Greetings from the Industrial-Organizational Psychology department at UNO! This year I continue to be very busy with my research team continuing to study creativity and teamwork. Currently studies are underway to look at the effect of problem construction in teams, idea evaluation in teams, and the role of revisions on individual and team creativity. In addition, I am working (together with Vicki Kennel, one of our Ph.D. students) on a grant with several faculty from UNMC studying fall risk reduction at small hospitals in rural Nebraska. This is a wonderful interdisciplinary group with faculty from Nursing, Physical Therapy, Pharmacy, and I/O Psychology. My role is to evaluate and provide recommendations regarding teamwork in interprofessional teams in those hospitals – how to facilitate communication, effective teamwork and so on, to create processes that would reduce patient falls.

Department and I/O area happenings

This year, the big news for the I/O program is the hiring of a new faculty in I/O Psychology. We are in the process of reviewing the applications, and will be starting to interview soon. Expect some news hopefully before the first of the year!

Students and faculty in our program have been busy with conference submissions, especially to SIOP, which is in Houston this year. While it is too early to let you know about the presentations at SIOP 2013, you can see a list of the different presentations and publications in this newsletter, including SIOP 2012. Speaking of SIOP, just a reminder that as always, we will have a fabulous get together. Last year, Talent+ was generous enough to pick up the tab for us – thank you very much!! We had a great time in San Diego, and we know that we will have a great time in Houston. More information about this will be sent as we near the conference date.

We are making an effort to stay connected to you, our alumni. This newsletter is only one aspect in this effort. We also have a group on LinkedIn called “UNO I/O Psychology”. This group includes faculty, current students, and alumni, and is designed to provide a networking tool. The group is currently 140 members strong! If you are not a member yet, please join us. Please use the group for networking and to post your I/O related questions and jobs. In addition, I will continue to send job openings to you via e-mail. Please help me keep our alumni data base current by letting me know about any changes in your information (new e-mail or address).

In this newsletter, which we will send out once a year, we have highlighted some of our student experiences, both research and applied. We also have provided updates from our alumni about their personal and professional life so you all can keep up. Please continue to update us about your life – we love hearing from you!

To keep in touch, please call (402-554-4810) or e-mail (reiter.palmon@unomaha.edu). Feel free to connect with me on LinkedIn as well. I hope to see you all in Houston!
SIOP Alumni Dinner 2012 What's New with SIOP-UNO?

Currant Brasserie, San Diego, CA

By Clayton Juarez

SIOP’s annual conference is more than just a chance for students and faculty to showcase their work; it’s also a chance for our alumni to catch up with each other and for our students to get to know a few of the people who came before them. To facilitate this, we host a dinner for students and alumni to come together and get to know each other and network. This year, we held our alumni dinner at the Currant Brasserie, situated in San Diego’s historic Gaslamp Quarter. The restaurant is located in the ground floor of an historic hotel, and though the space was small, it offered a pleasantly intimate dining experience. Like a traditional brasserie, Currant features a variety of dishes ranging from familiar comfort foods to more high-class fare, including some combinations thereof, and a wide selection of drinks. The menu featured a mix of Old-world French cuisine and modern chic spins on American dishes such as hamburgers topped with Gruyere, bacon jam, or chipotle aioli and fries seasoned with thyme.

The chevre cheesecake, made with goat cheese and fresh berries, was particularly creamy and decadent and is highly recommended if you’re ever in the area.

Although our turnout was a bit smaller this year than it was the previous year, the dinner was a welcome opportunity to meet new people. Our students got the chance to meet some of our alumni and hear about the sorts of things they can expect later in graduate school and the ‘real world.’ The students who came to the dinner left with a stronger idea of where they want to go with their careers and what they will need to do in order to get where they want to be. In addition to the current students, faculty, and alumni, we were joined by some friends from Talent Plus who chatted and ate with us. At the end of the night, the folks from Talent Plus were also very generous and covered the bill for dinner. All in all, it made for a lovely evening of networking and catching up with old friends.

