I·O NEWS

The official newsletter of the Industrial Organizational Psychology Program at the University of Nebraska at Omaha

FALL 2014
Greetings from the Industrial-Organizational Psychology department at UNO!

**Department and I/O Area Happenings**

Dr. Joe Allen became part of the I/O Psychology faculty last year. Two programs have been created or otherwise reinvigorated during his short time here: the Center for Applied Psychology (CAPS) and the Volunteer Program Assessment of UNO (VPA-UNO). Both of these programs provide applied research opportunities for I/O students, as well as benefit the greater Omaha for- and non-profit communities. You can read more about CAPS and VPA-UNO in the newsletter.

Students and faculty in our program have been busy with conference submissions and publications, which are listed in the newsletter. You can see that it was a productive and busy year, with the visibility of UNO increasing every year. We are very proud of our faculty and students!

Earlier this year we had a great get-together at SIOP in Honolulu, and we want to thank Talent + for providing the funding for that event. We appreciate it very much! Read about students’ perspectives of that time in the newsletter.

We are currently planning the get together for 2015, and we look forward to seeing everyone in Philly next year!

In an effort to stay connected to our alumni, we have a group on LinkedIn called “UNO I/O Psychology.” This group (currently 163 members strong!) is designed to facilitate networking by including faculty, current students, and alumni. If you are not yet a member, please join us. We also highly encourage members to post I/O-related questions and job postings, but I will continue to send job openings to you via e-mail. Please help me keep our alumni database current by letting me know about any changes in your information (e.g., new e-mail or work address).

In this 5th annual newsletter we have highlighted some of our students’ applied and research-related experiences, both from current students and alumni. We have also provided updates from our alumni about their personal and professional lives. On that note, please continue to update us about your lives – we love hearing from you!

(*Continued on next page* >>)
My Own Work

I am proud to announce that earlier this year I received UNO’s Distinguished Research or Creative Activity Award. This award means a lot to me, and I could not have earned it without the help from my colleagues and the students who are part of my research lab. In terms of my research, I continue to study individual and team creativity, especially in relation to problem construction. Work on malevolent creativity, or the use of creativity for harmful purposes, is also continuing. Dan Harris, one of my Ph.D. students, has published his thesis on this topic, and we have worked on a number of research projects related to this issue. In addition, I am interested in how motivation, specifically in the form of creative mindsets (whether creativity is viewed as fixed or malleable) relates to creativity.

Two grants I have been involved with are in their final stages of data collection, which means the next several months are going to be pretty busy with analyses and manuscript writing! One grant is about reducing patient falls in rural hospitals across Nebraska. Victoria Kennel, a doctoral I/O student, has worked most closely with me on this project, and she has written about her experiences in the newsletter. The other grant, funded by Rural Futures Institute, pertains to a leadership development program involving virtual teamwork of rural leaders. I am looking forward to exploring the data from both grants, which will hopefully yield results that can be widely disseminated so as to facilitate the reduction of patient falls in hospitals, as well as enhance leadership development and teamwork for leaders who are geographically distanced from one another.

To keep in touch, please call (402-554-4810) or e-mail (rreiter-palmon@unomaha.edu). Feel free to connect with me on LinkedIn as well.
Congratulations, Graduates!

**Ph.D.**
Eric Faurote, Erin Gallagher, Koichi Kurebayashi, Rebecca Shively, Ben Wigert

**M.S.**
Casey Bowyer, JoDee Friedly, Rose Green, Stephanie Mueller, Teresa Queen, Heather Tice

**M.A.**
Desiree Johnson
## Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>SIOP Alumni Dinner at Honolulu&lt;br&gt;Stephanie Sands, Amy Walzer &amp; Shane McFeely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>What’s New with SIOP-UNO?&lt;br&gt;Bianca Zongrone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Recent Ph.D. Graduate Interview:&lt;br&gt;Erika Morral&lt;br&gt;Daniel Harris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Recent M.S. Graduate Interview:&lt;br&gt;JoDee Friedly&lt;br&gt;Daniel Harris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Improving Patient Safety:&lt;br&gt;A Team Sport&lt;br&gt;Victoria Kennel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Experiences in the Center for Applied Psychological Services&lt;br&gt;Daniel Harris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Introducing VPA-UNO&lt;br&gt;Daniel Harris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Alumni Good News Corner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I/O Publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>I/O Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Help Support Our Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Stay in Touch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Upcoming Events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aloha! The SIOP annual conference took place in Honolulu, Hawaii at the Hawaii Convention Center and Hilton Hawaiian Village last May. The Hilton Hawaiian Village is located right on the shore of the Pacific Ocean with magnificent views of Diamond Head, a volcanic tuff cone on the southeastern shore of Oahu.

