

## The Beginning of a Journey: First Year Interviews

By Ashlee Asgharzadeh



### Mary Yama

**Hometown:** Clinton, NJ

**I was attracted to SDSU because:** I live in, and love, San Diego. I was in luck that SDSU has a great I/O program!

**I/O interests:** Leadership and employee wellness

**You know you're in grad school when:** The work day isn't 9-5 Mon-Fri because you always have things you should be doing.

**In my free time I like to:** Spend time outdoors and being active, write, and try out every restaurant in this city. I'm a big foodie.

**One thing that's interesting about me is:** I decided to move to San Diego on a whim and bought a one-way ticket from the east coast to California few weeks later. I didn't know anyone in this city, didn't have a job lined up, and came with only two suitcases, my Chihuahua, and enough savings to live off of for a few months. I love the challenge and adventure of putting myself in a completely new place where I need to create an entirely new network and learn to adapt on my own. I find it freeing and refreshing to step out of my comfort zone.

### Bahareh "Berry" Soltani

**Hometown:** Los Angeles, CA

**I was attracted to SDSU because:** I'm an AZTEC FOR LIFE! And because I knew I had a great fit with the faculty and research at the University!

**I/O interests:** Diversity training, organizational citizenship behavior

**You know you're in grad school when:** You consider caffeine as a major food group

**In my free time I like to:** Spend time with friends, go to Aztec sporting events, explore San Diego, and go to Trivia Tuesday at Woodstocks!

**One thing that's interesting about me is:** I studied abroad in Greece during my undergraduate studies!



### Lauren Dlugosz

**Hometown:** East Haddam, CT and Stevenson Ranch, CA

**I was attracted to SDSU because:** Research being conducted by faculty, emphasis on research and application, and I didn't want to leave San Diego

**I/O interests:** Leadership development, organizational change and implementation, and organizational climate

**My favorite part about living in San Diego:** There are so many things to do and diverse neighborhoods to explore

**You know you're in grad school when:** You are no longer happy when Friday comes around—you actually wish there was a 6<sup>th</sup> weekday.

**One thing that's interesting about me is:** I almost died from Scarlet Fever when I was two.

### Additional Information:

- THE STUDENT EDITORS OF THIS ISSUE WERE FIONA NGUYEN, JACOB MRAZ, AND MELISSA OATES
- PHOTOS PROVIDED BY DR. L.KATH, R.PAYNE, M.OATES, AND O.BUSTAMANTE

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 [lkath@sciences.sdsu.edu](mailto:lkath@sciences.sdsu.edu)

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## Internship Experiences

By Renee Payne

According to the students, the opportunity to work at an internship is one of the most valuable aspects that the M.S. program offers. It gives them opportunities to not only apply what they have learned in their courses, but to also face new, unexpected challenges. In the past year, students have interned at a variety of organizations while some are still continuing their internships at places such as the San Diego Public Utilities Department (SDPUD), Organization Systems International (OSI), The Foster Mobley Group, The Boys and Girls Club of San Dieguito, and RQ Construction.

The internships require students to engage in a variety of tasks and duties, including creating performance appraisals, analyzing data from engagement surveys and 360-degree feedback, updating job descriptions, and working on leadership development programs. Additionally, the students participate in a variety of other tasks that keep them interested and involved in multiple areas. Melissa Oates, who is still working at SDPUD, has gained experience in areas such as improving employee safety and wellness, developing an incentive program, and leading focus groups. Olivia Bustamante, who worked at OSI, also helped create monthly newsletters and prepare assessment centers and workshops. Kate LaMons, who is still working at The Foster Mobley Group, is applying her research experience to increase the company's intellectual property and improve their survey/assessment processes. Participation in multiple areas clearly gives students added experiences that will also come in handy when seeking jobs after graduation.

When it comes to reflecting on the most valuable part of their experience, all of the students agreed that it has been seeing what they study, discuss, and dream about doing not only legitimized in the practical setting, but also applied strategically. Fiona Nguyen, who worked at the Boys and Girls Club of San Dieguito, also pointed out the benefits of working with an extremely talented leader whose ability to multitask deeply inspired her. Jacob Mraz, who worked at RQ Construction, enjoyed working for someone who had the Master's in I/O Psychology that he is working towards.

Everyone agreed that students who are going to embark on an internship should remember that its purpose is to help them learn and develop new skills. As Jacob Mraz pointed out, "My experience would have been boring had I shown up and known everything I was supposed to know already." That being said, embracing the opportunity for personal growth and development is the best mindset one can have when starting their internship experience.

