

MSU OP Alumni Newsletter

Fall 2021



Alumni Spotlights

We recently caught up with program alumni Ken Brown ('99) and Jeff Schneider ('92) who reflected upon their time at MSU, offered advice for students and recent alumni, and more. Check out their interviews on pages 3-4!

Summer Internships

Several of our students participated in applied internships over the summer. Check out page 2 to hear about Jo Alanis' (Jackson) and Sarah Kuang's (Lockheed Martin) experiences as interns.

Connect with Us!

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Summer Internships

Several of our students participated in internships over the summer. Here we profile two of these students: third year Jo Alanis and fourth year Sarah Kuang.



Jo Alanis

Position: Workforce Analytics Intern

Company: Jackson

What skills did you utilize most in your internship?

From my first day, I was involved in survey development and found myself thinking back to what I learned in psychometrics. Whether I was creating new items or deciding on the overall organization of the survey, I felt prepared for this work and was excited to see that these surveys provided valuable information that aided decision-making.

Did you find our program's training to be useful?

My training in the program had a strong influence on how I approached my work, and I definitely feel that there was a large amount of overlap in the technical, communication, and critical thinking skills.

What was the biggest lesson you learned?

Keep an open mind and speak up when something interests you. Even though it can be easy to see some routine tasks as just something that needs to get done, I always learned something new or found myself becoming more efficient.

Position: Future of Work Intern

Company: Lockheed Martin

What skills did you utilize most in your internship?

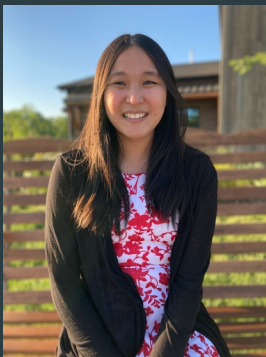
Because my responsibilities on the Future of Work team involved being a liaison to multiple stakeholders across the enterprise in implementing organizational change, I had to learn to speak the "language" of the company. I had to learn many acronyms and the structure of the organization as well as specific values and norms of different functions to be able to convince others to adopt something new in anticipation of the changing workplace.

What were some of the projects you worked on?

At a high level, the projects I worked on involved engaging with different functions and area heads to help support them in creating changes and adapting to the future of work within their own area.

What was the biggest lesson you learned?

I was always encouraged to ask questions and seek feedback in ways that allow others to provide input and give suggestions. I have learned that while feedback is a valuable resource from a perspective that I do not possess, I have the choices in whether and to what degree I incorporate feedback.



Sarah Kuang

Interview with an Alum:

Ken Brown

Dr. Kenneth Brown received his PhD from MSU's Organizational Psychology program in 1999. After graduating, he and his wife, Amy Kristof-Brown, both accepted positions at the University of Iowa in the Tippie College of Business. Iowa proved to be an excellent fit for Dr. Brown, where he currently serves as Professor of Management and Entrepreneurship and as an associate Dean for the undergraduate program in business. In addition to his work at the university, Dr. Brown has also served in external roles with organizations such as the Iowa City Community School District Foundation and the Academy of Management.



What advice do you have for recent MSU alumni that you wish you had known earlier in your career?

Know what matters to you so that you can have confidence to take the risks you need to take. For me I knew that I want to be broad in my activities and pursue a range of projects. Having clarity about what you want is crucial. If you force yourself to only do a certain type of work because you think that's what you must do to succeed, you may end up miserable. Postponing living out your personal values can have negative consequences on how much you enjoy your life.

Having this perspective can help you face challenges like tenure and various criticisms throughout your career. Don't internalize negative feedback and don't define success with someone else's yardstick. You must decide what success is for you.

What is one piece of advice you have for students?

You can't easily predict what will happen in your career—knowing whether to go academic or applied, business school or psychology department—you figure that out as you go by being open to different experiences and figuring out what kind of work you want to do. Don't be afraid to go all in with decisions once you've made them.

What was your most important experience for growth and development?

Every transformational experience in my career began with a relationship that then created new opportunities. My dad was a psychologist, and experiences with him helped put me on that path as well. Meeting my wife Amy also helped shift my trajectory into the IO direction. For me, real mentorship experiences were the causal factor of my growth and development. These relationships have helped me pivot my career into new directions and opened doors for me.