There was a smaller group of SIOP-UNO members that attended as compared to previous years, mostly due to the costs associated with going to Hawaii. Despite that, we still managed to have a great time in the sun and sand. In fact, conference session start and end times were adjusted this year to maximize attendees’ time in Hawaii’s beautiful sunshine. The professional attire was also somewhat relaxed, allowing for the inevitable Hawaiian shirt–tweed jacket combinations. According to SIOP, this year had a record-setting number of submissions to the conference - this is not surprising, considering the picturesque location!

The SIOP-UNO Alumni Dinner took place at Tiki’s Grill and Bar, which is in the heart of the Waikiki strip and a short taxi ride from the conference. Tiki’s has a vibrant rooftop patio, complete with a three-piece local band playing tropical music as diners overlooked the sunset dipping into Waikiki Beach. We began dinner with the local specialty (Mai Thais of course!) and were treated to the beautiful ocean sunset right as we sat down. The calamari was unreal; fresh, delicious, and much larger than the usual small rings we’re accustomed to. The macadamia-crusted mahi-mahi was also a table-pleaser. The food and drinks helped everyone get in the networking spirit. We were once again very fortunate to have Talent Plus graciously sponsor the SIOP-UNO Alumni dinner.

Continued on next page >>
There was a diverse group of people who attended the SIOP-UNO Alumni Dinner this year. We had new faculty from the program, new graduate students, older graduate students, recent program graduates, and alumni of all career levels and areas. This year we were also accompanied by consultants from Talent Plus. Conversation strayed from interesting conference sessions, research ideas, and professional development, to surfing, babies, and Game of Thrones. There was no shortage of interesting topics discussed. The event was sealed with the purchase of fresh plumeria leis. The sweet floral fragrance filled the cab ride back to the conference hotel; another successful SIOP-UNO alumni dinner in the books. We hope to see everyone at the 2015 SIOP-UNO Alumni Dinner in Philadelphia!
Greetings from SIOP-UNO! The current chairs are Kevin Mitchell, Elliott Barber, Maggie Gossard, and myself. Over the past year, SIOP-UNO has been busy planning and balancing social and networking activities with activities promoting professional development. As many of you know and look forward to, SIOP-UNO plans social outings on the first Friday of every month. Because graduate students are busy and tend to have full schedules, First Fridays are a great opportunity for students and faculty from psychology to get to know one another and relax over food and drinks. This year, First Friday locations have included the Dundee Dell and Saints Pub and Patio. As natives of the Omaha area, Kevin and Elliott have some fun locations and events scheduled for our upcoming First Fridays. Thanks for your hard work, guys!

Once again, the annual picnic was hosted at Dr. Ryan’s home and was a great success! Despite the heat and rain earlier in the day, I/O students and faculty had a great time getting to know the incoming class, as well as enjoying delicious BBQ and side dishes provided by SIOP-UNO and the students. We also had our annual hayrack ride at Shady Lane Ranch, where students got a chance to unwind by taking a break from classes and making s’mores around a campfire. What a great way to enjoy the unseasonably warm weather we’ve had in October!

In addition to social activities, SIOP-UNO hosts speakers to inform students about career options after graduate school. Dave Pfeffer, an M.S. graduate of the I/O program, kicked off our Speaker Series by sharing his post-graduation experiences at First Data and Goodwill, where he is currently the VP of Human Resources. Dave also shared his thoughts on trends he has seen, as well as trends he forecasts as prominent for the future workforce. We also invited Gini Collins and Danielle Crough, PhD graduates of the I/O program, to come and discuss the opportunities at SilverStone Group, a consulting firm headquartered in Omaha which currently employs many of our fine graduates.

Looking forward to another great year with SIOP-UNO!
Erika Morral graduated from the program in 2012 and currently works as an I/O Researcher at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in Washington, DC. She provided a brief summary of her experiences after graduation.

**Can you tell us about your work experience after graduate school?**
While I was in graduate school, I worked for SilverStone Group, Inc. as a Human Capital Consultant. Shortly after graduating, my husband was relocated to Washington, DC by his current employer. At this point, I transitioned to the role of an I/O Researcher at AIR. I have also continued to work as an Adjunct Professor in UNO’s College of Business, teaching a managerial leadership course online.

**Can you tell me a little about your role at AIR?**
AIR is a not-for-profit, applied research firm in Washington, DC. AIR employs behavioral scientists who provide consulting services to clients. Many of our clients are part of the public sector, including the federal government. However, we do have some contracts with private-sector clients as well. I conduct applied research for a variety of projects, including job analysis, competency modeling, certification exam development, and program evaluation.

