

The Center for Student Advocacy and Community Hires a New Associate Director A Narrative Press Release by Kevin Key, Student Employee and Marketing Intern

As our core mission, the Center for Student Advocacy and Community (CSAC) team strives to do the most we can for the students we serve. That includes everything from hosting large-scale community-building events, to providing students with food security and family planning essentials. The Center does this with a team that is as small as it is tight knit – meaning that every role is essential for the value we hope to bring to students every day. In holding the unique position of being on the CSAC team *and* a student, I was heavily involved in the process of finding a suitable hire. As we sought to find the right person to fill the role of Associate Director it was clear that we needed someone who feels earnest compassion for UH students, while also exhibiting the drive it takes to serve in a leadership role within the department.

More fitting words would be difficult to find for Beau Trent-Pierce (she/they). She hailed from Oklahoma as just one of many hopeful candidates and brought a humble affinity for the outdoors in tow. When asked though, Beau proudly professed her love of camping and enjoying nature with her wife & young son. But to make no mistake, she had not only extensive experience working with students, but also across quite the collection of universities. In a variety of roles– from student life to leadership programs– she honed a distinct skill for utilizing data-based approaches to help students make the absolute most of university life.

A rigorous vetting process still stood before Beau at the outset, despite her impressive accolades. She still had yet to prove herself not only to CSAC staff and university leadership, but also to a focus group of students that she'd be serving– with competition from other hopeful hires to boot. Those daunting evaluations didn't seem to damper her chipper personality though: Her kindness shined through with every question she answered and idea she posed, and she quickly imbued an atmosphere of joy and comfort into every room she was in. In doing so, she effortlessly embodied the spirit of the CSAC space– at least, that's how I and the rest of the CSAC staff felt upon meeting her.

But more importantly, what were the students' verdicts? Student voices provided us with invaluable feedback from a variety of perspectives and concerns. As the person responsible for recording students' responses after Beau's meeting with them, I can personally attest that their voices harmonized to emphatically repeat one word; one quality about Beau that stood out above the rest: Genuineness. Beau had it in droves according to the students, along with infectious passion and optimism. They also valued that she was realistic with the limitations she knew smaller departments could face and were hopeful that her data-driven approach could help to make CSAC stand out in the metrics that often dictate budgets– and The Center's capabilities by extension.

Naturally, the final decision of whether Beau would join the CSAC team rested in the hands of the director, Michael Crook (he/him) who made his choice after weighing the wealth of feedback that was collected from students and staff alike. When asked about what really drove home the idea that Trent-Pierce was the best person to join CSAC, this is what he had to say:

“From our first meeting, Beau demonstrated a strong commitment to student support and advocacy. It was clear to me that she understood the complexities of the student experience and was willing to put on the work to get them the support they need. In every interview, students and staff alike found her to be relatable, intelligent, and they noted that they were willing to help out with the daily physical duties of the Cougar Cupboard when needed and would also be able to make meaningful contributions to strategic conversations within the department.”

That brings us to today, where she’s already spent her first few days in the Center as Associate Director. Needless to say, she couldn’t be a better fit for the space. She always walks past the front desk with a friendly smile, and has already begun familiarizing herself with the staff through one-on-one meetings. She had this to say about her future goals and aspirations while she’s with CSAC:

“At CSAC, I want every student who walks through our doors to feel heard, supported, and empowered. College can be tough, and no one should have to navigate it alone. My goal is to break down barriers, build community, and make sure students have what they need to succeed—both in and out of the classroom.”

While this short article can only shed light on a few of the trials and tribulations that Beau has overcome in her journey to join us at the Center, we’re more than excited to welcome her unique perspective, expertise, and presence to the future of CSAC. We’re confident she’ll make a more than tangible impact on the lives of the UH students we serve every day, and look forward to how she’ll help CSAC improve as we strive towards that goal.

See Beau’s Bio Here: <https://www.uh.edu/csac/about/staff/beau-trent-pierce/>

About the Center for Student Advocacy and Community:

The Center for Student Advocacy and Community reduces barriers that inhibit academic and personal success by identifying areas of need, providing connections to resources, and supporting student-led programs and initiatives that strengthen our community. They envision a future where every student feels like a valued member of the UH community, has their essential needs addressed, and are supported to achieve their academic and personal goals.

<https://uh.edu/csac/>