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# The Canadian Industrial & Organizational Psychologist

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## Chair's Column

*Ivona Hideg, Ph.D.*  
*Saïd Business School, University of Oxford*  
*Schulich School of Business, York University*



Dear CSIOP Members,

It is my pleasure to write this column as your new CSIOP Chair. Many thanks to Deb's introduction in our previous newsletter! As mentioned in the previous newsletter, my family and I are on a new adventure in Oxford, UK, as I have started a faculty position at the Saïd Business School at the University of Oxford. I am also on the faculty at the Schulich School of Business at York University. My family and I are slowly settling in and discovering Oxford and England. I hope everyone is having a good start of a new school year and settling in your new school year routines.

Given that it is already October, this is a prime time to think about and plan for our 2024 convention, which will take place in our lovely capital city, Ottawa (which was also my home for the past two years before moving to Oxford). Although not the Tulip Festival season, I can assure you that June is gorgeous time to visit Ottawa and I hope you will take this opportunity to visit both our capital city and attend the CPA convention on June 21-23, 2024, at Westin Ottawa. The

submission system is opening in October and closing in December. Please be on the watch out for the exact dates so that you do not miss an opportunity to submit your abstract.

I especially wanted to highlight exciting new CSIOP specific awards for which I hope you will consider nominating your well deserving colleagues and also yourselves. We have two specific awards for which we are currently seeking nominations:

1. **CSIOP Outstanding Early Career Researcher Award** recognizing new researchers (up to 5 years post PhD and this is extended if parental leaves or other leaves or career breaks are taken during this period) who have made outstanding contributions to the science of I/O psychology and related fields.
2. **CSIOP Outstanding Practitioner Award** recognizing a practitioner who is using their background in I/O psychology to make a positive impact in industry in their role as a practitioner.

Full details regarding the nomination process can be found on our website (<https://www.csiop-scpio.ca/>) under the 'Awards' section. Important to note is that the deadline for nomination packages is **November 30, 2023**.

In addition to these new CSIOP specific awards, we will seek to nominate our members for other awards and recognitions including the Joan Finegan Award for service to CSIOP and Distinguished Contributions to Canadian I/O Psychology and we will look to support nominations for CPA Fellows. We are lucky to have many highly accomplished and deserving members of our community and we'll be working hard to promote our fantastic members and highlight their achievements and accomplishments.

If you have any suggestions and/or nominations for these additional awards and especially if you have any suggestions for CPA Fellows that you would like our executive team to consider and support, please contact the CSIOP past chair, Deb Powell, with your suggestions at [pastchair@csiop-scpio.ca](mailto:pastchair@csiop-scpio.ca). More generally, if you have any

questions in regards to any of our awards feel free to reach out to Deb at [pastchair@csiop-scpio.ca](mailto:pastchair@csiop-scpio.ca) or me at [chair@csiop-scpio.ca](mailto:chair@csiop-scpio.ca).

I would also like to welcome and introduce to you our new special collaborator, namely new CSIOP news column editor – Jane Phillips! Jane is pursuing her MSc in Management, studying Organizational Behaviour and Human Resource Management, at the Lazaridis School of Business and Economics at Wilfrid Laurier University. She is researching meaning and sense making, artificial intelligence, technology, and faking on personality measures in the workplace. She also has a broad range of professional sales, manufacturing, and senior leadership experience across the food and beverage manufacturing and distribution sector.

Finally, I would like to note a new initiative led by our student representative, Jocelyn Brown: student research spotlight! Students who are interested in having their work spotlighted in our newsletter should contact Jocelyn at [studentrep@csiop-scpio.ca](mailto:studentrep@csiop-scpio.ca).

Another exciting new initiative led by our communication team is that we now have an Instagram account as well ([https://www.instagram.com/csiop\\_scpio/](https://www.instagram.com/csiop_scpio/))!

