagement and business value, especially as users near a reward, but that achieving rewards and entering a state of flow can reduce participation in value-added activities. Read more →



This Deep-Learning Method Unlocks New Possibilities for Segment-Specific Product Design

Xiaoying Feng (Syracuse University) and **Sichen Meng** (Queensland University of Technology) wrote a blog post on automated product design. The paper develops a method that discovers and quantifies interpretable visual characteristics from product images, then uses them to generate new designs and measure consumer preferences without manual effort. Read more →



The Conditional-Promotion Paradox: How Conditional Discounts Hurt Total Sales

Shiekh Shahriar Ahmed (University of Wyoming) and **Wenting Zhong** (Bentley University) wrote a blog post on when conditional discounts backfire. Across five studies combining secondary, field, and lab data, the paper shows that pairing a costly precondition with a large discount lowers total sales of the promoted product: shoppers can't qualify for the deal, and seeing it makes the regular price feel like a worse bargain. Read more →



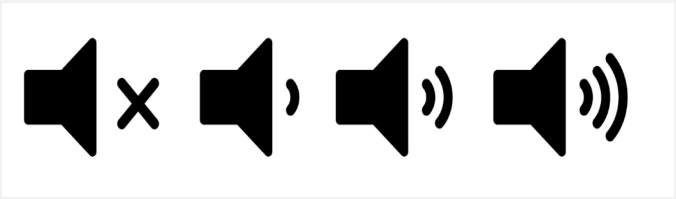
Free Plastic Bags Are Back—What Happens When Green Policies Get Repealed?

Xiaoying Feng (Syracuse University) and **Wenqian Ni** (Indiana University) wrote a blog post on what happens when green policies are repealed. Studying plastic bag policies in Austin and Dallas, the paper shows that the bans raised trash bag sales by roughly 70%, and this spillover lingered after repeal, especially after Austin's five-year ban. Even so, households needed to save only one plastic bag every five to seven trips for the policies to be environmentally worthwhile. **Read more →**



From Cafeteria to Cart: How Healthier School Meals Reshape Household Grocery Shopping

Rafaela Canova Davide (University of Arkansas) and **Aadya Sanwal** (Pennsylvania State University) wrote a blog post on healthier school lunches and household grocery purchases. The paper shows that the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act cut grocery calories by 6% as households, especially time-constrained ones with the least healthy baskets, shifted toward healthier school meals.
Read more →



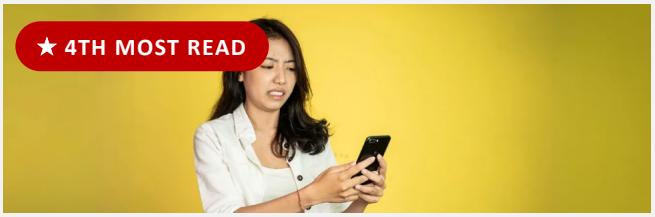
Noise, Power, Prestige: The Hidden Language of Product Volume

Simangaliso Bayabonga Zulu (University of KwaZulu-Natal) and **Yupal Shukla** (University of Bologna) wrote a blog post on product volume as a status signal. The paper shows that how loud a product is, from car engines to speakers, communicates two kinds of status: consumers seeking dominance prefer louder products, while those seeking prestige prefer quieter ones, though quiet reads as refined only when paired with other status cues like distinctive design or branding. **Read more →**



Doing Good and Looking Cool: The Impact of Disability Representation in Fashion Marketing

Gheremey Edwards (University of Michigan) and **Siddharth Arora** (Aston University) wrote a blog post on disability representation in fashion marketing. The paper shows that featuring models with disabilities makes brands seem both warmer and cooler, lifting ad response and purchase interest (one A/B test cut cost per click by 28%), with the strongest gains when brands lead rather than follow competitors and the disability is recognizable to consumers.
Read more →



