The Smothers Brothers have made millions of dollars with skits that revolve around one line: “Mom always liked you best.” Despite mom’s protestations to the contrary, everyone roars with laughter because it has the ring of truth. As the oldest child, we seldom had the opportunity to sit on mom’s knee; that privilege was usually reserved for the youngest. As the youngest child, we felt confined to mom’s knee while the oldest sibling was viewed by us as doing all the fun things. As the middle child, we wondered how the other two could justify their complaints. Not only didn’t we have many opportunities to sit on mom’s knee, we didn’t even have the opportunity to bask in the glow reserved for the first born. Life seldom appears fair.

The perceived favoritism SIOP/Division 14 shows towards scientists versus practitioners has existed since its inception. I heard about this bias repeatedly in the 1960s from my professors. Some academics continue to think that SIOP is becoming too practitioner oriented; we are straying from science and losing our rigor. Today some practitioners continue to feel that SIOP is becoming too academic; we are so concerned with the rigor of science that we are losing our relevance to society. Unlike the audiences for the Smothers Brothers, no one in SIOP is laughing at the perceived gap between our scientists and practitioners because this perceived bias has the ring of truth to it.

As a SIOP member who has worked full time as a practitioner for the American Pulpwood Association and the Weyerhaeuser Company, and full time as an academic for the University of Washington and the University of Toronto, and as the recipient of the awards from SIOP for Distinguished Contributions to Psychology as a Profession (1998) and as a Science (2002), I have strong views on this gap. We scientists need to view practitioners with a great deal of respect. It is the practitioner who uses our theories as frameworks for making predictions and designing interventions. It is we practitioners who make what we scientists do valuable in the eyes of the public. It is we academics/scientists who provide the theory and empirical data that enables us practitioners to differentiate ourselves in the market place from, and make ourselves invaluable to, decision makers in the public and private sectors. Unlike many professional consulting service firms, it is only we who are scientist–practitioners. As for mother SIOP, it is time to stop carping at her for at least 10 reasons.
1. Practitioners have been well represented in the critical role of president of SIOP. In the history of SIOP/Division 14, there have been 62 presidents of which approximately 29–32 were primarily practitioners.1 In the recent past, Drs. Tippins, Macey, Hough, and McHenry, all of whom are practitioners, served SIOP in this role.

2. SIOP has a chair of Practice and a chair of Science. Both chairs lead a SIOP task force that takes ownership and responsibility for practitioner and scientist goals, respectively. They will soon take a more active role in updating the SIOP Web site with information of interest to our membership.

3. Many practitioners have played a leadership role in the planning of the SIOP annual meeting in the spring (e.g., Stan Silverman, Bill Macey). Last year’s conference Program chair was Steven Rogelberg, an academic, this year it is John Scott, a practitioner. The practitioner content last year was 44% academic and 56% practitioner, not including posters. Forty-nine percent (49%) of all sessions were relevant to both academics and practitioners.

All or almost all of our workshops the day prior to our annual meeting are conducted primarily for practitioners. Many of the presenters are academics.

4. Our fall conference, established by Past President Leaetta Hough, a practitioner, focuses primarily on, and is attended largely by, practitioners. The presenters include both academics and practitioners.

The workshops, annual spring conference, and annual fall conference enable us to stay current, continue our education, and connect with others.

5. Our new journal, Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice, is well balanced for and well received by our academics and our practitioners. The first editor was an academic, Paul Sackett. Replacing him as editor is a practitioner, Cindy McCauley.

6. Similar to the Annual Review of Psychology, SIOP has a forthcoming annual review of best practices. The title has yet to be finalized. This series, to be published by APA, will be written in a style readily understood by the public. Our goal is for SIOP to become the source for evidence-based management. Evidence-based management will be the president’s theme track, Thursday, in New Orleans.

7. The current chair of Practice is Deb Cohen, the chief knowledge officer of SHRM. She and Past President Nancy Tippins are well on their way to making SIOP the source of evidence-based management for SHRM’s 250,000 plus members. The president of SHRM will address us in New Orleans, Thursday, on the importance of transferring science to practice.

8. Recognizing that symbols are important, the closing speaker at our inaugural 3-day spring conference was Tony Rucci, a practitioner and currently an executive in residence at Ohio State University. This year our closing speaker will be Steve Kerr, formerly an academic at the University of South-

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1 I say approximately because how should we categorize Wally Borman, a stellar academic and a stellar practitioner?
ern California, subsequently the vice president of Leadership Development at General Electric, and currently the chief learning officer at Goldman Sachs.

9. SIOP has formed a visibility committee, chaired by Chris Rotolo (PepsiCo). They hired a professional marketing agency to aid them in developing SIOP’s brand and making that brand known to the public. Among their accomplishments this year were two published articles in SHRM’s magazine (Graying Workplace and Religion in the Workplace) an article in APA Monitor (Employee Retention), and two articles in IPMA-HR’s magazine (Executive On-Boarding and Capturing Boomer Knowledge).

10. We are currently increasing the visibility of I-O psychologists to the public and simultaneously creating a new revenue stream for SIOP through partnerships with business schools. Since the 1960s business schools make sizable profits year after year teaching managers through their executive education programs. Managers want behavioral science principles, explained to them in memorable ways, that will enable them to increase their value in the marketplace. The executive programs that are well attended are not those that focus on finance, accounting, or even marketing. The big draw is the subject matter we in SIOP research and practice. Hence, what organization is more capable of teaching the subject matter that they want than SIOP? SIOP is the one organization in North America with practitioners who have years of experience applying rigorously developed behavioral science principles to organizational settings. It is we who have the knowledge and experience managers want.

How can SIOP take advantage of this situation? Today’s business schools are well-oiled money machines. SIOP as yet cannot compete with them; SIOP can join them. Our 2007 fall conference was on innovation and creativity. To demonstrate empirically how easy it is for SIOP to generate a meaningful new revenue stream, I asked SIOP and the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto to partner in adapting this topic for managers. In October, 2008 we charged $1,000 per advanced registrant, $800 for alumni, and $1,200 for those who registered the day of the event. SIOP divided the profits evenly with the University of Toronto’s Rotman School of Management. SIOP earned more money than we did at our fall conference. We are now seeking additional partners to present this topic so that SIOP will be seen and be heard by the public in city after city. We will do likewise with this year’s fall conference topic, executive coaching. As scientist–practitioners, we can and we will position SIOP as the leading source of evidence informed practice for the public and private sectors. The high standards that we communicate and the concomitant good will that this will create will make SIOP their “go to organization of choice.”