Alumni Spotlight:
An Interview with Corinne Boulanger

By Kristy Kay

When did you attend SDSU and what have you been doing since you left the program?
I attended SDSU from Fall 2006 to Spring 2008, but I did not complete my thesis defense and graduate until Spring 2013 (just under the wire!) Since 2008, I have had the opportunity to gain a wide range of experiences in varying industries and locales, including Austin, Denver, and Sacramento. Mostly, however, I have worked in both the education and healthcare industries. I currently serve as an internal consultant for a large healthcare system primarily in Northern CA, in their Talent Management department. More specifically, I sit on a very small workforce planning team whose ultimate goal is to help the organization keep and acquire the right talent at the right time.

Continued on page 5

Second Year Experiences

What has been your favorite part of this program?
Mark Reynolds: My cohort - they’re amazing! Statistics would be a close second.
Sandra Martinez: My favorite part of this program was getting the opportunity to present at SIOP. Also, getting a faculty/staff parking permit was a game-changer.
Justine Zimiles: I enjoyed the flexibility to take many courses outside of the Psychology department. I enrolled in three classes in the Graduate School of Public Health, which I highly recommend, as well as surfing and two semesters of ceramics.
Nick Eslinger: Stats. There is evidence to suggest that without stats I would not have significantly enjoyed this program.
Julia Brown: The group projects. These were assignments that I dreaded in undergrad but they were a completely different experience in this program. I have learned so much from working with my outstanding classmates and the combined efforts resulted in products that I am really proud of.
Alexa Young: How much it challenges you to accomplish more than you thought was possible. At the end of each semester, it’s so rewarding to look back and see how much you’ve grown. I also really enjoyed how close you get with your cohort and how supportive everyone is of one another.
Casey O’Loughlin: The variety and quality of academic/educational opportunities we are afforded. From applying our otherwise seminar-based knowledge in various engaging projects, to working diligently on our theses, to even learning how to teach others as TAs, there are so many different ways we are able to learn in this program.

What do you know now that you wish you would have known when you started this program?
Mark: It will be ok.
Sandra: It goes by incredibly fast so don’t miss out on any opportunity to gain more research or applied experience.
Second Year Experiences (continued from page 1)

Justine: I wish I had known to take more classes in the first semester as the course load is minimal. It is very easy to complete all courses in three semesters.

Nick: If you park at Alvarado, you don’t have to pay for a parking permit.

Julia: Don’t let the amount of work overwhelm you. Break assignments up into manageable pieces and don’t wait until the last minute to get started (I’m still working on that one).

Alexa: The thesis is not something to overly think about. It’s difficult, but 100% doable. Just start with baby steps, it’ll eventually get there even if it is a big mess at first.

Casey: Solid progress on your thesis between your first and second year can make all the difference. It’s not just something that the faculty say…it’s true! During the school year it can be tough (but not impossible) to manage your thesis and coursework, so any progress that can be made during the summer can really help make your school year more manageable.

What are you doing after graduation or, alternatively, what do you want to do?

Mark: I’m still figuring that out.

Sandra: I’ll be collecting the rest of my data, defending my thesis at the end of the summer, and then finding an awesome job to jumpstart my career!

Justine: This summer I will be taking a month to drive cross country to and from my home in NYC. Additionally, I will be continuing my position at UCSD Health Services Research Center. I hope to wrap up my thesis by the end of fall 2016 and determine how to get out of an office job. I am considering becoming a farmer.

Nick: I am going to be a Military Leadership Instructor at West Point.

Julia: I am continuing working at my internship and hope to have a career in consulting or project management.

Alexa: I’m taking the summer “off” to wrap up my thesis and start applying for jobs!

Casey: I am continuing to work part-time at Sony PlayStation as an Instructional Designer while I finish up my thesis this summer and look for other full-time opportunities in Training and Development.

What is the best advice you would give to someone just starting out in this program?

Mark: It’ll be over before you know it – have some fun!

Sandra: It’s okay to be wrong! The purpose of this program isn’t just to impart you with relevant research knowledge but also to teach you how to think/approach problems like an I-O psychologist. This means trying to answer questions with a certain mental framework, which you will develop, even when you don’t know the correct answer.

Justine: I would advise a new master’s candidate to explore the types of positions available in the field and take advantage of the plentiful resources of SDSU.

Nick: There are four types of people: (1) People who cause problems, (2) People who recognize problems but do nothing about them, (3) People who recognize problems and fix them, and (4) People who prevent problems. Keep being a #4.

Julia: Be a good citizen in the program - do your best in your classes, support your fellow colleagues, and be present!

Alexa: The program goes by fast, so enjoy it even though it can be stressful. Learn everything you can from your peers and the faculty because there is just so much to learn!

