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April

The Canadian Industrial & Organizational Psychologist

Chair's Column

*Deborah Powell, Ph.D.
 University of Guelph*



Hello CSIOP Members,

It is hard to believe that this is my last column as the 2022-2023 CSIOP chair. The next issue of our newsletter will be in the summer when Ivona Hideg will take over as chair.

I have been working in Perth, Australia at the Future of Work Institute for the winter term. It has been great to learn about the I-O community in another country. I will be back in Canada in April, and I am looking forward to catching up with many of you in Toronto at the CPA conference in June.

We will keep you posted (via email and social media) about the times and locations of the various CSIOP events at the CPA conference, such as our student poster competition, the I-O Military Social, the student-mentor social, the student symposium, and our invited guest speaker.

Our executive committee has been hard at work this year, and I'd like to thank all of them for their efforts in these volunteer roles. We will be putting a call out in early May for CSIOP executive positions that are going to be open for next year. If you'd like to get involved in CSIOP,

please reach out to chair@csiop.ca We hold the official voting at the annual general meeting at the conference, but it is good to know ahead of time that we have people ready and willing to fill these roles.

We have transitioned the CSIOP website to a new website provider. Thank you to Peter Fisher (former editor), Sara Murphy (interim editor) and Alvan Yuan (webmaster) for all of their efforts in making this change happen. And I'd also like to thank Abigail Mengist, who has been hard at work maintaining the CSIOP Social Media accounts (especially when our website was down). If you ever have news that you would like published on CSIOP social media, please contact socialmedia@csiop-scpio.ca

I hope you enjoy all of the great content in this month's issue of our newsletter.

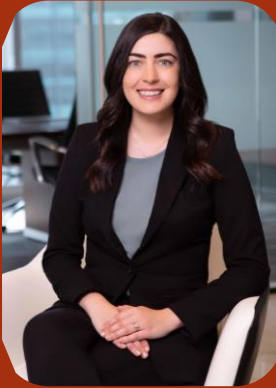
Best,

Deborah Powell, PhD
 Associate Professor
 University of Guelph
 CSIOP Chair

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CSIOP Membership



*Aleka MacLellan, Ph.D.
Kilberry*

As of April 11 2023, CSIOP has a total of 183 members across a wide variety of membership types, including some new categories. Our membership consists of 87 Full Members, 10 Early Career Members, 52 Student Affiliates, 1 Bachelor Gap Year Affiliate, 12 CPA Fellows, 1 Retired CPA Fellow, 2 CPA Retired Members, 6 Section Associates, 1 Honorary Life Fellow, 3 Honorary Life Members, 4 CPA Special Affiliates, 2 CPA International Affiliates, and 1 International Student Affiliate, and 1 CPA/APA Joint Member.

Don't forget to renew your membership for 2023, if you have not already done so!



CSIOP News

*Samantha Hancock, Ph.D. Candidate
Wilfrid Laurier University*

University of Guelph

Rahul Patel visited Spain in February and successfully participated in the in-residence phase of the Winter School as part of the Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree (EMJMD) in Work, Organizational and Personnel Psychology (WOP-P).

Université de Montréal



Congratulations to the following students who have recently defended their dissertations!

Jean Bouchard

Ph.D. R/I en psychologie du travail et des organisations

L'apport du « Competing Values Framework » à la conceptualisation et la mesure du climat organisationnel

[The contribution of the Competing Values Framework to the conceptualization and measurement of organizational climate]

Leila Benabdallah

Ph.D. R/I en psychologie du travail et des organisations

La flexibilité managériale : Synthèse conceptuelle et impact sur les employés

[Managerial flexibility: Conceptual synthesis and impact on employees]

Raphaëlle Marcoux

Ph.D. R/I en psychologie du travail et des organisations

Validation d'une échelle d'auto-efficacité émotionnelle en contexte de transmission de feedback: vers une meilleure compréhension de la transmission du feedback correctif

[Validation of an emotional self-efficacy scale in the context of feedback transmission: towards a better understanding of corrective feedback transmission]

University of Ottawa, Telfer School of Management

Congratulations to Dr. Yanhong Li who will be joining the University of Windsor's Odette School of Business as an Assistant Professor in the Management - Human Resources area. Yanhong served as the CSIOP University Liaison during her time at Telfer from 2018-2022. We are so proud of all her accomplishments!



uOttawa

Congratulations to Daniel Quintal-Curcic for winning the Telfer Ph.D. Student Engagement Award. This award of \$5,000 recognizes a student who has demonstrated leadership, is involved in the program, and supports the success of other students. Dan is an exemplary ambassador for the Telfer program and this award is well-deserved!

