

## Student Life and Conduct Briefing

### BACKGROUND

Student Life at Oregon State University (OSU), while broad and multifaceted, requires focused effort and intentionality in order to develop experiences that foster learning and growth that complements students' academic programs. Creating and enhancing Student Life is the work of each program and service at OSU, and contributions are made by each person who interacts with students.

Much of the university's programs and services related to student life focus on providing for holistic student development and support, with inclusion, health and wellness, and equalizing access for all students. This report provides a snapshot of efforts that directly contribute to advancing these focus areas in the context of SP4.0 goals, updates on previously reported priority areas, and highlights new initiatives and trends.

### PROGRESS RELATED TO STRATEGIC PLAN 4.0

#### Strategic Plan Focus Area: A Culture of Belonging

**Building Inclusivity:** One effort to operationalize OSU's commitment to creating a more inclusive environment is through the Inclusivity Survey. Conducted every other year by the Division of Student Affairs, this tool helps faculty and staff identify areas we need to focus as an institution to continue to create an environment in which students truly believe they belong. In the 2019 survey, one primary area of focus was related to relationships, experiences, and environments (e.g., in class and in living environments) and the extent to which they influenced students' sense of belonging at OSU.

The 2019 survey also examined student experiences with bias, both direct experiences and those they witnessed. Experiencing and/or witnessing acts of bias have a detrimental impact on students' wellbeing and experience at OSU. The Inclusivity Survey lays the groundwork (in partnership with the work of the Office of Institutional Diversity and the Bias Response Team, which provides support for those who report, provide referrals and resources, and elevate to appropriate offices as appropriate) to better understand 1) the frequency and nature of students' encounters with bias and how they respond to those experiences; 2) who they regard as resources and support; 3) what knowledge they have of OSU resources; and 4) possible barriers to their use of institutional resources. We will look at student responses through a number of demographic lenses including race, gender, student standing, college, socioeconomic status, religious practice, experience of disability and more. From this, we gain a better understanding of how students from different populations and identities experience belonging at OSU.

Various segments of the 2019 survey results are currently under review by members of the President and Provost's Leadership Council for Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice. In addition to being a tool to help determine next steps related to creating a more inclusive environment, the data will be compared with results from the 2017 Inclusivity Survey. In 2017, 80% of respondents reported that an inclusive campus community is important to their academic success. Additionally, students identified professors (87%), advisors (74%), and peers (76%) as the top three relationships that are most important to their academic success. While professors were identified as a person who influences student academic success, through the 2017 survey, we also learned more about barriers that students face when it comes to accessing their professors about academic conflicts. The top three barriers that were selected by participants were that their professor made them feel unintelligent, respondents perceive that the professor does not understand their challenges, and their professor intimidates them.

### Strategic Plan Focus Area: Improving Access and Success

As reported in the April 2019 Enrollment Management briefing to the Academic Strategies Committee, persistence and completion for students of color, first generation, and Pell-eligible students are improving. However, gaps in retention and graduation rates between both students of color and low-income students and their classmates have not improved significantly. Six-year graduation rates for Pell-eligible students are 5.5 percentage points behind the total population and students of color are 7.4 percentage points behind. In addition to the efforts of the Undergraduate Student Success Initiative, the university through its Division of Student Affairs has identified the following efforts to improve and equalize success:

**Black Access and Success:** The percent of undergraduate students on the Corvallis campus who identify as Black/African American declined from 1.7% to 1.1% over the last 10 years. Additionally, first to second year persistence rates for Black students are 13 percentage points below the university rate (Corvallis campus) (three-year average) and graduation rates are 20 percentage points below the university rate (three-year average).

Launched in fall 2017, the Black Access and Success Initiative seeks to address these inequities and trends by improving communication and relationships and overcoming negative perceptions with the Black community in the Portland area, strengthening partnerships with middle and high schools through visitations and advising, and creating a more inclusive and supportive community on the Corvallis campus. Each of these efforts are positioning OSU as a trustworthy partner with Oregon's Black community.

Indicators of Success:

- In the three years preceding fall 2017, Black, first-year cohort, first-to-second year retention averaged 69.4%. For the fall 2017 cohort, persistence to year two increased to 78.4%.
- In the three years preceding fall 2012, Black, first-year cohort, six-year graduation rates averaged 47.5%. For the fall 2012 cohort, the six-year graduation rate is 56.3%.
- Between fall 2018 and fall 2019, applications to OSU by prospective Black freshmen increased 33%, from 315 to 419.

