In the past 13 years, over one million students have earned their bachelor’s degrees in psychology. If the popularity of the major continues to increase at a comparable rate, one million additional psychology majors will graduate over the course of the next 10 years (Snyder & Dillow, 2010). Many psychology graduates ultimately pursue postbaccalaureate employment opportunities. According to one study (Landrum, 2010), about 27 percent of graduating seniors indicated they plan to pursue graduate training in psychology, and about 25 percent planned to apply to a graduate program in some other discipline or area of study. Thus, about half the majors graduating annually do not continue in a formal education path, and these graduates often attempt to enter the workforce with their bachelor’s degree training (Halpern, 2010). In this chapter, I address workplace expectations for baccalaureates in general (with psychology-specific advice where it exists), followed by the role that career-development courses can take. These reviews of the respective literatures are followed by conclusions and recommendations for the resources needed to continue to support the postbaccalaureate goals of all psychology graduates.

A number of organizations share an interest in understanding the workplace expectations placed on college graduates; much of this work is broadly applied, although some researchers address psychology-specific employer expectations. From the general perspective, when employers were asked what colleges should do differently (AAC&U, 2006), the recommendations that emerged included (a) undergraduate education should maintain a balance between well-rounded education and the acquisition of specific area knowledge and skills; (b) when evaluating new hires, employers mostly emphasize teamwork skills, critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills, and communication skills; and (c) employers and graduates alike desire an increased emphasis on the integration and application of knowledge and skills in applied, real-world settings. The skills gap between what the American workforce needs and what the American higher education system can produce is troublesome and an issue that continues to be addressed (Institute for a Competitive Workforce, 2012). This allows me to declare my biases from the beginning: I believe that psychology educators should focus more on skill development and assessment and focus less on rote memorization and multiple-choice testing. In my opinion, this is especially true when developing and improving career-development courses.

General Expectations for All College Graduates

As you might expect, multiple stakeholders often differ in their expectations of competencies for college graduates. Constituting a broad constituency, society maintains diverse expectations for college graduates. The larger population expects college graduates to be effective not just in the workplace, but in several areas of their lives (Cranney & Dunn, 2011). These expectations are identified in the AAC&U (2005) survey of the general public, reporting that (1) preparing undergraduate students for a career, (2) preparing students to be responsible citizens, (3) providing education to adults so they qualify for better jobs, (4) helping elementary and high schools do a better job teaching children, and (5) offering a broad-based general education to undergraduate students were among the top priorities or expectations of college graduates. In an aggregation of existing data, Baum and Ma (2007) suggested that societal benefits of higher education include lower unemployment, lower poverty rates, increased overall earnings, healthier lifestyles, higher levels of civic involvement, and increased consideration of others’ opinions, as compared to those without a college education. In a recent survey of the general public (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2011), when asked to rate the job that higher education system is doing in providing value for the money spent by students and their families, 5 percent responded with an excellent rating, 35 percent good, 42 percent only fair, and 15 percent poor. Perhaps the effective integration of more career-development courses in psychology curricula could help improve the actual and perceived effectiveness of a college education?

In 1991, the U.S. Department of Labor issued the Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) report listing requisite workplace skills, categorizing basic workplace skills as competencies or foundation skills (e.g., reading, writing, arithmetic). To establish a foundation, workers need to possess basic skills (reading, writing, math, communication skills), thinking skills (creative thinking, decision-making and problem solving, metacognitive skills), and personal qualities (individual responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, integrity). Effective workers must then be able to use their foundational skills to productively use (a) resources, (b) interpersonal skills, (c) information, (d) systems, and (e) technology. Yet the Association for
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Career and Technical Education (ACTE, 2010) suggested that these skills are essential, but incomplete. Employees should also be able to apply academic knowledge and skills in practical situations, as well as technical skills, such as the precise skills that may be necessary for licensure or certification in certain fields. To what extent do undergraduate psychology majors achieve these levels of competency? How would psychology educators answer that question?