[Continued on next page]
What is your favorite part about your job?
AIR has a very collegiate environment, and I love working with lots of smart people who are willing to share their knowledge. I also love working on a variety of projects, and getting experience in many of the core areas of I/O. I also love that AIR encourages continuing to present at conferences and publishing work in journals. It is nice to keep these skills sharp and to continue to build my vitae. It’s also great to work in one of the most beautiful areas of Washington, DC. However, the amount of dessert options and shopping within a few blocks of my office is dangerous!

What do you miss most and least about graduate school?
One of the things I miss most about graduate school is the flexibility and variety in my schedule. What I do not miss is never feeling like my work is done. It was a surreal feeling after graduation to not have a course paper, thesis, or dissertation constantly on my mind and on my “to do” list.

How was the process relocating for a job?
I found it to be much more challenging to find a job in a city you are not currently residing in. I wasn’t familiar with the organizations that employ I/O Psychologists in this area, and I had not done a ton of networking in the region. I did some research and joined the local I/O community. Also, networking with previous UNO I/O program graduates helped to get my foot in the door as two former graduates work at AIR.

How have you maintained work-family balance after recently having a baby?
I knew before moving to DC that we hoped to start a family while we were here. One of my hopes for my new employer was flexibility, and fortunately I found this at AIR. Even with the flexibility, it is still a challenge to find a balance as I am sure most working parents would say. Communicating with my employer about my challenges has been important, and they have been very supportive.

Do you have any advice for graduate students?
Don’t put all of your eggs in one basket. I was certain that I did not want to teach when I started graduate school, and wanted to work for a large consulting firm. However, as you progress through the program and through different milestones in your life, your priorities and preferences will change. Now I am teaching and working at an applied research firm. It is important to gain a wide variety of experience and to make a footprint in research so that you have as many options as possible in your career.
Interview with Recent M.S. Graduate: JoDee Friedly

by Daniel Harris

JoDee Friedly graduated from the program earlier this year in May and currently works at Kiewit, a Fortune 500 company. She provided a brief summary of her experiences after graduation.

**How did you start working for Kiewit, and how did you eventually get to your current position?**
I first started working for Kiewit as a Human Capital Analyst Intern while I completed my Master’s degree. They worked with me on scheduling and workload while I wrapped up school, and this transitioned to a full time position.

**Your current position is in Human Resources Reporting and Analytics – could you describe what that job entails?**
My job at Kiewit is to work closely with top leaders like the Vice President of Human Resources, Directors of Operations, compensation, succession planning and management, recruiting, client relations, and other groups as needed to help centralize and standardize reporting and analytics efforts across the company in addition to implementing predictive analytics projects.

Kiewit is a large company with over 30,000 craft and staff employees, and there is a big push to bring these silos together to help inform the executives so that they can stay ahead of other construction companies and retain high demand talent. It has been an extremely interesting company to work for thus far with a lot of forward thinking business leaders who keep me on my toes, push me, yet also create a climate of creativity and innovation.

**What is your favorite part about your job?**
My favorite part about this job has been the opportunity to understand how a corporate office is able to work with field employees to help make their jobs easier and more efficient so the company can stay ahead of the competition. Kiewit has truly supported me in training, development, company exposure to meet executives, and allowing me to share my ideas and projects. Working with a group of people who support creative thought is refreshing.

**Continued on next page >>**
How did UNO’s I/O program prepare you for your current job?
There is no single way you could describe how the program helps prepare you, but I think a major one—outside of the basic learning like stats and HR practices—is being able to manage large tasks. I am given huge, ambiguous goals to achieve, but after going through the program I am better able to sort through what is being requested and how to operationalize conceptual questions so that it is something concrete. Also, I think being skeptical is such an advantage in the workplace. This might seem simple but there are many people who will just accept tasks without thinking of how to improve the process or question the method that people are executing.

What do you miss the most and the least about graduate school?
The thing I miss most about graduate school is being surrounded by people who understand I/O language. You quickly realize that it is a unique training and point of view when you move into an organization that is not I/O centered. I loved our discussion-based classes where it was relaxed learning yet taught me how to be critical of information and logically discuss issues. The thing I miss the least about graduate school is the massive amount of reading every week. I truly enjoyed the topics and learning about new theories, but that Cohen book was brutal!

Do you have any advice for current I/O graduate students, especially students pursuing their M.S. degrees?
My biggest piece of advice would be to get a balance of academic and applied experience. Whatever path you decide to take, being well-rounded will make you more marketable to anyone. As a graduate student, it is easy for you to take for granted the unique opportunities around you that you will likely never have again. So, utilize this time as a student surrounded by academics and valuable outlets to learn, grow, and diversify your skillset.
Over the past two and a half years I have worked as a graduate research assistant on a project called Collaboration and Proactive Teamwork Used to Reduce Falls, otherwise known as “CAPTURE Falls.” This project was funded by an Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality grant and was an interdisciplinary collaborative research effort. Members of the research team included physical therapists, health services researchers, health data analysts, geriatricians, and pharmacists from the University of Nebraska Medical Center, nurse researchers from Nebraska Medicine and Methodist Health System, and I/O psychologists from the University of Nebraska at Omaha’s Center for Collaboration Science, including myself and Dr. Roni Reiter-Palmon.