**Native Access and Success:** Launched in spring 2018, the Native and Indigenous Access and Success Initiative seeks to address instances of cultural and identity erasure, provide enhanced institutional support for Native student success, and strengthen relationships with the Native and Indigenous communities of Oregon. This effort responds to the low retention (approximately 25% lower than overall) and graduation rates of Native students (approximately 12% lower than overall). During spring 2018, a small group of professional faculty at OSU began to meet as a “think tank” to assess the services being provided to Indigenous identified students. The initiative will continue and progress will be reported in future briefings to the Committee, and those involved in the initiative will be identifying and recommending specific actions for program administrators to be taking in the coming year.

### Strategic Plan Focus Area: Transformative Education

**Alternative Break:** The [Alternative Break program](#) is one example of providing a transformative education that is accessible to all learners (SP4.0, goal 2) while simultaneously enhancing OSU's impact in Oregon and beyond (SP4.0, goal 3). Started in 2012, and facilitated by the Center for Civic Engagement within Student Experiences & Engagement, Alternative Break is designed to increase students' capacity to lead for social change through weeklong service-learning experiences. The program addresses a need for more affordable immersive and experiential learning opportunities for

students who may not be able to study abroad. [Need-based travel grants](#) are available through a partnership with the Human Services Resource Center (HSRC). Many students have reported that the program allows them to clarify their values and long-term goals leading to refinement in their career goals and an increased commitment to their majors. Because of the positive outcomes for students, efforts are underway to scale the program through increasing the number of experiences and creating clearer avenues for students to earn credit for participation.

**Student Employment and Career Readiness:** Student employment at OSU is a high impact student experience that can lead to higher persistence rates, as well as preparing graduates as career ready professionals. A 2017 assessment of first-year, full-time students showed that students who were employed within the Division of Student Affairs (approximately 2,500 students) had a persistence rate of 91%, compared to the overall first-year, full-time retention rate of 84%.

Additionally, the Division of Student Affairs is developing high-impact career readiness competencies in its varied student employment opportunities. These opportunities build off content learned through a student's respective academic curriculum and leverage current university resources to support the student's next steps (e.g., [Handshake](#), Focus 2, [VMock](#), Writing Center). The primary objective is to develop career ready graduates.

## PROGRESS ON PREVIOUSLY REPORTED INITIATIVES

**Sexual Violence Education, Response, and Prevention:** The university regularly reports to the Academic Strategies Committee on its efforts related to sexual violence education, response, and prevention and will hear a full report on these efforts at the May 30 committee meeting. Education and prevention are embedded in programs across student life, with elevated focus provided by Student Health Services (SHS) and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), such as gender-based violence education and bystander training. Additionally, the Survivor Advocacy Resource Center (SARC) opened in the fall of 2015 following extensive conversations around OSU's response to campus violence, which identified a need for direct advocacy services for survivors of violence, both for students and employees.

Most employees are mandated by federal law to report any disclosures of sexual or relationship violence to the university. Thus, it is imperative that survivors have the option to speak with someone in a confidential and safe location, such that the survivor retains full control about whether and when to report to the university or police. Along with SHS and CAPS clinical services, SARC was organized to provide this type of space to provide survivors guidance on reporting options, information on medical and counseling resources, and help navigating any campus barriers that might impede their recovery.

Since opening, SARC has assisted 919 clients. Services include multiple follow-ups with clients and their allies. To date, SARC has:

- Provided 6,546 appointments for crisis intervention and management, response education, safety planning, reporting assistance, connection to necessary medical care and mental health care.
- Provided 696 consultations to campus community partners, including training in effective trauma-informed responses to disclosures.
- Provided 672 letters to instructors and professors requesting flexibility where possible in classroom and academic support needs for survivors. In order for SARC to maintain a confidential office (not providing notice to the university of assaults), it cannot mandate compliance with any particular remedies in the way that the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access can. These letters of request, however, have been generally successful and the

academic flexibility that professors provide help the student stay successful in the classroom and remain in school. For example, professors may adjust assignment due dates and make-up exams as needed as well as facilitate incompletes or late withdrawals from classes if the student is unable to stay in school.

- Assisted in numerous efforts to relocate students to safer living environments, including release from their leases and filing protection orders so that they are able to remain in school and in the community.
- Provided resources to expand capacity in providing trauma-informed response and services to the broader community, including law enforcement and the Corvallis and Benton County medical community. SARC also works directly with campus organizations, including student groups, on providing an empathic response to disclosure through enhanced empathy skills and avoidance of survivor blaming.

In addition to SARC, services have been expanded to support respondents (accused students), through the addition of an advocate in our Office of Student Life. This additional staff member is specifically appointed to ensure that all parties involved in a Title IX case have assistance as they proceed through the investigation and adjudication process.