Congratulations to Dr. Jennifer Dimoff for earning tenure and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor!

Western University

Dr. Johanna Weststar and her colleagues have won the award for best article of the year published in *Labour & Industry* for their work, titled "Sustained knowledge work and thinking time amongst academics: gender and working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic." This award is selected based on the extent of contribution to our understanding of industrial/employment relations & the rigor of research methods employed in answer the research question(s). Congratulations, Johanna! Click [here](#) to read the article.



Practice Makes Perfect

*Michael Vodianoi, MA
Leadership Strategist, DDI*



Introduction

I-O Psychology is a field of practice that rests on a deep body of theory and research. And, while this knowledge base informs our approach to practice, every practitioner has their own style based on their personality and experiences. I believe that we can expand our thinking and professional toolkits by integrating the perspectives of those whose experience in other domains has shaped their application of I-O Psychology in unique ways. The Practice Makes Perfect column is a great platform to benefit from these insights.

That's why I was excited to speak with Erica Naccarato, Managing Consultant at MacPhie, about how her experience as a competitive volleyball player and coach has informed her work in OD and leadership. In our discussion, Erica shared how athletics inspired her to pursue a career in I-O Psychology and continues to help her find ways to connect with leaders to enable them to align around shared purpose and achieve great results.

How Athletics Helped Shape my Approach to Leadership Consulting



*Erica Naccarato, MA
Managing Consultant, MacPhie Consulting*

Can you tell us about how your journey through sports and I-O Psychology brought you to this point in your career?

Since I was ten years old, I have been involved in the volleyball community as both a player and a coach. Throughout my youth, I played competitively, and while completing my bachelor's degree in psychology at Toronto Metropolitan University, formerly Ryerson, I played for the varsity team.

At TMU, my coach emphasized creating an efficient and effective team culture by defining core values and team identity to achieve excellent results on the court. The idea of 15 individuals with different personalities and aspirations coming together to work towards a collective purpose fascinated me, leading me to consider a master's degree in Sports Psychology. However, I ultimately felt that a better career option for me was in I-O Psychology, where I could tackle similar challenges in the corporate world. After completing my master's in I-O at the University of Waterloo, I joined the consulting world, where I have been working since, while also continuing to coach volleyball.

At MacPhie, our business model centers on two pillars of professional services: Strategy, which encompasses planning, facilitation, and communication support; and Culture and Organizational Development, which involves team culture, dynamic leadership development, and personal brand. I spend most of my time on the people and culture side of the business, working with clients on leadership development and training, building workshops, and facilitating conversations to help organizations align their priorities and make strategic decisions.

I typically work with 8 or 9 clients at a time on different engagements. One example is a high-performing team program for mental health professionals that lasts about five months and includes customized workshops and a habit builder platform to sustain new behaviours. The topics we cover include finding your authentic leadership style, communicating effectively, and giving feedback. It's like a Management 101 course for their unique context.

But my favourite work to do is facilitating key conversations for our clients. When our clients' leadership teams are trying to make strategic decisions, we help them find alignment. We do this using different methods and practices, but a lot of it comes down to being an empathetic observer and a clear communicator. Something that I learned from sports is asking difficult, direct questions, and having healthy conflict in the open so it doesn't lead to side conversations and resentment. Helping people understand each others' unique perspectives brings out the benefits of diverse experiences and opinions.

How has your experience in sports shaped your approach to leadership consulting?

For one thing, it taught me the importance of repetition. We tend to revert to patterns of behaviour that are comfortable for us, you need to get to a point where a learned behaviour becomes your default mode even when you're under pressure. That's why we place such an emphasis on sustainability in our development programs.

I also learned the value of purposeful and intentional collaboration. I often tell my clients that when you're collaborating with a team, you have to be intentional about your collaboration. You need to get to know your team members in a way that will help you collaborate better. You can't avoid those direct conversations that need to be had, and you can't just assume that everyone works the way you do. Intentional collaboration means putting in the effort to understand each other and figure out how to work together effectively. I think this is one way that teams in industry can take inspiration from teams in sports.

