From Mason to Houston (and In Between): Alumnus Whitney Botsford Morgan Wins Dissertation Awards
By Chad Peddie

This fall I had the opportunity to catch up with recent GMU I/O graduate Dr. Whitney Botsford Morgan concerning her recent achievements of winning not just one, but two awards related to her dissertation, *Mothers’ Psychological Contracts: Does Supervisor Breach Explain Intention To Leave The Workforce?* Dr. Botsford was presented with two awards this August at the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management (AoM). I had the chance to discuss her dissertation, the awards she won, and her career since graduating from Mason in 2009.

Whitney’s dissertation focused on mothers in the workplace and how their intentions to remain within organizations vary with the experience of supervisor-induced psychological contract breach. This work was initiated in response to a perceived gap in the literature on the experiences and identities of pregnant women in the workplace. Kristen kindly joined me for an inter-

Letter From the Co-Editor
By Kate LaPort

The holiday season is upon us and our gift to you, our readers, is this fresh, never-before-seen issue of the *I/ON*. We know what you’re thinking… “I/ON Editors, how on earth did you get hold of my Wish List?” Well, we thought you could use some moments of relaxation while you steal some time away from baking (or just eating!), visiting family, and frantically checking last-minute package shipping statuses online. In those moments, we hope you sit down with some hot chocolate and enjoy this latest issue of the *I/ON*.

Despite the expected crunch at the end of the semester, our authors have written some great articles for this edition of the *I/ON*. With our new batch of students settled into the semester, we’re excited to say that some of them have found time to write their first *I/ON* articles. Amanda Anderson, for example, recaps a conversation she had with third-year doctoral student Kristen Jones where Kristen describes her recently acquired grant. Also, Afra Ahmad collaborated with third-year student...
Given that both pregnancy and motherhood represent de-valued social identities in the workplace that are not readily observable by others (at least in the early stages of pregnancy), pregnant workers and working mothers face critical decisions about when, how, and to whom they will disclose their stigmatized identities. In other words, at the beginning of pregnancy, a woman can hide the fact that she is pregnant. As the pregnancy develops over time, a woman’s ability to “hide” it becomes more and more difficult. In some cases, a woman might be able to hide her pregnancy for most (if not all) of its course, whereas other women might start “showing” earlier, creating an imperative for her to make identity management decisions sooner. In the case of working mothers, they have a choice to either reveal or conceal the fact that they have children. Since mothers are commonly stigmatized in the workplace, they may indeed balance the pros and cons of concealing their motherhood status at work. The concept of identity management has been examined in the context of many stigmatized groups (e.g., pregnant women, lesbian and gay individuals) but it has not yet been examined in working mothers. Preliminary research on the transition from pregnant worker to working mother suggests that changes in identity and struggles to balance competing identities are characteristic of this period of time.

The purpose of the current research is to explore how working mothers manage their identities in the context of work as a function of their identity management experiences during pregnancy and how, ultimately, important outcomes such as satisfaction and work-family conflict might be impacted. We'll also explore not only how identity management during pregnancy contributes to a woman’s decision to return to the organization, but also how it affects the way she manages her mother identity upon return to work.

What sparked your interest in researching pregnancy in the workplace?

I have always had an interest in issues related to gender inequality in the workplace, which probably...
developed from a psychology of gender class I took at UVA. My first year at GMU, I got involved in some research with Eden [King] related to pregnancy disclosure at work and I've been excited about the topic ever since!

How did you find out about the grant opportunity for this study?

I actually kind of stumbled on this funding accidentally. I was applying for another grant last spring and one of the requirements for that application was to request "matching" funds from my university, which basically meant I had to email the Associate Chair for Graduate Studies (Dr. Jose Cortina) and request the same amount from GMU. At that point, I found out about an opportunity for George Mason graduate students to apply for the Elyse B. and Donald R. Lehman Graduate Student Research Award Endowment. I sent in my application and was subsequently selected to receive one of the awards.

What was the grant writing process like? Do you have any advice for other students thinking about applying for grants?

Applying for grants isn't as scary as you might think. A lot of people are actually interested in what we (as graduate students) are doing and willing to fund our research. One difference that I've found in grant writing is the tone of the proposal is slightly different than the tone of our traditional academic writing. You have to really "sell" your idea and be a little more persuasive than usual. Also, if you apply for bigger grants first (which are generally longer and more detailed), you already have the work done. At that point, you can adapt what you already have and apply to several smaller grants to maximize your chances. My best advice is to be persuasive and really go for it!

What are the next steps for your research on pregnancy in the workplace?

Last fall, we started collecting data from about 100 pregnant working women who filled out weekly surveys up until the point that they stopped working before delivering. Currently, we are in the process of re-contacting those women six months post-childbirth to complete our follow-up survey of their experiences reintegrating back to work. The plan is to be done with data collection this spring and start data analysis!

Where can we learn more about your results?