The goal of the CAPTURE Falls program was to help hospitals reduce patient falls by supporting a culture of safety, interprofessional teamwork, and sense-making. The overarching research question we attempted to answer was: if an interprofessional approach to reducing patient fall risk works, why does it work? And if it doesn’t work, why not? We partnered with 18 rural hospitals in Nebraska, evaluated their fall risk reduction practices, and helped them develop a customized action plan to implement changes and innovations to reduce patient falls. Each hospital created an interprofessional team to coordinate and implement the fall risk reduction program. These teams included nurses, nursing assistants, physical and occupational therapists, pharmacists, and quality improvement personnel. The research team conducted several webinars and monthly calls to educate the CAPTURE Falls teams on best practices to reduce patient fall risk, and consulted directly with teams to help them implement their action plans. This was the first research project I worked on where the research team was so highly involved in working directly with research participants. It was exciting to see the fall risk reduction teams learn and grow over time, and to coach them along as they implemented changes to improve patient safety in their organizations.

Continued on next page >>
At this point you might be wondering what an I/O psychologist can contribute to reducing a patient’s risk of falling. I quickly learned the answer: quite a lot! Implementing evidence-based medical practices can increase a patient’s safety, but hospital staffs need to adopt and use these practices in order for them to work. I/O psychologists can help hospitals develop strategies to improve employee buy-in and adoption of changes, and evaluate how the hospital’s culture, work environment, leadership, teamwork, and training and education programs support or hinder efforts to improve patient safety. During CAPTURE Falls, I helped to evaluate the safety culture of each hospital and staff perceptions of how teamwork across the hospital supported fall prevention efforts. We conducted focus groups with the fall risk reduction teams to learn about their successes (e.g., increased awareness and teamwork) and challenges (e.g., staff buy-in and irregular use of interventions) in implementing the program. I also conducted interviews with hospital CEOs and other senior leaders to learn about leadership’s role in supporting the program, which included empowering the fall risk reduction team, providing resources, and supporting a culture of safety.

Collecting and evaluating field data is challenging and messy, but we are finalizing the data collection for this program and will soon begin our evaluation of the success of CAPTURE Falls. The information we have collected thus far suggests that patient fall rates have dropped, hospital staff are more aware of the need to reduce falls, and employees see the value in using interprofessional teamwork to address this patient safety issue. As a researcher in this project, I experienced the true intersection of the science and practice of I/O psychology in action. In today’s rapidly changing healthcare sector, there is great opportunity for I/O psychologists to collaborate with healthcare researchers and professionals to enhance the research and practice of patient safety.

To learn more about the CAPTURE Falls, visit the program website at [http://www.unmc.edu/patient-safety/capturefalls/](http://www.unmc.edu/patient-safety/capturefalls/).
Experiences in the Center for Applied Psychological Services

by Daniel Harris

As the new school year kicks off and gets into gear, so does the Center for Applied Psychological Services (CAPS) with a new direction. This past summer, Dr. Joseph Allen took over from Dr. James Thomas as Director of CAPS. Not only does Dr. Allen seek to maintain CAPS’ commitment to providing students with applied experiences, but he also possesses a strong vision for further developing CAPS and maximizing its potential through expanding its client base and offering a wider range of services.

Although CAPS was founded over thirty years ago, it has evolved considerably from its original design. In the beginning, CAPS was intended for School Psychology students, but has since gained momentum through the emerging field of I/O Psychology. For the past two decades, CAPS has mainly provided services to the Lincoln Police and Fire Departments, offering opportunities for graduate students to gain applied experience.

Along with Dr. Allen’s new leadership, Co-Directors Tara Augustin and Michael Yoerger—graduate students from the I/O Psychology Department—hope to expand CAPS to provide more opportunities for building relationships with local organizations and more opportunities for student learning. Together, they are leading the Lincoln Police Department’s Sergeant Promotional Exam with the help of fellow graduate students Victoria Graeve-Cunningham and Ryan Royston.

“When I originally approached Dr. Allen last year about joining CAPS, I was excited to get hands-on experience taking what we learned in the classroom and applying it to the real world. Not only am I applying techniques learned through our coursework, but we also learn how to navigate organizations and communicate with people from other disciplines,” Augustin said. “Now that we are working on expanding CAPS to provide more opportunities, we are also learning how to network and communicate our skill set.”

