

Alumni Spotlight: Eileen Azzara

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

I attended from 1999 to 2002. Right after finishing the program I went to work at Southern California Edison until 2007. While there I worked in test development, executive development, and learning & development. Some examples of the work I did include performing test development for jobs ranging from electricians to analysts to chemists, participating in leadership assessment centers, designing and supporting ethics training, managing data and programs for succession planning and executive development, and creating and implementing surveys. I left SCE in 2008 to do external consulting with my husband, who also has an I/O background and has his own company, People Talent Solutions. In that role I did product development and consulting on 360 feedback, performance management, engagement/exit surveys, and succession planning. I returned to SCE a few years later where I did more assessment work, then transitioned to talent planning, human capital reporting, and performance management. Last year I left SCE and am back at PTS. Our focus is now on talent management technology for small and medium size businesses, though we still have a lot of consulting work as well. Currently I am marketing our succession planning software, consulting on a client project for 360 feedback and development planning, and designing content for a new technology product we'll be announcing soon.



By Justine Zimiles

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A Reflection on their Time: Second Year Experiences

What has been your favorite part of this program?

- Sean:* All the applied work. The projects with local organizations and the internship show you that the things you learn in your classes actually have an impact on organizations. And, of course, the friendships I've made.
- Zach:* 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.
- Lisa:* One of my favorite parts of the program was the chance to apply the skills and knowledge that we gained in class to our applied class projects. Those projects really helped solidify the topics from class and were great learning opportunities (as well as resume builders).
- Josh:* Conducting in-class PowerPoint presentations to apply what we learned from weekly readings and discussions. The feedback from our professors and classmates on the strengths/weaknesses of our presentations was especially useful.
- Michael:* My favorite part of the program was the emphasis on statistics. I feel like a good understanding of statistics isn't something that I'll learn on the job, but will be something that will set me apart once I have a job.

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Additional Information:

- THE STUDENT EDITORS OF THIS ISSUE WERE JUSTINE ZIMILES, NICK ESLINGER, JOSH CARLSEN, & SEAN TANG

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

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Second Year Experiences (continued from page 1)

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

- Sean:** That your thesis will push you to your limits, both intellectually and emotionally.
- Zach:** Assignments take longer than you think.
- Lisa:** Grad school goes by fast, so make sure you take the time to reflect on it and enjoy it while you are there!
- Josh:** That finishing your thesis before the end of your second year is possible, but it takes planning, perseverance, and commitment to the goals you have set during the process. Also, keep in regular contact with your mentor, and listening to their feedback throughout the process helps a lot, too.
- Michael:** What you get out of the program is what you put in. My advice is to dive in head first to ensure that your learning experience is rich and meaningful.



What do you want to do when you graduate?

- Sean:** I would love to be an HR Analyst working specifically in selection for a large organization.
- Zach:** I'm looking to travel for a bit and experience San Diego a bit more before entering the "real world."
- Lisa:** I will be working as an instructional designer when I graduate, and am excited for this new opportunity. Eventually, I think my career may evolve into a leadership development and training role, but for now I am glad for the chance to further my training development skills doing instructional design.
- Josh:** I'm starting an internship this summer working with a competency tracking system and I would be interested in pursuing additional work in this area once the internship is over.
- Michael:** I want to work in talent management (selection, training, and development).

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

- Sean:** Forget about grades and master the material. You'll find that you're more likely to retain the things you learn this way.
- Zach:** Don't trust electronics. Even if you double check your laptop, projector, printer, etc., have a backup plan.
- Lisa:** Realize that you own your own experience in graduate school, and that what you put into the program will equate to what you get out of it. Make sure to embrace the opportunities that come your way, and realize that the work you do is helping you to grow and develop, so focus on maintaining a positive attitude about it.
- Josh:** Manage your time well, work hard, and try to have an open mind to different topic areas during your two years here in the program. Also, make sure to get to the beach and have fun when you can—it helps the stress!

