

# The Pulse!

THE OFFICIAL  
NEWSLETTER OF  
FLORIDA TECH'S  
I/O PSYCHOLOGY  
PROGRAM!

KEEPING  
EVERYONE ON  
THE SAME BEAT!

FALL  
2018

## Featuring...

ICCM Happenings

Research Spotlight

Meet Gary!

Alumni Spotlight

The Anthony Report



# Editors' Note

And with another semester down, we are pleased to provide the latest edition of the Pulse for your viewing pleasure! In this issue, we will explore new and exciting happenings at ICCM! We also have some personal and professional updates that you'll definitely want to check out in the shout-outs section. As always we want to keep everyone on the same beat, so we hope you enjoy this edition!

-Your editors

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## Your Editors



Anthony



Lida



Mike



Michael

The Pulse is created with faculty support from: Dr. Lisa Steelman and Dr. Katie Merlini. Thank you both!!!



## Prelude from the Program Chair

Greetings near and far! Here in the Florida Tech I/O program we are rocking on, one beat at a time. We welcomed a new class of students and said farewell to old friends who graduated.

As we know from organizational theory, systems go through periods of stability marked by times of punctuated change. Change is good, if you manage it well, because it can transform the system into a better version of itself. Change can also feel disruptive because those things we are comfortable with may be different or no longer available. Our program has been stable for many years, and now a time of change is upon us. We were all sad to see Albert Zhou and Erin Richard leave us, but we are excited for their new opportunities. They will always be Panthers for Life and we look forward to reconnecting each year at SI-OP (and in between) to hear of their success.

We could not be happier to welcome Gary Burns to the FIT I/O family. You can read a little about him in this edition. Gary is a well-respected professor with many years of experience. He has distinguished himself in the field and we know he will fit right in! Change is what you make of it and we are going to embrace our change and make it work out for the best for everyone involved.

As I write this we are weathering through a cold snap in Florida and I am cozy in my flannel and fuzzy slippers. We send our best from frigid Florida and hope everyone is warm and happy and enjoying life. Never forget to enjoy life!

**-Dr. Lisa Steelman**

# Keeping on Beat with....

## ...SIOP 2018

Florida Institute of Technology took over SIOP! Enjoy some pictures of some of our students bracing the Chicago cold for some adventuring during this year's conference!



# Keeping on Beat with...

# ...ICCM!

By Lida Ponce and Anthony Belluccia

## President McCay's visit



Florida Tech President, Dr. Dwayne McCay

On the morning of August 31st, ICCM hosted Florida Tech's President (Dr. Dwayne McCay). Each project team presented their work for Dr. McCay and his administrative staff, who were impressed by our professionalism and work ethic. ICCM members educated Dr. McCay on projects such as the ARI Grant (Trust Across Cultures), The Guided Mindfulness Project and the Orlando International Airport consulting project, to name a few. Thank you for everyone who made this a reality! Special thanks to Kat Rau, our business director, who coordinated the event!

# Behind the Scenes with GOAA Project Filming

## Day 1: Airport Filming



Mia (Lida) being consoled by GOAA employee Ben (Anthony) after a long day



Our actors pausing from their Oscar-worthy performances for a candid photo



Our diligent film directors, James and Hairong, discuss a pivotal scene



Mr. Brown, the President of the Orlando International Airport, advising employees to take the Cross Cultural Competence and Customer Experience Workshop.

# Day 2: Harris Filming



Our actors taking a minute to review their scripts between scenes



Lights, camera, culture! The only issue is: how many takes do we need to get the right one??



James, our noble filmographer, advising the actors between scenes. "If you want to look mad, squeeze something before the camera goes on."

Over the summer, the GOAA team put their creative efforts together to film five videos for the Cultural Competence workshop that will be presented to employees at the Orlando International Airport. The videos are meant to convey cultural differences and how they might manifest in the workplace. Thank you to all who were involved!

# Keeping on Beat with...

# ...I/O Research!

## Research Spotlight: Motivation Lab

By Michael McFerran

The Self-Regulation and Motivation Research Team, led by Dr. Converse, focuses our research on examining the internal and external influences involved in gaining control over one's thoughts, emotions, and actions that drive important organizational behaviors. This fall semester we have been working on several projects.