Casey: You can do it! The program is very challenging, and we all know that going in. For those times when the challenges feel particularly large, just remember that you were accepted into the program because the faculty felt you could succeed, and there is an entire cohort there for academic and emotional support.

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

Dr. Kara Orvis graduated from George Mason University in 2004 with a doctoral degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology. Kara’s graduate training focused primarily on multi-team systems, training and feedback, and distributed team performance. These interests have persisted into her career and have evolved to include leadership and training technology. With more than 70 publications and presentations as well as a wealth of consulting experience working with the military, Kara’s career has soared. For the past ten years, Kara has worked as a research and development consultant for Aptima and was recently promoted to Division Director. In this role, Kara has 23 direct-report researchers who support her research. Kara assumed a management track position at Aptima, first working on projects, then running projects, managing other people's projects, and now reports directly to the Founder/CEO. As the Division Director, Kara’s time is split between business development, proposal writing, personnel management, and project execution/technical work.

Bryan Aasen

Bryan is a 2014 graduate of the program and is an analyst in the Global People Analytics department at Walmart Stores. Bryan worked as a temporary employee at Walmart for six months before signing onto the team on a more permanent basis. Bryan’s job functions include focus groups, pilot testing, data mining and visualization, software prototyping, and administering opinion surveys to associates. Given that Bryan is a recent graduate of the program, he wisely chose to focus on his job search rather than his post-graduate work experience. Bryan gave us an in-depth view of his interview process, including successes and failures. He generously provided lessons he learned from the job hunt. In addition, Bryan instructed us on properly writing survey items and hosting effective focus groups.

Faculty & Alumni Publications


The SIOP conference this year was in Anaheim, California and provided an excellent learning and networking opportunity for students and faculty alike. Of our 13 master’s students, twelve were in attendance. Due to the valuable experiences gained, almost all hope to attend next year’s SIOP convention. On average, approximately half of the time was spent in either seminar sessions or symposia with the remainder divided between a variety of workshops, poster sessions, and social events. Considering our program’s notable representation at SIOP this year, we would like to offer some insights provided by student attendees.

What was your favorite session?

**Dustin Abbott:** “Mastering your future: Sage Advice for early-career master’s-level I/O Psychologists.” This session was full of great information for master’s students entering the workforce including tips on interviewing, resume building, and internship experience.

**Mark Reynolds:** Multilevel confirmatory factor analysis - ‘nuff said.

**Sandra Martinez:** “Promoting Mindfulness@Work: Effects on Performance, Health and Relational Outcomes.” It focused on ways to increase mindfulness at work which was pretty interesting!

**Simona Spiridon:** “IGNITE Session: I-O Hot Topics Debate. Dual or Duel?” I liked the fast pace of the session and the topics that were covered such as measurement theory, employee engagement, and big data.

**Caitie Jacobson:** The one on Big Data because it had very creative samples, such as Twitter, Reddit, and virtual gaming population. I never considered sources such as these so it really goes to show how limitless big data really is.

**Joyce Hwang:** “Prosocial I-O in the UN.” Captivating presentations that expanded my view of I-O. We have unique skills as I-O psychologists that can be used beyond corporate structures, for international issues and in developing countries.

**Kristy Kay:** “The Military and I-O Psychology: A Century Long Partnership.” I’m personally interested in working with the military, so it was interesting to learn about an overview of I-O psychologists’ impact.

What advice would you give to graduate students attending SIOP next year?

**Dustin:** Don’t plan on going to what you find interesting (there is just way too much cool stuff!) Instead, focus on what will be most useful to you.

**Mark:** Bring business cards, and try to present something!

**Sandra:** Definitely bring business cards!

**Simona:** Network and attend a variety of symposia/panels.

**Caitie:** Make sure to take advantage of the résumé matcher option.

**Joyce:** Attend. Let your brain feast.

**Kristy:** Don’t get too caught up in taking notes during sessions! I found it best to just sit and listen, soaking it all in during the session. Then after a particularly great session, I would write up a little summary of information that I wanted to remember, or even make a note to email the presenter for their slide deck.

Based on what you experienced at SIOP, what struck you as particularly interesting contemporary issues/topics in I-O? In other words, what’s hot in the field that interests you?

**Dustin:** SIOP didn’t change what I’m interested in. It is still team-level outcomes, leadership & followership, empowerment, climate, & culture.

**Mark:** I thought the communication among team members was really interesting, and how having team members with similar communication styles and vocabulary can lead to better performance.

**Simona:** The growth of using big data in research. I was particularly interested in the symposium that presented research utilizing Twitter data to investigate trends in work stress and emotions, as well as the study looking at team self-assembly through data collected via a video game.

