

**SUDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 16, 2025 / 4:00 PM /
HSB 235 AND [ZOOM](#)**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Leszek called the meeting to order at 4:08 pm.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Industry

Amber Delagrange, SUD Clinical Manager, Cowlitz Family Health Center
Bryanna Jellum, SUDP Admin Supervisor and Assessment Counselor, Awakenings
Janet Bentley-Jones, Clinical Supervisor, Cowlitz Tribe

Education

Leszek Cromwell, Director of Operations for the SUD Program, Lower Columbia College
Hanna Burlison, Biomedical Science Teacher, R.A. Long High School
Merry Bond, Dean of Nursing, Allied Health, and Wellness, Lower Columbia College
Michele Waltz, SUD Faculty, Lower Columbia College
Jeb Bolerjack, SUD Faculty, Lower Columbia College
Drew McDaniel, SUD Faculty, Lower Columbia College

Guests

Nicole Buffham (recorder)

III. BUSINESS/INDUSTRY/LABOR EMERGING TRENDS

<https://lowercolumbia.edu/job-market-data/health/>

Leszek presented the job market data for SUD in Cowlitz County. The employment trend briefly ticked down, but is going back up.

Janet reported that the Tribe is hiring, but they do not hire SUDP-Ts because private insurance will not pay for their services.

Janet, Bryanna, and Amber confirmed that wage data seemed accurate. The site noted an average salary of \$68,193.

Merry said that SUD is at the top of the list for needs in the region, based on her work with ESD 112.

Bryanna confirmed a need, but many agencies seek Master's-level clinicians.

Michele explained that integrating behavioral health and SUD services has led to combined roles for SUD professionals, mental health clinicians, and behavioral health specialists, which agencies are still refining.

Bryanna added that billing practices often guide agencies, and insurance is willing to pay for Master's-level clinicians.

Janet reported that Medicaid pays for Peer Support Specialists, and there was a rumor that private insurance may start paying if the peer specialist has a Master's degree.

Michele said that being able to bill for peer support specialists has opened doors, but is also creating issues around their quality and education. The certification requires an 80-hour training. She mentioned meeting a peer support specialist who reported that he was abstinent, but his fellow peer support specialists were not. This highlights the gap in accountability and the need for stable recovery before and while working with clients.

Bryanna commented that there was a one-year recovery requirement, but nothing defines when that year starts or what that recovery means.

IV. ADD TOPICS FOR REVIEW AND INPUT FROM BUSINESS/INDUSTRY/LABOR

A. Curriculum & Environment

Review labor market information -There was nothing further to report.

B. Facilities, Equipment, Technology & Training

a. Facilities and Technology

b. Training/Professional Development - There was nothing to report.

C. Implementation of Pathways & CTE Programs of Study

a. Alignment with K12 and CTE Dual Credit

b. Stackable Credentials

c. Opportunities for graduates-Higher Education & Career Advancement

Hanna explained how her Human Body Systems class provides dual credit for the Medical Assisting program, meeting some of the degree's credit requirements and high school credits. She asked Leszek whether there was anything specific students could learn at the high school level to help them with the SUD program.

Merry suggested Mental Health First Aid and suicide prevention to help them enter college with a higher baseline of knowledge, even if it doesn't provide dual credit.

D. Student Success, Performance & Equity

a. Sharing Data and Discussion

- i. Enrollment updates: Fall 2025
 - SUDS AAS: 29
 - SUDS AAS-T: 17
 - AADTA SUDS Focus: 5
- ii. 2025 Total: 51 Students
- iii. Fall 2023: 48
- iv. Fall 2024: 49
- v. 2024-2025 Graduation:
 - AAS: 11
 - AAS-T: 1
 - AAS: 11
 - AAS-T: 1

Leszek provided the enrollment data for the program. There are 51 total students, which is an increase from 48 in Fall 2023 and 49 in Fall 2024. Only 14% of students are full-time equivalent, with the majority being part-time.

Note: AA-DTA graduates are not easily tracked because they are grouped with all DTA degrees.

Leszek and Merry explained the difference between the degrees.

- The AAS is a stand-alone program providing precisely what is needed to prepare students for SUDP licensure (meets WAC codes). It does not include college-level math or lab science, making transfer to a four-year school difficult without additional classes. Internship (practicum) hours are required.
- The AAS-T provides a transfer pipeline into LCC's Organizational Leadership and Technical Management (OLTM) Bachelor's program, or a future behavioral health program. It includes the necessary college-level math and lab science for transfer. Students still complete internship/practicum hours toward the hours needed for SUDP licensure.
- The AA-DTA with SUD focus is a statewide transfer degree with some SUD elective classes. The program does not include internship hours or licensure requirements needed to become an SUDP. It is for students planning to get a Bachelor's in fields like psychology or social work.

