THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

SPRING 2018 NEWSLETTER

PRESIDENT LEBLANC'S MISSON FOR THE UNIVERSITY:
"TOGETHER, WE RAISE HIGH"

President Thomas LeBlanc, newly inaugurated in August, has spent this academic year speaking to students and faculty about their concerns and establishing a mission moving forward for the university. President LeBlanc is particularly vocal about tailoring his plans to GW's specific needs in addition to using his prior administrative experience at the University of Miami and the University of Rochester.

Under his leadership, the university is making strides toward five strategic initiatives:

◊ Improving the undergraduate student experience
◊ Research enhancement
◊ Development and alumni relations
◊ Medical enterprise
◊ Institutional culture

Of particular importance for our department, the president has praised the previous establishment of the Office of the Vice President for Research and plans to establish metrics of success and to look very carefully at how well the University's formal research structures are serving our faculty and the serving the research mission of the university. Our organizational culture researchers might also be interested in LeBlanc's mission to reform the institutional culture of GW: to make it less risk-averse, more focused on individual service to students, and less defined by our financial limitations.

President LeBlanc is steadily working toward these and other major advancements at our university that will directly impact our department. Be on the lookout for his newer initiatives, accessible at:
https://strategicinitiatives.gwu.edu/

Also be sure to stay apprised of research funding by consulting the Initiatives Page of the Office of the Vice President for Research website. https://research.gwu.edu/university-facilitating-fund

Lots of good things going on here!

CONGRATULATIONS, DR. MEREDITH COATS!!

Congratulations to **Meredith Coats** for an impressive two-fer! First, on March 12th, Meredith successfully defended her dissertation titled "Understanding the retention of high potential employees: A comparison of survival analysis techniques." Her research explored how various survival analysis techniques can be used to better understand retention and turnover.

Second, Meredith also recently accepted a position with Capital One working in their newly created Leadership/Development/High Potential team. She starts her new job, as a freshly minted PhD, in April.

SIOP 2018 PRESENTATIONS

GW IO faculty and students will be traveling to Chicago in April this year for the 2018 SIOP Conference, and we hope to see you there!

Presentations are listed below in alphabetical order — GW students and faculty are **bold**.

- **Aguinis, H.**, Ramani, R. S., & Alabduljader, N. Enhancing methodological transparency in I-O psychology research. In Koehler, T. *Promoting replicable, reliable, and credible research in I-O psychology* (symposium)
- Aiello, J. R., Cascio, W. F., McNall, L. A., Stanton, J. M., & **Behrend, T. S**. *Invisible eye or helping hand? The present and future of organizational surveillance*. In D. L. **Tomczak &** T.S. **Behrend** (chairs; panel)
- **Behrend, T. S.,** Brown, K. G., Burke-Smalley, L., Kraiger, K., Peterson, D. B., Salas, E., & Surface, E. A. *The future of learning and development research: Threats and opportunities.* (symposium)
- Bradley, J., Ruch, B., O'Hare, E., Kuykendall, L., Ruark, G. A., **Behrend, T. S.**, Gallus, J. A., & Hyson, S. J. *Executive Board Session: Link Your I-O Work to Federal Policy & Funding Opportunities*. (panel)
- Canali, K. G., Legree, P. J., Wind, A. P., & **Willford, J. C.** *More evidence of specific abilities incrementing g for high ability individuals.* (poster)
- **Coats, M. R.,** Shaughnessy, S. P. & **Costanza, D. P.** *Understanding retention of high potential employees: Comparing survival analysis techniques*. (symposium)
- Culpepper, S. A., **Aguinis, H.,** & Kern, J. *A differential measurement and prediction framework for differential prediction* (poster)
- Fink, A., Battista, M., **Behrend, T. S.,** Kolmstetter, E. B., Kraiger, K., & Macey, W. H. *Forging the future of work with I/O psychology*. (panel)

SIOP 2018 PRESENTATIONS CONT.