**Bridging  
the Gap  
Between  
Research  
and  
Practice**



# APSA Newsletter

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## First Year Interviews (continued from page 1)



### Renee Payne

**Hometown:** San Jose, CA

**I was attracted to SDSU because:** I knew that the faculty was passionate and the program was challenging

**I/O interests:** Work family conflict

**My favorite part about living in San**

**Diego:** Is easy access to a variety of ethnic cuisine!

**You know you're in grad school**

**when:** You dream of PRE and F formulas at night.

**In my free time I like to:** Run long distances and/or scrapbook

**One thing that's interesting about me is:** I have climbed the Great Wall of China.



### Ashlee Asgharzadeh

**Hometown:** San Diego

**I was attracted to SDSU because:** The strong emphasis on research and the amazing faculty

**I/O interests:** Training, sexual harassment training

**My favorite part about living in**

**San Diego:** My family and friends are here and I am able to drive to the beach, snow, or desert in less than an hour

**You know you're in grad school**

**when:** Going above and beyond is the norm

**In my free time I like to:** Sleep and be lazy since free time is rare.



### Seamus O'Faolain Joyce

**Hometown:** San Francisco, Ireland

**I was attracted to SDSU because:** Beach! And well, I suppose because the program and professors are pretty darn awesome, too.

**I/O interests:** I like it all, but this week we are talking about work stress and employee well-being so I'm pretty stoked about that.

**My favorite part about living in San Diego:** Fish tacos

**You know you're in grad school when:** You post on Facebook, "I just realized it's 12:24am on a Friday and I am still reading journal articles."

**In my free time I like to:** Free time? Eat seafood and drink beer. Walk down to the pier and eat an Acai bowl... And maybe a few other things such as sit on the beach, ride my bike, listen to music, swim, snowboard, scuba dive, and check out all of the awesome things to do in SD.



The First-Year Cohort

## Fall APSA Speakers

*By Fiona Nguyen and Jacob Mraz*

### **Cathy Swody, Ph.D.: Senior Associate at Leadership Research Institute (LRI)**

Cathy Swody was our first APSA speaker of the semester. She is a senior associate at LRI, which is a consulting firm that specializes in leadership and organizational development. The foundation of LRI's work is their expertise and experience, their customization for each client, their ability to develop and sustain long term relationships with their clients, and their emphasis on research. Cathy shared some of her experiences in the consulting world relative to engagement, which was a topic we were discussing in our seminar that week. She stated that at LRI they defined engagement as "when individuals are personally committed, motivated, and contributing." Citing the Harvard Business Review, Cathy spoke about how engagement was important from an organizational perspective because of its relation to higher levels of productivity and profitability, better safety and attendance records, higher levels of retention, and improved financial performance. Employees who were NOT highly engaged were twice as likely to leave within three months. Interestingly, LRI's research demonstrated that an individual's compensation and the perks of the job were not what engaged employees the most. In fact compensation only contributed an additional 1% in explaining employee engagement. The common top drivers of employee engagement were found to be 1) manager quality, 2) alignment of values, 3) the use of one's skills, and 4) work life balance. A factor that was frequently found to largely disengage employees was having a manager that was not responsive to people's needs to be developed and connected. Cathy's parting words of wisdom were that managers really do matter and need to be given the tools to perform better, and that confidentiality in surveys is a must. When asked about whether or not it was a good idea to seek out a mentor or a sponsor at work, Cathy responded that both should be chosen carefully. Mentors should be people you can turn to for advice and talk to, and sponsors should be individuals who will go to bat for you. It was great to hear from such a research-oriented company as LRI and we're grateful Cathy could take some time to come and speak to us during her short vacation in San Diego!



### **Matt O'Connell, Ph.D.: Executive Vice President and Co-Founder of Select International**



The second speaker we had this fall was Dr. Matt O'Connell, the Executive Vice President and Co-Founder of Select International. His company focuses on developing and implementing assessment technologies to help companies hire, promote and develop employees at all levels of the organization. Select International performs roughly 2.5 million assessments per year. Their largest customers are Toyota and Dick's Sporting Goods. They design and use all of their own proprietary technologies with an emphasis on accuracy, fairness, legal defensibility, and candidate reactions. Dr. O'Connell also stressed the importance of scientific rigor in developing these assessments. Dr. O'Connell gave us a demo of some selection tests for manufacturing jobs called the Select Assess Manufacturing (SAM). He also shared an example of their online self-guided interviewer training, which was very well done and surprisingly entertaining. In addition to developing selection and training tools, Select International also participates in numerous research projects. They have access to mountains of data due to the large amount of assessments they perform each year. At last year's SIOP conference they had 10 submissions and 15 submissions this year. These include a research series on faking as well as research on safety.

