Welcome Our New Faculty Member!

Dr. Tara S. Behrend comes to GWU from North Carolina State University, where she earned her Ph.D in I/O Psychology under the direction of Lori Foster Thompson. She also holds a M.S. from NC State (2006) and a B.S. from the University of Pittsburgh (2003). Dr. Behrend will be teaching courses in training, psychometrics, and I/O Psychology. She is also interested in service-learning, and has led many international projects. In her free time, she attempts in vain to train her dog, Ruby.

Tara’s research focuses on the way technological changes are shaping organizational practices, from recruiting to training to performance evaluation. Her Workplaces and Virtual Environments (WAVE) lab is currently investigating some of the following questions:

Recruitment and Selection in Virtual Worlds. Virtual worlds, such as Second Life, present both obstacles and new possibilities for recruitment and selection. Recruiters have begun to use virtual worlds to advertise for positions, disseminate information about their organizations, and even interview candidates. Yet, very little is known about how this medium affects users. For instance, how do candidates’ avatars affect interviewer judgments? How does an organization’s virtual presence affect job seekers’ impressions of organizational culture? How will candidates feel about the fairness of an interview conducted in a virtual setting?

Intelligent Agents in Training. As training moves from classrooms to computers, trainees have access to a greater variety of courses, and more flexibility to train where and when they choose. However, this flexibility can lead to a high proportion of unfinished courses, low engagement, and high isolation. Intelligent agents have recently been used to increase engagement and reduce isolation in web-based training. Tara’s research aims to understand the factors that make intelligent agents most effective in achieving these goals. For instance, what are the effects of allowing users to design their own agents? Will trainees benefit most from an agent that is similar to them in terms of appearance or personality?

Mosel Award Spotlight

Congratulations to Raluca Graebner, winner of the 2009 Mosel Award for her paper “Personality and Conflict in Virtual Teams.” Her study explored the effects of personality on perceptions of conflict and outcome satisfaction in virtual teams. In order to simulate a virtual team experience, 115 undergraduate students were divided in teams of three to accomplish a creative task by using a synchronous form of computer-mediated communication. Conflict was induced through disparate role goals within the team. Results indicated that neuroticism significantly predicted perceptions of conflict and team competition. Individuals higher in neuroticism were less satisfied with the decision and the decision-making process than those lower in neuroticism, the latter relationship being partially explained by increased perceptions of conflict. Conscientiousness was significantly related to decision acceptance, satisfaction with the decision-making process, and perceived time to conflict resolution (highly conscientious subjects described conflict to be resolved faster than subjects lower in conscientiousness). Raluca presented her work from this project at SIOP 09 in New Orleans, and is currently working on preparing the paper for journal submission.
We are pleased to welcome two new students to the I/O program: Jamie Severt and Garett Howardson.

**JAMIE SEVERT**

I am from Columbia, Maryland and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from the University of Maryland in May, 2009. I will be working with Dr. David Costanza, who will be my advisor as a first-year student in the George Washington University I/O psychology program. My research interests include team leadership, organizational culture and climate, and selection.

I have interned with the Baltimore Orioles, Bowie Baysox, and was the team manager of the University of Maryland baseball team for the past four years. My interest in I/O psychology came about from applying principles from the field of I/O psychology to these baseball organizations with which I have worked.

In my spare time, I enjoy playing golf, attending Orioles, Terps, and Redskins games, listening to music, and hanging out with friends and family. I look forward to delving more deeply into the discipline of I/O psychology while sharpening my research and teaching skills in the program.

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**GARETT HOWARDSON**

I'm from Clark, SD a small farm town of about 1,100 people. I attended Clark High School and went on to attend the University of South Dakota where I majored in psychology and obtained a minor in computer science. My advisor is Tara Behrend and my early research interests vary but include Cross-Cultural Management & Leadership, Technology's Impact on Training, and Technology's Impact on Employee Selection. I will be working on a project with Tara involving virtual training with avatars.

In my spare time I like to read (mainly memoirs and biographies), ride bikes, run (pretty much anything outdoors), work out, watch movies, and cook. I'm really looking forward to exploring the relationship that the program has with the communication and management departments. I think that relationship provides some fantastic research collaborations and opportunities that would interest me very much. I'm also extremely excited about the applied opportunities that the DC area provides for internships and real-world experience.