Knowledge

Intuitively, we can assume that students attend college for the acquisition of knowledge. Yet with access to information high in the Internet age, a key skill is not the ability to find information but the ability to assess the credibility of information as well as information synthesis. In fact, when employers are asked about what information, content knowledge in one’s major does not typically emerge as one of the most important attributes. It seems that the acquisition of practical skills and abilities is more salient in employer responses. For example, when employers were asked how colleges should improve student learning (AAC&U, 2008), the results were striking:

- One-third of business executives think that a substantial proportion of recent college graduates do not have the requisite skills and knowledge that make them ready for the workplace.
- Out of 10 key areas of preparedness, employers believe that college graduates are least prepared in the areas of global knowledge, self-direction, and writing skills.
- When considering the potential for success at their company, most employers report that college transcripts (i.e., grades, completed courses) are not particularly useful.
- Employers lack confidence that the ubiquitous multiple-choice tests of content knowledge rife in university life are indicators of student achievement, but they have the most confidence in assessment strategies that measure complex, real-world problem-solving abilities and tests/projects that involve the integration of problem-solving, writing, and analytical reasoning.
- Regarding critical thinking, employers prefer faculty-assessed internships, community-based projects, and senior theses to be most useful in measuring workplace readiness, and believe that multiple-choice tests of critical thinking skills are the least useful.

Perhaps more important is the question: Are college faculty listening to the perceptions of employers and responding appropriately with effective pedagogical choices in the classroom? This provides psychology educators with an opportunity for career-development courses to fill specific needs.

In 2007 the American Psychological Association published the APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major (hereafter Guidelines). Similar efforts have occurred in other countries [e.g., see Clough (1993) for a summary of Australia’s efforts]. The 10 Guidelines, build on decades of work devoted to identifying the skills that psychology majors should be able to perform (Beins, 2003; Boneau, 1969; Green, 2005; Halpern, 1988; McGovern, Furumoto, Halpern, Kimble, & McKaechie, 1991), Guideline 1 addresses a knowledge base in psychology that majors should possess, emphasizing that students will demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology (APA, 2007). Developmental student-learning outcomes matching Guideline 1 are clearly articulated (e.g., APA, 2007) and direct measures are available to assess performance in this area:

- Area Concentration Achievement Test in Psychology (PACAT, n.d.).
- Graduate Record Exam (GRE) Subject Test in Psychology (Educational Testing Service, 2010a).

Each of the instruments is designed to measure content knowledge that students should possess when graduating with a baccalaureate degree in psychology. The measures are nationally normed and provide comparative data that can be used to respond to multiple constituents (e.g., students, parents, institutional outcomes assessment, accreditation requirement).

How effective are these assessment tools? Stoloff and Feeney (2002) investigated the use of the Major Field Test (MFT) as a measure of student learning outcomes in psychology. They found that the MFT does measure content knowledge, but they cautioned against using it as an overall measure of academic success. Instead, a multimethod approach to measuring student learning outcomes is warranted. Dolinsky and Kelley (2010) used the MFT to measure students’ content knowledge (e.g., social, development, cognitive). More importantly, they used the information to revise curricular offerings in psychology and determined that using the MFT to measure content knowledge was useful. These same results could also be used to respond to additional constituents; for example, data might be used in the campus-based assessment of learning initiatives, thereby responding to accreditation organizations’ requests for evidence.

