# Office of Student Life Impact Report

2023-24

## Engage. Learn. Thrive.

The Ohio State University
Office of Student Life

# Overview of the Office of Student Life

The Ohio State University's rich legacy was born in a single building that served multiple purposes: classroom, laboratory, living space. Over the years, these complementary uses have emerged as hallmarks of the iconic Ohio State education that generations of Buckeyes have come to strive for and expect.

In support of Ohio State's motto, "Education for Citizenship," the Office of Student Life is focused on creating unmistakably unique, supportive and productive environments in which students can expand their aspirations and achieve their full potential, prepare for a life of success and make a difference in the lives of others.

In a place so big in possibility, we work to connect the countless points where the university intersects with students' lives, bringing the experience full-circle from the classroom and professional development, to living spaces and co-curricular commitments. At The Ohio State University, we have a second-to-none commitment to the comprehensive student experience, and that fuels our collaborative efforts to provide the resources and support that our students, and staff, need to engage, learn and thrive.

## Message from the Senior Vice President

As I close out my fifth year at Ohio State, I continue to be inspired by Ohio State's tradition, excellence and vision. A critical part of which is our iconic student experience that the Office of Student Life is proud to be a partner in delivering. Students across our campuses learn and grow in countless ways throughout their time at Ohio State, from classrooms, libraries and labs to residence halls, on-campus jobs and the beautiful Ohio Union…and beyond.

Student Life's work centers around our mission to foster students' development, learning, well-being and sense of belonging; empower students to achieve their academic, personal and professional goals; and, prepare students to be engaged in a global society.

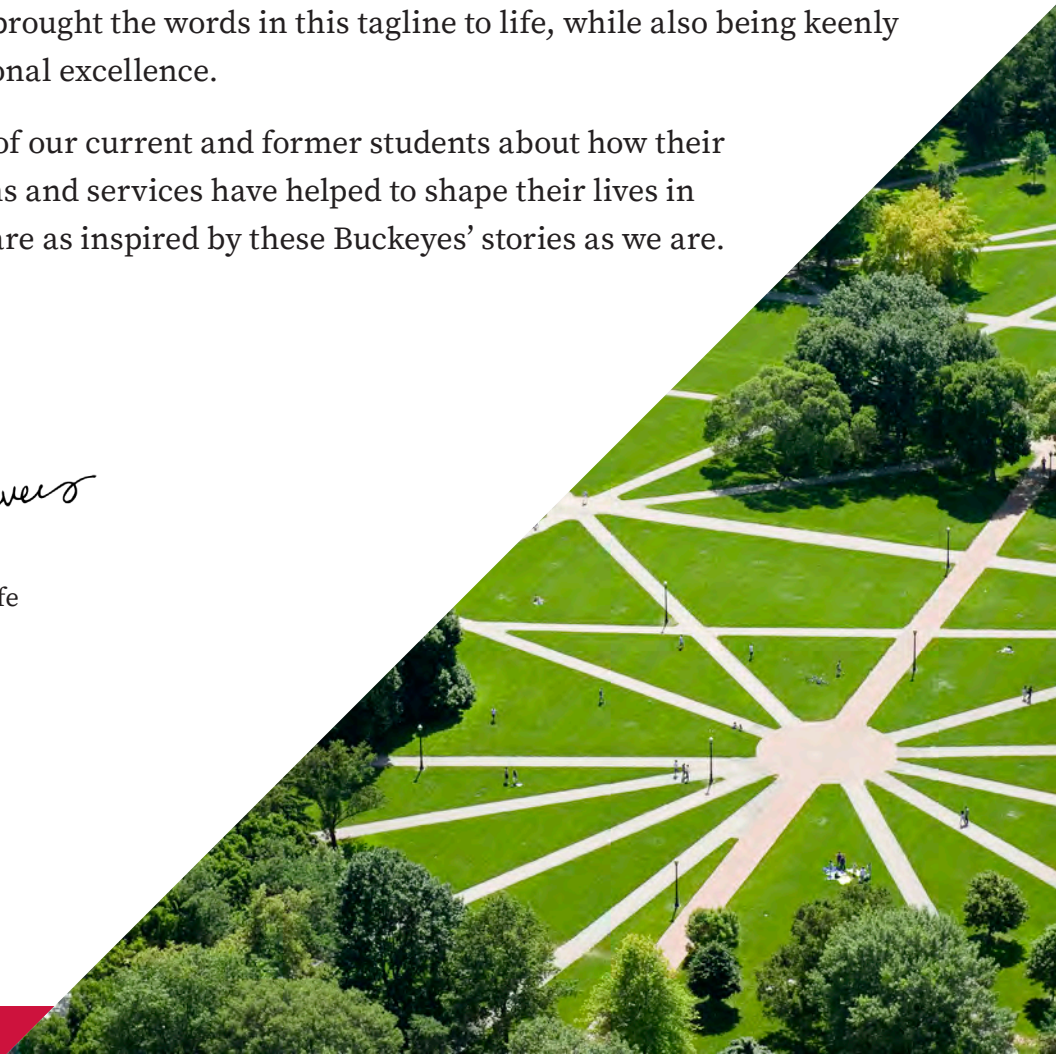
As I reflect on the 2023-24 academic year, there are boundless ways the Office of Student Life has helped students, and our staff, to "Engage, Learn and Thrive." Throughout this report, you will see how Student Life has brought the words in this tagline to life, while also being keenly focused on advancing operational excellence.