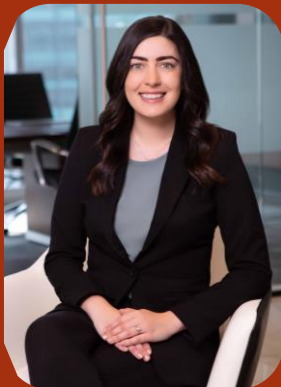
Please follow us and stay up to date on CSIOP news by following us on social media, including Twitter ([@csiop\\_scpio](https://twitter.com/csiop_scpio)) and our newly created Instagram account in addition to our website (<https://www.csiop-scpio.ca/>).

As always, if you have any suggestions or ideas how we can serve better our membership, please feel to reach out to me at [chair@csiop-scpio.ca](mailto:chair@csiop-scpio.ca).

Wish you all a wonderful and happy fall!

Ivona Hideg  
Associate Professor  
Saïd Business School, University of Oxford  
Schulich School of Business, York University  
CSIOP Chair

## CSIOP Membership



*Aleka MacLellan, Ph.D.  
Kilberry*

As of October 2, 2023, CSIOP has a total of 237 members across a wide variety of membership types. This consists of 98 Full Members, 13 Early Career Members, 86 Student Affiliates, 14 CPA Fellows, 1 Retired CPA Fellow, 2 CPA Retired Members, 7 Section Associates, 1 Honorary Lifetime Fellow, 3 Honorary Life Members, 6 CPA Special Affiliates, 2 International Affiliates, 1 International Student Affiliate, 2 Bachelor Gap Year Affiliates, and 1 CPA/APA Joint Member.

Don't forget to renew your membership, if you have not already done so!



## CSIOP News

*Jane Phillips, MSc Student, Wilfrid Laurier University*

### *University of Guelph*

Welcome to our three new MA students! Tianzi Dou, Amara Robbins, and Corey Wood



Congratulations to the following students who defended their thesis this summer:

Diogo Borba (PhD) "Rater Experience and Performance Appraisal: Analyzing the Effect of Rater Experience on Performance Ratings and on the Measurement of Job Performance"

Katherine Gibbard (PhD) "Explain it to me like I'm five: Harnessing the Power of Explanations to Increase Trust in Workplace Algorithms and Artificial Intelligence."

Melissa Pike (PhD): "Are They Really Just Words? Detecting the Presence and Impact of Physical Disability Bias in Job Advertisements"

Nouran Sakr (PhD) "An Examination of Workplace Incivility and its Selective Nature During Remote and Hybrid Work"

Caren Colaco (MA) "Understanding Group Differences in Exhaustion, Job Satisfaction and Productivity during COVID-19"

Parisa Sharif-Esfahani (MA) "The Influence of Authentic Women Leaders on Young Women's Leadership Aspirations"

### *University of Ottawa, Telfer School of Management*

We are happy to welcome our new graduate students! Patil Yessayan joins our PhD program. And Annaliese Haring, Avery Hughes, Carol Guo, Derek Calvert, Mohadeseh Shahdehi, and Patricia Mangalo join our MSc program.

For future PhD students, Ottawa is also having an online information session on its PhD program in OBHR at the Telfer School of Management on November 14; interested parties can register for this information session [here](#).

### *University of Montreal / Université de Montréal*

UdeM welcomed 6 new students to our program this year: Lesly Nzeusseu Kouamou, Léa Kherrati-Riscalla, Jisung Lee, Lisa-Marie Bernier, and Francis Myre-Desjardins.

We would like to announce that Raphaëlle Marcoux defended her PhD "Validation d'une échelle d'auto-efficacité émotionnelle en contexte de transmission de feedback: vers une meilleure compréhension de la transmission du feedback correctif" which would roughly translate to "Validation of an emotional self-efficacy scale in the context of feedback transmission: towards a better understanding of corrective feedback transmission."

Lastly, one of our faculty members Jean-Sébastien Boudrias, was awarded a CRSH (SSHRC) connection grant titled "L'humain au cœur de la transformation du travail" which would be "Putting people at the heart of work transformation."