Continued on next page >>
Yoerger was also eager for the rewards of applied experience. “Shortly after I arrived at UNO, I was intrigued to learn about a program in which I/O psychology students are provided such an opportunity – an opportunity to apply psychological principles and strategies to work with local clients, under the leadership of an experienced director,” Yoerger said. “Since joining CAPS, I have been very grateful to gain invaluable experience in working with faculty, clients, and other CAPS personnel to provide high quality research-based, legally defensible, and scientifically sound consulting services.”

The team has worked with Joan Bell to create CAPS’ first ever website: [http://www.unomaha.edu/psych/caps/](http://www.unomaha.edu/psych/caps/). Their hope is to get the word of CAPS out to local organizations to seek new clients and build relationships with the surrounding community.

Given that CAPS’ new direction is still a fairly recent development, getting started with new clients has not been without its challenges. “Many of the business leaders we’ve met have been hesitant to bring outsiders into their organization and are not always sold on the idea of working with the CAPS program,” Yoerger said. “My advice to future leaders of CAPS would be to be patient in developing connections with clients. Ideally, our goal is to build a strong relationship with the community, and this type of relationship will require lots of time and hard work, but it will also be very rewarding and mutually beneficial to both clients and students.”

These challenges are not without their rewards, according to Augustin. “Learning how to network has been an invaluable take away from our efforts. Whether it is meeting with an organization or attending events to meet new people, I am becoming more confident in myself as an I/O Psychologist,” Augustin said. “Sometimes it feels like there is a bit of a disconnect from graduate school and the real world. With CAPS, I am learning how to diminish that gap. My advice for future CAPS leaders is to take what you are learning through CAPS and really use it to your advantage. You are not only using your knowledge gained through the program, but learning how this functions in the corporate world and all the interesting variables that can affect this that sometimes do not come up in classroom discussion.”

With Dr. Allen’s help, the Co-Directors hope to have new clients by next semester so more graduate students will have the opportunity to learn through CAPS. Their efforts thus far are just the start of the new direction CAPS is taking. “Although I have only been involved with CAPS for a few months, I have very much enjoyed my experiences thus far and am happy to be a part of the exciting new developments in CAPS,” Yoerger said.

Augustin expressed the same outlook. “Working with Dr. Allen and the Lincoln Police Department, and being a part of CAPS’ new developments, has been beyond rewarding for me. I have gained real world experience, as well as strengthened my knowledge base,” Augustin said. “We hope to have more opportunities like this for current and future graduate students so they too can learn through these experiences.”
The Volunteer Program Assessment (VPA) network began at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in 2008 with Steven Rogelberg, Joe Allen, and Daniel Bonilla. Dr. Rogelberg worked a lot with animal welfare organizations, and noticed that assessments of volunteers had largely been ignored. Tools were soon developed to assess volunteers, and both the VPA system and the dataset that is the basis of VPA norms were created.

Joe started a VPA chapter at Creighton in Omaha, Nebraska, having undergrads work with clients in organizations beyond animal welfare (e.g., human shelters, Red Cross). In May of 2012, Joe met Lisa Scherer and they worked across Creighton and UNO until Joe was hired as a professor at UNO. The VPA-UNO chapter officially started in June, 2013 with Dr. Allen and Dr. Scherer as its Co-Directors.

The VPA-UNO process includes client outreach, survey administration, data analysis, program evaluation and enhancement, client consultations, and report development, with the whole process typically taking only 6-7 weeks. VPA-UNO is the largest chapter in the country, and as of October 1st, 2014, VPA-UNO has had 49 clients with a total of 32,529 volunteers served. The current Assistant Directors are Christine (Christy) Quick, Victoria (Vicki) Cunningham, and Sheridan Trent, and they have provided brief summaries about their experiences with VPA-UNO.

In what way(s) has being a VPA-UNO Assistant Director influenced or benefited you as a student, a professional, or a member of the community?

Christy
By exposing us to so many other organizations, it made me realize that I/O psychologists have a specialized set of skills and a knowledge base that organizations desire. I also get to see how the theoretical constructs we discuss in classes materialize in an actual organization and the consequences, both good and bad, that they have.

Continued on next page >>
Finally, this position has strengthened my connection to our campus and community by providing the opportunity to help local volunteer organizations.

**Vicki**
Beyond having someone offer me a new dataset for research each semester to play with, gaining priceless applied experiences in an integrative learning environment, and retaining an opportunity to grow my professional network, VPA-UNO has allowed me to give back to the Omaha community. Philanthropic work has always been a passion of mine, and VPA-UNO allows me to give my time and talents to nonprofit organizations to improve their volunteer operations, which is a wonderful impact that I get to be a part of.