I love meeting new people and hearing their ideas/perspectives about various topics. I'm always up for a good discussion over coffee or what-have-you and I'm an extremely open minded individual. I am very much looking forward to meeting everyone!

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**APA TRAVEL GRANTS**

This August, two of our students received prestigious travel grants, with funding, to present at the APA conference in Toronto: Basford, T.E. & Offermann, L.R. (2009). *Creating Diversity-Inclusive Climates: What Leaders Can Do*

Leaders have the opportunity and responsibility to help ensure all members of their diverse workforces feel included and valued. The present study aimed to identify behavioral strategies leaders can utilize to promote inclusive climates. Seven themes were uncovered: Fairness, Merit-Based Rewards, Inclusive Communication, Individual Consideration, Recognition & Appreciation, Respect, and Leading by Example.


The relationship between ethnic identity and organizational attitudes was investigated. Data from 230 students indicates that perceived diversity moderates the relation between ethnic identity and organizational attitudes. Perceived social support mediates this relationship, where social support results in positive affective commitment only when perceived diversity is high.
Students in our department are working in multiple private and public organizations to gain experience in the field. Here are some of the exciting projects they are working on:

Jessica Badger: This summer I interned at Fors Marsh Group, an applied research DoD contractor, where I helped develop a survey aimed at assessing the predictors of attrition among Military applicants.

Tessa Basford: As a summer intern at Federal Management Partners, I worked with several federal agencies on a variety of projects ranging from leadership succession planning to performance management.

Sumona Basu (De Graaf): I am currently working at Bloomberg LLP on the Leadership, Learning and Diversity team, leading a global onboarding initiative for new hires and executive talent. I am also responsible for the talent development of the HR workforce at the company.

Jessica Deares: I'm interning at ICF International in the Applied Organizational Research group, where I'm working on projects including a handbook on how to influence others, a satisfaction survey, and a benchmarking study.

Rebecca Fraser: I returned to the Competency Assessment Branch within the Office of Personnel Management as a Personnel Research Psychologist. This summer my projects included occupational analysis, assessment development, and training.

Raluca Graebner: Over the summer I worked as a paid research assistant on Dr. Offermann's NSF grant, running statistical analyses and doing research on issues pertaining to diversity in the workplace. In the fall I am excited to teach a course (PSYC 119 - Group Dynamics) and start working in the Office of Academic Planning and Assessment at GW.

Jennifer Harvel: I'm working for the Office of Personnel Management as a Personnel Research Psychologist. I have been involved with a variety of projects involving job analysis, competency modeling, and various types of assessment development (e.g., structured interviews, assessment centers, accomplishment records, etc.).

Salman Jaffer: I am currently working at the U.S. Government Printing Office, working on creating a change management process for the agency, improving GPO's selection procedures, and post-survey action planning.

Congratulations to Becky, Sumona, Raluca, and Salman for passing their comprehensive examinations!!

SIOP 2009

The 2009 SIOP conference was held in April in New Orleans, Louisiana, with faculty and students presenting.

Some of the most common themes of the conference were employee engagement, generational issues in the workplace, and green business initiatives.

Our GW group of students, faculty, and alumni gathered at the Red Fish Grill on Bourbon Street for some delicious Cajun food and catching-up. Alumni joining in the fun included Elaine Brenner, Tanya Brubaker, Dave Dye, and Mindy Lockshin Levy.

The next SIOP conference will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, from April 8th-10th. Hope to see you there! Please plan on joining us for dinner.
SPOTLIGHTS ON SOME OF OUR RECENT GRADS!

Dr. Courtney Morewitz recently successfully defended her dissertation, *Climate Strength as a Moderator of the Relationship Between Person-Organization Fit and Job Performance*. This dissertation sought to explore inconsistencies in the relationship between person-organization (P-O) fit by proposing and testing a mediated moderation model where the relationship between P-O fit and job performance is both moderated by climate strength and mediated by organizational commitment. The results indicate that P-O fit did not have any significant relationships with the study variables. However, organizational commitment was significantly related to perceptions of organizational climate quality as well as job performance.