Skills and Abilities

Although the general notion of skills and abilities is addressed in the literature (both broadly and in psychology-specific terms), their relative importance is highlighted more often that it is meaningfully assessed due to the difficulty in measuring skills and abilities. Appleby (2009) compared the skills that psychology educators say their students can acquire versus the skills employers say they value in potential employees. He examined the gaps in the broad skill areas of communication, critical thinking, research, self-management, collaboration, professional/management, computer/technology, sensitivity, and ethics, with the goal of informing educators about instructional areas of emphasis. In a different study, when Appleby (2000) surveyed employers of psychology graduates, he found that social skills (“deals effectively with people,” “handles conflict”), followed by personal skills, communication skills, information gathering skills, and numerical/computer skills were among the most important skills that were desired. Similarly, Landrum and Harrold (2003) asked employers to rate the most important qualities, skills, and abilities of psychology graduates, and concluded that (a) listening skills, (b) an ability to work with others as part of a team, (c) getting along with others, (d) desire and ability to learn, and (e) willingness to learn new, important skills were among the most important: Although these types of studies can be useful to psychology departments and faculty,
studies conducted on a national scale are warranted to ensure that psychology programs meet the evolving needs of both new graduates and their employers; this would help to provide more generalizable results. Furthermore, assessment of actual skills and abilities at time of graduation could be particularly useful to multiple constituencies because accountability concerns will continue for the foreseeable future.

A common technique for gathering indirect learning outcomes data (i.e., perceptions about learning outcomes) in psychology relies on alumni surveys (Allen, Armstrong, & Gutierrez, 1990; Borden & Rajecik, 2000; Fried & Johanson, 2003; Landrum, Hettich, & Wilner, 2010; Lumeber, 1979; McGovern & Carr, 1989; Nelson & Johnson, 1997). For example, Fried and Johanson (2003) asked alumni to complete a curriculum map charting desired learning outcomes with specific departmental courses, and were surprised to find that few alumni reported the acquisition of communication and computer skills as important outcomes. Marsh and Poespel (2008) compared current student perceptions of usefulness with indirect (presemester and postseason ratings of self-confidence and departmental helpfulness) and direct (APA-style writing test and knowledge test) measures, and concluded that there were no significant relationships between usefulness ratings of learning outcomes, direct learning measures, and student self-confidence ratings about their knowledge.

When undergraduate majors are asked about the skills they expect to gain in psychology, students reported the highest expectations in regard to application skills and research skills (Gaither & Butler, 2005). McTighe and Self (2010) suggested that appropriate courses contain cornerstone assessment tasks or cornerstone performances, that is, merit badge requirements that reflect key challenges within the subject with the ability for practical applications. Cornerstone tasks possess the following characteristics: (a) “they reflect genuine, real-world accomplishments and are set in authentic contexts” (p. 159); (b) students are required to apply their learning, as in transfer from one context to another (also signaling that a major goal of education is the transfer of learning beyond the classroom); and (c) call for the integration of 21st century skills and higher-order learning processes and genuine applications of cognition, technology, communication, collaborative teamwork, and so on—as in the real world. Properly attuning undergraduate students to learning goals and outcomes of the psychology major could help deter dissatisfaction with their employment following completion of the major (e.g., Borden & Rajecik, 2000; Light, 2010; Rajecik & Anderson, 2004). The key questions becomes: What role can career-development courses fulfill in helping students better understand the eventual demands of a workplace in their future?

To summarize, educators creating a career development course (or those who are looking to update an existing career development course) may want to consider these key ideas:

- Not only should students be made aware of the skills and abilities needed for success in the workplace, but also career-development courses should provide opportunities to practice skills and build confidence.
- Although society has expectations for college graduates, it is unclear whether those expectations are met; that is, assessment data are lacking.
- Faculty members may want to consult with actual employers of psychology graduates in order to better meet workforce needs; even better, building lasting collaborations and partnerships may serve the discipline better (in addition to meeting local student needs).
- Those who design career-development courses, which include multiple cornerstone tasks, serve both their students and multiple external constituencies well.

