

Psychology Undergraduate Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 12th, 2021

1:00 pm (meeting occurred via Zoom)

Members Present: Alicia Grande, MA, Psychology Instructor, WCU (Board Chair)

Melodie Frick, PhD, Counseling Program Director, WCU

Carrie Hachadurian, MA, Assistant Director of Student Development, Center for Career and Professional Development (CCPD), WCU

Ashley Addonisio, MA, Clinical Psychology (PsyD) Graduate Student, WCU

Hannah Durand, Psychology Undergraduate Student, WCU

Jay Ruebel, PhD, Clinical Psychologist, Meridian Behavioral Health

Absent: Not applicable

Guest: Windy Gordon, PhD, Director of Undergraduate Studies and Assistant Department Head of Psychology

- 1) Welcome and Introductions
 - a) Welcome from Alicia Grande
 - b) Introductions- All Board Members and Guest
 - c) Advisory Board Purpose: The purpose of today's meeting is to discuss traits that employers and graduate schools are looking for in our undergraduates. Further, we need to discuss ways that our department can better prepare our students for life after graduating from WCU.
- 2) Old Business/Updates/Status of Tasks
 - a) Previous meetings have pointed out what our students are lacking, specifically focusing on their lack of soft skills.
 - b) As a response to feedback from previous meetings, the department decided to create a new required course: PSY 250, "Careers & Issues in Psychology."
- 3) Current Program Status
 - a) The inaugural PSY 250 class will occur in Fall 2021 and is currently being developed by Alicia Grande; subsequent semesters will include 6 or 7 sections of PSY 250, taught by either Alicia Grande or PsyD graduate students (Instructors of Record).
 - b) Many faculty members in the psychology department struggle with advising undergraduate students who do not want to go on to graduate school.
- 4) New Business Items & Feedback from Board Members
 - a) Feedback from Carrie Hachadurian:
 - i) Carrie recently worked with Dr. Erica Zimmerman in the College of Health and Human Services to create a career class for all of the majors in that college.
 - (1) Dr. Zimmerman may be a good resource while creating the PSY 250 course.

- ii) Carrie has lots of data from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) that will be very helpful for developing PSY 250.
 - iii) Carrie will be working with faculty to create a Major Map for Psychology; a Major Map is essentially a rubric to guide students in both the student's path here at WCU as well as their career options after graduation.
 - (1) Carrie shared the Major Map for Sociology with the Board.
 - (2) Many career and student services offered here at WCU are endorsed on the Major Map.
 - (3) The Psychology Major Map will serve as an excellent tool for advising, as well as for teaching PSY 250.
 - (4) The CCPD often uses Major Maps to help students who are still undecided about their majors.
 - (5) The departments often distribute Major Maps during promotional events such as Open House.
 - iv) NACE data shows that employers look for transferable skills.
 - v) Candid Career, a library of career videos through FSU, could be a valuable resource for both students and advisors.
 - (1) There are 62 videos related to the psychology major.
 - vi) Students need to learn Cultural Competency, a NACE career readiness competency.
 - vii) Students need to learn how to discuss their skillsets.
- b) Feedback from Melodie Frick:
- i) In addition to a high GPA and high GRE scores, Melodie expects students to know the difference between the fields and licensures of Counseling, Social Work, and Psychology.
 - ii) A student who has worked in the field has an edge over a student who is applying to graduate school immediately after graduating with a BS/BA.
- c) Feedback from Jay Reubel:
- i) It is important for students to know that they will not be able to administer therapy with only a bachelor's degree.
 - ii) To be a Qualified Mental Health Professional (QP), you need a bachelor's degree along with a year of documented experience, such as an internship.
 - (1) A QP works on a team with a therapist- they cannot work with a client independently.
 - (2) A QP works hands-on with clients to build skills (e.g., social skills, relaxation techniques).
 - (3) One can be an Associate Professional (AP) before acquiring their BS/BA, which could be another way of getting experience in the field.
 - (4) QP and AP are Medicaid terms.
 - (5) Working as a QP really immerses one in the field and is a great way to decide whether one wants to advance in the field.

- iii) Students need to learn appropriate professional communication skills.
- d) Feedback from Hannah Durand:
 - i) Many students romanticize psychology and do not understand what the psychology major really entails, so it is important to inform students of their options as early in their career as possible.
 - ii) Students need to understand that they will only get out of WCU what they put into it.
 - iii) Students need to learn how to communicate with professors.
- e) Feedback from Ashley Addonisio:
 - i) Major maps will be very helpful to PSY 150 instructors, who meet a lot of undecided freshmen.
 - ii) PSY 250 will be a great follow-up to 150 because it will clarify and broaden the options laid out in 150.
 - iii) PSY 250 should include a lot of guest speakers from different fields to help students better understand their options.
- f) Feedback from Windy Gordon:
 - i) PSY 250 needs to focus on transferable skills- most psychology majors will not be advancing in the field of psychology.
 - ii) Because psychology majors usually have the right set of core values, the administrative side of the non-profit sector is a great place for them to seek employment.
- 5) Follow-up Tasks
 - a) The Psychology Major Map should be completed by Fall 2021.
 - b) Consider developing an exit survey for recent graduates, possibly administered via social media, asking how their education helped them transition into employment.
 - c) Members of the Board will contact Alicia Grande if they have any further feedback on the development of PSY 250.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.