

Statement on Social Justice

There have been a number of experiences that I have been involved with that have helped to shape my understanding of social justice. However, I feel strongly that if accepted into the CSSA program this would be one of the most fundamental areas of learning for me. While I have worked with students as an Instructor and in Student Life I have no formal training in this area and look forward to gaining a better understanding of this area in order to grow personally, gain confidence and help to implement change during my career.

I first began to explore the areas of social justice while working at the Career Development Center as a student. At the time the Career Development Center shared a suite with a number of other Departments. Here I was able to begin to explore areas of diversity and social justice and was exposed to many views I had not had much exposure to before. I constantly try to challenge how I think and loved being able to discuss and explore these sometimes difficult topics in a safe environment.

I was invited to attend the Students Speak Out Event that was being held at Oregon State University. The event was very impactful to me and at times uncomfortable and tense but personally it allowed me to grow as a person and made me aware of thoughts and behaviors that I had previously unconsciously held. One of the major ones is that without thinking I had extrapolated my lived experiences onto others. For instance, I have always found the OSU community to be warm, caring and welcoming. I think that most people will agree with that statement but at this event I learned that while this is case many students have issues and challenges I do not face.

A specific example comes from one of my best friends who is in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. A typical day might include studying at the Valley Library and then going to Dixon Rec Center. I might end the day thinking about how kind and supportive the student and full time employees are at both of these places. I also might think she had experienced the same experience as I had. While this is true she also is faced with other issues I am not. For instance, she worries about her family and if she will even be able to stay here. Our friendship and also shared Spanish and Mexican heritage has helped me to set another personal goal for being in the CSSA Program. I

hope to explore options and be able to work supporting the Latin American communities at OSU. I feel strongly that the CSSA Program could provide me with the education I need to succeed in my career in Higher Education and give me the foundation to create a welcoming community for everyone.