**Fraternity & Sorority Life:** The fraternity/sorority community at OSU is a dynamic subset of the overall student population. The community is diverse and provides positive benefits and experiences for members. The 3,100 fraternity/sorority members make up over 16% of the Corvallis campus undergraduate population. OSU hosts 47 chapters within five separate governing council communities. Twenty-eight of the 47 chapters provide a residential experience, and nine chapters have a cultural or multicultural emphasis. The Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life (CFSL) has three full-time professional faculty who provide support, oversight, and development of the short and long-term goals of the community.

In January 2017, the vice provost for student affairs (VPSA) charged a taskforce to develop a comprehensive set of policy, process, and values-based program enhancements that represent data-informed methods of improving the health of Greek Life programs. In June 2017, the taskforce proposed five recommendations and developed an action plan aimed at impacting the short, mid, and long-term health of the Fraternity & Sorority Life program at OSU.

Adopted Recommendations in Second Year of Implementation of Enhancements:

1. Relationship Statement executed annually between OSU and each fraternity/sorority;
2. Community-wide adopted risk reduction and management policy and hard alcohol prohibition;
3. Required live-in house director/resident advisor for housed chapters;
4. Recruitment process requirement for culturally based chapters, providing a transparent and consistent process;
5. Additional safety measures for Interfraternity Council recruitment process, such as no alcohol use.

OSU is not immune to the scrutiny that fraternity/sorority life is facing nationally and is providing support and guidance to students who are working to address issues within their own organizations and community. At OSU, the fraternity/sorority community has been working proactively to create their own measures to address and curb high-risk behavior. That effort has garnered a high level of buy-in among community members. Other efforts being explored include a fraternity/sorority experience survey, an assessment of how well relationship statements are working, revision of adopted risk management policies to reflect national best practices, hosting of the End Hazing Now program, and development of a Chapter Scorecard Model.

**Affordability and Access to Basic Needs:** Food and housing insecurity undermine academic success.<sup>1</sup> Housing insecurity and homelessness have a particularly strong, statistically significant relationship with college completion rates, persistence, and credit attainment.<sup>2</sup> Researchers also associate basic needs insecurity with self-reports of poor physical health, symptoms of depression, and higher perceived stress.<sup>3</sup>

According to a recent report provided by the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice (Hope Center) that surveyed 123 two- and four-year institutions across the United States, 45% of respondents were food insecure in the prior 30 days. Fifty-six percent of respondents were housing insecure in the previous year, with 17% reporting being homeless in the prior year. Homeless students were working more hours than their peers were, and as expected, students with marginalized identities were more likely to be impacted<sup>4</sup>.

At OSU, of the 970 students who completed the Food Assistance application in Fall 2018, more than half can be considered as having Very-Low Food Security, a measure that means a student is not accessing sufficient quantities of food. In January 2019, students from the HSRC and the Family Resource Center shared with the president and Board of Trustees recommendations to enhance support for student basic needs. Recommendations ranged from improving awareness of programs and promoting a culture of care at OSU, to allocating additional funds for various aid programs and program expansion. The university is actively following up on these suggestions. One request was to provide central resources for the centers to provide increased need-based aid for students. The Division of Student Affairs is working closely with the Office of Financial Aid to create more direct leveraging of institutional aid dollars with programs such as Mealbux, which provides eligible students with a meal card to use on campus. Additionally, University Housing and Dining Services has allocated more rooms for the Emergency Housing program, growing from two spaces to 10.

## NEW PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

**Healthy Campus Coalition:** In the fall of 2018, Dan Larson, then interim VPSA, and Javier Nieto, dean of the College of Public Health and Human Sciences, convened a cross-divisional partnership to advance holistic health and well-being throughout the campus community. The resulting Healthy Campus Coalition (HCC) aims to advance both student and employee health and well-being, utilizing cross-functional teams and a community health approach to engage multiple sectors across the campus community. The HCC currently comprises 40 members representing multiple departments, programs, initiatives, and partner organizations contributing to the holistic well-being of students and employees. The primary aim of the HCC is to bolster and align existing efforts, identify and address gaps, reduce or combine duplicative services, and integrate efforts to advance the holistic health and well-being of individuals, populations, and the broader OSU environment.

The first year will focus on identification of shared goals, measurements, and mutually reinforcing activities. Employee health is integral in supporting student success, so this will be a focus area for year one, including utilization of a new national faculty/staff wellness survey through the American College Health Association. The coalition will also be identifying opportunities to better coordinate existing efforts and programs aimed at improving faculty and staff health.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2018). Food insecurity: Better information could help eligible college students access federal food assistance benefits. (GAO Publication No. 19– 95) Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Accountability Office. (2016). Higher education: Actions needed to improve access to federal financial assistance for homeless and foster youth. (GAO Publication No. 16–343) Washington, D.C.