### *Wilfrid Laurier University*

We would like to welcome Jane Phillips, Klei Hoxha, Haozhi Li, and Yilin Zhao to the MSc Management, OB HRM program, and congratulate Elana Zur for starting the PhD, Management, OB HRM program.

We are happy to announce that our incoming MSc Management, OBHRM students are the recipients of the Graduate Prestige Scholarship (Jane Phillips) and the OBHRM Entrance Scholarships (Klei Hoxha).



Congratulations to Dr. Samantha Hancock on defending her PhD, which examined how instigating task conflict can impact coworkers' perceptions of the conflict instigator and how such impact depends on the conflict instigator's gender.

### *York University*

Parisa Sharif-Esfahani is now beginning in the PhD in Organization Studies program at the Schulich School of Business this year, and has received an Ontario Graduate Scholarship. We're very excited to have her join us!

Welcome to incoming York SHRM PhD students: Nazish Ahmed, Mirela Aleksandrova, Liana Anwar, Shraddha Kunwar, Shawn Matadeen, and Zahra Sedaghat Telgard.



Guler Ulusman Kizilenis and Ambreen Ashfaq of York SHRM successfully passed their comprehensive exams and advanced to PhD candidacy.

Dr. Jelena Zikic of York SHRM received the Future Skills Centre Future Skills Center grant to study alternative careers of migrants. She is also invited as a Distinguished Guest Panel at the Careers Division Plenary session at the Academy of Management conference.

Dr. Duygu Biricik Gulseren of York SHRM received a SSHRC Insight Development Grant with Dr. Zhanna Lyubykh (co-applicant, Simon Fraser University) and Dr. Kevin Kelloway (co-applicant, Saint Mary's University) to study inconsistent leadership behaviors.

## Convention Corner



*Samantha Hancock, PhD*  
*Program Coordinator*

Another academic year is upon us! I am very excited to be taking over the role of program coordinator for CSIOP for the next CPA convention in Ottawa, scheduled for June 21-23, 2024, at the Westin. The call for submissions is now OPEN, and the deadline is earlier this year compared to past years, November 20, 2023!

I look forward to seeing all your submissions for the upcoming conference! If you have any suggestions or ideas for the conference program, please reach out to me at [shancoc@uwo.ca](mailto:shancoc@uwo.ca).

## Practice Makes Perfect



*Michael Vodianoi, MA  
Leadership Strategist, DDI*

I-O Psychologists study people at work and partner with organizations to create systems that foster high-functioning, highly engaged, and high-performance workforces. We apply psychological principles and methods to help companies, and the people that comprise them, operate in a fulfilling, successful, and healthy, way.

As we navigated a global pandemic, employee and leader well-being was put in the spotlight, and many I-O Psychologists were leaned upon to provide insight and support. During that chaotic time, we did our best to provide value and insight in the face of unprecedented challenges. Now, as the day-to-day impact of Covid has lessened, I wondered what we've learned about supporting employee well-being over the last three years that can make us better and be more prepared and proactive, rather than reactive, going forward.

To help me answer this question I gathered a panel of experts who worked with companies during the pandemic to support their well-being for a LinkedIn Live discussion. They shared their personal experiences and learnings to help us be more proactive, rather than reactive, as partners in well-being. The highlights from this event have been shared below.

### Partners in Organizational Well-Being: Lessons from the Pandemic and Beyond



**Alexandra Chris**

Leadership and Team  
Development Lead, Omers



**Tessa Dehring**

Principal, Nous Group



**Nick Hobson**

Global Director,  
Behavioral and Data  
(BAD) Sciences

**If you could go back in time to before Covid spread, what would you tell organizations to start doing to support their people through the coming pandemic?**

**Alex C.:** I would tell them start by creating a well-being strategy, or at least defining well-being, to start thinking about how they are creating a psychologically safe culture, and how they are enabling people to bring their whole selves to work.

