

Spring 2014

## Alumni Spotlight: Alice Wastag

By Jon Hussey

### When did you attend SDSU and what have you been doing since you left the program?

I attended SDSU from 2006 to 2008. Since I finished the program I have been working for Denison Consulting in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Denison is a small but rapidly growing culture and leadership diagnostic and solutions vendor. I started working at Denison as a Client Manager. In the Client Manager role, I was the main point of contact for dozens of Denison clients. I was also the project manager for administering Denison diagnostic survey tools within our clients. I learned all about the challenges organizations were facing and how corporate culture and effective leadership could either mitigate those challenges or enhance them. I also learned how to successfully administer an enterprise-wide assessment to hundreds of thousands of people, in all different jobs, located all around the globe.



After a couple of years in the Client Manager role I moved into a role as Director of Client Management. As the Director I was coordinating much of the same work as a Client Manager, but working with 10-12 people in Client Management roles and support roles. I was responsible for all activities in the department including hiring and performance reviews. In addition, I became a member of the leadership team at Denison and was closely involved in running the business. I spent three years in the role as Director of Client Management and came to a crossroads in my career. At this point I had been out of the program for five years and had started down the path of executive leadership in Client Services. While this had been an invaluable experience I also longed to get back to directly supporting organizations with an increased focus on work closely tied to my I/O roots.

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## A Reflection on their Time: Second Year Experiences

By Bryan Aasen

### What has been your favorite part of this program?

- Bryan:** Doing consulting projects with local organizations. It gives us an opportunity to apply what we learn in the classroom to real-world settings.
- Sam:** I most enjoyed the applied projects in our seminar classes where we were given access to a real, live San Diego organizations and asked to solve problems they were experiencing by applying the ideas we had discussed in class.
- Tim:** Building friendships and learning interesting things from my cohort.
- Elisa:** My internship provided me great work experience and allowed me to utilize the skills developed in the program in an applied setting.
- Mike:** Getting to know all the students and faculty, and the staff parking was pretty awesome.
- Jon:** The opportunity for applied projects with various organizations. Having the ability to apply the skills and techniques that we have been learning in the classroom to a practical setting has been very rewarding.

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### Additional Information:

- THE STUDENT EDITORS OF THIS ISSUE WERE BRYAN AASEN, MIKE KIRKPATRICK, SEAN TANG, AND JON HUSSEY

If you would like additional information on the Applied Psychology Student Association (APSA) or anything discussed in this newsletter, please e-mail Dr. Lisa Kath at [lisa.kath@sdsu.edu](mailto:lisa.kath@sdsu.edu)

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## Second Year Experiences (continued from p. 1)

### What do you know now that you wish you would have known when you first started the program?

- Bryan:** That the statistics homework assignments are meant to be challenging. You should work on them together with classmates instead of trying to figure out everything on your own.
- Sam:** Your thesis will take so much more time and effort than you ever imagined.
- Tim:** I wish I would have known how truly broad the field is so I could have picked a specific area of interest early on.
- Elisa:** How fast the program flies by. In just a blink of an eye the program is over, so cherish the time that you have with your cohort and soak up all the information you can.
- Mike:** I wish I would have known how quickly the program goes by. It feels like it just started yesterday.
- Jon:** That everything takes longer to do in graduate school, so planning accordingly is very important so you can get everything accomplished.



### What do you want to do when you graduate?

- Bryan:** I want to work as an HR Analyst, preferably in the software or technology industry.
- Sam:** I want to work as a consultant either internally to one organization (in an OD or training position) or externally (working for a consulting firm).
- Tim:** I want to find a job at either SpaceX or NASA doing about anything they will hire me to do!
- Elisa:** Two main things in no particular order: (1) Travel to another country and (2) find a job in which I can utilize the knowledge and skills I gained in the program. I wouldn't mind finding a job in another country either!
- Mike:** I'm planning on doing some traveling through Southeast Asia first, and then after that return to the real world and get a job!
- Jon:** I would like to work in the HR department of a growing organization, especially in the area of selection and training.