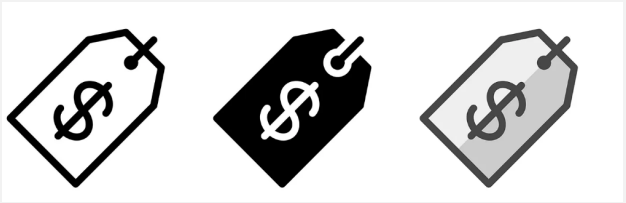
From Awkward to Viral: Why Consumers Can't Stop Sharing Cringe Content Online

Shrestha S. (Indian Institute of Management, Udaipur) wrote a blog post on why people share cringeworthy content. The paper shows that sharing others' cringeworthy behavior lets people signal their own social savviness, which means brands that miss the mark risk being shared for the wrong reasons. **Read more →**



Team Up or Take Over? Strategic Drivers of Firms' Alliance and Acquisition Decisions

Atike Ugurlu (Istanbul Bilgi University) and **Vidhya Krishnaraju** (McMaster University) wrote a blog post on why firms choose alliances over acquisitions, or vice versa. Drawing on more than 6,500 deals by 1,053 U.S. public firms, the paper shows that firms emphasizing marketing assets over R&D lean toward acquisitions, since those assets are hard to value in an alliance, though having a CMO or more analyst coverage makes alliances viable. Firms whose choice fits their strategic emphasis earn higher stock returns. **Read more →**



Weigh Your Options: How Price Format Can Boost Sales Without Changing the Price

Maren Doemer (University of Leeds) and **Andrew Chung** (Wayne State University) wrote a blog post on how price format shapes grocery sales. Across sixteen studies, including field tests with a retailer, the paper shows that shoppers anchor on whichever price is displayed most prominently, so unit-based pricing sells more of items under a pound and weight-based pricing sells more of heavier ones; in one field study, sales of a half-pound product rose 90% under unit-based pricing and a two-pound product rose 39% underweight-based pricing, with no change in the actual price. **Read more →**



Why Doctors Avoid AI When Patients Need It Most—and Why They Rely on It When It's Less Useful

Xiaoying Feng (Syracuse University) and **Rawan Hamdan** (University of Portsmouth) wrote a blog post on physicians' adoption of AI in clinical decision-making. The paper shows how legal liability and financial incentives lead doctors to avoid AI when it would help most, and even to avoid it more as it becomes more accurate. **Read more →**



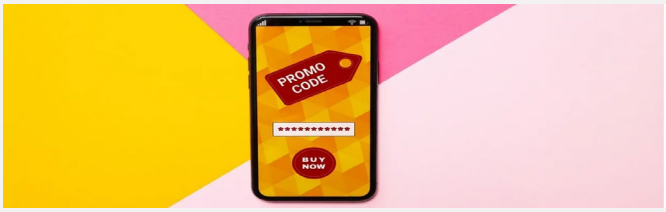
Less Spending, Higher Revenue: How Mergers and Acquisitions Affect Marketing Decisions in the Biopharma Industry

Lalitha Namrata Manchiraju (Cardiff University) and **Narek Grigorian** (Aston University) wrote a blog post on how mergers and acquisitions reshape pharmaceutical marketing. Drawing on 73 biopharma deals covering 375 branded drugs, the paper shows that acquirers typically raise prices and cut promotion on acquired drugs, yet each remaining marketing dollar works harder: across all deals, physician detailing fell by $1.19 billion while revenue rose by $23 billion in the two years after the deal. **Read more →**



The Face That Launched a Thousand Follows: Using AI to Predict Celebrity Potential

Mithila Hegde (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) and **Devidutta Mohanty** (University of Kansas) wrote a blog post on using AI to predict celebrity potential. Training a deep learning model on 22,000 face images, the paper introduces Celebrity Visual Potential, a score for how celebrity-like a face appears that is only weakly correlated with attractiveness. Higher scores predict faster Instagram follower growth and are more common among Fortune 500 executives. **Read more →**



Make Them Type the Promo Code: Why a Little Effort Beats an Automatic Discount in Digital Shopping

Wenkai Song (University of Utah) and **Joycee Wilson Pol** (Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee) wrote a blog post on why asking shoppers to type a promo code can beat an automatic discount. The paper shows that a small redemption step, like entering a code, makes shoppers feel they earned the deal and so increases redemption. In an email test with 6,623 Zoka Coffee customers, the code version converted at 1.45%, compared with 0.91% for the automatic discount. The advantage fades when the effort gets too large. **Read more →**

Want to see your name here next year?

