

AN EVALUATION OF THE MASTER'S PROGRAM IN INDUSTRIAL/ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY:
BIANNUAL ALUMNI SURVEY (2002 -2003 GRADUATES)

A Technical Report Prepared for the Psychology Department at
Southwest Missouri State University

by

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Acknowledgments

I want to express appreciation and gratitude to the Industrial/Organizational Psychology program's graduates who gave of their time generously to respond to this questionnaire. They are a talented, energetic, group of people and the I/O faculty is proud of their professional successes, their continuing commitment to the program, their desire to see the program do well, and their willingness to contribute toward that end. We are pleased to call each of these individuals our colleague. I also want to express appreciation and gratitude to the program's faculty. They, too, are a talented, energetic, and collegial group of people who are committed to the program and who work hard to make it successful. I would especially like to acknowledge the work of Dr. Donald Fischer. His efforts on previous alumni surveys served as the model upon which this document is fashioned and his assistance on every aspect of this project has been invaluable.

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Executive Summary

Recent graduates of the Master's program in Industrial/Organizational (I/O) Psychology were surveyed during the spring semester of 2004 with a questionnaire designed to collect information about their post-graduate work experiences and views on various aspects of the program. The results indicate that:

- All respondents were employed full-time, part-time or pursuing an advanced degree.
- Median income of those employed was \$40,500; mean income was \$40,558.
- Employed respondents were relatively satisfied with various aspects of their jobs.
- All of those employed found their present jobs within six months of graduation.

When compared to a national survey of I/O Master's program graduates conducted by the American Psychological Association (APA), Southwest Missouri State (SMS) graduates were finding jobs in more corporate settings, were earning somewhat less, and were more satisfied with their jobs. Starting salaries for recent graduates were higher than graduates in previous surveys. These graduates showed similar patterns of satisfaction with most aspects of their jobs as previous graduates.

In terms of how recent graduates view the program and their program-related experiences, the areas of greatest satisfaction included:

- Opportunities for institutional support and financial aid,
- Opportunities for financial aid (loans),
- Opportunities to interact with faculty,
- Opportunities to develop communication and interpersonal skills,
- Opportunities to develop statistical skills for job analysis, performance appraisal, measurement of individual differences, program development and evaluation, and
- Opportunities to develop knowledge base concerning contextual influences on behavior.

(note: all of the above had mean ratings of 3.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale)

Areas of least satisfaction included:

- Library holdings/services,
- Quality of computer support for research and course work, and
- Rigor of academic standards fostered by the students.

It is important to note that in previous alumni surveys, opportunities to participate in field experience and relevance of internship/thesis for current job were among the lowest satisfaction items. It would seem that program development activities in the area of increased field experience opportunities, has had a positive impact on student's experiences.

Program development activities are an important component of this evaluation. Results indicate that future efforts should continue to focus on increasing funding for guest speakers and presentations. Finally, enhancing and increasing working networks with organizations in the Springfield community and the Midwest-region would be desirable.

AN EVALUATION OF THE MASTER'S PROGRAM IN INDUSTRIAL/ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY:
ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND BIENNIAL ALUMNI SURVEY (2002 - 2003 GRADUATES)

The Program

The Psychology Department at Southwest Missouri State University (SMS) has offered a Master of Science degree in Industrial/Organizational (I/O) Psychology since the fall of 1992. The two year (47 credit-hour) program was originally designed for 16 full-time students (eight per year), taught by a core faculty composed of four I/O psychologists. Beginning in 1994 after a fourth I/O psychologist was hired; enrollment targets were increased to their current levels of approximately 10 students per year. A fifth I/O psychologist was hired in 1996, bringing the program to its current level of 24 students and five core faculty.

Following a scientist-practitioner model, the program is designed to reflect standards promulgated by the Council for Applied Master's Programs in Psychology (CAMPP, 1990) and curricular guidelines developed by the Society for Industrial/Organizational Psychology (SIOP, 1994). The focus is upon applying psychological principles and research methods to solve problems in a variety of settings, including business, industry, government, and non-profit organizations. Students select either an internship or thesis option depending upon whether their career goals involve seeking employment as a masters level I/O practitioner or continuing their graduate education in a doctoral program. Specific objectives of the program include the following:

1. Developing research and statistical skills for job analysis, performance assessment, the measurement of job-related individual differences, program development and evaluation.
2. Developing a knowledge base concerning important contextual influences on behavior, including social influence, work motivation, job design, training and organizational development.
3. Developing an understanding of the philosophical, ethical, and legal constraints on the practice of applied psychology.

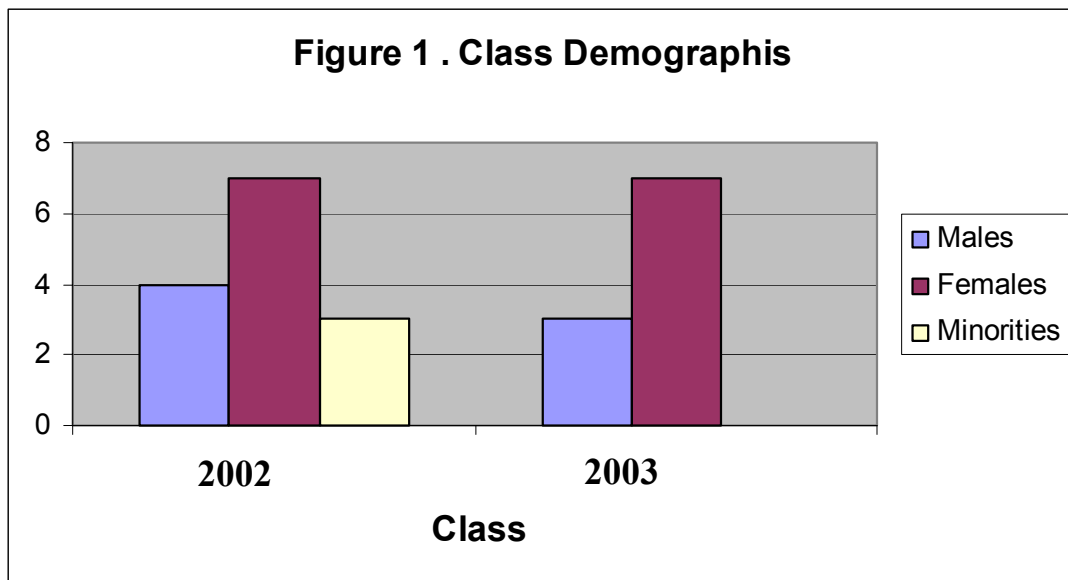
4. Developing communication and interpersonal competence necessary for successful functioning in organizations.

Ninety-five percent of the students who graduated in 2002 and 2003 received institutional support as graduate assistants and/or teaching assistants as compared to the 90% reported in the 1999 biannual survey. Graduate assistantships provide a fee waiver and monthly stipend in return for 20 hours of service. However, most of the institutional support that students receive comes from sources outside of the Psychology Department; over 70% of the students who were enrolled during the period of this evaluation were supported through assistantships administered by other university units (e.g., Center for Assessment and Instructional Support, Office of Career Services, Office of Equal Opportunity, Human Resources, Student Affairs, Office of Athletic Academic Achievement, TRIO Programs, etc.). This rate is consistent with previous evaluations. As described below, this high level of institutional support has greatly enhanced the program's ability to attract and enroll a talented and diverse group of students.

