

2018-19 OCPA Executive Board Nominee Information

Nominee Name: Cindy Deng

Nominee Institution: Case Western Reserve University

Title: Graduate Assistant

Positions for Consideration: Graduate Student Members-at-Large

Please describe your involvement with OCPA.

I am celebrating my three “month-iversary” with OCPA. My involvement started when I was an attendee at the Careers in Student Affairs Conference at the University of Akron this past October. I had started my Master’s Degree in Higher Education Administration program at Kent State University in Fall 2017, so this was my very first student affairs conference. David Vale, the Careers Conference Chair at the time and colleague of mine at Case Western Reserve University, recommended I check the conference out and explore all that it had to offer for aspiring college personnel practitioners, such as myself. The connections I made and the lessons I learned blew me away. The experience I had interacting with the breakout speakers and other attendees brought me closer to understanding the selfless nature of Higher Education and motivated me to join this Ohio college professional community.

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

I find the Member-at-Large, Graduate Student role as a valuable resource to graduate students across the state of Ohio. The goals with this role are to encourage participation, bring new opportunities, and open dialogue relevant to the graduate student community. If elected in this role, I will continue carrying out the position’s duties and creating a connected culture between them and the Ohio colleges and universities. In speaking with Leanne Barson, one of the projects that did not yet come to fruition was the opportunity to distribute monthly eNewsletters. Bringing graduate student-specific information piqued my interest, and it is a project I hope to hit the ground running. Separately, I am a proud first-generation Asian-American who wants to serve as a representative of the diverse, hard working Ohio graduate student leaders. Each of us bring different perspectives/experiences to the table and I hope to raise that social platform to ensure they are being heard at the utmost level.

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

Qualities I can bring to the position and to the OCPA Board are my persistence and enthusiasm. I have a strong work ethic and I know persistence is key to ensuring those big picture responsibilities are carried out -- even down to the smallest detail. I’m beaming with OCPA pride from ear-to-ear already as I’m writing this, so I will surely bring that extra enthusiasm to make this new year the best year yet. I also value transparency and communication, and much of that came from my former career roots. As alluded to earlier, I didn’t exactly start in student affairs. I was formerly a public relations practitioner for two years writing stories that make

people feel included in what was happening with the brands they love. I have learned that without a sense of transparency and communication about all that is happening around us, it would be nearly impossible to feel like we can be a part of something bigger. These skills I have strengthened over time will be prevalent when I put the projects into action.

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

I believe the role of professional associations, like OCPA, is to be the support network for future college personnel leaders and an advocate for the profession. Through my undergraduate years, and now as a graduate student, I took advantage of the professional development opportunities that came with being a part of professional associations. I made connections with those similar to my expertise and others who bring a wealth of knowledge and experience that helped me learn more about all that comes with the job. These individuals eventually became my mentors -- people I can reach out to learn from and bounce ideas off; I am forever grateful for the wisdom they have shared with me over the years to help me feel confident in my new role in student affairs. I believe professional associations like OCPA create valuable experiences and learning opportunities for the current and next generation of leaders in the field.