

Meet Our First Year Students!



Name: Shreya Cho

Hometown: Irvine, CA

Attraction to SDSU: I was drawn to SDSU because of the program's emphasis on research, and I liked that there was a requirement for both internship hours and a thesis project. Also, based off of conversations with faculty and students/alumni, I felt that SDSU's I-O Psychology program had the most supportive and welcoming environment.

In my free time, I... love to cook! I can literally cook for hours and I just throw on a podcast in the background—I find it so therapeutic. I also enjoy reading, swimming, running, trying out new cafes, and going to concerts!

An interesting fact about me: I am a huge NBA fan and my favorite player is Kawhi Leonard!

My favorite San Diego grub: Yiko Yiko snowball mochi (mango flavor is the best)

In ten years, I see myself... in a fulfilling job within the I-O field where I help make the workplace a better environment for employees. I hope to be living in CA still, maintaining a good work-life balance so that I can enjoy all the beauty there is in this state.

If your life was a movie, what genre would it be? Dramedy for sure



Name: Tina Madani

Hometown: Mission Viejo, CA

Attraction to SDSU: I chose to attend SDSU because I felt the faculty genuinely care about their students and invest time in mentoring them. Among all the master's programs in California, this was the only one where I felt truly supported. I pursued a master's degree to challenge myself and grow as a scientist-practitioner, and SDSU is the perfect place!

In my free time, I... love to cook, bake, go to the gym, and watch football.

An interesting fact about me: English is my second language.

My favorite San Diego grub: Thai food from Hug Thai Express

In ten years, I see myself... travelling the world every opportunity I get.

If your life was a movie, what genre would it be? My life would be a cheesy rom-com

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Additional Information:

THE STUDENT EDITOR OF
THIS ISSUE WAS
SIMRAN BHATIA

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY
SIMRAN BHATIA & LISA KATH

If you would like additional information on the Applied Psychology Student Association (APSA) or anything discussed in this newsletter, please e-mail jeff.conte@sdsu.edu or lisa.kath@sdsu.edu

Don't forget to join the APSA LinkedIn Group.
For more information, contact Dr. Lisa Kath
(lisa.kath@sdsu.edu)

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Meet Our First Year Students! (continued from page 1)



Name: Catherine Missler

Hometown: Seattle, Washington

Attraction to SDSU: I was super interested in SDSU because of the amazing faculty! After attending SDSU for undergrad I had full confidence that the faculty would be extremely supportive, knowledgeable, and passionate about my education. I was drawn to the small cohort sizes as well as the faculties research interests. San Diego is also a beautiful city I never want to leave!

In my free time, I... enjoy running, trying new workout classes, cooking, and finding fun unique things to do in San Diego!

An interesting fact about me: I studied abroad in Denmark where my only mode of transport was a bike for two months

My favorite San Diego grub: Not specific to San Diego, but I love any salad from Mendocino Farms

In ten years, I see myself... in a career in I-O Psychology that I am passionate about while maintaining great work- life balance!

If your life was a movie, what genre would it be? A rom-com



Name: Alexandra (Alex) Nash

Hometown: Granite Bay, CA

Attraction to SDSU: Having gone to SDSU for undergrad, I was aware of the masters program at SDSU and discovered how unique and rigorous it is. I was able to learn more about the program, interact with current students in the program, and ultimately speak to faculty who run/teach in the program. I valued the small size of the cohorts, the 300-hour internship, TA-ship, and the thesis requirement.

In my free time, I... like to bake, go on walks, spend time in the sun, and read!

An interesting fact about me: I am a triplet! All girls, too!

My favorite San Diego grub: Italian Food!

In ten years, I see myself... working in an applied role and using the scientist-practitioner model to inform me in my practice. Ultimately, I will be working in a role and with a company that I align with in terms of values, passion, and impact. I hope to have a golden retriever that I can take on long walks around San Diego.

