

2019 Ohio College Personnel Association

Elections Information

Vanessa Bak –

Graduate Student Member-at-Large Candidate

Please describe your involvement with OCPA.

During the 2018-2019 academic year I attend two conferences through OCPA. The first was OCPA: Careers in Student Affairs at Walsh University. While there I attended sessions on topics that I was able to later bring to my own assistantship and talk with my students about. Second, I attended OCPA's annual conference in Columbus. There I presented on competitive busyness and busyness culture, both in terms of how it affects us as student affairs professionals, and also the effects it has on our students. At Todd Simmons encouragement I also participated in the case study competition, which was a highlight of the conference for me.

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

The OCPA conference in Columbus was an incredible weekend for me to make connections, learn from professionals, and find others who are also interested in my passions. The case study competition allowed me to think critically about difficult situations that I could come across in my future career. However, had it not been for Todd's encouragement, I may not have participated. I am interested in the Executive Board, and the Graduate Member-at-large position in particular, because I want to work to recruit graduate students to participate more in opportunities such as the case study and other events through OCPA. I want to utilize connections I made this past year and continue to develop new connections this coming year to increase membership involvement in OCPA. OCPA was a truly remarkable experience for me, and I want to show others what opportunities this organization can present for them.

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

At Ohio University I currently serve as the graduate assistant for the Margaret Boyd Scholars Program: a program specifically for undergraduate women. In the fall I am charged with recruitment of applicants for the new cohort. This year I utilized new techniques to recruit applicants, such as email campaigns, information sessions in residence halls, and tabling. Applications increased by 21% this past year, and I hope to increase them by another 10% next year. This experience will help me in the Graduate Member-at-large position as I encourage graduate students to be involved in OCPA and participate in events such as the case study competition. Also, my previous participation in the competition gave me a good understanding of how to run the event, as well a other ways to recruit people to participate next year.

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

Professional associations such as OCPA encourage connections between student affairs professionals. Student affairs is a relatively small field, and it is important to stay connected with others and keep up-to-date on new practices in the field. For example, one of the presentations I attended at the annual discussed a potential new theory on leadership development. The presenters discussed their ideas with



others in the field, and I gained new insight into how to think about leadership that I can take into my assistantship and future career. OCPA breeds these connections for those in the field, which is why it is a valuable organization to be a part of both as a graduate student and in the future.