

2018-19 OCPA Executive Board Nominee Information

Nominee Name: Sophie Braga de Barros

Nominee Institution: The Ohio State University

Title: GAA - Off Campus and Commuter Student Services

Positions for Consideration: Graduate Student Members-at-Large

Please describe your involvement with OCPA.

As a first-year Master's student and someone new to the Ohio area, my involvement with OCPA so far has been very limited, but I am looking forward to increasing it over the time I have left at my institution. Earlier in the year I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the 2018 OCPA Annual Conference and present a session on Imposter Syndrome as a graduate student. Throughout the conference, I also had the opportunity to learn from peers in the region, network and participate in the graduate student case study competition. While my involvement with OCPA has only begun, I look forward to being an active and contributive member in the future.

Why are you interested in participating as a member of the OCPA Executive Board?

I am interested in participating as a member of the OCPA Executive Board because I am a strong believer that connections are the key ingredient that make our field and SA practitioners thrive. As a Graduate Student Member-at-Large, I would hope to facilitate cross-institutional connections to promote the professional development of graduate students in the state of Ohio. While I have been in the area for less than one year, attending the OCPA Annual Conference allowed me to see how diverse institutions in the state are coming together to advocate for similar passions and to exchange leading practices to best serve our students. By being a liaison between the graduate student population and the OCPA Executive Board, I hope to continue voicing those similar passions and promoting connections across the field.

What qualities and skills do you think you can bring to the indicated positions, and to the OCPA Board?

One of my key strengths is my experience with conference and event planning, having now planned one TEDx conference and an International Town and Gown Association conference. This has allowed me to develop key skillsets that will be helpful in the Graduate Student Member-at-Large position as it relates to coordinating the case study competition and helping with presenter recruitment. Additionally, I am a very flexible and adaptable individual, something that will be helpful in this position particularly when it comes to balancing my various roles and dedicating the time to create connections with graduate students across the state. Finally, as someone who comes from a journalism background, communication has been a skill that I have developed in a variety of ways. From social media management to engaging an audience with creative marketing techniques, I believe my skills with communication will be useful to reach the graduate student population in Ohio and voice their needs.

What do you believe to be the role of professional associations like OCPA?

I believe that the main role of professional associations like OCPA is to facilitate professional connections that would otherwise not happen. Professional associations provide the unique opportunity of meeting peers from different institutions and sharing leading practices across the field, something that cannot happen easily without the spaces that these organizations provide. Additionally, professional associations like OCPA are crucial to recognize the efforts of "SA-past", address the issues of "SA-present" and encourage/inform the work of "SA-future." Through those connections that are created, Student Affairs professionals are able to recognize the incredible work of those that came before them, have informed conversations about events and concerns that currently affect our practice, and identify those who, like me, are just now entering the field, helping them prepare to serve students in the best way possible.