As all I/O's know, the fall semester has a special date in September. Around this time, there is increased coffee consumption and decreased amount of sleep within the I/O community. This special date is...SIOP conference deadlines! This year was no different. Our team was hard at work to submit our paper on self-control strategies. The central aim of our research was to develop a sound and valid measure of self-control strategies, and to examine the relationship of these strategies with various variables such as, emotional regulation, personality, affect, and life satisfaction. We have also been working on a paper examining self-control strategies and augmented cognition.



The Self-Regulation and Motivation Research Team currently meets first thing on Monday every week. Our team philosophy is to conduct theory-based research with implications for employees and organizations. This is accomplished in a collaborative atmosphere in which team members work together through all stages of the research process. The team members include: Dr. Pat Converse, Dr. Katie Merlini, Nick Moon, Mina Milosevic, Jesse Caylor, Sherif Al-qallawi, Lee Duong, Lida Ponce, Chris Juszczuk, and Michael McFerran.



# Keeping on Beat with.....

## ...Our Alumni!

In this edition of The Pulse, we have the pleasure of highlighting another one of our amazing alumni, Matt Merbedone. Matt joined the I/O program in 2005 and was one of Pat's very first advisees. Matt has left a big mark on the program and those who've known him - we always love catching up with him whenever we can. During his time at FL Tech, he was always willing to help others learn the ropes and was known for providing the "real deal" when giving advice (or opinions) as well as for his signature hoodies, using armadillos as landmarks, a slight obsession with iced-tea, his signature dance moves, and being a truly loyal friend. Nowadays, he's been doing amazing things at Marriott, including his recent promotion into a Vice President role. Read on for more about what he's up to and how he got there!

1. Can you tell us a little bit about yourself, your current position, and how you got there?

*Shortly after graduation from FL Tech in 2012, I started at Marriott as a Manager in the Talent Management Analytics & Solutions team (TMAS) and worked on global assessments for the company. With a little bit of good luck, over the next few years, I was given multiple opportunities to lead various workstreams (e.g., Performance*

*management, Succession Planning, Engagement) within that team. In 2016, I moved out of the Talent Management space and into the Talent Acquisition group to gain a bit more experience in another facet of Human Resources and helped to manage the relationship with our RPO vendor.*

*Most recently, in August of this year, I accepted the position of Vice President, Talent Management Analytics & Solutions and rejoined the team where I started my career. In my current role, I have oversight for various specialized I/O psychology functions (global: assessments, job infrastructure, analytics and surveys, performance management, succession planning, engagement) including enterprise-wide HR reporting.*



2. Can you describe the types of tasks you typically work on/what you typically do at Marriott? Are there any tasks in particular that you enjoy in the most?

*In general, I work to ensure the programs I have oversight for, such as the company's global selection strategy, challenge current thinking and meet business needs. My team engages in a variety of tasks to support this goal such as global validation studies (Research Methods with Rich actually proved to be quite helpful in this arena ☺), engaging in predictive analytics like Machine Learning, and supporting our hotels with their Talent Management needs.*

3. Is there anything in particular that you learned or experienced during your time in the I/O program at FL Tech that has been especially helpful in your post-graduate school life?

*I think everything I learned at FL Tech plays some sort of role in every work decision I make. I/O principles can relate to almost any project in some fashion or another. One of the more important distinctions you will have to make, in the private industry, is deciding between what is statistically significant and what is practically significant and if the latter will suffice given current business demands.*

4. What advice would you give to current I/O students who may want to go into a job/role like yours?

*As Rich would say, work hard, be cool! And in addition to that, always be open to opportunity. When I was in graduate school, I had a slight, to say the least, affinity for all things "I" related. However, most of my career has been leading "O" related programs such as Engagement and Performance Management. Being open to the opportunity to take on new roles, that I may not have been as knowledgeable in, has led me to where I am today.*

5. What are some of your favorite memories from the program?

*Most of my favorites are probably not safe to print! However, the most enjoyable times were always those with my friends. I met some of the most amazing people I will ever know during my time in Florida and I will cherish their friendships forever.*

*I will tell you my worst too. Comps!*

6. The SIOP conference will be in YOUR area in 2019! Can we expect to see you there?

*Yes! I will be there and am looking forward to seeing everybody.*

Big thanks, Matt, for catching up with us! We'll be sure to say hello at SIOP and hopefully catch up some more (your Miller Lite is on us!).