**Caitie:** Big Data, data visualization, I liked a session I went to on using forced-choice personality measures and trying to resolve if they are useful or not. I also liked the session where the speakers talked about how I/O can impact the world outside of organizations

**Kristy:** I-O has always been a major partner to the military, and it’s incredible how much there is yet to explore. With contemporary issues varying from gender to national security, I-O continues to have a profound impact.
Alumni Spotlight: Corinne Boulanger (continued from page 1)

What do you enjoy most about your career?
Certainly the people you meet along the way can make a big difference in anyone’s career being enjoyable or not so very enjoyable. This is especially true in a consulting role where you have many diverse customers that are constantly changing. In a lot of ways, I feel lucky to have mostly held positions where the people make going to work fun every day. I’ve also encountered a lot of people throughout my career who are afraid of data, and it can be fun to help them make sense of it. In a way, I feel like I’m a storyteller and the best way to engage my colleagues in the data is to tell a story with it.

What aspects of your job do you find the most challenging?
Being the only I/O psychology-trained employee can represent a challenge. Part of my job is just educating people on what skills I can bring to the table to help the organization. Also, people hold many biases based on their personal experiences, and that leads them to want to disregard the data in many instances. The art of persuasion is one I’m still working on. Finally, healthcare moves at a snail’s pace so change takes a lot of time. It can be frustrating when the data is blatantly telling you something needs to change, but seeing the change come to fruition and being able to measure its success can takes years.

Are there certain skills you find most helpful in your field?
I think the two big ones that I’ve already mentioned that go a long way are data analysis and persuasion skills. More specifically, being able to quickly toggle back and forth between seeing the bigger picture and being able to speak to the details depending on your audience is crucial. Sleuthing/being a good detective is also a valuable skill in large, complex organizations where finding the right people and information you need to do a good job is not always readily available and is sometime half the battle.

Do you have any post-graduation advice for the second year students?
I’m sure you’ve heard it before, but I would say it’s important to explore all opportunities and see where it leads, especially if you aren’t absolutely certain of the specific kinds of work you want to be doing. I started out at my current organization doing something somewhat non-I/O related to get my foot in the door, and then made the right connection to be recommended for the role I currently sit in. Also, be confident! The skills you’ve acquired in your program will go a long way and might be more impressive to organizations than you might realize!

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SIOP Path to Membership

The SIOP Membership application can be accessed by visiting https://my.siop.org/

New Student Affiliate Membership
- Complete each screen of the application all the way through to submission
- Make an online dues payment upon completion of your application
- Your Student Affiliate membership benefits will be activated upon receipt of the dues

New Professional (Member, Associate or International Affiliate) Membership
- Complete each screen of the application all the way through to submission
- Your application will be evaluated by the SIOP Membership Committee, which may take up to 8 weeks to make a decision on your approval for membership
- If approved, follow the instructions in your approval email to make a professional dues payment to finalize membership
- If denied, view the reason(s) provided and follow the instructions on how to resubmit an application

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It’s never too early to start planning for SIOP 2017!

April 27-29, 2017
Orlando, Florida
Student Exchange: An Interview with Katharina Finger

By Kristy Kay

What is your home institution?
My home institution is the University of Osnabrück in Germany where I’m currently enrolled in a master’s program in cross-cultural psychology.

What were you looking forward to most about coming here to SDSU to study?
Last summer, I got to know Professor Kate Hattrup during a summer school workshop at University of Osnabrück and she told me about the possibility to work in her research lab on cross-cultural research projects together with other students. I loved this idea because I imagined it to be very interesting to be working with American students as well as exchanging opinions about different topics, getting to know their culture better and talking (as well as laughing) about differences between the American and German culture.

What has been surprising or most shocking to you since being here?
People are incredibly friendly and cheerful in this city no matter where you are – unfortunately in Germany it is quite usual that people, in grocery stores for example, are stressed out by their customers and are often in a bad mood. I really enjoyed how I’ve been treated in San Diego’s stores – people were always willing to help, have always had a smile on their faces, and just seemed to enjoy their lives.

What do you like most about San Diego?
San Diego is one of the cities most worth living in that I’ve ever been to. First, the weather is amazing, which is why life takes place outside – that is what I love most. San Diego offers a variety of different things you can do in your free time – you can visit a lot of beautiful beaches, Balboa Park, Coronado Island, Point Loma, street festivals, and more – you could never get bored! But what I also really like about this city is the cultural mix of the American and Mexican culture – I think that is also a reason why people in San Diego sometimes seem to have a different mentality than people in other U.S. cities - people are really easy-going, enjoy their lives and live the moment.

What were the favorite places you have visited in the US?
The U.S. has a lot of beautiful things to see. In general, what impressed me the most were the gigantic and gorgeous national parks like Grand Canyon National Park, Bryce Canyon National Park, Joshua Tree Park, etc. But the most adventurous and unforgettable trip I did in the US was a backpacking trip to Big Sur National Park where we were hiking from campground to campground while passing beautiful scenery. It was also a challenging trip because we didn’t even have toilets for one night but it was definitely a fun weekend and a great experience!