You will also hear from some of our current and former students about how their experiences with our programs and services have helped to shape their lives in meaningful ways. I hope you are as inspired by these Buckeyes' stories as we are.

In firm friendship,

Melissa S. Shivers

Melissa S. Shivers, PhD
Senior Vice President for Student Life



# Student Life Foundations

### Vision

To be the premier student affairs division in the country; student- and staff-centered with cross-cutting experiential learning and a dedication to facilitating an environment that is inclusive, supportive and welcoming.

### Mission

The Office of Student Life fosters students' development, learning, well-being and sense of belonging; empowers students to achieve their academic, personal and professional goals; and prepares students to be engaged in a global society.

### Our Culture Commitments

**APPRECIATION**

**CONNECTION**

**SUPPORT**

**CARE**

Our Tagline

# Engage. Learn. Thrive.

## Our Values

As a premier student affairs division, The Ohio State University's Office of Student Life values and fosters a campus culture that affirms the dignity of every student and staff member and their unique backgrounds, identities and experiences. Our work is grounded in the cultivation of personal and professional skills that nurture a sense of belonging, grow empathy and compassion for others and contribute to positive change. We are steadfastly committed to advancing the university's Shared Values throughout our operations and interactions:

- Excellence and Impact
- Diversity and Innovation
- Inclusion and Equity
- Care and Compassion
- Integrity and Respect

## Student Learning Goals

- Embrace self-discovery
- Cultivate community
- Foster health and well-being
- Think critically

# Our People

The Office of Student Life employs more than 5,000 individuals, including:

**520+**

**ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF**

**150+**

**CIVIL SERVICE STAFF**

**4,600+**

**PART-TIME STUDENT EMPLOYEES**

**300+**

**BARGAINING UNIT STAFF**
(housekeeping, food service, maintenance)

**60+**

**GRADUATE ASSISTANTS**

# Facilities

Our footprint across Ohio State's campuses covers six million square feet and includes:

## Food Service

More than 35 food service locations on Columbus, Newark, Mansfield and Wooster campuses

## Residence Halls

36 residence halls and five houses on the Columbus Campus, three graduate residence halls and three housing complexes on the Wooster, Newark and Mansfield campuses

## Outdoor Recreation

36 acres of outdoor recreation space on and around the Columbus campus

## Event Center

One of the area's most comprehensive event centers, the Ohio Union

## Health, Wellness and Student Success

Eight health, wellness and student success facilities on the Columbus campus including the Adventure Recreation Center, Jesse Owens Recreation Centers on North and South Campus, the North Recreation Center, the Recreation and Physical Activity Center (RPAC), McCorkle Aquatic Pavillion, the Wilce Student Health Center and the Younkin Success Center

# By the numbers:

Student Activities supported the work of **1,472** registered student organizations. These organizations feature a range of interests from academic, community service, religious affiliation, creative and performing arts, political affiliations and cultural backgrounds.

Student Life partnered with the City of Columbus to help students moving into or out of the University District dispose of unwanted items. The project resulted in nearly **23** tons of material recycled and more than **1,300** tons of trash collected.

Student Life celebrated Ohio State legends Barbie and Jim Tootle on their **80th** birthdays during Homecoming Weekend, raising more than **$40,000** for Ohio State programs the Tootles are passionate about.

Buckeye Careers hosted **1,765** students in-person and **247** virtually at the 2023 Career and Internship Fair.

More than **3,700** students attended leadership workshops and programming offered by our Leadership and Community Engagement team.

Student Life celebrated staff members' years of service milestones to the university during an annual Years of Service Recognition event. In total, Student Life celebrated **1,425** years of service among **114** staff members.