**Sheridan**
I first joined VPA-UNO as an undergraduate interested in non-profits and applied I/O experiences. I was happy to volunteer my time at each meeting and event because I strongly identified with the mission of VPA UNO. I never imagined that it would eventually pay for my first year of graduate school. I am ecstatic to be able to continue the work that I loved as an undergraduate now as a VPA-UNO Graduate Assistant.

**How has the I/O program helped you with successfully completing VPA-UNO projects?**

**Christy**
In addition to building my research skills, I think the I/O program has helped me in my VPA-UNO role by exposing me to so many different areas of research. Having that knowledge base allows me to make higher-quality recommendations to organizations that I can feel confident in.

**Vicki**
I have been able to take my experiences and knowledge from the I/O program and apply them directly to the VPA-UNO process. Further, the I/O faculty, specifically Dr. Lisa Scherer and Dr. Joe Allen, have given me the support, guidance, and confidence to apply what I have learned to this wonderful applied experience.

**Sheridan**
I feel that the information we learn in psychometrics, as first year I/O graduate students, is very applicable to what we do in VPA-UNO. Although I was aware of some of the information as an undergrad, the difference is that now I am better able to understand exactly how we are measuring constructs and why it is important to utilize validated processes. I feel like I have been having a lot of ‘Aha!’ moments, which only furthers my conviction that VPA-UNO provides an integrative learning experience.

**What has been your biggest challenge as a VPA-UNO Assistant Director? What has been your greatest victory?**

**Christy**
I think our biggest challenge as Assistant Directors is change management. VPA-UNO is going through a huge transition and has grown in a number of ways since its commencement here at UNO. Continued on next page >>
With this transition, a lot of organization, training, and documentation has to be done on our part. That being said, I also think this is our greatest victory. We now have a handbook that documents each of our processes in an easy-to-understand manner that has greatly improved our training process. We now have a standardized training that each on-boarded member of VPA-UNO is required to go through, and this will only enhance the quality of our service.

**Vicki**
When thinking about my biggest challenge as a VPA-UNO assistant director, I think I will take the usual graduate student cop-out and say finding enough time to get everything done. Because I am truly passionate about VPA-UNO and our mission to serve nonprofit organizations, it is easy to justify working on VPA activities instead of my studies. However, I am very lucky to have the flexibility, support, and much needed advice from Dr. Scherer and Dr. Allen to prioritize coursework and research. That being said, VPA-UNO has provided me with an opportunity to for integrated learning, but also an opportunity to conduct research with robust populations. At times it may seem overwhelming, but I know that this is a great opportunity that I am lucky to be a part of.

**Sheridan**
My biggest challenge is keeping track of everything. We deal with dozens of clients, which require us to be aware of and manage a multitude of activities. Luckily we have very good communication between the directors and assistant directors, which makes things much more manageable. One difficult, but rewarding, task for me has been having to train and manage analysts. My greatest victory has been helping to update the VPA handbook, which provides analysts a source of knowledge. It was a monster of a project but many of our analysts have provided a lot of positive feedback about the updates. Basically, we went from 15 pages to almost 100. I’ve learned so much from helping with the content and developing efficient processes.

Dr. Scherer and Dr. Allen also offered their input to similar questions.

**In your experiences as VPA-UNO Directors, what have been your biggest challenges and your greatest victories?**

**Lisa**
Joe and I work an average of 10 hours a week on VPA-related projects, and this is on top of teaching courses, conducting research, and mentoring students. So the biggest challenge is that what we’re doing is not sustainable because we don’t have release time to do it; we’re tired and it’s wearing us out. Another challenge is that prospective volunteer coordinators are sometimes fearful that the results of our assessments might make them look bad, may suggest incompetence, or give reason for them to get fired. However, we help them realize that most problems in nonprofits are system issues, not person issues.

**Continued on next page >>**
One victory is that people often come back to us once they've used our services. Another is that I get to see my students develop professionally and personally, which is always great. VPA-UNO is also housed in the Community Engagement Center at UNO, so we get to know other non-profits and their struggles, as well as seeing a real-world application of I/O knowledge and how I/O can help.

Joe

One of the biggest challenges is convincing others of the value of assessment, to get them to realize that we can help. And like Lisa said, sometimes the volunteer coordinators feel threatened about what the results of our assessments may suggest. Another challenge is that students can sometimes lose the vision of giving back to the community, instead getting caught up in analyses. If we lose our vision, we lose the whole purpose of what we’re doing.

I also agree with Lisa that one of the largest victories is in seeing students and clients grow and progress over the span of months, sometimes years. It’s especially rewarding to see clients improve volunteer recruitment and retention based on the feedback we provided. I’m also grateful that we received financial support from the Dean to hire Assistant Directors. This allows me and Lisa to focus on networking and getting clients while the Assistant Directors deal with projects and analyses.