The Students and Alumni

Fifty percent of the students in the most recent graduating classes (1998 through 2003) have come from out-of-state and over 76% have come from schools other than SMSU. While the program largely draws from the Midwest; our program has attracted students from as far north as Canada and Wisconsin, as far south as Florida, as far west as California and New Mexico, and as far east as New Jersey. Some of the schools from which the program's students have graduated include: the Universities of Florida, Nebraska, and New Mexico; Louisiana State University, Illinois State University, Wayne State University, Kansas State, Wittenberg College (in Ohio), Evansville University (in Indiana), Tuskegee University (in Alabama) and St Mary's (in Texas), to name but a few. Demographics for the previous graduate classes (classes of 1994 through 2001) can be found in previous alumni survey reports (Beatty & Fischer, 1997; Fischer, 1999, and Fischer, 2002). What follows is a description of those who have subsequently enrolled and graduated (graduating class of either 2002 or 2003).

Demographic Characteristics of 2002 – 2003 Graduating Classes. In 2000, 25 individuals made application to the program; 17 of these were accepted and 11 enrolled. Of those who enrolled four were male, seven were female, three were ethnic minorities and none were over 40. Nine of these students graduated (demographics are presented in Figure 1). Two students (1 male, 1 female) withdrew from the program. Ethnic minorities represented in the 2002 graduating class included African-American, Asian-American, and Hispanic. Demographics from previous graduating classes can be found in earlier alumni surveys (Beatty & Fischer, 1997 and Fischer, 1999, 2001).



In 2001 there were 20 applicants; 15 of these were accepted and 10 enrolled. Of those who enrolled three were male, seven were female and one was an international student from Germany. No ethnic minorities or individuals over 40 applied. Seven of these students graduated (see Figure 1). One student (female) withdrew from the program, one student was dismissed (male) and one student (female) is completing degree requirements.

Academic Characteristics of 2002 – 2003 Graduating Classes. The undergraduate GPA and composite GRE means for these last two classes to enroll are 3.51 and 1005, respectively. These are approximately the same as the 1999 biannual report.

Program Attrition. The attrition rate for the program was 19% (4 out of 21) for the classes covered by this survey. This is somewhat lower than the time span covered by the classes of 1997 to 2000 in which the attrition rate was 24% (9 out of 40). We tend to lose approximately two students per class. We see the drop in attrition as a positive change given the rigorous, academically challenging, and stressful nature of the program. Students who are not intrinsically interested in I/O psychology and students who do not have the requisite academic abilities and skills find they can not survive and either drop out or are asked to leave. While undergraduate GPA and composite GRE scores provide some indication of an applicant's academic abilities and skills; motivational and interpersonal prerequisites are more difficult to assess. It is interesting to note that the mean undergraduate GPA and composite GRE scores for the graduates and non-graduates are *not* significantly different. This comparison underscores the importance of motivational and interpersonal factors for successful completion of the program, and may indicate that the program needs to do a better job of screening applicants on these characteristics.

The Questionnaire and Survey

The first survey of program graduates was completed in 1997 and evaluated graduates from the 1994 through 1996 graduating classes. Since that time, we have completed bi-annual evaluations of our graduates. The 1999 survey assessed the perceptions of the 1997 and 1998 graduating classes. The 2001 survey was conducted on all program graduates (1994 through May 2001). This survey assessed all graduates from May 2002 to August 2003.

The alumni survey is part of a larger, ongoing evaluation effort that involves many components (e.g., semester course/instructor ratings, application rates, graduation/attrition rates, etc.). One purpose of the survey is to evaluate the program from the post-graduate perspective of its alumni. The administration and program faculty want to know how graduates view their course work and related program experiences. The focus of this concern is upon program development — i.e., identifying areas of perceived strength and weakness. In addition, the administration, faculty and prospective applicants want to know more about the post-graduate work experiences of alumni, including some measure of their career success as I/O practitioners

and human resource professionals. The focus of this concern is upon salary, job satisfaction and how SMS graduates compare with those from other programs, nationwide. This was the fourth survey in what is an ongoing follow-up evaluation effort designed to build a data base capable of answering questions of interest to many people, including prospective applicants, who want to know where our graduates work, how much they make, how well they like various aspects of their jobs, what they think about various aspects of the education and training they received, etc.

The questionnaire developed by Beatty and Fischer (1997) was minimally modified (i.e., dates changed) for use in the present effort. This was done, in part, to facilitate comparisons with the earlier data and data from a national survey conducted by the American Psychological Association (APA). The development and pilot testing of this instrument is described in the report of the first survey (see Beatty & Fischer, 1997). A copy of the questionnaire used in this survey is contained in Appendix A.

For the present administration of the survey the questionnaire web-based technology and FrontPage software was used. Collected response data was imported into Access 2003 and then into a statistical program (SPSS) for further analysis. The questionnaire was emailed in January 2004 to all those who had graduated since the last survey ($n = 16$). A cover e-mail was included from the Program Coordinator describing the survey's purpose, a link to the web questionnaire, and information on how results would be used (see Appendix B). A follow-up e-mail including the web link was sent approximately four weeks after the first contact to all those in the original list (see Appendix B). Fifteen of the 16 individuals responded by the end of March. This is an exceptionally high response rate (94%) for this type of survey research. Nine of the returned questionnaires were from the class of 2002, and seven were from the class of 2003.

Results for Employment

In the Employment Section, 73% ($n = 11$) of respondents indicated that they were currently employed and 27% ($n = 4$) indicated he/she was pursuing an advanced degree. One respondent indicated they were seeking different employment. Of the 11 who were employed, nine (82%) indicated they were employed in a position related to their graduate education (one person did not respond to this question).

Employment Characteristics. Forty-five percent (n = 5) indicated that their primary employment was in a corporate setting, 9%, (n = 1) indicated a non-profit agency, 18% (n = 2) indicated 2-year university and 3 (27%) indicated other. Fifty-five percent (n = 6) were employed in Missouri, 18% (n = 2) in Virginia, and 9% (n = 1) each in Michigan and Tennessee. None indicated he/she had a secondary employment setting. The employment settings were similar to those in previous two-year surveys.

Table 1
Employment Setting by Graduation Year

Employment Setting	Graduation Year		
	01 – 02	02 – 03	Total
2yr/4yr University	1	1	2
Private Research	0	0	0
Public & Not for Profit Research	1	2	3
Private Applied/corporation	2	3	5
Public & Not for Profit Applied	1	0	1
Total	5	6	11

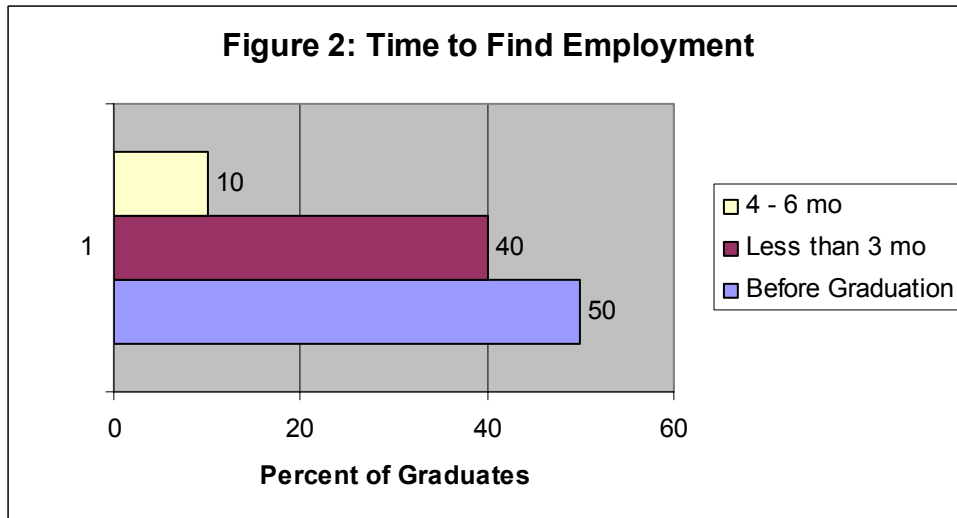
When describing their primary employment, respondents indicated they worked between 20 and 50 hours per week, with a mean of 39 hours per week and a median of 42.5 hours worked per week. Respondents indicated they had been employed from 6 to 24 months in their current jobs, with a mean tenure of 14.5 months. Salaries ranged from \$35,000 to \$50,000 per year, with a mean of \$41,878 and a median of \$40,750. Although time at work and tenure were similar to previous surveys, salaries were somewhat higher than in the past (\$40k vs. 30k in 1999 and 32.3k in 1997 for median income; \$42K v. 30.5k and \$34.7k for mean income).

