Applied Psychology Program Alumni Survey

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1 Applied Research Consultants (ARC) is a service and training organization within the Department of Psychology. ARC has provided professional services in applied research, evaluation, and consulting to local, regional, and national clients since 1981. Find us on the web at: http://www.arc.siu.edu.

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Executive Summary

Applied Research Consultants (ARC) was contacted by Dr. Meera Komarraju on behalf of the Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) Applied Psychology Program to conduct a survey of alumni of the SIU Carbondale Applied Psychology Program. The overall goal of the project was to develop, administer, and analyze the results of a survey assessing alumni's career outcomes and how their experiences at SIUC contributed to those outcomes. An additional goal was to assess alumni opinions regarding program strengths and potential growth opportunities. The survey assessed alumni's first job after graduating, current job, experience job searching, salary, affiliations with professional associations and conference attendance, demographic information, the most and least valuable aspects of the program, and advice and suggestions for the program.

Alumni who graduated from the Applied Psychology Program within the last twenty years were invited to participate in the survey. Qualtrics survey development software was utilized to collect data. The official survey invitation, which included the online survey link, was distributed on Wednesday, September 12, 2018. The survey link was active for a total of four weeks. ARC invited 55 Applied Psychology alumni to participate in the survey, 30 of whom responded and were included in analysis. Of these 30, sixteen currently work in industry and fourteen currently work in academia. Although 30 alumni responded, not all responses were complete. Therefore, N-sizes vary from question to question.

The survey items concerning alumni's first job after graduating revealed that a majority of alumni accepted a full-time job offer before graduation and worked in the industry sector for their first job. In regards to alumni's current jobs, a slight majority reported currently working in industry as opposed to academia. Of the alumni currently working in industry, the most frequently reported job responsibilities were statistical data analysis, consulting, and project management. Of the alumni currently working in academia, the most frequently reported job responsibilities were teaching, conducting research, and mentoring/advising students. In regards to alumni's job searching experiences, the most frequently reported source for job opportunities were personal connections and job posting websites (e.g., Indeed.com). Specifically for alumni whose first job was in industry, when asked how helpful having a Ph.D. was for obtaining their first job, 58.3% responded specifying that having a Ph.D. was very helpful in obtaining their first job.

When asked what the entry salary range would be for a recent graduate of the Applied Psychology Program at their current job, alumni most frequently reported a range of $70,000-$79,999 regardless of whether the recent graduate had a Master's degree or Ph.D. The most frequently reported professional associations and conferences alumni have memberships in and have attended were SIOP, APA, and AEA. Of note, in regards to demographics, alumni on average reported completing both their Master's degree and Ph.D. in approximately five years.

The most valuable aspects of the Applied Psychology Program as reported by alumni were ARC, applied statistics and research design, and program evaluation and survey development. The least valuable aspects of the program as reported by alumni were departmental issues, lack of applied research experience, and inapplicable statistical teachings. The most frequently reported advice and suggestions for improving the program included teaching programming languages and data visualization, helping students obtain publications, and increasing the faculty base and mentorship among faculty and students. Of the Alumni that responded to the survey, 69.2% showed interest in becoming more involved with the program today.

Introduction

The Applied Psychology program at SIUC is a unique combination of industrial/organizational psychology and applied social psychology for students who seek careers in business, government, not-for-profit organizations, independent consulting, or academic careers. A central feature of the Applied Psychology Program is the student run consulting firm, Applied Research Consultants (ARC). ARC is a 2-year vertical practicum that provides training in statistical consulting, survey design and research methodology, program evaluation, organizational development and restructuring, as well as traditional academic research.

The Applied Psychology Program Alumni Survey invited Applied Psychology alumni to provide information about their career outcomes, how their experiences at SIUC contributed to those outcomes, and any suggestions they had for improving the program. The main goal of this survey was to assess alumni opinions regarding program strengths and potential growth opportunities.

The following report details the survey methodology, data analysis, and results of the Applied Psychology Alumni Survey at Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC).

Methods

All alumni who graduated with either Master's or Doctoral degrees from the Applied Psychology Program were asked to complete the survey. Qualtrics survey development software was used to design the survey instrument and collect the data online.

The official survey invitation, which included the online survey link, was distributed on Wednesday, September 12, 2018 at 10:00am CST. The survey link was active for a total of four weeks, with reminder emails being sent weekly. The survey closed on October 15, 2019 at 11:59pm CST.

Emails were sent to 55 alumni and 30 responses were received, resulting in a 54.5% response rate. Although 30 alumni responded, not all responses were complete. Therefore, N-sizes vary from question to question. The survey covered six main topic areas: (1) First Job, (2) Current Job, (3) Salary, (4) Conferences, (5) Program Outcomes, and (6) Demographics.

The Applied Psychology Program Alumni Survey (Appendix A) first asked alumni about their job search for their first job after graduating from the program, what field it was in, and what skills they used on the job. Alumni were funneled to relevant questions based on the field of their first job (i.e., Academia, Industry/Non-Academic, or Postdoctoral Position). Next alumni were asked about their current job, what field it is in, and what skills they use at their job. Alumni again were funneled to relevant questions based on the field of their current job (i.e., Academia, Industry/Non-Academic, or Postdoctoral Position).

