

**DEVELOPING INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE AND CURRENT STUDENTS  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE  
INDUSTRIAL/ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM**

**by**

**Matthew K. Newland, B.A.**

**PROJECT REPORT**

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**We the undersigned, certify that we have read this project and approve it as adequate in scope and quality for the Master's Degree in Behavioral Sciences.**

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## **DEDICATION PAGE**

**Special thanks to my wife Jennifer who kept me moving forward with this project even when it was difficult to continue. To Dr. Pereira for the project idea and for sticking with both me and the project through (a few) protracted delays.**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**Special thanks to Dr. Gloria Pereira and Dr. Camille Peres for assisting me with this project. Without their limitless patience I would not have come this far.**

**ABSTRACT****DEVELOPING INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE AND CURRENT STUDENTS  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE  
INDUSTRIAL/ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM**

**Matthew K. Newland, M.A.  
The University of Houston-Clear Lake, 2008**

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**The Industrial/Organizational Psychology program at the University of Houston-Clear Lake is in the process of updating its website for current and prospective students. This project examined the informational needs of students to better understand what the program should make available. Results of a current student survey revealed that the UHCL I/O psychology graduate student values specific, pragmatic, and goal-centered content information. Students want to know what is necessary to achieve graduation (and subsequent employment) goals, and are less concerned with information that does not expressly aid in that objective. With this data, it is recommended that the UHCL I/O program investigate updating their website to reflect the results of the survey to better serve the community of students.**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>Chapter</b>	
<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b>	
<b>Context of the Problem</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Website Content for Student Needs</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Challenges of the Website: Usability and Utility</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Purpose of This Project</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>II. METHODOLOGY</b>	
<b>Participants</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Instrument</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Design and Procedure</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>III. RESULTS</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>IV. DISCUSSION</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>38</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>		<b>Page</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Preferences of Prospective Graduate Students vs. Prospective Undergraduate Students .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Mean Category Rankings.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Mean Rankings of Interest of Website Content Topics .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Mean Category Rankings and Standard Deviations by Student Level .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Suggestions for Website Content Topics.....</b>	<b>30</b>

**LIST OF FIGURES**

<b>Figure</b>		<b>Page</b>
1	<b>Graphical Representation of Mean Category Rankings.....</b>	<b>17</b>
2	<b>Comparison of Mean Category Ratings by Student Level. ....</b>	<b>25</b>
3	<b>Comparison of Mean Category Ratings by Year in Graduate Program. ....</b>	<b>26</b>



**Developing Information for Prospective and Current Students of the  
University of Houston-Clear Lake Industrial/Organizational Psychology Program**

Universities and the programs within them want to provide informational content to prospective and current students. One only has to look at the effort put into brochures, campus open house programs, and other marketing strategies to know this is important (Kurz & Scannell, 2006). How do universities know what content students are looking for when considering applying to an institution? Do they consider how students search for information, and whether any fundamental changes may have occurred which alter the effectiveness of certain strategies? The Industrial/Organizational Psychology (I/O) Sub-Plan at the University of Houston-Clear Lake (UHCL) is asking those questions in an attempt to better serve both prospective and current students seeking program information.

Growth of the World Wide Web and increased use of the internet as a communication and information gathering tool has changed typical information gathering behavior (Miller, 2006). Students are increasingly using the internet to obtain information on available university programs and now more students prefer to acquire this information from websites rather than from printed materials (Art & Science Group, 2004; Noel-Levitz, Tower, & GradSchools.com, 2006). High achieving students look for specific programs of interest, proximity to home, and high quality programs when selecting a university (LipmanHearne, 2006). Students in general have expressed interest in program details, reading faculty profiles (Noel-Levitz, Tower, & GradSchools.com, 2006), and visiting the campus (Art & Science Group, 2004), considering them important when choosing a university. O'Reilly (2001) found that medical schools that

implemented virtual tours as a way to help students visit the campus received positive feedback for the new online feature. These trends are making the university website a key representative of academic institutions and their programs.

However, sometimes students are unable to find the information they are looking for on a website (even when the information is there) or report finding conflicting information on separate website pages (Mechitov, Moshkovich, Underwood, & Taylor, 2001). This can negatively impact their impressions of the character of a school and its programs. It is analogous to a student walking into a campus information office that has missing brochures, misfiled papers, and no one available at the front desk to help direct the student in his or her search for information about a specific type of program. The student might either wander around campus hoping to find the information, or, if an alternative institution exists, visit a different university in hopes of finding the desired information. If an alternative exists, would the student prefer the institution with an organized and complete information system? In one study, most of the students indicated that “an unprofessional web page indicated a lower quality institution” (Poock & Lefond, 2001, p. 19). Furthermore, once students join a program, they continue to need an easily accessible and organized resource for basic program-related advising questions.

Given that students search for this information online and use the information they find to make their educational choices, the universities and their programs may benefit from providing the informational content students are looking for in an effort to compete with other institutions. These issues place a responsibility on university programs to develop and maintain useful content. Ideally, content information would be designed into a comprehensive resource that quickly and efficiently conveys the most

**pertinent information for both prospective and current program students. To this end, this project intended to examine informational content for the Industrial/Organizational Psychology Sub-Plan.**

***Website Content for Student Needs***

**Published research on program website content indicates that graduate students strongly value practical information in a straightforward format. The 2006 E-Expectations Graduate Edition report provides survey results from over 1,000 prospective graduate students about their behavior and preferences in the graduate school application process (Noel-Levitz, Tower, & GradSchools.com, 2006). The findings demonstrate that prospective students are looking for “details about the programs of study, opportunities for aid, value of a degree from that institution, and how to communicate with potential faculty mentors” (Noel-Levitz, Tower, & GradSchools.com, 2006, p. 1).**

**The study reveals qualitative differences between graduate and undergraduate prospective students (Noel-Levitz, Tower, & GradSchools.com, 2006; Noel-Levitz, Tower, & The National Research Center for College and University Admissions, 2006). Prospective graduate students exhibited a stronger preference for viewing a website (over mailed brochures) to learn about a program compared to prospective undergraduate students. They also displayed a stronger desire to access online information about faculty, current students, and alumni. Finally, prospective graduate students (82%) feel more strongly than prospective undergraduate students (63%) in their desire to view a virtual tour on a website. Table 1 illustrates the numerical differences in item response for the E-Expectations surveys.**

**Table 1****Preferences of Prospective Graduate Students vs. Prospective Undergraduate Students**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Prospective Graduate Students</b>	<b>Prospective Undergraduate Students</b>
I would rather look at a Web site about a (graduate/undergraduate) program than read brochures sent in the mail.	62%	56%
I would like to read profiles of faculty online.	90%	64%
I would like to read profiles of current (graduate/undergraduate) students online.	71%	63%
I would like to read profiles of alumni online.	70%	56%
I would like to view a virtual tour online.	82%	63%

*References.* Noel-Levitz, Tower, & GradSchools.com, 2006; Noel-Levitz, Tower, & The National Research Center for College and University Admissions, 2006.