Eighty percent (n = 8) of the employed respondents indicated that their jobs were commensurate with their levels of experience, and 90% (n = 9) said their jobs were commensurate with their levels of training. Forty percent (n = 4) said that they would prefer a more challenging position.

Job Satisfaction. Mean responses to items involving job satisfaction are presented in Table 2. Overall, respondents were fairly satisfied with their positions, with mean responses equal to or exceeding the scale value for “satisfied” on all but two of the eight items. Overall, graduates expressed greatest satisfaction with supervision, coworkers, and personal development opportunities; they were least satisfied with their opportunities for salary and promotional opportunities. Compared with the 1997-1998 two year survey, these graduates are more satisfied with promotion and benefits, and very similar on all other aspects of their jobs (see Table 2).

<i>Table 2</i>			
<i>Comparison of Job Satisfaction Means</i>			
	Graduation Year		
	<i>1994 – 1996</i>	<i>1997 - 1998</i>	<i>2002 – 2003</i>
Working Conditions	3.3	3.4	3.2
Co-workers	3.1	3.4	3.3
Supervision	3.1	3.6	3.5
Recognition	3.0	3.0	3.2
Personal Development	3.3	3.2	3.3
Promotion	3.0	2.4	2.8
Benefits	3.0	2.8	3.2
Salary	2.9	2.6	2.5

Time to Find Employment. With respect to the length of time subsequent to graduation it took to find their current jobs, 100% (n = 10) reported finding their current position within 6 months of completing their degree requirements. It should be noted, that unlike previous surveys 100% of these individuals were still in the first job after graduation. Time to find this job is presented in Figure 2.



Results for Education

Program Satisfaction Measures. Mean responses to the first 25 questions of the Education Section are displayed in Table 3. Overall, SMS graduates indicated high levels of satisfaction with the program and their program-related experiences. Courses continue to be seen as relevant to their current work (see items 18 to 20), alumni were satisfied with their opportunities to obtain the knowledge and develop the skills described by the program's stated objectives (see items 21 to 24), and the climate was generally viewed as supportive (see items 2 to 10). The items receiving the highest satisfaction ratings include:

1. Opportunities for institutional support and financial aid ($M = 3.69$).
2. Opportunities for financial aid (loans) ($M = 3.53$).
3. Opportunities to interact with faculty ($M = 3.50$).
4. Opportunities to develop communication and interpersonal skills ($M = 3.50$).
5. Opportunities to develop statistical skills for job analysis, performance appraisal, measurement of individual differences, program development and evaluation ($M = 3.50$).
6. Opportunities to develop knowledge base concerning contextual influences on behavior ($M = 3.50$).

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Program Experience Items.

Items	M	SD
1. Quality of instruction in my classes	3.31	.60
2. Faculty support and concern for my well-being	3.44	.81
3. Student support and concern for my well-being	3.44	.73
4. Opportunities to interact with faculty	3.50	.52
5. Opportunities to participate in research	3.38	.72
6. Opportunities to participate in field experience	3.13	.62
7. Opportunities for institutional support (graduate assistantship)	3.69	.70
8. Opportunities for financial aid (loans)	3.53	.52
9. Rigor of academic standards fostered by the faculty	3.31	.95
10. Rigor of academic standards fostered by the students	2.94	.68
11. Quality of initial contacts with the program during the application process	3.19	.75
12. Quality of printed information about the program	3.19	.75
13. Quality of library holdings and services for the program	2.81	.91
14. Quality of computer support for my research and course work	2.88	.96
15. Quality of academic advisement I received	3.37	.81
16. Satisfaction with course offerings and times scheduled	3.13	.81
17. Satisfaction with comprehensive exams	3.44	.63
18. Relevance of core courses to my current job	3.38	.62

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Program Experience Items.

Items	M	SD
19. Relevance of I/O topics courses to my current job	3.37	.81
20. Relevance of internship/thesis experiences to my current job	3.25	.93
21. Opportunities to develop research and statistical skills for job analysis, performance appraisal, the measurement of individual differences, program development and evaluation	3.50	.52
22. Opportunities to develop a knowledge base concerning contextual influences on behavior such as social influence, job design, training and development	3.50	.52
23. Opportunities to develop an understanding of the philosophical, ethical, and legal issues related to the practice of applied psychology	3.37	.62
24. Opportunities to develop the communication skills and interpersonal competence necessary for successful functioning in organizations	3.50	.82
25. Overall program quality	3.31	.60

Note: 1=Very Dissatisfied; 2=Dissatisfied; 3=Satisfied; 4=Very Satisfied.

Graduates were least satisfied with library resources facilities, computer support and standards fostered by the students. Items receiving the lowest ratings include:

1. Library holdings/services ($M = 2.81$).
2. Quality of computer support for research and course work ($M = 2.88$).
3. Rigor of academic standards fostered by the students ($M = 2.94$).

It should be noted that these three items also had the largest variance of the 25 items in this section of the questionnaire. An examination of the distribution of responses revealed that 73% of respondents reported being “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with each of the dimensions above.

Overall, the pattern of results for this section of the questionnaire is similar to the results in previous survey administrations. Statistical tests revealed that none of the item means from

the two samples (1999 vs. 2004 surveys) were significantly different. However, there were some changes in item means that may warrant consideration. Largest mean differences among the samples were in the areas of satisfaction with library holdings and opportunities for field experience. In both cases respondents were more satisfied now than in previous surveys. Continued efforts among faculty to increase applied activities in classes and on-going development of relationships with internship sites is likely responsible for this continued increase in satisfaction. While library support continues to be an issue, the availability of on-line journals may be a contributing factor to the increase in satisfaction in that area.

In addition, this survey found that students were less satisfied with their opportunities for institutional support than in either the 1999 or 1997 surveys. It should be noted that 80% (n = 12) of respondents were very satisfied, 7 % (n = 2) were satisfied, and only 13% (n = 2) were dissatisfied. No respondents were “very dissatisfied” with institutional support. This is an interesting finding since a greater percentage of students in this group of graduates received institutional support and all that sought support received it. Perhaps the dissatisfaction with opportunity is related to the small number of available departmental research assistantships or reflects dissatisfaction with specific positions rather than opportunity to receive graduate assistantship support.

Debt Accrued. In response to questions involving debt, 73.3% (n=11) of the graduates indicated that they had accumulated some debt that was directly related to their graduate education (5 respondents did not answer). Of these, most indicated the amount of accumulated debt was between ten and twenty thousand dollars (40%). The percentage of respondents and their corresponding levels of debt are presented in Table 4.

Examining the table below, it would appear that graduates are accumulating more debt than in the first alumni survey. However, there is considerable variation across years in cumulative debt. While tuition costs have risen in the last few years, most students have received institutional support which covers tuition, fees and provides a stipend. Hence only cost of living and individual needs should be contributing to these fluctuations.