# Keeping on Beat with... ...Our Newest Professor!

By Mike Sawdy

We got a chance to sit down with our newest professor, Dr. Gary Burns, who started here at FIT this semester! Gary earned his Ph.D. in Industrial and Organizational Psychology from Central Michigan University in 2006, and is bringing multiple years of academic experience to the table. Gary is teaching Statistics courses this year. Welcome to the FIT family, Gary!



1. What have been 3 major milestones in your life as an I/O psychologist?

*3 major milestones in my life as an I/O psychologist have been my first Symposium presentation, my first first author manuscript rejection, and being a visiting professor in Linnaeus University's IO program*

2. What is your current research focus and where do you see your research headed in the next five years?

*My current research focus is on understanding the influence of non-cognitive traits on human behavior. This ranges from basic research examining the underlying structure of the Big Five to understanding how trait suspicion influences behavioral trust in human-machine teams. Current projects focus on modifying trust in automation scales to better predict trust behaviors, developing a short version of the AB5C, understanding how core self-evaluations are related to stress appraisals, and development of a fear of missing out measure to better understand consumer behaviors.*

3. How did you initially become interested in I/O Psychology?

*I initially became interested as an undergrad, because of the promise of how much money I could make. I got involved with a guy who was doing training seminars. I was impressed with the opportunities, demand for training, and amount of money orgs would pay for training.*

4. Was there anything in particular that influenced you to choose academia over the applied world and join us at FIT?

*I fell in love with research, and was fortunate to get involved with research during my first year. I gave a talk at SIOP with Tim Judge and Ed Locke and fell in love with the research process. In comparing applied research versus academic research, I loved the autonomy provided by academy (choosing my own research focus over the needs of the organization).*

5. Why FIT?

*I heard that FIT had an open position, and talking with the chair of the selection committee, I learned that FIT might have leadership opportunities for a more senior faculty member. I really liked FIT's position and prominence in the field of international psychology. I also liked that FIT had a partnership with Erasmus Mundus and that there is a strong international presence on campus as well. FIT is out there in the world!*

6. What is the biggest piece of advice, other than "work hard; be cool" you would give to students?

*PUBLISH! It shows strong project management and communication skills that are respected in both the applied and academic sectors.*

7. Do you have any advice for students to maintain work/life balance?

*Say yes but learn to say no.*

# Two Truths and a Lie

We are renewing our professor-themed edition of “2 truths and a lie”! Gary has kindly provided us 3 statements about himself, but only 2 of the below statements are true, and one is false. The first person to email Lisa and correctly identify which statements are which (truth or lie) wins a prize! To be considered, contestants must email the correct answer to Lisa at [lsteelma@fit.edu](mailto:lsteelma@fit.edu). Any reader is eligible!

- 1) My advisor pulled out 100 pages from my dissertation and threw them in the trash
- 2) I got to play an instrumental role in picking out our first dog, a miniature schnauzer named Karlyle
- 3) The initials of my immediate family's first names are GHIJK with the dog's being K



# Keeping on Beat with...

# ...program happenings!!

## Shout-outs!



Colin and Lauren Latham who got married on June 9<sup>th</sup>!



Julie and Darren Walsh who got married on August 6<sup>th</sup>!



Mike and Amy Sawdy who got married on August 11<sup>th</sup>!

# Shout-outs!

Tem Lawal's new baby girl Titilayo Mae Lawal born on August 20<sup>th</sup>! She is called Layo (Lah-yo) for short.



Our alum and former Executive Editor of our very own The Pulse newsletter, Dr. Christa Phillips Bupp, just welcomed a baby girl into the world! Autumn Elizabeth Bupp was born November 26<sup>th</sup> at 4:26am. Congratulations to Christa and her husband, Glen!