Other items students reported as helpful include availability of course descriptions and course schedules and an interest in student organizations or clubs (Mechitov et al., 2001).

Other sources of data besides text-based information have been examined by researchers. Pictures and graphics are appreciated by prospective students when they provide information that text cannot, such as pictures of the campus, pictures of students, relevant floor plans, etc., that help the student learn about and determine if the program is a good “fit” for them (Poock & Lefond, 2001). Students reported enjoying “high-quality images and photos of the school” (Mechitov et al., 2001, p. 658). Gratuitous pictures, graphics, and flashy designs were not appreciated and viewed as unprofessional (Poock

**& Lefond, 2001). It should also be noted that although most students have access to high-speed connections (Nielsen/NetRatings, 2006), web pages should be designed with consideration for low-speed downloading (Mechitov et al., 2001), including reviewing pictures and graphics for large file size or offering text-only pages (Poock & Lefond, 2001).**

### ***Challenges of the Website: Usability and Utility***

**On first glance, it may seem a misuse of time to put effort into the correct functioning of the website, and therefore only concentrate on the content of the site. Research on updating content, however, has found that the two go hand in hand (Ezarik, 2005). “Usability and utility are equally important: It matters little that something is easy if it’s not what you want. It’s also no good if the system can hypothetically do what you want, but you can’t make it happen because the user interface is too difficult” (Nielsen, 2003, ¶ 3). Indeed, in a study of 13 university websites by 31 university students, Mechitov et al. (2001) found a significant correlation between easy access to information and the overall rating of a website, and a moderate correlation between completeness of information and the overall rating of a website. Poock and Lefond (2001) found that “the highest level of frustration occurred when students searched for information without being able to locate it” (p. 20).**

**Difficult site navigation is common among university websites (Ezarik, 2005). The National Research Center for College & University Admissions (NRCCUA) conducts an annual review of university website functionality which includes 28 different criteria. According to their 2005 annual report, none of the more than 3,000 program websites earned above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile (Ezarik, 2005). One category of criteria, for**

example, is “the prominence of an admission office link on the institution’s home page” (14 Steps to a Great Admissions Website, 2006, ¶ 2), which is viewed as a critical navigation link for prospective students. Generally, the more steps it takes for a prospective student to find the information needed, the more difficult a web page is to navigate. A second NRCCUA category of criteria is “admission page design and ease of navigation” (14 Steps to a Great Admissions Website, 2006, ¶ 2). Ease of navigation can be defined as “offering simple, consistent page design, clear navigation, and an information architecture that puts things where users expect to find them” (Nielsen, 2006, ¶ 1). In Pooch and Lefond’s study (2001), 95 percent of the students judged organization of a university website as important or very important, and the higher-rated sites were described as visually intuitive. According to Nielsen (2004), the most easily identifiable text link design is to color and underline the text, although underlining is not always necessary, especially if the link is in a clearly defined navigation menu. Students have shown a preference for sites with highly distinctive links in easily navigable formats over sites with links with no clear organization (these sites were sometimes described as exceedingly busy) (Pooch & Lefond, 2001). They also preferred pages with more links on each page and fewer levels of links, reducing the number of steps to arrive at the desired page (Pooch & Lefond, 2001). Websites that have not been updated to account for user preferences and usability may be performing a disservice to the organization. According to web usability expert Jakob Nielsen, “If a website is difficult to use, people leave” (Nielsen, 2003, ¶ 1). Sarah Coen, the director of admissions at Transylvania University (NRCCUA’s 2005 top site for functionality), agrees. “If [students] can’t find what they’re looking for in a matter of seconds, they move on” (Ezarik, 2005, p. 1).

Keeping regular updates to the I/O website may prove to be useful as we examine other concepts such as usability.

Usability is an important concept when updating the functionality of the I/O Sub-Plan website. Suggestions include having a consistent and easily navigable menu (Nielsen, 2003), using standard color-coded links of blue and purple (Nielsen, 2003), having a site map (14 Steps to a Great Admissions Website, 2006), including easily identifiable links (Mechitov et al., 2001), and having a site-specific search engine (Mechitov et al., 2001; Poock & Lefond, 2001). Updating the links within the entire site (such as those designed to direct users to the programs from the home page website) can also increase usability by helping the user arrive at the intended site (Nielsen, 1998).

#### *Purpose of This Project*

The purpose of this project was to discover the specific needs of the UHCL I/O Psychology graduate student in addition to reviewing published research on topics of interest to students from a variety of schools. University records report that the typical UHCL Human Sciences and Humanities (HSH) graduate student is about 35 years of age and enrolled in 1 or 2 courses per semester (Tiu, Johnson, Qumsieh, Salinas, & Smith, 2006). The current investigation analyzed what these UHCL students are interested in, both as enrolled students and as prospective students choosing a program, as their needs may differ from the typical student represented in previous studies. The results of the project will be used to update the I/O Psychology Program's website content so as to better serve the student community.