**3,323** donors contributed more than **$8.7 MILLION** to Student Life, including **487** new donors.

The average starting salary for Ohio State graduates was **$65,778** for bachelor's degree recipients, **$77,678** for master's degree recipients and **$87,041** for professional degree recipients according to the 2022-23 First Destination Survey.

**12,996** rental units participated in the Off-Campus Housing Network, which establishes criteria for off-campus property owners for following the City of Columbus Housing Code and other key safety and security features.

More than **7,500** students are registered with Student Life Disability Services.

# Engage

**Strategic Goal**

Create opportunities for engagement and community that foster an environment of belonging for all students, staff and the campus community

## Highlights

### Regional campus engagement

Ohio State's regional campuses play an important role in providing access to an affordable, high-quality education taught by Ohio State's distinguished faculty while giving students an option for a smaller campus experience. Student Life team members on each campus work diligently to make this smaller campus experience vibrant and engaging.

The Office of Student Life on the Columbus campus actively collaborates with and supports Student Life efforts on the regional campuses of Lima, Mansfield, Marion and Newark as well as at the College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) at Wooster. This is a concerted effort because engaging on campus is strongly related to student success outcomes and satisfaction.

Many services in Student Life on the Columbus campus are available to students on all campuses through virtual service offerings, such as career coaching, financial wellness coaching and leadership workshops.

Student Life also works collaboratively with regional partners to help prepare students who choose to campus change to Columbus. Off-Campus and Commuter Student Engagement actively supports students by offering campus change orientation sessions, inviting students to events like the Roommate Fair and by hosting Commuter Preview Day, which gives resources for students who may choose to commute to campus.

Student Life colleagues on all campuses actively work to bring students together. This year, students from each campus were provided transportation to attend Buckeye Kick-Off, a tradition that invites the first-year class to the 'Shoe to experience the excitement, learn Ohio State cheers and songs, take pictures on the field, and hear from leaders and student athletes. This event was such a success in the fall that, during spring semester, students on all campuses were invited and provided transportation to attend another signature event, Taste of OSU. Taste of OSU, hosted by the Office of International Affairs in the Ohio Union, features an evening of cultural performances, exhibits and food from around the world from more than 40 different international clubs on campus. Future efforts will continue to explore ways to collaborate and engage with students across all campuses to make the entire university feel even more connected.

## Buck-i-Frenzy

Ohio State's Welcome Week during autumn semester has an unmatched energy. Student Life hosted Buck-i-Frenzy for the first time since the pandemic, and it was bigger and better than ever. Buck-i-Frenzy is a highly interactive, fun-filled festival with food samples, music and free giveaway items from dozens of vendors. The goal of Buck-i-Frenzy, which occurs immediately following Convocation outside of the Recreation and Physical Activity Center (RPAC), is to provide new and returning students insight into what Columbus has to offer. More than 50 local and national companies offer samples of their latest products, services, fashions, sounds, technologies and tastes. Over 20,000 students attended Buck-i-Frenzy and the event generated $114,116 for Student Life from sponsors and vendors.

## Community Engagement

Each year, Student Life provides opportunities for students and staff to engage with the surrounding community in meaningful ways. Many of these efforts that bring students and staff together for service are organized under Student Life's Kindness Initiative, with a goal of driving students' sense of belonging to the Ohio State and Central Ohio communities. The initiative showcases the power of collective action, the strength of shared values and the positive impact of kindness.

- Be Kind Food Packing Project. Every year, hundreds of people gather on the Columbus campus to pack meals that are then distributed to areas with low food security around the state. Since the program's launch five years ago, the Buckeye community has contributed to the distribution of 1.5 million meals to people in need. In 2023 alone, more than 700 students, staff and alumni came together to assemble an astounding 205,000 meals that were donated to nonprofit organizations in Harden, Allen and Marion counties.
- Bowl Service Project. The latest edition of Student Life's decades-long annual tradition saw Cotton Bowl foes Ohio State and University of Missouri joining forces to pack 25,000 pounds of apples that were distributed by the Tarrant Area Food Bank in North Texas.

- Big Table. Social connections are vital to our mental and physical health, and this year Student Life hosted two events as part of the Columbus Foundation's Big Table Initiative. Several hundred campus and community members gathered in the Ohio Union to discuss the importance of community connections, the danger in our country's increasing levels of loneliness, how we can work together to re-energize and strengthen a sense of community.
- What it Means to Be a Buckeye. In March, Student Life hosted the second annual What it Means to Be a Buckeye event featuring Ohio State football Hall of Famer and two-time Super Bowl champion, Malcolm Jenkins. Jenkins reflected on his experience as a Buckeye and how the friendship and support he received at Ohio State, both through football and his fraternity, helped him become a leader. He also spoke candidly about his mental health struggles and reducing stigma for others. Gene Smith was honored with the What it Means to Be a Buckeye award for his dedication and contributions to Buckeye Nation. Approximately 200 people attended the event and were able to meet and have books signed by Jenkins.

