

PRACTICES EXCHANGE

NEWSLETTER

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<https://yeswemustcoalition.org>

Issue 44

This year the Practices Exchange Newsletter is dedicated with appreciation and admiration to the memory of Dr. Nia Lane Chester, the newsletter's founding editor and program manager of the Yes We Must Coalition.

Higher Education in These Times In order to provide a forum for YWMC members to share strategies and raise questions with one another during these uncertain times, the Yes We Must Coalition will continue the Open Forums begun last year. Each month we will offer a general session, open to anyone at a member school. Information regarding links to these sessions is sent out via the email lists for YWMC Google Groups. We welcome all members who wish to join the conversation.

Growing the Coalition If you know a school that should be a member of the Yes We Must Coalition, please connect us with them. Growing numbers make us stronger in the work we do together and the voice we raise on behalf of low-income students. Please get in touch with Gloria Nemerowicz, President, at glorianemerowicz@yeswemustcoalition.org.

YWMC MEMBER SHOWCASE: Albizu University



Founded in 1966 by renowned Hispanic psychologist Dr. Carlos Albizu-Miranda, **Albizu University** is a private, non-profit institution of higher learning with campuses in San Juan and Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, and Miami, Florida. It enrolls approximately 2000 students, close to 75% of whom qualify for financial aid in the form of grants, loans, or on-campus employment. Albizu became a member of the Yes We Must Coalition in February 2021.

Dr. Albizu established the University in response to the lack of culturally sensitive clinical psychology graduate programs and a growing need for Hispanic mental health professionals in Puerto Rico and the parallel community of South Florida in the 1960s. Albizu became the first professional school of psychology established in the United States and the Caribbean, fulfilling the goal of educating culturally competent individuals capable of serving diverse populations in an increasingly global community.

In keeping with Dr. Albizu's philosophy of inclusivity and diversity, Albizu University offers undergraduate and graduate programs in psychology, education, speech-language pathology, human services, criminal justice and even an ESOL program taught by diverse, expert faculty members who are both academics and professionals in their field. Programs are designed for students of all cultural and ethnic backgrounds and provide rich exposure to diverse populations through both academic training and applied experiences.



Because many of its students are already in the workforce, Albizu offers the personal attention of small class sizes, together with morning, afternoon, and night courses to provide flexibility that includes many degrees and programs taught completely online. Continuing education and professional certification programs are also offered.

Albizu University also affords a rich student life, which includes extensive virtual programs and resources, complete with a student council and clubs, a career services, coaching and academic success center, and numerous educational workshops and enrichment webinars.

Through its Miami, San Juan, and Mayagüez on-campus low-cost clinics, as well as its network of external practicum sites, Albizu University provides a forum for students to apply their new clinical skills in mental health and speech and language services under the supervision of licensed professionals by serving the local community both in-person and through telehealth.

More than 20,000 needy individuals in the San Juan and South Florida area have been served to date without the requirement of insurance.

Albizu University is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education; its clinical psychology programs are accredited by the American Psychological Association; and its Master of Science in Speech and Language Pathology is accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Most recently, Albizu was approved as a member of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA) that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education activities.

Albizu University is ranked in the top five U.S. universities in conferring doctoral degrees to Hispanic students by the National Science Foundation. The PhD in Clinical Psychology program at Albizu's San Juan campus received the Example of Excellence Award in Education—the only institution in Puerto Rico to receive this honor. For additional information or to answer questions, please contact Floralba Arbelo, Dean of Student Affairs (Miami), farbelo@albizu.edu.

Institutional Resources/Practices

Bay Path University: WELL Program

Bay Path University (MA) is a women's college founded in 1897. The Women as Empowered Learners and Leaders (WELL) Program was created in 2010 to provide undergraduates of all ages opportunities to explore passions, leadership styles, and the contexts in which women lead. The program helps students consider their potential, develop confidence, and find meaningful ways to engage in their life pursuits.

The WELL Program supports students in the residential college as well as in The American Women's College and is built into every degree plan. Each student has a dedicated professional advisor, and peer mentors and career coaches serve as additional supports throughout the curriculum. For residential students, WELL courses are offered in person over 14 weeks, while courses in The American Women's College run 6 weeks online. The WELL courses in both divisions include Women as Empowered Learners & Leaders, Present Yourself (an optional 2 credit course), Strategies for Career & Personal Growth, and WELL in Practice. Total credits for the program is 7 credits for residential students and 9 credits for online students, and completion of WELL Program courses is presented on transcripts.

The WELL Program also provides thoughtfully designed campus activities such as peer mentors embedded in courses, career coaching sessions including career assessments, and community service projects to ensure students get oriented to the University, develop a sense of belonging and connection, explore their leadership potential and passions, and learn and use personally meaningful and career-focused skills. All 1,530 undergraduates at Bay Path participate in the program.

The courses and campus activities of the WELL Program fit the guided pathways model the University is developing for all students to increase persistence and graduation. Learning outcomes related to leadership, teamwork, problem solving skills, communication, critical thinking, and adaptability are assessed annually using specially designed WELL Program rubrics. WELL also incorporates pre- and post-course surveys and reflective assignments to gauge effectiveness.

Students frequently comment that the first WELL course broadens their perspective and fosters a sense of purpose. Sample reflections include:

- “I enjoy how open, inclusive, and inviting the class is and feels.”
- “I was pushed to speak outwardly about my feelings and problems, and I felt more confident speaking in front of the class, which is important to me.”
- “I have added awareness, knowing women I encounter along my journey can influence me and I, in return, strive to do the same for them through leadership.”

About the career-focused course, a student reflected: “Communicating is a vital part of working. This course has given me a deeper understanding of how that relates to my career path. I know even more now how things like body language, active listening, and marketing my soft communication skills will help me achieve my goals.” The salary negotiation learning activities increased the confidence of a student to negotiate a higher salary for a technical position, resulting in a 14% increase over the original terms.

Quantitative data support these anecdotes. Survey data from 2021 show that the number of students who agreed with the statements, “I know how to negotiate salary, benefits, and other aspects of employment” and “I know how to build my professional network” increased by 70% and 44%, respectively. Learning in the capstone course is evidenced by a jump from 49% pre-course to 96% post-course in agreement with “I am confident in knowing what my next steps are regarding my career plans”.

WELL experiences help students to discern and articulate their goals in life and give them the confidence, skills, and knowledge to achieve those goals successfully. For more information, please contact Maura Devlin, Dean, Institutional Effectiveness and Accreditation, at mdevlin@baypath.edu.

Submissions for Future Issues

YWMC members are encouraged to submit examples of policies, practices and/or resources that you have found to be effective in promoting student success and that you would like to share with your YWMC colleagues. We are particularly interested in examples of how members are addressing issues of social and racial justice. Send ideas for the newsletter to Barbara Kirby, Operations Manager, barbara@yeswemustcoalition.org.