By Marisa Sklar

As our first year in this program comes to a close, what better time than now to reflect on our experiences here? We each came to this program with different interests in mind. For example, many of us were aware of the strong faculty base this program offered, and chose this program specifically for its faculty support. Others of us had attended SDSU as an undergraduate, were already working in our labs, loved the location, and felt this program was overall the best fit.

At the start of our year, almost every one of us immediately immersed ourselves in our labs. We often took on the responsibility of multiple projects, researching charismatic leadership, diversity in the workplace, cross-cultural research, person-environment fit, mental health outcomes evaluation, and even some projects for the nursing department. For some, much time was spent simply learning what was expected of us in our lab and familiarizing ourselves with our mentor’s management style before we ever started working on our research.

Our first seminar class in this program was PSY 622: Seminar in Organizational Psychology. This class proved to be a great learning experience, and was enjoyed by all. In fact, this seminar tended to be a favorite amongst a majority us. But how could you go wrong with daily snacks and video clips?

As our year progressed, the biggest challenge we encountered was finding a balance between our schoolwork and our social life. As Stephen nicely said, “Due to the demanding nature of the program, you can spend all your time studying and still not be done with your work. So, the biggest challenge was trying to find some type of medium.” Time management was a serious struggle for many of us. Luckily, many of us have found ways to reach some sort of middle ground. In those rare moments of free time, many of us would play sports, catch up with friends and family, or make use of San Diego’s natural playground: the beach!

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By Ryan Mills

One of the greatest highlights of the spring 2008 semester was the Annual Conference for the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP). Traditionally, SIOP takes place in a major U.S. city, and with this year’s conference being held in San Francisco, many of our students and faculty were able to attend.

Some of the major themes at SIOP 2008 included leadership, cross-cultural work issues, and employee selection. Another theme universal to any discussion of I/O Psychology is the scientist/practitioner gap. For many first-year students in our program, this was their first encounter with the other side of that gap. “I was surprised how applied [the conference] was,” said Brandon Roberts. “There was definitely a gap between science and practice.” Another student noted that although in some sessions the gap was wide, there were others that bridged the gap by using empirically-driven data to solve practical dilemmas within the workplace.

As expected, the SDSU faculty and students shined at SIOP 2008. Jeff Conte, along with SDSU Management professor Michelle Dean, presented a piece on the measurement of emotional intelligence. Mark Ehrhart, along with students Taylor Peyton and Corinne Boulanger and alumna Angelina Sawitzky, presented an interactive poster on personality, work stress, and citizenship behavior. Keith Hattrup participated in two symposia, the first focusing on job satisfaction and turnover between individualist and collectivist countries, and the second, presented with students Brandon Roberts and Jordan Willoughby, focusing on individualism/collectivism, organizational commitment and job facet satisfaction. Lisa Kath chaired a symposium on the topic of workplace safety climate and presented a piece on the drivers of upward safety communication.

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Kevin Sears, Senior Manager of Operations Training and Development at Amgen and SDSU graduate, recently shared his experiences about the field of training and development with current SDSU students. Kevin’s vast array of experience includes a variety of organizations such as Bolt Consulting, Navy Personnel Research Development Center, and Center for Creative Leadership. These experiences and his work at General Dynamics as a Senior Training Specialist led him to his current position at Amgen where he has been for over four years. Mr. Sears shared great advice with the first and second year M.S. students. He suggested that the need for quality of life is essential when choosing an organization to work for. While opportunities in I/O Psychology may be ample throughout the country, it is important to consider other factors such as family or geographic location. He also stated the need for learning as much as possible through any job you take and understanding the company you work for. While I/O Psychology is an applied field, Kevin mentioned the need for students to speak the business language and be able to translate what we understand in I/O through a business vernacular.

Tanya Goodwin-Maslach
Learning Development Manager
Qualcomm

Tanya Goodwin-Maslach, Learning Development Manager at Qualcomm, recently came to speak to the SDSU Applied Psychology students about her extensive consulting experience and her career path. Tanya initially was a director at TalentSmart, focusing on consulting and product development, before moving on to her current position at Qualcomm. In addition, Tanya also worked as a consultant for numerous years. Through her experience, she stressed two important points to all students interested in pursuing a career in I/O Psychology: to develop strong and genuine relationships and understand the business vernacular. Specifically, she stated that networking with colleagues, classmates, and so forth is invaluable in the business world. Furthermore, understanding the business language will help students better express what they know in I/O Psychology in business terms. Lastly, she discussed that a good work-life balance is a necessity and how well these two balance truly depends on the individual.

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Presentations continued…


First Year Student Experiences continued…

So now our year’s coming to a close, which means “Party Time!!!” What are we going to do with such luxurious amounts of time? A very select, lucky, few will be traveling to Peru this summer, while the majority of us will be working our internships and hopefully making significant headway on our theses.

