

Q&A with Purdue I-O Psychology Faculty

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CJ=Carolyn Jagacinski; CS=Chelsea Song; FK=Franki Kung; LT=Louis Tay; MR=Melissa Robertson; SW=Sang Woo; TB=Tara Behrend

What is I-O to you?

MR: To me, I-O is the scientific study of work and workers. I-O psychologists both apply and extend psychological theories and research to the workplace, and discover new things about human behavior through investigating the workplace.

CJ: I view I-O as an extremely lucrative as well as varied field which can accommodate all kinds of people. While the field has an applied bent, we do both basic and applied research. There are many different career paths that are possible with a degree in I-O.



TB: IO is about using scientific knowledge and methods to maximize individual and organizational health.

SW: It is a psychological study of work, working, and people at work.

LT: Inquiring-Occupations. Improving-Organizations. And Increasing-Oomph in Work and Life.

FK: A vibrant field at an estuary--where theory meets practice, and they nourish each other.

CS: I think I-O psychology is a really cool field that allows us to use science to understand and improve our work and beyond. Rigorous research and a creative mindset enable I-O psychologists to make a real and positive impact on everyday life.

How and why did you get into I-O?



FK: Back when I was an undergrad, I was intrigued by research on motivation, culture, and conflict management. I got into I-O to study these topics further, hoping to become a prof and contribute useful knowledge and solutions to these issues.

LT: I was going to major in engineering but going through personal struggles led me to psychology. Because we spend so much of our waking time at work, I-O was a perfect confluence of science and application where I felt could make a difference in people's lives.

CJ: I was not trained in I-O. At Purdue, I was involved in the National Engineering Career Development Project working on factors influencing the career development of women in engineering. My interest in I-O developed while working on this project.

MR: I got into I-O because I really loved research, and was looking for a research-oriented career with good job prospects and flexibility that would allow me to study the things I was interested in.

CS: When I started college, I was really active in student organizations and soon started helping to recruit new members. That's when I started to ask a lot of I-O related questions: Why are they asking these questions during interviews? Why did they think that attribute was important? The strong desire to find answers to the questions led me to the field of I-O. I still frequently ask those questions today.

SW: I was debating between my interests in neuroscience and differential psychology, and the latter turned out to be stronger (a long story short).

TB: I was working in HR in college, and volunteering in a social psychology lab. I wished that I could use my social psychology knowledge to improve the HR practices in my workplace. My advisor, Richard Moreland, suggested that IO might be the right place for me.

What do you like about Purdue I-O?

CS: The first thing that comes to mind is the collegial and supportive culture of Purdue I-O. In it, you feel like you are supported in all aspects, big and small. The program is made up of a family of such talented people with diverse perspectives and interests that you sure will be able to develop your full potential.



LT: The hallmark of the Purdue I-O program is love for one another and love for science (yes - psychology is a science). It can't get any better than that.

FK: I appreciate the programs' rich history, supportive culture, and constant intellectual stimulation from my super-star colleagues and students.

CJ: We are a team (faculty and grad students), we work together well, and we accomplish a lot.

MR: Our program wants everyone to succeed and reach their potential, and people are genuinely interested in each other's work and in getting to know each other as whole people. I also feel like the faculty and students here have a mission to do work that has an impact, and that really resonates with me.

TB: Purdue's IO faculty is an inspiration to me. They lead with humility and kindness and support each other's success. I'm proud to be a part of this team.

SW: We are a hard-working, goofy, and friendly bunch who look out for one another and strive to do good science together. We generate high-quality research products that are ethically and responsibly done. We are also mindful of how our science translates into real-life problem solving.

What do you think is the future of I-O?

TB: The future of IO is about expanding our sphere of influence beyond the large corporation to government, civil society, and educational organizations. To do so we will need to ask bigger and better research questions that address the needs of these system and organizations.

CS: Work will continue to be a very important part of our lives. On top of that, with the changing nature of work and our evolving relationship with work, I believe the field of I-O will be more dynamic, interdisciplinary, and relevant to our everyday lives. With rigorous scientific skills and innovative thinking, I-O psychologists will make a huge impact on society.

FK: I see I-O becoming even more interdisciplinary and contributing even more to informed policy, management, and governance.

LT: I can't see the future of I-O because it is too blazing bright!

MR: I feel pretty confident the future will involve big data, more personalized and rapid assessment, and more human-technology interaction. I also think our society is facing some big problems that I-O can play a role in addressing in the future, including widespread inequality, hatred and division, distraction, and despair.

SW: The boundaries of I-O psychology will continue to expand – to include multiple modes of science (including data-driven approaches) and multiple ways of collecting and analyzing data. Technological innovation will continue to transform and augment the ways we solve intellectual and practical problems.

CJ: I have no idea.