Table 4 Cumulative Graduate Education Debt by Survey Year			
Amount of Debt	Survey Year		
	2004	1999	1997
none	29	17	27
Less than 2,500	0	8	9
2,500 – 5, 000	14	8	0
5,001 – 10,000	7	0	36
10,001 – 20,000	43	58	0
20,001 – 30, 000	0	0	27
30, 001 or more	7	0	0
n=14 (1 respondents did not report amount of debt accrued)			

Open Ended Responses. In response to the open-ended items, graduates described some of the more satisfying, worthwhile aspects of the program. Applied projects and opportunities, small class sizes, variety of content courses, support from faculty, personal and professional relationships with both faculty and other students, and opportunity to interact with guest speakers were among these statements (see Appendix C).

When asked to describe the least satisfying or frustrating aspects of their experiences in the program, the following issues were raised: lack of faculty connections in industry, personal biases of faculty, frustration with peers, and lack of statistical offerings and skill development. Unlike previous surveys, these graduates did not express lack of opportunities for field experience or applied projects as a frustrating aspect of their experience. This is likely due to the increase in these activities in course.

Some of the changes the graduates suggested were the inclusion of certain topics in established classes or the addition of new classes. The topics/classes cited include employment/labor law, compensation and benefits, and computer skills related to research methods and statistics. A compendium of all comments can be found in Appendix C.

Comparisons with APA Data

Mean and median salary data were obtained for respondents to a national survey of masters level I/O practitioners conducted in 2001 by the American Psychological Association (APA; see Singleton, Tate, & Randall, 2003). These data were compared with the salary data obtained from SMS alumni. The results indicate that APA respondents had salaries that were considerably higher than SMS graduates (see Table 5). This is likely do to the difference in length of employment tenure. The APA data is based upon 2 – 4 years of employment; whereas our students were employed 2 years or less. Unfortunately, the sample size for the more appropriate comparison group, employed 0 – 1 year, was too small in the APA survey to calculate statistics. Additionally, the APA sample included more respondents in consulting and business settings than the SMS sample, where the majority was employed in corporate settings.

<i>Table 5</i>		
<i>Salary Comparisons between SMS Graduates and APA 2001 Respondents</i>		
	2002 – 2003	2001*
	SMS	APA
Median	\$40,750	\$55,000
Mean	\$41,878	\$54,429
Sample Size	11	21

Note: the *n*'s for both the SMS and APA samples include those employed in I/O-related applied settings and excludes those employed in settings related to the delivery of mental health care services (i.e., clinical or counseling settings).
*These salaries are for individuals who have been employed for 2 – 4 years.

The 2002 employment survey of master's, specialist's, and related degrees data (Singleton, Tate, & Kohout, 2003) was used for comparing perceptions of how one's training and experience are related to one's job. A smaller percentage of SMS graduates than APA respondents indicated their jobs were "in field" (see Table 6; note that APA data includes graduates from all specialty areas, not just I/O). Further, more APA respondents indicated that their jobs were not commensurate with their level of training, and a greater percentage of SMS

graduates said they would prefer a more challenging position. A higher percentage of SMS graduates said they would prefer to remain in their current position for personal reasons.

Table 6
Job Characteristic Ratings for SMS Graduates and APA 2001 Respondents

SMS % Agreement	Item	APA % Agreement
18	The job is not in my field.	6.7
18	The job is not commensurate w/ my experience.	7.4
9	The job is not commensurate w/ my training.	11.7
45	I would prefer a more challenging job.	9.8
18	I prefer to remain in this job for personal reasons.	9.5

[Note: The *n*'s for the APA data displayed in this table ranges from 300 to 327, depending upon the item, and includes Master's level practitioners from all specialty areas (not just I/O); the *n*'s for the SMS data displayed in this table is 11 -- all those who are employed.]

SMS graduates indicated higher levels of satisfaction than did the APA survey participants in all facets of their jobs. The higher levels for SMS graduates were especially evident for satisfaction with supervisors/co-workers, working conditions and opportunities for personal development (see Table 7). This pattern is virtually identical to the 1999 survey.

Table 7
Mean Job Satisfaction Ratings for SMS graduates and APA 2001 Respondents

SMS Mean Rating	Item	APA Mean Rating
2.55	Salary	2.4
3.0	Benefits	2.1
2.82	Opportunities for promotion	2.5
3.27	Opportunities for personal development	2.2
3.18	Opportunities for recognition	2.2
3.45	Supervisor	1.9
3.27	Co-Workers	1.8
3.18	Working Conditions	2.0

[Note: The *n*'s for the APA data displayed in this table ranges from 418 to 421, depending upon the item, and includes Master's level practitioners from all specialty areas (not just I/O); the *n*'s for the SMS data displayed in this table is 11-- all those who are employed.]

employed.]

On average, SMS graduates took less time to find their current employment than did the APA respondents. Ninety-one percent of SMS graduates found jobs before completing their degree requirements or within three months; while only 73% of APA respondents had found their current job in that time frame. This is also different than past SMS graduates who typically found their current jobs within six months after completing their degree requirements (see Table 8).

SMS % Agreement	Item	APA % Agreement
45.5	Before completing degree requirements	38.3
45.5	Within 3 months after completing requirements	34.5
9.1	4 - 6 months after completing requirements	12.2
0	> 6 months after completing requirements	14.7

[Note: The *n*'s for the APA data displayed in this table 430, depending upon the item, and includes Master's level practitioners from all specialty areas (not just I/O); the *n*'s for the SMS data displayed in this table is 11-- all those who are employed.]

More SMS graduates (73.3%) indicated having debt directly related to graduate education than APA respondents (61%). The specific amount of cumulated debt differed as well. The greatest percentage of SMS graduates (60%) indicated \$11,001 - \$20,000 of debt, while the corresponding percentage of APA respondents was substantially lower (26.8%). However, there was a greater percentage of APA respondents who accumulated larger amounts of indebtedness (53% of APA respondents had \$21K or more in debt versus 10% of SMS graduates with over \$21k). These data are presented in Table 9.

<i>Table 9</i>		
<i>Amount of debt for SMS graduates and APA Respondents</i>		
SMS %	Amount of Debt	APA %
20	\$5k or less	9.9
10	\$6k to \$10k	10.2
60	\$11k to \$20k	26.8
0	\$21k to \$30k	18.7
10	over \$30k	34.3

[note: The *n* for the APA data displayed in this table is 332 and includes Master's level practitioners from all specialty areas (not just I/O); 29% (*n* = 4) of SMS sample did not have any debt associated with education. The percentages are based upon respondents who specified the amount of education-related debt (*n* = 10).

Discussion of Results

The Master's program in I/O psychology at SMS is doing well in terms of the post-graduate work experiences of its alumni. All of the graduates were either employed full time, part-time or continuing their graduate education in a doctoral program. Of those employed full time, most were satisfied with their jobs, and only one respondent indicated they were seeking other employment. The graduates were employed by corporations in jobs with various titles and descriptions; however, most were working in an area involving human resources or development. On average, respondents worked 43 hours per week, had been in their current positions for about 14 months, and made about \$41,000 per year. When compared with APA's national survey of Master's level practitioners, SMS graduates made somewhat less but were more satisfied with their jobs.

Overall, SMS graduates indicated high levels of satisfaction with their experiences in the program. The faculty and institution were viewed as supportive. The program continues to be seen as rigorous and students report being satisfied with their opportunities to achieve program objectives. One particularly strong point of the I/O program is its faculty-student relations.

