

The University of Oklahoma I/Oklahoman Special Issue

Alumni & SIOP Updates



Alumni Spotlight

This year we interviewed some of our esteemed alumni to learn a little about how OU shaped their careers, where they are now, and what advice they have for students and other alumni. In this issue, we interviewed four alumni who have chosen a variety of career paths. We look forward to catching up with the rest of you in future newsletters.



Amanda Allen

Amanda Allen (*Applied, Government*)

started the OU I/O program in 2003 with Dr. Eugenia Cox-Fuenzalida. After completing her Master's Degree, she began working with Dr. Shane Connelly as her Major Professor and finished her Ph.D. in 2008. Her favorite part of the program was the collegial nature of the work. She enjoyed working in labs or on contracts together to collaborate and learn from each other without being competitive. Learning to prioritize and juggle multiple projects was the most important skill she learned while at OU. This has helped her tremendously as a professional to be productive when she has a lot of projects going on simultaneously.

After graduating, she started her career as a Research Psychologist at the Department of Health and Human Services in Washington, D.C. Her specific organization formed after Hurricane Katrina and was charged with overseeing the public-health side of disaster recovery. While Amanda described the mission as rewarding, the organization was young and still developing, which often involved growing pains. She stayed there for two years before taking a job as a Research Psychologist with the U.S. Secret Service. She led the development

and implementation of several new hiring processes and promotional exams for Special Agents.

While she enjoyed working with this unique population for 3 years, she decided to move outside the federal government to the non-profit Edison Electric Institute (EEI). EEI is the trade association for the electric power industry and represents all U.S. investor-owned electric companies. The organization itself provides public policy leadership, strategic business intelligence, and essential conferences and forums to its members. At EEI, she works in the Employment Testing Department which is a consortium program established in the early 1980s to provide member companies with validated employment tests for hiring into a range of energy company jobs including power plants operators, lineworkers, electricians, and even customer service representatives. She has now been at EEI for almost 6 years.

What advice would you give the current graduate students at OU who now hope to have a successful early career?

For current students who are getting ready to go on the job market, I would suggest looking for opportunities that allow you to do a lot of different types of I/O work. Even if you think you know exactly what areas you want to focus on in your career (e.g., selection, leadership), it's great to get a lot of different experiences early on because it's great to get a lot of different experiences early on because it can help you decide what you are really interested in. It can also make you more marketable if you eventually decide that you want to change jobs.

What are you involved in outside of your job (e.g., professional organizations, committees, journal review boards)? Tell us more about how you got involved.

I have maintained memberships in several professional organizations including SIOP, IPAC, and the Personnel Testing Council of Metropolitan Washington (PTC-MW). I have been a part of a couple of SIOP committees including the workshop planning committee and a reviewer for SIOP awards, as well as a reviewer for SIOP conference submissions. The committee memberships were ones that I learned about through word of mouth and joined to be more involved in the I/O community, but also to network with other I/O Psychologists. I would suggest to anyone who is interested in being more involved to reach out to those local organizations and join. Many of them host regular meetings/events where you can hear speakers on a variety of topics and meet with others in the I/O community. Also, SIOP committees are always looking for members so if there is something that is of particular interest to you, ask for more information and how to join. Even if you aren't sure what you have to contribute, I think it is worth getting involved because you might be surprised!

Tell us a little bit about your job. What do you do on a daily basis?

I am a Manager in the Employment Testing Department at EEI, which means I oversee the research, development, and maintenance of the products in our testing program. My job is sort of a combination of internal and external consulting where we conduct internal research for the program, but also consult with the member companies who use our testing products on how to implement testing in a legally defensible manner. My days are spent communicating with our customers by phone or e-mail because they are spread across the U.S. I typically have several long-term projects going on, such as re-validating existing testing products, developing new products for test preparation, etc., mixed with more immediate, short-term responsibilities, such as conducting small scale transportability studies, reviewing testing accommodation requests, troubleshooting customer issues, etc. studies, reviewing testing accommodation requests, troubleshooting customer issues, etc.



Jennifer Griffith

Jennifer Griffith (*Academic, Business School*) spent a solid 9 years at OU (2004-2013) getting her Bachelor's, Master's, and Ph.D. While she was an undergrad psychology student, she worked as a research assistant for Amanda Allen, Josh Davis, Vykinta Kligyte, and Ethan Waples in Dr. Shane Connelly's lab. Right away, she knew she wanted to work with Shane to get her graduate degree. Luckily, Shane was interested in having Jennifer in her lab even though she was on sabbatical. While at OU, Jennifer learned two critical skills. First, she learned to cultivate productive working relationships. She also learned how to manage projects with many moving parts. These skills are critical to her professional career today.