## Alumni Spotlight: An Interview with Lara Bellardita

By Fiona Nyguen



### **When were you at SDSU and what have you been doing since you left the program?**

I attended the I/O program at SDSU from 2000 to 2003. At the beginning of 1999, right after my graduation in Psychology in Milan, I had applied for a Fulbright scholarship and I had been planning my move to SD for more than a year. I was very excited but also very scared!

I was in San Diego almost three years, a very intense period during which I did a lot of different things: studying, teaching, working, meeting new people. When I came back to Italy I must admit I had a hard time re-adjusting to my own country! I started looking for a job but I was a little disappointed as it seemed that I was considered to have too high an education level but not enough experience in HR.

In any case, I decided to begin with taking the exam to become a licensed psychologist, and during the oral examination I talked to a professor who valued my experience at SDSU and asked me if I was interested in working with a group of psychologists that he supervised for a project on the psychological well-being of patients with heart failure. I was in charge of this project for about four years and meanwhile I got my Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology and also became a licensed psychotherapist.

My SDSU training proved to be very valuable because of the research skills that I had gained with the classes and even more thanks to my work with Professor Matt for my thesis.

After getting my PhD, I took a semester off and started to look around for a job, since the grant I had been paid through was closed. Eventually, at the beginning of 2009, I got in touch with a team at Istituto Nazionale dei Tumori in Milan who was looking for a psychologist/researcher and that's how I finally ended up in a position where I could use both my I/O and clinical background. As a matter of fact, our group provides psychological counseling to patients with prostate cancer but we also are interested in training physicians as far as communication skills, teamwork, and shared decision making. We also conduct research on quality of life and on patient satisfaction. It's not strictly an I/O job but I believe I am taking advantage of my background.

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

I really like my current job because I am dealing with a lot of different things. The program director and the project manager I work with have many contacts in the healthcare system in the U.S., and I guess we sort of share a professional frame of mind, which can be somewhat different from the typical "Italian" way of doing things. I enjoy working with them and every day there are new ideas and projects, things we want to do to improve patients' and clinicians' satisfaction.

### **What aspects of your job are the most challenging?**

Well, as a psychologist working with physicians I always have to be aware of the different perspective we might have. Clinicians are very rarely trained on interpersonal and communication skills, and psychologists sometimes forget that they do not have the same amount of time that we usually grant to our clients. The different background and training has to be taken into consideration—that's the challenge. But it is very interesting to work with other professionals and share different points of view.

### **What are some of the differences in what organizations focus on in the U.S. versus Italy?**

Well, I'll tell you how I decided I wanted to study in the U.S. Right after high school, I worked for almost a year at Epcot center (Disneyworld!!!). I was 19, had studied languages at high school and wanted to practice my English. I was impressed from the very beginning by the level of professionalism, the attention to training, and the idea of customer satisfaction. I still believe that organizations in the U.S. have a lot to teach in that sense. Italians are maybe more flexible.

### **Any post graduation advice for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year students?**

Pursue your dreams! And travel! I have done a lot of different things and jobs in my life, which is quite unusual for Italians, and now that I am close to reaching my forties, I am very thankful above all for the people I have met in different countries and the things I learned from them both professionally and personally.



## Recent Presentations

- Cherry, C., & **Kath, L.M.** (2011, August). *Turning the volume down on workplace incivility: An examination of moderators on the negative effects of incivility*. Oral presentation at the UCSD Student Research Conference, San Diego, CA.
- Fierro, A., & **Kath, L.M.** (2011, August). *What helps nurse managers cope with work-family conflict?* Oral presentation at the UCSD Student Research Conference, San Diego, CA.
- Kath, L.M.** (2011, May). A brief introduction to multilevel modeling. In L.M. Kath & V. J. Magley (Co-chairs), *Methodology in occupational health research: A continual learning effort*. Symposium conducted at the annual meeting for the Work, Stress, and Health Conference, Orlando, FL.
- Kath, L.M.**, & Magley, V.J. (Co-chair) (2011, May). *Methodology in occupational health research: A continual learning effort*. Symposium conducted at the annual meeting for the Work, Stress, and Health Conference, Orlando, FL.
- Kath, L.M.** (Chair) (2011, May). *Mistreatment issues for home health care workers*. Symposium conducted at the annual meeting for the Work, Stress, and Health Conference, Orlando, FL.