Publications

- Aarons, G. A., Ehrhart, M. G., Farahnak, L. R., & Hurlburt, M. S. (2015). Leadership and organizational change for implementation (LOCI): A randomized mixed method pilot study of a leadership and organization development intervention for evidence-based practice implementation. *Implementation Science, 10*, 11.
- Ehrhart, M. G., Aarons, G. A., & Farahnak, L. R. (2015). Going above and beyond for implementation: The development and validity testing of the Implementation Citizenship Behavior Scale (ICBS). *Implementation Science, 10*, 65.
- Ehrhart, M. G., & Kuenzi, M. (2015). Organizational climate in the work setting. In J. D. Wright (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of the social & behavioral sciences* (2nd ed., Vol. 17, pp. 327–333). Oxford, UK: Elsevier.
- 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.

First Year Experiences

By Nick Eslinger

Summer is here and our first year of graduate school is over—50% of the program complete already. It seems like just yesterday we were at the welcome orientation listening to Dr. Ehrhart's esoteric jokes about statistics, and now, after nine months of PSY670 with Dr. Sadler, we finally understand the punchlines.

We would be remiss if we did not thank our wonderful instructors who made our first year truly worthwhile. To Professors Ashworth, Conte, Hattrup, and Sadler, thank you for our time together. We learned a great amount of KSAOs from each of you that we will each take forward in the program and our careers. To our advisors, thank you for your guidance and insight. Also, thank you for believing we can do great things. As we bare down on our theses this summer, we will need you more than ever. So thank you in advance for your time and patience this summer...even though you are not getting paid for it.

Perhaps the most significant event for us this summer is our internship. Our cohort is very fortunate to have Ms. Louis as our internship coordinator and with her constant assistance we have each earned an internship at a great company. Some of the companies we will be interning at include Rady's Children's Hospital, Sony, Center for Creative Leadership, and several other local organizations. We truly are excited to apply the KSAOs we've learned in the classroom over the past two semesters toward practical work experience. Being a practitioner for a few months will certainly be enjoyable and beneficial for all of us.

Finally, we would like to congratulate the second years for finishing the program and thank them for their friendship, wisdom, and encouragement to get through the first year. We could not have done it without you guys. Best of luck to each of you as you begin your next endeavor. To the incoming cohort, welcome to the team! We will be there for you as our second years were for us. Have a great summer everyone!

Visiting International Student: Teresa Bartsch

By Josh Carlsen



What is your home institution?

The wonderful University of Osnabrück in Germany.

What are your research interests?

My master's program back home is called "Cross-Cultural Psychology" and within this program, I am concentrating on Intercultural Business Psychology, specifically on work-private life enrichment and cultural trainings.

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

Escaping the cold winter in Germany :) I was also excited to meet locals and international students to work on projects together and see how psychology is taught and applied here as opposed to how I studied it.

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

I guess the amount of assignments you have to complete for class every week is something Europeans have to get used to.

What do you like most about San Diego?

The fantastic weather, the palm trees, the beach, Mexican food everywhere, the beautiful campus, friendly and outgoing San Diegans and my Debby family (the people I live with) who make me feel at home here in San Diego.

What were the favorite places you have visited in the US?

San Francisco and Yosemite National Park.

What do you like to do in your free time?

Travel, go camping and hiking, meet people from all over the world, read on my kobo, go to the beach, ride my bike (I live in Münster, the bike-capital of Germany), dance, and spend time with friends and family.

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

Don't be shy, express your opinion, and find out how studying psychology at SDSU is different and similar to how you know it—talk to people about it and learn from each other's perspectives.

What do you like most about SDSU?

The wide variety of subjects, resources available to students, the various campus events, and the welcoming atmosphere.

Spring APSA Speakers

By Sean Tang and Josh Carlsen

Matt O’Connell: Executive VP and Co-founder of Select International

Dr. Matthew O’Connell is the executive vice president and co-founder of Select International and a managing director at Get Abby, which is a Virtual Private Assistant company that combines natural language learning with artificial intelligence. He is a leader in the field of selection system design and psychometric testing with close to 20 years of experience. While the director of research and development at Select International, he designed tools for assessment and selection systems used by over 500 organizations worldwide, such as Goodyear, Merck, GM, Toyota, Verizon Wireless, John Deer, and GE.