Next year, the SIOP conference will be held in Houston, Texas. If you know of any good places to eat in Houston that might be able to host our next alumni dinner, e-mail your suggestions or post them on our LinkedIn page. We look forward to seeing you in Houston in 2013!

By Desiree Johnson

SIOP Tri-chair, 2011-2012

The 2011-2012 SIOP-UNO tri-chairs were Amy Walzer, Casey Bowyer, and I. Last year we planned many events, both fun and informational. As most people know, SIOP-UNO is responsible for planning First Fridays. First Fridays are a fun way to get together with other grad students over food and drinks and just have a good time. As we are all busy grad students who don’t have much time to go out, we have found that First Fridays are a time to look forward to. Some locations of FF last year include Dave and Busters, Crave, West Lanes bowling alley, and Pitch Pizzeria.

The annual picnic at Dr. T’s, which is held to welcome the incoming first year I/O grad students, is also an event that SIOP-UNO organizes. As a first year grad student last year, this event was a great time to get to know older students and faculty, which helped make the transition to grad school a little bit less intimidating. This informal event was a fun way for everyone in the program to get together before the semester began.

Another event that has become a staple in our program is the annual hayrack ride at Shady Lane Ranch. This event occurred in October and was a ton of fun. We rode on a wagon pulled by a tractor, threw hay (and had hay thrown on us), sat around a fire, drank, and ate s’mores. Although SIOP does enjoy planning these fun events, we also planned informative events for students as well.

SIOP-UNO organized speakers last year as well. These were former I/O students from our program who had successfully transitioned to an applied career. These alumni included Jason Weiss, an I/O consultant; Kathy Kemler, a comps and benefits specialist; and Sally Waters, an OD specialist. These talks helped students to see how the knowledge we are gaining in the classroom can be applied in the real world. Additionally, these speakers were helpful in that they let current grad students “pick their brains” and gain insight into how to best market our skills.

Lastly, SIOP-UNO helped Dr. Scherer to plan and promote the ASH health fair last fall. We coordinated with individuals from other departments across campus in order to offer a variety of services to students. The purpose of this event was to inform students of services available to them, while also promoting health and wellness.

Images

Above: I/O students Nick Arreola (PhD, at left) and Amy Walzer (PhD, at right) at the 2011 Hayrack Ride.
Below: I/O students Mackenzie Harms (MA, front-left), Desiree Johnson (MA), and Emily Pearce (MS) at the 2011 Hayrack ride.
Historiometry: The Science of Studying the Exceptional

By Mackenzie Harms

Let’s be honest, psychologists are experiment junkies. Sometimes it seems that before we’ve even posted one study on SONA, we’re already planning the next. What data can I collect? How will I use it? What do I hope it can tell me? This forward thinking is what keeps our field progressing. However, as every Northerner who’s had to drive their car out of a snowdrift knows, sometimes moving backwards is ultimately the best way to move forward.

Data collection is an uphill battle. We have to find willing participants, justify using them for our research, and hope to avoid drawbacks. It is rare, if not impossible, to obtain access to a sample of successful U.S. presidents or esteemed artistic geniuses in the current population. These individuals are by definition extraordinary. Historiometry allows us to reflect on highly influential people throughout time and use their strengths to study exceptional human behavior.

Historiometry is the quantitative analysis of historical or archival data to study individual differences in human behavior and achievement. This data (such as historical records, artifacts, and documents) is nearly infinite in supply, already collected, accessible to everyone, and rich with exceptional achievements and failures. As psychologists, we already have the skills necessary to analyze this data, all we need to do is use them.

Several steps are involved in any historiometric analysis. First, we must identify our hypothesized relationship or model. Second, we must identify the sample needed to analyze our hypotheses (for instance, U.S. presidents or famous impressionist painters). Third, we must identify a coding scheme based on the literature. This will direct our collection of historical documents and artifacts necessary for our analyses. Once the data is Briggs or ask Mozart to complete a problem construction task, but we can use our statistical expertise to analyze their work in order to find new paths for future research to explore. This can be accomplished through a statistical methodology known as historiometry.

