



SOCIETY for
INDUSTRIAL and
ORGANIZATIONAL
PSYCHOLOGY[®]

SCIENCE FOR A SMARTER WORKPLACE

Dear SIOp Members and Friends of I-O Psychology,

Earlier this year, in light of the immediate and potential long-term adverse effects of government actions, the SIOp Executive Board (EB) committed to seeking ways SIOp can support, inform, educate, and advocate for our members and the organizations we serve. At that time, our President, Alexis Fink, issued a [letter](#) on behalf of the EB that clearly stated SIOp's perspective and highlighted our intended actions.

As the new President of SIOp, I want to reinforce Alexis's message about SIOp, provide an update on our actions, and offer a perspective on the road ahead. While the Board acknowledges that we cannot resolve this complex challenge, we intend to maintain an **action orientation**, prioritizing deeds over words.

SIOp's Perspective

Here is an excerpt from Alexis's letter, with emphasis added in bold. It is this perspective that shapes the actions we are choosing to take.

*At our core, SIOp is a professional society dedicated to scientific rigor, fairness, and balancing the needs of organizations with those of individuals. Our work in Industrial-Organizational Psychology enhances organizational efficiency and effectiveness in both public and private sectors, improves workers' lives, and strengthens families, communities, and our society by **promoting both well-being and economic prosperity**.*

*SIOp is an organization built on science. As such, we strongly believe in the implementation of evidence-based practices to support employee performance and well-being and to drive organizational performance. Industrial-Organizational Psychology research and practice are especially critical for ensuring that employment decisions such as hiring, promotion, and work assignment **decisions are made based on the requirements of the job, rather than irrelevant criteria**, and that organizational design and work practice decisions are made in a way that support effective, efficient, high performing organizations.*

SIOp recognizes the presence of substantial misinformation about DEI. Already-illegal

*practices, like the use of racial quotas and preferential hiring for subgroups, are often criticized as examples of DEI and cited as reasons for its elimination. The science of DEI, and I-O psychology broadly, does not promote such practices. **Instead, our research centers on ensuring that merit and capability drive organizational decisions.** SIOF endorses the continuation of evidence-based, science-backed practices that drive both individual and organizational success.*

*Beyond misalignment with scientific evidence, the implications of the current government disruptions on our members and the community we serve is far-reaching. Actions such as blunt force stoppages in grant funding, employment, and policy enforcement have the potential to lead to **significant short- and long-term ramifications** for job applicants, employees, students, organizations, and consumers.*

What We Are Doing: An Update

With that perspective and an orientation towards action, below are some steps we have taken and plan to take to support our members and the organizations we serve.

Support you

- Provided conference **travel grants to 29 members** impacted by government changes to support their ability to attend the SIOF Annual Conference in Denver, funded by donations from our executive board, the SIOF Foundation, and SIOF members.
- Organized and conducted **115 free mock interviews and provided resume feedback to support** job seekers during and after the conference.

Educate and keep you informed

- Posting **timely, curated information** about changes, such as Executive Orders, policies, and other activities that may affect our membership, on our [Federal Policy Updates webpage](#).
- Conducted an **interactive practitioner panel** during the SIOF Annual Conference on the *Latest Policy Updates and Their Implications*, and **two SIOF-curated sessions**:
 - *Managing DEI Backlash: A Conversation with SIOF DEI Chairs*
 - *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Under Fire: Examining the Backlash*
- Hosted a **policy webinar**, led by content experts, to provide insights into government activities and their potential impact.
- Offered a **no-cost Advocacy Academy** (*Introduction to Science Policy and Advocacy*) to educate SIOF members on how to get their voice heard.
- Continue to provide **timely webinars**. For example, our CEMA committee has developed a webinar on “[Navigating Workplace Trauma](#).”

Advocate for science-based practices

- Working closely with our **advocacy firm**, Lewis-Burke Associates, to promote the use of I-O psychology principles and evidence-based policymaking. For example, we provided outside witness testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science in support of:
 - National Science Foundation funding for
 - The Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences
 - Research on workforce participation of individuals with disabilities
 - Exploration of AI's impact on the workforce
 - Workforce evaluation and technical assistance for the DOJ's Community-Oriented Policing Services (COPS) office
- Provided outside witness testimony to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies in support of:
 - A partnership between the DOL and the National Academies on the need for I-O psychology in preparing the workforce for emerging technologies
 - The Department of Education's Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) Program
- Co-signed a [letter to Senate leaders](#) from a broad coalition of partners, calling for **greater transparency** about workforce reductions and reorganization plans within federal agencies.
- Proactively engaging with policymakers, for example, meeting with **congressional offices** that want to legislate on topics related to upskilling and workforce development.
- As a division of the American Psychological Association (APA), we are continually **partnering with APA** to ensure our perspective is heard (e.g., in support of science funding, appropriate employment practices, and [academic freedom](#)) while recognizing that some messages are more powerful coming directly from APA, an organization with 150,000 members, extensive advocacy resources and expertise.
- Partnering with **other scientific organizations**, such as the National Academy of Sciences, and expressing support for research funding (e.g., co-signing a National Safety Council letter supporting NIOSH funding and worker safety).

Educate SIOP's Leadership

- Invited a **panel** of highly experienced I-O practitioners to meet with the SIOP Executive Board to educate us about how government activities are impacting our members.

Combat disinformation

- Issuing a SIOP [position statement](#) in support of Title VII and the use of **fair, job-relevant employment practices**, correcting erroneous assumptions in Executive Order [14281](#).
- Exploring opportunities to provide [white papers](#) or amicus briefs that communicate the importance and impact of employing **evidence-based I-O practices**, to ensure employment decisions are job-related, fair, and not based on irrelevant discriminatory factors.
- Establishing a **task force** to write a white paper on evidence-based DEI under the guidance of our D&I Officer, Enrica Ruggs.

Provide safe opportunities to discuss your experiences and challenges

- Hosted an **online listening** session before the SIOP Annual Conference to learn about member needs and challenges.
- Hosted two in-person **listening forums** during the conference, where practitioners and researchers met with colleagues, SIOP board members, and content experts to discuss the challenges they face at work and the potential loss of research funding.

Final Thoughts

I-O psychology has a vital role to play in helping society and organizations navigate these challenging times. Whether it is guiding organizations to make informed, fair, evidence-based employment decisions or navigating the opportunities and challenges of AI in the workplace, I-O psychology can make an impact if we remain engaged and vigilant.

One of the gratifying aspects of being SIOP's President is that I get to see the commitment and passion of our members. SIOP isn't a monolithic group of people who think identically. That is one of our strengths! While we won't always agree, we are all eager to do what is right. I recognize that some members wish SIOP were doing more, while others would prefer that "we mind our own business." Regardless of your view, **please know that we are approaching the challenges thoughtfully and with positive intent, trying to do what is best for SIOP, our membership, profession, and society at large.**

It sounds corny, but navigating challenging times truly takes a village. I want to thank all the members of our village, including SIOP committee chairs, our hundreds of volunteers, Board and Foundation members, our advocacy firm, and SIOP staff. I truly appreciate your energy, expertise, and commitment to I-O psychology!

Scott Tannenbaum
SIOP President