SMS graduates described the faculty as being very accessible and they valued the personal relationships fostered by the high level of interaction.

It is very positive to see that the program has shown improvement in the area of a more applied focus and more/better field experience. Recent graduates seem to have responded to faculty attempts to increase the number of applied activities in courses. Eighty percent of SMS graduates reported their internship experiences were relevant to their current jobs versus 65% of respondents in the APA survey. Additionally, SMS respondents were satisfied with their opportunities for field experiences.

Respondents were less satisfied with library holdings/services, quality of computer support for research and course work, and rigor of academic standards fostered by the students. With respect to the library holdings and services, the department continues to lobby for increased funding for materials and services. However, this is likely to continue to be a source of concern given system budget constraints.

Additionally, students would like faculty to increase the number of contacts with I/O professionals in industry in St. Louis and Kansas City area. This will continue to be challenging. It takes substantial time and effort to build linkages with area employers and establish a presence in the business community by attending Chamber of Commerce/Rotary Club/etc. meetings, cold-calling potential contacts, writing letters, spending time nurturing contacts and helping organizations solve problems. This would be logistically difficult given the time and commuting issues involved with traveling to these areas.

Increasing contacts in the Springfield area is also challenging because of similar time commitments. Additionally, because there are few I/O practitioners in the Springfield area, the level of individual attention and supervision required by students in field settings often increases the faculty member's work load by geometric proportions. Since faculty are not released from other graduate and undergraduate course work or from other supervision and advisement responsibilities to pursue these activities, there is little incentive for faculty to invest their time developing more field experience opportunities. In fact, faculty are *punished* for spending their time in this manner because this is time that is taken away from that which they can spend in activities that *are* recognized and rewarded (e.g., producing publications). As long as the tenure

and promotion system requires published research for advancement, faculty can be expected to give these activities higher priority than those that increase their students' opportunities for field experience. This line of reasoning suggests that the faculty roles and reward system needs to be changed before substantial change in this aspect of the program can be expected. As suggested in the last two evaluation reports, one possibility might be to reduce the annual teaching load for faculty who develop and incorporate field experience opportunities in a course. For example, a faculty member might receive six or eight credit-hours, instead of the usual four, for teaching a course with a field experience component (and thereby reduce his/her semester load by a course). Another possibility might be to recognize the types of documents that are often produced by projects in applied settings (e.g., technical reports to management) and allow faculty count these projects as research credit toward tenure.

Alumni responses to the open-ended questions suggested a desire for more exposure to statistical methods and programs. Some of the concerns in this area were addressed by a change of faculty that occurred fall 2001. Similar to previous surveys, some alumni would like exposure to the statistical program SAS. Given the limited funding and the computer centers support of SPSS this is likely to be an issue in the future as well. The possibility of an intersession course introducing SAS will be explored.

Guest speakers continue to be mentioned as a positive aspect of the graduate experience, along with the need to do more of this. While we continue to seek funding for these activities, this issue may ultimately be like the desire for more field experience; it is unlikely we will be able to afford more than one or two outside presenters per semester and it is unlikely this will satisfy the level of students' desire for these activities. Nevertheless, we plan to continue our efforts in this regard.

A few students expressed perceptions of inequity and some of these sentiments were strongly felt. While all students felt nurtured and supported by some faculty, there were some students who felt that some faculty treated them unfairly. Consequently, faculty may need to be more sensitive to differential or preferential treatment issues. However, as was stated in an earlier evaluation reports (Beatty & Fischer, 1997 & Fischer, 1999), differential/preferential treatment perceptions may be an unavoidable consequence of the close-knit, high level of

faculty-student interaction that characterizes the mentoring relationships that faculty develop with students. Each faculty member cannot be each student's exclusive mentor, and the relationship between mentor and student will likely be perceived by others as closer and more nurturing than the relationship between a student and a faculty member who is not that student's mentor.

Finally, a few graduates expressed the need for more assistance with job placement and help in making the transition from school to work. As suggested in the previous report, this is an issue that may fade as the program produces more graduates and a more extensive alumni network develops. The data clearly support this proposition; considerably fewer respondents in this survey mentioned the need for more job placement help.

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Appendix A

The Graduate Alumni Survey Questionnaire

Graduate Alumni Survey

The purpose of this survey is to help us evaluate the Master's Program in Industrial/Organizational Psychology. We are particularly interested in learning about your post-graduate work experiences and what you think about your graduate education now that you have finished the program. The two parts of this survey should take 25-30 minutes to complete. Your responses are essential to our evaluation effort.

I. Employment. Please read each question and mark the best response.

1. What is your CURRENT status?

- 1. Currently employed
- 2. Currently employed, but seeking other employment
- 3. Not currently employed, but seeking employment
- 4. Not currently employed and not seeking employment
- 5. Other (Please specify): _____

2. If you are currently enrolled in school, please indicate the following:

Name of School: _____

City/State: _____

Type of Program: _____

If not full-time, how many credit-hours do you take: _____ per _____ (semester or quarter)

3. If not currently employed, how long have you been seeking employment?

- 1. 0-3 months
- 2. 4-6 months
- 3. More than 6 months.

If you are *not* employed, skip to Part II; if you are employed, please answer the following questions. If you have more than one employer, answer the following questions for your *primary* employer (the job at which you spend the most time).

4. Employment Setting **(Mark one response)**

- 1. University: Four-Year College
- 2. University: Two-Year College
- 3. Self-employed
- 4. Private research organization or lab
- 5. Government research organization or lab
- 6. Corporation
- 7. Small Business
- 8. Criminal Justice System
- 9. Military Service
- 10. Federal Government Agency
- 11. State Government Agency
- 12. Local Government Agency
- 13. Other **(Please specify):** _____

Name of Organization (Optional): _____

City/State: _____

Job Title: _____

Job Description/Duties: _____

Hours per week you work (Ave.): _____

How long have you been here? _____

If this is a full-time position, please indicate in thousands of dollars the current amount of the base salary you receive (e.g., your salary for the 1999 fiscal year). If you are self-employed, indicate in thousands of dollars your net income (i.e., your total income after deducting business expenses) for the previous 12 months.

\$ _____,000.00

If this is not a full-time position (*less than 35 hours per week*) please indicate the amount you currently receive and the rate at which you are paid: \$ _____ .00 per _____ **OR** _____

5. To what extent do you believe your current primary position makes use of your training and experience?
(Mark all that apply)

The job is in my field.

The job is not in my field.

The job is commensurate with my level of experience.

The job is not commensurate with my level of experience.

The job is commensurate with my level of training.

The job is not commensurate with my level of training.

I would prefer a more challenging position.

I prefer to remain in this position for personal reasons.

6. Please indicate how satisfied you are with each of the following aspects of your current primary position.
(Mark one response for each aspect.)

1 = Very Dissatisfied	2 = Dissatisfied	3 = Satisfied	4 = Very Satisfied
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_____ 1. Salary

_____ 5. Opportunities for recognition

_____ 2. Benefits

_____ 6. Supervisor

_____ 3. Opportunities for promotion

_____ 7. Co-workers

_____ 4. Opportunities for personal development

_____ 8. Working conditions

7. When did you find your present employment (*i.e., accepted the job offer*)?

1. Already employed in this position when I started my graduate program.
2. Before completing requirements for graduate degree.
3. Within 3 months after completing requirements.
4. 4-6 months after completing requirements
5. More than 6 months after completing requirements.

8. If you currently have more than one job, please answer the following:

Name of Organization (optional): _____

City/State: _____

Job Title: _____

Job Description/Duties: _____

Hours per week you work (Ave.): _____

How long have you been here? _____

Current Salary/Rate of Pay: _____

9. If you have had other jobs since you graduated, please answer the following questions about each of these jobs, starting with the most recent. Attach additional pages if necessary.

