

Beyond the Degree: Careers in Psychology Career Panel

Panelists:

- **Chelsea Sims**
Regional Recruitment Manager
City Year
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- **Officer Nathan Cameron**
Winter Garden Police
Department
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- **Melissa Quinonez**
Central Florida Region CPI Recruiter
Florida Department of Children and
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- **Hope Walters**
Human Resources Generalist
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Introduction:

Erin Grainger, M.A.- Assistant Dir. For [Psychology Advising Center](#), welcomed the group and encouraged the audience to meet with an academic advisor to cover not only academic requirements, but information about getting involved with student organizations, research, and internship opportunities. Open M-Th 9am to 4pm, Fri 9am to

Deborah Watkins who put together the event shared her story about higher education as a career path- working in Multicultural Student Services to Admissions.

Gian-Karlo Alvarez, Assistant Director for Employer Relations in Career Services, shared about resources and opportunities from Career Services and Experiential Learning

- [Education fair](#) April 22nd
- [State wide Career Fair](#) May 12th

Dr. Bill Blank, Director of Career Development in Career Services talked about Psychology dept. including cornerstone and capstone and future touchstone courses to enhance psychology majors' degree skills connection to employability.

Questions (in bold):

1. Introduce yourself:

Hope Walters- HR Dept at Orange Legal, hires for litigation services, court reporters, interpreters, it's a 1 stop shop for attorneys. She earned her BS in Psych 2012, then MA in Clinical Psych from UCF in 2014, worked at Center for Drug Free Living but changed her career entirely towards Human Resources

Officer Cameron – 8 years – City of Winter Garden. He says having a degree is needed within agency as mental illness is out there. Psych majors are great to talk to all kinds of individuals. Most officers have BS, MA from UCF, sometimes PhD

Melissa Quinones- Recruiter for Dept of Children and Families. She started as a Childhood Investigative Recruiter after graduating with Psych degree in 2007. Worked 8 years in dept. There are many areas in the department, often starting with going into homes to investigate for abuse or neglect for child under age of 18. Take childhood development courses and often partner with law enforcement and schools.

Chelsea Sims- City Year Regional Recruitment Manager- City Year is education focused looking for 18-25 year olds to work in high needs schools to tutor and mentor full time to reduce dropouts (Orlando, Miami, Jacksonville) – attendance, behaviors, performance- on track to graduate

2. Qualities/characteristics that make psychology majors perfect for job opportunities:

Chelsea- Psych majors typically have a desire to help. Most AmeriCorps members are psych majors with desire to pursue clinical psych or social work

Melissa- Again, wanting to help. It is its own reward back. As a student she did experiential learning and volunteered with different organizations (like Give Kids the World, Ronald McDonald house)

Officer Cameron- a Criminal Justice degree doesn't always bring best options for dealing with other people – having background in psych helps people out there especially for CIT officers (Crisis intervention technique)

Hope- this company is customer service based as attorneys are the clients, they have high expectations. In need of soft skills like people skills and psych perfect to transition to any kind of position, problem solving, and personnel issues. Even though no longer in Clinical Psych, still counseling in HR.

3. Different areas in agency- what kind of job titles are there for psych majors to apply to?

Hope- We have positions open right now! A legal recruiter position: out in the field recruiting candidates interested in law firm; and a Digital Court Reporter position- deals with interaction with attorneys, dealing with people all the time. She loves to see UCF and psychology on a resume

Officer Cameron- Police dispatcher, on a computer, can get more as an officer; entry level- patrol officer, take courses, become a detective (psych is perfect for talking with people); hostage negotiator (after training); need degree like psych to advance; gender equity important when hire (lots of female psych majors) ; arrests don't necessarily disqualify you as an officer

Melissa- Child Protective Investigator- research home and work with family 1 on 1- crisis mode; Case Management Agency- CPC – get to see everything- particularly mental illness- how you talk and communicate w/people, treat with respect, identity with people; go on to senior child p I after 2 years, to supervisor; adult investigations as well – for anyone vulnerable over 18 – do projects run data

Chelsea- communication skills, ability to understand who you're working with; staying at city year programs go into recruitment and admissions, manage with schools

4. What are you looking for on resume/application when you hire?

Chelsea- *leadership*- what are you doing outside of classroom; types of organizations, mentoring, tutoring, giving back; etc

Melissa- volunteered and spell out *what you've done in community*; hospital, boys and girls club; not 5 pages long- have someone look over your resume and whats important

Officer Cameron- *education* stands out ; pre-screener application online; main application 66 pages- whole background with society; resume should be included- not too long- have most important experience and education first as well as community involvement

5. What about Social Media like Facebook or LinkedIn?

Melissa- if you have a rough day- must keep things confidential- opinionated/biases affect judge's decision (don't put it on social media)

Officer Cameron- social media gets you in trouble- delete it, make it private- what's more important career or social media? Can find you on face book – some agencies can make you sign in and have you leave while investigator have access to it...