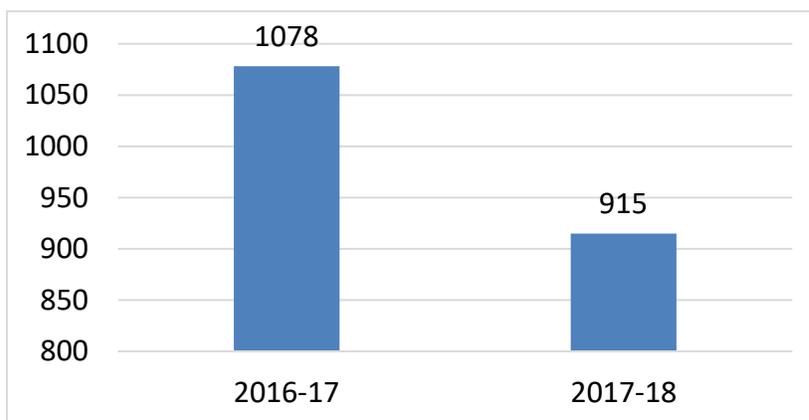
<sup>2</sup> [https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/HOPE\\_realcollege\\_National\\_report\\_digital.pdf](https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/HOPE_realcollege_National_report_digital.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Broton, K. M. (2017). The evolution of poverty in higher education: Material hardship, academic success, and policy perspectives (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Wisconsin–Madison, Madison, Wisconsin

<sup>4</sup> [https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/HOPE\\_realcollege\\_National\\_report\\_digital.pdf](https://hope4college.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/HOPE_realcollege_National_report_digital.pdf)

**Student Mental Health:** The number of students seeking mental health treatment at OSU has increased by 58% from 2013-14 (1,897) to 2017-18 (3,004), and while mental health resources have increased during that period, they have not increased proportionally. In response to these trends, CAPS is adjusting its service delivery model to provide students with a wider range of options beyond individual therapy, some of which are more resource-efficient (e.g., group therapy). In addition to therapy groups, the expanded options include online resources, the Single Session Clinic, and peer support options. By providing this wider range of more efficient options, CAPS has increased the number of clinical contacts by 50%, from 2013-14 (9,985) to 2017-18 (15,026). Additionally, despite the increasing number of students visiting CAPS, the total number of students placed on the waitlist for individual therapy during the last year actually decreased by 15%, from 1,078 in 2016-17 to 915 in 2017-18.

**Total Number of Students Placed on Waitlist for Individual Therapy**



**Initiative: Single Session Clinic:** Started in fall 2018, the Single Session Clinic (SSC) is a specific example of CAPS’ recent expansion of service options. The SSC was created to serve students who needed help to resolve a specific issue (e.g., how to better manage stress), but did not need ongoing therapy. The SSC is designed as a one-time visit, where students will leave their appointment with an action plan and no expectation of follow up. Strategically located in the Memorial Union to remove the potential stigma of visiting CAPS, the SSC has provided 345 single session appointments to 325 different students. Post-session evaluations indicate that 94% of students find the statement “The counselor helped me find options for my problem(s)” either “true to a great extent” (71%) or “mostly true” (24%). Another advantage of the SSC is that students can self-schedule an appointment online and are often able to get an appointment within a week.

**Initiative: Building a Culture of Caring:** Addressing the ever-increasing mental health needs of students goes well beyond actions like adjusting the CAPS’ service delivery model and adding a Single Session Clinic. This university-wide challenge must involve university-wide solutions, beyond CAPS and Student Health Services, and must focus on building a culture of caring across OSU. Recent efforts to promote a caring culture include the adoption on May 9, 2019 by the Faculty Senate of a mandatory syllabus statement that encourages students to “reach out for success” (i.e., reach out when they need assistance or support), and provides a list of wellness resources. All course syllabi will include the “reach out for success” statement starting in fall 2019. Another way to engage faculty and staff in supporting students’ mental health is Kognito, a recently funded online interactive program that trains employees to have helpful, supportive conversations with students who may have mental health struggles. It is anticipated that Kognito will be available to all OSU faculty and staff by fall 2019. A final example of creating a culture of caring is the Beavers Belong Support Network (BBSN). Many students

struggle with feelings of loneliness, so starting in fall 2019, the BBSN will provide weekly small group meetings, led by trained students, to support connection and to build a stronger sense of community.