**Nick H.:** One thing that we lost in the pandemic was the sensemaking process, those informal conversations people have around the office to help them make sense of what's happening around them which also support learning and collaboration. Organizations would have done well to think about how they could design for those sensemaking experiences when we are distant and can't count on them happening organically. For example, don't schedule meetings back-to-back, allowing time to connect and debrief. Those conversations are most needed when things don't really make much sense, like during Covid, and make a big difference.

**Tessa D.:** I'd advise companies to consider the history of pandemics to get a more realistic understanding of its potential impact and prepare accordingly. I think we were overly optimistic about how long and severe the pandemic would be and could have managed expectations better. I'd also advise them to take a more holistic approach to well-being interventions. During the pandemic, many companies overly favoured tertiary, surface-level interventions that

were band-aid solutions. But they don't work as well in the long term, and we need to focus more on primary interventions like job design and how we lead to have a bigger impact on well-being.

**What well-being issues did you encounter during the pandemic and how did you and your organization become aware of them?**

**Nick H.:** Our organization had been conducting regular surveys and found that, by the end of 2021, there were significantly elevated rates of stress, inability to focus, absenteeism, presenteeism, and distraction. Interestingly, when we dug further into the data, those with the lowest scores were also the ones who were most engaged in well-being programs. Anecdotally, clients were coming to us for help with issues related to negative emotions. In response, we had facilitators that would connect with them for virtual drop-in sessions and micro-interventions to help them manage negative emotional states. We asked participants how they were feeling at the beginning of the drop-in, did the 10-minute interventions, and then reassessed their emotional state. We had thousands of participants and found that they tended to leave with more positive emotions than they arrived with. Even though the effect was small, many found that it helped them manage their emotions throughout their week. For some of our larger clients, we were also able to link the impact of this positive emotional regulation with sustained mindset and behaviour changes.

**Tessa D.:** We saw multi-layered issues in terms of where well-being issues were coming from as well as multiple issues at the same time. The root of many issues were personal and social challenges, and the challenges became harder because support people like leaders and well-being practitioners were also struggling and weren't always able to help themselves. Many people trying to manage their well-being did so by ticking off items and activities from their well-being checklists but would often find that it didn't help them improve and could even create new anxiety and worry that they weren't doing enough. I think that the better approach would have been to engage with these good practices to find what would really worked best for them individually, and to work more on those things.

**What is the line between our work and the work of clinical psychologists when we're helping people with burnout and mental health challenges at work?**

**Alex C.:** The reality is that people bring their mental health challenges to work, and it isn't leaders' jobs to diagnose them, but to listen, have empathy and be aware of the resources available so they can help them access the care they need. Employers are increasing the number of benefits employees have access to and leaders have an important role to play in providing access to them.

**Tessa D.:** Our field is challenged with a brand that is often confused with clinical psychology. The pandemic highlighted the importance of being cognizant of the bounds of our expertise. When you coach someone, you inevitably coach the whole person, but I try to maintain bounds around my expertise and only address stressors when they are work oriented.

**How has the move of the workplace from people's offices to their homes impacted their well-being?**

**Nick H.:** The move to remote working created some inequities because not everyone had access to the same quality work environment, yet they were still expected to be productive. That's an issue that hasn't been discussed enough.

**Tessa D.:** On a more optimistic note, it's amazing how quickly we were able to transform how we worked, and many companies were forced to adapt, and they were able to prove that they can still be productive with a distributed workforce.

**What have you learned about supporting people during or after a crisis?**

**Tessa D.:** I've learned a lot about how we partner in well-being. During a large-scale crisis we need to have more empathy and consideration around the pace of change that people are experiencing. There is also greater value in helping people manage their workloads as they are working under stress and have limited energy.

**Alex C.:** As a people leader, make sure to check in with your teams and foster open communication, empower growth and development, and consistently ask how they're doing and feeling. Be present and work to understand their needs and challenges and your role in helping them through it.