Courtney is currently a Manager in the Talent Management Analytics and Solutions group at Marriott International. In her role, she manages the global associate opinion survey and conducts other brand-specific and internal human resources research related to recruitment, selection, and program evaluation.

Dr. Ken Matos recently successfully defended his dissertation, *Relational Demography, Linguistic Diversity, and Workplace Attitudes.*

He examined the association between varying populations of Spanish-speaking employees and the workplace attitudes (e.g., opinion of coworkers and perceived opportunity for advancement) of both Spanish and English-speaking employees. His results generally suggested that employee reactions to linguistic diversity in their workplace was moderated by other factors such as intent to stay and impressions of supervisors and that an employee's relationship with their employer and long-term career plans may impact how they respond to the presence of Spanish-speakers in their workplace.

Currently, Ken is working as a survey and research Psychologist at Defense Manpower Data Center here in DC. He manages surveys looking at the incidence of racial/ethnic discrimination and harassment and the environment for equal opportunity programs in the military.

Dr. Natalya Dyomina successfully defended her dissertation, entitled *Gender and Cultural Influences on Leadership Perceptions* in June.

Natalya’s study contributed to the field of leadership by integrating research on cultural values, gender dynamics, and raters’ behavior into a theory of leadership perceptions. Using a sample size of 14,926 employees from four countries, her study found support for a leadership perceptions model in which followers’ characteristics, such as gender and culture, influence leadership perceptions. Specifically, participants from cultures low on individualism and high on power distance and masculinity expressed much more favorable views of their leaders than did employees from cultures high on individualism, low on power distance and low on masculinity. While culture and gender were found to be useful indicators of how followers perceived their leaders, cultural variables were more important predictors in this study than was gender.

Natalya has just moved to Canada, and is looking for work in the Toronto area.
Spotlights on Some of Our Recent Grads!

In June, Dr. Arwen Hunter successfully defended her dissertation entitled *Delving Deeper into the Commitment Process: Pre-Employment Factors, Initial-Entry Commitment, and Turnover*. She explored the role of personality and other pre-entry individual characteristics in turnover decisions. Her findings suggested that personality and other pre-entry individual characteristics may predispose an individual to stay with or leave an organization, regardless of the experiences the individual has once entering the organization. Additionally, results suggested that the levels of normative and continuance commitment an individual enters an organization with may affect turnover decisions made up to two years later.

After working for ARI and being funded by the Consortium of Universities in their Fellows Program during her time at GWU, Arwen recently took a position in ARI’s Organizational Performance Research Unit at Aberdeen Proving Ground. In her new position, Arwen conducts research on enhancing performance in the Army; exploring human complexities in joint, interagency, intergovernmental, multi-national, and distributed organizations and developing methods to measure and improve team performance in network-enabled, complex organizations.

AoM Presentation

This August, doctoral student Noelle Scuderi presented a paper at the Academy of Management conference in Chicago entitled, *Servant leadership and transformational leadership in church organizations*.

Congratulations to Dr. Costanza!

Dr. David P. Costanza was awarded the 2009 Distinguished Alumni Award by George Mason University’s I/O Psychology program. This award honors alumni who have excelled in research, mentorship, professional contributions, and the application of I/O psychology. Award winners are chosen based on nominations by current students and the vote of a committee. The award was presented at GMU’s annual reception at SIOP in New Orleans this spring. Congratulations, David!

Welcome GW’s New VP of Research

Prominent neuroscience researcher and professor Dr. Leo M. Chalupa became GW’s first Vice President for Research this year. Dr. Chalupa aims to bring GW into the top tier of the nation’s research institutions, stating, “The George Washington University is well situated to be one of the nation’s leading research universities. It is home to a wide variety of innovative scientists and professors…I look forward to joining GW’s collaborative educational community, as we work together to bring GW to the forefront of research development.”
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If your organization would like to become a sponsor, please have them contact David Costanza at dcostanz@gwu.edu.

Thank you enjoyed the newsletter! We wish you a safe and memorable rest of the year.

Yours Sincerely,
’09-’10 Newsletter Editors
Tessa Basford
Jessica Badger
(From Left to Right)

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