#### **Method**

##### *Participants*

**Fifty-one current I/O psychology students at UHCL were asked to participate in the content needs analysis survey. Forty-five participants were graduate students and six were undergraduate students. At the time of data collection, there were approximately 60 students enrolled in the UHCL I/O Psychology graduate Sub-Plan, so the graduate participants represented about 75% of the intended population. Demographic information including race, gender, age, and completed credit hours was collected (see Table 2).**



**Table 2****Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Participants</b>	51	100.0
<b>Student Status</b>		
Undergraduate	6	11.8
First Year Graduate	25	49.0
Second Year Graduate	20	39.2
<b>Credit Hours Completed (Graduate Level)</b>		
0 – 9	18	35.3
10 – 18	6	11.8
19 – 28	9	17.6
29 – 38	10	19.6
over 38	1	2.0
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	9	17.6
Female	41	80.4
<b>Age</b>		
under 18	0	0.0
18-30	35	68.6
31-40	11	21.6
41-50	4	7.8
over 51	0	0.0
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
American Indian/Eskimo/Aleut	0	0.0
Arab/Middle Eastern	1	2.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	9.8
Black/African-American	11	21.6
Hispanic/Latino	8	15.7
White/Caucasian	23	45.1
Multi-racial	1	2.0
Other	1	2.0

### ***Instrument***

**A 56-item survey was utilized to obtain feedback on content needs from the perspective of prospective and current graduate students (see Appendix A for the entire survey). To develop the survey, the researcher gathered information that may be of interest to students by collecting topics from a variety of sources, including current written and electronic documentation from the UHCL I/O Psychology Program and other psychology program websites. The researcher collected information on frequency of content presence, whether the content was in prevalent locations, and the level of detail for the content from the review of other websites.**

**The researcher organized the content topics by logical categories such as program information, admission information, and faculty information. Items included questions regarding courses a student must take, contact information and office hours of professors, and a description of what opportunities are available after graduation. In order to capture both the needs of current and prospective UHCL students, participants were asked to consider information they would have been interested in, both as a prospective student and as a currently enrolled student. Students rated how interested they were in each item using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from (1) "Not Interested" to (4) "Very Interested."**

### ***Design and Procedure***

**The study utilized a questionnaire and a convenience sample. The researcher visited three graduate level classes to recruit participants for the survey. Participants were asked to complete the survey at the beginning of each class and were asked to not participate if they had completed the survey in one of the other classes. Participants were given the informed consent document and were fully informed of their right to halt the**

study at any time without penalty or consequence (see Appendix A). They were instructed verbally and in writing not to include their name on any of the research materials. The instructor was not present to ensure anonymity for the students and no extra credit was offered for participation.

Upon agreement of the conditions of the study, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire that took approximately five to seven minutes. The questionnaire was utilized to determine the appropriate content needed for the I/O Psychology website. Upon completion, the researcher collected the survey and thanked the participants for their time. Additionally, the volunteers were given information on how to obtain the overall results of the study (from the researcher), should they so desire.

### Results

To examine the student responses to the questionnaire, the data were analyzed by computing mean scores for survey categories and individual survey items. Table 3 presents the results of the mean scores by survey categories ranked in order of importance. The scale ranged from 1 to 4 [(1) "Not Interested," (2) "A Little Interested," (3) "Somewhat Interested," (4) "Very Interested"]. The highest ranked category was Coursework Information ( $M = 3.63, SD = .43$ ) which consists of items on specific policies to complete the course requirements of the program. The next categories in sequential order are topics for students to complete degree requirements: Internship Information ( $M = 3.58, SD = .64$ ), Coursework Option Information ( $M = 3.53, SD = .88$ ) and Master's Project Information ( $M = 3.46, SD = .75$ ). Admission Information ( $M = 3.44, SD = .55$ ) ranked in the middle (fifth) of all the categories. The Master's Thesis Information category ( $M = 3.42, SD = .83$ ) and Research Opportunities category ( $M =$

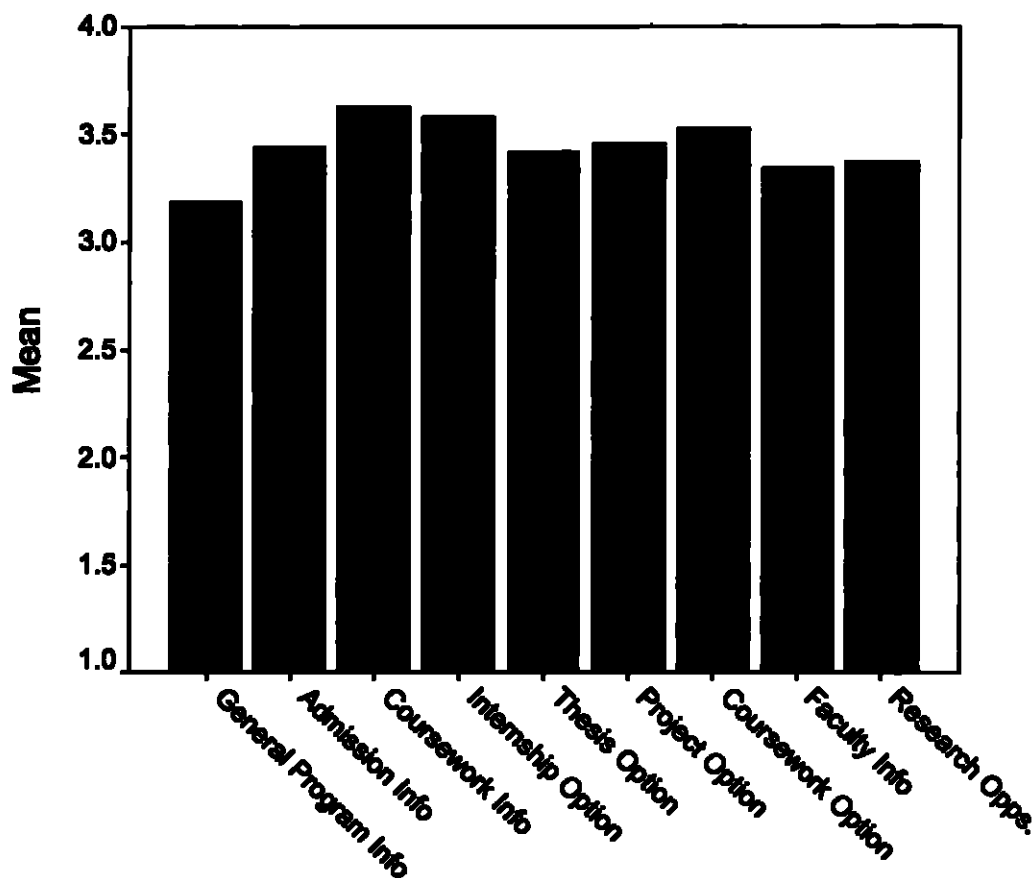
3.37,  $SD = .72$ ) were followed by the Faculty Information category ( $M = 3.34$ ,  $SD = .50$ ) and finally, the General Program Information category ( $M = 3.18$ ,  $SD = .51$ ) was rated lowest. Figure 1 illustrates the results in graphical form.