Career-Development Courses

The history of career-development courses is long and storied, dating back to the 1920s in the United States (Folsom & Reardon, 2003). In a meta-analysis of existing published studies, these authors identified previous researchers who address the design, development, administration, and assessment of career-development courses. In fact, Folsom and Reardon (2003) enumerated 38 separate studies in which positive career decision-making outcomes were reported, and 15 studies in which other variables were positively influenced, such as student retention. In the literature review that follows, I emphasize psychology-specific career-development course tips wherever possible and available. I organize this section under the following topics: (a) exposing students to career options and raising awareness; (b) course design recommendations specific to psychology, including potential readings and course policies; and (c) general and psychology-specific assessments of career-development-course student performance.

Raising Awareness about Careers and Career Preparation

Although a career-development course may be the optimum approach for facilitating serious self-reflection for students concerning career and workplace issues, there may be situations in which an entire course is not feasible in the curriculum. There are a number of resources available that could be used in preexisting courses as well as career-development courses. For example, Pinkney, Deters, and Bizzaro (1986) developed a writing process that helped students complete an assessment of a potential career path, which can raise student awareness about possible careers. Wesley and Bickel (2005) reported on how an internship experience can serve as a transitional path to career options by exposing students to real-world workplaces and environments. However, Larkin, Pines, and Bechtel (2002) utilized the structure of a portfolio to organize multiple assignments designed to augment career development—specifically for students in psychology courses. The course assignments included writing a career-goal statement, completing a self-assessment about job-activity preferences, researching occupational information, creating a cover letter and resume for potential employers, conducting an occupational interview with a working professional, and crafting a reflective statement about career exploration. The authors determined that student exiting the course with valuable materials related to career exploration as well as opportunities to apply critical thinking and writing skills.

Resources for Course Design

Within psychology, course-design advice about careers in psychology has been around for some time (Gottlieb, 1975; Korn, 1980), and the relevant course titles can vary considerably—from “Introduction to the Fields of Psychology” or “Careers in Psychology” or “The Professional Psychologist” to “Introduction to the Psychology Major.” Two resources for faculty members to consult when considering the design of a career-development course

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DiPietro, Lovett, and Norman (2010) are established, and assessment is centralized as opposed to the afterthought it may sometimes be in traditional course design. The key to backward design is that the assessment of student learning is designed and determined immediately after learning goals and evidence-based processes are in place, what pedagogical practices will be employed in an effort to achieve the learning outcomes? Here is what you would want your students to be able to know and do by the end of the course? Once learning goals are established, then how will student learning be assessed? The assessment strategy is added at the end of the design process. After the assessment process is in place, learning goals must be articulated with clarity and precision to be useful in the next step of backward design, which is then to determine the content goals and skills-based goals that you want your students to leave the course with. That is, can an instructor clearly articulate what they want their students to be able to know and do by the end of the course. Will students write a paper, take tests or quizzes, participate in online discussion threads, or create a wiki? The assessment strategy is added at the end of the design process because grades have to be assigned (perhaps begrudgingly) at the end of the course. What I describe here is a typical approach to course design suggested what a traditional course-design approach might look like. Typical course-design advice focuses on developing course content, accounting for multiple facets to consider. I recommend using a backward design approach as opposed to a traditional course-design approach. Diamond (2008) described what a traditional course-design approach might look like. Typical course-design advice focuses on developing course content, accounting for the class environment (presentation of content, daily classroom interactions), and grading (Suddreth & Galloway, 2006). Consider the scenario in which an instructor is asked to teach a new career-development course—what steps might be followed? With regard to course planning and design, many would select the textbook first (because of departmental/institutional deadlines). Educators tend to choose a teaching approach that has served one well in the past; for example, students (and student evaluations) suggest outstanding lecture skills, so lectures it is. An instructor may have favorite exercises/activities from other courses that are “known to work,” so make sure to include these time-tested favorites. Perhaps after the course is designed, the textbooks are ordered, and the syllabus is nearly complete, assessment is literally an afterthought. Will students write a paper, take tests or quizzes, participate in online discussion threads, or create a wiki? The assessment strategy is added at the end of the design process because grades have to be assigned (perhaps begrudgingly) at the end of the course. What I describe here is a typical approach to course design (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998).