## Recent Publications

- Choi, S., & **Hatrup, K.** (2012). Relative contribution of perception/cognition and language on spatial categorization. *Cognitive Science*, 36, 102-129.
- Hatrup, K.** (in press). Review of the Mechanical Maintenance Trainee test. In K. F. Geisinger & J. F. Carlson (Eds.), *The mental measurements yearbook*. Lincoln, NE: Buros Institute of Mental Measurements.
- Hatrup, K.** (in press). Review of the Assess Expert System. In K. F. Geisinger & J. F. Carlson (Eds.), *The mental measurements yearbook*. Lincoln, NE: Buros Institute of Mental Measurements.
- Kath, L. M.**, Stichler, J. F., & **Ehrhart, M. G.** (in press, April 2012). Moderators of the negative outcomes of nurse manager stress. *Journal of Nursing Administration*.
- Kono, T.**, Ehrhart, K. H., **Ehrhart, M. G.**, & **Schultze, T.** (in press). Implicit leadership theories in Japan and the U.S. *Asian Pacific Journal of Human Resources*.
- Mellor, S. & **Kath, L.M.** (2011). Fear of reprisal for disclosing union interest: Assessing the effectiveness of perceived anti-unionism. *Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal*, 23, 117-129.
- Mueller, K., **Hatrup, K.**, & Straatmann, T. (2011). Globally surveying in English: Investigating of the measurement equivalence of a job satisfaction measure across bilingual and native English speakers. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 84, 618-624.
- Mueller, K., Volkle, M. C., & **Hatrup, K.** (2011). On the relationship between job satisfaction and non-response in employee attitude surveys: A longitudinal field study. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 84, 780-798.
- Raver, J., **Ehrhart, M. G.**, & Chadwick, I. C. (in press). The emergence of team helping norms: Foundations within members' attributes and behavior. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*.
- Schneider, B., **Ehrhart, M. G.**, & Macey, W. A. (in press). A funny thing happened on the way to the future. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice*.
- Wolf, T., **Hatrup, K.**, & Mueller, K. (2011). A cross-national investigation of the measurement equivalence of computerized organizational attitude surveys: A two-study design in multiple nations. *Journal of Organizational Computing and Electronic Commerce*, 246-263.

Note: Names in **bold** indicate faculty, students, or alumni affiliated with the Applied Psychology program



Get Ready for  
**SIOP 2012** - it's  
coming to us!

April 26-28, 2012  
San Diego, CA

### Recent Thesis Defenses

- **Ryan Mills**. "Safety or productivity? The effect of conflicting demands on employees' work-related attitudes." December 2011. Chair: **L. Kath**.
- **Nichole (Best) Miller**. "Emotional intelligence and academic performance: An evaluation of moderated effects." December 2011. Chair: **J. Conte**.

**Don't forget to join the APSA LinkedIn Group.**  
**For more information, contact**  
**Dr. Lisa Kath -**  
**lkath@sciences.sdsu.edu**

### Announcements

- **Nora Grace Awkerman French** and her husband Barker French welcomed their first child, Zoe Caroline French, on October 7, 2011.
- First year student **Lauren Dlugosz** recently announced her engagement to Pedrum Farahnak.
- **Angelina Sawitzky** is now an Organizational Development Advisor at San Diego Gas & Electric.
- **Zack Girgis** recently moved to Santa Clara, and continues to work for Qualcomm as an HR Business Partner at their Northern California location.
- **Susan Murphy**, née Drobka, was married to Mike Murphy in September 2011.
- **Heather Park**, née Yamashita, was married to Tony Park in Oceanside, CA on September 3, 2011.
- **Sean Foley** is engaged to Linda Franci Alpert as of September 1, 2011. Sean also recently received a promotion as a Consultant with Accenture's Talent & Organizational Performance Team.
- **Tressa Schultze** started working at Bridgepoint Education as a survey researcher in November 2010.

Note: **Names in bold indicate faculty, students, or alumni affiliated with the Applied Psychology program**

## APSA BBQ



**Above and Right: First and second year students gather for the Fall APSA BBQ**



**Left: Mark and Evan Ehrhart, Eli and Emi Kath, and Jeff, Caroline, and Colleen Conte**

**Below: Second Year Students Ian Smith, Jacob Mraz, Olivia Bustamante, Kate LaMons, Fiona Nguyen and Melissa Oates**



**A special thanks to Lisa Kath and her family for hosting the Fall APSA BBQ!**

## Students Around San Diego

**Right: Students from the POWER Lab**



**Far Right: Students at the second annual wine night**



**Below: Seamus, Renee and Berry Celebrate the end of first semester**



**Above: Statistics TAs meet to plan for next semester**

**Above: Lauren, Melissa and Fiona at an SDSU Football game**



**Above: Students gather for a BBQ before school starts**



**Above: Current students, exchange students, and alumni gather at Woodstock's Pizza**



**Far left: Students celebrating Jacob's thesis proposal**



**Left: Students celebrating Melissa's thesis proposal**