**Table 3**  
**Mean Category Ratings**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Coursework Information	3.63	0.43
Internship Information	3.58	0.64
Coursework Option Information	3.53	0.88
Master's Project Information	3.46	0.75
Admission Information	3.44	0.55
Master's Thesis Information	3.42	0.83
Research Opportunities	3.37	0.72
Faculty Information	3.34	0.50
General Program Information	3.18	0.51

*Note.* Questions were coded as 1 = Not Interested, 2 = A Little Interested, 3 = Somewhat Interested, 4 = Very Interested.

**Figure 1. Graphical Representation of Mean Category Ratings**



Detailed information for each item can be found in Appendix B. Overall, the most important item for students was information about I/O specific job openings ( $M = 3.90$ ,  $SD = .36$ ). The next five highest rated items were all from the Coursework Information category: Course Requirements to Complete Degree ( $M = 3.86$ ,  $SD = .40$ ); Comparison of Internship, Thesis, Project, and Coursework Option ( $M = 3.80$ ,  $SD = .40$ ); Course Prerequisites ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = .53$ ); List of Approved Electives ( $M = 3.69$ ,  $SD = .58$ ) and Total Credit Hours Required to Complete Degree ( $M = 3.69$ ,  $SD = .55$ ). Items that followed in importance ranged from specific, reference-type information (“Course Requirements to Complete Degree”) to general information (“History of the Industrial/Organizational Psychology Program”).

To analyze whether students at different levels of the program (undergraduate, all graduate students, first year graduate, and second year graduate) were interested in different types of information, comparisons of mean category ratings by student level were computed (see Table 4). Figure 2 illustrates the category mean differences between undergraduate and graduate level students. For undergraduate students, Coursework Information ( $M = 3.90, SD = .13$ ) ranked highest followed by Coursework Option Information ( $M = 3.83, SD = .41$ ), Master's Project Information ( $M = 3.79, SD = .29$ ), Research Opportunities ( $M = 3.71, SD = .46$ ), Internship Information ( $M = 3.67, SD = .52$ ), and Admission Information ( $M = 3.67, SD = .39$ ). The graduate level students rated Coursework Information highest ( $M = 3.59, SD = .44$ ), followed by Internship Information ( $M = 3.57, SD = .66$ ), Coursework Option Information ( $M = 3.49, SD = .92$ ), Master's Project Information ( $M = 3.42, SD = .79$ ), Admission Information ( $M = 3.41, SD = .56$ ), and Thesis Information ( $M = 3.40, SD = .86$ ).

**Table 4****Mean Category Ratings and Standard Deviations by Student Level**

	Under-graduate N=6	Graduate N=45	First Year Graduate N=25	Second Year Graduate N=20
<b>General Program Information:</b>				
Mean	3.32	3.16	3.09	3.26
SD	0.38	0.39	0.59	0.44
<b>Admission Information</b>				
Mean	3.67	3.41	3.32	3.52
SD	0.39	0.56	0.61	0.49
<b>Coursework Information</b>				
Mean	3.90	3.59	3.61	3.57
SD	0.13	0.44	0.49	0.39
<b>Internship Information</b>				
Mean	3.67	3.57	3.43	3.74
SD	0.52	0.66	0.82	0.34
<b>Thesis Information</b>				
Mean	3.54	3.40	3.40	3.40
SD	0.70	0.86	0.83	0.91
<b>Project Information</b>				
Mean	3.79	3.42	3.42	3.41
SD	0.29	0.79	0.72	0.87
<b>Coursework Option Information</b>				
Mean	3.83	3.49	3.44	3.55
SD	0.41	0.92	1.09	0.67
<b>Faculty Information</b>				
Mean	3.44	3.33	3.41	3.23
SD	0.55	0.50	0.43	0.57
<b>Research Opportunities</b>				
Mean	3.71	3.32	3.32	3.34
SD	0.46	0.74	0.70	0.81

