

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Contact Information

Division

Student Services

Dean

Tabitha Conaway

Division Office

L 102, Rocklin Campus

Overview

The department of Personal Development is the instructional component of the College's counseling services. Courses provide a broad foundation in academic, career and personal success strategies to help students achieve their goals and participate as productive members of our society. Opportunities for practical application serve to build knowledge and skills in key areas such as planning and goal setting, decision-making, cultural competency, personal responsibility, self-awareness, critical thinking, emotional intelligence and communication. The objective of Personal Development is to promote student success by strengthening essential academic, career and life skills.

Faculty

Brook Fellows

Professor, Counseling

B.A., California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

M.S., California State University, Hayward

Mark Kwoka

Professor, Disabled Student Programs and Services Counseling

B.S., Oregon State University

M.S., California State University, Sacramento

Karin McGuire

Professor, CalWORKs Counseling

A.A., American River College

B.S., California State University, Sacramento

M.A., Chapman University

Catherine J. Morris

Professor, Counseling

B.A., California State University, Sacramento

M.A., California State University, Sacramento

Christopher Old

Professor, Counseling

B.A., College of William and Mary

M.A., University of Virginia

Blake E. Rood

Professor, Counseling

A.A., Monterey Peninsula College

B.A., University of Washington

M.S., California State University, Sacramento

Tonya N. Times

Professor, Counseling

B.A., California State University, Sacramento

M.S., California State University, Sacramento

Courses

Understanding course descriptions (<https://catalog.sierracollege.edu/archive/2025-2026/student-resources/course-information/understanding-course-descriptions/>)

PDEV 0001. College and Life Success

Units: 3

Hours: 54 lecture

Strategies for creating success in college, life and career. Apply psychological, social, and physiological principles of development, learning, motivation and wellness to support success. Explore personality, interests, and values to increase self-understanding and support informed educational, career and life decisions. Strengthen academic study strategies such as note taking, memorizing and test taking skills. Apply life management techniques to accomplish goals. Develop a plan for wellness and living a long and healthy life. Practice creative and critical thinking techniques, problem-solving, and decision-making. (CSU, UC-with unit limitation)

PDEV 0006. Career Planning

Units: 3

Hours: 54 lecture

A study of Career Counseling and its relationship to career planning. In particular, students will learn to examine their individual psychological, social, and environmental factors impacting their career choices. The course includes individual assessments of personality, interests, values, and skills to help identify appropriate careers and college majors. Students will examine the historical view of careers, current career trends, employment outlook, occupational research, research on educational requirements, goal setting, decision-making, and job search strategies including networking, resume writing, interviewing and portfolio development. (CSU, UC)

PDEV 0008. Introduction to College

Units: 0.5-2

Hours: 9 lecture per .5 unit

Introduction to higher education, college terms, student resources, student success practices, steps to choosing a career direction, related interest area, program and/or major, the college catalog, degree/certificate requirements, and an overview of the transfer process to four-year colleges/universities. Students formulate an educational plan to increase success in reaching educational goals. (CSU, UC-with unit limitation)

PDEV 0009. Assertiveness Training

Unit: 1

Hours: 18 lecture

Step by step strategies for becoming more assertive, rather than passive or aggressive. Learn verbal and nonverbal skills for communicating with people more authentically, effectively and fairly. Examines cultural and social differences in assertive communication. (CSU)

PDEV 0012. Peer Mentor Training

Units: 3

Hours: 54 lecture

Experiential introduction to the method and process of being a skilled helper in academic peer support programs. Emphasis on communication skills, relationship development, knowledge of higher education, college policies and resources with the goal of promoting the academic and psychosocial factors that contribute to college and life success. (CSU)

PDEV 0021. Career Exploration through Self Assessment*Units: 0.5-1*

Hours: 9 lecture per .5 unit

Introduction to the career decision making process using career assessment and educational planning tools. Includes self assessment of personality, values, interests and skills; analysis and exploration of course of study and career options; development of a career action plan; and creation of a student educational plan. (CSU)