Keep an eye out for the call for participation in the next Scholarly Insights issue.

Communications



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This year, our Communications team led DocSIG's rebrand, establishing a consistent visual identity across all channels and tailoring content to how doctoral students engage with each platform. We redesigned the Weekly Digest with refreshed visuals and a layout that makes key updates easier to scan. Email open rates have increased since the redesign. On LinkedIn, we introduced more engaging posts and launched a short-form video initiative to help doctoral students discover relevant resources, upcoming events, and opportunities in their feeds.

Since August 2026:

Email · Weekly Digest

- **Higher email click-through rate**
- **Redesigned Weekly Digest email layout with upgraded graphics and improved readability**

LinkedIn

56%
Monthly post clicks rose compared with the same period last year.

48%
Monthly post views rose compared with the same period last year.

84%
More posts published per week than last year, with content tailored to marketing doctoral students.

- **Introduced short video clips on DocSIG's LinkedIn page for the first time.**
- **Expanded collaboration with the AMA's official LinkedIn page, other AMA Special Interest Groups, and international marketing communities beyond the AMA.**

Who Went Where Report



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The **2026 Who Went Where Report** is now available. Drawing on feedback from doctoral candidates, the report offers a firsthand look at the academic job market in marketing. Reza Pedarpour and Mona Safizadeh of the 2025–26 Who Went Where team prepared the report under the leadership of Ishita Nagpal. Our 2026–27 team members, Annur Sifat and Yijia (Vita) Cao, are refining how we collect and analyze data for the next report. Data collection begins in spring 2027. Watch for our call for participation in May 2027. We'll share the findings at the 2027 AMA Summer Academic Conference.

NOW AVAILABLE

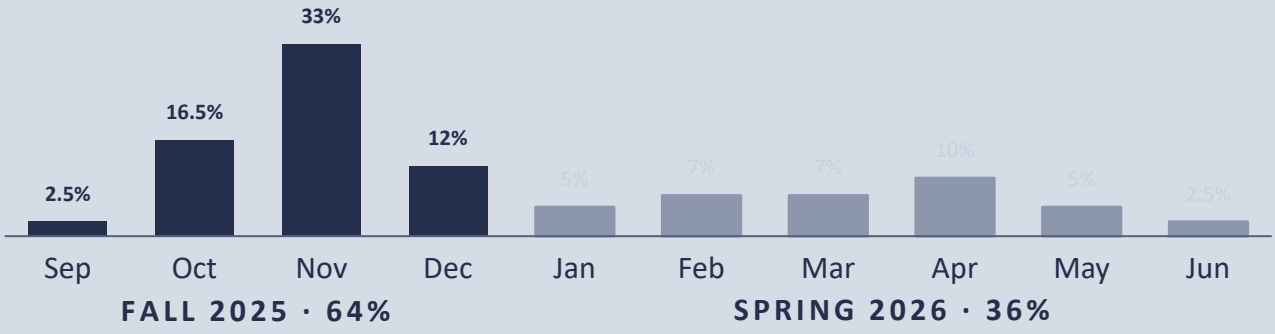
The 2026 Who Went Where Report

Read the report →



FROM THE 2026 REPORT

64% **of accepted job offers came before the new year.** November alone accounted for one in three acceptances, while 36% were accepted in spring 2026.



Webinar



Indeesh Mukhopadhyay
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Colin Bisbee
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This Year in Webinars

NEW SERIES

Crafting the Research Paper

We launched the Crafting the Research Paper Series, which opened with Dr. Jeff Covin (University of Wyoming) on letting the data speak to build a compelling narrative, and continues with Dr. Ajay Kohli (Georgia Tech). We hope to keep growing the series around the elements of writing that set a research paper apart, while connecting doctoral students with faculty they might not otherwise meet.

EXPANDED SERIES

Track Discovery

We broadened the research conversation at DocSIG, adding a three-part Sales Research series to the Track Discovery Series alongside sessions on Transformative Consumer Research and Consumer Behavior. We hope these sessions help students broaden their understanding of the field and discover research areas they may not have explored before.