- **Foley, K., Offermann, L.R., & Lanzo, L.** *U.S. politics at work: The impact of leader-follower political alignment.* (poster)
- Joo, H., & **Aguinis, H**. *Opportunity variability and the production of star performers* (poster)
- Joo, H., **Aguinis, H**., Lee, J., Kremer, H., & Villamor, I. *Non-normality of performance produces incorrect utility analysis results* (poster)
- **Miles, A. F., Costanza, D.,** Finkelstein, L., **Wright, C., & Arnold, G.** *Does potential actually predict high potential?* (poster)
- Murphy, K. R., **Aguinis, H.**, & Pulakos, E. D. *Performance appraisal and performance management: Where are we? Where are we going* (panel)
- Ramani, R. S., **Aguinis, H.,** & Alabduljader, N. *Advancing the conversation on scholarly impact in I-O psychology: Novel approaches.* (panel)
- **Ravid, D. M., Costanza, D. P.,** & Imose, R, A. Inappropriate inferences from generational research. In F. K. Buettne (Chair), *Generational theory gets a trophy: Limitations and implications of a popular concept.* (symposium)
- **Tomczak, D. L., Willford, J. C., White, J. C., & Behrend, T. S.** *When electronic monitoring encourages withdrawal: The mediating role of autonomy.* (poster)
- **Willford, J. C.** & Muhammad, R. S. Person-centered personality measurement in the U.S. Army. In Muhammad, R. S. (chair). *Innovations in personality research in I-O: Person-centered analytic approaches.* (symposium)

SEE YOU IN CHICAGO!!

OTHER 2018 PRESENTATIONS

- **Aguinis, H.,** & Ramani, R. S. (2018, Jan) *What you see is what you get? Enhancing methodological transparency in organizational behavior research.* Paper presented at the Israel Organizational Behavior Conference, Tel Aviv, Israel.
- **Costanza, D. P., & Ravid, D. M.,** (2017, Nov). *A New Approach to Understanding Generational Differences: What Do You Mean They Don't Vary?* Presentation at Age in the Workplace Meeting 2017, Lünberg, Germany.
- **Foley, K., Lanzo, L. & Offermann, L. R.** (2018, July). Team inclusion over time. Poster to be presented at the 13th Annual Conference of the Interdisciplinary Network for Group Research. Washington, D.C.
- Cieniewicz, A., & **Offermann, L. R.** (2018, July). Authentic leadership and teams: A review and future research agenda. Poster to be presented at the 13th Annual Conference of the Interdisciplinary Network for Group Research. Washington, D.C. http://www.aom.org/

ACADEMY OF Management   **CHICAGO, IL, AUGUST 2018**

- **Aguinis, H.,** Joo, H., Lee, J., Kremer, H., & Villamor, I. *Effects of non-normal performance distributions on the accuracy of utility analysis.*
- Bradley, H., & **Aguinis, H**.*The abundance of star teams: Antecedents of heavy tails in team productivity distributions.*
- **Aguinis, H**., Ramani, R. S., Alabduljader, N., Bailey, J. R., & Lee, J. *A pluralist conceptualization of scholarly impact in management education.*
- **Foley, K.,** Villamor, I. & Hill, N. S. Gender and virtual work: A review and future research directions. In I. V. Villamor & N. S. Hill (chairs). *Advancing virtual work research: Differences that matter for virtual work.* Symposium

George Washington University SIOP 2018 Reception!

Register at: go.gwu.edu/SIOP2018

Please join the **Department of Organizational Sciences & Communication** and

the **Department of Management** at:

Loews Chicago Hotel, Richardson Room (2nd Floor)

455 N Park Drive

Chicago, IL 60611

Thursday, April 19, 7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.

As we celebrate…

David Costanza joined *Work, Aging and Retirement* as an associate editor

N. Sharon Hill joined the editorial board of *Personnel Psychology*

Herman Aguinis received SHRM's 2017 Losey Award for lifetime achievement in human resource research

Tara Behrend received grants from the Lincoln Electric Foundation and MERSeta

James R. Bailey's research was covered by *BBC, The Washington Post, The Boston Globe,* and *CBS Nightly News.*

The placement of doctoral students **Samuel Kaminsky** at Google, **Ravi Ramani** at Purdue U.-NW and **Nawaf Alabduljader** at Kuwait U.