Name of Organization (optional): _____

City/State: _____

Job Title: _____

Job Description/Duties: _____

Starting Salary: _____

Date Began: _____ Date Left: _____

Reason for leaving (optional): _____

II. Education. These questions are designed to assess different aspects of your experience in graduate school. Please select the response that **BEST** reflects your feelings about each of the following:

1 = Very Dissatisfied	2 = Dissatisfied	3 = Satisfied	4 = Very Satisfied
<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Quality of instruction in my classes		<input type="checkbox"/> 12. Quality of printed information about the program	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Faculty support and concern for my well-being		<input type="checkbox"/> 13. Quality of library holdings and services for the program	
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Student support and concern for my well-being		<input type="checkbox"/> 14. Quality of computer support for my research and course work	
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Opportunities to interact with the faculty		<input type="checkbox"/> 15. Quality of academic advisement I received	
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Opportunities to participate in research		<input type="checkbox"/> 16. Satisfaction with prescribed course schedule (course offerings and times scheduled)	
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. Opportunities to participate in field experience		<input type="checkbox"/> 17. Satisfaction with comprehensive exams	
<input type="checkbox"/> 7. Opportunities for institutional support (graduate assistantships)		<input type="checkbox"/> 18. Relevance of core courses to my current job	
<input type="checkbox"/> 8. Opportunities for financial aid (loans)		<input type="checkbox"/> 19. Relevance of I/O topics to my current job	
<input type="checkbox"/> 9. Rigor of academic standards fostered by the faculty		<input type="checkbox"/> 20. Relevance of internship/thesis opportunities to my current job	
<input type="checkbox"/> 10. Rigor of academic standards fostered by the students			
<input type="checkbox"/> 11. Quality of initial contacts with the program during the information seeking and application process			

1 = Very Dissatisfied	2 = Dissatisfied	3 = Satisfied	4 = Very Satisfied
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- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>_____ 21. Opportunities to develop research and statistical skills for job analysis, performance appraisal, the measurement of job-related individual differences, program development, and evaluation</p> <p>_____ 22. Opportunities to develop a knowledge base concerning important contextual influence on behavior, such as social influences, job design, training and development</p> | <p>_____ 23. Opportunities to develop an understanding of the philosophical, ethical, and legal issues related to the practice of applied psychology</p> <p>_____ 24. Opportunities to develop the communication skills and interpersonal competence necessary for successful functioning in organizations</p> <p>_____ 25. Overall quality of this program</p> |
|---|---|

26. Month/Year Graduated: _____ / _____

27. Upon receipt of your graduate degree, did you have any debt directly related to your graduate education?

- YES
 NO

28. If YES, what was the level of your cumulative graduate debt at the time of graduation?

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| _____ \$2,500 or less | _____ \$5,001 - \$10,000 | _____ \$20,001 - \$30,000 |
| _____ \$2,501 - \$5,000 | _____ \$10,001 - \$20,000 | _____ \$30,001 or more |

Please use the space below each question to make comments, observations, suggestions, etc. about the I/O program. Attach additional pages if necessary.

Please describe the most satisfying, worthwhile aspects of your graduate experience in this program.

Please describe the least satisfying or most frustrating aspects of your graduate experience in this program

From your perspective, what might be done to improve the nature of the program? What would you like to see changed?

Appendix B

Cover Letters

E-mailed to alumni in February 2004

Dear Alumni:

The Masters program in Industrial/Organizational Psychology at Southwest Missouri State has completed its thirteenth year and the number of our graduates continues to grow. As some of you know, we try to survey alumni within two years of graduation; since the last survey was conducted in the spring of 2001, it is survey time again. The purpose of this effort is to collect information about your post-graduate work experiences and to give you a chance to tell us what you think about the program now that you are no longer students. This year we will be surveying graduates from 2002 and 2003 (web address is at the bottom of the page).

Now for the obligatory information: Although we collect program evaluation information while you are here (remember the course/instructor ratings you made at the end of each semester?), that information reflects a student perspective. The on-line questionnaire asks you to make summary judgments that span courses and experiences. The questionnaire also contains items that address aspects of your program-related experiences that are not included in the semester appraisals. Some of the items have been taken verbatim from a questionnaire the American Psychological Association uses to survey graduates nationwide. We use the APA items so that we can compare your experiences and achievements with those from other programs.

Given the number of graduates being surveyed it is difficult to assure your anonymity. Although you are not asked to identify yourself by name, we do ask you to tell us when you graduated, what you do, and where you work (city/state). We want to know when you graduated so that we can examine cohort effects and assess changes made during the time you were here. We want to know what you do, where you live, how much you make, etc., so we can construct a demographic profile of our graduates and answer questions that applicants often ask – like, Where do your graduates work? What do they do? How much do they make? How do they like their jobs? What do they think about your program? etc. What I can assure you is that I will be the only person handling the raw data and that mainly summary information or appropriately disguised responses will be reported to others. Each respondent will receive a copy of the main report that I write.

I know I don't have to tell you that your participation in this effort is extremely important. Please take time to thoughtfully consider all of the items in the questionnaire and give us your response. If you would like any additional information regarding the survey, please contact me at the numbers or addresses below.

Carol F. Shoptaugh, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and I/O Masters Program Coordinator
Psychology Department
SW Missouri State University
Springfield, MO 65804-0095
(417)836-5788 cfs280f@smsu.edu

<http://www.faculty.smsu.edu/c/cfs280f/survey.asp>

Emailed to alumni the second week in March

Dear Alumni:

About a month ago, I sent those of you who graduated from the I/O Masters program within the last two years a questionnaire with a cover letter that began something like this: “As some of you may know, we try to survey alumni within two years of graduation. The purpose of this effort is to collect information about your post-graduate work experiences and give you a chance to tell us what you think about the program itself.” To my angst and dismay some of you have not yet responded to the questionnaire.

Okay; for you who have been too busy to respond, here’s the appeal: ***Puhleeze, puhleeze, puhleeze*** help with this program evaluation effort. My goal is 100% return rate because Dr. Fischer has never achieved higher than a 85% return rate and of course this is a competition. Surely you can beat previous survey groups’ response rates.

If this appeal seems desperate, it’s because it is. Your opinions and experiences are important — they will help us identify areas of strength and target weaknesses that need improvement. Your information will help us recruit future students. Here’s another quote from the first cover letter: “Although we collect program evaluation information while you are here (remember the course/instructor ratings you made at the end of each semester?) . . . [t]he questionnaire included with this letter asks you to make summary judgments that span many courses and program experiences. . . . We want to know what you do and where you live so we can construct a profile of our graduates and answer questions that applicants often ask (like: Where do your graduates work? What do they do? How much do they make? What do they think about the program?).” To the extent fewer of you respond, our results will be skewed and biased — less useful.

If you are one of those who is holding out, please try to find the time it takes to fill out the questionnaire. No kidding, this is very important and I want to do anything I can to encourage you to participate. If you lost or accidentally deleted the web address for the questionnaire is

<http://www.faculty.smsu.edu/c/cfs280f/survey.asp>

If you are one of those who ***did*** return your questionnaire, pat yourself on the back and think about ways you might put some peer pressure on your colleagues who haven’t done. As always, call or email me if you want any additional information (or just want to complain about this second request).

Sincerely,

Carol Shoptaugh
Masters Program in I/O Psychology
cfs280f@smsu.edu

Appendix C
Responses to the Open-Ended Questions

Responses to the Open-Ended Questions

Please describe the most satisfying, worthwhile aspects of your graduate experience in this program.