Alumni were then asked about the salary range a recent graduate of the Applied Psychology Program could expect if hired by that alum's current employer. One question asked what the range would be for a graduate with a Master's degree and another question asked what the range would be for a graduate with a Ph.D. After that, alumni were then asked what professional/academic associations they have membership in and what professional conferences they attend.

Alumni were also asked a series of questions about their experience in the Applied Psychology Program. First, they were asked about the quality of the various educational components of the program and the importance of these components to their careers. Then they were asked what they thought were the most and least valuable parts of the program. Then they were asked what advice they had for current students and what suggestions they had for improving the Applied Psychology Program. Lastly, alumni answered demographic questions, some of which asked about how long it took to obtain their degree(s), what year they graduated, and if having a Ph.D. was helpful for obtaining their first job (if their first job was in Industry, not Academia).

First and Current Jobs

First Job

Table 1: *Field of Their First Job for Applied Program Alumni Respondents* ($N = 22$)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Academia	3.00	13.64
Non-Academia/Industry	18.00	81.82
Postdoctoral Position	1.00	4.55
Total	14.00	100.00

Current Job

Table 2: *Number of Jobs since First Job for Applied Program Alumni Respondents* ($N = 22$)

Response	Frequency	Percent
1	4.00	18.18
2	9.00	40.91
3	5.00	22.73
4	1.00	4.55
5	1.00	4.55
6	2.00	9.09
Total	14.00	100.00

Program

Alumni were asked about their level of satisfaction with the quality of training on various components within the Applied Psychology Program. Alumni rated their satisfaction on a 5-point Likert scale, with lower scores indicating higher levels of satisfaction (*1 = extremely satisfied, 5 = not satisfied*). See Tables 3-4 for frequencies and percentages.

Satisfaction with the Quality of Applied Program Training Components

Table 3: *Applied Program Alumni Respondents' Satisfaction with Training in Descriptive Statistics (N = 30)*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Extremely satisfied	21.00	70.00
Very satisfied	7.00	23.30
Moderately satisfied	2.00	6.70
Slightly satisfied	0.00	0.00
Not satisfied	0.00	0.00
Total	30.00	100.00

Table 4: *Applied Program Alumni Respondents' Satisfaction with Training in Working in a Lab (N = 29)*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Extremely satisfied	6.00	20.70
Very satisfied	3.00	10.30
Moderately satisfied	6.00	20.70
Slightly satisfied	4.00	13.80
Not satisfied	9.00	31.00
Total	29.00	100.00

Demographics

Table 5: *Ethnicity of Applied Program Alumni Respondents* (*N* = 27)

Response	Frequency	Percent
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.00	0.00
Asian	1.00	3.70
Black or African American	1.00	3.70
Hispanic/Latino	0.00	0.00
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.00	0.00
White/Caucasian	21.0	77.78
Bi-Racial or Multi-Racial	1.00	3.70
Prefer Not to Answer	3.00	11.11
Total	27.00	100.00

Table 6: *Gender of Applied Program Alumni Respondents* (*N* = 26)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Male	12.00	46.15
Female	12.00	46.15
Prefer Not to Answer	2.00	7.69
Total	26.00	100.00

Appendices

Appendix A

Applied Psychology Program Alumni Survey

Page 1

Welcome to the Applied Psychology Program Alumni Survey!

Thank you for responding to this survey about the Applied Psychology Graduate program at Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC). Your participation will help current students better prepare themselves for their post-graduation endeavors and aid in the continuous improvement of the Applied Psychology program.

Your participation is voluntary, and your responses will be anonymous, so please give your honest opinions. No personally-identifiable information will be associated with your responses in any reports of the data. If you have any questions or comments about the survey, please feel free to contact Kristin Pankey by email at arcmail@siu.edu.

Kristin Pankey, M.S.
Applied Research Consultants (ARC) Director

Next

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If your current employer were to hire a <u>recent</u> graduate from the SIUC Applied Psychology program with a <u>Master's degree</u>, approximately what would the starting salary be?

Less than $40,000	$80,000-$89,999
$40,000-$49,999	$90,000-$99,999
$50,000-$59,999	$100,000 or More
$60,000-$69,999	Don't Know
$70,000-$79,999	Not Applicable

Next

The table below contains a list of components that may have been a part of your training in the Applied Psychology program at SIUC. *For components that you feel were not part of your training, please select the "Not Applicable" option.*

Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the quality of each training component.

	Not at all Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied	Not Applicable
Descriptive Statistics	○	○	○	○	○	○
Inferential Statistics	○	○	○	○	○	○
Statistical Modeling	○	○	○	○	○	○
Research Design and Methodology	○	○	○	○	○	○
Academic Writing	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Not at all Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied	Not Applicable
Presenting	○	○	○	○	○	○
Publishing research	○	○	○	○	○	○
Teaching Experience	○	○	○	○	○	○
Working in a Lab(s)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Broad and General Understanding of the Field of Applied Psychology	○	○	○	○	○	○

Next

Thank you for participating in the SIUC Applied Psychology Alumni Survey! The results from this survey will be compiled and analyzed in order to assist current Applied Psychology students in preparing for their post-graduation endeavors and to aid in the improvement of the Applied Psychology program.

If you would like any further information about this survey or the results, please contact Applied Research Consultants at arcmail@siu.edu.

At this point, you can use the "Next" button below to submit your responses.

Next