Katina Sawyer will join GW as assistant professor of management in Fall 2018

Page 4

RESEARCH DISCUSSION SERIES

Dr. Jennifer McLeer

Jennifer received her PhD in sociology from the University of South Carolina in 2015, specializing in social/organizational psychology. Her research experimentally tests theories within the group dynamics literature to establish the precise conditions for successful applied interventions in educational and organizational settings. She currently teaches courses in group dynamics and industrial psychology and consults on a project that has been contracted by the Army Research Institute. Her research discussion took the form of a job talk on her current study "Socially Motivated Underachievement: How Group Dynamics Affect Individual Performance." This benefited both her and attendees as it provided a useful feedback mechanism and gave students a realistic job preview for academia.

Dr. Joanne Zhang

Joanne is a visiting scholar in the I/O Department who specializes in group coaching and individual coaching geared towards habit change She mainly serves major multinational organizations in China and in APAC. She is cofounder and partner of The Inspire Group. She received her PhD in organizational communication from Texas A&M University. Joanne's talk provided a useful introduction to dialectical theory.

Dr. Meredith Coats

After successful defense of her dissertation, titled "Understanding the retention of high potential employees: A comparison of survival analysis techniques," Meredith gave a talk about her project. Her research explored how various survival techniques can be used to better understand retention and turnover. She recently accepted a position with Capital One working in their newly created Leadership/Development/High Potential team.

ADVANCED STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: SAMUEL KAMINSKY

What is your new position at Google? What are your day-to-day activities?

I work on the Hiring Innovation team, where I am a Scaled Assessment Specialist. Google gets millions of job applications every year and my team develops new and innovative hiring methods to improve the efficiency and quality of the hiring process. I'm still getting started here, however my day to day work has mostly focused on developing and validating assessments and work sample tests. This includes a mix of meeting with different teams throughout the company to understand their hiring needs, writing test items, and analyzing data in R.

How has your time in the I/O Program at GW prepared you for this kind of work?

The main thing that I use in my job that directly comes from GW is a general research mindset. My role requires me to not only question how we do things, but to also turn those general questions into testable hypotheses. GW prepared me in this sense through discussion (or in some cases argument) based classes and by working on several WAVE lab projects. My job also requires me to have knowledge of psychometrics and statistics, which I learned in classes at GW.

How's the California weather treating you?

California weather is great! I thought it would take me awhile to get used to it, but I've already become someone who thinks it's cold when it hits 50°.

Google

ALUMNI CORNER: DR. KAITLIN THOMAS, PHD 2017

Why did you chose an applied I/O career and Riot Games in particular?

A lot of it probably had to do with watching my mom work in an applied organizational development position for most of her life and being really inspired by the way she affected change in her organization.

I chose Riot in particular because I was very attracted to the type of work I would be able to do and intrigued by the organization's maturity state. I was the first I/O psychology researcher that was hired at the company so I knew I would have a lot of autonomy to shape what that position looked like in the problem spaces I would get to pursue. It was also a very exciting time to join the company because it was this start up organization that scaled extremely rapidly and was dealing with a lot of interesting questions like "how does a company maintain a scrappy culture when it scales rapidly", "how does a company introduce more process into things like their hiring and performance management when folks are so used to doing things however they want?" I felt that I would be able to have a pretty significant impact and that really excited me.

What kind of research are you working on?

The type of work I do can really be broken into three different categories: (1) research deep dives (e.g., selection validation study), (2) product design and development (creating a competency based feedback tool or developing our companies annual engagement-ish survey), and (3) advising/consulting, which mostly involves using strategic thinking frameworks to help leaders and teams think through decisions.

I'm currently working on three main teams. The first team is the diversity and inclusion (D&I) team. We are working to create our company's philosophy around D&I and to develop and implement a strategy on how to achieve our D&I goals. The second team I work on is our global riot survey team which runs our company's annual health survey. The third team that I work on is our performance management team where I help design and run or 360 performance review tool. Aside from my team work, I also take on a number of ad-hoc projects that often involve running surveys or focus groups or developing key performance indicators.

How did the GW I/O program help prepare you for your career? Is there any truth to the idea that what's most important is learned "on-the-job"?