We intend to submit our findings to the 2012 SIOP Conference, so you can look for us there!
Dr. Eden King’s New Book Helps Women Get Ahead At Work

By Alexis Gray

Women have come a long way since the time our mothers entered the workforce, and now they can go even further thanks to a new book by our very own Dr. Eden King, *How Women Can Make It Work: The Science of Success*. Recently I had the opportunity to sit down with Dr. King to learn more about what the book is about and what writing such a book was like.

Alexis: What would you say the book is about?

Dr. King: The book was designed to help young women in their careers by giving them easy-to-understand descriptions of social scientific findings about gender and work.

Alexis: What inspired you to write it?

Dr. King: My co-author’s husband asked me a great question about our research. He said, “Who reads it? Who pays attention to this great work?” And my response was something like, “About two people.” We do all this work, and spend all this time to learn about these issues, but the findings don’t reach the population at large. With this book, we are trying to reach those people.

Alexis: There is a lot of fantastic information in here, and it’s presented in a very entertaining, energetic way. Can you describe your writing process a little bit?

Dr. King: I had a fantastic coauthor. Jenn [Jennifer Knight] is a friend from grad school where we had shared an office, and she is not only a fantastic friend, but also a fantastic collaborator. We wrote it over the summer. We’d send sections to each other as we wrote them, and we’d laugh as we read what the other had written, which kept us motivated to go back and work on more sections. That was key. Also, maybe a quarter of the information in each chapter is just fun stuff, so that made it more enjoyable to write than an academic paper.

Alexis: Do you have any comments or advice about the collaboration process when writing a book?
**Dr. King:** Do it on something you are passionate about and want to spend time thinking about, and do it with someone you enjoy working with. I couldn’t have done it during the school year, so make sure you have time as well.

**Alexis:** Was it difficult to choose what to include and what not to include? If so, how did you make those decisions?

**Dr. King:** Yes, it was definitely difficult. We started by putting together a table of contents that we wanted to cover. We did cover the topics we wanted to, but because we were limited to digestible amounts, we had to choose studies and make decisions about levels of specificity. We could have written a book about each chapter, so we decided to go broad rather than deep. That was a conscious decision. It could be fun to write deep as well.

**Alexis:** Did you have a favorite chapter to write?

**Dr. King:** The first chapter I wrote was on queen bees. I put it in the proposal we wrote because I’d been thinking about working with the idea in the lab. It’s an experience that is unique to women in some ways (it also happens to men, but it’s different). It helped me get going.

I also wrote the negotiation chapter and that was fun. The day after I finished it, there was a piece in the New York Times covering much of the same material, which was validating.

On the other hand, it was frustrating to write about topics in areas with little research. We tried to write on subgroups. We also wrote about single moms and minority women, and it was eye-opening to see how little I/O research has addressed these issues.

**Alexis:** Is there any section you are particularly pleased with?

**Dr. King:** I loved sections that Jenn wrote. I would start laughing in my head and sometimes out loud when I read them. It felt like we were telling each other jokes for three months.

**Alexis:** How would you summarize the themes in this book?

**Dr. King:** I would say that the top takeaways are that first, despite progress, women still face problems, and the central driver of those problems is stereotypes about men and women. Second, when it comes to your job, it’s all about fit. You need to figure out what makes the fuzzy butterflies for you. We can’t tell you what will work best for you. Third, people really do make the place. Find people you want to work with. And fourth, we stand on the shoulders of giants. You can get into social science research and use it to help you.

**Alexis:** If there was just one thing you could tell young women out there, what would it be?

**Dr. King:** Again, gender stereotypes affect everything. We found them coming into every section that we wrote. They play into how we see ourselves – are we entitled to a raise? do we perform well? – and into how other people treat us. So, if I could tell young women just one thing, it would be that gender stereotypes affect our own behavior as well as the behavior of other people towards us, and we need to know how that works so that we can make choices and counteract those behaviors.

**Alexis:** How do you manage to stay so positive while writing about issues that are often related to sexism?

**Dr. King:** Understanding what’s going on can help you avoid it. Knowledge is power. And things have improved a lot, you have to recognize that.

**Alexis:** Do you think you’ll write another book soon? Why or why not? If yes, on what?

**Dr. King:** Not soon. There’s a chance I guess – how about maybe? I think it’s a good way to communicate a lot of information. I am interested in the possibility of recognizing the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act. Jenn and I talked about writing a parallel book for men or people who work with women, but it seems difficult because you would have to generalize so much. So, I probably won’t write anything any time soon.

**Alexis:** And last (but definitely not least!), when does the book hit the shelves?

**Dr. King:** It comes out Spring 2011.

**Alexis:** We’ll be keeping an eye out!
As students (and researchers), it is easy to overlook the applied value of the theories we spend so much time studying. However, understanding the application of our research is critical to our success. As part of a continuing series of articles in the I/ON, in this column we will discuss the applied value of our research. We seek to bridge the divide between researchers and practitioners by highlighting both the theoretical and practical implications of our work here at Mason. This issue’s topic: emotion management in the workplace.