In the previous example, learning goals may have been central to the design process, but assessment appears to be an afterthought. Experts in course design suggested a different sequence of course planning steps; a sequence that is counterintuitive to many instructors, thus the label “backward design” (Fink, 2003; Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). Backward calls attention to a different sequence of course planning. In backward design, learning goals are the initial, central focus of the design process (at this point the process is still similar to a traditional course design approach). These learning goals must be articulated with clarity and precision to be useful in the next step of backward design, which is then to determine the assessment method. After the assessment process is in place, then the educator designing the course considers the pedagogical approach; assessment drives pedagogical decision making. As Wiggins and McTighe (1998) put it, “what would we accept as evidence that students have attained the desired understandings and proficiencies—before proceeding to plan teaching and learning experiences” (p. 8; italics in original).

Another way to think about backward design would be to follow the sequence of goals, progress, and practice. Beginning with a learning objective-central focus, what are the content goals and skills-based goals that you want your students to leave the course with? That is, can an instructor clearly articulate what your students need to know and do by the end of the course? Once learning goals are established, then how will student progress be monitored for acceptable evidence in support of the successful achievement of desired learning outcomes? Then, after learning outcomes and evidence-based processes are in place, what pedagogical practices will be employed in an effort to achieve the learning outcomes? Here is where knowledge of best practices and the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) literature can help inform an instructor of the options and choices available. The key to backward design is that the assessment of student learning is designed and determined immediately after learning goals are established, and assessment is centralized as opposed to the afterthought it may sometimes be in traditional course design. Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, and Norman (2010) offered research-based suggestions for how to help students value and build a positive expectancy for the course
When thinking about the practical aspects of implementing a career-development course, these are the key points to consider:

### Strategies to Establish Value
- Connect the material to students’ interests
- Provide authentic, real-world tasks
- Show relevance to students’ current academic lives
- Demonstrate the relevance of higher-level skills to students’ future professional lives
- Identify what you reward and value
- Show your own passion and enthusiasm for the discipline

### Strategies That Help Student Build Positive Expectancies
- Ensure alignment of objectives, assessments, and instructional strategies
- Identify an appropriate level of challenge
- Create assignments that provide the appropriate level of challenge
- Provide early-success opportunities
- Articulate your expectations
- Provide rubrics
- Provide targeted feedback
- Be fair
- Educate students about ways we explain success and failure
- Describe effective study strategies

### Strategies That Address Both Value and Expectancies
- Provide flexibility and control
- Give students an opportunity to reflect

### Assessing the Course: An Evidence-Based Approach

Although there are specific efforts to examine the effectiveness of specific components of a careers course in existence (e.g., computer-assisted guidance systems: Garis & Niles, 1990; raising career awareness: Green, McCord, & Westbrooks, 2005; the marriage and family therapy subfield: Latty, Angera, & Burns-Jager, 2010), there are also multiple broad efforts to promote an undergraduate careers course and its subsequent assessment. Some of these existing efforts are applicable to the general university-level careers course (Grier-Reed & Skaa, 2010; Vernick, Reardon, & Sampson, 2004) but other are specific to career exploration and orientation to the psychology major courses (Dillinger & Landrum, 2002; Macera & Cohen, 2006; Ware, 1988). Each of these efforts included an evidence-based approach, often utilizing a precourse-postcourse design to detect changes over time with quantitatively scaled items. For instance, Ware (1988), over a series of studies, examined pre versus post differences in cognitive skills, identity, decisiveness, self-knowledge, job knowledge, and skills knowledge. Other approaches include the ratings of individual course assignments about their usefulness and degree of student engagement.

