

**CSPA Practicum****Number of Positions Available:** 1 Spring, 1 Summer**Office/Department:** Center for Assessment and Research Studies<http://www.jmu.edu/assessment/sass/CSPA-practicum.shtml>**Director:** Dr. Keston Fulcher

**Mission Statement:** The mission of the Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS) at James Madison University is to provide quality assessment service to the university, to provide applied graduate training in both assessment and measurement, to increase the use of innovative technology in assessment practice, to increase the rigor of measurement and statistical techniques used in assessment practice, and to produce quality scholarship in assessment and measurement.

**Functional areas included in this office/department:**

- Student Affairs Assessment Support Services (SASS)
  - Collaborate with any JMU student affairs office to assess student learning and development outcomes associated with intentional programming
  - Develop educational materials and present on-campus educational workshops
- Academic Program Assessment Consultation & Support (PASS)
  - Evaluate the assessment reports of all academic programs and provide formative feedback
  - Develop educational materials and present on-campus educational workshops
- General Education Assessment Support
  - Collaborate with faculty to address general education outcomes associated with the five cluster areas of general education
  - Coordinate large-scale data collection events (i.e., Assessment Day)
- Learning Improvement by Design (LID)
  - Work collaboratively with the Center for Faculty Innovation to help student affairs and academic programs “close the loop” by using assessment results to make programmatic changes that improve student learning

**Students who participate in this experience will gain understanding of student affairs as a profession and the influence student affairs has on contemporary higher education through the following tasks and activities:**

- Attend CARS staff meetings, SASS team meetings, and Student Affairs Assessment Council meetings
- Develop assessment-related educational materials
- Present workshops on various topics related to outcomes assessment such as learning improvement, program theory, implementation fidelity
- Observe assessment consultation meetings
- Evaluate existing student affairs assessment processes and make recommendations for improvement
- Engage in student affairs assessment related listservs and on-line professional development activities offered through ACPA and NASPA Assessment Knowledge Communities
- Develop an evidence-based program that aligns with student’s interests; design a comprehensive assessment plan to accompany this program
- Additional activities may be incorporated based on practicum student’s interests and skills.

**Students who participate in this experience will be exposed to the purposeful application of the following student development, career development, counseling and/or organizational theories:**

- Through this practicum, students will be exposed to the necessity of student development and learning theory when assessing program effectiveness. The need for “purposeful application of theory” will be emphasized, the lack of “purposeful application of theory” in practice will be discussed, and strategies to increase “purposeful application of theory” will be taught. In particular, the link between theory and program logic will be major component of the practicum, as this understanding is fundamental to quality assessment.
- Moreover, as part of this experience, students will likely encounter theory-based programming when working with clients within student affairs. That is, as student affairs offices contact SASS and work with the practicum student, those clients will be articulating the theories they have used to build intentional programming to impact stated student learning and development outcomes.
- Given this emphasis on purposeful application of student development theory in the CSPA practicum, a powerful experience would be for practicum students to evaluate what JMU student affairs programs have purposeful application of theory via programming, which theories are used most often to build intentional programming and why, and the resources necessary to build high-quality theory-based programming.

**Students assigned to this site will be able to participate in the following assessment or evaluation projects:**

Due to the nature of this practicum experience, all activities and tasks will promote the development of crucial assessment-related skills. Some examples of specific tasks/activities include the following:

- Compare and contrast ACPA’s *Assessment Skills & Knowledge (ASK) Standards* with the ACPA-NASPA *Professional Competencies in Assessment, Evaluation, and Research (AER)* given these standards/competencies apply to all professionals in the field
- Use the ACPA-NASPA AER rubrics to evaluate personal competencies in AER and growth during the practicum experience
- Explain the function of the CAS standards and provide an example of their use for assessment
- Serve as proctor for Assessment Day
- Evaluate existing student affairs assessment processes and make recommendations for improvement
- Additional projects based on practicum student’s interests and skills

**Students who participate in this experience will be evaluated and provided on-going feedback in the following ways:**

- Weekly meetings with supervisor
- Final written evaluation and meeting to occur no later than the end of April
- As requested by student or deemed necessary

**Specific expectations of students assigned to this site include:**

- Create and maintain a schedule designed to meet practicum requirements; notify staff of any changes to regular schedule
- Be prompt to all meetings and complete assigned tasks in a timely, organized and professional manner
- Work effectively in teams while also being self-directed on independent projects
- Maintain consistent and open communication with supervisor
- Address successes and challenges with supervisor; request assistance when needed
- Adhere to confidentiality guidelines
- Maintain a positive attitude about practicum responsibilities
- Uphold office professionalism standards

**Contact Person & Site Supervisor**

Sara Finney, PhD

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Watch this video for the perspective of a CSPA student who completed this practicum:

<http://www.jmu.edu/assessment/sass/CSPA-practicum.shtml>