Sports has also impacted the way I personally lead. When I grew up playing on teams, there was always this notion of leaving everything at the door, including your personal stuff, but I realized that this was impossible. Command and control leadership considers empathy to be weak. As a coach, I vowed to never encourage my athletes to leave their personal lives at the door, and instead, I encourage them to show up to training as their whole person, and I showcase, honour and care about them for the genuine people they are.

Lastly, I learned that leadership is not about you, and winning something or being successful is not about you as an individual. When you join a team, you have to make a commitment to let go of that personal ego and any need for self-validation from the team. Having an ambition for personal glory will make it really hard to lead successfully and develop a great team. That's a big component of teamwork; you're part of a group of people.

As consultants and coaches, how can we help leaders find a successful approach that balances both high empathy and high accountability?

This is such a relevant topic, given how the events of the last three years have put people's mental health and personal well-being into the spotlight. It seems that organizations are now realizing the value of prioritizing their employees' personal lives over their work lives. However, some organizations struggle with the trade-offs of being empathetic to their team members while also holding them accountable for their work.

In my opinion, before anything else, leaders need to build a foundation of trust with their team members, set appropriate expectations and show that you care about the team members and their personal goals. Understanding team members' goals helps leaders tailor their leadership and coaching style to help team members achieve their aspirations. Doing this will help motivate the team members and build a deeper, more trusting relationship.

Many employers fear that if a team member is going through challenges or personal issues, they will use it as an excuse and slack off. But, in my opinion, being a leader requires putting trust first and putting skepticism and fear of betrayal aside. That means that if they say they are unable to perform a certain task due to their mental health, trust them, and work together to find a solution. This collaborative process may require adjusting goals or finding alternative ways to achieve them.

To sum it up, building a foundation of trust, managing expectations, understanding team members' long-term goals, connecting feedback and coaching to those goals, and giving the benefit of the doubt are critical for leading a team for sustainable results.

How can industry leaders learn from sports leadership to foster high-performance in teams? What lessons can they draw on for what to do or what not to do?

There is a concept in sales that I've seen applied in sports which states that your level of self-belief and self-confidence dictates your overall performance. Your self-concept dictates how you perceive yourself, and if you believe that you are mediocre, you will perform at that level. I have found that, while self-concept is a common focus for sports leaders, it is applied less in industry. The truth is that people hold themselves back because of their limiting beliefs all the time, and leaders can access untapped potential by helping their teams identify and engage with these beliefs.

From a coaching perspective, it is challenging to help people change their self-beliefs, especially when they are newer in their roles or careers. I see this happen in the girls that I coach. I have tried to coach my players through this by showing them concrete evidence of their actual abilities and setting high expectations for them and believing in them. This also needs to be reinforced by fostering a culture of high performance that can influence low self-concepts just by association.

I also find it interesting when leaders who are big sports fans adopt the mentalities, lessons, and values of high-performance sports coaches in their leadership capacity. They want their team to move as a unit, and this trend towards togetherness and collective goals is reflective of sports. However, sometimes we can move too far into the realm of high-performance sport, which can be problematic. There is a level of martyrdom associated with sport that glamorizes blood, sweat, and tears, and dying for the team, the sport, and the fans. Some leaders equate this to their organizational job, which can become unhealthy and overly intense. In such cases, empathy is critical, and we need to understand that it is not healthy to encourage team members to prioritize their job over their life or put their mental and emotional well-being over their job performance.

Both sports and industry have been challenged to be more inclusive of women and marginalized groups. What have you seen in those areas that make you optimistic and where is there more room to grow?

There's a positive trend in sports towards increasing the number of women in leadership positions, including female head coaches and women on the benches of male professional sports teams. This diversity is important because it attracts more women to the workforce. When the leadership team does not include people who look like me, I feel that my perspectives, perceptions, and life experiences won't be acknowledged. Different leadership styles are emerging, such as servant leadership, empathetic leadership, and political leadership, with Jacinda Ardern from New Zealand being celebrated for her leadership style during the COVID pandemic. People across the spectrum of gender, race and ethnicity, and age have different experiences, and there is a desire for more holistic perspectives to avoid biased approaches and ways of thinking.

