

## **RPTA Senior Exit Interviews May 26, 2016**

### **RESPONSES IN PURPLE; SIX STUDENTS PARTICIPATED**

#### **Introduction:**

Thanks for taking the time to meet with us today.

As a senior, you have had the opportunity to participate in several curricular and co-curricular activities during your time as an RPTA student. Co-curricular activities would include the RPTA Club, Rho Phi Lambda, the Cal Travel Summit, the Super Bowl, the Visit CA Outlook Forum, the CPRS Conference, the Advisory Council, professional development trips, the RPTA newsletter, the quiz bowl, and other experiences outside of the classroom.

In addition to my interest in hearing your perspectives on our efforts to continuously improve the RPTA major, as a department, in the near future we will be embarking on a self-study for accreditation and program review. A portion of this self-study provides our department with the opportunity to assess the learning outcomes for our students.

Your input is invaluable. I want to hear you and I ask that you reflect on whether or not your curricular and co-curricular experiences have been valuable to your development as students.

Kathy will be taking some notes to keep track of what you say today – but everything you share with will be confidential – meaning we won't be attaching your name to anything that you say. Do you have any questions before we get started?

#### **Warm-up Questions related to Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities through RPTA**

Let's go around the room –

- 1) Please share your name, concentration and anticipated plans following graduation.

J – Minor in Communication. I was split between all RPTA concentrations and couldn't decide. Internship with City of Atascadero this summer.

H – Event Management. Internship with 'Streamline Events' corporate event planners

M – Event Management. Internship with Madonna Inn and will continue as a career choice.

C – Spanish minor. Teaching English in Columbia.

E – Hospitality and Tourism.

K – Event Planning. Internship with a production company in Nebraska this summer [her father's business]. I am applying for an MBA in Nashville.

- 2) Up to this point – what has been your most valuable learning experience at Cal Poly?

K – Mostly outside the classroom, Super bowl 50; did not participate in professional conferences.

H – The auction and end-of-year banquet, entire year of planning to implement and see it through to completion.

J – Professors – not direct – as they model their behavior. Dr. Goldenberg facilitating. Watching them interact with students. Seeing just how much they care.

E – Cal Travel, especially the networking breaks made me get out of myself. Also the internship for the city of SLO took me out of my element.

M – Going through the internship process, interviewing, and mock interviews. I felt very prepared.

C – Work experience and getting involved on campus.

- 3) How would your Cal Poly RPTA experience be different if there were no co-curricular activities or opportunities?

J – RPTA is so hands-on and the information sticks more.

K – I wouldn't feel as prepared. I'm not scared about entering the real world.

H – Beneficial for getting a job after. Even an entry level job with so much event background impresses employers. My resume is full. I had to delete my high school information as I ran out of room.

M – I learned more from field trips.

E – This made me realize what I wanted to concentrate in.

*Note: These first questions have been general in nature but with an expressed intent to elicit general thoughts and feelings on the learning outcomes associated with co-curricular activities offered through RPTA.*

As an academic program there are several learning outcomes that we want you to achieve while a student at Cal Poly and in the RPTA major.

- 1) Please reflect and share your thoughts regarding whether or not your education has helped you with your written and verbal communication skills, and your ability to think critically and creatively.

K – RPTA 221 forced me to communicate. It really helped me assess a situation and handle customers.

E – Group projects helped, however GE courses helped with writing.

C – ENGL 310 – I can communicate better.

J – Employer told me that I come up with creative solutions.

- 2) As you prepare for graduation, how do you feel about your ability to design and implement programs, services and experiences, and your ability to interpret data and evaluate these programs, services and experiences.

E – Implementation is there but not analysis of data.

K – Same, not prepared in marketing.

H – The back-end [data] is missing.

M – I agree that the follow-up is missing. In my job it is events 60% planning, 10% actual, 30% follow-up.

J – RPTA 360 – not hands on and didn't stick.

E – Usually a 'set-team' that analyzes data.

- 3) Please discuss your comfort level in the strategic management and operations of employees and participants in programs, events, and service-based experiences.

J – This is what I probably feel strongest in and I feel very prepared.

M – I have a staff of 20 people and it works really well, including leading them.

C – Managerial class [Dr. Hendricks' class] worked and it was something I was interested in. Class was everything I am doing at work.