Although the data are not recent, Landrum, Shoemaker, and Davis (2003) determined from a national survey that just over one-third (34.2 percent) of Departments of Psychology in the United States offered some sort or variation of an “introduction to the psychology major” course. Given the aforementioned expectations of society and employers of psychology graduates, coupled with the potential benefits associated with career-development courses, the majority of psychology departments that are not offering such a course should reconsider doing so. Such a course may well benefit not only retaining students in the major but also help individual students align undergraduate experiences and expectations with the reality of the workforce. Psychology educators understand that an undergraduate education in psychology is good preparation for gainful employment, but that employment may not be psychology related. Some research is emerging in which the researchers suggest that the mismatch between career relatedness (Borden & Rajec, 2000) may be linked to dissatisfaction with the psychology major (Light, 2010). I believe that serious self-reflection coupled with a proactive approach by psychology educators (Landrum, Hettel, & Wilner, 2010) can help minimize potential future job/career dissatisfaction. Urge students to know what they want, and then encourage students to complete narrow job searches to ensure that one’s qualifications match the jobs being explored. If a student is open to broad search of the possibilities, then do not limit the job search to just psychology related positions. If satisfaction is centrally important to the student (compared to salary, for example), then educators may want to encourage that student to explore Smith’s (2007) research findings regarding job satisfaction and happiness—the conclusion being that if satisfaction and happiness are key, then start by choosing a career that helps others. Mismatches or misalignments between perception and reality can lead psychology majors to experience dissatisfaction with the major (for more about dissatisfaction, see Borden & Rajec, 2000; Light, 2010). The career development course may be the ideal location in the undergraduate curriculum to help students explore career and expectation alignments and to be proactive in the pursuit of career options that ultimately lead to satisfaction and happiness.

When thinking about the practical aspects of implementing a career-development course, these are the key points to consider:

- Numerous efforts have existed over time to help students explore career options. Sometimes these efforts existed as stand-alone courses and other times content modules were presented as components of other courses.
- There are many different resources available to educators (textbooks and websites) deciding to teach the career-development course; a backward design approach is strongly recommended for course design (or re-design);
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- Evidence-based strategies are available to educators such that value and positive expectancies can be infused into course design and its implementation.
- By leveraging backward design, assessment should play a more central role in determining whether the course-based objectives are being met. These assessment data can be highly valuable to educators as well as broader constituencies.

General Recommendations

In thinking about undergraduate psychology education generally and the career-development course specifically, I offer the following suggestions about future practices and challenges:

- Psychology educators are aware of workplace demands, although our discipline-specific contributions to this literature are slim.
- Psychology must do more to regularly study and report on the employment trends that impact all majors who do not pursue postbaccalaureate education in psychology or another field.
- There is no advocacy group for all psychology majors in the nation. No singular voice speaks on behalf of this group, although there are organizations that speak on behalf of segments (e.g., Psi Chi) or occasionally study issues of direct interest to undergraduate psychology education (e.g., American Psychological Association, Association for Psychological Science).
- Much of our inability to articulate the successful achievement of learning outcomes for psychology majors stems from our inability to measure skills and abilities expected to be achieved by the psychology major. Even when there are psychology-specific measures available (such as for measuring knowledge acquisition), they are rarely used by psychology departments and they are used with no national coordination or cooperation to advance our knowledge about best practices in psychology programs.
- More nationwide coordination and collaboration is needed, especially in regard to the assessment of skills and abilities of psychology majors so that psychology educators can make the case to multiple constituencies about the effectiveness of a bachelor's degree in psychology. This outcome can help not only with accountability, but also demonstrate the added value of our best practices, especially in regard to recent movements such as massive open online courses (MOOCs) and other online enterprises.

Simply put, if psychology educators cannot tell a convincing, evidence-based story about the beneficial effects of an undergraduate psychology education to students, faculty, parents, citizens, employers, and accrediting agencies, then who will? Demonstrating the effectiveness of a career-development course using an evidence-based approach seems like one obvious contribution to the story. Our discipline's collective inability to tell our success stories could lead to deleterious outcomes—from Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, and Whitt (2010, p. 18): “indeed, there are disadvantages to being successful without knowing why…. Not knowing what contributes to exceptional performance makes an institution vulnerable to losing over time what made it successful in the first place.” If not now, when?