Looking back at all of our first year experiences, we have all enjoyed everything this program has to offer. From attending classes, SIOP, and APSA BBQs, to getting the opportunity to apply our experience through class projects, we have all learned so much over the year and have grown close with one another. Although the program is demanding, it is a wonderful program that is worth all of the work.

Over the course of this year, we have all gained pearls of wisdom we would like to share with the Fall 2008 incoming first year students. We hope you will take these words of advice to heart, and enjoy your first year in this program!

- Be prepared to work hard.
- Don’t be afraid to ask questions.
- Work with your classmates to get assignments done.
- Don’t just learn how to manage your time—start managing it now.
- You spend a lot of time reading about your thesis topic. So, seriously think about what you are interested in, and base your thesis on that.

Speakers Corner continued…

Andrea Jackson
Senior Employee Relations Specialist
Qualcomm

Andrea Jackson, a Senior Employee Relations Specialist at Qualcomm and Applied Program graduate, recently spoke with current SDSU students on a variety of topics. Andrea has spent the last three years at Qualcomm focusing on facets of employee relations such as affirmative action and ethics. In talking with the students, she discussed the flexibility of the Industrial/Organizational degree in organizations. However, Andrea also suggested that students first focus on getting into an organization which will eventually allow for movement around the company itself. She also mentioned that students should start thinking about where they want to work, such as big companies versus small, external consulting versus an internal position, and so forth. Overall, she stated that some of the most valuable tools she has gained from the program at SDSU have been her presentation skills, teamwork, coordination within group projects, and networking.

Dr. Karsten Müller
Professor
University of Mannheim

Dr. Müller, Professor at the University of Mannheim, came to SDSU recently to give a presentation on cross-cultural research and collaboration as well as studying abroad in Mannheim. He specializes in employee surveys and cross-cultural organizational change. In terms of collaboration, Dr. Müller frequently partners with Dr. Keith Hattrup, a resident professor here at SDSU. In addition to providing a wealth of information on the effectiveness of employee surveys in managing a diverse international workforce in multi-national organizations, Dr. Müller also talked to students about coming to University of Mannheim for a semester of study. The cross-cultural exchange between University of Mannheim and San Diego State University was founded originally by Dr. Jörg Matt and Dr. Werner Wittmann. Dr. Müller discussed the benefits of spending a semester abroad, both in terms of personal and career growth, and suggested that it is an experience all Applied Psychology students should consider.

It’s never too early to start making plans to attend SIOP 2009!

When: April 2 - 4, 2009
Where: New Orleans, LA

For more information: http://www.siop.org/conferences
A unique aspect of SIOP is the Job Placement Service, which assists students in their final year of coursework to network and interview with potential post-graduate employers. Although the service was generally seen as helpful, a couple of students pointed out ways to get more out of it. Taylor Peyton remarked, “I think the job placement service would be most useful if you begin your job hunt about two months in advance of the conference. This would enable you to have plenty of time to set up interviews with the companies that interest you most.” In addition, Alice Wastag noted that preference of location plays a role: “The placement center only had one job posted for the area I was looking for… It might be more useful if you are very flexible and willing to move anywhere.”

Other advice for students planning on attending next year included, “Figure out what your main goal for the trip is and focus on that… I knew that networking for a job was a top priority and I focused on that.” Other students recommended utilizing the index of the official program to search for the names of people whose symposia you’d like to attend most. In addition, finding the right balance between applied and academic symposia is critical.

SIOP 2008 was a huge success. Our entire I/O faculty participated in presentations, and many of our students did as well. In speaking with many students and faculty, people’s greatest highlight of SIOP 2008 was far and away that so many of us were able to attend and enjoy the conference together!
Above: Mark Ehrhart’s lab presents at a SIOP interactive poster session.

Right: Jeff Conte’s lab smiles for a group picture at SIOP.

Above (left to right):
Tiffany Adams took a job with Qualcomm as an HR Representative in January of 2008.

Addie Brewer recently became engaged. She will be getting married next summer in San Diego. In addition, she will be joining the SDSU/UCSD clinical psychology joint doctoral program this fall.

Amelia Burns is in the process of starting her own business called A Better Choice Nanny and Babysitting Agency and is projected to be up and running in the summer of 2008.

Dr. Ulloa and his wife, Dr. Monica Ulibarri, are expecting a baby in December.

Amelia Burns. Exploring Predictors and Outcomes of Burnout in Young Adults within a College Setting. April 2008. Chair: J. Conte.


Left: First-year students (left to right): Jessika Reliford, Tressa Schultze, Brandon Roberts, Stephen Vong, Linsey Dirkes and Ryan Mills.

Right: Second-year students (left to right): Jordan Willoughby, Taylor Peyton, Addie Brewer, Corinne Boulanger, Alice Wastag, and William Huynh.

Left: Faculty (left to right): Jeff Conte, Jörg Matt, Melody Sadler, Mark Ehrhart and Lisa Kath (with Emi).

Additional Information

The student editors of this issue were Alice Wastag and Stephen Vong.

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.