

Ouachita Baptist University

Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita

Press Releases

Office of Communication

4-6-2022

Ouachita adds undergrad programs in pre-counseling, Christian foundations

Felley Lawson

Ouachita News Bureau

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/press_releases



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), [Organizational Communication Commons](#), and the [Public Relations and Advertising Commons](#)



For immediate release

Ouachita adds undergrad programs in pre-counseling, Christian foundations

By Felley Lawson

April 6, 2022

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5206.

ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Ouachita Baptist University has approved new undergraduate degree pathways for fall 2022 to better support students seeking to pursue careers that invest in others. Ouachita faculty members approved the curriculum changes in a March 8 meeting; changes included adding a pre-counseling program of study, a Christian foundations co-major and new clinical and human services emphases within the community and family services major.

Pre-counseling students will earn a Bachelor of Arts degree with double majors in psychology and community and family services (CFS). Developed through a partnership between the Department of Psychology in the W.H. Sutton School of Social Sciences and the community and family services program in the Chesley and Elizabeth Pruet School of Christian Studies, the new degree track is curated to serve students who plan to attend graduate school and become licensed mental health counselors. It combines psychology classes to develop research and statistics skills with instruction in counseling through the CFS program's new clinical emphasis.

“The pre-counseling program at Ouachita provides a distinct pairing between psychology and Christian studies, giving students a strong Biblical foundation for counseling while spurring the kind of intellectual

and psychological growth needed to excel in a demanding profession,” said Dr. Allyson Phillips, chair of the Department of Psychology at Ouachita. “This program is grounded in the idea that counselors play a crucial role in the restorative mission of Jesus. Our graduates will be well prepared for graduate training to become licensed professional counselors.”

Within the CFS program, the additional emphases as well as an internship consisting of a supervised experience in a student’s chosen area of concentration offer students more focused preparation for particular vocations within the field.

Dr. Jeremy Greer, dean of the Pruet School, said, “We think these changes will position students well both to enter into careers in human services or to enter graduate school in clinical mental health or social work.”

“The strengths of the community and family services program are its faith integration and the experienced licensed counselors we have advising and teaching courses,” said Christa Neal, Title IX coordinator and program advisor for community and family services at Ouachita. “The additional major in psychology offers significant benefit in its research and theory focus. I am very excited about this partnership. I believe our students will benefit, and those they serve in their future professional work will see that benefit as well.”

Also in the Pruet School, the new Christian foundations co-major offers a scaled-back 30-hour version of the university’s established 47-hour Christian studies degree program. It is designed for students who are majoring in another discipline and want to pursue a greater course load than is required for a minor in Christian studies. The curriculum will present foundational knowledge in biblical studies, historical and systematic theology, missions and ministry practice.

“The Christian foundations degree arose out of some feedback provided through an annual survey that the Office of Campus Ministries administers each fall,” Greer said. “More than 300 students expressed interest in doing ministry of some sort both during and after college. More informally, we also observed that many students come to Ouachita to pursue various degrees outside of Christian studies, but they are interested in theological and ministry education.”

He added, “As its name suggests, the major provides students with a foundational understanding of God’s word and God’s mission that can propel a student into further theological studies or a lifetime of faithful service to the Lord in any vocation. Want to be a pastor or an international missionary? We recommend the full major. Want to be a schoolteacher, a coach or businessman equipped to lead a Bible study or be a youth leader? Christian foundations may be just the degree.”

To learn more about new degree programs at Ouachita, contact Dr. Stan Poole, vice president for academic affairs, at pooles@obu.edu or (870) 245-4261.