It's not about simply asking for advice. When you find people who you really respect, try to find ways to do work with them. In my graduate education, I learned so much from working with Kevin Ford, Rick DeShon and Steve Kozlowski. Each of them provided me with different insights for how I wanted to shape my own career. After I got to University of Iowa, I went to Sarah Rynes and told her that I wanted to do whatever kind of research I could with her, which ultimately opened many new exciting experiences for me.

What are some of your best memories at MSU?

The best memories for me always relate to the people. Great faculty are very important because they attract and then develop the best students. Programs should always be actively focused on getting the best faculty because they are what makes a program great. Experiences with the other students stand out the most to me. Time spent playing roller hockey and other sports was very special. Spending time with other students like Stan Gully with his amazing sense of humor stick out as some of my best memories during this time.

Interview with an Alum: Jeff Schneider

We recently sat down with alum Jeff Schneider ('92). Jeff is a Senior Partner at Korn Ferry and a member of their North American succession and assessment leadership team, specifically supporting industrial clients in sales, solution design and delivery. He has extensive experience working with leaders around the globe.



Who did you work with while at MSU, and what were your primary interests?

My interests were in individual differences and job performance and assessment methods, so I am very grateful to have worked with Neal Schmitt on both my thesis and dissertation. There was a lot of concern during my time in grad school about American auto companies losing their leadership position to non-U.S. automakers. Neal and I worked with the Michigan Department of Education on assessments of teamwork to address concerns from the automakers that US schools' learning and grading methods did not foster teamwork. Dan [Ilgen] and I worked with the UAW-GM to study job transitions of laid off autoworkers. We travelled to Atlanta to discuss sampling of workers at the Doraville Assembly plant—Who would have guessed that I would eventually move to Atlanta in 2004 and drive by that plant often until its closure in 2008.

What is one fond memory you have of your time at MSU?

The accessibility of the faculty and collegiality between faculty and students made for a highly motivating and productive environment. Faculty and students worked in the office daily. We ate lunch together and got together socially. This really helped me and the other students stay engaged and on track.

What are you currently doing that you think is most exciting or that you'd like to share with other alums?

We have been working on an engagement this past year to understand the future requirements of Chief Technology Officers in a large iconic industrial company whose traditional hardware products are being surpassed by nimble technology competitors. Our team has both deep assessment consultants like me and organization consultants with expertise in culture, organization design and teams. We could have done individual work like high potential identification and development but would have had little impact if we did not also address significant barriers in strategy and culture. It's powerful (and fun) to bring organizational and individual solutions together

What advice do you have for recent MSU alumni that you wish you had known earlier in your career?

We have somewhere around 250 psychology Ph.D.'s in a range of roles--research scientists, product developers, solution designers, account managers, salespeople and search consultants--more variations than I ever imagined. It shows that you can use org psych as a base but do widely different things based on your interests. I grew up in a family of entrepreneurs so I gravitated to commercial/sales roles and running businesses. Students are welcome to get in touch with me if you want help exploring options.

MSU OP Social Events

As the world begins to emerge from the pandemic, we have enjoyed spending time together in person again for masked/socially distanced working, learning, and socializing. Here is a collection of photos of our faculty and students from this fall.



News and Announcements

Recent publications

- Ajay Someraju, Chris Nye, and alum Jeff Olenick had a paper accepted at *Organizational Research Methods* reviewing measurement equivalence practices in organizational research.
- Ajay Someraju, Daniel Griffin, Daisy Chang, alum Jeff Olenick, and Steve Kozlowski had a paper published at the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*.
- Jenna Van Fossen had a commentary accepted at *Industrial and Organizational Psychology*.
- Jo Alanis and Ann Marie Ryan had a paper accepted to *Research in Human Resource Management* on immigrant socialization experiences.
- Jenna Van Fossen, alum Jeff Olenick, Daisy Chang, and Steve Kozlowski had a paper on personality and functioning in Antarctica accepted in *Acta Astronautica*.
- Daniel Griffin, Ajay Someraju, Christopher Dishop, and Rick DeShon had a paper accepted at *Organizational Research Methods* providing a network-based approach to measuring interdependence.
- Nathan Baker, Daisy Chang, and their collaborators from York University and University Florida had a paper published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*.

Other news

- Dr. Quinetta Roberson was elected a Fellow of the Association for Psychological Science.

Tell us what is new with you for our next issue!

One goal of this newsletter is for alumni to share news with each other. So give us the scoop! Send us a few sentences on your current projects, life and family updates, and personal or professional accomplishments. Additionally, if you have any feedback or future ideas for the newsletter, let us know!

You can reach us at: msuorgpsychcolloquia@gmail.com