

# APSA NEWSLETTER

A publication of the SDSU Applied Psychology Student Association

## Fall 2003

### Peering into the Mind of a 1<sup>st</sup> Year I/O Student

By Erica Anderson, Jon Kochik  
& C.J. Mohammed

As my first semester in the Applied Psychology program draws to an end (and so does my tolerance for Starbucks coffee), there have been many ups and downs that should be duly noted as great learning experiences. Whether they have led to sleepless nights spent in front of my computer or countless, hourless days in the basement of the Life Sciences Building, my first-year experiences have turned out to be pretty remarkable:

While traversing this unknown terrain called grad school, I realize that ours is a program that encourages camaraderie and community. When stressing over the intricacies and nuances of a statistics exam, there are few things more comforting than a group study session to reinforce these far-out concepts. I realize that by helping to explain the ideas to others, it solidifies them in my head as well. This is a common theme shared by the students in our program and department and I think that it shows a mature attitude and outlook on learning.

Leading discussion in Organizational Psychology also serves as a source of stress among 1<sup>st</sup> years, but once we get started, we know that our cohorts will respond with the perfect mix of personal experience and inquisitiveness that will enlighten us all. And, all is wonderful when you hear the knock, knock, knocking of approval to signify a well-presented lecture. The viewpoints of our international students reinforce the feelings of community. Not only do they provide insight into interesting German customs, but also they are an excellent source of cross-cultural viewpoints in industrial/organizational psychology that we truly treasure.

Becoming a TA is definitely the best way to get over your fears of public speaking! I didn't think I could ever lecture to a group of students for 50 minutes. But twice a week, I find myself at the front of the classroom, staring at a bunch of students who are eager and willing to learn. Or at least they *seem* that way. Sometimes they just stare back at me, open-mouthed, eyes glazed over, waiting for class to end.

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### Dear SDSU Applied Psychology Program Alumni, Professors, and Students,

We hope this newsletter finds you healthy, happy, and spreading the joy of Industrial/Organizational Psychology throughout this winter season. As this is our inaugural newsletter, there is much to discuss and much to plan for the year 2004. One of the issues widely discussed amongst the current SDSU Applied Psychology Program students has been the lack of alumni involvement and communication between the SDSU alumni, staff and current Applied Program student body.

This newsletter is the perfect opportunity to solicit information from the San Diego State Applied Psychology Program's alumni in order to develop and maintain a relationship with the current SDSU Applied Psychology Program students. In addition, this forum provides SDSU students and alumni with the opportunity to create a cohesive network that can help develop career relationships, program mentors, and sustained connections throughout the community.

An Alumni Association can provide SDSU with a great way to stay in touch with fellow alumni, not only across counties and states, but across disciplines as well.

We look forward to your input and future involvement in the SDSU Applied Psychology Alumni Association.

Thank you for your support.

Kristin Carpenter  
Class of 2004  
[kktc123@hotmail.com](mailto:kktc123@hotmail.com)

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### Additional Information

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

# APSA NEWSLETTER – Fall 2003

## Speakers Corner

By Melinda Boyd

The APSA committee sponsors a monthly speaker series for students and faculty. Past speakers have included alumni, local entrepreneurs and well-known researchers. We welcome ideas for future speakers!

Fall Speakers:

*Nancy Befort*

*Resource Manager at Wind River Systems*

Nancy spoke about her experiences conducting job analyses and performance management systems she has developed for her job. Her discussion included both practical and important insights into applying what is learned in the classroom on the job.

*Travis Bradberry*

*President of TalentSmart, Inc*

A publishing and organization development consulting firm with a focus on emotional intelligence. Travis discussed his experiences transitioning from graduate school to an independent consultant.

*David Morris*

*Sempra Energy People Research*

David discussed his career progression at Sempra from an intern to an Advisor. He reminded everyone how important it is to complete your thesis to continue moving forward in your career.

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## What is Program Evaluation???

By Bri Allgire

Although it may come as a surprise to many current or former SDSU students, there is more than one option when it comes to choosing a concentration for a master's in applied psychology.

If you have an affinity for applying the principles that you learn in basic psychology research to real-life situations and you have an interest in psychological assessment, then program evaluation utilizes those very skills! Program evaluation assesses the outcomes of everything from health and human service organizations and educational intervention programs to community service and non-profit organizational programs.

