



Beyond the Degree: Psychology



Career Services



Department
of Psychology

Gian-Karlo Alvarez, Assistant Director, Career Services Employer Relations

Moderator: Tyler McGill, Career Services Intern, MA student in Counselor Education

Panelists:

Lina Pabon, Psych B.S. **ADP**, College Recruiter 7-8 months

Jennifer Rios, Communications B.S., working on MA, **City Year**, Recruitment Manager

Tara Zeller, Psych B.S., Human Resources MA, **The AppleTree Connection**, Board Certificate Behavioral Analyst (BCBA)

Q1. What qualities/characteristics make psychology majors perfect for job opportunities?

Jennifer Rios (JR): Dedication and Passion about service for children, communities, and social justice, want to give back

Lina Pabon (LP): Communication: written and verbal, Teamwork from experience with group projects, Problem Solving, and how people work

Tara Zeller (TZ): Helping people whether it's children and parents or teachers. Interface with people

Q2. For those with a psychology background, how do you feel psychology prepared you for the transition into the workplace?

TZ: Explore different avenues with different classes and gain experience such as with Co-Op. Tailor your direction with electives.

JR: Passion for service, learning about mind, communication with individuals with special needs

LP: I liked too many things, but it was my Personality Theories class that made me follow Psychology. There are many resources to take advantage of to be well rounded, use experiences and translate to your field, psychology is broad enough to do that.

Q3. How did you decide between working or going to graduate school?

JR: After I graduated, I couldn't decide between MSW or LMHC so I chose to wait to make the right choice. That's when I joined City Year to transition between work and education. Build resume, give back, and not rush to commit to a graduate program. Think of your end goal and understand that detours are okay.

LP: For me, I was thinking of the clinical Psychology doctorate, but after thinking about what it takes to get there and where I wanted to be, it wasn't the route I wanted to go. I found something interesting and a company that will help go back to school with tuition reimbursement.

TZ: I was considering clinical, or maybe I/O Psychology. I recommend any hands on experience you can get is important. I didn't do graduate school until 5 years after and went into Human Resources (HR) and they paid for my graduate degree and later I got certified in BCBA.

Q4. What kind of job titles and opportunities are there for psychology majors to apply to after they graduate? How much is expected they would make in these roles?

TZ: Registered Behavior Tech (RBT) completes a 40 hours class and can make \$10-\$16 an hour; Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA) needs a college degree and can make \$25/hr- this job is flexible working with children or adults, parents, teachers, you can make your own schedule or work with a company; with a Masters degree you can become a Board Certified Behavioral Analyst (BCBA) and make \$50 or more an hour. There is a huge need for Behavior Analysts, the demand is higher than supply.

LP: ADP is looking for entry level: Client Support Specialist and Organization Implementation Specialist (\$30k-\$35K a year). Want to help people. ADP is human capital management provider relating to hiring to retirement as well as recruitment, payroll, etc. Lots of opportunity for growth and development.

JR: City Year is a volunteer job BUT get \$565 biweekly, healthcare covered and there is travel and food assistance. Loans will be given forbearance and interested covered. Education award of \$6k with 10-100% discounts offered by colleges for service.

Q5. Do you know of a good timeline to take the GRE, do you have any advice?

LP: Get some study books and take as soon as you can so you're still in the "study" mindset.

JR: Be proactive, research programs and find what score is needed. There are GRE apps. Have a plan to study for example: This chapter this week, next chapter next week, this many questions answered, etc. Library might have practice books. There is also the Millers Analogy Test (MAT)- some schools accept this, only 1 hour long and 125 questions.

TZ: I took the GRE many years after graduating and right before applying, and I did fine.

Q6. Jennifer, what made you decide between Mental Health Counseling (LMHC) and Masters of Social Work (MSW for LCSW)?

JR: I took Criminal Justice Certificate that had CJ, Psychology, and Social work courses. Also, had a 40% discount with Stetson thanks to City Year. I recommend you meet more people in Social Work and LMHCs.

Q7: Why a MA vs a Phd?

TZ: And what about a PsyD? A doctorate is time, money- you have to think about what you're spending/incurred for your chosen career.

Q8. Benefits of having a minor with degree?

LP: I did a minor because I had extra credits and the classes overlapped with major, I also found the course interesting. I thought it would be helpful with Clinical Psychology was my goal. I don't use it now, but I liked it at least.

TZ: Minors give you more exposure to what you're interested in.

JR: Feed your passion. You're more diverse with a minor, and you have more to say about yourself.

Q9. What are you looking for on a resume/application when you hire? How would you differentiate between 2 psychology majors applying to the same job?

JR: At City Year, this is an optional resume, but I recommend you submit it- talk about yourself on paper, what events you've done, skills you have, be an asset to yourself. That will say how you are different from others in this room is sharing your involvement, internships, clubs, sports, etc.

LP: The resume is our first time learning about you- showcase your impact- what did you do to contribute or improve your environment?

TZ: Reach out for internships, take related courses, be consistent and have longer experiences. Participate in campus programs such as Knight-Thon. Get involved to be more well-rounded. Expand out and embrace all opportunities.

Q10. Does doing undergraduate research make a big difference to you as employers?

TZ: Not really, but I wish I had done more. Consider starting your own research, at least be a participant.

LP: It doesn't hurt to have research experience. It's not related, but if it shows what you're passionate about. It deserves to be listed. It shows your problem solving and critical thinking.

JP: Will not detract from application.

Q11. How go towards Human Resources field?

LP: All experiences will add up to that route.

JR: Look at job descriptions and match the skills you have to what is needed to be better for that position.

TZ: I just ended up in it and then did my MA in HR.

Q12. What should students be doing while in college to be more appealing to employers?

LP: Get involved. Not always in many, but in at least 1 and hold leadership role. Develop leadership skills and talk to as many people as possible.

JR: Networking is vital- talk with someone who can connect you with the field. Get involved- I did Alternative Spring Break which opened insight to other cultures and what the world needs.

TZ: Leadership roles in college look really good. But this can come from a job, even as a Lead Server or Assistant Manager- it doesn't necessarily need to be psychology related.

Q13. Can past jobs substitute for volunteer work/internships even if they are unrelated?

TZ: Working at the same place over a long time builds relationship with references who know you. These experiences can sometimes trump internships and vice-versa.

LP: Just sell your experience on your resume- showcase your impact.

JR: Employers understand that you need to pay the bills so other experiences are just fine.

Q14. Does your organization check social media like Facebook or LinkedIn before making a hiring decision?

JR: I have heard of that happening with other employers.

TZ: I do peruse it, if anything stands out, then yes I will consider it.

LP: I do check LinkedIn since you can apply with LinkedIn so make sure it is updated.

Q15. What kinds of challenges do you think psychology majors might face after they graduate and do you have any tips to help them through?

LP: Translate your experience to employers, related to the job. You've gained transferable skills and career services can help you.

JR: Don't wait too long to figure out what you want to do. Use Career Services, network, reach out, don't procrastinate on this. Start sooner than later.

TZ: You might have this ideal job in your head, but you need to be open and not limit yourself. Careers in Psychology courses is very helpful.

Q16. Any final words of wisdom?

TZ: Passion- you can help people in many different forms- any career can do that. Also follow your wallet. A job that you are passionate about does not feel like work.

LP: Talk with as many people as you can. Ask questions, do Informational Interviews—you can find UCF Alumni on LinkedIn. Go to Career Fairs- meet with recruiters and even better hiring managers.

JR: Congrats to coming to this event! This is the path to success. Let this panel sink in, use this information and share it with your classmates. Work on your personal brand.