Historiometry allows us to reflect on highly influential people throughout time and use their strengths to study exceptional human behavior.

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By Maria Teresa Gastón

You never know where a fill-in presentation will lead. Last semester, a conference talk led to an interesting three-month research project for a large, international non-profit. I will highlight the challenge of developing the contract for the consultation and briefly describe what I got myself into that turned out to be a very satisfying applied experience.

In the summer of 2011, Lourdes Gouveia, a UNO sociology professor who served on my thesis committee, passed my name on to the organizer of a conference on Labor across the Food Industry. They had asked her to present on a panel. She was not available and forwarded my name because of my research on meatpackers in Nebraska. I was invited, accepted, and I enjoyed presenting on my thesis work in Santa Cruz, California in February (all expenses were paid). Early the following week back in Omaha, I received an email from a staff person at the Natural Resources Defense Council asking me if I would consider assisting them with research for a new campaign on sustainable food purchasing. A staff person from their San Francisco office had heard me present at the conference and recommended me for the consulting work. She listed ten questions they would like help understanding. I was hesitant. Some of questions were specific and others were deep and broad. I did not feel I was the national expert they were looking for. However, urged by family and friends who lauded the reputation of NRDC’s work on the environment, and encouraged by Dr. Harrison, my advisor, I agreed to a conversation to find out more.

On the phone call the following week with five staffers from NRDC, part of me just wanted to tell them everything I knew right there, and get back to my class work. During the phone call, they convinced me they wanted what I had — that is, they wanted me to teach them what I see and understand about the reality of meatpacking and processing, an area they knew very little about. They were open to reading articles and grateful for contacts. I felt my I/O studies, my research, and my years of involvement with workers in the industrial food industry were being validated and that I should try to contribute to this specific project with the potential to make long-term impact on sustainable purchasing practices that would include labor fairness.

Click on the gold “O” below to see the first online edition of our new publication!
My Applied Experience Interning at Sprint

By Amy Walzer

Over the summer, I worked at Sprint Nextel Corporation as their Talent Assessment Intern. Generally, this internship involved assisting the talent assessment team by evaluating and improving Sprint’s hiring practices. Although I had the opportunity to work in many different areas, I led three specific projects.

First, I helped to conduct a confirmatory job analysis for Sprint’s business sales position. Business sales representatives acquire and maintain business sales accounts (e.g., a construction company) for Sprint’s various services. A confirmatory job analysis for this position had not been conducted in several years and the talent assessment team wanted to confirm that the KSAs needed for the position remained the same. As part of conducting the confirmatory job analysis, I spoke with many different Sprint employees who were knowledgeable about the business sales representative position, observed a business sales rep on a typical day, and organized two focus groups: one of business sales representatives and one of business sales representatives’ managers, all aimed at developing a business sales representative job profile. Although slight changes were made, the job profile for the business sales position remained the same.

I also compiled a dataset to validate Sprint’s hiring assessment for retail store managers. The goal was to determine whether the hiring assessment significantly predicted job performance. To compile this dataset I obtained employees’ scores on the hiring assessment as well as various measures of retail store managers’ performance (e.g. ratings of customer satisfaction, sales, manager ratings). This project involved tracking down relevant data and restructuring datasets.

My third main project involved improving Sprint’s training for conducting behaviorally-based interviews. We worked to make the interview training more accessible, interactive, and engaging for hiring managers. Among other things, I added activities to make the training more engaging, broke the training into modules so that hiring managers could easily find information, and added questions so that hiring managers could assess their own knowledge. I especially enjoyed this project because I was able to use my knowledge of selection and training.

Working on these projects not only challenged me but increased my self-efficacy about applying the knowledge I have obtained in my I/O coursework. It was great to have the opportunity to use what I have learned in selection, training, job analysis, and psychometrics courses in real life projects. Additionally, I felt like my knowledge and opinions were valued and taken seriously during my internship. I felt like a member of the talent assessment team, not just an intern.