Leszek explained that attrition rates are high, which is typical for the field. There are several reasons for attrition. Most students are part-time, so it takes longer for them to complete the program. Many classes are only offered once per year, requiring students who need that course to wait until it is offered again to take it.

Michele pointed out that the program's students primarily consist of non-traditional students. Often, those students have gone through addiction and want to help others.

Merry shared that Washington does not have a clean time requirement, but that the program highly recommends one to two years clean, and that the student is stable in recovery. This is clearly stated in the [SUDS Program Handbook](#).

Michele said that students who are not stable in their recovery can find themselves overwhelmed with the stress of college and slip back into active addiction. She recognized the efforts in the handbook to get students to assess their readiness for the program and the risk of relapse.

Leszek explained that he discusses these points when he meets students for new student advising. He also has to have hard conversations about convictions that may prevent students from completing internships or working in the field.

Janet and Bryanna said that their agencies generally have a zero-tolerance policy for person-to-person crimes and crimes against vulnerable populations (children, the elderly, and exploitation), regardless of the timeframe. Domestic Violence 3 (felony) is a definite "never." Lesser assaults (like Assault 4, a misdemeanor) and non-violent charges may be permissible.

Leszek said he will follow up with each agency to compile a more definitive list of exclusionary crimes to share with students.

V. K12 General updates

Around the Table - Any other updates from K12 attendees

Hanna offered to have SUD professionals visit her high school classes as guest speakers to raise awareness of SUD careers beyond the typical high-visibility jobs.

VI. LCC General updates

Around the Table - Any other updates from LCC faculty/staff

Merry reported that LCC had peer evaluators on campus for ongoing accreditation from the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, October 15 - 17, 2025.

Additionally, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education has granted accreditation for LCC's Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program, effective retroactively from March 2025.

Merry announced that the SUD program now has a [webpage](#). In addition to information on the degree options, program costs, and licensure eligibility requirements, the [SUDS Handbook](#) and [Practicum Guide](#) are posted on the webpage.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Proposed Changes

A. Course Revisions

- a. SUDS 113: Substance Abuse and Addiction Treatment Methods (3 credits) – Course to be retired.
- b. The three credits will be redistributed as follows:
 - i. SUDS 102 will increase by 1 credit.
 - ii. SUDS 111 will increase by 2 credits.
- c. SUDS 102: Introduction to Theories and Counseling
 - i. Proposed new title: Introduction to Theories of Counseling and SUD Treatment Methods
 - ii. Rationale: Updating the course title and content ensures compliance with WAC 246-811-030 and better reflects current industry standards and competencies.

- d. SUDS 111: Record Keeping and Case Management
 - i. Will increase from 3 credits to 5 credits.
 - ii. Rationale: The additional credit hours will allow students to gain greater familiarity with ASAM Criteria and its application in assessment and treatment planning.

B. Elective Updates

- a. SUDS 109: Process Addiction/Compulsive Behaviors
 - i. Will be reduced from 4 credits to 3 credits.
 - ii. The 1 credit will be reallocated to SUDS 114.
- b. SUDS 114: Suicide Assessment, Prevention, and Crisis Management
 - i. Will increase from 2 credits to 3 credits.
 - ii. Rationale: Given the rise in mental health concerns and suicide risk, expanding this course provides students with deeper knowledge and practical skills in prevention and crisis response.
- c. PSYC 220: Psychological Disorders
 - i. Will be moved from the elective list to the required course list.
 - ii. Rationale: *Psychopathology/Abnormal Psychology* is a WAC requirement. Previous reliance on PSYC 100 and PSYC 200 no longer meets this requirement based on current course content and WAC alignment.

Summary of Proposed Changes

Course	Current Title	Proposed Title	Current Credits	Proposed Credits	Action
SUDS 113	Substance Abuse and Addiction Treatment Methods	—	3	—	Retire course
SUDS 102	Introduction to Theories and Counseling	Introduction to Theories of Counseling and SUD Treatment Methods	3	4	Title change; credit increase
SUDS 111	Record Keeping and Case Management	—	3	5	Credit increase
SUDS 109	Process Addiction/ Compulsive Behaviors	—	4	3	Credit reduction
SUDS 114	Suicide Assessment/Prevention/ Crisis Management	—	2	3	Credit increase
PSYC 220	Psychological Disorders	—	5	5	Move from elective to required

In previous advisory meetings, there was significant discussion around the proficiency of our students in administering the ASAM and documentation. As a result, the department worked to bolster the needed skills while leaving degree credits unchanged. Leszek presented the changes and explained the rationale (as listed above). These changes reduce content overlap, allowing more time to focus on the content that must be reinforced to better prepare students for their internships. The overall program credit totals will remain unchanged.