**Nick H.:** Many people leaders were completely lost during covid. The first thing you need to provide is clarity because of the stress of the tremendous uncertainty people were feeling and the mixed messages they were getting. There are still difficult, awkward conversations that people leaders need to have, but they need to resist the urge to be indirect and sugarcoat their message in those moments, because clarity is kindness. The other important lesson was the importance of empathy that is grounded in action. In our organization we studied empathy by tracking roughly 6000 leaders using 360° tools and we found that those with a higher capacity for empathy tended to take on some of the emotional burden of their people out of a desire to help, which led to a series of negative outcomes for them and their teams. But if they followed up their empathy by taking action to alleviate the issues, we found that their outcomes were significantly more positive.

**About Tessa Dehring, MA.**

Tessa co-leads the organizational performance and leadership and capability work for Nous Group globally and brings deep experience supporting organizations to enhance organizational performance and leadership.

**About Nick Hobson, PhD.**

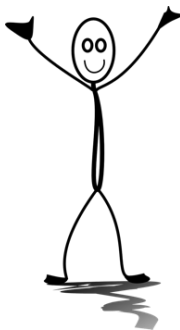
Nick is a Behavioural Strategist and Organizational Psychologist who helps create knowledge communities where business leaders and academics can come together to think about how best to deliver on evidence-based behavior change. He is a broker of science and business strategy and has worked with some of the largest and most recognizable brands in the world.

**About Alexandra Chris, PhD.**

Alex completed her PhD at the University of Guelph where she conducted research on micro-aggressions, employee well-being, and positive organizational psychology. At Omers, Alex works to support the development of a healthy, productive, thriving workplace as the Lead of Leadership and Team Development.

Do you have ideas on how to merge the science and practice of I-O Psychology to advance the interests of organizations and their people? We would love to hear from you. Please contact Michael Vodiano at [mvodiano@gmail.com](mailto:mvodiano@gmail.com) if you have comments, suggestions, or would like to be a guest of the Practice Makes Perfect Discussion Series.

## State of the Science



*Lance Ferris, Ph.D.  
University of Ottawa*

*Welcome back to “The State of the Science,” where we highlight recently published or in press research coming out of Canadian universities that is relevant to I/O psychology. Each issue, new research will be summarized for our readers who may not have time to read, or access to, the full articles. If you have any suggestions for research to cover in future columns, please see the contact information at the end of this column.*

Fall is a time of change, whether it be the colours of leaves falling from trees, or the composition of CSIOP’s executive board! Along those lines, I figured what better way to welcome Ivona Hideg (our new CSIOP Chair) and Samantha Hancock (our new CSIOP Program Coordinator) than by featuring one of their new papers in this column? As a bonus, the paper also features Winny Shen, a past CSIOP Chair!

In their paper (Hideg, Hancock, & Shen, currently in press at *Psychology of Women Quarterly*), they examined how women with non-native accents (specifically, Mandarin) were evaluated in a hiring context. They argued that while women are generally stereotyped as being high in warmth, this would particularly be the case for women with non-native accents because such accents suggest they are immigrants to Canada. Prior work has repeatedly found that immigrant women are strongly stereotyped according to gender roles and are seen as adhering to traditional feminine values, which they argued should lead to women with non-native accents being seen as warmer than women with native accents (such effects should not occur for men, who generally are stereotyped as being high in competence but not warmth). In turn, being seen as higher in warmth may be beneficial on the job market as warmth generally conveys being trustworthy and cooperative; as such, Hideg and colleagues argued this should lead to women with non-native accents being more likely to be recommended for job positions.

While this may seem beneficial for those with non-native accents, they argued it might also only apply to promoting hiring within feminine, but not masculine, industries – because masculine industries are stereotyped as requiring masculine traits. Put differently, while women with non-native accents are seen as particularly warm, this may make them be seen as particularly unsuited to work in more masculine industries. If so, this would represent a problem for advancing gender equality at work given employees in feminine industries are typically considered less prestigious and also paid less.