Figure 2. Comparison of Mean Category Ratings by Student Level

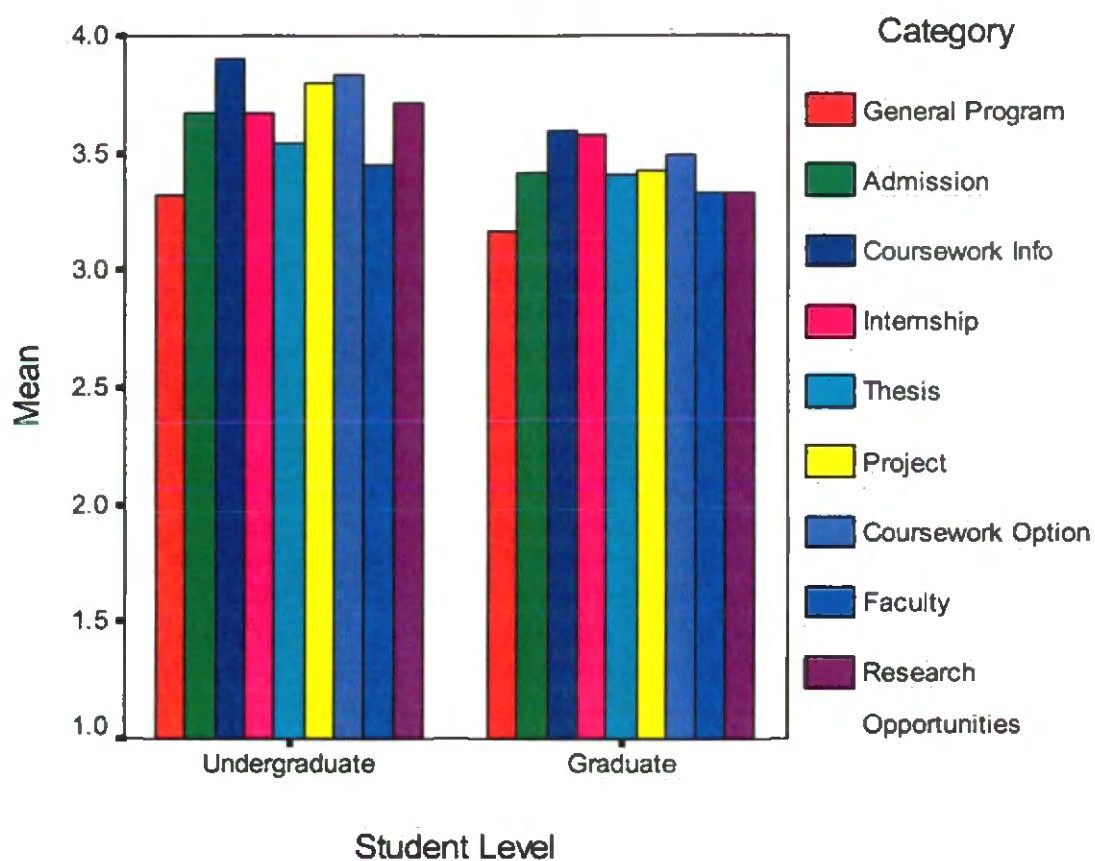
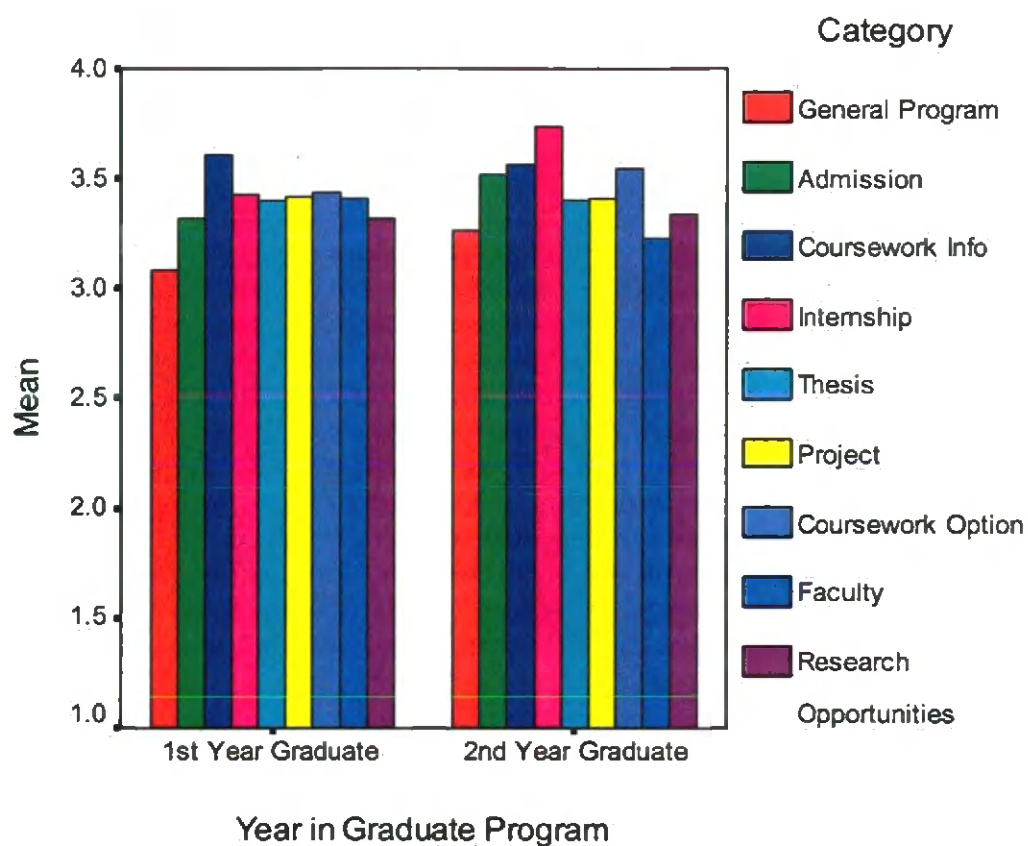


Figure 3 illustrates the category mean differences between first and second year graduate level students. The highest ranked category for first year graduate students is Coursework Information ( $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = .49$ ), followed by Coursework Option Information ( $M = 3.44$ ,  $SD = .72$ ), Internship Information ( $M = 3.43$ ,  $SD = .82$ ), Master's Project Information ( $M = 3.42$ ,  $SD = .72$ ), and Faculty information ( $M = 3.41$ ,  $SD = .43$ ). For the second year graduate students ( $n = 20$ ), the highest mean score was Internship Information ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = .34$ ), followed by Coursework Option Information ( $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD = .67$ ), Coursework Information ( $M = 3.57$ ,  $SD = .39$ ), Admission Information ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = .49$ ), and Master's Project Information ( $M = 3.41$ ,  $SD = .87$ ).



Figure 3. Comparison of Mean Category Ratings by Year in Graduate Program



### Discussion

The mean score rating results (both by category and by item) indicate that the UHCL I/O Psychology graduate student may want to know what is necessary to achieve graduation (and subsequent employment) goals, and may be less concerned with information that does not expressly aid in that objective. For example, the most important item for students was Information about I/O Specific Job Openings. The second highest item was Course Requirements to Complete Degree. The lowest item scores were Testimonials from Alumni, History of the I/O Program, and Introduction and Welcome Message from Faculty.

Of all the categories, it is interesting to note that Admission Information ranked in the middle (fifth). Although students received instructions to answer the questionnaire both “as a prospective student ... and as a current student” (see Appendix A), the mean for this item is lower than one would expect a prospective student to answer. It is conceivable that the ratings would change if the students had been asked to separately rate from the prospective and current student’s perspective. Nevertheless, the mean score for this category suggest that the students feel that it is important to include Admission Information on the website.

Interestingly, the means for undergraduates were higher than graduates in all categories. The higher means for undergraduates could indicate that they have a desire to access more information than their graduate counterparts who may have already learned this information due to their greater academic experience. However, it is difficult to make generalizations due to the limited sample size of the undergraduate participants.

In contrast with similar research that has analyzed the content interests of potential graduate students, UHCL I/O Psychology students did not express a high level of interest in financial aid information (Noel-Levitz, Tower, & GradSchools.com, 2006). Given the higher age and full-time employment status of the UHCL HSH graduate student, it may be that the students that participated in this survey are already fully versed in financial aid information or could have retained that knowledge from their undergraduate careers.

First year graduate students in the program felt that the Coursework Area, Coursework Option and Internship were the most important to them. For the first year graduate students, coursework area being the highest rated is not surprising. Students in

their first year logically are curious about which course they can or must take and in what order. Contrast that with the second year graduate student who believes that the Internship is the highest priority followed by Coursework Option and Coursework Area. The main difference between the different student levels is that the Internship Option is the most important by a wide margin, perhaps suggesting that students ready to graduate within the year are looking for experiences that will directly relate to finding employment. If this supposition is correct, then these findings would not be unexpected; since the Coursework Option and Project topics are in the top five along with Internship information. This lends further credence that students within a year of graduation want information tailored to them that will directly impact their completion of the program and possible employment opportunities. Focusing on students needs by examining their expected completion date may enhance the website design. This can be accomplished by displaying a suggested course track and adding the appropriate content that would be tailored by first year or second year student levels. Organization of the website by student needs in the program should help students at all levels focus on the topics that are most important to them.