If there’s an interest in our services, keep in mind that we put alumni and friends at the top of our waiting list! And even though we are primarily focused on serving non-profits in Nebraska, we conduct a lot of assessments for non-profits across the country. If there’s an interest in VPA-like services with for-profit businesses, the UNO I/O department also houses the Center for Applied Psychological Services (also directed by Joe).

Likewise, we’d be happy to partner with anyone who is interested in starting a VPA chapter at their organization, and we could potentially provide start-up clients in their area. Ultimately, our goal is to grow VPA to build better non-profits through the knowledge and application of I/O psychology.

For more information about VPA-UNO and its services, click on the following link:

www.unomaha.edu/unopsychvpa/

Lisa Scherer & Joe Allen
Good News Corner

Kiley Cordes: MS, ‘10
Our second child was born this May on 5/1/14. Her name is Kinsley Jynae Cordes, and she joined her brother Keagan Carroll. I’ve also started a new role at my current company, Professional Research Consultants, as a Client Relationship Manager.

Kevin Reindl: MS, ‘94
I am now in my 3rd year at Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) in San Francisco and still heavily involved in the design and validation of Talent Assessments for the company. My title has changed to “Expert”, which I find quite amusing, and it is always fun to introduce myself as an expert (as opposed to a novice, I guess?).

I’m now in my 4th organization within HR at PG&E, reporting up to Recruiting, then Diversity/Inclusion and have most recently a newly created group that has yet to get a new name. Titles aside, I believe our new group will eventually include Talent Assessments, Engagement, Org Design and Survey Research/Analytics. My new boss is a Ph.D. I/O person and I am looking forward to delving into some new areas of the I/O world.

On the personal side, my second attempt at fatherhood (some 18 years after the first) is going well. My little guy is now 6 years old and settling into his school in Albany, CA (east bay from San Fran). We are somewhat committed to staying here until he makes it through school, and to seal the deal, my wife and I have spent way too much money to buy an over-priced home in the crazy Bay Area housing market...

Dan Whitenack: PhD, ‘88
I developed a new/unique career guidance website (www.OccupationProfessor.com) that was launched late last year. It combines testing with a search engine and helps young adults figure out the age-old question of ‘what should I be when I grow up’. I’ve been featured on some radio shows and appeared on the HLN (formerly Headline News) network a couple of months ago.

Earlier this year, I’ve also helped co-found and launch another company/website (called www.ApplicantMatcher.com) to help companies determine if hourly employees match up to a pre-determined job profile – primarily for hourly and entry level professional positions. This latter role is in conjunction with an I/O Professor at Virginia Tech (Dr. R.J. Harvey).
Gary Greguras: MA (PhD from Bowling Green)
I have just been promoted to Full Professor of OBHR at my university.

Brent Proulx: MS, ‘06
First, my girlfriend Jeanette Siewert and I got engaged this summer and are planning on a private ceremony wedding in mid-2015. Also, I got a promotion at work. I am now a Senior Management Consultant at Talent Plus.

Katherine Gerson: MS, ‘11
I’m transitioning into a new role on my team (HR Workforce Insights Team) at Allstate Ins. and Trevor and I are expecting our first child (a boy!) in early December. I’m moving to a more analytical role where I will be consulting with my clients on creating scorecards and dashboards, along with how to use our company data to answer their business/research questions. This will involve some training of employees on our tool, along with me learning how to use Tableau (excited about this!) to make visually fancy reports.

Lastly, my husband is finishing up his last year of medical school here in Chicago. He will be interviewing for residencies across the U.S. this fall and graduating next June. We will likely move to wherever he gets in for residency in Neurology. Funny how he ended up with loving Neurology!

Allen Gorman: MA, ‘04 (PhD at U Tenn)
I am in my second year as an Assistant Professor of Management at East Tennessee State University. I teach classes in Strategic Leadership in the MBA program and Current Management Issues at the undergraduate level. I recently published a paper on intelligence and leader development in the Leadership and Organization Development Journal (reference below).


Tony Gage: MS, ‘05
This year has been quite busy year for the Gage family. We welcomed our second daughter, Naomi, into the world and I accepted a new position as a Psychometrician at Ascend Learning. The new position is located in Kansas City, so we moved our family from Chicago only 4 months after welcoming our youngest into the world. This is all good news, but we are hoping for a calmer 2015.

JoDee Friedly: MS, ‘14
I was hired by Kiewit and bought a house!
John Omel: MS, ‘75

I am still performing interim Human Resources Leadership for hospitals and am currently trying to complete an assignment as VP HR at an HCA hospital in Los Angeles. I have been serving here for over a year now and am hoping to find my replacement soon. This hospital has undergone significant leadership changes in the last year in the process of creating a new culture and I have been gratified to see some of the results already in increased patient satisfaction, process improvement and employee engagement. I have also been active in helping to implement the OneHR model within the HCA.