# Shout-outs!

In early August we hosted visitors from the Erasmus Mundus program. Thank you Professor Leonor Pais, Professor Marina Romeo, and Professor Nuno Rebelo dos Santos for visiting!



From left to right: Professor Leonor Pais – University of Coimbra, Portugal; Professor Marina Romeo – University of Barcelona, Spain; Professor Nuno Rebelo dos Santos – University of Evora, Portugal



# Shout-outs!

Hot off the press!!

Congratulations to our SB SHRM Student Chapter members for winning the *Organization of the Month* at November 28th's SGA meeting! The student chapter executive board currently consists of our amazing I/O graduate students: Kayla, Kat, Lida, Sherif, Jesse, Aaron, and Lily. Kayla Hoelzel has taken incredible initiative as the chapter president – under her leadership and with the support of her amazing team, the student chapter has taken on several new initiatives, such as fundraising, volunteering, establishing a mentor program with professionals in our area, and helping members obtain scholarships and travel funds. We are very proud to have their hard work and achievements recognized!



# Congratulations to the 2018 Graduates of the I/O Psychology Program!

## PhDs

Phillip Thomas  
Michele Thackray  
Kelsey Perkins

## Masters

Anthony Belluccia	Alicia Bollinger
Jesse Caylor	Timothy Davis
Zachary Glover	Kayla Hoelzel
Sangyi Hu	Collin Latham
Nicholas Moon	Katherine Rau
Yadi Yang	Nick Rosemarino
Anna Saelinger	

# Congratulations Lisa!



You've likely heard the news by now (no, we're not the first to report this – we're no Twitter after all!); but, it's worth repeating: The Pulse would like to give a huge shout-out to our very own Lisa Steelman for becoming the **Dean** of our *College of Psychology and Liberal Arts (CoPLA)*! This means Lisa is now leading the charge for the *School of Behavior Analysis, School of Psychology, School of Arts and Communication, and the Department of Military Science*. This is no small feat and we know there's no one better for the role!

Lisa joined the I/O faculty at FL Tech in 1999 and has been the fearless leader of our I/O program since becoming Chair in 2009 (see the "Passing the Torch" article in our very first edition of The Pulse). In that time, she has helped lead our program to greatness. We know she'll take CoPLA to a whole new level too as she's truly a "clock builder." Congratulations, Lisa!



# Sad to see you go!



## We will miss you Erin!

Dr. Erin Richard has left FIT this fall, and will be teaching at her alma mater, LSU. Students in Erin's Emotions Research Lab gave this Sadness doll (from Disney's Inside Out) to Erin as a parting gift. Perfectly sums up our feelings about having to say goodbye to an awesome teacher. Good luck at LSU, we will miss you! Thank you for everything you have done for us!

# The Anthony Report

## *Margin of Error: The Chronicles of Writing a kinda-bad Thesis*

By Anthony Belluccia

### **Scene I- The Grad Student Lair**

“AUGHAUGHHAUUGGHUAGH”

It was a rare moment of emotional relief for one thesis writer, Oscar Carlos Bennington.

After his third and final effort double checking his CFA results, FIT student Oscar Carlos Bennington crushed his can of Rockstar energy drink and threw it across the room toward his overflowing wastebasket. Oscar was typically a conscientious student, with an altruistic attitude towards study guides and was the type of guy who said “let’s look that up” when someone had a stats question. He even searched for and shared the hard-to-find files that some professors forgot to upload on Canvas. He was a helper, with a low margin of error, and this reputation earned Oscar Carlos Bennington the appropriate nickname O.C.B.

But this thesis, sadly, was unraveling that reputation. Frankly, it was sending O.C.B. up a wall. The hours of sleep that month were outnumbered by the number of articles he’d perused, and his loyal German Sheperds, Diversity and Inclusion, were severely underfed. There were only three days left until his thesis was due to the office of graduate programs, and in his typical O.C.B. manner, he had finished early. Except this time, O.C.B. was largely unsatisfied with his output. Grabbing another Rockstar energy drink for the road, O.C.B. rubbed his baggy eyes with a masochist’s intensity, scratched his dandruff (err- I mean, head) and collected his 203 loose papers that represented his thesis efforts.