The Research Side: EMOTE

By Xiaoxiao Hu

Over the past two decades, dramatic progress has been made in understanding the role and importance of emotions in organizational behaviors and outcomes (Lord & Kanfer, 2002). Previous research suggests that (a) an important source of employees’ emotional experience is interactions with their leaders and that (b) being a successful leader requires effective management of subordinates’ emotions (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Boudens, 2005). Highlighting the importance of leader emotion management (LEM), Leavitt and Bahrami (1988) argued, “managing one’s own emotions, and those of employees, is as much a critical managerial function as managing markets or finances” (p. 40).

In spite of this recognition, research in the organizational domain explicitly examining the precise nature of LEM performance is almost entirely absent. Although some relevant research (e.g., transformational leadership, emotional intelligence) links emotions with leadership, the dimensions underlying effective LEM performance and the specific antecedents and consequences of these dimensions remain unexplored.

To fill this gap, the Emotion Management Orientation and Training Exercise (EMOTE) group, led by Dr. Kaplan and Dr. Cortina, has undertaken a program of research aimed at developing and testing a model of LEM with funding support from Aptima Inc. in support of a larger effort funded by the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI). Based on a comprehensive literature review and semi-structured interviews with Army leaders, we have developed a model of LEM which includes eight dimensions of LEM performance as well as antecedents and consequences of LEM behaviors.

On the basis of the developed model, the group is conducting two experimental studies to test linkages between LEM, its causes, and its consequences. Specifically, these two studies are focused on the emotion of boredom and how leaders can manage it. The EMOTE group is currently wrapping up data collection on their Study 1 experiment. This first study examines antecedents of LEM by linking specific leader knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes (KSAOs) to the proposed dimensions of LEM performance. In the first part of this study, participants fill out a number of measures assessing the KSAOs identified in the model. The second part of the study is conducted in the laboratory where the participant is instructed to lead two other “participants” (confederates) as they work on a monotonous sorting task. During the task, the confederates stage several emotionally-relevant incidents, trying to elicit the participant’s LEM behaviors. This process is videotaped, so trained judges can rate participants’ performance based on each of the proposed LEM dimensions. These ratings will enable us to test the EMOTE model’s proposed linkages by correlating various KSAO’s specified in the model with LEM dimensions.

While running experiments for Study 1, the group also has been working on designing and pilot-testing Study 2. Study 2 is designed to test the consequences of LEM. That is, it will examine how individuals respond to leader efforts of emotion management. Participants will be asked to work on a monotonous computer task. Meanwhile, the experimenter (i.e., leader) will exhibit high/low quality LEM behaviors to manage (or not manage) participants’ boredom. We will assess how participants react to these LEM behaviors and how these behaviors impact participants’ performance and attitudes.

The Application Side: Soldier Training

By Krista (Langkamer) Ratwani — Aptima, Inc.

Every context and situation has the potential to evoke an emotional response in a Soldier. Consider the following emotions and situations: fear as a Sol-
dier conducts a cordon and search in a local Iraqi village, an inappropriate display of over-exuberance by a Soldier at a promotion ceremony, and boredom while completing extensive paperwork required for deployment readiness. Whether deployed or in garrison, leaders need to maintain awareness of their Soldiers’ emotions to ensure their appropriateness for the mission or task at hand. If the emotions expressed by Soldiers are appropriate for the mission or situation, performance is optimized. However, inappropriate emotional expressions may compromise mission success if leaders do not influence emotions and create a match between emotions and performance requirements.

Although emotions likely are one part of successful performance, the Army does not currently provide in-depth training to leaders on scientifically-based emotion management knowledge and skills; training is needed for leaders on how they can help manage the emotions of subordinates within the context of normal job activities. While Army field manuals reference the importance of emotion management (e.g., FM 6.22), the references do not provide enough information on the trainable attributes (e.g., knowledge and skills) that are needed to manage emotions in others. Therefore, research is first needed to develop a comprehensive theory of leader emotion management that details relevant knowledge and skill areas. Such a theory must also provide ideas about how these knowledge and skills can translate into behaviors that leaders can use to influence and manage emotions. By explicitly identifying knowledge, skills, and behaviors, a training program can subsequently be developed. The usefulness of such a training program rests on it being well-informed by theory as well as operational input from Army leaders.

The leader emotion management training program, being developed by Aptima, Inc. with support from ARI, is designed to support the development of emotion management knowledge and skills in leaders. The training makes use of both didactic (or more direct instruction) and experiential approaches to training. By employing a variety of training methods, trainees can first gain baseline knowledge about the training content and then learn how to apply that content in different contexts. The overall training objectives are to 1) educate leaders on the importance of emotions in task and mission accomplishment; 2) teach leaders to engage in an emotion management process consisting of monitoring, deciding, and acting; 3) promote awareness of proficiency levels of related knowledge and skill areas; and 4) teach leaders general behaviors in which they can engage to support the emotion management process.

The research conducted by the George Mason team has been instrumental in developing the leader emotion management training program. One of the primary research foci is on developing a model that can predict engagement in the leader emotion management behaviors. Therefore, the training is primarily concerned with training the application of the relevant KSAOs that leaders need to execute the leader emotion management behaviors. By utilizing the comprehensive theoretical model developed by the EMOTE group as a baseline for training development, the training is solidly grounded in theory. In addition, since it is extremely important to obtain input from Army leaders who would be using the training, the emotion management behaviors were vetted with a number of Army officers and enlisted personnel. These focus groups helped to successfully focus the training on KSAOs and leader emotion management behaviors that are salient to an Army audience.