However, progress is still needed to overcome the challenges of individuals who uphold old systems, such as old boys' clubs and patriarchal norms. There is room to grow, especially in sports, where there is a lack of female coaches despite the high percentage of female athletes. Amongst volleyball players in Ontario, for example, while 75% of the players are female, only 25% of coaches are female. That's why I developed a leadership program for female volleyball players aged 15 to 18 to encourage them to become coaches. The increasing focus on authentic leadership, which emphasizes leading in a way that feels natural based on personal experiences, gives me hope for future progress.

What is one piece of advice you that leadership-focused I-O Psychologists need to hear?

One critique that I have for some people in I-O Psychology is an overreliance on theory. We need to be much more flexible when we work in industry because theory doesn't always reflect real-life situations. While theory gives us credibility and provides an objective foundation to work from, the biggest mistake that I see consultants make is being overly focused on systematic research and theory at the expense of being flexible to the client's needs.

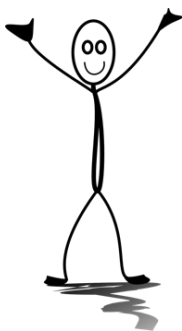
In my experience, I have found that I get the most success and build the most trust with my clients just by being willing to listen to them, accommodate them, and be patient. If you try to push your own agenda and diagnose them too early without listening to the full picture, you will not be successful. I build most of my trust and partnerships by listening to the challenges that a leader is experiencing and helping them talk through it. So use research as much as you can, but be flexible, thoughtful, and responsive to the needs of your clients.

About Erica Naccarato, MA

Erica is Managing Consultant at MacPhie, where she supports high-performing team initiatives through programs that empower and motivate teams to communicate more effectively, generate focus, and achieve their strategic goals. Erica also currently supports the development of strategic plans for various non-profit organizations and associations. Erica is a Prosci Certified Change Practitioner and holds a Master's of Applied Science in Industrial-Organizational Psychology from the University of Waterloo, and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Ryerson University.

Outside of work, you'll find Erica in the gym coaching her competitive girls volleyball team, or playing on the court herself! Erica loves the culture and fashion of Toronto, and is always up for trying a new restaurant or stepping into a local boutique in the city.

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 if you have comments, suggestions, or would like to contribute an article to the Practice Makes Perfect column in an upcoming issue of the CSIOP newsletter.



State of the Science

*Lance Ferris, Ph.D.
Michigan State University*

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.

Particularly as workforces age, individuals with hearing disabilities – or those with some limitation on their ability to comprehend spoken communication – are becoming increasingly common in organizations, with some estimates suggesting nearly half of people aged 60-69 have at least some level of hearing disability. Such communication impairments can leave employees feeling frustrated and anxious, impacting their sense of professional isolation. This isolation, in turn, can lead to being less likely to be promoted or to be given raises, as well as lower levels of career satisfaction and commitment.

One might reasonably expect that as the severity of hearing loss increased, this sense of professional isolation might deepen. However, in a recent paper accepted for publication in the *Journal of Management* by Brent Lyons (York University), David Baldrige (Oregon State University), Liu-Qin Yang (Portland State University), and Camellia Bryan (York University), they argue that the opposite might actually be true. Drawing on the concept of psychological disengagement, they argued that employees with more severe forms of hearing impairment would detach from the work role because – given the frustration and anxiety associated with it – the work role would threaten their feelings of self-worth. Ironically, doing so would lead those with more severe forms of hearing impairment to be less likely to feel a sense of professional isolation: because the work role is less important for them, they would be less sensitive to being isolated from others, while those with less severe forms of hearing impairment would be highly attuned to and distressed by such isolation.

Given professional isolation negatively impacts career attitudes and advancement opportunities, in reducing their sense of isolation, those with more severe forms of hearing impairment may actually end up more satisfied with, advanced in, and committed to their careers. Across two studies testing their hypotheses, this is generally what Lyons and colleagues found: although results varied slightly between studies, they found robust support for the notion that more severe hearing impairment was related to less professional isolation, which in turn impacted career attitudes and advancement. Moreover, these results were particularly pronounced when employees had lower-quality relationships with their supervisors (i.e., low LMX); when individuals had higher-quality relationships with their supervisors, they tended to experience lower levels of isolation regardless of the severity of their hearing impairment.

