Amy Buch
Health Promotion Division Manager
Orange County Health Care Agency

Education Background:
Kalamazoo College—Bachelor’s Degree in Sociology
United States International University (Now Alliant University)—Master’s in Education
California State University, Fullerton—Public Health Certificate

Current Job Tasks:
I oversee the Health Promotion Division which educates individuals on health behaviors and also aims to create community environments that support healthy behaviors. We focus on topics such as drug and alcohol prevention, tobacco prevention and cessation, chronic disease and injury prevention, cancer screening and prevention, and sexually transmitted disease prevention. Additionally, we aim to reduce health disparities.

Favorite Thing About Their Job:
I love health education overall, so what I love most about my work is supporting my team to provide the best health education services possible. That might mean helping them to problem solve or it may mean leading them to a helpful resource. It also means managing my budget in a way that allows as much money as possible to go directly to health education services.

Piece of Advice:
If you are looking for a job in health education, follow which grants are being awarded. New grant money often allows organizations to hire, even during tough budget times. Also, take advantage of the variety of experiences that UCI has to offer. These experiences will help you to know what kinds of work related activities you might enjoy (such as working with people) or might also teach you what you might want to avoid!
Minoo Ghajar
Supervising Public Health Microbiologist
Orange County Public Health Laboratory (OCPHL)

Education Background:
I started as an international student with a Bachelor’s Degree in Laboratory Science. I took classes at Cal State University, Long Beach and received my Bachelor of Science in Microbiology. I have a Public Health Microbiologist and Clinical Laboratory Scientist licenses. Currently, I am pursuing my Masters in Public Health from Cal State University, Fullerton.

Current Job Tasks:
I supervise the Tuberculosis, Mycology, and Parasitology sections of the P.H. Laboratory. I also supervise a staff of 8 microbiologists within three areas. We perform a variety of tests such as Nucleic Acid Amplification tests to detect Mycobacterium tuberculosis (TB). Isolation and identification of Mycobacteria from different clinical sources. In Parasitology, we identify intestinal, blood, and tissue parasites. In the Mycology department, we isolate and identify fungus from different clinical sources. I oversee the quality assurance and daily operation of these three areas.

Favorite Thing About Their Job:
I love that my job involves science because that had always been my favorite subject in school. We are the backbone to the physicians because we identify the pathogenic microorganisms that affect the public. I love having a job that helps the greater good and can save lives.

Piece of Advice:
There are different areas within the world of public health. They are all very challenging and interesting, so I would recommend learning about them as much as possible and applying for internships. It’s a great way to gain hands-on experience in the field.
Margaret Valle
Alcohol & Other Drug Programs Manager
UC Irvine Center for Student Wellness and Health Promotion

Education Background:
I have a Bachelors degree in International Studies with a minor in Sociology from UC Irvine. I received my Masters degree in Public Health in Community Health Education from Cal State Long Beach.

Current Job Tasks:
I work in the field of public health as a Program Manager focusing on alcohol and other drug education and prevention. My role at the Center for Student Wellness & Health Promotion at UCI is to work with students one-on-one offering consultations, providing guidance and support around alcohol and other drug education and prevention. I also teach small group classes and workshops on how to make smart, safe choices around alcohol and other drugs. Lastly, I advise a group of Peer Health Educators who volunteer to develop and implement programs and workshops encouraging UCI students to "Party Smart".

Favorite Thing About Their Job:
I truly believe in the power of prevention. At UCI, I am able to work with college students, encouraging them to explore their personal health and wellness, while empowering them to make healthy lifestyle choices that I hope they will take with them beyond their college career.

Piece of Advice:
Explore what interests you with an open mind, learn from mentors in the field and be open to opportunities no matter how great or small, you never know where it will lead you.
Leila Esfandiari
Program Coordinator
National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence—Orange County (NCADD/OC)

Education Background:
University of California, Irvine—Bachelor of Science in Environmental Analysis and Design
  Minor in Epidemiology and Public Health
California State University, Fullerton—Master in Public Health with emphasis in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

Current Job Tasks:
- Coordinate, supervise, and facilitate an underage drinking prevention project in South Orange County.
- Partner and collaborate with community agencies to reduce and prevent underage drinking.
- Provide monthly, quarterly, and yearly reports for the County of Orange Health Care Agency.
- Supervise Health Educators to ensure that all state objectives are met for the underage drinking project.
- Collaborate with project evaluators to ensure the effectiveness and utilization of appropriate tools and methods within the program.

Favorite Thing About Their Job:
I love being able to make a difference in people’s lives.

Piece of Advice:
Give yourself several career options. If something does not work out, do not give up, and try different things. Follow your passion and love what you do to be successful. Always take chances and be open-minded to reach out and ask for advice. In your career path, look at challenges and obstacles as opportunities instead of problems. Step out of your comfort zone and try different things in order to expand your knowledge and skills to advance.