David Vasquez

155 NW Kings Blvd Apt 647

Corvallis, Or. 97330

(925) 818-1172

[Vasquezd@oregonstate.edu](mailto:Vasquezd@oregonstate.edu)

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I am excited to be writing about the opportunity to work as a Graduate Research Assistant with the CHARTER Fellows Program. I was immediately drawn to the collaborative and scientific nature of this position and also the opportunity for personal growth. I feel that my background as a graduate student in the College of Engineering and working in Student Life has prepared me well to succeed in this role. My goal is to become a Professor with a strong focus on supporting students interested in science and research.

As a first generation undergraduate student I really had no idea about what scientists and researchers do but fell in love with learning. I began working as a tutor for the OSU Athletics Department and also discovered my love of teaching. During my master’s degree in the College of Engineering I was fortunate to be asked by faculty to be a Teaching Assistant and then an Instructor. After graduating I knew that I wanted to pursue a PhD but was not sure what research I wanted to pursue. I began working in the Office Student Life including working at the Human Services Resource Center where I primarily supported low income and first generation students. I also worked with the Electrical Engineering and Computer Science Department working with teams of graduating seniors on their Senior Capstones. I spent a lot of time looking at research and was drawn to the work done in the College of Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences which is where I plan to finish a master’s and pursue a PhD. I am particularly interested in applying computational methods to large data sets in areas of human geography.

I wanted to tell a little of my unique background because I think it is important in what this role does. I have directly done this kind of work hiring student workers, working on research grants and collaborating with outside industry professionals. In my recent role at the Human Services Resource Center I worked directly with our undergraduate student staff to support OSU students who were struggling financially, personally or academically. I loved that my role was focused on helping students succeed and I would love to continue to do that.

Finally, I loved that this opportunity is looking for someone who really wants to be a part of this team and grow as a person. I am still working to figure out what research I hope to engage in for a PhD and think that this would open a lot of ideas. I hope to speak more about my interest in working with and learning from you and also supporting the other fellows.

Thanks for your time,   
David Vasquez