### What is the biggest piece of advice that you would give to someone who is just starting out in the program?

- Bryan:** Spend a lot of time on your thesis during the summer and winter breaks. It is much easier to make progress during the breaks when you don't have the pressing deadlines of your coursework to deal with.
- Sam:** Talk with the people in your cohort. Take advantage of being around so many budding I/O psychologists and discuss your thoughts, coursework related or not. Two years sounds like a long time at the beginning of the program, but it really flies by.
- Tim:** Choose a thesis topic you are truly interested in and start early.
- Elisa:** Set mini-deadlines regarding your thesis and do your best to stick with it.
- Mike:** Pick one day out of the week to dedicate to doing something you enjoy. It's easy to get bogged down in school and I think a weekly escape is the best prescription.
- Jon:** Never give up! There will be times when the program can be difficult and exhausting, but just remember to look at every opportunity as a chance to grow. In the end, you will be surprised at how much you can accomplish!

## Recent Thesis Defenses

- Bryan Aasen. "How Polychronicity Moderates Relationships between Work-Family Conflict and Work Outcomes." April 2014. Chair: J. Conte.
- Elisa Torres. "Followers' Characteristics as Predictors of Their Preference for Servant Leadership: A Followership Approach" July 2014. Chair: M. Ehrhart.

## The First Years' Experiences

By Sean Tang

Now that spring semester is coming to an end, the first year students are looking forward to the relatively relaxing summer ahead. The most important lesson we have all learned is that time is short. Whether it be the time we have left to finish a project or homework assignment or our time left here at SDSU, the first years have all learned how to cherish the time we have with each other. The amazing experiences that we've had in our first year, from group projects to seminars, will surely prepare us for the big picture goals that remain, the internship and the thesis. The knowledge that we have learned in our courses over the year will aid us in preparing our theses for proposal. The wisdom and the experiences that our guest speakers have shared with us has helped to shape our plans for the future (see the descriptions of this semester's speakers starting on page 5). Group projects with organizations, such as The UPS Store, Illumina, and Qualcomm, have provided us with invaluable applied experience, which will prove useful in our internships.

The group projects conducted throughout the course of the semester have given us applied qualitative experience with established organizations. The projects required that each team conduct focus groups and interviews with employees of various levels of the organization. This experience has taught us how to interact with employees at a company and how to present relevant information to executive members.

As each of the first year students have their sights set to propose in the next semester, we each have plans to obtain valuable work experience through internships with organizations like RQ Construction, Booz Allen Hamilton, and EdITS. These internships will allow us to utilize the skills we've learned regarding organizational and personnel psychology and data analysis.

As this semester comes to a close, and with internships and thesis writing quickly approaching, we are all looking forward to learning more about personnel psychology and program evaluation. With SIOP in Hawaii this year, none of the first years were able to attend; however, we are looking forward to attend the conference in Philadelphia this coming year. Also, we are all very excited to welcome the new incoming students and to share the knowledge and experiences that we have gained with these fresh minds.

## Visiting International Student: Lotte Holck

By Mike Kirkpatrick



### What is your home institution?

The Department of Organization at Copenhagen Business School, Denmark. I started my PhD fellow May 2012 and have one year left.

### What are your research interests?

Organizational diversity with a particular focus on how contextual antecedents and organizational structure – the organizational set-up, the spatial dimension, and institutional complexity – enable and constrain the room of maneuver for corporate diversity processes to unfold

### What were you looking forward to the most about coming here to SDSU to study?

The international research climate and especially working with researchers from the IIDO (Institute of Inclusiveness and Diversity in Organizations) of SDSU's Management Department. I am very inspired by their research on an inclusion framework for working with diversity in organizations. The US is 20 years ahead of

Denmark when it comes to working with and researching diversity, so we have so much to learn from you even though we have a very different history and institutional setting.