### *Recommendations*

The overall high ratings to the questionnaire indicates that students were very interested in accessing a great deal of information on the program's website. Given the students' apparent interest and the large amount of information to be presented on the site, the development of the website would most likely benefit from a thoughtful organizational structure. For instance, an examination of the results would provide a logical order for the I/O webpage links that can be classified as "must have" such as I/O

**specific job openings and “nice to have” such as coursework options (see Table 5). This would assist the website content organization so that the most important information or links are placed in rank order from the top of the page down in descending order for ease of use. It is important to note that the content the links display to the user must accurately convey the program’s information to the students. Ordering the program’s topic links by importance ratings and ensuring accurate and thoughtful information within those links should help the website convey the best information possible.**

**Table 5****Suggestions for Website Content Topics**

<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Question No.</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Must Have	5	General Program Information	Information regarding I/O specific job openings	3.90
Must Have	20	Coursework Information	Course requirements to complete degree	3.86
Must Have	28	Coursework Information	Comparison of internship, thesis, project, and coursework option	3.80
Must Have	21	Coursework Information	Course pre-requisites (pre-requisites needed for each course)	3.74
Must Have	29	Coursework Information	List of approved electives	3.69
Must Have	26	Coursework Information	Total credit hours required to complete degree	3.69
Must Have	35	Internship Information	List of possible internship sites	3.69
Must Have	34	Internship Information	Link to Internship website	3.67
Must Have	32	Internship Information	How to begin an internship	3.63
Must Have	33	Internship Information	Internship requirements	3.63
Must Have	31	Internship Information	Information on Internship application process	3.61
Must Have	49	Faculty Information	Professors' email address	3.57
Must Have	52	Faculty Information	Link to professors' email	3.55

### **Suggestions for Website Content Topics**

<b>Must Have</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>Coursework Option Information</b>	<b>Coursework option requirements</b>	<b>3.55</b>
<b>Must Have</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>Coursework Information</b>	<b>Sample course schedule (order of classes)</b>	<b>3.53</b>
<b>Must Have</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>Faculty Information</b>	<b>Professors' office location</b>	<b>3.53</b>
<b>Must Have</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>Coursework Option Information</b>	<b>Explanation of the coursework option</b>	<b>3.53</b>
<b>Must Have</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Coursework Information</b>	<b>Minimum acceptable GPA during program</b>	<b>3.53</b>
<b>Must Have</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>Coursework Information</b>	<b>Minimum acceptable course grade</b>	<b>3.51</b>
<b>Must Have</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>Coursework Option Information</b>	<b>How to start the coursework option</b>	<b>3.51</b>
<b>Must Have</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Admission Information</b>	<b>Graduate admission requirements to the I/O Psychology program</b>	<b>3.51</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>Faculty Information</b>	<b>Professors' office phone number</b>	<b>3.49</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>Master's Project Information</b>	<b>How to start a Master's project</b>	<b>3.49</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Admission Information</b>	<b>Link to UHCL graduate admission requirements</b>	<b>3.49</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Admission Information</b>	<b>Degree pre-requisites (undergraduate course requirements for entry into the I/O Psychology program)</b>	<b>3.49</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>Master's Project Information</b>	<b>Master's project requirements</b>	<b>3.49</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>Coursework Information</b>	<b>Course syllabus information including relevant information of all required courses</b>	<b>3.49</b>

### **Suggestions for Website Content Topics**

<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>Admission Information</b>	<b>Information on scholarships</b>	<b>3.47</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>General Program Information</b>	<b>Link to professional websites (APA, SIOP, HAIOP, etc.)</b>	<b>3.47</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>Master's Thesis Information</b>	<b>Master's thesis requirements</b>	<b>3.47</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>General Program Information</b>	<b>Information about applying to Ph.D. programs after completion of Master's degree</b>	<b>3.45</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>Coursework Information</b>	<b>Course description from catalog</b>	<b>3.45</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>Master's Project Information</b>	<b>Explanation of what a Master's project is</b>	<b>3.45</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>General Program Information</b>	<b>Information on recent graduates and their positions</b>	<b>3.45</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>Master's Thesis Information</b>	<b>Explanation of what a Master's thesis is</b>	<b>3.43</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Admission Information</b>	<b>Link to UHCL graduate application</b>	<b>3.41</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>Admission Information</b>	<b>Link to Human Sciences &amp; Humanities advising</b>	<b>3.41</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>Research Opportunities</b>	<b>Timeline for completion of research project</b>	<b>3.41</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>Master's Project Information</b>	<b>Sample project titles</b>	<b>3.41</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>Research Opportunities</b>	<b>Professors offering research opportunities</b>	<b>3.40</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>General Program Information</b>	<b>A program newsletter to announce changes or news about the program</b>	<b>3.39</b>

### **Suggestions for Website Content Topics**

<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>Master's Thesis Information</b>	<b>How to begin a Master's thesis</b>	<b>3.39</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>Master's Thesis Information</b>	<b>Sample thesis titles</b>	<b>3.37</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>Research Opportunities</b>	<b>What topics are available</b>	<b>3.35</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>Research Opportunities</b>	<b>How to sign up for research opportunities</b>	<b>3.35</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Admission Information</b>	<b>Link to financial aid Info</b>	<b>3.30</b>
<b>Good to Have</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Internship Information</b>	<b>Explanation of what an internship is</b>	<b>3.27</b>
<b>Nice to Have</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>General Program Information</b>	<b>Requirements for honors organization (e.g., I/O Psi, Psi Chi) induction</b>	<b>3.22</b>
<b>Nice to Have</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>General Program Information</b>	<b>First semester advice from advanced students in the program</b>	<b>3.18</b>
<b>Nice to Have</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>General Program Information</b>	<b>Contact information of selected students who are knowledgeable about the program</b>	<b>3.06</b>
<b>Nice to Have</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>Faculty Information</b>	<b>Professors' vitae and biographical information</b>	<b>2.98</b>
<b>Nice to Have</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>Faculty Information</b>	<b>Professors' research interests</b>	<b>2.94</b>
<b>Nice to Have</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>General Program Information</b>	<b>Information on student organizations (e.g., Psychology Club, The Bridge)</b>	<b>2.90</b>
<b>Nice to Have</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>General Program Information</b>	<b>Introduction and welcome message from faculty</b>	<b>2.82</b>
<b>Nice to Have</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>General Program Information</b>	<b>History of the Industrial/Organizational Psychology program</b>	<b>2.69</b>