In addition to working on great projects, I enjoyed the benefits of working at Sprint’s International Headquarters in Kansas City, MO. Among other benefits, the campus boasts several great places to eat, a gym, a drugstore, and a spa. They also have a large internship program which enabled me to attend career development talks and meet other interns.

Overall, my experience as a Sprint intern was extremely positive. I obtained great work experience, loved working for a large company, and enjoyed exploring a new city for a few months. Getting this opportunity provided me with a lot of direction for my future and I would highly recommend the experience to anyone!

Working at Gallup: A Brief Reflection

By Cheryl Fernandez

Over the past few months I have been privileged to start my career at Gallup. Gallup is known worldwide for its polling business, but there is a very strong ‘Strategic Management’ arm that works with clients to help them select and retain the best talent possible. My work here at Gallup requires critical thinking for solutions to internal and external client issues, while constantly improving existing practices through research initiatives. In my role as a Research Manager for the Selection Research and Practice team, I am involved with developing and validating customized selection instruments and linking them to Engagement and Wellbeing initiatives within the organization. I value the opportunity and freedom to involve myself with projects I find interesting. The last few months have not only introduced me to a variety of selection-related issues and new frontiers, but also to a very friendly and flexible work culture. Applying its own Engagement and Wellbeing indexes, Gallup encourages a friendly atmosphere at work, allowing for a flexible, responsible schedule. I truly enjoy my time here because I work alongside knowledgeable, wonderful people.

CONGRATULATIONS, Dr. Scherer!
UNO I/O professor Dr. Lisa Scherer received the Outstanding Reviewer Award from the Midwest Academy of Management this year.

CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!
The following students earned their degrees this past year:

Danielle Crouch - PhD
Erika Morral - PhD
Sara Roberts – PhD
Andre Hennig – MS
Katie Gerson – MS
Carissa Orth – MS
Sarah Nienhueser-MS

By Cheryl Fernandez

Gallup requires critical thinking for solutions to internal and external client issues, while constantly improving existing practices through research initiatives. In my role as a Research Manager for the Selection Research and Practice team, I am involved with developing and validating customized selection instruments and linking them to Engagement and Wellbeing initiatives within the organization. I value the opportunity and freedom to involve myself with projects I find interesting. The last few months have not only introduced me to a variety of selection-related issues and new frontiers, but also to a very friendly and flexible work culture. Applying its own Engagement and Wellbeing indexes, Gallup encourages a friendly atmosphere at work, allowing for a flexible, responsible schedule. I truly enjoy my time here because I work alongside knowledgeable, wonderful people.
Career Reflections

By James Thomas

IN THE BEGINNING...

As I was nearing completion of my PhD at Iowa State in 1969, I began looking for an academic position. I wanted to be reasonably close to Des Moines, Iowa, for family reasons. I investigated Drake University in Des Moines, but they were not looking for anyone in applied Psychology, and I was not interested in being an experimental Psychologist, although my Masters’ degree made it a reasonable possibility. I also applied for a position at the University of Illinois at the recommendation of one of my co-workers at the Air Force Personnel Research Lab. The Lab had a good reputation in collaborative efforts with Illinois. I told Illinois that I was looking for a position in which teaching was NOT considered to be a secondary duty with research being the major expectation. They appreciated my honesty, but...

As luck would have it, a position opening was advertised on the bulletin board at Iowa State looking for someone in Industrial Psychology to join the faculty at UNO. I had never heard of UNO, and I didn’t know much about Omaha; but it was a reasonable distance from Des Moines. I applied and miraculously was hired in 1969 at the temporary salary of $9,500, the going rate for an Instructor, with promise of a $500 increase upon completion of my dissertation. I was to work on a dissertation while employed in a teaching position. I have tried to pass that notion on to my grad students here…don’t leave until you are finished, or nearly finished, with your dissertation, or risk being a meteoric rise in facilities and faculty. This is nothing like the UNO that hired me.

THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS

Shortly after I arrived at UNO, I was asked if I wanted to teach Intro Psych...on television!! It was distributed as a closed circuit course on campus and as a course broadcast off campus on KYNE-TV, the local educational channel. At that point my teaching load became 3 sections of Psy 1010 and one undergraduate course in Industrial or Social Psych each semester. I learned how annoying it can be to go out in public when you are a “TV personality”. I had that 12 hour teaching load until I entered phased retirement last year. When I finished my PhD in 1973, I began teaching the Social Prosem and some of the graduate I/O courses, in particular the Performance Appraisal/Criterion Development course and Personnel Selection. I also took over the Psychometric Theory course when Dr. Wikoff and Dr. Liddy left. Other faculty were hired over the years including Carl Greenberg, Dennis Dossett, Dennis Doverspike and Doug Cellar. When some of these faculty members left, we hired Wayne Harrison, Lisa Scherer, and Ronni Reiter-Palmon. As you can see, the I/O program has been reasonably stable for the past several years. Perhaps the biggest change was our ability to offer a PhD here at UNO. Prior to that we only had MA and MS programs.

At some point during the 1970s the Center for Applied Psychological Services was created by two School Psych faculty members as a way of paying grad students for work in school settings. When Omaha University became UNO and thus part of the University of Nebraska system, and they were able to offer a PhD here at UNO. Prior to that we only had MA and MS programs.

At some point during the 1970s the Center for Applied Psychological Services was created by two School Psych faculty members as a way of paying grad students for work in school settings. When the two School Psych faculty left, the I/O program took over CAPS. The first project I remember was in 1982 for the Council Bluffs Police department; they wanted help selecting Captains and Lieutenants.

Then we had a project in 1985 with the Brandeis retail stores, which involved creating a selection interview for hiring sales associates. In 1983 we had a project with Complete Music to create a selection procedure for hiring their party DJs. Although a few other projects were included under the CAPS umbrella over the years, most of the CAPS projects focused on promotional exams for the City of Lincoln Police and the City of Lincoln Fire Departments. This work began in 1986. I don’t recall how I became “Director” of CAPS. I think it was due to lack of interest by the other faculty members. As I write this, we still have active CAPS projects with the Fire and Police divisions in Lincoln. We must have done something right. I do know that a number of the project directors went on to very successful careers, and they often felt their involvement with CAPS was important in securing their jobs.

Looking back, the quality of our graduate students in I/O has gradually improved to the point where we have a number of highly qualified applicants each year, and the acceptance procedure has become more difficult. We are now in a position to reject applicants that would have been accepted in earlier years. The thing that seems to remain stable, however, is the lack of appreciation for the role commas play in good writing. I found it necessary to emphasize the importance of commas, and that still seems to be an issue. I also think the quality of the I/O faculty has dramatically improved over the years, as has the quality of faculty in our other programs. It’s clear to me that, if I applied for my own position, I would not get the job. So, I’m very thankful for the career UNO allowed me to pursue.

I did manage to find a job in which teaching was not “a secondary duty”, and, as a bonus, my CAPS work was valued. Even more, I appreciated the opportunity to do the schedule each semester!! This was also a learning experience: Job security is often a function of being willing to do things no one else wants to do.

Wishing you well, I’ll sign off now. Thanks for reading my ramblings.
Department Publications and Presentations: The Year in Review


Kennel, V., & Reiter-Palmon, R. (2011, October). The effect of group regulatory focus on the accuracy of team idea evaluation. Presented at the 2011 Midwest Academy of Management Conference in Omaha, NE.


Reiter-Palmon, R. (2012, Aug.). Team Creativity in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Chair, session presented at American Psychological Association meeting, Orlando, FL.


Continued on page 13


Stephens, S., Hullsiek, B., & Reiter-Palmon, R. (2012, Nov.). The effects of task interest and ambiguous instructions on creativity. Poster to be presented at the Society for Judgment and Decision Making, Minneapolis, MN.


Wigert, B., & Reiter-Palmon, R. (2011, November). Harvesting the creativity of perfectionists: The influence of goals and constraints on creativity. Paper accepted to the Midwestern Academy of Management Annual Convention, Omaha, NE.