**Initiative: Tracking Student Career Attainment:** In spring 2018, the Career Development Center (CDC) and Institutional Analytics and Reporting (IAR) partnered with representatives from each academic college and the OSU-Cascades campus to:

- Develop a consistent set of post-graduation placement survey questions to use across the institution and to comply with National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) standards for national comparison.
- Collaborate and coordinate to collect placement data for the spring 2018 first-time undergraduate graduates.
- Develop a dashboard and distribute summary results for broad university use of placement survey data.

There was a greater than 60% response rate across spring 2018 undergraduate graduates (compared with 25% in previous years from the central survey alone), with some colleges having upwards of an 80% response rate. IAR will release in spring 2019 the first version of an interactive dashboard to provide a centrally available tool that can be used to reflect and inform future work for the colleges.

Based on the benefits and the challenges of collecting this data, the CDC and IAR proposed the following guidelines and expectations for collecting and reporting undergraduate placement survey data for the spring 2019 graduates and beyond:

- Adopt the undergraduate placement survey questions developed for spring 2018 as a university standard
- Distribute the standardized placement questions to all students earning undergraduate degrees
- Distribute survey at the end of every term to students
- Store all responses centrally

**Initiative: New Wellness Center:** A new collaborative endeavor between SHS, CAPS, Recreational Sports, and the Memorial Union (MU) will utilize a currently vacant lounge space within the MU to serve as a hub and resource center for Corvallis campus wellness services. Students have expressed a need for space that is both easily accessible and offers a comprehensive collection of resources, information, and opportunities for engagement.

The new wellness space will be organized and staffed by peer educators, and will include a central welcome desk, self-service kiosks, informational brochures, and other materials related to the spectrum of health and wellness resources on campus. This will include HSRC, Collegiate Recovery Community, Cultural Resource Centers, late-night programming and Student Leadership and Involvement opportunities, along with programming and resources available through SHS, CAPS, and Recreational Sports.

**Initiative: Belonging and Identity Intersectionality:** The Division of Student Affairs is identifying areas where our work can collaboratively and positively impact students of color and other underrepresented and marginalized students. While identifying the gaps that exist in our service to students, we are researching and developing new positions to increase our ability to serve students across identities. Working more intentionally within and between departments, we are vetting an intersectional identity coordinator position to assist our university in creating more supportive spaces and a sense of belonging for all who hold multiple and intersecting identities. We are also working with partners in the Office of International Services to reconstruct positions that can better support our

international students from a more centralized location.

Social justice work cannot be done in a vacuum and cannot be done only in one or two departments. It must be understood, committed to, and integrated into every facet of our work. Utilizing feedback and data to inform their efforts, a group of leaders will meet monthly to help design inclusivity and diversity training for professional staff in the Division of Student Affairs. Through our work together, we will continue to positively change our university and support student success.

### TRENDING/EMERGING ISSUES

There are a number of current and emerging trends nationally, in Oregon, and at Oregon State that we monitor. Much of our efforts described in this report are aimed at proactively addressing these trends in student life, which span issues such as mental health and wellbeing; food, housing, and, financial insecurities; and rapidly changing demographics.

**Public health approach to supporting mental health:** Although we have already identified student mental health as a current priority, we recognize that, there is no conversation around advancing student success that will not require addressing mental health. Time-of-need intervention will need to increase, but as we look to the future, we recognize that we need to get more “up-stream,” partnering with communities on supporting young people and preparing them with tools and strategies to manage within an increasingly stressful world where they are not only dealing with traditional identity development, emotional development, etc., but also macro-level issues such as climate change and world politics and the impacts of social media on integration and socialization.

**Supporting the campus community in polarizing times:** We have become increasingly aware and equally troubled with the polarizing nature of today’s politics and advocacy, marked by “you are either with us or against us” rhetoric. In the past several years, OSU has seen this shift on our campus, just as every other campus across the U.S. In efforts to better understand, support and teach students how to engage in dialogue and shared problem solving when their positions differ, the Division of Student Affairs, and the Student Affairs profession has been exploring ways in which we can interrupt this trend. As we look to the future on how to best prepare our students to solve our world’s most pressing challenges, developing students’ ability to view problems from multiple perspectives will need to be a major component of our student life programs.

**Engaging Alumni and Donors in Student Life:** Alumni and friends of Oregon State University are a vital source of support. In light of trending declines in student enrollment, which signals a decrease in funding, utilizing partners that seek to enhance the student life experience for all students will be an essential strategy. This engagement with alumni and donors must be thoughtful and deliberate to ensure mutually beneficial goals are reached. Partnering with alumni and industry leaders goes beyond philanthropic investment and includes supporting experiential learning career readiness.