The GW I/O program was incredibly beneficial in setting me up for success in my current role. I was able to earn a lot of trust from coworkers because of my subject matter expertise in the I/O area (e.g., designing interview questions and competency models) and basic research methodology (e.g., running focus groups and crafting surveys). The program also really set me up for success by giving me the opportunity to have several applied experiences such as my fellowship at the Army Research Institute, where I gained invaluable experience with managing relationships, presenting, and figuring out how to balance doing things according to best practice with doing them quickly. I also gained lots of project management and team leadership experience through my work in Lynn's lab that has been quite relevant to my current work.

I do feel that there is a lot of truth to some skill sets being learned on the job. Some of the things that I developed competency in while on the job include storytelling – basically turning findings from research studies into compelling narrative that I present to two different audiences — structured problem-solving, and really advanced relationship management. I also can't overemphasize how important organizational knowledge is – and that only comes with time in an organization.

Do you do any interdisciplinary work and if so, how does your I/O background inform what work you pursue and/or what you contribute to projects?

A lot of the work that I do is extremely interdisciplinary. My organization is a matrix organization. We have a number of departments which we call disciplines. These include things like engineering, art, game design, communications, project management, insights (my discipline!), etc. Then we take members from each discipline and embed them onto product teams that are organized around a specific problem space. For example, we might gather an engineer, an artist, and somebody from insights together to work to produce a champion skin for *League of Legends*. We call this a cross-functional product team. So it's actually very rare that folks would just be working with people from their same discipline and background. An example of this in my world is that global Riot survey team which I lead. On the team I do project management as well as survey design. Then we have somebody from the communications discipline on the team to help us think through the strategy of how to advertise the survey, get folks to participate, and effectively communicate open and close dates as well as response rates. Then we have somebody from the development management discipline who is in charge of creating template guides for teams to turn their survey results into facilitated discussions and eventually create action plans around how to change how their team works based on the feedback. Then we might also have an instructional designer join the team to help create a training for team leads to better understand how to interpret the data that they are receiving. Finally, we have a technical analyst who is responsible for doing data visualizations with the survey and writing the code to create the dashboard with the quantitative results. So even though the product that we are producing is a pretty clear I/O type product, but its development brings together a number of individuals with different backgrounds.

What advice do you have for current and prospective students hoping to pursue an applied career?

My best advice would be to really take advantage of all of the amazing applied opportunities you have access to as a part of the GW program and being in the D.C. area. When it comes time to apply for full-time jobs it's going to be extremely important that you're able to tell compelling stories of times that you've managed difficult relationships, given candid feedback upwards, or solved a really ambiguous problem. Stretch yourself in your day-to-day academic work as well as in these applied experiences to try to do these things that you'll be faced with day-to-day in applied roles. Invest some time in leveling up in your structured problem-solving approach. When you write that section in your research papers that speaks to practical implications of your work, really put more thought into it then you might typically. That section was always really difficult for me to write in any kind of concrete way, but it becomes an extremely important skill to bridge the gap between research findings and their practical applications to an organization, and that is a frame of mind worth building muscle around earlier rather than later.

ALUMNI CORNER: DR. NIKKI BLACKSMITH, PHD 2016

Why did you choose to do a post-doc, and why the Army Research Institute (ARI)?

While at GW, I worked on a grant funded by ARI and really enjoyed the collaboration that resulted from working on research with some of the ARI scientists. Then in 2015, ARI published a research agenda for assessment of individual performance. One area that was identified as a focus for future research was individual difference in the susceptibility to cognitive biases, a content area highly related to my dissertation. I thought it would be an excellent opportunity to continue my research and contribute to the Army's research goals while also having the chance to collaborate with some exceptional researchers.

What kind of research are you working on?

One of the goals of the U.S. Army is to ensure their soldiers are capable of making effective decisions across all contexts. However, decades of research has presented a discouraging reality of human decision-making; individuals systematically and universally use unconscious mental shortcuts (i.e., cognitive heuristics) that lead to cognitive bias. This body of research, however, has focused little on individual differences leaving a large gap in our understanding of decision-making. One fundamental goal of my research program is to identify individual differences predictors of the tendency to use cognitive heuristics. Also lacking in this body of research is a unifying framework of cognitive biases from which we can synthesize findings and develop a comprehensive understanding. One promising albeit incomplete taxonomy set forth by Oreg and Bayazit (2009), categorizes biases by their motivational end states. At this point, however, it is simply a conceptual model; the framework has not been empirically tested. My research aims to test the theoretical framework by examining the relationships among various cognitive biases to explore the structure and nature of cognitive heuristics. If this taxonomic structure of cognitive biases holds up, it could unify this line of work and stimulate future research. The future of this research program is motivating because if we can start to understand and determine antecedents of biased decision-making, it could help the Army (and other organizations) build training programs or selection assessments.

