



William James College Launches Behavioral Health Service Corps, Paid Service Year for Recent College Graduates

The William James College Behavioral Health Service Corps, a first-of-its-kind paid service and learning opportunity for recent college graduates, offers scholars both an entry-level career experience and credits toward a master's degree.

NEWTON, Mass., (April 21, 2020) – William James College, an independent, non-profit institution and leader in psychology education, has announced the launch of the **Behavioral Health Service Corps (BHSC)**, a service-learning program designed to help grow and diversify the workforce. The BHSC is a year-long service and learning opportunity for recent college graduates that provides paid and benefitted entry-level career experience, along with the opportunity to earn credit towards a master's degree.

“Behavioral health needs, substance use, and mental illness are the most common causes of disability in the world, but over half of the counties in the United States don’t have a single mental health professional,” said Dr. Nicholas Covino, President of William James College. “The lack of access to mental and behavioral healthcare is the most overlooked healthcare problem that we have in the United States today, and with the current healthcare crisis the need for behavioral healthcare providers will certainly continue to grow.”

Through employment with leading behavioral health agencies in Greater Boston, and master's level education at William James College, BHSC Scholars will spend their service year becoming familiar with the work of behavioral healthcare, learning to understand the needs of different populations, and receiving professional mentoring. The collaborative program also incorporates College-provided job skills training and employer-supported work release time for education and professional development.

Andy Pond, MSW, MAT, Chief Executive Officer of JRI, a BHSC agency partner, said the partnership will expand and develop the pipeline of candidates that reflect the diversity and lived experience of the communities JRI serves.

“With William James, we have found partners that share our social justice mission, our commitment to racial equity, and our dedication to culturally competent services,” Pond said. “A very important part of this effort is to substantially reduce the cost of education. By helping student-employees to avoid crippling college debt, many of these new partnerships are making careers in nonprofit work more attractive to a broader and more diverse base of individuals.”

JRI is one of the largest and programmatically diverse human services providers in the Commonwealth, with over 100 programs that serve hundreds of clients in residential settings, and thousands more in outpatient or community-based services. The Home for Little Wanderers, which impacts over 12,000 lives each year through a network of services including behavioral health, therapeutic residential and special education, adoption and foster care and provides vital

programs and services for every stage of child and family development, is also a partnering organization.

Jennifer Kropveld-Boucher, MA, LMHC, Director of Workforce, Learning & Development for The Home for Little Wanderers, said the BHSC offers recent college graduates a “true and realistic feel for the work, the youth, and the field at large.”

The Home for Little Wanderers has had a longstanding relationship with William James College as a graduate internship site. “WJC has been a great partner the last few years on other programs,” Kropveld-Boucher said. “We often hire their students post degree completion. [The College] is a leader in creating new, cutting edge initiatives aimed at increasing strength and diversity in the workforce to help better serve youth and families.”

After the conclusion of their service year, BHSC graduates have the option to continue in professional roles with the partner agency and to apply to study in the William James College Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling program. With the need for trained behavioral health professionals, especially those who are trained to work with underserved populations, at an all-time high, William James College aims for this program to become a model for the Commonwealth and the country.

“This program is a response to a critical shortage in the behavioral health workforce and provides bold solutions to the field,” said Marc Abelard, Director of the Behavioral Health Service Corps. “Now more than ever, the behavioral health workforce is in desperate need of solutions to serve the burgeoning needs of the health care system.”

William James College will welcome the first BHSC cohort in Summer 2020. The program is open to all recent college graduates with a bachelor’s degree and an interest in behavioral health, regardless of undergraduate major. Skills trainings will be provided, as will on-the-job training. Recent college graduates interested in learning more about the BHSC, or who wish to apply, should visit: www.williamjames.edu/BHSC.

About William James College

Founded in 1974, William James College is an independent, non-profit institution and a leader in educating the next generation of mental health professionals to support the growing and diverse needs of the mental health workforce. Integrating field work with academics, the College prepares students for careers as organizational leaders and behavioral health professionals who are committed to helping the underserved, multicultural populations, children and families, and veterans. William James College alumni can be found making an impact in a variety of settings, including schools, the courts, clinical care facilities, hospitals, the community and the workplace.

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