PDEV 0028. Independent Study*Units: 1-3*

Designed for students interested in furthering their knowledge at an independent study level in an area where no specific curriculum offering is currently available. Independent study might include, but is not limited to, research papers, special subject area projects, and research projects. See Independent Study page in catalog. (CSU)

PDEV 0052. Student Leadership Development*Units: 2*

Hours: 36 lecture

Introductory course in leadership development, which explores student government, student clubs and organizations, and aspects of group dynamics. Students gain knowledge in applying practical leadership skills to out-of-class projects; such as planning and running effective meetings, parliamentary procedure, group leadership, and motivation techniques. (CSU)

PDEV 0070. Stress and Well Being*Units: 3*

Hours: 54 lecture

Emphasis on analyzing theories, research methods, and empirical evidence regarding the relationship between stress and well-being. Overview of psychological theories of stress, including types, causes and effects. Explores solutions to mitigate its negative impacts. Explores the relationship between psychological and socio-cultural theories and factors in creating stress and affecting ones ability to manage it. Introduces research in coping techniques including meditation, cognitive strategies and the practice of wellness. (CSU, UC)

PDEV 0075. Study of Happiness and Well-Being*Units: 3*

Hours: 54 lecture

An overview of happiness and well-being through current theory and research in positive psychology. This course explores the relationships between positive psychology, psychological theories, and the application of strategies to enhance happiness and well-being. Topics include personal strengths, gratitude, meaning and social connection. Emphasis on analyzing theories, cultural perspectives, research methods, and empirical evidence, all with a direct application to everyday life, including finding meaning in relationships, career, and life. (CSU)

PDEV 0094. Career Exploration Internship*Units: 0.5-4*

Exposure to business/industry under the direction of a worksite supervisor, related to student's educational or occupational goals. Develops career awareness, experience and knowledge with a focus on job skills that enhance academic learning. Mandatory orientation session and faculty approval to determine eligibility. One unit of credit is equal to 54 hours. Students may earn up to a total of 16 units in internship courses (any course numbered 95 and PDEV 94). (CSU-with unit limitation)

PDEV 0095. Internship in Personal Development/Human Services*Units: 0.5-4*

Designed for advanced students to work in an area related to their educational or occupational goal. Provides new on-the-job technical training under the direction of a worksite supervisor, allowing students to expand knowledge and skills in the chosen field. Mandatory orientation session and faculty approval to determine eligibility. One unit of credit is equal to 54 hours of work. Students may earn up to a total of 16 units in internship courses (any course numbered 95 and PDEV 94). (CSU-with unit limitation)

PDEV 0800. Career Essentials - Looking Inside*Units: 0*

Hours: 10 lecture

Introduction to the career decision-making process using career assessment tools to formulate a career profile. Includes self assessment of personality, values, interests, skills and learning style. (pass/no pass grading) (noncredit)

PDEV 0801. Career Essentials - Exploring the World of Work*Units: 0*

Prerequisite: Completion of PDEV 800 with grade of "Pass"

Hours: 8 lecture

Introduction to the world of work including industry sectors, career clusters and pathways. Overview of current and projected trends in expanding career areas, educational/training requirements, salary and outlook. Research career options using a variety of resources. Develop understanding of decision-making process and apply to career choices. (pass/no pass grading) (noncredit)

PDEV 0802. Career Essentials - Getting Hired*Units: 0*

Hours: 10 lecture

Overview and explanation of the job search process, including the role of social media, personal branding and evolving employer expectations. Understanding and application of current job search techniques including finding and researching positions and companies, networking, resume writing, interviewing, and evaluating and negotiating job offers. (pass/no pass grading) (noncredit)

Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)

- Demonstrate ability to access college and/or community resources to achieve goals.
- Apply critical thinking and problem-solving strategies to make academic, career and/or personal decisions.
- Demonstrate appreciation and understanding of the importance and influence of social and cultural diversity in academic, career, and/or life planning.
- Enhance self-awareness through self-assessment, applying theories of learning, communication, psychology and/or career development that are relevant to college and life success.
- Formulate academic, career and/or personal goals and create an action plan to achieve them.