How did the GW I/O program help prepare you for your career? Is there any truth to the idea that what's most important is learned "on-the-job"?

It is difficult to answer this question because I cannot think of any one thing specifically – everything about the program prepared me – the classes, being involved in research projects, studying for comps, etc. The things that stand out, however, were the supportive professors and the collaborative learning culture they foster. All of the professors were extremely supportive and provided many opportunities for students to gain new skills. More importantly, they set high standards and challenged students to continuously grow professionally. The culture the faculty created in the I-O program fostered the development of analytical and critical thinking skills, creativity, independence as a researcher and teamwork. For example, I had the opportunity to design my own research projects, engage in philosophical debates in class, attend conferences and publish, among many other things. The culture was also not a competitive culture, which encouraged graduate students to work together and support one another – my classmates and I were all very close. They also helped prepare me for a career. We taught each other things we learned outside the classroom, brainstormed together, provided constructive feedback, and most importantly we had a lot of fun learning together.

For an I-O psychologist, I do think that there is certainly much to be learned "on-the-job," but I would argue that *what you learn in the I-O graduate program is by far much more important* because it sets the foundation for future learning and success. Organizations are going to hire you because they assume you already have I-O expertise; they do not plan to teach you how to be an I-O on-the-job. They expect you to come in with strong statistical skills, the ability to design and conduct research, writing and communication skills, and to have a wealth of I-O knowledge. In fact, organizations sometimes will give you a dataset to analyze or an organizational problem to solve as part of the selection process.

As a student, what was the most important career move you made?

One of the most important career moves I made was to seek out opportunities to learn advanced statistics. The department is small and sometimes may not be able to provide those courses. I took short courses at the University of Maryland, audited SEM classes in the education department, took a summer course on meta-analysis and took CARMA classes. Any opportunity I got to gain a new statistical skill, I took. I also taught myself and learned from my classmates who did the same thing but on different statistical analysis. Having strong statistical skills is important for me as a researcher for obvious reasons. However, it is just important in an applied job. Organizations have increasing amounts of data available to them, are often unaware of how to analyze the data and are seeking I-Os who have the skills to help them make sense of the data and use it to make decisions. With that said, I do think that another *very* important "move" is that I always make sure I am doing what I love and what keeps me engaged and challenged (which as I-Os we know is related to performance) and this is why I think every move – no matter how small or large – is still important because it can help you reach the point of figuring out what you want to do with your I-O degree in the future.

What advice do you have for current and prospective students hoping to pursue an academic career?

My advice is to learn how to take the initiative to learn on your own, outside of the classroom. The most important skill you can have as an employee (whether it is in academics or applied) is to take the initiative to learn independently and consistently. Future employers will expect you to come in with the expertise and if you do not have the knowledge or skills needed for a project you will need to be able to teach yourself. Research and statistical techniques are constantly advancing and it important to never stop learning. While you are at GW, practice teaching yourself new statistical skills or in-depth knowledge about a specific topic you are studying because you are going to need to take that initiative in your future job.

One thing to remember is that when you graduate and search for a job, having a PhD does not set you apart. The jobs you apply to are the same jobs that other PhD graduates (from prestigious graduate programs) are seeking. Therefore, if you want to be on the short list for a job, you need a very strong foundation that makes you unique – take advantage of the opportunities you have available to you in grad school and get heavily involved in research and learn as much as you can.

Every donor is important to our program's mission!

To contribute, please contact GW Alumni Relations by phone: 1-800-789-2611. If you donate via the GW web site at any time, please make sure you indicate "I-O Psychology Ph.D. program" for your donation.

Questions? Email: jbracey@gwu.edu.
If your organization would like to become a sponsor, please contact Tara Behrend at

behrend@gwu.edu.

2017-2018 Newsletter Editors

Daniel Ravid, Ahleah Miles, Kira Foley
(from left to right)

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