Her favorite thing about the I/O program was the culture of the program. She loved how supportive the students were of each other. Through collaborative work, she learned that success is not a fixed quantity. When someone succeeded or reached a milestone, everyone celebrated rather than becoming competitive, undermining each other, or sabotaging the work of others. This is not the experience many of her coworkers had and she was happy to avoid that additional stress.

After graduating from OU, Jennifer said (with a smile) that she "did a bit of job sampling." She held a few short-term project management and research analyst roles. She worked at the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services in the Policy and Planning division. She also worked at the Oklahoma

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Department of Commerce in the Workforce & Employment Research division. She learned about what she liked (e.g., research & policy) and what she didn't (e.g., convoluted and overly complex excel spreadsheets) from both positions. Ultimately, despite her intense dislike for complicated spreadsheets, she landed in academia, first at a liberal arts college and finally at an R1 state school.

Jennifer is now the Assistant Professor of Organizational Behavior & Management at the University of New Hampshire in the Paul College of Business and Economics. She teaches OB and HR topics to undergraduate and MBA students. She also researches socio-cognitive factors that influence workplace judgments and relationships (e.g., leader-follower, teammates). She also helps shape policy and develops training on her favorite topics. Jennifer says, "In a nutshell, it's my dream job!"

What exciting projects are you working on?

Some of my most interesting and exciting projects come out of my role as a Faculty Fellow at Prevention Innovations Research Center (PIRC), which is a standalone research center at UNH that (per their website), is "dedicated to ending sexual and relationship violence and stalking through the power of effective practitioner and research partnerships". Sharyn Potter & Jane Stapleton, the women that founded and run PIRC & it's sister nonprofit, Soteria Solutions, have done decades worth of amazing work in this space from driving public policy to bystander intervention training for high schools and colleges to producing new technology to aid in training & prevention. I'm delighted to be able to be a small part of their story as they expand their training, consulting, and outreach initiatives to include the prevention of workplace sexual harassment.

Currently, we're putting together a survey that will eventually be deployed to HR professionals across the US. In short, we ask about the content, delivery, & frequency of sexual harassment prevention training in their workplace as well as if and how they evaluate their trainings. Because it's difficult to get that kind of data publicly (when it exists at all), this is a great first step in understanding what's working (and what's not) in practice so we can incorporate that

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information into both public education & targeted consulting initiatives.

What is the most important lesson you have learned in your career to date?

Don't waste time working on things you aren't interested in if you can avoid it. I often did right after graduating because I thought I should to get started on my own path, but, in the end, it made it harder to figure out what I actually did want to spend my time doing. You can't wait for someone to give you permission to do the work that you want. You have to get comfortable advocating for yourself. Allie Gabriel wrote it much more comprehensively and eloquently in her TIP column: "Make sure that you do good work that makes you fulfilled, and I promise that you will find where you are meant to be."

What is the role of work/career in your life? How do you balance between work and life/family? What suggestions do you have for students with regards to work-life balance?

In grad school (and for a good long while after, if I'm honest), I felt guilty anytime I wasn't working, so I "worked" as much as I could - from the time I woke up to the time I feel asleep every day of the week. But, as we all know, there are diminishing returns on work quality & productivity, as the first draft of my dissertation clearly illustrated. And, because I was too busy working on things I don't even remember now, I wasn't making enough room in my life for the people that I care about. Now that Chris & I live 2,700 miles away from our families and all my amazing graduate school friends are scattered around the world, I really regret doing that.

Work-life balance is different for everyone, so you must find what fits in your life. I can't stop my brain from thinking "This episode of Parks & Rec would be great for class" or "I need to tell Kelsey about this idea/article on our next call", but I can decide not to spend an entire Saturday afternoon editing a paper when it can wait until Monday. I know it's not possible or desirable for everyone, but I very, very rarely work on weekends anymore, and I let all my collaborators know that in advance. When you have an "on call" kind of job where you get emails all the time, it's very easy for work to sneak into every second of your life. The bottom line is that we all spend a lot of time in school, and we should be able to reap the rewards of doing so, whatever that means to each individual.



Jay Hardy

Jay Hardy (*Academic, Business School*) graduated with a BS in Psychology from Colorado State in 2009 and worked for about a year and a half in various HR roles before starting at OU in 2010. At the time, he came in as part of a cohort of 11, which is the largest OU I/O psychology cohort at the time. Jay says, "I wouldn't trade it for anything." The relationships he built during those five years were his favorite and longest lasting benefits of attending graduate school. Many of the people he met on his first day remain his good friends as well as productive professional collaborators. Jay says, "I think it's important that you don't write you classmates off or take them for granted, because they will provide the foundation of your professional network for years to come." He knows the value of looking out for your fellow OU I/O program members.