**Suggestions for Website Content Topics**

<b>Nice to Have</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>General Program Information</b>	<b>Testimonials from alumni</b>	<b>2.67</b>
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### ***Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research***

There are several possible limitations of this study. First, the procedure of asking current students to answer the questions as if they were prospective students may have diminished the validity of the survey. Actual prospective students may behave differently when researching I/O psychology graduate programs than the self-report method utilized in the present study. For instance, the students that participated may not fully remember or recall precisely what was most important to them at the time. Similarly, the passage of time and familiarity of the program hinders the validity of the study. Additional research could be conducted to survey actual prospective students rather than asking current students. A second limitation is the small sample size. Although approximately 75% of the current students were sampled, the small number of participants can affect the ability to make meaningful statistical conclusions. Generalizing these results to other institutions of higher learning may be problematic due to the small sample size and the specific of the Master's program at UHCL. A larger sample size including results from similar institutions accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools would increase the ability to generalize results and provide the University of Houston-Clear Lake with increased data and greater external validity to guide any website changes.

Finally, it is suggested that the study be conducted again with a more in-depth investigation into the needs of prospective students perhaps asking more precise questions. Current technology allows for real time monitoring and reporting of websites. This can have a great impact for the I/O program at UHCL if a "webmaster" can utilize the data to add, modify, or delete data or links as appropriate to keep abreast of the changing nature of information.

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## Appendix A

### **Title: Information Needs Assessment for the Industrial/Organizational Psychology Program**

**Student Investigator: Matthew Newland**  
**Faculty Sponsors: Dr. Pereira and Dr. Peres**

You are being asked to participate in a 56-item survey designed to understand which content students need to make an informed decision to enroll in the Industrial/Organizational Psychology program and which content current students find useful as they are completing the degree. It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete this survey.

There are no physical or mental risks associated with participation in this project. You will receive no direct benefit from your participation in this study, but your participation will help the investigators determine what content areas students need regarding the Industrial/Organizational Psychology program. Your participation in the survey is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate, or you may decide to cease participation once you have begun. Your refusal or withdrawal from participation will involve no penalties or loss of benefits. We ask that you answer all the questions but you may also choose NOT to answer any particular question. You are being asked to read this consent form carefully. You can keep this copy whether or not you decide to complete this survey. (Please detach this form from the survey after reading.)

Your participation is anonymous; please do NOT record your name on the attached survey. The data collected will be used for research purposes. Your responses will be reported in an aggregated form, which will not identify your individual responses. Every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of your survey response. The confidentiality of the data will be maintained within allowable legal limits.

The investigator has offered to answer all your questions. If you have additional questions during the course of this study about the research or any related problem, you may contact the researcher, Mr. Matthew Newland (713) 927-0840 or the Faculty Sponsor, Dr. Pereira (281) 283-3332.

You have agreed to waive your signature of this informed consent form so that your response is completely anonymous. Completing the attached survey indicates your voluntary participation in this research project. Such participation does not release the investigator(s), institution(s), sponsor(s) or granting agency(ies) from their professional and ethical responsibility to you.

**THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON-CLEAR LAKE (UHCL) COMMITTEE FOR PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS HAS REVIEWED AND APPROVED THIS PROJECT. ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT MAY BE ADDRESSED TO THE UNCL COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS (281-283-3015). ALL RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT ARE CARRIED OUT BY INVESTIGATORS AT UHCL ARE GOVERNED BY REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. (FEDERALWIDE ASSURANCE #FWA00004068)**

## **Instructions**

**Thank you for volunteering to participate. The survey you are about to undertake will relate to the Industrial/Organizational program here at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. Please answer all questions while thinking about your major and degree plan. Your time and honesty will benefit the degree program for which you have enrolled. All questions will be tallied by May and results can be obtained by emailing me at [m.newland@earthlink.net](mailto:m.newland@earthlink.net).**

**Thank you,**

**Matthew Newland**

### Information Needs Analysis of the Industrial/Organizational Psychology Program

The following survey asks you to think about the different topics and content areas that might be included for the I/O Psychology sub-plan at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. For each question, please answer how interested you are in seeing the topic/content area available in the I/O Psychology program. When answering these questions, please think about your experiences both as a prospective student (considering starting the program) and as a current student.

	Not Interested	A Little Interested	Somewhat Interested	Very Interested
<b>General Program Information</b>				
1. Introduction and welcome message from faculty				
2. Testimonials from alumni				
3. A program newsletter to announce changes or news about the program				
4. History of the Industrial/Organizational Psychology program				
5. Information regarding I/O specific job openings				
6. Information on recent graduates and their positions				
7. Contact information of selected students who are knowledgeable about the program				
8. First semester advice from advanced students in the program				
9. Information about applying to Ph.D. programs after completion of Master's degree				
10. Requirements for honors organization (e.g., I/O Psi, Psi Chi) induction				
11. Information on student organizations (e.g., Psychology Club, The Bridge)				
12. Link to professional websites (APA, SIOP, HAIOP, etc.)				
<b>Admission Information</b>				
13. Link to UHCL graduate admission requirements				
14. Graduate admission requirements to the I/O Psychology program				

	<b>Not Interested</b>	<b>A Little Interested</b>	<b>Somewhat Interested</b>	<b>Very Interested</b>
15. Degree pre-requisites (undergraduate course requirements for entry into the I/O Psychology program)				
16. Link to UHCL graduate application				
17. Link to financial aid info				
18. Information on scholarships				
19. Link to Human Sciences & Humanities advising				
<b>Coursework Area</b>				
20. Course requirements to complete degree				
21. Course pre-requisites (pre-requisites needed for each course)				
22. Sample course schedule (order of classes)				
23. Course description from catalog				
24. Minimum acceptable course grade				
25. Minimum acceptable GPA during program				
26. Total credit hours required to complete degree				
27. Course syllabus information including relevant information of all required courses				
28. Comparison of Internship, thesis, project, and coursework option				
29. List of approved electives				
<b>Internship Information</b>				
30. Explanation of what an internship is				
31. Information on Internship application process				
32. How to begin an internship				
33. Internship requirements				
34. Link to Internship website				
35. List of possible Internship sites				



