

2018-19 OCPA Executive Board Nominee Information

Nominee Name: Todd Simmons

Nominee Institution: Ohio University

Title: Graduate Assistant for Student Senate

Positions for Consideration: Graduate Student Members-at-Large

Please describe your involvement with OCPA.

OCPA was first introduced to me through the Careers in Student Affairs conference that was hosted at The University of Akron in the fall of 2017. This conference was the first that I was able to attend in a professional role as a graduate student, as well as the first conference that I had the opportunity to present at. While at OCPA: Careers in Student Affairs, I was able to interact with my emerging and established professionals, while providing advice and support to undergraduate students who were considering the field of higher education and student affairs. The second time that I was able to be involved with OCPA was when I attended in January of 2018. This was my first time attending a large-scale conference geared towards higher education and student affairs professional, as well as my first time presenting at a conference that was primarily for professionals. During this experience, I ensured that I attended all sessions possible, as well as truly engaged with the presentations.

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

OCPA has proven to me that the state of Ohio is extremely lucky to have a strong, close-knit group of professionals who prioritize the common goal of success of our higher education institutions. This has inspired me to want to start giving back to this profession, even as early as my graduate career. This role and opportunity interests me because of the experience it provides, as well as the ability to impact others it promotes. I am also interested in the OCPA Executive Board because of what I believe that I can bring to the table. Through my own background of undergraduate involvement at The University of Akron, into my career as a graduate student at Ohio University, I envision that I could provide a new perspective that would highlight what our students need from us as well as what we could be doing better for our institutions and communities.

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

Having the privilege and opportunity to serve in various leadership roles, both undergraduate and graduate, has given me a unique skillset that is specifically designed for higher education and student affairs. This skillset allows me to provide different ideas that what are typically presented, while staying resilient and adaptable when acclimating myself to a new team/environment. A skill that I believe that I possess that could serve beneficial in the Graduate Student At-Large role is my ability to be representative of others. While in roles of leadership, I have faced conflict of how constituents feel versus how my values align with those

beliefs. It was through these difficult times that I had the opportunity to learn to adapt and encompass the thought of many others rather than just myself in my decisions as a representative leader. I would be able to represent graduate students across the state of Ohio and determine the best ways to engage, support, and grow those individuals.

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

Professional associations such as OCPA serve in various capacities within the field of higher education and student affairs, specifically focusing on the advancement of our mission as professionals paired with the support of our efforts within our everyday roles. OCPA serves as a driving force behind providing insightful, unique educational opportunities to grow and develop professionally. For example, within the annual conference, various educational sessions helped to broaden and sharpen the lens of the members in attendance. OCPA also serves as a body that can provide collaborative opportunities for Ohio-based professionals with the idea of unity and growth in mind. This occurs through the connection-making opportunities that OCPA provides through the various programming efforts that the group exudes. As it stands now, I believe that this association is a defining factor of the success of the professionals and institutions within the state of Ohio.