Across three studies, they generally found support for their predictions: the first study had student participants evaluate audio statements of men and women with native or non-native accents who were applying for a student volunteer position at the university, while the second study had a similar design but with different participants (employed adults) hiring for a different position (a paid marketing coordinator position). Across both studies, they found that having a non-native accent increased perceptions of warmth for women (but not men), and these increased ratings of warmth led to increased recommendations to hire the applicants. In their third study, they had working adults evaluate audio statements of women with native or non-native accents who were applying for a marketing position in a company that caters to a masculine (manufacturing, oil, and gas industries) or feminine (fashion and cosmetics) industry; they found that women with non-native accents were seen as warmer (and hence more likely to be recommended for hiring) only when the position was for working in feminine industries.

For those interested in the complete paper, the full citation for the article is as follows:

Hideg, I., Hancock, S., & Shen, W. (2023). Women with Mandarin accent in the Canadian English-speaking hiring context: Can evaluations of warmth undermine gender equity? *Psychology of Women Quarterly*. DOI: 10.1177/03616843231165475

*Are you or one of your co-authors a researcher at a Canadian university? Do you have an I/O-relevant research article that has been recently published (i.e., roughly within the last 6 months), or is in press at, a peer-reviewed academic management journal? Would you like to have your research summarized in a future edition of this column? If so, please contact Lance Ferris at [lanceferris@gmail.com](mailto:lanceferris@gmail.com).*

## Student Update



*Jocelyn Brown, M.Sc.  
Saint Mary's University*

### **Nurturing Leadership Skills as a Student**

We all know how leadership literature has progressed throughout the years. Some aspects of being a good leader may be innate, though not as strictly as ideas like the Great Man Theory propose. Many leadership qualities can be developed, even as a student or in your early career! These skills are highly desirable for anyone who is looking to get a job or advance professionally. Students are in a unique position to build these skills and shape their future. Here are some considerations for those of you who might be on your leadership development journeys.

#### 1. What are your goals?

I am sure this is not the first time you will hear about the importance of goal setting. Whether it was for a university course, a job, or a hobby, most of us have been told that planning our goals will help us succeed. Outlining what we want to achieve is a great motivator! Planning is a key skill in graduate school as it can help with your capacity to get things done. Start with figuring out what you want to achieve, both in the short-term and long-term. From these goals, figure out what is going to help and hinder you along your path. Don't forget to celebrate along the way!

#### 2. Who do you look up to as a leader?

Find role models or mentors who have qualities or values that you admire. You know that faculty member who seems to have it all together? Or your boss who takes the world by storm? Ask them how they do it! Consider how they act



as a leader, how they overcome obstacles, and communicate with others. Role models can help to inspire you as you figure out your own leadership style.

3. How can you take initiative?

Adults learn best by doing, which means you should find opportunities to build your skills. Whether it is in the classroom, through student or community groups, or at work, be a leader now! You do not need a formal title to be a leader. Take charge, share your ideas, offer to help, and collaborate with others. Being proactive and showing your potential can give you valuable opportunities to develop.

4. When are you using your leadership skills?

Evaluation is essential in the learning process. Ongoing reflection improves your self-awareness by helping you to find your strengths and weaknesses. What qualities do you already excel in? Where are you in need of improvement? Reflect on your experiences so far and the impact that you have had on others. Think about feedback you have received, both good and bad, as you do this. All of this can inform your leadership goals!

5. Which actions should I take next?

Leaders are well informed and engage in continuous learning. In our field, we are uniquely positioned to remain well informed about leadership principles! Stay up to date with articles, books, seminars, and conferences. Apply what you learn to your education and employment!

Working on yourself as a leader is an investment in your future successes. Remember that leadership is not necessarily about power or control over others, it is also about status. By inspiring and guiding people towards shared goals, you are leading!

### Student Research Spotlight

Canadian students from I/O Psychology, OB, HRM, or other related areas are invited to share their research to be featured in upcoming newsletters. For a chance to be featured, submit your work using our call for submissions.