### What has been surprising or most shocking to you since being here?

That the city was so clean and well kept; it was a pleasure going to the beach with no trash and walking the inner city – all clean and neat. Secondly that San Diego is such a calm and peaceful city. We never got hassled, robbed or anything like that, and we felt very comfortable walking the streets in the evening. And thirdly the extreme friendliness that we have been met with. Our youngest did not speak English when we first arrived, and the way that the local school (Kate Sessions) embraced the challenge of two little Danish-speaking boys was simply amazing. After three weeks, they spoke English and were able to participate in regular 1st grade and kindergarten classes. Instead of perceiving it as an obstacle, the Danish boys were seen as a possibility to talk about Denmark and how people live in different countries in the world. We have so many good memories and good friends that we have to come back and visit.

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## SIOP Conference in Hawaii: Student Perspectives

*By Elisa Torres and Jon Hussey*

### **Elisa Torres:**

Even though this was my second year attending SIOP, I still felt as excited as if it were my first time. However, although Houston was nice, nothing beats mingling with researchers and practitioners in beautiful Hawaii! This time around, I was more focused and strategically planning sessions that I wanted to see to make sure I had time to network with various practitioners in the field (make sure to have business cards!). The key takeaway for me came from Tammy Allen's presidential speech, where she addressed the need for us as I/O psychologists to become united as a field and connect with others outside of our field. As I am currently on the job hunt, her message really resonated with me. It is our duty to inform others about how the skills we've developed through our training helps improve all aspects of organizational life. So, as a result of the conference, I am now committed and understand my role in bridging the scientist-practitioner gap but also to informing others how our training at SDSU makes us desirable in this ever-changing global organizational environment. All in all, SIOP once again proved to be an exciting and intellectually stimulating experience. If you are debating it, you should go...hope see you next year in Philly!



### **Jonathan Hussey:**

This was my very first trip to SIOP and I was very excited that it was in my home state of Hawaii. It was great to be able listen to all of the different speakers whose works I have read throughout my academic career. Being able to attend seminars that highlighted both sides of the scientific-practitioner relationship was enlightening and helped to open eyes to other venues of study in the field. Looking back on my time there, if there was one piece of advice I would give to first timers to the conference it would be to remember to pace yourself! At my first day of the conference I was so overly eager to attend as many seminars as possible that I had forgotten to eat! As all of you know, a empty stomach is never a good thing! Even with that incident, SIOP was a wonderful event and I would recommend all students and Alumni to attend SIOP in the future. I hope to be in attendance next year and hope to see you all in Philadelphia!

## Visiting International Student (continued from p. 3)

### **What did you like most or least about SDSU?**

I liked the openness, the friendliness, the diversity of the students, and the beautiful surroundings/buildings. The weather was always warm and good on campus – coming from a rainy Northern European country this is definitely a plus. The faculty and researchers took time to read through my work, meet up and give me great feedback. I really appreciated that. I don't have any critical comments about my stay at SDSU; even going there was easy with the local train.

### **What advice would you give to people studying abroad here for the program?**

Concentrate on the everyday life and save the vacation for later. You can always come back to California to do a round trip but to have an everyday life is a rare experience. And bringing children is the best way to get local friends and get a strong local network through the schools. My husband was a PTO volunteer, helping out the teachers every Friday, and that gave him a great experience. So get involved and participate in whatever local activities you can find, and you will be able to make friends with local American families.

## Spring APSA Speakers

By Sean Tang

### Bill Puchlevic: Former VP of HR at Amgen

Bill Puchlevic was the first APSA guest speaker of Spring 2014. Bill shared the wisdom he had acquired along his path to becoming the VP of HR at Amgen. Bill received his B.A. at Northwestern University and an MBA at Lake Forest College. His humble beginnings started at Abbott Laboratories where he gained over 17 years of HR experience across various roles, including being a member of the Clinical Chemistry team, responsible for human resource management. After leaving Abbott, Bill was recruited by Amgen during their startup phase. He remained at the organization for several years as the company began to grow very rapidly.



