UPO/Psi Chi Meeting

12/5/16

Psychology Careers Beyond the University

Introduction by Dr. BK

* Please talk to an officer if you would like to join UPO or Psi Chi

Panelists

* See sheet for panelists’ biographies
* Ashley Grundmayer, M.A.-Licensed independent mental health practitioner
* Brett Woods, Ph.D.-Sports psychologist at UNL
* Jayden McDonald, J.D.-Law clerk for Nebraska Supreme Court
* Katie Bevins, Ed. S., NCSP, School psychologist with LPS
* Samantha Alfaro-talent acquisition associate with ResourcePro

Questions for Panel

* What advice do you have for students wanting a career in your area?
  + Alfaro-Internships
  + Grundmayer- Internships will really give you a good idea of what is a good fit for you before committing to a job
  + McDonald- if you are going to law school, really focus on your gpa. Some people with high enough GPAs can get their LSAT score waived for entrance to law school. Also, take classes that interest you. Don’t worry about what law schools will think about your major.
  + Bevins- I would also say that people really look for research, so try to get involved in undergraduate research.
  + Woods- Say yes to great opportunities. I never expected to be where I am today, but I’ve had great mentors that gave me great advice and took me to great places. Look into the Association for Sports Psychology.
  + Grundmayer- One of the things I regret from undergrad is not getting involved. I didn’t know a lot of my professors and I barely visited my advisor. When it came time for references, I hardly had anyone to ask.
  + Woods- I’ve had a lot of people refer me to jobs that I didn’t actually find myself, so it really does make a difference by getting to know people and making connections.
* What personality characteristics do you find important in your line of work?
  + McDonald- For litigation, it's more likely for people to be outgoing, but there are other people that are more quiet in other more methodical positions. Use your personality to your advantage.
  + Bevins- I would say we are kind of a funny group. You have to be pretty social and have to like interacting and working with people, but then you have to go back to your office and look at data.
  + Grundmayer- I used to think with counseling you have to be really outgoing, but I’ve found out that that is not necessarily true. I know so many counselors with so many different personalities. You pull strengths from your own personality. The self care side to it may be different comparing introverts or extroverts, but you can still be a successful counselor either way.
  + McDonald- You just have to be really hard working and be able to set aside the fun stuff to focus on getting what you need done.
  + Woods- When I graduated from my undergrad, everyone congratulated me, but as I got my MA and PhD, there was less congratulations. It’s important to push yourself and know that the work you are doing now will be worth it eventually. I have to be very flexible and adaptable in my line of work as well.

Other Questions

Were you ever concerned about finding a job? (directed to McDonald)

* What I really liked about the Nebraska law program is they have a really high level of employment. I also really utilized the career services available here. I don’t think there was a huge fear here about not getting a job just because the program really tries to help you, and I don’t know anyone who hasn’t found a job, and I think everyone would say the law school here really helps find you a job.

Do you have any tips on networking?

* McDonald- I think it's harder for undergrad students. Whatever careers you are thinking of exploring, try to ask professors if they know anyone in that field that you could meet for coffee as a way to network. It can be kind of weird, but just know that those people were in your shoes and had those questions too and it gets easier the more you do it.
* Alfaro- Also, meeting people like that sticks out in their minds and they may consider you for future positions.
* Grundmayer- I actually worked administratively in the clinical office and I got to know every clinical professor, which was super healthful. If you meet anyone interesting, try to get their information for future reference.
* Bevins- I would say in the education system networking isn’t super important until you actually begin to work in the field.

How do you suggest making good impressions?

* McDonald-Being honest is the best thing you can do. In law, you probably don’t know what area you are interested in, and it is ok to say that to people that you are meeting. Be honest, tell people your interests, and ask for their advice.
* Woods- Try to do mock interviews that are available from Career Services.
* Grundmayer- Definitely stick with honesty, but if you’re not sure if you are interested, it may be helpful to act interested and ask questions to learn more about their area.
* Bevins- Appearing put together, organized, on time, dress well, take notes, all of that will give people a good impression.
* Alfaro- We always take note if people are three minutes late, or if they take out a notebook. We notice every little thing.
* McDonald- Also, make sure to know about the company. Do some research on the company and the people you are meeting with.
* Alfaro- LinkedIns are huge, they are my number one thing that I look into.
  + Woods- I’ve had a few people shadow me, and there have been some people who have had no clue what they were doing. Its very easy to do some background research to make yourself look more prepared.

Did you consider I/O? (Alfaro)

* I am considering doing that, if I want to move up in my career I will more than likely need that.

Would you consider trying out things if you aren’t sure you like them?

* Yes

How would you handle parents of a child that may be resentful or in denial to you? (to Bevins)

* One thing I love about working in schools is that I have the kids every day. Usually I can work with the parents, and there is processes with parental consent and meetings.

What has surprised you or challenged you in your career?

* Woods-The dissertation was probably my biggest hurdle
* McDonald- The bar exam
* Bevins- As a school psychologist, you are always on deadlines. So you have to be really organized to stay on top of everything.
* Alfaro- Finding a job before I graduated. I was fortunate enough to find one, but it isn’t the worst thing to not find one.
* Grundmayer- Learning how to communicate effectively was the most surprising thing; the most challenging thing is letting go of the expectation that I can “fix” everyone. I have to meet people where they are at and change my idea of what success is.
* Woods- learning how to accept failure; no is sometimes a good thing.

What kind of exploration did you do to find your career?

* McDonald- I’m from Lincoln so I had a lot of connections with attorneys. I shadowed someone in high school and that cemented my plan.
* Bevins- Trial and error
* Woods- I did a lot of shadowing, and I loved the StrengthsFinder inventory
* Alfaro- If you have room in your schedule to take an extra class that sounds interesting, do it.