While at OU, the most important things he learned were (a) how to run advanced statistics from a great quantitative faculty and (b) how to write from his advisor, Dr. Eric Day. Doing these two things helped him secure his dream academic job. Jay is currently an Assistant Professor in Oregon State University's College of Business, where he teaches classes in Organizational Behavior and Human Resources Management. Over the last four years at OSU, he has researched a variety of topics focused on the applications of empirical research to the field of human resources (HR). His research has been published in the Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Management, Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, and Human Resource Management Review, among others.

Tell us why learning to write and run advanced statistics is important to you.

The statistics are important because they represent the value that we add as I/Os to the broader field of business. Being able to make sense of data and then communicate those stories to stakeholders that may not have the same level of sophistication is a valuable and constantly in demand skillset that will guarantee you employment for the rest of your life. Having great quant faculty helped me develop these skills, but I also learned from teaching an undergraduate stats class, because it forced me to boil down the things I was learning into digestible, relatable, and accessible lessons. If you get the opportunity and are up for the challenge, I would encourage you to give it a try.

The writing is important for me especially as someone who now works in academia because the vast majority of my time is spent doing just that - writing. In my opinion, being able to turn an idea into a paper or a study effectively is just as if not more important than ensuring your methodology is well developed and your analysis sound. This was something I was admittedly really bad at when I first entered grad school. Fortunately for me, Eric Day did a remarkable job over the years helping me progress my writing from that of a sloppy undergrad to a refined scientific writer. This not only enabled me to get the publications I needed to secure my dream academic job, it also set me up for success once I got there.

Please tell us about your research.

I have a pretty broad range of interests when it comes to research. My main stream focuses on applications of theories of self-regulation to the field of training and development. A lot of this work has built on the foundation of my master's thesis and dissertation and I continue to work in this space today. However, thanks to grad school connections I've been able to sustain over the years, I've also been able to expand into topics related to employee selection using extremely large data sets of real-world applicants to answer questions that are highly relevant to practitioners. This has been a rewarding avenue of intrigue for me because I can see the direct connections between the work I'm doing and the issues that selection scientists and hiring managers are facing. I'm also in the early

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stages of building up a more robust stream centered around the role of human curiosity in adult learning and employee functioning. If anyone has an interest in working with me in this space, please reach out (my email is jay.hardy@oregonstate.edu)! There's a lot of really cool research topics in this area that have yet to be explored

What advice would you give new professionals (academic or applied)?

I knew from the day that I submitted my first graduate school application that I wanted to go into academia. As such, most of my advice would be targeted to those of you interested in working in a business school, though I'm sure some of this advice would apply to those of you targeting psych programs as well.

The first thing that I would say is that there are few professions that offer the same level of intellectual freedom and control over your flow of work. With this freedom comes a lot responsibility to manage your own time and energy. Before committing to the job, understand that it won't always be easy. But if it works out, it can be incredibly rewarding.

Second, one limitation I would note of the OU I/O program (although this may have changed over the years) is that it does not do enough to encourage students to target the top journals in our field (e.g., AMJ, AMR, JAP, PPsych) with their work. For those of you interested in working in a business school, you may need to push for this on your own. Although breadth on your CV when you hit the job market is good, business schools in general are going to be more interested in the likelihood that you will publish big papers in big journals. As such, when developing an idea for your master's thesis, dissertation, or a side project, make sure you take the time to look through these top journals, especially those publishing on your topic, take notes on how they structure their theory, methods, and contribution, and do your best to emulate their approach. It may seem intimidating at first, but believe me, if I can do it, you can do it. In fact, a recent paper by Podsakoff et al (2018) in AMLE demonstrated that many academics publish their most high impact articles while they are in graduate school or during the early days of their

career. You may (and likely will) fail a few times before it works out, but if you stick with it, you can set yourself up for a successful life-long career studying phenomena you find interesting and rewarding. It doesn't really get any better than that.

Finally, as I indicated earlier, don't be afraid to reach out to your network of fellow I/O alumni (myself included). It's in all of our best interest to see the OU I/O psych brand expand and there's no better way to do that than working together. It doesn't matter if you're a grad student or recent alum. If you're willing to work hard I (and pretty much everyone else I know) would love to collaborate with you.



Logan Watts

Logan Watts (*Academic, Psychology Program*) entered the I/O psychology Ph.D. program at OU in 2012 and graduated in 2016. His advisor was Dr. Mike Mumford. His favorite things about OU were the lifelong friendships he made, the beautiful campus, and the college football games on Saturdays. The most important thing he learned was how to be a productive researcher.