If your life was a movie, what genre would it be? Docudrama



Name: Sarah Snyder

Hometown: Medford, MA

Attraction to SDSU: I was drawn to the emphasis on research and theory. I want to apply evidence-based practices to the workplace, so I think it is important to study the research methods and theories that are the foundations of those practices. I also wanted to be a part of a small program that I could be proud to call home.

In my free time, I... like to read fiction, try new recipes, and spend time with my girlfriends.

An interesting fact about me: While I'm from New England, one of my first memories is having lorikeys drink syrup from my hands at the San Diego Zoo.

My favorite San Diego grub: So far, Tacos El Gordo! The Thai food is also amazing out here!

In ten years, I see myself... I hope to use data and literature to improve equity in selection processes. I foresee myself at a job where I can still be fascinated by selection methods. I also hope to have a hypoallergenic cat of my own.

If your life was a movie, what genre would it be? A woman-led comedy, like Pitch Perfect or Bridesmaids.

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Fall SDOSP Meeting

By Shreya Cho

On Tuesday, October 8th, the grassroots group San Diego Organizational Science & Practice (SDOSP) held its inaugural meeting! Founded by Lisa Kath, Sinan Julnes, Michael Petty, John Little, and Anaid Northcraft, the group aims to unite professionals in Industrial-Organizational Psychology and related fields who are passionate about applying evidence-based practices to enhance organizational outcomes.

The first meeting was a success, with an impressive turnout of over 40 attendees, including current SDSU students, SDSU alumni, SDSU faculty, and other I-O psychology practitioners. Everyone was provided with a sheet of questions with stickers to help encourage networking. The aim was to collect a sticker every time you networked with a new person. The event buzzed with conversations and excitement as attendees exchanged stickers, sparking connections and shared interests.

After networking for a while, the launch team divided everyone into groups. Our task was to brainstorm topics and activities that could create potential "connection circles" to further strengthen our relationships. We were also asked to suggest guest speakers we would like to see at future meetings.

A heartfelt thanks goes out to the launch team for bringing this group to life and creating a space for professionals dedicated to evidence-based practices to connect and grow.



Some important announcements from SDOSP:

- Don't forget to email the group with your announcements or questions at SDOSP@groups.io and post to our group on LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13593982/>)
- Stay tuned for the start of a mentoring program
- Plan to join us at our second event, at *Marsh McLennan Agency (San Diego office)* again. More details will be shared with the members soon!

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Fall APSA Speakers

Ada Rodriguez and Jacqueline Marefka

By Maxwell Cain

This Fall 2024, we had the privilege of speaking with Ada Rodriguez, a Change Management Supervisor specializing in Digital Adoption and DEIA, and Jacqueline Marhefka, a Human Capital Manager, both of whom work at ICF, a global consulting firm that has been developing data-driven solutions for clients for over 50 years. Ada and Jacqueline shared valuable insights into the consulting field as an external government consultant, emphasizing the autonomy consultants have in managing projects and the flexibility to adjust time spent on tasks. They also discussed business development, with Jacqueline explaining the importance of government proposals and Ada advising newcomers to volunteer for proposal roles to learn the basics. They also answered five questions about the field and their experiences:

1. What is the most challenging part of your job?

Jacqueline said that balancing wanting to help clients (project work) and wanting to do internal work for ICF (e.g., business development, workgroups) was challenging; both can be quite important. For Ada, tracking utilization (how much time is spent on projects) was a recurring challenge, but it is a vital piece for performance reviews and career growth.

2. What led you to pursue this career?

Jacqueline mentioned that it can be tough to translate the majority of grad work to the real world in areas outside of consulting. However, consulting allows you to use the scientist-practitioner model to its full extent. Ada liked how impactful the work is, driving meaningful change – not just for the organization but for the individuals within it.

3. How do you apply evidence-based practices when you get pushback from non I-O Psychologists?

Jacqueline suggested trying to show consequences, limitations, and results of implementation, essentially how doing whatever it is can increase a firm's return on investment. Ada highlighted that most clients seeking external help already wanted the opinions of I-O psychologists and external expertise, the key is identifying influential team members who can champion the value of I-O expertise.