What do you like to do in your free time?
In my free time, I like working in different international student organizations like AIESEC or AEGEE because I love the exchange with people from different cultures. Also last year, I started working with kids in a refugee camp on a voluntary basis because it is a great feeling to see how grateful these kids are when you play with them and just take care of them. Additionally I love ballroom and Latin dance!

What advice would you give to people studying abroad here for the program?
Leave your comfort zone – of course, it is easiest to get in contact with people from your home country or with other international students. But to immerse yourself in the American culture you need to take heart and try to get in contact with American students as well as other American people. Don’t plan every single weekend for travelling – just spend some weekends in beautiful San Diego with your American friends to see how their usual weekends look like. I can definitely recommend game nights with people from different countries.
Faculty & Alumni Presentations


First Year Experiences

By Kristy Kay

As we say goodbye to our second-year mentors, and hang in limbo between the status of first- and second-year graduate students ourselves, we reminisce on what in the world just happened. The first year of graduate school was a whirlwind of classes, readings, statistics, research, and life experiences. It has been challenging, but it has also been amazing. Imposter syndrome has dwindled, but occasionally still makes its dreaded appearance. Alas, we are ever-motivated to push onward.

There is no doubt that we could not have made it through as successfully as we all did without the incredible support we have received. Our seminar courses this year were with Dr. Lisa Kath and Dr. Mark Ehrhart, who are both incredibly committed to developing students and pushing us toward stimulating and valuable experiences. For example, in Dr. Ehrhart’s Advanced Seminar in Organizational Psychology, we had the distinct pleasure of working with large San Diego-based organizations on organizational culture consulting projects. In Psychological Testing and Measurement, we were able to learn from Dr. Kate Hattrup, who offered astounding breadth and depth of knowledge in psychometric theory, as well as many motivating stories of her consulting experiences. Last, but most certainly not least, we learned the beautiful science of data analysis from Dr. Melody Sadler. Having spent a full academic year with Dr. Sadler, it is unsurprising that many of us adopted her sincere passion for the subject. The flawless coordination of all of our activities could not have been made possible without the excellent work of our bubbly administrative coordinator, Jackie Jones.

The upcoming summer months are expected to consist of no less hard work than we have been putting forth thus far. In addition to making substantial progress on theses, this cohort will be keeping quite busy! Some of us will be studying abroad at the University of Osnabrück in Germany to learn about cross-cultural competencies from Dr. Hattrup and her colleagues; the course will culminate with the creation of a training program. Others still will be gaining valuable experiences in summer internships. Our students will be interning at companies such as the Center for Creative Leadership, Valencore Consulting, and Aptima. For helping us to find these exciting internships, and for guiding us through the process, we certainly thank our Internship Coordinator, Godelièvre Louis.

With such an incredible first year to look back on, with memories made at SIOP, lab events, and barbecues, as well as the knowledge gained through our research and coursework, we are ecstatic for what our second year may bring. To Personnel Psychology, Program Evaluation, Multivariate Statistics, and thesis proposals and defenses: we’re coming for you.

Faculty & Alumni Announcements

Susan Drobka-Murphy and her husband, Mike, welcomed their daughter, Elliott Marie (pictured to the right). She is their first child. Congratulations, Susan and Mike!

Jeff Conte served as a Senior Research Fellow at the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) Research Fellows Program (Winter 2015-2016).

Lisa Wright has started a new job in February working as the Analytics Coordinator at FMG Leading.

Zack Girgis, a 2010 graduate, recently joined LinkedIn as a Human Resources Business Partner.

Chris Atkinson, a 2011 graduate, began working at Biddle Consulting Group in Folsom, California in October 2015 as a pre-employment assessment consultant where he works with various organizations to design a variety of custom selection procedures.

Heather (Yamashita) Park and her husband, Tony, celebrated the birth of their daughter, Hailey. She is their first child. Congratulations, Heather & Tony!
The APSA Spring BBQ is an annual potluck event in which students, faculty, friends, and their children get together to enjoy food and drinks along with laughs. The BBQ is an opportunity for incoming students to socialize with their future colleagues. Mark Ehrhart hosted the event this year at his lovely, hilltop home. In addition to socializing at the BBQ, our students enjoy spending time together outside of academics.

**Right:** Caitie (left) and Casey (right) pose with their research mentor, Dr. Conte

**Above:** Simona (left) and Julia (right) missing their mentor, Dr. Hattrup!

**Left:** Kelsey proves that the master's program isn't “all work and no play”

**Right:** Dr. Kath poses with her graduate students

**Above:** Dr. Ehrhart poses with the members of his research lab