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

Lyons, B. J., Baldrige, D. C., Yang, L.-Q., & Bryan, C. (2023). Disability severity, professional isolation perceptions, and career outcomes: When does leader-member exchange quality matter? *Journal of Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01492063221143714>

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.



Student Update

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

The 2023 CPA conference is only a couple of months away! As a student, I love conferences as an opportunity to learn about new areas in the field and meet some of the exceptional people researching IO psychology. This year's conference is being held in Toronto from June 23rd – 25th. In addition, [Pre-Convention PD Workshops](#) covering a variety of topics are being held on June 22nd.

[Registration](#) for the 2023 CPA conference is now open! From now until April 26th, early bird rates apply. If you don't enroll before then, don't worry! You can still register up until the conference at a discounted rate if you are a student.

Student Symposium

CSIOP is excited to be hosting a Student Symposium at CPA to showcase some incredible research projects by students across the country! The 2023 symposium is titled "Psychometrics and Psychological Interventions" and includes four wonderful projects addressing leadership, motivation, socialization at work, and interview anxiety. You will not want to miss it, so be sure to look for it in the program and include it in your schedule for the weekend!

Student Events

The planning of the **annual Student Mentor Event** is underway. This popular event matches participants with mentors who are IO professionals working in both academic and applied settings. There are limited spaces available, and registration is required for the event, so be sure to keep an eye on your email and RSVP as soon as possible! CSIOP also plans an **I/O Psychology Social** that is a great opportunity to meet other people in the area or to catch up with old friends! I am personally excited to see many of my colleagues from Western at CPA, and hope I'll catch some of them at the social!

CSIOP Students Awards

Each year, CSIOP presents awards to the students who present outstanding work. I wanted to be sure you know about two opportunities in particular:

1. [Student Poster Awards](#)
Three prizes are awarded based on the quality of the poster, the student's presentation, and the topic. All posters in the I/O psychology session who have a student member as the first author are considered for this award. More details about eligibility can be found on the website.
2. [RHR Kendall Award](#)
This award is given in partnership with RHR international to recognize outstanding papers by CSIOP student members. The award honours the impact that Dr. Lorne Kendall and Charles (Chuck) Evans had on the I/O psychology community. All papers, posters, and presentations submitted to the CSIOP program of the CPA conference are eligible, though they must be submitted separated by **May 15th, 2023**.

There are other CPA awards which will be awarded at the conference as well! You can find those [on the website](#).

Jocelyn Brown (she/her)

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 Submissions for Special Issue in Group and Organization Management

The Use and Efficacy of Employer-Sponsored Mental Wellbeing Programs

Mental wellbeing and health are receiving increasing attention, investment, and priority in the professional world. Employers are spending more to support their employees' mental wellbeing, while workers are demanding more support amidst a growing prevalence of mental health challenges. In addition to health insurance coverage for Mental Illness, and the required accommodations/fair-hiring protections provided for these conditions, employers are commonly offering Employee Assistance Programs, Stress-Reduction, Mindfulness, Meditation, e-counseling, and more to attract, retain, and support workers. But ~75% of business leaders hesitate to voluntarily provide mental health offerings because they lack certainty about what to offer, how to choose an offering, or not having considered these offerings at all. Evidence also indicates that, for all of the cost of these programs to employers, employees often doubt or do not receive the benefit. Despite more than 70% of employers offering EAPs at no cost to employees, fewer than 10% of employees use them.

To serve employees and their companies' investment, we seek to found a research stream on the Use and Efficacy of Employer-Sponsored Mental Wellbeing Programs, with a Special Issue in Group and Organization Management. The SI has four major objectives.

1. Increase the discourse in empirical research on employee benefits relative to mental wellbeing
2. Assemble a body of empirical evidence to inform organization leaders and HR professionals in their decision-making regarding which mental wellbeing resources are appropriate for their employees
3. Fill the void in organization and HR literatures regarding an under-researched aspect of employee total rewards
4. Present the perspective of employees who seek out mental wellbeing resources from their employers

A full call can be found [here](#).



Call for Papers - EAWOP Small Group Meeting

The "great rethink": Understanding work engagement, performance, and well-being in the new work normal

University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
 21st – 22nd September, 2023
 Submission deadline: 1 May, 2023
 Click [here](#) for more information

Precarious Employment and Work: Understanding the underlying psychological and social processes

University of Glasgow, Adam Business School, United Kingdom
 4-6 September, 2023
 Submission deadline: 31 May, 2023
 Click [here](#) for more information



IAAP Division 1 Initiative: “This Works In My Place!”

