DOLPHIN CONNECT
Featured Mentor

Andrew Barba

Job Title: Administrative Support Specialist
Employer: UCLA Health
CSUCI Degree: Bachelor's Degree in Health Science, 2018
Start a conversation with Andrew

What do you enjoy most about your job as an Administrative Support Specialist for UCLA Health? What is most challenging?

Working for UCLA Health has been a life changing experience. Working for the health system is a bit hectic but that is what is expected when working in healthcare. Let me assure you that there is never a dull day in healthcare, but the true reason for my career choice is to assist in healing patients. I enjoy knowing that the work I am providing is ultimately improving the health of our community.

How important were your internships with Ventura County Health Care Agency and Dignity Health in preparing you for this field? Would you recommend that students complete internships before graduating? If so, what steps did you take to secure your internships?

The internships I participated in made a huge impact on my career and career goals. The resource management internship and data analyst internship I did offered me valuable knowledge of healthcare and all of the different aspects within it. These internships were my first exposure to healthcare. I obtained these by searching what was offered through CI, checking healthcare websites and calling healthcare facilities directly. Often internships or volunteer experiences are offered but they are not displayed at a large scale. Doing your due diligence in researching and contacting offices directly can greatly impact your chances of obtaining these opportunities. Contacting the facilities directly also allows you to acquaint yourself with employees and staff to build your network.

After graduating from CI, how did you get your foot in the door of the healthcare industry?

After graduating from CI, I found it difficult to secure a job in healthcare. With little experience, I found that you should acquaint yourself with failure. Failure was a big driving force in my current successes. I have gone through many interviews and meetings for positions that I never received an offer for. That being said, getting my foot in the door was always being prepared for whatever can be thrown at you and creating a network where ever you are. It is important to grow your network within any industry of work because those relationships can offer you valuable knowledge about the field you are stepping into.

Did you have any mentors who helped you in your career? If so, in what ways did they support you?

Mentors can offer many different services such as career advice, goal setting, resume assistance and references. I have accumulated several mentors over the years. I believe it is important to build a portfolio of mentors with the same values that can help you align your career goals. In every job I have obtained, I made it my purpose to find a mentor that could lead me to success. Most recently I connected with a few alumni through [Dolphin Connect](). I was able to connect with fellow alumni who were pursuing MBA and MHA degrees. Meeting these mentors provided me with support and knowledge in continuing my education. This opportunity allowed me to clarify any questions I had about programs, financial assistance and curriculum.

On your Dolphin Connect profile, you mentioned that you are a First Generation College Student. What advice do you have for CSUCI students who are also First Generation College Students?

Persistence and hard work are the two most important items I found necessary to succeed at CI. Often times being a first generation college student, you find yourself asking yourself a lot of questions and without seeking assistance. As a first generation college student, I believe that it is important for students to take advantage of all of the services offered by CI. I found CI to have an amazing structure of support, whether it was the STEM Center, EOP Office, Counseling and more.

Thank you, Andrew! How can students or alumni contact you?
Find me on Dolphin Connect. https://dolphinconnect.csuci.edu/hub/csuci/profile/andrewbarba2