For example, a few of the research projects in the area of program evaluation that are currently being conducted by faculty member Dr. Georg Matt include everything from re-evaluation of a behavior

questionnaire and examination of the processes involved in responding to survey items to evaluation of the effectiveness of an community youth counseling training program.

Program evaluation allows students to use the skills that they learn in psychological assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of and make suggestions for improvement of real programs in the community. What makes program evaluation so special? Psychology cannot get much more applied than program evaluation. When students assess the effectiveness of an existing program, the future and direction of real organizations and programs are at stake.

The skills learned in program evaluation can be used in many different fields, especially in industrial/organizational psychology. If you would like more information on program evaluation, please visit the following websites:

Basic Guide to Program Evaluation:

[http://www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn/fnl\\_eval.htm](http://www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm)

American Evaluation Association

<http://www.eval.org/>

American Productivity and Quality Center

<http://www.apqc.org/portal/apqc/site?path=root>

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## Interview with a Faculty Member: Markus Held

I recently had the opportunity to meet and interview Markus Held, a visiting professor from Germany. I learned some interesting background information on why Markus is currently at San Diego State University, and what he plans to do upon his return to Germany.

-Kristen Miller

K: "What made you decide to travel to San Diego from Germany?"

M: "Two years ago I visited San Diego in May to get an idea of what the exchange program might be like. I thought San Diego presented the whole package; great university, faculty and students."

K: "What did you do in Germany?"

M: "I was a graduate student working on my Ph.D. on intranet acceptance in Mannheim. I also taught I/O classes."

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## Exchange This!!

### Part 1 of an Ongoing Series on the SDSU-Mannheim Exchange Program

By Christopher Stubbs

Graduate school is a time to learn through experience. What better way to experience than to immerse yourself in another culture and gain another perspective on things. The University of Mannheim and San Diego State University entered into an exchange agreement in 2002 for just that reason – to provide faculty and students an opportunity to experience another perspective. This program originated with the Applied Psychology Group at SDSU and Mannheim, but is technically open to all students of each university. At the time of this writing two MS students and one professor from San Diego State – Benjamin Ingram, Guido Makransky, and Dr. Keith Hatstrup – have flown off to Mannheim as part of this program. To date, four Mannheim students – Anke Roemer, Julia Braeutigam, Eva von Rennenkampff, and Leander Dehm – and one professor – Markus Held – have graced the San Diego campus. It appears this program is off to a great start.

Interviews with participants and administrators of this exchange have generated a strong consensus about the motivation for and benefits of the exchange experience as well as challenges that inherently accompany such an endeavor. Growth – personal, academic, and professional – is the number one reason why this exchange was established by the Applied Psychology Group and sought by participants. All involved perceived seeing new places, meeting people, and learning as the grandest of benefits as well as part of the challenge they faced. Improving language skills, understanding the research and teaching practices as well as the politics of the exchange country, and overcoming the bureaucratic and logistical obstacles such as paperwork, testing, room, board, and transportation were identified as important growth experiences.

Memorable events abound for exchange participants. The Mannheim students had especially fond memories from Melinda Boyd's party at the beginning of this fall semester. They were pleasantly surprised that everybody knew who they were and engaged them in quite vigorous conversation. This helped to make them feel welcome as part of the Applied Psychology Group at SDSU. For that they were quite thankful. The barbecue at Dr. Georg Matt's house was the most memorable program-related experience thus far for Markus Held. This memory pops out for him because of the level of

interaction between faculty and students. According to him, in Mannheim professors would not invite students to their house – there is a social separation between the teacher and the student. He will additionally remember his trip to New York City during the early fall and particularly seeing Bright Lights Big City at the Guggenheim Museum. He just happened to attend a performance where the author and producer were providing introductions. As for the SDSU contingent at Mannheim, Guido Makransky identified three most memorable experiences. Not surprisingly, attending the Oktoberfest in Munich was one of these. He spent two nights sleeping in a tent to get to the Oktoberfest tent on time. There is not enough space to go into detail, but let it suffice to say that Guido really appreciates the condensed cultures of Europe. Fifteen Euros for a train and he was in Prague. Based on the recommendation of a stranger, he traveled to Karlsbad "where rich Russians go to spa." Quick trips on weekends seem to be the norm for him.