Call for Experts “This Works in my Place!” Africa Edition

After the success of [This Works in my place: Latin America Edition](#), we would like to launch the second edition of this project in relation to *This work in my place: Africa Edition*.

The main goal of the project will be to identify pertinent challenges, opportunities, barriers and any other contextual factors in Africa that shape Work and Organizational Psychology (WOP) strategies and practices in achieving relevant Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

For this reason, we are launching **a call for work and organizational psychology experts**, including academics and practitioners, who can contribute with their knowledge and experience to this project. We are looking for experts who are knowledgeable on the context in Africa regardless of where they currently live. To fully capture the diversity of the African context, we are encouraging participation from as many regions of Africa as possible.

The role of the expert will be to contribute to the different stages of the project such as the workshop, the analysis and classification of contextual factors in Africa, the design of a measurement instrument and participation in a Delphi study.

Please share this call with anyone who might be interested in participating!

To obtain more information about the project and to participate, please email us at: iaapdiv1@gmail.com

The Convention Corner

*Lindie Liang, Ph.D.
Wilfrid Laurier University*



I hope you are all excited about the upcoming CPA convention will take place at the Sheraton Centre Hotel in Toronto from June 23 -25! A friendly reminder that if you plan to attend the conference, you should book your accommodation soon – the date of the conference overlaps with Toronto Pride Parade, so hotel rooms are going fast!

Here are some exciting sessions to look forward to:

- A conference plenary session by Dr. Lisa Feldman Barrett (Northeastern University).
- An invited keynote address by Dr. Winny Shen (York University) entitled “Exploring the Asian American Experience at Work”.
- CSIOP Graduate Student Symposium organized by our student rep Jocelyn Brown, featuring the amazing work being conducted by students in I/O psychology and related programs across Canada.

In addition to the talks, there will also be social events, and the planning is underway. If you have any suggestions on how to improve our convention or if you have any ideas for our program, please email me at lliang@wlu.ca. Don’t forget to follow CSIOP on Twitter (@CSIOP_SCIPIO) and Facebook for convention updates. The full program will also be posted on our website. I look forward to seeing you all in Toronto in June!

Lindie

Off With His Head: A Summary of a Recent Case of Termination for Cause¹

By: Erika Ringseis, Ph.D., J.D.²



Background:

With very few exceptions, either an employee or an employer can choose to terminate an employment relationship at any time. If an employee has acted inappropriately, such as being guilty of serious misconduct or wilful disobedience, the employer may choose to terminate the employee “for cause” or “for just cause.”³ If an employee is terminated for cause or just cause, they are not entitled to receive any notice or pay in lieu of notice, or any severance payments. They also will likely have difficulty claiming employment insurance. Termination for cause is capital punishment, in employment law terms.

Facts:

A recent BC case reminds us that an employer should be very careful before terminating an employee for cause. The courts do not look kindly on employers who aggressively send heads rolling down the exit ramp. The burden is on the employer to prove just cause and the courts have emphasized that the level of proof required is high.

In the recent case of *Chu v China Southern Airlines Company Limited*,⁴ an employee, Mr. Chu, had been employed for more than eight years at China Southern Airlines. As a Marketing and Business Development Manager, Mr. Chu was responsible for establishing the airline’s business in Canada and enjoyed success at his job. His boss,

¹ *Chu v China Southern Airlines Company Limited*, 2023 BCSC 21.

² Erika Ringseis received her Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from Penn State before focusing her career on employment and human rights law. She has not been terminated for cause and currently advises clients through the innovative virtual law firm, Inhaus Legal LLP (<https://inhauslegal.com/lawyers/erika-ringseis/>).

³ “Just cause” and “cause” are often used interchangeably and refer to a termination without any notice or pay in lieu of notice, other than any relevant requirements under the applicable employment standards legislation.

⁴ *Ibid.*

however, was then replaced by a new General Manager (GM), who was dismissive of the role that Mr. Chu held. The GM excluded Mr. Chu from management meetings and then eliminated the marketing department entirely.