During his many years at Amgen, Bill worked with several different CEOs each with their own style of management. Bill began his time at Amgen as the head of Human Resources Management. He then had roles in other areas of the organization, such as the business review group and the operating committee. When Bill resigned in 1995, he was the VP of HR, a corporate officer, and the secretary to the compensation committee of the board of directors. However, following his retirement, Amgen retained Bill as a Organizational Development Consultant where he worked with the research and development team. Bill expressed that his most challenging and rewarding experience with Amgen was supporting organizational development as Amgen evolved from primarily a research organization to a nearly fully integrated bio-pharmaceutical enterprise that marketed products both in the US and internationally.

### Bill Macey: Founder and CEO of Valtera

Dr. Bill Macey was our second APSA speaker. Bill was the founder and former CEO of Valtera before it was acquired by CEB, where Bill is currently the Managing Director of the Global Research Office. Bill was former president of SIOP from 2001-2002. Most recently, he was the co-author with Dr. Mark Ehrhart and Dr. Ben Schneider of *Organizational Climate and Culture: An Introduction to Theory, Research, and Practice*. CEB provides advisory services to organizations, as well as data and talent analytics. Bill



Macey offered a significant amount of advice influenced by his experiences that will prove helpful when we complete the program. For example, Bill stressed the importance of following contemporary research. In an age where organizations are now looking to science to find sources of competitive advantage, keeping up with contemporary research is vital. Bill also suggested that presentation and writing skills are also key to successful career in I/O Psychology.

### Brandon Roberts: Lead Researcher for Qualcomm's Strategy Group

Brandon Roberts, the third APSA speaker, is a former Master's Student in the I/O Psychology program at San Diego State University and current Lead Researcher for Qualcomm's Strategy Group. While at SDSU, Brandon's research focused on the application of advanced psychometric and statistical techniques to the study of cross-cultural issues in the workplace. After graduating he continued to conduct research on similar topics at the University of Mannheim while working at BASF The Chemical Company in Mannheim, Germany. His work has been included in SIOP's Frontier Series and the Journal of Business & Psychology, among other publications. For the past 6 years he has worked at Qualcomm where he played an integral part in the creation of Qualcomm's Talent Analytics Team and served as the Lead Researcher. Today he serves as a Lead Researcher on Qualcomm's Strategy Group and works with a cross-functional team studying invention, collaboration, and multi-team systems. Brandon's job role as the Lead Researcher involves using data to find predictors that lead to an increased amount and quality of the inventions at Qualcomm.



## APSA Newsletter

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### Spring APSA Speakers (continued from p. 5)

#### Quotes from our speakers...

“Regardless of your success, always remember to stay humble.”

- Bill Puchlevic

“Spend time on small commitments.”

“Never say ‘No.’ Say, ‘Yes, but...’”

- Bill Macey

“Never turn down a meeting especially with people you don’t know.”