---

I/O’s Role in Cleaning Up the Gulf Oil Spill: A Conversation with Dr. Steve Zaccaro

By Irwin J. José

Since April of this year, every form of media has inundated our lives with the crisis that is the Gulf oil spill. It’s nearly impossible to consume daily current events without coming across some commentary on the current progress of the oil spill cleanup. “Gulf oil spill cleanup: NO hair donations being used!” Really? What are they doing with all that hair then? “Kevin Costner hopes to fight oil spill with oil-separating technology!” That seems random. Turns out his brother heads up a science group (i.e., Ocean Therapy Solutions) that has developed technology that can separate oil out of 200 gallons of water in a minute! “Oil spill cleanup: Volunteers get training. Get involved.” Now that’s a headline for every I/O psychologist.
Irwin: This would probably have implications for leadership as well, right? How so?

Dr. Zaccaro: Yes. Leadership in an MTS is quite complex. Here you can have different forms of shared and vertical leadership across different parts of the MTS. So for example, in some parts of the MTS, two teams may work together using a shared leadership model where there is shared leadership going on at the between team level, but a vertical leadership model occurring within teams. Alternatively, there can be some teams in which there’s complete shared leadership, and partnering teams that have a vertical leadership model. Clearly, leadership can become very complex in MTSs. So, one might want to focus on some developmental interventions in helping people to learn how to lead in these kinds of contexts.

Irwin: As students, in what way do you think we should be thinking about training when considering this type of training?

Dr. Zaccaro: When we first began our conversation, you gave me some task-specific concerns regarding training (e.g., how to train volunteers with varying experience), but we already know how to do that. It’s true in the case of the BP oil spill that there was training on the implementation of new procedures, but we know how to train people on new procedures. That is, we can just use our traditional training strategies.

However, fewer people have really thought about teamwork, and even fewer have thought about MTS level issues that would come up and would need to be developed. What we find in disasters is that many responses can fail as a result of failures and inadequacies at the MTS level. I would push you towards thinking not just about within teamwork skills but also between and MTS level considerations. Those are the training needs.
Local Happenings
Review: First Annual Alumni Picnic
by Jim Kurtessis

September and the start of the new academic year bring lots of things to the Mason community. Campus takes on a lively atmosphere as thousands of students once again move around campus, students and faculty return to classes, research groups again begin to meet regularly, and both students and faculty reluctantly say farewell to the freedom of the summer. For both faculty and returning students, highlights of this time of year are the new faces of the many first-year students who will become our colleagues and friends over the next few years. For first-year students, the transition to (or, occasionally a return to) graduate school can sometimes be difficult. Many students move far from home to attend Mason, and all of us can expect to see friends and family a little less as class and research obligations demand our time.

To help ease this transition, each fall the Mason I/O program holds its annual potluck picnic to welcome the new students to the program, and to allow a more relaxed, social opportunity for new and returning students and faculty to reconnect. This year, the annual picnic was held at Olney Park in Falls Church on September 25th. With beautiful weather, laughter, touch football, and a diversity of dishes to choose from, students, faculty, and their families once again enjoyed this annual gathering.

This year’s picnic also provided an opportunity to build and expand the growing Mason community. Reflecting Mason’s I/O Psychology Student Association’s (IOPSA) renewed commitment to connect with friends of the Mason I/O program, alumni were invited to join students and faculty for the first time. Attendees included recent Master’s graduates as well as more experienced alumni who graduated from the program several years ago. This special opportunity afforded a chance for these graduates to reconnect with faculty and to meet the students who will also soon represent Mason in industry and academia.

Once again, the annual Mason I/O picnic was a fun and relaxing opportunity for Mason students, faculty, and, for the first time, alumni to meet one another and socialize. The Mason I/O program thanks all of those who were in attendance, and we look forward to another gathering of the Mason family next year!

Above: Third-year Veronica Gilrane stands in line for potluck goodies at the First Annual Alumni Picnic.

If you are a Mason I/O alumnus who did not receive an invitation to the picnic this year, please email your information to Tracy McCausland at tmccaus1@gmu.edu to be included on the mailing list for future events!

Targeting, Market Share, and Segmentation: Speaking the Language of Marketing
By Joseph Luchman

Industrial/Organizational Psychology is something of a polyglot. We, as a field, speak the languages of psychology, business, and human resource management. Depending on your research focus, you might also be fluent in various other diverse areas such as behavioral medicine, neuroscience, or sociology. While we I/O folk are fluent in many tongues, there are, sadly, several scholarly languages that we have yet to incorporate into our parlance. In the present article, I focus on the field of marketing – highlighting how and where theory from marketing could serve to help I/O better understand working behavior and could further the application of our research.