## Update On: Alliance for Organizational Psychology



*Lynda Zugec, M.A.  
The Workforce Consultants*



### Alliance for Organizational Psychology

The Alliance for Organizational Psychology (AOP) was established in 2009 and member organizations include the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology (SIOP), the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology (EAWOP), the Organizational Psychology Division of the International Association of Applied Psychology (IAAP-Division 1), and the Canadian Society for Industrial & Organizational Psychology (CSIOP). Our "Update On: Alliance for Organizational Psychology" column seeks to provide our readership with information relevant to the AOP and member associations so as to encourage a more global and unified approach in the dissemination of knowledge, exchange of ideas, and participation in varied initiatives.

A list of Network Partners can be found here: <https://alliancefororganizationalpsychology.com/the-%22big-tent%22>



## Call for Special Issue Proposals

The *Industrial and Organizational Psychology* journal will continue to feature focal articles and commentaries but will also broaden its focus. Accordingly, the journal is currently soliciting proposals for special issues that address content, method, or other thematic topics.

Proposals for special issues should be submitted to Editor **Tori Howes** ([satoris.howes@osucascades.edu](mailto:satoris.howes@osucascades.edu)), by **November 1, 2023**, containing the following information:

- Proposed topic and approach
- Rationale and potential contribution to science and practice in, and beyond, industrial and organizational psychology
- Proposed timeline (e.g., proposed deadline for manuscript submissions and anticipated turnaround time for editorial decisions) and any special review criteria (beyond those typically seen for such submissions)

Proposals should be no more than three double-spaced pages in length and should be accompanied by a one-page summary of the special issue guest editors' qualifications and editorial experiences.

Proposals will be reviewed for fit with the journal, editorial qualifications, potential contributions to the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology's strategic goals and more generally to the science and practice of industrial and organizational psychology, potential contributions beyond industrial and organizational psychology, and the feasibility of generating high-quality submissions.



## WorkLab 2023

In November we have a WorkLab workshop in Valencia: Engaging Leadership: Cultivating Employee Strengths and Psychological Safety in Organizations. Our speakers are Associate Professor Kimberly Breevaart and Jessica Halgren an expert practitioner who works with senior executives around the world. Come and join us if developing better leadership is relevant to your practice. WorkLab workshops are highly rated by attendees who value both the insight into the latest science and practice from the speakers and the opportunity to network with an international group of experienced practitioners. Book now to benefit from the best member rates – [www.eawop.org/worklab-2023](http://www.eawop.org/worklab-2023)



## Volume 5, Issue 2: Psychology in China: State of the Art

Your latest issue of Applied Psychology Around the World is here! [Volume 5, Issue 2: Psychology in China: State of the Art.](#)

This second issue of Volume 5 of Applied Psychology Around the World is dedicated to a series of papers around the broad topic of **Psychology in China: State of the Art**. It is introduced by *A Message from the President of IAAP*, Lori Foster, followed by a series of 23 articles.

- *Christine Roland-Lévy,*  
IAAP Past President and APAW Editor

To submit items of interest to the Alliance for Organizational Psychology (AOP), please contact Lynda Zugec at [Lynda.Zugec@TheWorkforceConsultants.com](mailto:Lynda.Zugec@TheWorkforceConsultants.com)

## Top 5 Considerations for Being a Top 5 Expert Witness



*By: Erika Ringseis, Ph.D., J.D.<sup>1</sup>*

When I was a graduate student, we read a very interesting US case study about a sex discrimination case in employment. The successful plaintiff called expert social science testimony on the stand, causing many of my Ph.D. candidate peers to look forward to that role as a future opportunity. I, however, read the case and realized that I wanted to be the lawyer in the room, not the expert witness. And so I ended up with more studying and a career in law.