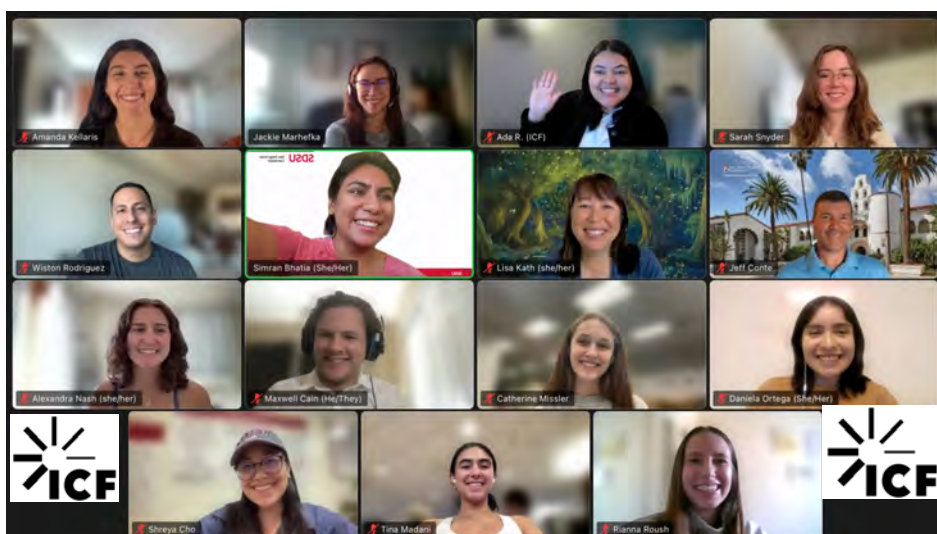
4. What soft skills are important for consultants?

Jacqueline quickly suggested communication skills, specifically active listening and critical thinking. Companies do not know what they want exactly, so understanding what wasn't said or reading between the lines was crucial. Ada stressed the importance of learning how to manage client relationships. If a client is upset, then the project can be tougher to move forward, and understanding where their stress might be bubbling up can help with the solution.

5. What makes applicants stand out on resumes?

Jacqueline said that asking about what projects they are currently working on and framing your answer to fit exactly what they need is a great way to stand out. Ada emphasized the importance of utilizing career centers for interview preparation and bringing relevant examples to discussions. She also advised trusting one's instincts, noting that if there's a significant mismatch between the job description and what is conveyed during the interview, it should be considered a potential red flag.

We appreciated the time both Ada and Jacqueline took out of their day to speak with us and impart their helpful wisdom!



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Fall APSA Speakers

By *Simran Bhatia*

Jahnina Montreuil

The SDSU's Industrial-Organizational Psychology grad program was delighted to welcome Jahnina Montreuil as a guest speaker. Jahnina, a 2019 graduate of SDSU and a former POWER Lab member, currently works as an Organizational Effectiveness Consultant at Kaiser Permanente. Her presentation provided valuable insights into her work in organizational change management (OCM), offering graduate students a glimpse into real-world applications of the skills learned in graduate school.

Jahnina's work at Kaiser focuses on improving organizational program success rates. She shared that while 70% of organizational programs fail, incorporating OCM practices can increase success rates by 6 times. Her process begins with a thorough needs assessment using structured questions, followed by qualitative thematic analysis to identify key themes. These insights inform customized OCM plans that draw on lessons learned from past projects. Her strategies address common challenges such as technological hindrances and setting realistic expectations for program rollouts. Jahnina uses the evidence-based ADKAR framework, which focuses on building Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement for successful change implementation. She also leads change wellness workshops, team-building exercises, and emotional intelligence sessions to engage stakeholders across all levels of the organization, from frontline employees to executives.

Jahnina offered students practical advice drawn from her journey:

Strategies for Success: Engage stakeholders early, build networks through forums, and leverage peer influence to secure buy-in.

Challenges in Internal Consulting: Navigating organizational politics, managing egos, and maintaining relationships are vital skills in large organizations like Kaiser.