<p>The most satisfying aspect of my graduate education was the opportunity to receive applied practice with projects such as Climate Assessment, Job Analysis, Training Design, and Validation of a selection instrument.</p> <p>Equally as satisfying was the small class size, allowing for student relationships to be established both professionally personally.</p>
<p>My GA in Career Services.</p>
<p>Support from faculty.</p> <p>Amount of knowledge acquired.</p>
<p>The technical knowledge and problem-solving skills that I gained from the program have proven to be invaluable in my position.</p>
<p>Hands-on, real world projects and practicums</p>
<p>The faculty to student ratio was great. With class sizes ranging from 10-12 students, it would be hard to remain anonymous (i.e. an MBA program).</p> <p>Also, the projects that we did in various classes (training, selection, PA) were great resume builders, particularly for those of us who had no prior work experience. The applied experience is invaluable.</p>
<p>I truly feel I was prepared in terms of I/O content - I can't tell you how often I use stuff Fischer covered - and I have referred back to Kane's notes numerous times. I definitely got a good foundation to build upon.</p> <p>I also enjoyed the teaching experience I received, and am glad we were encouraged to join SIOP and go to/present at the annual conference.</p>
<p>The number and variety of content of the courses required in the program provide a strong knowledge and skill base for going applied or continuing on with graduate school</p>
<p>Ability to work closely with faculty. Applied experiences. I learned so much about factor analysis from a couple different faculty. I thought this was worthwhile as I will definitely use it.</p> <p>I enjoyed talking to Dr. Fisher and Dr. Mitchell in social situations. There were so many good times.</p> <p>Overall, it was a truly awesome experience being in the program. I think it was great that the learning and teaching did not start and stop with each class period; it continued in someone's office, at someone's home, or at a favorite local establishment. The small town really helped this happen.</p> <p>The faculty really cares about their students and it shows.</p>
<p>The applied projects, the opportunity to do research and the advisors.</p>
<p>Developing professional relationships with faculty and peers was a highlight of this program.</p>
<p>I'm so glad I went though the program with my cohort (class of 2002). We had a mostly great, supportive relationship, not only in class but outside of class. We helped each other out a lot. I'm not sure what exactly fostered the bond we seemed to have . . .</p> <p>Completing my thesis is something with which I am very proud. It was probably one of the most satisfying and rewarding things I've ever done. Doing a thesis helped me gain and hone my research skills. It's also one of the reasons I believe I was hired for my current job. Developing, implementing and managing my own research project and my ability to convey in the interview the background, hypotheses, methods, analyses and results showed my competency.</p> <p>The relationship I had with my advisor was great. I feel like he was very supportive, but he also challenged me when I wasn't working hard enough, and he challenged me to do more than what was expected. He gave great advice, was a good mentor, and I think I learned a lot from him. As an example, he suggested that I present my thesis findings at OAPA and the Graduate Interdisciplinary Forum. This is something I wouldn't have done on my own, but he challenged me to do this, and it benefited me greatly. I learned to talk about my thesis very comfortably. There were so many worthwhile experiences that helped me gain knowledge and skills.</p>

<p>Now that I have been working, I feel that the coursework was very comprehensive. And all of the projects we had to do were great learning experiences, such as the department head job analysis study, both practicum courses, my training project, etc. I loved doing my training project. That was a project that we put in a lot of time doing. I feel like we were challenged to do the best job we could, and I am proud of the end product.</p> <p>A worthwhile benefit of the projects is that that they give you something tangible to show what you learned and show what you can do. I have a lot of respect for the level of work and effort that the program and professors require, and I appreciate it so much now. I may not have always appreciated it at the time, but I do now. Sure, to a certain degree, you get out of the program what you put into it. But it is rigorous and demanding.</p>
<p>Aside from how wonderful ALL the classes were in general, a few details stick out in my mind. I'm so thankful that we were pushed to develop our presentation skills, especially in Dr. Kane's classes. He constantly gave us feedback on how to improve our presentations.</p> <p>Dr. Levesque's class changed my life- everything made sense after having her class.</p> <p>What a privilege to have Dr. Thayer visit & attend our class.</p> <p>I really appreciated attending Organizational Health & Stress. Dr. Shoptaugh was the balance between the "I" & the "O"- she always linked concepts together with examples.</p> <p>Dr. Mitchell really cared about us- coaching us in softball & socializing with us in general.</p>
<p>The hands-on experience we obtained in Organizational Practicum, Selection and Training. I found it most useful to go to an actual organization and be accountable for producing a finished product for them.</p>
<p>One of the most satisfying, worthwhile aspects of my graduate experience in this program was giving presentations on various research topics. It fostered public-speaking skills as well as the skills needed to disseminate information gathered during a project. In addition, the quasi-internships students were asked to do as part of class were very helpful in attaining real-world experience (e.g., Visio's Org class, and the applied projects in Fischer's class).</p>
<p>No debt directly due to graduate education; All instructors were understanding and competent; Diverse research interests and expertise; Camaraderie among my peers</p>

Please describe the least satisfying or most frustrating aspects of your graduate experience in this program.

<p>The least satisfying aspect of my graduate education was the lack of faculty connections within the industry for assisting students in gaining employment post graduate. However, faculty had a greater number of contacts in the academic setting, allowing them to better assist students who wished to pursue PhD level work.</p> <p>Another frustrating aspect of my graduate experience was the relatively blatant personal biases that occurred between faculty and students throughout the graduate program.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The inability of professors to put students first. Meeting times and class schedules were altered on short (or no) notice due to the professor's inability to be dependable and reliable. 2. Personal bias ruled what grades were achieved, what projects were completed, and which students received the most aid from professors (and which students received the most attitude from professors). 3. Having to constantly battle in order to exercise the rules outlined in the course catalog. The impression was made that the program could be tailored to the needs of the students. However, actually attempting this became an almost impossible feat.
<p>Felt first semester could have more emphasis on development of I/O background. Felt overwhelmed from information overload at times.</p>
<p>I was most frustrated with a couple of members of my class and their poor attitudes towards the program. This behavior tended to bring the rest of the group down and lower overall motivation. While an individual's education is their own responsibility, I felt that group interaction in our class was often strongly negatively influenced by one or two students and this gave others the perception that our class lacked motivation. This often dampened the learning experience for those that cared.</p>
<p>I was at a professional disadvantage by using SPSS in graduate school, because the business world does not generally use SPSS as a statistical package, but rather SAS.</p>
<p>My particular cohort had an interesting dynamic that may have led to a misrepresentation of some students. Apathy on the part of a few students did not necessarily mean an apathetic group as a whole.</p>
<p>I did not feel I had adequate statistical knowledge when I left. I also would have liked more variety in scheduling, and more opportunities for research beyond just the thesis.</p>
<p>I did not care for the stats class I took in Fall of 2000. I feel like I didn't learn anything new; the class seems like a blur right now. All I can remember is flying through the first half of the semester doing things I did in undergrad and then watching him plot out a cluster analysis on the chalkboard. I still don't remember what a cluster analysis is.</p>
<p>Statistics class was not enough to prepare for work in this field and I feel that a broader grouping of stats classes would serve students better. I pretty much felt like I was going to have to seek help from the nearest egghead at any I/O job I got. Furthermore, I understood how to make SPSS do a lot of things, but didn't fully grasp what the numbers represented. I felt like I learned more about the reasons "behind" the stats I did in my undergraduate class.</p>
<p>I have mixed feelings about comps. It's like boot camp. At the time, it was so grueling. But I can honestly say that I'm glad I had to study so hard for them, and put so much effort into them. It was nice to rattle off the threats to validity in a project team meeting when people were questioning my methods, and I don't think I could have done that so easily if I didn't have to know it for comps. But what bothered me about comps was the stats question. We never learned how to do a factor analysis in any course we had, yet we were being asked a comp question on it. But this is another paradox for me because I'm glad I learned how to do it, even though it was a little late in the program.</p> <p>Some of the least satisfying aspects of graduate school had to do with managing my responsibilities as a student with other personal responsibilities and the stress that it caused. I wouldn't say there was</p>