Janet asked about professional language because she struggles with some staff neglecting to document using appropriate clinical language. Drew responded that he teaches his students the verbiage they'll use in the field. He covers the Mental Status Examination (MSE)/Mental Status Assessment (MSA) in all his

classes. He stresses the importance of understanding terminology, writing, and understanding clinical notes.

Michele and Drew discussed the challenges in the SUD scope of practice and how the overlaps with mental health provide challenges. To prevent overstepping those boundaries, students must use “client presents with” or “client reports”, rather than using terminology that might look like a diagnosis (i.e., depression). Drew stressed the importance of students being well-versed.

Jeb explained that he draws attention to the importance of collaboration and warns students to be leery of diagnosing things outside of their scope. Students also spend time practicing treatment plans and assessment language.

Janet has found it helpful at her agency to take objectives and interventions from existing treatment plans and put them on slips of paper to be drawn from a hat. She asked the group whether or not they worked. Afterward, they reworded them. The team thought it was a fun game that made them recognize where and how to improve their work.

Leszek suggested the program consider a program-wide initiative to incorporate technical writing. This would build student skills from day one through graduation.

Merry shared that a full-time faculty member for the SUD program is very high on the list of priorities. While she appreciates our excellent adjunct faculty, a full-time faculty member could devote time to leading program initiatives. She added that it may not happen next year due to budget constraints, but having a full-time faculty member for the program remains a high priority.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Certificate of Completion

B. AAS-T? Science and Math Requirement Concerns

<https://lowercolumbia.edu/publications/catalog/programs/Health-AAS-Substance-Use-Disorder-Studies-BAS-OLTM/>

C. AAS: <https://lowercolumbia.edu/publications/catalog/programs/Health-AAS-Substance-Use-Disorder-Studies/>

Leszek said a Certificate of Completion of 45 credits was being considered for the program, as other colleges around the state offer a COC. It would meet the WACs and allow students to enter the field faster. While this contradicts the requests for students to have more education, he wanted committee feedback.

Merry explained that students completing a COC must complete more practicum hours to get their license.

Janet thought that would be a viable option. As far as considering people with a COC versus an associate degree, it would depend on the person.

Bryanna thought that a COC might open the door for people who think an associate's degree would be too much for them. It would save time and money.

Jeb reported that most SUDP-Ts are not paid while completing their practicum hours requirement. He said we would want to clarify to students that the extra hours beyond the certificate of completion would likely not be paid. Many associate degree students already struggle with the idea that they will be working for 15 months for free, so the COC having more practicum hours would be a drawback.

Bryanna shared that she worked for 9 months for free until a position opened up. She worked full-time elsewhere during that time.

Merry thought this was a significant gap in the progression towards licensure. She was not previously aware of the issue. She said job market data and other schools offering the COC must be consulted.

Janet recommended that people who want to enter the field quickly become Certified Peer Specialists. They could get in the door of an agency, be paid, and have exposure to the profession. CPCs with the Tribe are paid a minimum of \$26.40 per hour, more than many SUDPs.

Bryanna explained that SUDP-Ts spend much time learning and observing, which is not billable. It is not feasible to pay them. Once they can do the job with supervision, if they have a position open, her agency will hire SUDP-Ts.

The group thought that the peer support route would be a better option. Michele said that although the two-week training is free, the waiting list is long. Janet recommended speaking to Maureen Bailey at the state for information on developing a training program for peer support at LCC. She will send the contact information to Leszek.

Because the training is completed in such a short time period, Merry thought that Certified Peer Specialist training would be best suited for the continuing education department.

Merry expects the course changes presented at the meeting to be submitted to the Curriculum Committee this fall for implementation next summer.

IX. UPCOMING PROGRAM OR COMMUNITY EVENTS

None presented.

X. NEXT MEETING (DATE/TIME/PLACE)

April 30, 2026, 4:00 pm, HSB 235 and Zoom

XI. MEETING END: 5:46 pm

XII. Amendment: 11/4/2025: Michele Waltz clarified that the SUDP credential is a certification, not a license.

RESOURCES

ADVISORY COMMITTEE HANDBOOK

Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Statement

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