Graduate School Lessons: Jahnina emphasized the importance of time management, meeting deadlines, and teamwork. She encouraged students to invest in applied projects, as these experiences translate directly into professional success.

Career Growth: Entering the workforce requires flexibility—do not limit yourself to a specific job type. Focus on building relationships, learning continuously, and staying confident in your abilities.

Advice to her younger self: Stress less and take time to enjoy the grad-school experience more. Focus on completing your thesis while prioritizing your mental health and well-being.

Jahnina also shared insights into the differences between internal and external consulting.



Internal consulting offers long-term visible impact, job stability, and the potential for greater work-life balance. On the other hand, external consulting provides opportunities to gain experience across diverse projects and industries, often with potentially higher salaries. However, it typically demands a sales-oriented approach and can involve less work-life balance.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Jahnina Montreuil for taking the time to share her experiences and knowledge. Her insights into OCM and her candid reflections on her career journey were incredibly inspiring. On behalf of the students, staff, and faculty, we sincerely thank her for her contributions and look forward to staying connected.



It's never too early to start
planning for
SIOP 2025!

April 2-5, 2025
Denver, Colorado

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Second Year Internship Experiences

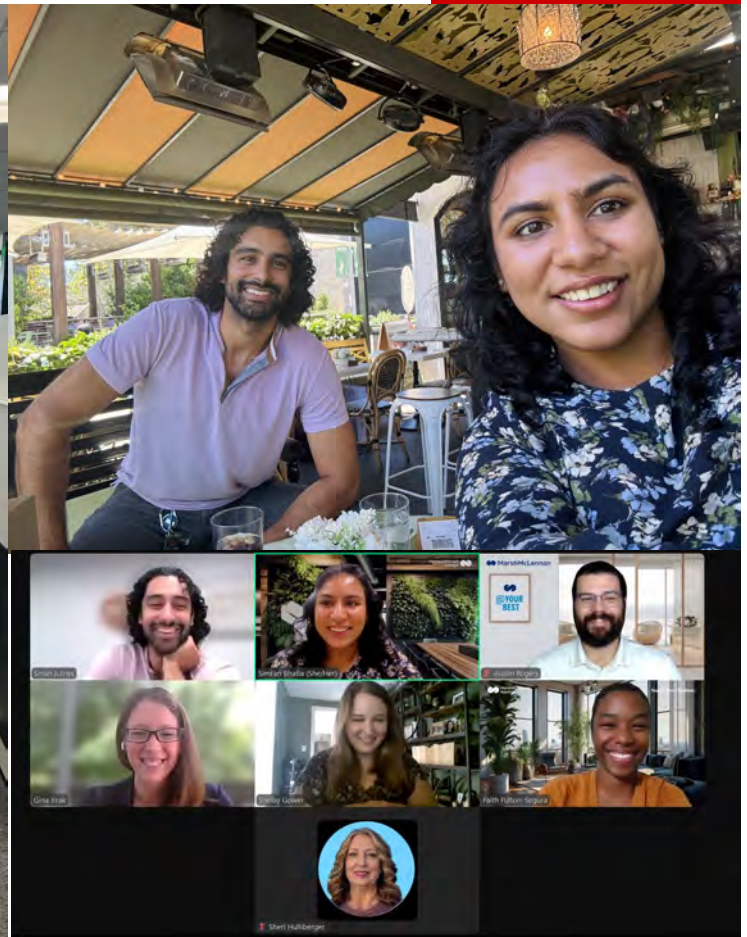
By Maxwell Cain

Internships provide our students an opportunity to practice their skills and apply their knowledge within an organization. This year, we had 5 students complete engaging internships. Oftentimes, these internships build a foundation for our students' careers, building upon knowledge gained throughout the M.S. program, and supporting our success in future career opportunities.