Dr. O’Connell is also an Adjunct Professor of Psychology at San Diego State University and is involved in applied research as well. He is a regular presenter at professional conferences, and he has authored or co-authored over 200 articles or book chapters on the topics of selection and assessment, leadership, work teams, and safety in many well known psychology and business journals. He has also won awards from the Academy of Management and the Society for Industrial/Organizational Psychology for his professional endeavors. Fluent in both Japanese and Spanish, he received his M.A. and Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from the University of Akron and his B.A. in Psychology from Earlham College.

During Dr. O’Connell’s presentation, he showcased some of the products that have made Select International one of the top firms in personnel selection. Dr. O’Connell also showed us how these materials are used, interpreted, and scored in organizations. In addition to these selection tools, Dr. O’Connell discussed the value of the M.S. in I/O Psychology and some fields in which this degree would fit best.

Jon Kochik: Talent Development Manager at San Diego Gas & Electric



Jon Kochik currently leads the Talent Development team at San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) in the design and implementation of enterprise-wide blended learning programs that assist employees and leaders in support of strategic priorities. Jon has also worked as a Senior Organizational Developmental advisor at SDG&E and as a learning and talent development manager while previously working at AMN Healthcare. In this latter role, he led enterprise-wide talent management programs which included job analysis, competency modeling, performance management optimization, and workforce management.

Jon credits his success in these roles to the training he received while in the I/O master’s program at SDSU, especially regarding the topic areas of organizational climate and culture, as well as applied projects in the advanced personnel psychology class. Jon also participated in the foreign exchange program at the University of Mannheim during his first summer of the master’s program. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from Penn State University, and a Master of Science degree in industrial/organizational psychology from San Diego State University.

“Culture is what people do when no one is looking.”
- Jon Kochik

Jon gave great advice regarding job hunting and interviewing during his presentation. More specifically, he mentioned how the projects completed during our seminars would serve as great work samples that can be presented to a potential employer during an interview. Jon also discussed the skills that helped him most in his roles that complement the skills developed in the program, such as public speaking and Excel knowledge and skills.

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**Don’t forget to join the APSA LinkedIn Group.
For more information, contact
Dr. Lisa Kath (lisa.kath@sdsu.edu)**

Spring APSA Speakers (continued from page 4)

Ryan Mills: Survey Lead for Qualcomm's Talent Analytics Team

Ryan Mills has been a member of Qualcomm's Talent Analytics team for over four years. In his current role as Survey Lead, he manages the team's over-arching survey strategy and works with senior leaders to make data-driven decisions. He received an M.S. in I/O Psychology from San Diego State University and graduated Magna Cum Laude from UNLV with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology. He has been happily married for 10 years and has two kids. In his free time, Ryan thinks about all the fun things he would do if he had more time.



"When asked to describe my degree, I say that I have a Master's in Critical Thinking."

- Ryan Mills

Ryan offered several tips for second year students who will be entering the job market and for first year students who may be looking for an internship. More specifically, Ryan emphasized the value of charisma and being unique as organizations today will be looking for applicants who can bring something new to the table. Ryan suggests that during the interview, ideal applicants will demonstrate natural conversation expertise, resilience, and creativity. As for those still in the program Ryan also offered kind words of wisdom or in his words, "Unsolicited Advice." Ryan stressed the importance of developing versatility by acquiring skills in several different areas. Additionally, he suggested not complaining about the projects you receive as they may open doors for other opportunities. Lastly, Ryan emphasized the importance of learning the values of the company you work at and excelling in the work you are hired to do, as you are evaluated from day one.

Announcements

- **Bryan Aasen** was promoted to an Analyst position on the Global People Analytics team at Walmart.
- **Sam Courtney** is now a Digital Analyst at Mirum Agency.
- **Mike Kirkpatrick** is now an Institutional Researcher at National University.
- **Guido Makransky** is now an Associate Professor at the Institute of Psychology at the University of Southern Denmark.