COMING IN SPRING 2027

Shaped by what you told us

Earlier this year, we asked DocSIG members how we could better support their academic needs. In response, we are planning more Spring 2027 webinars, including Consumer Behavior Track Discovery Series sessions and new job market and methodology webinars.

Fall 2026 Webinar Highlights



SEPT 11, 2026

Dr. Jeff Covin
University of Wyoming
Watch on YouTube →

CRAFTING THE RESEARCH PAPER
Let the Data Speak to You: From Results to Storytelling

Ask a strong question, let the data shape the theory, and tell a compelling story.



SEPT 25, 2026

Dr. Eli Jones
Texas A&M University
Watch on YouTube →

TRACK DISCOVERY · SALES · 1 OF 3
Inside Sales Scholarship: A Field Guide to Questions, Theories, and Opportunities

Bring your own theories, stay close to practice, use new data, and tackle the hard questions.



OCT 23, 2026

Dr. Shikha Upadhyaya
California State University, Los Angeles
Watch on YouTube →

TRACK DISCOVERY · TCR
Discovering Transformative Consumer Research: Scholarship for Consumer and Societal Well-Being

Start with well-being, partner with communities to understand their needs, and remember that impact goes beyond citations.

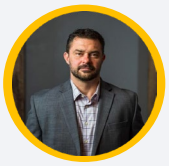


NOV 6, 2026

Dr. Linda Alkire
Texas State University
Watch on YouTube →

TRACK DISCOVERY · SALES · 2 OF 3
Becoming a Sales Professor: Navigating the Job Market and Building Your Career

Stay curious, research what truly motivates you, invest in your community, and enjoy the journey along the way.



NOV 20, 2026

Dr. Adam Rapp
Ohio University
Watch on YouTube →

TRACK DISCOVERY · SALES · 3 OF 3
Doing Impactful Sales Research

Get in the room with salespeople, ask diagnostic questions, and create value for your industry partners.

CATCH UP ANYTIME

Missed a webinar? Every session is recorded.

Watch past recordings on our YouTube channel →

Upcoming Webinars

SPRING 2027



Guest Speaker

Dr. M. Joseph (Joe) Sirgy

Virginia Tech

TRACK DISCOVERY SERIES

Consumer Behavior and Consumer Well-Being

Friday, Jan 22, 2027 1:00 PM MT

Scan to Register

or click here →



Guest Speaker

Dr. Ajay K. Kohli

Georgia Institute of Technology

CRAFTING THE RESEARCH PAPER SERIES

Anatomy of a Paper

Friday, Feb 5, 2027 1:00 PM MT

Scan to Register

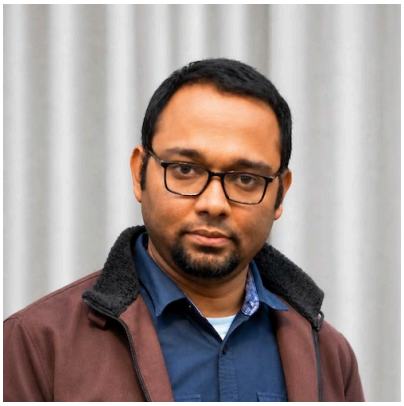
or click here →

FROM MARCH

Job Market Webinar Series

This series will include great guest speakers to help you navigate the job market. Watch for announcements on dates and speakers here.

