

Billy Wagner
Professor of Health Science & Sociology
1166 Solano Hall
william.wagner@csuci.edu

The CSU Health Policy Conference (April 2019) was a success. 8 Health Science majors attended the conference and experienced a live legislative session, as well as meeting with legislators, etc. Below, please find several reflection reports from our students, as written by them:

#1

I feel privileged to have attended my second consecutive CSU Health Policy Conference. Each day was filled with interesting programming that was geared toward the interests of the students who came from a variety of backgrounds. Though everyone had different goals for the conference and for life after higher education, every attendee was at the conference for a similar purpose- to gain a better, in-depth understanding of the public health policy process and what is important in today's climate. Unfortunately, I felt that this goal in particular was not met. I felt that at most of the programming I attended, there was a focus on trying to push students to work at the Capitol and do public health work specifically for the government. For example, questions asked to most of the panelists included "what is your ideal candidate?" and "what do you look for when someone is applying for your position?" While it is interesting and important to learn about the large variety of jobs to consider in the public health field, the point of learning about specific health policies and processes was missed. Otherwise, as compared to the 2018 conference, the programming and flow of events seemed to be much more coherent and relevant. Overall, I would say that this year's conference was a success and I am glad to have attended with my peers.

#2

Attending the CSU Health Policy Conference was the best way to culminate my undergraduate degree. It was made even more special because I have never visited the Capitol, let alone had the opportunity to sit in the Assembly Chambers or ask questions to Senate Health Committee staff and administrators of the California Department of Public Health. The benefit of meeting health policy professionals cannot be understated. Learning about their educational and career journeys, as well as understanding their role in health care expanded my idea of career possibilities. My favorite part of the trip was viewing an Assembly Health Committee Hearing, which discussed bills such as AB-50. As a student who is interested in gerontology, I loved watching politicians and lobbyists discuss the implications of expanding the Medi-Cal Assisted Living Waiver Program. Finally, meeting other students and faculty members from the CSU system was an advantageous networking opportunity I otherwise would have never received. I am so grateful to have been selected to go on this trip to Sacramento, and I look forward to encouraging my peers to apply next year.

#3

As I approach my last year here at CI, I have noticed the immense amount of pressure

I've put on myself to know what my next steps should be. With that in mind, I pushed myself to apply for this conference so I could gain more exposure to public health career choices. As the first in my family to attend a four-year university, I have always expected myself to follow this "perfect" path to success. Attending this conference, opened my eyes in several ways. I was able to connect with my peers that share these same feelings and given the opportunity to explore the academic/career paths in public health. Being able to talk with a diverse pool of faculty members was one of my favorite parts of the conference! I was able to learn about their experiences and gain insight in what to expect when transitioning from the college life to the "real world". Along with that, I was able to firmly grasp the fact that my path is solely based on my choices and that I shouldn't look at others' experiences as a template to follow. I appreciated the authenticity in my conversations with the faculty members and college students from the other universities. They were extremely supportive and provided great, useful advice. After the first day of activities, I felt a newfound sense of pride about the path I am currently on and excitement to dive deeper into the careers options within the political realm of health. Before attending the conference, I never considered pursuing health policy because I'm not extremely knowledgeable about politics nor is it my scene. However, this experience altered my perspective on politics and cleared up some misconceptions I had. It was encouraging learning that there were so many politicians who possessed a background in health. Moreover, hearing about the lack of diversity (from assemblymember Evan Low) in health policy and amount of change that can be implemented by going into this field really sparked my interest. I am now considering going into health policy because I love the idea of achieving specific health care objectives within society and creating change on a large scale. This experience has significantly impacted my life in such a short length of time and I am grateful I had the opportunity to attend. I have further developed as a person, student, and future health professional. I have finally acquired the confidence needed in confronting what my path will be after I earn my bachelor's degree.

#4

I am very grateful for being able to go and represent CSU Channel Islands in the Sacramento CSU Health Policy trip. I received a plethora of invaluable career information. I enjoyed the Assembly health committee hearing, the Panel discussion session with public health officials, and the discussion session with Daniel Zingale.

The Assembly health committee hearing opened my eyes to the processes in which our state government discusses and passes health policy. The event showed me how many people care about their state laws and what is needed to pass them. Many bills proposed have been through the system many times in a cyclical fashion; constantly being denied and amended before passing.

The panel discussion session with the public health officials: Dr. Charity dean, Susan Fanelli, J and Julie Nagasako created narratives for how once faceless segment heads of our government are actually people with completely different backgrounds and experiences that come together to help large portions of the State population. It was refreshing to see and hear how previously perceived unattainable jobs are completely attainable through a wide variety pathways.

The discussion session with Daniel Zingale, the Senior Advisor on Strategy and Communications Office of Governor Gavin Newsome, was both humorous and enlightening. His stories of his past working experiences with previous state governors provided great insight in how the governorship identifies and execute solutions to health policy issues. Again, I am very grateful for being part of this conference. I enjoyed watching the inner workings of the public, but it made me realize I want to work at a lower level and not deal with large political policies that affect large portions of the population. I would instead individually help people reach their health goals.