Presentations

- Aarons, G. A., **Ehrhart, M. G.**, **Farahnak, L. R.**, & Finn, N. (2014, December). *Implementation leadership: Confirmatory factor analysis and supervisor-clinician discrepancy in ratings on the Implementation Leadership Scale (ILS)*. Paper presented at the 7th Annual NIH Conference on the Science of Dissemination and Implementation, Bethesda, MD.
- **Kath, L. M.**, & McGonagle, A. K. (2015, May). *Introduction to multilevel modeling*. Workshop presented at the Work, Stress, and Health conference, Atlanta, GA.
- Moss, J. J., **Kath, L. M.**, McGonagle, A. K., & Bauerle, T. J. (2015, May). *The effects of agreement and discrepancy between espoused and enacted safety norms on safety outcomes*. Interactive panel paper presented at the Work, Stress and Health Conference, Atlanta, GA.
- Raver, J. L., **Ehrhart, M. G.**, & Lim, B. C. (2015, April). Incivility norms and the pursuit of empowerment and cultural alignment. In M. G. Gonzalez-Morales (Chair), *Context matters: New perspectives in the study of incivility*. Symposium conducted at the 30th annual conference of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Philadelphia, PA.

Alumni Spotlight: Eileen Azzara (continued from page 1)

What do you enjoy most about your career?

I've always liked how our field allows us to be both creative and analytical at the same time. Now that "big data" is such a hot topic, there's a greater opportunity to apply both at the same time. In my previous roles the focus tended to be on one or the other. There also seems to be more opportunity for creativity with respect to technology, and I am enjoying being applying that to my work.

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

The biggest challenge I am experiencing here as well as in the past in an internal role is information overload. There is so much material to keep up with—some of it is worthy of my time and some of it is not....but that doesn't necessarily mean it's not fun! I'm working on prioritizing the good stuff.

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

When you write your thesis it may seem like torture, but know that the development you will gain in your writing skills will be a great benefit to your career. I've been able to broaden my exposure and experience because often I was the only one who was able to put some crazy or complex idea into writing that people could actually understand, and writing a thesis definitely contributed to that.

Are there certain skills you find most helpful in your field?

Consulting skills: I regularly find myself returning to the foundations of research methods in consulting clients to help them first identify a research question (i.e., define the expected outcome) before designing and implementing a solution.

Project management: When you take on a full time role whether internal or external, you will likely be contributing to some large HR initiative. It is one thing to have expertise in the content you are designing, but you also need to be realistic in considering the operational aspects of the situation... what resources will be needed and how much they cost, how things will really take, who needs to be involved, etc.

Relationship building: If your clients don't like you, they are not going to want to deal with you!



It is never too early to start planning for **SIOP 2016!**
April 14-16, 2016
Anaheim, California

Recent Thesis Defenses

- **Josh Carlsen.** "An Investigation of Work Engagement as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Personality and Work Outcomes." April 2015. Chair: J. Conte.
- **Mike Kirkpatrick.** "The Impact of Advertising Used Cars as 'Smoke-Free' on Their Resale Value in Different Markets in the U.S. and Canada." May 2015. Chair: G. Matt.
- **Lisa Wright.** "The Role of Transformational Leadership Consensus and Innovation Climate Strength in Predicting Employee Attitudes." May 2015. Chair: M. Ehrhart.

2015 Graduation Ceremony



Top Left: Sam Courtney and Mike Kirkpatrick join the hood

Top Right: Sam Courtney and Dr. Mark Ehrhart

Left: Mike Kirkpatrick and Dr. Georg Matt

Bottom Left: Sam Courtney gets hooded by Dr. Mark Ehrhart

Bottom Right: Mike Kirkpatrick and Dr. Georg Matt celebrate



APSA Spring BBQ



Left: Current and incoming students, faculty, and their families

Right: Dr. Mark Ehrhart, Dr. Michelle Dean, and Dr. Jeff Conte



Left: Dr. Kate Hattrup, Zach, Dr. Lisa Kath, and Julia

Right: Emily, Casey, Sean, and Nick



Right: Incoming students

Bottom Right: Second year students and Liam Petty

Bottom Left: First year students