- Brandon Roberts

#### Publications

- Aarons, G. A., **Ehrhart, M. G.**, & **Farahnak, L. R.** (2014). The implementation leadership scale (ILS): Development of a brief measure of unit level implementation leadership. *Implementation Science*, 9, 45.
- Aarons, G. A., **Farahnak, L. R.**, & **Ehrhart, M. G.** (2014). Leadership and strategic organizational climate to support evidence-based practice implementation. In R. S. Beidas & P. C. Kendall (Eds.), *Dissemination and implementation of evidence-based practices in child and adolescent mental health* (pp. 82-97). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Aarons, G. A., **Ehrhart, M. G.**, **Farahnak, L. R.**, & **Sklar, M.**(2014). Aligning leadership across systems and organizations to develop a strategic climate for evidence-based practice implementation. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 35, 255-274.
- **Ehrhart, M. G.**, & Raver, J. L. (2014). The effects of organizational climate and culture on productive and counterproductive behavior. In B. Schneider & K. Barbera (Eds.), *The handbook of organizational climate and culture: Antecedents, consequences, and practice* (pp. 153-176). New York: Oxford University Press.
- **Hatrup, K.** (2014). Review of the Assess Expert System. In J. F. Carlson, K. f. Geisinger, & J. I. Johnson (Eds.), *The nineteenth mental measurements yearbook*. Lincoln, NE: Buros Institute of Mental Measurements.
- **Hatrup, K.** (2014). Review of the Mechanical Maintenance Trainee test. In J. F. Carlson, K. f. Geisinger, & J. I. Johnson (Eds.), *The nineteenth mental measurements yearbook*. Lincoln, NE: Buros Institute of Mental Measurements.
- **Kath, L. M.**, Stichler, J. F., **Ehrhart, M. G.**, & **Schultze, T. A.**(2013). Predictors and outcomes of nurse leader job stress experienced by AWHONN members. *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic, and Neonatal Nursing*, 42, E12-E25.
- Kempen, R., Pangert, B., **Hatrup, K.**, Mueller, K., & Joens, I. (in press). Beyond conflict: the role of life domain enrichment for expatriates. *International Journal of Human Resources Management*.
- Mueller, K., Straatmann, T., **Hatrup, K.**, & Jochum, M. (2014). Effects of personalized versus generic implementation of an intra-organizational online survey on psychological anonymity and response behavior: A field experiment. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 29, 169-181.
- Schneider, B., **Ehrhart, M. G.**, & Macey, W. H. (2013). Organizational climate and culture. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 64, 361-388.

## Alumni Spotlight: Alice Wastag

(Continued from page 1)

I was thrilled when I was able to join the Research and Development department at Denison in 2013. I have been in a Research Consultant role for the last year. In this role I continue to support survey projects as a member of project teams. I also support our clients with custom projects that include data analysis and literature reviews for a variety of topics. I love working at Denison and feel fortunate that I can continue to contribute to the growth of the company while developing my career in my area of interest. It's really difficult to just pick one thing. I know that I enjoy learning, helping clients and the people I work with. As Denison evolves and grows I am constantly exposed to new projects and new challenges.

### What do you enjoy most about your career?

I really enjoy talking with Denison's clients. My favorite client interactions are those where I've helped create clarity for or inspired the person on the other end. In addition, my coworkers are among the most talented, hardworking people I've ever known. I often think of the importance of the environment we are socialized in, and I'm so thankful to be in an environment where I have amazing role models to learn from.

### What aspects of your job do you find to be the most challenging?

The single most challenging thing about work for me was finding and maintaining a work and life balance. The business environment, much like school, is one where you can always be doing more and there are competing demands that can keep you working 24/7 if you let them. For many years I struggled to set boundaries with my work and this came at a cost to my personal well-being. I've become much better at leaving things unfinished and taking time for myself when I need it.

### What are some pieces of advice you can offer incoming graduate students?

*Embrace opportunities.* Looking back I know I passed up or didn't fully embrace experiences that could have helped me later in my career. I eventually had to have similar experiences anyway, so it probably would have been better to have them sooner in an environment designed for learning.

*Keep the big picture mind.* If I had to do it again I would take a moment before each assignment and ask myself, "what am I trying to get out of this?" and then focus on getting that outcome. When I was in school, my main objective was to be a good student and get every assignment done; however, I think I sometimes ended up losing the forest for the trees.

*Get as much experience in organizations as possible.* There are topics I learned about that I did not fully understand going through the program because I had not experienced them first hand. I think I would have benefited the most from working more before the program or doing the Master's program while working.

### Do you have any post graduation advice for the 2nd year students?

I would advise 2<sup>nd</sup> year student to be mindful of two things, their work-life balance and their career path. In order to find a balance I had to learn to manage my person preferences. I am the type of person who likes to have all my work done before I "play." This helped me get far in the short term, but burned me out within five years. I have learned to become more comfortable making time for myself even when there was more work to be done.

I would also encourage people to be thinking critically about their career path every 1-2 years to make sure they are on the right track. It's easy to get set on one track and find yourself several years down a path you may not have intended to be on. Actively managing your career is essential.