- 4) Please reflect and share whether or not your experiences in RPTA have helped you to work independently and collaboratively in groups on projects.

K – These forced me to work with others. I got much better at this and my classes helped me.

C – Strong inter-personal skills in this major.

H – Team-based jobs. We work with each other. Really beneficial to find strengths and work well together.

J – I agree that this is the most valuable skill. Makes for a better project.

E – Interviews. Question at beginning of project: What are your strengths to gain teamwork?

- 5) Consider your curricular and co-curricular experiences with marketing concepts and experiential marketing. How confident are you that you are prepared in this area?

K – I don't feel confident. This is why I am pursuing my MBA. BUS 346 was product development.

J – BUS 346, when I took it was applied. We made a marketing plan for an aquarium. Then the structure of this course changed after I took it.

H – BUS 346, we created a plan for Cal Poly Baseball. I put the 405 management plan on LinkedIn because it was beneficial, but not the marketing plan.

M – BUS 346 was a product based course.

E – Experiential marketing – Did not have any depth to it. I don't know what experiential marketing is besides George P. Johnson.

J – RPTA 370 with Dr. Sturm. We planned an experiential marketing program for a non-profit, however I didn't feel like the work was upper-division. Course was redundant.

E – RPTA 370 should just be for event planners, not all RPTA students.

- 6) Please discuss your preparation to interpret budgets & analyze financial documents.

M – I feel more comfortable with excel than budget.

H – I am hands-on in my jobs and I did not get it in class, i.e., proposed budget, then corrections and final budget.

K – The financial accounting class helpful. We need one more class to help.

E – RPTA 424 is a good foundation and I learned the excel program.

J – I feel comfortable in excel but this doesn't translate to budget.

- 7) Please reflect and share whether or not your experiences in RPTA have helped raise your awareness of issues related to sustainability.

C – RPTA 313 was one of my favorite classes.

E – RPTA 313 and RPTA 314 were my favorite classes. It is what I want to do now, it is my passion.

K – Sustainability got me thinking and opened my eyes. I liked the concepts.

J – Jerusha rocked that class and I retained the information.

- 8) Following your education at Cal Poly, how committed do you think you will be to lifelong learning?

C – I'm always learning.

H – I can never have too much experience. There are always new technology & events and new techniques.

M – Everyone wants something new so you are always learning.

E – Hands-on and learn by doing, we take these to our jobs.

J – I've never hated going to class.

## **General Strengths & Weaknesses of RPTA**

### **Strengths**

- 1) What are the curricular and co-curricular strengths of the RPTA major?

K – Hands-on experiences and conferences.

J – Volunteering is a priority for the curriculum.

H – Jobs blog is beneficial. I look every week.

K – Cool opportunities! I look at the jobs blog and say to myself, "I can do that".

H – Jobs blog especially knowing that these companies want you.

K – Professors really care for you. Able to go to Dr. Mac for advice.

E – Full-time faculty motivate you and they care about you. Their doors are always open.

J – Department Head emails you checking in about your internship, amazing!

H – Faculty know your name.

C – Faculty are approachable and welcoming.

### **Weaknesses**

- 1) What are the curricular and co-curricular weaknesses of the RPTA major?

K – Need to have more emphasis on business especially budget & marketing.

H – Senior Project should be more hands-on, i.e., interviewing people, not just sitting at a computer working on project.

M – Senior Project feels disconnected for RPTA majors. Not really for the RPTA major.

E – RPTA club and Rho Phi Lambda are a bit of a letdown in our year.

C – Perception of the title of our major.

J – Feels like there has been a shift and the major is more recognizable now than when I first started. Others have heard that it is a great major.

2) What are the common complaints about the RPTA major?

K – Classes are busy work.

E – Busy work just to add up points in order to grade. Wish I was more challenged. Rec classes are an easy “A.”

**Wrap-up Question**

1) What piece of advice would you share with incoming RPTA students next fall about RPTA curricular and co-curricular opportunities?

C – Get involved.

J – Invest in your Professor and your work.

E – Ask Professors questions during office hours and right after class.

H – Get involved in clubs and committees. Get your foot in the door early!

K – Don’t wait. I quit my sorority because RPTA became my family.