Marketing’s linkage to I/O is not difficult to establish. For example, several of the field's research topics are highly psychological (e.g., attitudes toward products, such as satisfaction). However, marketing represents a strategic side of business where scholars talk about concepts like
"market share" (roughly, this concept refers to what percentage of the overall market buys the company's product). Concepts such as these are outside the traditional I/O focus.

One way marketing stands to contribute to I/O is by focusing attention on the strategic aspects of topics we already study. One part of marketing research is devoted to forming strategies for finding profitable customer markets (e.g., *Journal of Targeting, Measurement & Analysis for Marketing*). In attempting to find profitable markets, organizations are often interested in focusing marketing messages and the products and services they offer to specific subsets of the population who are likely to be interested in and motivated to purchase the product or service. As such, methods of targeted marketing such as "market segmentation" are used to cluster customer markets into relatively homogeneous subgroups (usually based on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics) in order to simplify customer relations such as marketing products to and maintaining the patronage of customers.

Targeting has begun to make its way into the practice of recruitment. Recruitment, like marketing, is thought to have much strategic potential. Recruitment, as compared to some other HRM functions, is "proactive" as opposed to "reactive," shaping the actual applicant pool itself rather than simply leaving it to individuals to self-select into the applicant pool. Indeed, recent research has begun to take on this perspective (Newman & Lyon, 2009).

In addition to recruitment, HRM researchers have recently suggested the use of market segmentation techniques in order to identify different classes of employees based on their contributions to organizational performance. Rather than classifying customers by their demographics and purchasing habits, this segmentation classifies employees by their work behaviors and psychological characteristics (i.e., clusters by aptitude/trainability, performance, OCBs, etc.). As applied to employees, Cardy et al. (2007) propose that segmentation can identify "high value" versus "low value" employees to the organization based on a myriad of outcomes and predictors.

Finally, some scholars in HRM have taken a marketing perspective on the employee-organization relationship. For example, several theorists have suggested that employees should be thought of in terms of "internal customers." Such internal customers need marketing to sell "internal products" otherwise known as their jobs (e.g., Mohr-Jackson, 1991). Thus, in part to improve morale and to boost retention of current employees, and in part to recruit new employees, organizations need to continuously use marketing messages to "sell" employees on the importance of their jobs and where each job "fits" in the scheme of the organization.

The foregoing is just a tiny taste of the potential that marketing has for understanding aspects of work behavior and HRM practice. Speaking the language of marketing could be useful for a number of other reasons such as offering practical value support for many of the job attitudes we oftentimes study (e.g., the potential for satisfied or committed employees to take part in word-of-mouth advertising for the organization). Marketing is a sister-field that shares our focus on applications of social psychology to work and organization-related problems and that could ultimately help our field focus more on important aspects of business such as organizational strategy. In an increasingly tight economy in terms of research grants, state funding, and finding work post-graduation, understanding of the language of marketing could be of benefit to academics and practitioners alike and could improve your own personal "market potential."

**Good News Corner**

As usual, Mason students, faculty, and alumni are keeping busy! Here are just a few of the things people have been up to lately:

- Fifth-year doctoral student **Joseph Luchman** recently received an "outstanding reviewer" award from the OB division of the Academy of Management.
- Alumnus **Stacy Everett** recently started a new job as a Research Associate at Richard Day Research, a market research firm in Evanston, IL.
- Second-year M.A. student **Suzette Tassin** was recently engaged to be married.
- Doctoral students **Gonzalo Ferro** and **Meredith Cracraft Ferro** just welcomed their new baby boy, Lucas Agustín Ferro, on November 30, 2010.
- Alumnus **Adam Grim** finished the Army 10 Miler on October 24, 2010 in 78:42, a 7:54/mile
pace. He finished 3049 out of almost 22,000 runners, putting him in the top 14%.

♦ Doctoral students Jeff Herman and Elizabeth Conjar were promoted from Senior Consultant to Associate at Booz Allen. Elizabeth works for the Mission Performance and Policy Analytics team, specifically mapped to the Analytics group, and Jeff works for the Strategy and Organization team, specifically mapped to the Human Capital Team.

♦ Upon completing his M.A. in I/O Psychology at Mason last June, Joe Caramagno was promoted to Research Scientist at the Human Resources Research Organization in Alexandria, VA. Along with his promotion comes more responsibility and more interesting work, some of which includes incremental validity analysis in military selection research and survey research with the Department of Defense.

♦ And last but not least, faculty member Dr. Jose Cortina has been chosen as the recipient of the 2011 Distinguished Teaching Contributions Award from SIOP. The award is given "in recognition of SIOP members who demonstrate a sustained record of excellence in teaching, as revealed by excellence in the classroom or via Web-based teaching, student development, and community service via teaching." He'll be recognized at the plenary session of the 2011 SIOP Conference.

Congratulations, everyone!

Mason’s Best Kept Secret: Undergraduate Research Assistants

By Veronica Gilrane and Afra Ahmad

For those of you with graduate school experience, you know that grad school can feel like a constant balancing act. With responsibilities like keeping up with class readings, preparing lectures for teaching assistantships, and conducting research, sometimes it would be nice to have an extra hand. Fortunately, when it comes to research, the undergraduate research assistants (RAs) at George Mason are some of our best assets for freeing up more time. This article provides both the graduate and undergraduate student perspective on how to make the best of this potentially mutually beneficial research collaboration.