Website



Amio Galib Chowdhury
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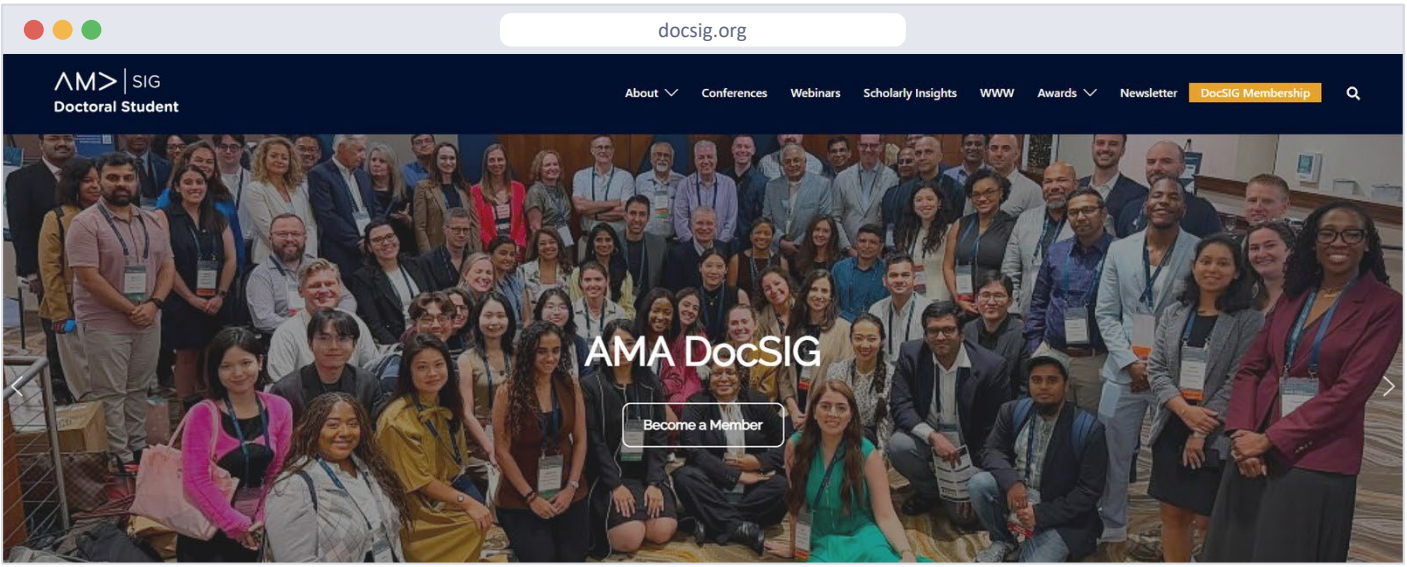
A brand-new docsig.org



For years, we've envisioned a complete overhaul of our website—not just its design but also its technical features, content, and overall user experience.

Our goal was to make the website the central hub for DocSIG, where all information originates and is then shared with our community through our Weekly Digest, LinkedIn, and YouTube channels. This year, that long-standing vision finally became a reality!

Guided by our Chair's vision and brought to life through the exceptional technical expertise, dedication, and independent work of our Website Vice Chair, Amio, the website now has a fresh look, richer content, improved functionality, and a much smoother experience for our members.



04

Community & Support

The Monthly Social	37
Survey Winners	38
Sponsorship Opportunities	39
Honoring Our Sponsors	39
Join DocSIG and Stay Connected	40

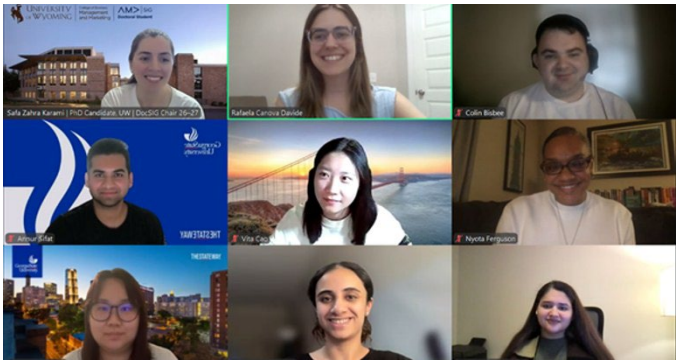
The Monthly Social

> *"These monthly socials help us stay connected as people first, not just as researchers."*
> — DOCSIG LEADERSHIP TEAM



