**Response to Questions**

David Vasquez

**How do you work with people from different communities or backgrounds? What is most important in supporting the health of diverse communities on campus?**

Student Health Services has an incredibly important mission on campus and one whose success is directly tied to the ability to work with individuals from all backgrounds and communities. Aspects of health and wellness are also deeply personal so it is even more important that appropriate support is available to the diverse communities on campus. A lot of how I work with people from different backgrounds has been shaped through both my education and hands on experience working in student life.

What is important to me when I work with people from different communities and backgrounds is to treat everyone with respect and kindness. I have also found that the ability to listen and learn are crucial in understanding the experiences of others. I first began working with other students while still an undergraduate. I was fortunate to be hired as a tutor for the OSU Athletics Department. Since then I have worked as a Graduate Teaching Assistant in the College of Engineering and as an Instructor at both OSU and LBCC. In my review the Dean wrote, “You do a wonderful job creating an open, welcoming, supportive atmosphere. It’s clear your students feel at ease.” It would be my goal in this role to bring this kind of environment to the Wellness Agents and the campus community who we outreach to.

There are a number of important things that go into supporting the health of diverse communities on campus. Proper nutrition, sexual health, mental health and safe drinking practices are issues that matter to students from all backgrounds. What is important is an understanding of how to best to reach out to these diverse communities about these personal topics. To do this I view the support of the Wellness Agents as crucial to being successful in our mission. Having these other students who each have a unique background and are actively engaged on campus can help us come up with some incredible and exciting outreach ideas. I also think it is important to realize that students are busy and we need to be creative in outreaching to students in an engaging and meaningful way. In this role I would hope to build upon my past experience and also leverage the education in the CSSA program which has a strong focus on social justice.

The other aspect that I think is important is to utilize data and research to support what we do. I worked directly with the Dean of Student Life to assess five years of past operational and financial data for the Career Development Center. We used this data to figure out what was working and also what demographics we were missing in our outreach. By utilizing internal data and existing research we would be able to continue reaching out to the diverse OSU community in an exciting and engaging way.

**How do you support student leaders in planning and implementing peer health initiatives? What should be taken into consideration in this process?**

During my MBA I worked in the Career Development Center with our student workers. We had a number of Career Assistants who had a similar function to the Wellness Agents at Student Health Services. I worked with them on every aspect related to marketing, planning and running events and initiatives like our large Career Expos. We also worked together on data collection and analysis related to our Department. Supporting the Career Assistants and making sure they were learning, doing well and enjoying their position was very important to me. I would bring this same level of care to working with student leaders at Student Health Services.

There are a number of things that should be taken into consideration when supporting student leaders including how things are going as a student worker and also how their academic and personal responsibilities are going. I have found my ability to successfully support students comes from building a relationship that allows for open communication. Through this communication I can get them working on initiatives they care about, prevent them from becoming overwhelmed and gain valuable insight from their own ideas. Having worked on initiatives involving thousands of student attendees and multiple planning teams I have found that planning, communication and organization are crucial to success.

An example might be if I was working with the Wellness Agents on an initiative focused on nutrition for incoming students moving into the Resident Halls. My first step would be to put together a core team and brainstorm some ideas to come up with some fun, engaging and inclusive ideas. As we began to develop some solid steps I would then try to align these tasks with the students own interests. Another important aspect along the way would be proper training so that the students feel confident in their ability to successfully perform. Related to this I also think it is important that students know who they can reach out to if they have any concerns or issues.

Finally, planning and implementing initiatives is a lot of fun and I think it is important that the Wellness Agents are enjoying their role. In this role I would work to keep things fun and interesting. I also think it is important to reward and recognize people for their work and would hopefully be able to work with other Student Health Services staff to show appreciation for everyone’s hard work.