The Graduate Student’s Point of View

In addition to allowing more time for classes, teaching, and research, undergraduate RAs can serve as helpful collaborators in idea generation, methodological consideration, data collection, and perhaps analysis and writing. Even if RAs do not play a primary role in your research, bouncing ideas off of “a new set of ears” — and especially unbiased newcomers — can be quite helpful. Further, the advantages of working with undergraduate RAs span beyond personal benefit. It was not too long ago that many of us (graduate students) were in the undergraduate position ourselves. As many of us know all too well, one of the most important qualities that I/O programs look for in selecting prospective students is research experience. Thus, exposing undergraduate students to the research process can be truly invaluable and can aid in students’ academic and professional development. So, whether or not you believe in research karma, put yourself in their shoes and remember to pay it forward!

Also, providing these opportunities provides students with exposure to I/O research which they otherwise might not have obtained, in turn producing future I/O scholars and helping to grow the field.

Before embarking on research collaboration with undergraduate RAs, it is important to keep the following tips in mind when recruiting and training them:

Where to find RAs. The best places to find RAs are in classes that you or your advisor teaches. Not only will the level of familiarity allow
Choosing the right assistants. There will be legwork in the beginning. Sometimes the process of finding undergraduates who are interested, qualified, and who can devote enough time to your research can be difficult. Therefore, remember to request an application and interview before bringing anyone onto your research team. This process helps to ensure that your RAs will be serious about working with you.

Training RAs. Depending on the tasks that your RAs are helping with, training may take a considerable amount of time. If you need to train several RAs, try to have a group training session or designate an experienced RA to assist or lead a portion of the training.

The Undergraduate Student’s Perspective

We have discussed how RAs can benefit our research, but another important question is “How can we benefit the undergraduate student through an assistantship?” Psychology undergraduates often struggle with what direction to take on their future career paths. Through research involvement, undergraduates can expand their educational experience and obtain more in-depth knowledge of the field. Gaining hands-on experience can provide a better understanding of the field, whether it is clinical, human factors, or I/O psychology. For students who know they want to continue onto graduate school, research experience is vital for the competitive application process. It demonstrates to admission committees that the student is serious about enhancing his/her knowledge outside the classroom. In addition, while working on research projects, faculty members acquire a greater sense of the student’s strengths, allowing them to write stronger letters of recommendations.

Before working with undergraduate RAs, we recommend discussing a few key points with your RAs to prevent any misunderstandings:

Time expectations. It is important to determine how much time an RA can devote to your research project and how the project will fit into his/her schedule. Time constraints are important because logistics will need to be worked out. For example, if an RA is coding data, he or she may need access to the lab, so someone will need to be there to grant the student access. Also, you may have a deadline and need the undergraduate to work more hours than his or her schedule may allow.

Training. For many undergraduates, this experience may be their first time working on research. Explaining the research processes and training your RA is very important. Keep an open door policy and make your RA feel comfortable to ask any questions about any steps, even tasks that we now regard as straightforward such as how to look up scholarly journal articles for a literature review.

Work expectations. Find out how much responsibility your RA wants. Some undergraduates may not want to be only “data collectors.” They may want to take on more complex tasks so they can feel more involved and can grow professionally. Others may already have a “full plate” and therefore want to take a more limited role.

Follow-Up. Many RAs work hard on research projects, but always wonder about the results of their work. If your RAs would like to keep updated on the progress of your project in terms of results, publications, or presentations, be sure to communicate that information to them. This helps them know their contributions were helpful.

This relationship ideally should be a mutually beneficial one. Graduate students have the opportunity to give back by helping to train and mentor future researchers as well as to get help on their projects. Meanwhile, undergraduates can gain experience vital to shaping their interests and getting into graduate school. Now that we have revealed Mason’s best kept secret, go find your undergraduate research assistant and happy researching!

How To Transition from the Master’s to the Ph.D. Program

By Kristen Jones, David Geller, and Elizabeth Conjar

Each year, hundreds of applicants from across the world apply to fill one of the handful of doctoral student slots and 15 or so master's student slots in Mason’s I/O graduate program. Both of these programs have been rated in the Top 10 nationally. For those accepted, a rigorous but exciting journey awaits. During the first two years (i.e., the time to
completion for master’s students), doctoral and master’s students have almost identical classroom requirements – the main difference being more demanding research requirements for the doctoral students.