Sample Assignments for Career-Development Courses

One-Minute Papers (OMP): At the end of each class I will ask you “Are there any unanswered questions?” In one paragraph or less, you write a brief answer to this question. Be sure to put your name and the date on the full piece of paper that you hand in; the one-minute paper doubles as my method of taking attendance. Even if you have no questions, be sure to turn in the paper with your name and the date on it.

Find A Job: I want you to locate jobs suitable for bachelor's-level psychology graduates. Whereas you might find something in print sources (e.g., newspaper), you will more likely have better luck with online search engines such as monster.com, careerbuilder.com, or a host of any other engines. You might try a google.com search to get the process going. Be sure to attach the results of your search to the assignment page. Turn everything in together, stapled. Find at least 1 job, and turn in no more than 3.

Practice Resume: Prepare a current, updated resume. You should create your own file on your computer. Microsoft Word has some resume templates if you need help getting started. For this assignment, do not go longer than 2 pages; also, try to print back-to-back on one piece of paper rather than two pages stapled. Pick a clean, clear 10-pt or 12-pt font. Some other tips: (1) first impressions count; a well-prepared resume can open doors, but a poorly-prepared resume can close doors; (2) make sure your resume is current, with cell phone and professional email address; (3) your resume must be perfectly crafted, with no typographical or grammatical errors; make sure trusted advisors/mentors proofread your resume; (4) if printing, use white paper, print only on one side of the paper, use a readable, non-decorative font, and do not fold or staple your resume; and (5) do not use horizontal or vertical lines, or shading (many paper resumes are electronically scanned by companies, and these visual features often do not scan well).

Personal Statement: Writing a coherent personal statement is a difficult task. Use a 12-pt clean font, 1-inch margins, single-spaced. Your personal statement must be 2 pages (not shorter, not longer). Your personal statement should be an organized and well-written statement in which you are able to integrate your various academic, research, practical, and life experiences in a manner that shows your determination to pursue your goals to the program or the job you are applying to. Write a statement that will maximize your ability to pursue your goals.

Written Advising Plan: Prior to completing this assignment, secure a copy of your transcripts (an unofficial copy is fine). If you are a transfer student, get a copy of your transfer credit evaluation also. Using the Long-Term Planner form, map out the courses you have already completed, the courses you are currently enrolled in, and your future semesters. Map out your entire academic career, even if you are graduating at the end of this semester (or have decided to graduate with a different major). Map out an academic plan that will allow you to graduate. Clearly indicate: the department and 3-digit course number (for example, PSYC 120), number of credits (for example, 1), and semester taken or to-be-taken (for example, Spring 2015). Be accurate and be sure you understand the system for listing courses in the Undergraduate Catalog.
Proofreading for Correct APA Format: See the general guidelines and actual paper elsewhere in this packet. Correct the paper for APA format and other writing errors with red ink directly on the pages.

Informational Interview Assignment: Locate a person who is currently working in an occupation of interest to you. Ideally, this person should have what you consider “your perfect job.” Schedule a 30-minute interview with this person. Try to interview someone you don’t know so that you can have some experience in an interview situation. If the person you ask to interview has already been interviewed by someone else in the class, interview someone else. Ideally, schedule a face-to-face interview. If this is not feasible, then a telephone or e-mail interview is acceptable. Remember that people are extremely busy; you may not be able to get an appointment until several weeks after you schedule it. Also: do not ask them their current salary. You need to start working on this assignment at the beginning of the semester in order to finish it by the due date. Review the questions on the Informational Interview Report Form prior to the interview, and write any questions you want to ask at the end of the form.

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