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### Learning to serve (New undergrad programs equip for careers that invest in people)

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Office of Communications & Marketing

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For immediate release

**Learning to serve (New undergrad programs equip for careers that invest in people)**

*By Felley Lawson*

November 18, 2022

For more information, contact Ouachita's Office of Communications & Marketing at [comm-mark@obu.edu](mailto:comm-mark@obu.edu) or (870) 245-5206.

Equipping students to integrate faith and career as they build lives of meaningful work is a priority at Ouachita. And this fall, brand-new tools will be available to help them.

Ouachita has approved new undergraduate degree pathways for Fall 2022 in order to better support students following a call to pursue a profession that invests in others. Additions to the curriculum include 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, as well as a dual degree program to prepare students for careers in psychiatric nursing.

## NURSING SPECIALIZATIONS

In the psychology and nursing dual-degree program—a collaboration between the Department of Psychology in the Sutton School of Social Sciences and the Department of Nursing in the Patterson School of Natural Sciences—students earn both a B.S.N. and a B.S. in psychology.

"I'm very excited about the 5-year dual degree between nursing and psychology," said Dr. Brenda Trigg, director of nursing at Ouachita. "For nurses to provide quality and compassionate care and to analyze patient needs, they must understand the relationship between the two disciplines of how the mind and body affect a patient's overall healthcare status. This dual degree will allow nursing students the opportunity to gain greater knowledge and to improve patient outcomes."

The program is similar in structure to the dual-enrollment pathways already in place for students who are seeking to serve in diverse settings either domestically or abroad. Those options include a dual degree in nursing and B.A. degrees in either Spanish or international missions.

## PRE-COUNSELING

The Department of Psychology also partnered with the community and family services (CFS) program in the Chesley and Elizabeth Pruet School of Christian Studies to develop a new degree track at Ouachita. The pre-counseling degree program 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 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."

## CHRISTIAN FOUNDATIONS

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.

**"MANY STUDENTS COME TO OUACHITA TO PURSUE VARIOUS DEGREES OUTSIDE OF CHRISTIAN STUDIES BUT ARE INTERESTED IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION."  
Dr. Jeremy Greer**

"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."

"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," 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."

**Editor's note:** *The dual enrolled program with BHCLR was discontinued in March 2023.*



*By Felley Lawson, editorial coordinator*