Rather than terminate Mr. Chu's employment at that time, the court found that the GM "embarked upon a campaign designed to manufacture cause of dismissal or induce the plaintiff to resign."⁵ Although the respondent had no concerns with Mr. Chu's performance prior to the new GM's arrival, suddenly Mr. Chu was disciplined for a number of alleged failures. He was also given a lesser role, his salary was reduced and the nature of the work he was performing required him to use a program with which he had no experience and insufficient training. He was set up to fail.

The employer initially alleged that Mr. Chu had never worked in a management position but had misrepresented himself, was guilty of sexual harassment, was also guilty of theft, had attended public events as a representative of the respondent without permission and had missed important regulatory deadlines. The employer also suggested that Mr. Chu was incompetent.

Just before the hearing of the matter, the respondent dropped some of its more egregious allegations against Mr. Chu and focused more on his performance. As the matter was proceeding by summary trial, Mr. Chu provided strong, sworn affidavit evidence. The respondent did not appear to be as prepared. The court suggested that the information provided by the respondent did not directly respond to the issues and concluded that Mr. Chu's evidence was largely uncontested.

Decision

The Court did not agree that Mr. Chu had been appropriately dismissed for cause. The employer had failed to make its case and defend its decision. Thus, Mr. Chu had been dismissed without cause and should have received notice or pay in lieu of notice of his termination. He was awarded 20 months of pay in lieu of notice, which is at the high end for a manager with only eight years of service. As Mr. Chu was over the age of 65, his age pushed the reasonable notice period higher.⁶

In addition, the court clearly reprimanded the employer for its callous disregard for Mr. Chu and the targeted bad faith and abuse by the GM. The employer was ordered to pay an additional \$150,000 in aggravated and punitive damages. The court emphasized the fact that unilateral demotions to entry-level positions were humiliating, reprimands were given publicly, and the employer appeared to be creating an untenable environment in an attempt to get Mr. Chu to resign.

Final Thoughts

Had the employer showed proof of Mr. Chu stealing model airplanes and engaging in sexual harassment and the other unacceptable behaviour of which he had been accused, termination for cause may have been justifiable. But the court was clearly unimpressed with the outrageous behaviour of the GM. The court also noted that termination for cause because of poor performance is possible, but first the employer must:

1. Establish a reasonable, attainable standard of performance that is communicated to the employee;
2. Provide the employee with appropriate training and time to meet the standard; and
3. Warn the employee that failure to meet the standard will result in dismissal.

Evidence and careful documentation are key in defending the decision to terminate an employee without providing any notice or pay in lieu of notice. Immediate termination is possible where appropriate reasons exist, but employers need to exercise caution when dropping the for cause gauntlet. Employers will also face additional punishment, like the additional penalties in this case, if they attempt to make the work environment so miserable that the employee quits.⁷

⁵ At para 20.

⁶ When determining what is a reasonable notice period under the common law in Canada, the courts try to estimate what length of time it would take a reasonable person in the employee's position to find a new job. The courts consider such factors as tenure, age, type of role and availability of other employment. See the seminal case of *Bardal v Globe & Mail Ltd.*, 1960 CanLII 294 (ON SC).

⁷ This is known as "constructive dismissal."

Finding & Fueling my Commitment to Equity, Diversity & Inclusion



*Aisha S. Taylor, Ph.D.
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My passion for equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) was sparked at an event that happened 23 years ago, and I almost didn't go. One year earlier, I had moved from my hometown of Sacramento, California to the palm-lined, ornately designed, and meticulously upkept campus of the University of San Diego (USD). I had been elected Sophomore Senator, and one of the requirements for the position was to attend a two-day Human Relations Workshop (HRW). There would be about 100 participants, half from student government and half from the multicultural centre.

A few days before the workshop, a fellow officer in student government told me, "This is where we get yelled at for being white. I wish we didn't have to go." I remember my defensive walls going up and being much less excited about my weekend plans.

Growing up in the 80's, I had been taught to "not see colour." I even had a "love sees no colour" pin proudly displayed in my childhood bedroom. My high school was incredibly diverse, being roughly even quarters Asian, Black, Latine, and White. While diversity was valued and present, I was not equipped with the awareness or skills to respond to this statement with anything other than defensiveness in the moment, so I said, "I don't want to be yelled at for something I can't change." If I *had* been taught about the differences in how people are treated and in how systems benefit some people more than others, I would have responded very differently.