Currently I have the privilege and responsibility of sitting as a chair of the Alberta Human Rights Tribunal, allowing me an opportunity to gain a new perspective on the role of expert evidence in legal proceedings. With this experience in mind, I have decided to provide some advice to any experts in my former I/O psychology world who may have the opportunity to lend their expertise in a legal forum. These are the current top 5 tips I would give to an expert.<sup>2</sup>

### 5. Use the power of the mighty pen.

If you have the opportunity to provide a written report instead of only oral testimony, use that opportunity wisely. Your written words will be carefully reviewed and considered long after your verbal testimony has faded. Avoid jargon and write in a simple, clear and concise manner. Remember that your objective is to make decision making easier for the adjudicator.

In oral testimony, using simple language and being deferential and helpful to the adjudicator will also go far in establishing your credibility as a trusted advisor and scientist. If it seems that you are repeating what you have already written, do not feel frustrated or annoyed. The decision maker may need to hear the information from you before reviewing your text in depth, or the decision maker may not have understood your writing, in which case this is your chance to clarify.

### 4. Swim in your lane.

Do not try to argue with the lawyer or adjudicator or act like a lawyer with your responses and considerations. Don't "get cute" with question avoidance or asking questions back to opposing counsel. Do not try to guess why lawyers are asking certain questions or try to avoid evidence that might be damaging to the party who has hired you. Your role is to provide information and evidence, not to argue a case.

### 3. Speak to research and facts, not conjecture.

Your integrity is at stake and you are an expert. If a lawyer tries to lure you down a road of hypotheticals, resist. Speak to the research you know, the theories you have tested, the publications you have written.

You are an expert, but you are not THE ONLY expert. There are always others in the field who will disagree with your conclusions or whose research you may reference instead of your own. That is all OK. You can speak to the research of others without diluting your own expertise, and you can acknowledge oppositional research as a chance to clarify why your conclusions are better supported.

### 2. Silence is painful. Silence is golden.

Although it may feel uncomfortable, reflection before answering is acceptable. In fact, your silence gives the decision maker an opportunity to look back over notes or reflect on testimony as well, and is likely appreciated. A transcript

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<sup>2</sup> I deliberately have written "current" because I know as soon as I finish this article I will think of another consideration, or I will oversee a new hearing where I develop a new recommendation to share. This is only the beginning of the conversation.

does not record pauses and you should not feel rushed to answer any questions or provide input. Listen carefully to questions and consider thoughtfully before you respond.

Do not “think out loud.” If you find yourself saying, “I have never thought of that...” STOP. Think. Is what you are about to say actually of value and based in research or is your scientific mind starting to consider hypotheticals and possibilities? Are you opening a door to questions that go outside the expert report you were asked to provide that might lead an adjudicator down an unnecessary rabbit hole?

If you have never testified on the stand or you feel some stress about the process, ask the counsel who engaged you to spend some time explaining what will happen and how. Every tribunal or court hearing is different and you may feel more comfortable with the process and do a better job if you are provided some more information. And then do not panic if the process does not unfold exactly as described...each adjudicator may have differences in approach of which counsel are not aware. Breathe, pause, think. You’ll do fine.

#### 1. Your integrity is on trial.

You were hired by one side and you likely have a vested interest in seeing that side succeed. However, there are always indisputable strengths to the other party’s positions or the matter would not have proceeded so far down the litigation path. To slavishly adhere to the position of the party who paid your bill will erode your credibility. You can acknowledge weaknesses in research or strengths in other perspectives while still clearly concluding that your analysis supports the party who hired you. The baring of one’s research soul like seen in the final paragraphs of experiential papers is not necessary, however. The adjudicator does not need to hear all of the possible reasons why further research is necessary. You can acknowledge limitations simply and briefly and be prepared to discuss the counter points as to why the limitations should not be the focus in that particular matter.

If you have the opportunity to act as an expert witness, enjoy! You will play a vital role in the decision making processes of our legal system. Be clear, calm, concise and civil and you will be greatly appreciated not only by the party who sought your expertise, but by the adjudicator who has to make a very difficult decision.

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