Simran Bhatia: During the summer of 2024, I worked as an Industrial-Organizational (I-O) Psychology Intern at Marsh McLennan Agency (MMA), a division of Marsh McLennan. A key focus of my role involved contributing to a comprehensive study of Sales Colleagues, where I collaborated with subject matter experts (SMEs) to help develop eight assessments and incorporated a Big Five personality measure. I managed the survey launch across 11 regions and analyzed the resulting data using R and SPSS, applying techniques such as correlation, t-tests, ANOVA, and regression. I also supported the development of a Power BI dashboard designed to assess individual performance, which helped managers provide targeted coaching to sales professionals. I will present our study findings to C-suite executives, highlighting opportunities for strategic learning interventions and future recruitment strategies this year at MMA. Additionally, I provided internal consulting for the producer development team, conducting interviews with eight members to identify team behavioral trends. My recommendation to adopt Wrike as a project management tool was implemented in October 2024, improving team collaboration. This internship significantly enhanced my technical, analytical, and communication skills, while offering valuable experience in applying psychological principles to real-world business challenges.

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Bridging
the Gap
Between
Research
and
Practice



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Second Year Internship Experiences

By Maxwell Cain

Amanda Kellaris: I worked on four key projects during my time as a Senior HR Intern at ThermoFisher Scientific. One of my main tasks was managing the Early and Internal Talent Strategy for North America's Field Service Engineer Interns. I also created a competency framework for 107 technical support colleagues, which was supported by an AI-based "competency assessor." Additionally, I proposed and designed People Leader Development bootcamps as part of the company's 2025 leadership strategy. Lastly, I explored standing up a virtual Business Resource Group to foster community and belonging within our division. From this experience, I gained valuable insight into talent strategy and HR processes on a broad scale. I honed my skills in project management, competency framework development, and the use of AI in HR. I also learned how to design leadership development initiatives and build inclusive workplace communities. This internship strengthened my understanding of the impact HR can have on talent development and organizational culture, and it gave me a chance to contribute meaningfully to leadership strategies for the future.

Sofija Markovic: I worked at ThermoFisher Scientific as a Senior HR Intern in the Biologicals and Chemicals Division. During my time, I led 3 different week-long engagement events to drive career development, career exploration, and belongingness in the workplace. I created and helped facilitate educational workshops and interactive activities that served as the foundation for these initiatives. One of my proudest achievements was developing an AI-powered learning and development tool that enhances the quality of employees' performance management and development (PMD) goals. Lastly, I built a toolkit to help people leaders implement a new communications strategy into their leadership approach, ensuring stronger alignment with the company's culture. Through my projects, I developed greater confidence in decision-making and learned the importance of patience and persistence when communicating with stakeholders. I also discovered that while AI may not always be reliable or accurate for data analysis, it serves as a valuable tool for brainstorming ideas.

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Second Year Internship Experiences

By Maxwell Cain

Rianna Roush: This summer, I was a remote Human Capital Consulting Intern for ICF, a consulting firm based in Reston, VA. I worked on a variety of projects for federal government clients, including the CDC, IRS, Center for Army Leadership, Army Research Institute, and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group. My project for the CDC involved creating a toolkit for health departments to implement peer support programs, which overlapped nicely with my thesis which is also about peer support programs! For the IRS, I worked on a training needs analysis, competency modeling, and career pathing. I gained data analysis experience by using R to create correlation and descriptive tables for items on a scale we were validating. I also visited the headquarters in Virginia and met with other interns from across the company. Through my internship, I learned what it looks like to work in consulting and I found that I enjoyed the variety of work I got to do. It was great to work with so many other I-O professionals and gain experience doing impactful work!



Daniela Ortega: I had the privilege of serving as an HR Consulting Intern at Forward Talent Strategies, a local, woman-owned consulting firm. Under the mentorship of Tracy Ward, the firm's CEO, I was able to apply many of the concepts and skills I had gained throughout my studies. One of my key responsibilities involved analyzing and summarizing data from an organizational climate survey for a local biotechnology company, where I used the scientist-practitioner skills acquired through this program to effectively communicate the results to the organization's leadership. Additionally, I had the rewarding experience of planning a conference and fundraiser event to raise awareness about local community issues while supporting a non-profit dedicated to helping survivors of human trafficking. Working closely with Tracy, an HR expert with over 20 years of experience, provided me with invaluable growth opportunities, new skills, and meaningful insights that I hadn't anticipated gaining.