Despite my initial trepidation, the HRW proved to be a turning point in my life. My mind and heart were opened by the stories students shared, of hate crimes and bias they experienced on campus. One member of the LGBTQ+ community shared that the "F" word (i.e., derogatory term for a gay person) had been etched into his dorm room door. Another student described returning to her desk after using the washroom and finding a swastika drawn on her school binder.

Upon hearing these stories, my defenses evaporated, and my 20-year-old-self thought: "This is terrible! What can I do to change this?" From that weekend on, a few members of the student government joined the on-going student movement for EDI, based in USD's multicultural centre.

We met every Tuesday evening for three years. During these meetings, we strategized, set high-level goals, and developed objectives to achieve them. Our goals were threefold: 1) institute an Ethnic Studies major, 2) diversify the student body, faculty, and curriculum, and 3) obtain a Diversity general education requirement. Our strategies included organizing protests that garnered mainstream media attention with over 300 students in attendance, letter-writing campaigns, regular meetings with administrators to hold them accountable to their promises, and social events with supportive faculty, staff, and mentors who advised us. We also served as student facilitators for countless HRWs, helping to educate the student body. We helped design and facilitate deeper-dive training on topics such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation.

By the end of my senior year, the university had created an Ethnic Studies major and the faculty was more racially diverse than it had ever been. The following year, a Diversity general education requirement was approved. We were overjoyed by the changes we had helped make.

Due to these experiences, my life took a sharp turn, from preparing for medical school to pursuing a doctorate in Industrial Organizational Psychology (I-O). Throughout the twists and turns of my career, EDI has guided the way. In my time running a national non-profit working for gender equity in the Catholic Church, a major part of my legacy was creating an anti-oppression team, with an explicit focus on anti-racism. In graduate school, I chose my adviser (Dr. Keith James) based on his research in EDI. Together, we built a taxonomy of diversity at work to describe the multifaceted psychological dynamics present in diverse workplaces, and then developed a scale to operationalize it. In the years when I led an assessment development team and directed several large-scale credentialing programs, EDI informed the way I practiced inclusive leadership amongst my colleagues and with clients.

In my current work, I focus directly on EDI every day, as the Founder and CEO of Taylor-Made Strategies, an evidence-based firm fostering inclusive cultures at work, based in Calgary. For nearly 20 years, I have worked with

clients across industries to build strategies that foster equity, increase diversity, and create more inclusive environments at work.

I share this story and information for a few reasons. First, I want to introduce myself and share what brought me to – and keeps me in – EDI and I-O Psychology. Second, providing an example of successful and effective EDI work (i.e., at USD) is important in our post-2020 era, where there has been a lot of talk about these complex topics, all too often with very little to show for it. Third, in my new role as EDI Strategic Lead for CSIOP, I want to communicate my passionate dedication to building effective strategies to help achieve EDI in our field. My life's work has been an attempt to shape the spaces we live in to be more equitable, just, and inclusive. I-O psychology has provided me a theoretical lens in doing this work and rigorous standards for knowledge production to inform it.

Finally, I'm excited to bring my experience and perspectives to CSIOP. I see this new position as a way to serve my profession, bringing what I have learned in EDI since I was 19 years old to the collaborative work of the EDI Standing Committee. I look forward to continued growth through this position and with the committee.

About Aisha Taylor, Ph.D.

Aisha Taylor, Ph.D., is a professional consultant, coach, strategic advisor, educator, and facilitator. With over 20 years' experience, Aisha has become a respected thought leader in workplace equity, diversity, inclusion (EDI), and leadership. Since 2003, Dr. Taylor has worked with leaders in educational institutions, corporations, non-profits, and government agencies across North America. Her main areas of practice are guiding strategic, inclusive culture change at work, delivering leadership and EDI training programs, and building EDI Councils.

With a Ph.D. in IO Psychology, she has taught university courses and published her work in academic and practitioner settings. In every engagement, Aisha builds trusting partnerships with her clients, a few of which have included the University of Calgary, California State University at Northridge, the Kinkaid School, Toyota, Honda, Seattle Aquarium, Center for Community Solutions, Carpenters International Training Center, and New York City Dept. of Buildings. She lives in Calgary with her spouse and two children, where they enjoy Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, living room dance parties, and building community.

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