**Don't forget to join the  
APSA LinkedIn Group.  
For more information,  
contact  
Dr. Lisa Kath**



**SOCIETY for  
INDUSTRIAL and  
ORGANIZATIONAL  
PSYCHOLOGY**

SCIENCE FOR A SMARTER WORKPLACE

**It is never too early to start planning for SIOP 2015!  
April 23-25, 2015  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

## Announcements

- **Bryan Aasen** was the recipient of the Department of Psychology's Becky Award for the best thesis of the year.
- **Olivia Bustamante** was recently married to Matt Gamber. She is also the Manager of Talent and OD at Taylor Morrison (correction from Spring 2013).
- **Sean Foley** is the Director of Talent at diviantArt.
- **Zack Girgis** was recently engaged to his girlfriend, Nancy.
- **Bruce Griffiths** is now an adjunct faculty member for both the UCSD CES EPSE and LAMP certificate programs. His son, Dustin, is an SDSU undergraduate and is pursuing I/O psychology.
- **Lisa Kath** was recently elected to be the next president of the Society of Occupational Health Psychology. She will also be taking a sabbatical for the 2014-2015 academic year to work with the nursing research team at Sharp Healthcare's metropolitan campus in Kearny Mesa.
- **Jacob Mraz** is now the Recruitment and Training Coordinator for the Treasure Island Job Corps in San Francisco.
- **Fiona Nguyen** is now working with the Mergers and Acquisitions Team at Twitter HQ in San Francisco.
- **Melissa Oates** was recently promoted to Director of Programs and Assessments at TalentSmart, and also became engaged to Andy Cutting.
- **Lindsay Palmer** was recently promoted from Analyst II to Analyst III within the County of San Diego.
- **Bahareh (Berry) Soltani** is now a Consultant, Custom Solutions SHL Talent Measurement at CEB.

## Presentations

- Aarons, G. A., **Ehrhart, M. G.**, Hysong, S., Weaver, S., & Weiner, B. (2014, May). *New opportunities in implementation science and practice for I/O psychologists*. Panel presented at the 29th annual conference of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Honolulu, HI.
- **Conte, J. M.** (2014, May). Invited presentation on panel entitled *IGNITE and Discuss: Perspectives on High Potential* (Chair: N. Ginther). Paper presented at the 29th Annual Conference of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Honolulu, HI.
- **Conte, J. M.**, Heffner, T. S., **Roesch, S. C.**, & **Aasen, B.** (2014, May). *A person-centric investigation of personality, attrition, and performance*. Paper presented at the 29th Annual Conference of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Honolulu, HI. *Featured as a Top-Rated Poster at the Conference.*
- Dean, M. A., **Conte, J. M.**, & Groover, M. (2014, May). *Consider the source: An examination of referrers in employee referrals*. Paper presented at the 29th Annual Conference of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Honolulu, HI.
- Farahnak, L. R., **Ehrhart, M. G.**, Aarons, G. A. (2014, May) *The influence of transformational leadership and attitudes on implementation success*. Paper presented at the 29th Annual Conference of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Honolulu, HI.

# 2014 Graduation Ceremony



**Above Left:** Bryan Aasen and Rashmi Risbud (M.A. student) before the Psychology Awards Ceremony

**Above Right:** Students are honored with diplomas while being congratulated by members of the Psychology faculty

**Left:** Master's students getting hooded by their advisors at the Psychology Awards Ceremony

**Below:** Bryan Aasen poses after the Psychology Awards Ceremony



# APSA Spring BBQ



**Left:** Mike, Bryan and Sam

**Right:** Jon and Tim



**Left:** Alumna Bri Hayes and coworker

**Right:** Alumni Melissa, Ashlee, and Ian



**Right (Worm's Eye View):** Dr. Mark Ehrhart

**Below Right (Worm's Eye View):** Dr. Lisa Kath

**Below:** First year and second year students plus incoming student, Casey.