Sometimes master’s students decide they want to extend their stay at Mason as a doctoral student. To successfully do so, they must prove their dedication and competence at the doctoral level and reapply for the doctoral program during the fall of their second year (or at a later time). Here are a few pieces of advice from master’s students who have successfully made this transition:

**Show your dedication and commitment to research!** Research productivity is the cornerstone to Mason’s doctoral program. By showing your commitment to research, you are setting yourself up to be viewed as a serious doctoral candidate. Attend several research groups during the first couple of weeks of your first semester in the master’s program to see what sparks your interest. Then, decide which group(s) you want to attend on a regular basis throughout the semester. This is a great way to get involved in research that is already in progress and to get some experience (e.g., running experiments, coding for meta-analyses, etc.). By your second year in the master’s program, make goals to either (1) have your own research study that you would be ready to conduct if accepted into the Ph.D. program, or (2) actually conduct your own study, thereby demonstrating your ability to conduct novel research. The faculty is always open to helping you transition your research idea into a feasible study. Along the way, make specific and attainable goals to move along your different research projects. A great way to do this is by attending Jose Cortina’s research group where we have goal meetings every three weeks. Also, while it is most likely necessary to have an internship off campus, aim for one that is research-focused. The fellowships at the Army Institute of Research are a great example.

**Get to know the faculty.** Last year, the faculty instituted a program where each master’s student is assigned a faculty advisor. Make sure to meet with this faculty advisor frequently (e.g., at least a couple times a semester) to discuss your goals, progress, development, etc. In addition, identify another faculty member whose research aligns with your own interests. Faculty are here to aid our development and growth and challenge us as graduate students. Be proactive about this. If you need feedback on a research idea or a paper, ask for it! If you want advice on which classes to take next semester, ask for it! One or two great faculty mentors can make all the difference.

**Do the first year statistics (611/612) paper.** Although this is optional for master’s students, opting to do the 611/612 paper often leads to your first independent research project. Completing this paper is an indicator of your ability to succeed as a doctoral student at Mason. For this assignment, students must select a faculty member to supervise their work. This gives students another opportunity to strengthen their mentor/mentee relationship(s). Furthermore, it shows your dedication and motivation.

**Seek advice from older students.** There are several current Ph.D. students who started as master’s students. Identify these students and ask them about their experiences. Learn about their path, and ask them for their advice so that you can determine the right path for you. Some may be willing to share their Ph.D. application with you or read over your application to give you a second opinion. The program’s culture is highly supportive and collaborative, and students are always willing to help each other. Take advantage of this opportunity.

**Submit to SIOP your second year!** This is a great way to demonstrate your progress as a researcher. First-year students are generally not expected to present at their first SIOP since the submission deadline coincides with the first few weeks of the semester. But if you are working hard during your first year, you should have something (if not multiple things) to submit in the fall of your second year. If you have done the 611/612 paper, this should surely turn into a submission. Aim to get involved in a symposium (not just posters), as speaking in front of an audience at SIOP is good experience to have under your belt.

**Make an effort to be on campus.** Although most master’s students have internships off campus, master’s students who are interested in applying to the Ph.D. program should make a concerted effort to be on campus as much as their schedules allow. Obviously, this can be difficult, but it is critical to your development as a student researcher. There are many different ways to establish your presence on campus: attend weekly Brown Bags and research
individuals are able to rise above these often debilitating events. More specifically, research is seeking to explain why a highly stressful and traumatic event can cause 1) negative or maladaptive responses in one set of individuals; 2) enough environmental change to prompt adaptation to survive the ordeal in another set of individuals; and 3) an almost hyperactive response to not only adapt and survive these difficult situations but excel and triumph. In short, how can resilience help explain who can escape crisis situations (e.g., the Gulf Coast oil spill, military combat) mentally unscathed?

While there exist numerous notions of similar psychological resilience concepts (e.g., hardiness, learned optimism/resourcefulness, grit, adaptive coping) the majority of researchers agree that the act of being resilient encompasses a two-dimensional construct consisting of exposure to an
groups, help run experiments, or try teaching! Teaching opportunities often exist for master’s students in both the Psychology Department and the School of Management.

Here’s the takeaway: The lifestyle of a Ph.D. student is particularly demanding. Master’s students do not need to know with certainty if they want to become a doctoral student; however, if they want that possibility to exist, then they need to seek every available opportunity from the beginning. Show your motivation and dedication to research, and prove that you will thrive in the doctoral program. Good luck!

Life certainly hands us daily challenges (just ask your average I/O graduate student). Sometimes these challenges are minor obstacles or small annoyances that do little to affect our overall or long-term attitude or motivation. We’re generally able to overcome them with little or no difficulty. However, at the other extreme, these trials can test the very fabric of our psyche. At an individual level, these events may include events like the death of a significant other, witnessing a traumatic event, or being exposed to a life-altering experience. A review of the current front page of any newspaper highlights both local and international concerns such as the Gulf oil spill crisis, economic recovery indicators, global warming, and escalating tensions regarding our continued presence in the Middle East.

The chronic stress literature classifies these more extreme difficulties as typically being greater in scope and capable of producing lasting, negative effects on general well-being and health (e.g., increased rates of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD], and suicide). The increased recognition of this link between crisis and mental health distress has prompted a resurgence of resilience (i.e., an individual's capacity to endure stressors) research within the last decade. This research has aimed to examine how and why certain individuals are able to rise above these often debilitating events. More specifically, research is seeking to explain why a highly stressful and traumatic event can cause 1) negative or maladaptive responses in one set of individuals; 2) enough environmental change to prompt adaptation to survive the ordeal in another set of individuals; and 3) an almost hyperactive response to not only adapt and survive these difficult situations but excel and triumph. In short, how can resilience help explain who can escape crisis situations (e.g., the Gulf Coast oil spill, military combat) mentally unscathed?