Upon graduation, he was offered a tenure-track job as an Assistant Professor at Baruch College in New York. Baruch offers undergraduate, Master's, and doctoral degrees in I-O Psychology, which allows Logan to hone his teaching skills at all three levels of education. He is currently teaching Research Methods and Organizational Training and Development. Next fall, he plans to offer a Ph.D. class on Creativity and Innovation in Organizations and develop another

class on the Psychology of Morality and Ethical Decision Making next year. Logan also leads an active research lab focused on the topics of leadership, ethics, and creativity—all topics he studied at OU.

Logan is currently working on a book for Taylor and Francis with Kelsey Medeiros, Tristan McIntosh, and Tyler Mulhearn on the topic of ethics training. Their goal is to translate practical insights gleaned from their time working on the NIH ethics education grant at OU for managers charged with administering ethics and compliance programs in organizations. Logan has also partnered with this trio to form a company called Ethics Advantage to consult on ethics assessment and development in organizations.

Please tell us about your research.

I'm excited about a number of research projects right now. I'll briefly mention two. First, Logan Steele (my soul bro), Deanne den Hartog from the University of Amsterdam, and I are in the final steps of publishing a meta-analysis examining the cross-cultural relationships between transformational leadership and innovation. This is currently in the 3rd R&R stage at a great international business journal (please keep your fingers crossed for us!). The gist of our findings is that the level of uncertainty avoidance within a society amplifies the relationship between supervisor transformational leadership and innovation at the team and individual levels. Thus, multinational corporations and global institutions desiring to boost creativity and innovation might benefit more from transformational leadership interventions (e.g., training and development) when they concentrate these investments in societies with higher levels of uncertainty avoidance.

A second project at the top of my mind is one being led by Ethan Rothstein, a Ph.D. student of mine at Baruch. We are currently writing a manuscript on the effects of leader charisma on follower interpretations of leader values. What we are finding is that followers report higher levels of value congruence with leaders who signal self-transcendent values (e.g., need for benevolence, universalism) compared with leaders who signal self-enhancement values (e.g., need for power, status, wealth). However, when leaders display high levels of charisma, these differences in follower perceptions wash

out. This pattern points to a potential explanation for why some charismatic leaders are able to get people to buy-in to their self-enhancement-focused visions—because the charisma distorts followers' abilities to decipher between different value systems signaled by leaders.

Tell us a little bit about your job. What do you do on a daily basis?

I get to work from home, most days in my pajamas. These are the days that I focus on writing, research, and prepping for classes. Then about two days a week I go to campus to teach, supervise student research, and attend meetings. Right now, I'm working on about a dozen different projects. Academic life is always busy, but good!

What is the role of work/career in your life? How do you balance between work and life/family? What suggestions do you have for students with regards to work-life balance?

I've learned academic life is kind of a double-edged sword when it comes to work-life balance. What I mean by that is: academics have none. My applied friends always tell me how good they have it working from 9 to 5, five days a week and not bringing work home much. I personally don't feel like I have any real separation between work time and home time, because I use my home as my office 85% of the time. On other hand, I'm in complete control of when and where I work (also about 85% of the time). I usually try to take one day off on the weekend and do something fun to recharge. My advice is to find the amount of work-life balance that works for you and then stick to it, and don't feel bad if your formula looks different from others.

OU's SIOP reception is an opportunity for us to catch up and learn about the incredible work and successes of our alumni. It's also a time to have fun and reunite with old friends, as well as to make new ones. Here's a snapshot of the fun we had at the SIOP reception this year.







We'd also like to congratulate the recipients of the I/O Psychology Graduate Student Alumni Association's Travel Award! This year's recipients were Ashley Jorgensen, Michelle Todd, and Megan Turner. Funding for this travel support was made possible by a generous donation from Hogan Assessments to the I/O Psychology Graduate Student Alumni Association Fund.



Travel Award recipients and Alumni Association Board members. Pictured from left to right: Amanda Allen, Ashley Jorgensen, Michelle Todd, Megan Turner, Kelsey Medeiros, and Kimberly Nei.



From all of us at the OU IO Alumni Association, thank you for your donations and making our SIOF reception possible! Also, a big thank you to our sponsor, Hogan Assessments.





We had a blast at SIOP this year! Thank you for reading this Special Issue, and we look forward to seeing you next year!

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If you have any questions, comments, concerns, or ideas for improving future issues of the newsletter, please contact the Editor, Michelle Todd, at [erinmichelletodd@ou.edu](mailto:erinmichelletodd@ou.edu). If you are interested in volunteering to take on a leadership role in the OU I/O Alumni Association, please contact the President, Kelsey Medeiros, at [kelseymedeiros@gmail.com](mailto:kelseymedeiros@gmail.com)