



NWACUHO New Professional Award – Oregon: Blair Osburn Nominated by Shelly Clark, Western Oregon University

I would like to nominate Blair Osburn from Western Oregon University for the New Professional Award. While I have only worked with Blair for a few short months, I was impressed with her talent and approachability from “Day 1.” I have found that Blair is a professional that is inviting, inclusive, approachable, and an excellent critical thinker. Blair has a sense of humor that immediately puts others at ease, creates safety and approachability, and helps her relate to others.

I took the opportunity to ask Blair’s colleagues to describe the ways in which she has helped them in their current roles. Blair’s colleagues used words such as, “leader”, “thoughtful”, “reflective”, “listener”, “adaptable”, “enthusiastic”, “creative”, and “a rock.” Blair was described by one of her colleagues as “the person that they feel most comfortable turning to whenever there are questions, there is a need to process an incident, or whenever there is a need for additional understanding.” Students view Blair as an important person in their collegiate experience. When asked, students used similar words to describe Blair’s impact. Rarely does a day go by where I do not see Blair meeting with students, encouraging their growth, helping them find their own best solutions, and cheering for their accomplishments.

While I have already shared how approachable Blair has been from Day 1, let me also share with you how impressed I was with her campus engagement from “Day 4.” On the fourth day of working at Western Oregon University I got the opportunity to attend the Fall Student Affairs Meeting. While this meeting had a primary focus of safety, I was impressed with Blair’s involvement with our campus Green Dot program. Blair was able to speak to her involvement on the Green Dot committee, as well as the value of the Green Dot Training, and overall how we can work together to make our campus safer from violence. It was clear from her interactions with her campus colleagues that they valued her involvement, perspective, and wisdom.

University Housing at Western Oregon University has experienced a significant amount of professional transition during the Fall 2015 quarter. Change is hard, especially for new professionals that are trying to find their professional rhythm. In the midst of all of these transitions, Blair has been a professional that has been adaptable and able to look at the big picture. Where other new professionals might struggle with how their professional point of view fits into a changing landscape, Blair role models patience and looking for understanding rather than jumping to judgement. Blair has been an exceptional role model of how one can be both leader and follower, listener and responder, teacher and student. Blair has been able to pull from her experience as a student at Western Oregon University to provide how a student may interpret and feel the changes that have been happening within the department. Blair has helped guide us past potential misinterpretations and potential conflict with students. Blair has helped us champion change and bring stability to our organization.

Even as a new professional, Blair already has a sense of how important it is to have a life away from campus. Time and time again I have seen new professionals burn themselves out because they don’t take time away for themselves. Blair is a professional that cares about the welfare of her colleagues. Rather than waiting for others to take the lead, Blair invites others to coffee off campus, to meals in a nearby town, shares when she finds a new place to go, and overall makes every task an adventure. Recently, we had a staff event celebrating the closing of fall quarter. Going to the store and planning was more than just getting something done. Blair worked hard to both make the event special for the students, and to create memories, joy, and connection with her colleagues.

Even though Blair is a new professional, I am confident that we are going to continue to see great things from her. Blair has an ethic of care, approachability, and perspective that is remarkable and unmistakable.