While there exist numerous notions of similar psychological resilience concepts (e.g., hardiness, learned optimism/resourcefulness, grit, adaptive coping) the majority of researchers agree that the act of being resilient encompasses a two-dimensional construct consisting of exposure to an
adverse event and the subsequent positive adaptation. Cognitive appraisals are made of the event to determine whether the individual possesses the capability of dealing with its associated stress and risk. Then the individual applies coping strategies to the external problem and the internal emotional response. He or she may also seek support from social networks.

This research has far-reaching assessment and training/development applications for our field. From an individual difference perspective, identifying the existence of a trait or pattern of skills that nurture a deep-rooted drive to overcome obstacles in the face of stress and danger could illuminate how certain individuals are capable of producing positive adaptation to these traumatic events. From a more practitioner-oriented standpoint, once this repertoire of skills is identified, this research could lay the foundation for developing training protocols designed to teach effective adaptive strategies to those who typically encounter these situations on a more-than-average basis.

The U.S. Army has a vested interest in the continued research and results of resilience. With an overall goal of reducing PTSD, depression, and anxiety associated with the trauma of combat, the Army leadership believes that developing and investing in partnerships with the leading resilience researchers can lead to increasing this hardy disposition among soldiers. In the fall of 2009, the Army introduced the Comprehensive Soldier Fitness (CSF) program in order to assess the status of its 1.1 million active-duty, reservist, and National Guard soldiers and enhance their current coping strategies. Drawing from the work of Marty Seligman, Karen Reivich, Barbara Fredrickson, and others, the Army began placing a more substantial emphasis on addressing soldiers’ psychological needs by implementing a holistic fitness program that rests on five primary dimensions of strength: physical, emotional, social, family, and spiritual.

Soldiers are initially assessed on these dimensions via the Global Assessment Tool (GAT; results of which can then be compared at later stages of a soldier’s career), individual self-development modules, and periodic mandatory resilience training from certified Master Resilience Trainers. Although the results from current studies are still years from release, the Army leadership is optimistic in the program’s ability to enhance resilience and promote post-traumatic growth within its fighting force.

Mark Twain once said “Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear.” With respect to this article, it might be plausible to substitute “Resilience” for “Courage.” While unexpected change and exposure to significant stressors may still induce fear, those who possess (or who can be trained to possess) resilient dispositions, may indeed be better positioned to not only survive their ordeal, but thrive and experience post-traumatic growth from the event.

---

About GMU’s I/O Program

The Industrial/Organizational Psychology Program at George Mason University is housed in the Psychology Department. The department itself is a part of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Jack Censor, Dean. For further information on the I/O Program, please contact Dr. Lois Tetrick at ltetrick@gmu.edu or the graduate secretary at psygrad@gmu.edu. Please also visit our website at http://www.gmu.edu/org/iopsa.

I/O Alumni!

We love to hear what you’re up to! Please keep us informed of your life changes, from your mailing address to SIOP fellowship nominations. If you are willing to be interviewed for our alumni column or wish to contribute to the newsletter in any way, please e-mail us at agrayd@gmu.edu or klaport@gmu.edu.

I/O Website and E-mail

Our website is at http://www.gmu.edu/org/iopsa/thon.htm. We can also be contacted at agrayd@gmu.edu or klaport@gmu.edu.

I/ON Newsletter

The I/ON newsletter is published by graduate students of George Mason University’s Industrial/Organizational Psychology program. This newsletter is intended to serve as an impartial forum for information pertinent to the students and faculty of the program, as well as the general I/O community. We would like to thank the previous I/ON editors, Dr. Marisa Diana-Russo, Dr. Stephanie Payne, Dr. Lisa Boyce, Nikki Dudley, Mike Ingerick, Dr. W. Benjamin Porr, Deirdre Lozzi, Tiffany Bludau, Marissa Shuffler, Jordan Robbins, C. Brooke Orr, Jayme Pittsonberger, Elizabeth Conjar, Richard Hermida, Carrie Grimes, Irwin José, Phillip Gilmore, and Kristen Jones.

Previous Editors: Phillip Gilmore Kristen Jones
Current Edition Contributors: Afra Ahmad Irwin José Amanda Anderson Jim Kurtessis Elizabeth Conjar Kate LaPort David Geller Joseph Luchman Veronica Gilrane Chad Peddie Alexis Gray Krista (Langkamer) Xiaoxiao Hu Ratwani Kristen Jones
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Seth Kaplan
The I/ON — Winter 2010

Alexis Gray & Kate LaPort
I/O Psychology Program
George Mason University
4400 University Drive
Fairfax VA, 22030

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AT

HTTP://WWW.GMU.EDU/ORG/IOPSA

Happy Holidays From the I/ON!