Advice for future exchangers was brief and to the point. The most important was to obtain all the information you can before the exchange. This includes learning the language, culture, procedures at the host school, and understanding all the challenges involved. The richest source of information would be other exchange participants, but newspapers, magazines, and websites can provide quite important information as well. Secondly, spend time preparing before you depart. This will allow for a richer exchange experience. Anke mentioned having a host-country roommate would have been a benefit. This definitely requires advanced preparation. Arriving early to settle in an apartment would be advantageous as well.

Overall, the exchange program is off to a great start and promises to provide opportunities for growth to all who wish to participate for years to come. All participants expressed that they would recommend this experience to everybody. There is much to learn and experience through exchange. It isn't easy, but it is worth it. Anke, Eva, and Julia offered assistance to anybody interested in going to Mannheim. Their e-mail addresses are

Anke: [ambercalifornia@web.de](mailto:ambercalifornia@web.de)

Eva: [eva.rennenkampff@web.de](mailto:eva.rennenkampff@web.de)

Julia: [juliabraeutigam@web.de](mailto:juliabraeutigam@web.de)

Additional information about this exchange program can be found on the exchange program website:

<http://www.uni-mannheim.de/fakul/sowi/sdsu-um/>.

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## *Interview continued from Page 2*

K: “*What is your current position here at San Diego State?*”

M: “I am an adjunct faculty member. I teach two classes a week, Psychology 700 (Organizational Technology) and Psychology 319 (Introduction to I/O Psychology). My schedule is pretty flexible, and I am able to find time to work on wrapping up my Ph.D. work.”

K: “*What do you enjoy most about your career? What parts are most challenging?*”

M: “Besides the perfect climate? I enjoy working on scientific projects and establishing good relationships with other faculty and students. The most challenging aspect of coming to San Diego has been teaching two classes in English. The texts are very different in Germany than they are in the U.S., so it took me a while to get acquainted with the style in order to prepare for each class I taught.”

K: “*What personal qualities, knowledge & skills are needed for your success?*”

M: “In terms of being an I/O Psychology visiting professor, I am open to new experiences and I enjoy learning. I obviously have to stay current with the knowledge in the technological field, so continuous learning is important.”

K: “*What is the current employment outlook for your field?*”

M: “It is quite different than it was four years ago, where everyone found employment straight out of university. Now the economy is slower and there are fewer positions available. If I go on to be a professor of I/O psychology, I will be 40 years old in Germany before I am able to apply for a full professorship. The system is different there than it is in the U.S.”

We wish Markus the best of luck in completing his Ph.D. and being successful in the field!

## *1st Year continued from Page 1*

However, when they're attentive and full of questions, I feel like I'm actually having an impact on them. For a first-year student, teaching isn't just lecturing for an hour and grading papers; there's the constant interaction with students, the ever-pressing need to improve your methods, and the constant fear of sounding like you don't know what you're talking about. Even though teaching requires effort...and a whole *lot* of patience... I'm glad I received the opportunity to start off my first year as a TA.

Many months ago I filled out a form ranking the top three professors that I would like for my mentor. Back then I wasn't quite sure what this mentorship would entail; all I knew was that I should choose someone whose work I found interesting, especially since I would be working in their research lab for the next two years. What I have come to find is that my mentor is like my sensei matched to me so that I may conquer my opponent otherwise known as “Thesis.” When I throw out lofty, romanticized thesis ideas, my mentor listens patiently and brings me back from La La Land to remind me that a longitudinal study is not ideal if I wish to graduate in two years. Then my mentor kindly reminds me that I will be analyzing my own data; consequently, I have decided to drop my number of independent variables down to a single digit number. Instead of attacking the thesis topic with flailing punches and kicks, my mentor trains me to attack piece by piece. Uppercut – what constructs do I find interesting? Jab – do these constructs relate to any measurable phenomena? Cross – in what population can I measure this relationship? Hook – is there substantial literature on this topic? After many punches with my mentor, I have my thesis question and am feeling confident that I will be victorious in my battle. I have a long journey ahead of me and am relieved that I am not going it alone. Particularly since my mentor hasn't trained my kicks yet, shall we start with a little roundhouse?

As the semester ascends closer to its pinnacle, and we experience new levels of highs and lows, we can rest assured that we will not be alone. Whether we are confused about administrative procedures or seeking a fresh viewpoint on our assignments, a fresh smile will be right around the corner. So bring on the second semester – we're ready!