	<b>Not Interested</b>	<b>A Little Interested</b>	<b>Somewhat Interested</b>	<b>Very Interested</b>
<b>Master's Thesis Information</b>				
36. Explanation of what a Master's thesis is				
37. How to begin a Master's thesis				
38. Master's thesis requirements				
39. Sample thesis titles				
<b>Master's Project Information</b>				
40. Explanation of what a Master's project is				
41. How to start a Master's project				
42. Master's project requirements				
43. Sample project titles				
<b>Coursework Option Information</b>				
44. Explanation of the coursework option				
45. How to start the coursework option				
46. Coursework option requirements				
<b>Faculty Information</b>				
47. Professors' vitae and biographical information				
48. Professors' research interests				
49. Professors' email address				
50. Professors' office phone number				
51. Professors' office location				
52. Link to professors' email				
<b>Research Opportunities</b>				
53. How to sign up for research opportunities				
54. Professors offering research opportunities				
55. What topics are available				
56. Timeline for completion of research project				

Is there anything else that you would like to see in the I/O Psychology website that was not included in this survey?

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**1. What is your race?**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Eskimo/Aleut | <input type="checkbox"/> Black/African-American | <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-racial    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arab/Middle Eastern          | <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino        | <input type="checkbox"/> White/Caucasian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Pacific Islander       |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                 |   |  |

**2. Gender:  Female  Male**

**3. What is your age?**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 years old | <input type="checkbox"/> 41-50 years old   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18-30 years old    | <input type="checkbox"/> 51-60 years old   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 31-40 years old    | <input type="checkbox"/> over 61 years old |

**4. Current credit hours completed (not counting current enrollments)**

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for participating!

**Appendix B****Mean Ratings of Interest of Website Content Topics**

<b>Question No.</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
5	General Program Information	Information regarding I/O specific job openings	3.90	0.36
20	Coursework Information	Course requirements to complete degree	3.86	0.40
28	Coursework Information	Comparison of internship, thesis, project, and coursework option	3.80	0.40
21	Coursework Information	Course pre-requisites (pre-requisites needed for each course)	3.74	0.53
29	Coursework Information	List of approved electives	3.69	0.58
26	Coursework Information	Total credit hours required to complete degree	3.69	0.55
35	Internship Information	List of possible internship sites	3.69	0.65
34	Internship Information	Link to Internship website	3.67	0.65
32	Internship Information	How to begin an internship	3.63	0.66
33	Internship Information	Internship requirements	3.63	0.69
31	Internship Information	Information on Internship application process	3.61	0.67
49	Faculty Information	Professors' email address	3.57	0.54
52	Faculty Information	Link to professors' email	3.55	0.64

**Appendix B****Mean Ratings of Interest of Website Content Topics (continued)**

46	Coursework Option Information	Coursework option requirements	3.55	0.86
22	Coursework Information	Sample course schedule (order of classes)	3.53	0.78
51	Faculty Information	Professors' office location	3.53	0.58
44	Coursework Option Information	Explanation of the coursework option	3.53	0.92
25	Coursework Information	Minimum acceptable GPA during program	3.53	0.76
24	Coursework Information	Minimum acceptable course grade	3.51	0.76
45	Coursework Option Information	How to start the coursework option	3.51	0.88
14	Admission Information	Graduate admission requirements to the I/O Psychology program	3.51	0.76
50	Faculty Information	Professors' office phone number	3.49	0.58
41	Master's Project Information	How to start a Master's project	3.49	0.76
13	Admission Information	Link to UHCL graduate admission requirements	3.49	0.78
15	Admission Information	Degree pre-requisites (undergraduate course requirements for entry into the I/O Psychology program)	3.49	0.81
42	Master's Project Information	Master's project requirements	3.49	0.81
27	Coursework Information	Course syllabus information including relevant information of all required courses	3.49	0.78

**Appendix B****Mean Ratings of Interest of Website Content Topics (continued)**

18	Admission Information	Information on scholarships	3.47	0.76
12	General Program Information	Link to professional websites (APA, SIOP, HAIOP, etc.)	3.47	0.70
38	Master's Thesis Information	Master's thesis requirements	3.47	0.83
9	General Program Information	Information about applying to Ph.D. programs after completion of Master's degree	3.45	0.70
23	Coursework Information	Course description from catalog	3.45	0.73
40	Master's Project Information	Explanation of what a Master's project is	3.45	0.81
6	General Program Information	Information on recent graduates and their positions	3.45	0.81
36	Master's Thesis Information	Explanation of what a Master's thesis is	3.43	0.90
16	Admission Information	Link to UHCL graduate application	3.41	0.80
19	Admission Information	Link to Human Sciences & Humanities advising	3.41	0.67
56	Research Opportunities	Timeline for completion of research project	3.41	0.70
43	Master's Project Information	Sample project titles	3.41	0.83
54	Research Opportunities	Professors offering research opportunities	3.40	0.81
3	General Program Information	A program newsletter to announce changes or news about the program	3.39	0.78

**Appendix B****Mean Ratings of Interest of Website Content Topics (continued)**

37	Master's Thesis Information	How to begin a Master's thesis	3.39	0.87
39	Master's Thesis Information	Sample thesis titles	3.37	0.92
55	Research Opportunities	What topics are available	3.35	0.80
53	Research Opportunities	How to sign up for research opportunities	3.35	0.80
17	Admission Information	Link to financial aid info	3.30	0.84
30	Internship Information	Explanation of what an internship is	3.27	0.90
10	General Program Information	Requirements for honors organization (e.g., I/O Psi, Psi Chi) induction	3.22	0.82
8	General Program Information	First semester advice from advanced students in the program	3.18	0.84
7	General Program Information	Contact information of selected students who are knowledgeable about the program	3.06	0.97
47	Faculty Information	Professors' vitae and biographical information	2.98	0.91
48	Faculty Information	Professors' research interests	2.94	0.88
11	General Program Information	Information on student organizations (e.g., Psychology Club, The Bridge)	2.90	0.95
1	General Program Information	Introduction and welcome message from faculty	2.82	0.99

**Appendix B****Mean Ratings of Interest of Website Content Topics (continued)**

4	General Program Information	History of the Industrial/Organizational Psychology program	2.69	1.10
2	General Program Information	Testimonials from alumni	2.67	1.11

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*Note.* Questions were coded as 1 = Not Interested, 2 = A Little Interested, 3 = Somewhat Interested, 4 = Very Interested.