Hope- Orange Legal doesn't check social media but does do *active recruiting* on LinkedIn- allows to search specific key words to find candidates

6. What should students be doing while in college to be appealing?

Hope- UCF has HR generalist certificate, quick, at own pace, great info

Officer Cameron- Police Academy- 5.5 months- finish degree than police academy- a lot more difficult to go back to get educate, have a good back up if not stay in law enforcement

Melissa- State and UCF have child welfare certification class- child welfare certificate- go right into job about 2 week roundup when completed- 2-3 months training- state will pay provisional certification – certificate in mail

Chelsea- training happens once started with City Year- demonstrate that you are a leader and have experience with children or with mentoring/tutoring; don't discount experience that you have – transferable skills with babysitting, McDonalds, etc.

7. Why should psych majors consider your organizations?

Chelsea- Psych is not a hugely terminal degree- most students look into grad school- City Year offers an *education award* to help towards past or future education as well as City Year *alumni scholarships*

Melissa- working for State, *tuition reimbursement*, can help continue for MA with tuition reimbursement; *loan forgiveness program*, *great benefits*, paid time off and sick leave, medical insurance... different areas you can go into with degree

Officer Cameron- city of Winter Garden- *tuition reimbursement* for up to MA degree (including books); pensions 25 years and out; *Pension*: retire early with good percentage of salary; still low percentage of deaths in profession compared to what is shown in media; lot of opportunity- degree helps bring to the profession; role as counselor to enforcer to friend

Hope- Orange Legal has lots of *opportunity for growth*; CEO started as receptionist, most management started at lower level, usually promote within, different training courses for professional and personal life, good work/life balance, *fun things* like yoga instructors, dance parties

Open up to Q & A:

For Hope: From psychology to clinical- have you taken I/O Psych? No- wish had

Keeping good relationships with good employers- recommender no longer works for that company- past employer- can you still use that person? Police needs 6 references- personal references are who you choose. Don't forget 2 week notice when leaving job

Can past job experiences substitute for volunteer work and internships? Yes, sell yourself

What if your job is unrelated like theme park? Customer services is everywhere sell yourself

Hope- What experience helped with pursuing Clinical Psych? Only one internship at a counseling center, didn't do research, but wish did- keeping GPA up; interview is less about experience more about personal fit

Employ fl- social work availability- need 2 years' experience- bother applying? Depends on position, but volunteer work, anything else counts as experience with bachelors' degree.

Hope- do you have positons for those with just a bachelors? Yes- legal recruiter and field recruiter . benefits \$60 a month for insurance and dental , paid time off, volunteer for more paid time off, contribute to 401k; no tuition reimbursement

Chelsea- any opportunities to get involved now while a student?- AmeriCorps members do service projects like MLK day ; gala and school visits

Melissa- investigators does it get dangerous? Be aware of surrounding- talk about it in training. Know family history and background, come prepared, joint response with police; know who is in the home, dog removed, etc; its about respect, no attacking, no judging, building relationships

What other experiences to shadow are there? Officer Cameron- anyone can do a ride along that can turn into an interview- officer writes summary of what went over- application summary don't include changing career. Crime analyst position internship?

For more information on **career options for psychology majors**, check out the Psych Advising Center website: <http://psychology.cos.ucf.edu/undergraduate-psychology-advising/psychology-careers/>

- Get involved NOW with Student Organizations: <http://psychology.cos.ucf.edu/undergraduate-psychology-advising/opportunities-in-psychology/psychology-organizations/>
- Internships like Experiential Learning and Teaching Assistant: <http://psychology.cos.ucf.edu/undergraduate-psychology-advising/opportunities-in-psychology/internships/>
- Research Assistant: <http://psychology.cos.ucf.edu/undergraduate-psychology-advising/opportunities-in-psychology/undergraduate-research/>

Utilize services from Career Services for resume critiques, interview help, and of course Employer connections during Job Fairs and other events when employers come to campus. <http://career.ucf.edu/>