Wigert, B., & Reiter-Palmon, R. (2011, November). Harvesting the creativity of perfectionists: The influence of goals and constraints on creativity. Paper accepted to the Midwestern Academy of Management Annual Convention, Omaha, NE.


This past May, my wife Kelly and I moved from Birmingham, Alabama to Columbus, Ohio. Kelly is doing her year-long internship in clinical psychology at Nationwide Children’s Hospital, which will most likely turn into her post-doc for two additional years. After match day on February 24th I began my job hunt in the Columbus metro-area. Less than two months after knowing we were moving to Columbus, I accepted an exciting job offer with a company called IQ Innovations, LLC here in Columbus http://www.iq-itly.com/. IQ Innovations is a software company providing the learning platform for K-12 online education. Currently we are the official state K-12 online learning platform for Ohio and California with additional states in the works.

I am a Research and Development Specialist working on a groundbreaking long-term project that will harness a wide variety of student data sources resulting in predictive analytics that will lead to increased academic outcomes. It is really exciting to come into an organization and play an instrumental role in the development of a completely new product feature that will provide differentiation from the competition. I have found that many, many facets of the UNO I/O curriculum along with my applied work experiences have been indispensable on a daily basis to this new K-12 education context.

Justin Wolfe
Class of ’05

My husband, Daniel, and I had our first baby, a boy named Gavin Marcus on February 15, 2012. I have also been promoted to Manager of Consulting Services at Assess Systems. Assess Systems is a consulting and software firm that specializes in selection and development solutions for organizations.

Renae Manning Slaughter
Class of ’03

I was elected to be the interim chair of the psychology department for this year.

John Johanson
Class of ’98

Was promoted to Associate Professor and received tenure last year with the Goodrich Scholarship Program.

Troy Romero,
Class of ’09

Pretty quiet on my side other than becoming a grandfather for the first time!

Bob Myers
Class of ’79

I just published the following article in Personnel Psychology:


I also co-edited a book that came out this summer:


and I wrote a chapter in that book:


On a personal note, my wife Anne and I officially adopted in May a 3 year old boy named Mason.

C. Allen Gorman,
Class of ’04
Help Support Our Program!

The Psychology Department at UNO and the University of Nebraska Foundation wish to announce a new way you can help support our I/O Program and the work we do here: The UNO Industrial Organizational Psychology Fund. Your gift to this fund will help support our students' research and conference presentations to further enrich their education.

Donations may be made online by following this link or may be mailed using this form. Please specify the "UNO Industrial Organizational Psychology Fund" (Designation ID: 01109150) when making your donation.

Thank you for your continued support!

Applied Experience at the Natural Resources Defense Council

Continued from page 6

After the group call ended, I inquired about specifics of time frame and budget with the woman who had initially contacted me. She breezily told me, “just write up a SOW and budget and send it to us and we will review it and get back to you.” She made it sound so easy. I did not even know what an SOW was! I found out later that it is short for a “scope of work” description.

OK, I can do this, I told myself. I have researched for classes, for my thesis, and for white papers for Creighton on focused subjects for strategic planning. I have worked on many committees, both locally and nationally. Still, I had never consulted for pay with a large, international organization. I asked advice from friends with more experience and wrote up a description of the work I proposed I could do, the time frame, and specified a budget for an estimated number of hours it would take me to complete the task. I was advised to keep it general and open-ended in case the work took much more time than I anticipated.

The NRDC agreed to my “SOW” and followed up with a daunting legal contract which I signed and sent back after asking a couple of clarifying questions about confidentiality and the proprietary nature of material I would provide them. As part of the research, I was able to conduct interviews with people I had long wanted to speak with about their work in meatpacking, including local line workers, union leaders, and our own classmate in I/O, Scott Schmidt-Bonne who worked for four years in a HR department in a local meatpacking plant. I completed the research, met twice with staffers to give phone updates, and wrote an additional executive summary for extra pay. I look back on this consulting as a challenging, but very satisfying, applied experience!