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Announcements

- **Alexa Samaniego** got engaged to her partner, Milan.
- **Amy Tran** started a new role with American Express as a Training Analyst on the Learning and Development Team and will be relocating to Phoenix, Arizona.
- **Kristy Kay** was promoted to Director of Strategy & Transformation at American Express in July 2024.
- **Zack Girgis** and his wife (Nancy) welcomed twin girls (Rebecca & Victoria) in January, 2025.

Faculty Publications and Presentations

- Ashley L. Boal, Taylor Gara, **Justine Zimiles** & Rebeca Cerna (2024) California's Historic Investment in Community Schools: Early Evidence to Understand Shifts in Community School Practices Before and After Grant Participation, *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*.
- **Conte, J. M.** (2024). *Work in the 21st Century: An Introduction to Industrial and Organizational Psychology* (7th Edition). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- **Kath, L.M.**, O'Shea, P.G., Tippins, N.T., & Zickar, M.J. (2024). 'Working' in Chicago: Lessons in storytelling from Studs Terkel. Panel discussion held at the 39th Annual Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology Conference, Chicago, IL.
- Zhou, S. (Co-Chair), McCauley, R. (Co-Chair), Fletcher, K., Grabarek, P., Islam, S., **Kath, L.M.**, Nelson, K., Rogelberg, S., Sawyer, K. Wiese, C., Yost, P., Morel, J. (Non-Speaking). (2024). *Speaking up for your research: How to communicate your findings to a broad audience* [Alternative Session]. Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.
- **Kath, L.M.** (2024, November) - *Imposter syndrome: What is it and what can be done about it?* Lunch and Learn presentation for the Structural Engineers Association of San Diego, San Diego, CA.
- **Kath, L.M.** (2024, March) *The psychology of employee safety*. Pediatric Grand Rounds presentation at Primary Children's Hospital in Salt Lake City, UT.
- **Kath, L.M.** (2023, December) – *Patient aggression toward healthcare workers -and- Background on @iopsychmemes*. Brown Bag presentation for University of Georgia. [virtual]

FALL 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Our cohort had a fantastic Fall semester! Highlights included a spirited Halloween celebration, our annual fall social, and cheering on classmates as they successfully proposed and defended their theses. A standout moment? Dressing up (and wearing police badges) as one of our favorite professors, Dr. Jeff Conte, who has lots of great stories about doing job analyses in advance of developing police selection systems.



Top: First- and second-years dressed up as police officers for Dr. Jeff Conte's seminar!
Bottom: Job analysis presentation day in PSY 621 (Personnel Psychology)—hard work in action!

FALL 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Top Left/Bottom: First- and second-years enjoying the annual APSA fall BBQ, graciously hosted by Dr. Lisa Kath
Top Right: Dr. Lisa Kath capturing a beautiful stargazing moment of Cat and Alex.



FALL 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Top Left/Right: Everyone enjoying the bonfire while watching ...
Bottom: The friendly ping pong match between Max and Dr. Conte!



FALL 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Top Left/Right: First- and second-years celebrating Halloween in style!
Bottom: Second-years celebrating at John Little's (Class of 2024) graduation party!



FALL 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Top Left/Right: Second-years celebrating Amanda, Sofija, and Rianna's thesis proposals!
Bottom: Second-years celebrating at Brianna Camacho's (Class of 2024) graduation party!



FALL 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Top Left: Dr. Harwood (Psychology faculty member at Miramar College) with Simran and Sofija for lunch after their presentation on I-O psychology to Miramar College students!

Top Left: Dr. Lisa Kath hosted a pizza party for her POWER Lab students at her house!

Bottom Left: Dr. Lisa Kath addressing SDOSP members about the founding members' vision for SDOSP.

Bottom Right: Students and alums celebrating after the first successful SDOSP event!