### **Scene II- The Grad Programs Office**

“It’s the mahgins,” she said in a discernable New York accent, smacking her bubblegum. It was the affable graduate program admin assistant, and her hoop earrings dangled from side to side as she navigated the 203 pages of O.C.B.’s thesis. “Ya mahgins are not what they should be sweetie. They’re a third of an inch, they should be much widah”. Admittedly, O.C.B. didn’t remember checking his margins against the template offered online. In a frenzy, he yanked his laptop from his backpack and fervently navigated to his Chrome icon: in characteristic FIT fashion, the Wifi was down. “Oh boy,” O.C.B. audibly groaned. He hadn’t felt this level of anxiety since the first Test and Measurements exam one long year ago.

“Betta luck elsewha sweetie,” the admin called after as O.C.B. stampeded toward the parking lot. On his way back, he hurried past an FIT trolley that was completely empty. On the driver’s face, O.C.B. identified a relatable glumness, and wondered if the trolley driver was once a graduate student who misjudged the margins of *his* thesis. *What is my fate*, pondered O.C.B. *if I can’t even get my margins right?* He hopped in his car and sped to the consistently appetizing (and somehow only) Chick-fil-a in Palm Bay. Here, he hoped to find useable Wifi, if not refreshing southern hospitality.

### Scene III- The “Grad” Slam Slugger

O.C.B. would be the first to admit that large crowds made him nervous. The Chick-fil-a, needless to say, was filled to the brim on this particular Friday, and it gave him flashbacks to the claustrophobic Stats 1 course that was shared by three psychology programs. It warranted a cringe, and he decided to take his work across the street, to the fine dining establishment across the street, Denny’s.

Opting to eat before fixing his thesis margins, O.C.B. found the booth that smelled the least like bacon grease. He decided that a little lunch out could only *marginally* add to his student debt. “I’ll have the Grand Slam Slugger,” uttered a callous O.C.B., handing the waitress his menu. Man, was he dejected. It didn’t even matter that his Fantasy Football team had won this week by a wide margin, this thesis was testing all his patience. “Would that be scrambled or sunny side up?” she asked. “Scrambled,” he responded. “Oh, and can you add some extra bacon in the margins?” The waitress looked at him quizzically before scribbling on her pad and heading to the kitchen. He enjoyed the meal, and before he left, he noticed that the waitress wrote a smiley face in the margins of the receipt. *Ha!* Thought O.C.B., while responsibly leaving a larger tip (Rind & Bordia, 1996). O.C.B. drove home marginally faster than the other drivers and when he got home to his margin he margined the margins away.

It was only that night that O.C.B. realized he had gone insane.

### Scene IV- The Grad-itude of a Finished Thesis

O.C.B. arrived back at the grad programs office with 248 loose pages in an envelope. The wider margins made his mammoth of a thesis much longer than it previously looked. But don’t worry, reader, our protagonist is no longer insane. He finally slept for 7 hours in one night, he finally fed his German Shepherds, Diversity and Inclusion (who are now trending on Instagram) and he finally substituted his Rockstar energy drinks with water. If you saw him now, you’d be surprised. He’s even back to his old O.C.B. ways, helping students with homework, locating hard-to-find articles online, and making study guides.

The admin assistant collected his newly printed thesis, looked up and smiled, “you’re all good sweetie.” O.C.B. was *thrilled*. After all, it was only 8 months of his life, each moment seemingly chronicled somewhere in that stack of papers that once belonged in a Staples warehouse. O.C.B. walked into the sunshine like a man being released from prison and strode past a remarkably happier looking trolley driver. He returned to his humble abode where he would send useful emails to classmates and eat leftover Denny’s. Having made his contribution to science, it was nice to be a free man.

It goes without saying, unfortunately, O.C.B.’s thesis only had a marginal impact in the I/O community.

# That's a Wrap!



First years unite!



I spy a Mentor Family Tree!



I/O students doing what I/O students do



What's a thesis?

And the best costume award goes to....The Spice Girls!