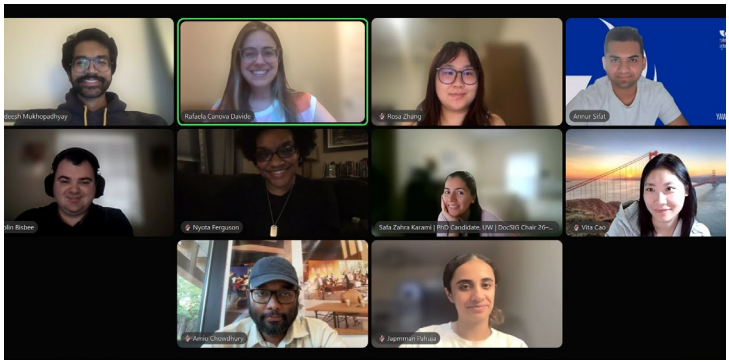
AUGUST 2026

Our first social of the year was an introductory call, a chance to meet one another and learn what each team does.



SEPTEMBER 2026

A relaxed, just-for-fun hangout where officers got to know each other beyond our roles and responsibilities.



OCTOBER 2026

We caught up on plans for the upcoming conference and celebrated our star officers, Amio and Nyota.

Survey Winners

DocSIG is committed to supporting the doctoral students who help shape our community by sharing feedback, contributing ideas, and participating in our initiatives. At the start of the academic year, students who completed our September 2026 **DocSIG Member Engagement Survey** could enter a drawing for one of five Amazon gift cards as a thank-you for their time and input.

~75

PhD students took part in our September 2026 survey

At the close of our well-attended October 2026 TCR webinar, we drew the names of all five winners live in front of the full webinar audience. Thank you to everyone who completed the survey. Your feedback is helping us plan programs that reflect doctoral students' needs and priorities.



Amazon gift card winners

01	**Devanshu Monga** *Central University of Himachal Pradesh*
02	**Wayde Juergens** *University of Illinois Chicago*
03	**Maren Stone** *Northwestern University*
04	**Julia van de Sandt** *University of South Carolina*
05	**Sajid Wetzel** *University of Mannheim*

Congratulations, and thank you for sharing your feedback!

Opportunities to Support DocSIG

We invite members of the academic community to support AMA DocSIG's events and initiatives dedicated to the academic and professional development of marketing doctoral students. Discover the different ways you can support our community:

01	02	03	04	05
Webinars	**Digital channels**	**Who-Went-Where Report**	**Scholarly Insights**	**Awards**

06
In-Person Events

2027 AMA Winter

Feb 12–14 · New Orleans, LA

2027 AMA Summer

Aug 6–8 · National Harbor, MD

Explore every opportunity in our 2026–27 Donation Booklet.

Contributions are processed through the AMA foundation.

View the booklet →

Honoring Our Donors

DocSIG extends heartfelt appreciation to the generous donors whose continued support has empowered our mission. Together, these partners strengthen the DocSIG community, supporting doctoral students, fostering research collaboration, and helping us build a thriving global network of emerging scholars.

SHETH FOUNDATION

A partner for many years, the Sheth Foundation supports several DocSIG initiatives and continues to champion doctoral students worldwide.

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS | Sam M. Walton College of Business

Welcome to our newest supporter. University of Arkansas Sam M. Walton College of Business is supporting both the 2027 AMA Winter and Summer DocSIG Global Colloquia.

Join DocSIG and Stay Connected

DocSIG membership is free with your AMA membership. Here is how to join and where to find us.

JOIN IN THREE STEPS

1

Fill out **this AMA form** to add a SIG to your membership.

2

Indicate **"Doctoral Students"** as your SIG selection.

3

Send it to **AMA Customer Support**. They add DocSIG to your membership.

WHY JOIN THE AMA

20% off

all AMA conferences, including Summer and Winter AMA

Free

DocSIG membership, connecting you with doctoral students worldwide

Discount

a special DocSIG rate for doctoral student memberships

See all AMA member benefits →

Doctoral student discount →

STAY CONNECTED

LinkedIn
Join us on LinkedIn

Weekly Digest
Subscribe by email

YouTube
Watch past webinars

docsig.org
Visit our website

Scan to connect with DocSIG

Looking Ahead

Meet us in person in New Orleans

2027 AMA Winter Academic Conference· February 12–14

DocSIG Global Colloquium and Joint Reception · Saturday, February 13, 2027

Next newsletter: Spring 2027

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