

BE THE ONE TO BE YOU.

You have blue hair
differently than
when you
should
Be the

valenciacollege.edu/betheone

Ryan Kane
An Advocate for
Acceptance Helps Pave
the Way Toward Inclusion

//BY CAROL STINNETT

Ryan Kane discusses Title IX and highlights various inclusion topics during a workshop on Valencia's West campus.

What keeps you on your toes? For Ryan Kane, balancing work projects, family life and a new puppy are just some of the things that keep him busy. Kane, the assistant vice president of Organizational Development and Inclusion at Valencia College, wears many different hats on any given day. When he's not playing the role of husband, dad, leader or supervisor, he's tapping into his artistic side—playing the piano, clarinet and saxophone.

With an extensive background in higher education, he's had first-hand experience in working with very diverse groups of students. One of his favorite aspects of his position is seeing the impact that his team's work has on students' professional and personal lives. "The work we're doing is creating a positive experience for students as a whole, which is extremely rewarding," he says.

A northeast native, Kane grew up in a suburb outside of Philadelphia. Originally interested in pursuing a career in prelaw, he earned a political science degree with a minor in psychology at Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. While there, he worked as a resident assistant, and later, transitioned to a residence director. It was during this time that he developed a greater passion for psychology and its connection with people.

After Franklin & Marshall College, he took a position as residence director at Siena College, before moving into a similar role at Towson University. At Towson, Kane supervised a number of residences, which included 15-floor towers and 150 townhome units. His quick-wittedness and easy-going personality were everyday essentials in this position. "Each townhome housed eight students who had to share two bathrooms," recalls Kane, laughing. "You can imagine what that was like."

Through his 12 years at Towson, he would take on additional roles, earn a master's degree, chair the student affairs and staff development committee, and move into a director position with the Office of Student Conduct. While the position was serious in nature, he enjoyed the one-on-one interaction with students, saying, "I would ask them about their values and whether or not their



“

I want individuals to value the diversity that the college has to offer. Take initiative to learn, reach out and get to know people that may not be similar to you.”

behaviors aligned with those values. It was a great way to help guide them in making better choices to lead a successful life.” It was also in this position where he began working more closely with Title IX, a federal law that mandates sexual harassment and sexual violence requirements for educational institutions.

Although Kane and his family lived in the northeast their entire lives, they always dreamed of becoming residents of the Sunshine State. “We spent a lot of time in Florida with family and friends in the area, visiting theme parks and the beach. It always felt like this area was home.”

So in 2015 when a Title IX position opened at Valencia College, he jumped at the opportunity.

After an hour-long interview, Kane knew that Valencia was exactly what he was looking for. Within weeks, Kane, his wife and two daughters headed south to start their new life in Central Florida. “We’ve seen more family and friends since moving down here. They can come visit any time and go to the parks, catch up over dinner... even take the dog on a walk,” he jokes.

Within his first few months at Valencia, Kane was eager to jump right in and start collaborating with teams from around the college. During this time, he and his supervisor talked about ways to integrate pieces of Title IX into a big-picture discussion, saying, “We wanted a way to show what Valencia is all about—how our college provides an

**BE
THE
ONE TO
INCLUDE
OTHERS.**

valenciacollege.edu/betheone

**BE
THE
ONE TO
FEEL
AT HOME.**

valenciacollege.edu/betheone

A few examples of Valencia's Community Inclusion campaign visuals.

environment where all people feel welcome and where we embrace their unique traits.”

Students at Valencia come from all backgrounds and walks of life—more than 100 countries are represented on the college’s six campuses. Keeping that in mind, Kane and his team worked with other departments on a Community Inclusion campaign that aligns our college’s culture with the important message behind Title IX: Be the one to make a difference.

The campaign motivates people to think about their own identity and the identity of others, Kane explains. “I want individuals to value the diversity that the college has to offer. Take initiative to learn, reach out and get to know people that may not be similar to you. Don’t wait for someone else to do it first.”

At Valencia, students, alumni, faculty and staff all play a role in creating and maintaining an inclusive college community. From showing support for others around campus to just knowing when something’s not right and reporting it, everyone can help in maintaining a safe learning environment.

“You are what makes us Valencia College. You are part of our community,” he says. “We accept you and appreciate the things that make you unique. Be the one to know that you are welcomed, just as you are.” **V**

For more information about Title IX, visit valenciacollege.edu/betheone

valenciacollege.edu/ryan-kane



JULIE AVERY, '97

Julie’s passion is biological research.

She’s now a research assistant professor and runs laboratories in

Alaska and Florida.

Julie is living her dream.

“I’ve been fortunate to do work on three continents and explore some amazing places.”

Share your story.

Say it forward.

valenciacollege.edu/sayitforward

VALENCIA COLLEGE

17MSC045