Several months ago, I was asked to provide the same interim HR leadership to a sister hospital several miles away. For the first time in my 39 year HR career I was the VP of HR in two separate organizations at the same time.

I look forward to getting some time off after this assignment ends and my wife and I plan to make our biannual trip back to the Midlands for the Christmas holidays this year.

On a sad note, I mourn the passing of my friend, Mike Krehbiel [MS, ‘74], who left us this past July 17th. Mike graduated from the I/O program a year before me and we had both served an assistantship to Dr. Gordon Hansen while in the program. We were, of course, both tortured in the same “Chips classes” that served us so well later in our careers. We both joined the new HR team at Father Flanagan’s Boys Home soon after and worked together there for a few years before moving on to other adventures. He truly cared about people in the workplace, had a great perspective on organizational behavior and I learned a lot from him. Mike and I stayed in touch over the years both personally and professionally. I and everyone who knew Mike will miss him very much.


Allen, J. A. (November 2013). Psychology: A look at careers and my career. Invited address for “DREAM” (Direction Recruitment Education and Mentoring), A Union Pacific Railroad HR Recruiting Services Program at Omaha North High School, November 14, 2013, Omaha, NE.


Allen, J. A. & Scherer, L. (June 2014). Volunteer Program Assessment Q&A. Invited presentation and discussion session with the Metro Omaha Food Policy Council, June 17, 2014, Omaha, NE.


Barber, E., Harris, D. J., & Reiter-Palmon, R. (2013, November). The Relationship between Problem Construction and Malevolent Creativity. Paper presented at the Nebraska Psychology Society’s Annual Convention: Wayne, NE. (Also presented in March, 2014 as a poster at UNO’s 6th Annual Student Research and Creative Activity Fair: Omaha, NE).


Jones, K. J., Kennel, V., & Venema, D. M. (2013, November). Reflections on the CAPTURE Falls project: Lessons learned from implementing organizational change. Panel presentation at the 2013 Nebraska Critical Access Hospital Quality Conference in Kearney, NE.


QuicK, C., Scherer, L., & Allen, J. (February 2014). Results and Recommendations of Volunteer Program Assessment for Partnership for Kids. Invited presentation for the leadership team at Partnership for Kids, February 3, 2014, Omaha, NE.

Quick, C., Scherer, L., Allen, J. (2014, Feb.) Influence of distributive justice on volunteer satisfaction and intention to quit as a function of the importance of extrinsic outcomes. Presentation at the University of Nebraska at Omaha Research Fair, Omaha, NE.


Scherer, L., Allen, J., Quick, C., Faurote, E., & Trent, S. (2014, Apr.) Volunteer Program Assessment: University of Nebraska at Omaha. Invited presentation to the Knights of Aksarben Foundation. Omaha, NE.


Trent, S. B., & Scherer, L. L. (2014, March). Resilience as a moderator of work-school conflict on daytime sleepiness, satisfaction, and general well-being. Poster presented at the 2014 University of Nebraska at Omaha Research and Creativity Fair in Omaha, NE.

If you wish to support our I/O Program and the work we do, you can donate to the **UNO Industrial Organizational Psychology Excellence Fund** through the University of Nebraska Foundation. Your gift to this fund will help support our students’ research and conference presentations to further enrich their education.

You can donate:

- **Online** by following [this link](https://nufoundation.org) and selecting “Give Now.” Alternatively, you can go to [https://nufoundation.org](https://nufoundation.org) and enter “Industrial Organizational” in the “Give to a specific fund” search.

- **By mail** using [this form](https://nufoundation.org). If donating by check, please make it payable to the University of Nebraska Foundation. In the memo portion of the check, write “UNO I/O Excellence Fund.”

Thank you for your continued support!
Throughout this newsletter many points-of-contact are provided. Please note our primary methods of staying in touch with you:

**Linked-In**
Click on the LinkedIn logo on the left or visit linkedin.com and search “I/O UNO Psychology” to find our group.

Joining will keep you in close contact with our program and alumni! Stay updated with job postings, notifications of upcoming events, stimulating discussions, and tons of networking.

**E-mail**
[rreiter–palmon@unomaha.edu](mailto:rreiter–palmon@unomaha.edu)

**Department Phone**
402-554-2581

**Address**
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Psychology Department
6001 Dodge St.
Omaha, NE 68182-0274
Upcoming Events

7th Annual UNO Student Research and Creative Activity Fair
March 6th, 2015
Undergraduate and graduate student research showcase
Omaha, NE

30th Annual Conference of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology
April 23rd - 25th, 2015
Philadelphia, PA

123rd Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association
August 6th - 9th, 2015
Toronto, ON Canada

75th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management
August 7th - 11th, 2015
Vancouver, BC Canada