<p>anything about the program that you could change that would have alleviated any stress. I think that's the nature of school and life in general . . . how to find balance.</p> <p>I mentioned that my classmates were one of the best things about grad school. But one of the most consistently disappointing things throughout my two years was the way we communicated in class. Generally speaking, I seemed to have a difficult time getting my opinion heard in class. I learned to be more assertive toward the end of my two years. But even still, in many classes, I felt like I had to be aggressive to get a point across or make a comment. And that's just not me. Oftentimes, it seemed like whenever someone had a thought, he/she said it, even if someone else was speaking. That's not my communication style. But I found that if I was respectful and waited patiently for someone else to stop speaking before I spoke, someone else would just jump in and beat me to it. I did bring this up several times to my classmates, but it never really changed. Sometimes it made me feel like my classmates didn't really respect or appreciate my opinions.</p>
<p>One minor detail that was a strange situation: one faculty member was not around because he was campaigning & other activities.</p> <p>A major serious issue that should be taken seriously: The faculty needs to learn EMAIL ETIQUETTE. For example, when an individual student writes a private email with a comment or question addressed to a professor, a reply should not be sent out to the entire class with the original private email included on the reply. Although none of my personal emails were forwarded/replied to, I observed this happen many times. Emails are private & are assumed to be kept that way. (Do you think it is funny that I learned, by observing, not to email questions)? ...Perhaps.</p>
<p>I felt that my class was labeled as the "bad class". We were constantly compared to the previous class that was apparently more outspoken than us. It caused many hard feelings between the students and some members of the faculty and was not motivating!</p>
<p>The least satisfying and most frustrating aspects of the program are the political approaches to classroom teaching that one (unnamed) faculty member engages in. This person seems a lot more concerned with his/her ego than he/she is in helping students to actually learn.</p> <p>Also, lose the Organizational Health class; a Compensation class would have much more value-add to an I/O program and provide a much more global I/O education. Granted, a student would have to "go outside the program" and take it from the Business School, which seems, for some reason, to be viewed as an act of treason. This simply points out the aforementioned lack of true concern for a student's actual learning, in that it should not take an act of congress to replace the Org Health class with the Compensation class. What is important here is the student's learning, not the professor's hurt ego.</p>
<p>Completion of my thesis</p>

From your perspective, what might be done to improve the nature of the program? What would you like to see changed?

<p>I would love to see faculty establish more industry contacts in the Kansas City and St Louis area. Such contacts would allow more opportunity for internship/practicum experience, and ultimately allow for more opportunities for post graduate employment. Maybe faculty and/or student participation in local I/O organizations, such as GIOP, would help to establish these connections.</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give this survey to more than just two years of graduates at a time. It's important to know what kind of long-term effects the program has had on graduates. And these results would be very interesting...to students and graduates. Survey participants may then be more compelled to provide honest and meaningful feedback, since the anonymity would be less of an issue. 2. Allow two paths for students, one for those going into a PhD program (and needing more classes in research and stats) and one for those going into practice (and needing more compensation and eeo law). 3. Conduct meaningful research as professors. No one in I/O has heard of SMSU because none of the professors provide meaningful research to the discipline. 4. Update course content. It's disheartening to know that the same readings, questions, and activities are being distributed year after year. Students need to be aware of current research. In fact, a seminar (taught by Fischer or Skip) on current research topics and trends in I/O would be a great addition to the course listings. Of course, this is not to negate the fact that all courses should stay current.
<p>More flexibility in class offerings / selection. More developmental first semester.</p>
<p>I think the candidate screening process should be improved upon to ensure that only those who have a real interest in I/O Psych and who are willing to work are accepted into the program. More training is needed regarding overcoming barriers to change. Making a sound recommendation is one thing....actually implementing the change successfully is something entirely different!</p>
<p>I would like to see SAS used, instead of, or as an alternative to SPSS in order to better prepare students for the workforce. Also, continue to preach the importance of learning, at the minimum, some basic computer program skills, especially in EXCEL, ACCESS, WORD, and POWERPOINT. These are invaluable skills at the professional level, and there should be incentives if not requirements for students to be proficient in these applications.</p>
<p>My only suggestion would be to allow a little more flexibility when the students are choosing electives.</p>
<p>It would have been nice to have the program somewhat tailored to the individual. The content is certainly useful and comprehensive (to a point - lacking on compensation side for those going applied... and pretty weak in stats), but it is also a cookie-cutter program. Perhaps more statistics classes for those interested, and more variety in core courses (e.g., assessment center course, leadership, etc. could be offered every other year in place of one of the other seminar classes - allow flexibility and variety in schedules).</p> <p>Overall, I'm satisfied with SMS though... good quality...</p>
<p>Since you have two graduates entering program evaluator positions within the last two years, I think the program should add electives dealing with survey development and/or psychometrics. Coupled with experience at the CAIS, this could be great preparation for evaluator type of work. I really need to know more about different type of complex stat analysis (such as logistic regression) and when to use them. I'm comfortable with basic stat analysis's (linear/mult. regressions, ANOVA, t-tests) but become weary about the use of for example, an ANCOVA. I think a class that would involve developing research designs and choosing the appropriate analysis over and over and over would have been great practice. Mitchell briefly touched upon Structural Eq. Modeling in the last two classes of his class, however, I'm beginning to realize that I will need to know more depth of this analysis and design.</p>

<p>For example, I think that knowing more about SEM may help me think about designing some more complex research studies. Right now I'm only able to think of designing studies that I know I am able to perform statistical analysis on. In other words, I would only feel comfortable designing a study that I know I can use a regression with. Perhaps what I'm describing is more geared for a Ph.D. program or maybe an entirely different program/field, but I thought at least some of this may help.</p>
<p>I would like to see more GAs within the department. I think it would be helpful to require both an internship and a research project/master's thesis. I think the internship should be done either after the first year or before admission. I once had to do a short internship for a different master's program in order to gain admission, and after spending 40 hours on the job, I decided it wasn't for me.</p>
<p>I think having a qualitative data analysis component would improve the program. Virtually all of the emphasis in the program concerning data analysis is on the quantitative side. I think there should be a stronger qualitative analysis presence in the program. I think that the level of quantitative data analysis/statistics is probably about right for a masters program. There will be some people who need more, some who need less. We had stats and research methods, and some stats were worked into almost all of our other classes. But if you were to ask me if the program should have more or less of a stats component, I would say definitely more. I wish I would have gained more stats/quantitative data analysis knowledge and experience. I'm realizing that I could have used more stats.</p>
<p>Nothing- Our class was DEVIANT (literally. students changed the standards-dropping classes, 'opting out' of others; talking too much about other people outside of class or not at all in class). From the beginning our class was like this & EVERYONE, including the faculty, suffered for this reason.</p>
<p>More options in courses. Would have liked to learn about compensation and labor unions.</p>
<p>Create even more opportunities for students to acquire real-world experiences via internships outside of the immediate university. The existing opportunities are great, but far too few.</p>
<p>You guys are doing a great job-especially with funding. When I entered my Ph.D program I was well prepared for courses.</p>