## Parent and Family Relations

Parent and Family Relations engages parents and families as key stakeholders in their students' experiences through enhanced communication, involvement in programming and leadership and support of fundraising initiatives. This year, the department launched a new communication platform, the Buckeye Family Connection, to strengthen information-sharing with parents and families. This tool allows users to personalize the content they receive, helping them connect to campus events and opportunities that they, and their students, find interesting with more refined and targeted information distribution.

The new technology will also provide significantly improved data and tracking capabilities, which can lead to the identification of families who want to support the university through the Parents Advancement Council or other ways of giving their time, talent and treasure.

In addition to communication, Parent and Family Relations hosts other major events throughout the year, including summer send-off events, Sibs, Kids and Family Day and the Legacy Dinner. This year, they welcomed more than 8,000 families to in-person campus events, including over 2,065 attendees at the first Buckeye Football Family Tailgate in September.

Parents wanting more sustained engagement can apply to join the Parent and Family Roundtable, which brings together a standing group of families to create opportunities for regular, ongoing dialogue focused on the holistic student experience. The group has virtual, monthly meetings where they discuss important topics, such as health, wellness, safety and student engagement. Members serve up to a two-year term and applications open every summer.

## High-Profile Events

Student unions have often been called the living room of campus where students can relax, socialize and study. Yet, the Ohio Union is much more than just a living room. In addition to student events and activities, the Ohio Union and other Student Life facilities are also premier destinations for high profile events for both university and community organizations. Student Life Events and Conferences, supported by the Ohio Union Operations team, won the 2023 Unique Venues Award - Planner's Choice for Professional Meetings and Conferences.

Event highlights in the Ohio Union from the past year include the Barbie and Jim Tootle 80th Birthday Celebration, several Wexner Medical Center events, BuckeyeThon's Dance Marathon, President Carter's student welcome reception and the Legends Luncheon presented by Nationwide Children's Hospital. The Ohio Union is not the only facility in Student Life to host important events. During the summer, Recreational Sports, in partnership with the Wexner Medical Center, hosts the Special Olympics of Ohio Summer Games. Student Life looks forward to hosting even more exciting events in the future across its broad portfolio of facilities.

# Anthony Ashford III

## Featured engagement

Homecoming Court

## Major

Business Administration

## Rank

Third-year student

## Campus

Newark

Anthony is engaged in many co-curricular activities on Ohio State's Newark campus, from being a team leader at the recreation center and working as a student employee, to serving as a student ambassador and being involved in various student organizations. One of Anthony's most memorable achievements as a Buckeye was being selected for Homecoming Court in both 2022 and 2023. Anthony shares that it was an amazing, fun and exciting experience. He was honored to be able to bring his mom to the Homecoming football game and stand on the field in the 'Shoe with the other Homecoming royalty. When Anthony reflects on his co-curricular experiences, he says that being so engaged on campus is helping him learn how to balance everything, a lesson he continues to use as he works toward his future goals. When asked what he has learned through his engagement on campus, Anthony shares that he has a better sense of self-confidence and ability to speak up, which he believes will help him with his long-term goal of starting his own business.

# Heather Daly

## Featured engagement

Graduate Research Associate in the Center for the Study of Student Life

## Program

PhD in Cognitive Psychology

## Rank

Graduate (Spring 2024)

## Campus

Columbus

Heather Daly recently completed her PhD in the field of Cognitive Psychology, which prepared her to work in that field, and her time as a Graduate Research Associate (GRA) in the Center for the Study of Student Life (CSSL) prepared her to work as a professional. Heather worked as a GRA focused on research and assessment around student mental health and well-being. She shared that her time in CSSL taught her how to work with partners and how to align research with strategic goals.

When asked what advice she would give other graduate students at Ohio State, Heather says she would encourage them to get involved on campus somewhere outside of their academic department. “During the first few years of my graduate program I never really saw much of campus besides my academic building and the library. I also did not interact with anyone outside of my department, so it was challenging to feel like a part of the university. However, once I began getting involved with the Council of Graduate Students as a delegate and then branching outside of my department by pursuing the CSSL position, I began to feel a greater sense of belonging at Ohio State. I only wish I’d gotten involved a bit sooner so I could have had more time to enjoy the expanded community!”

# Learn

**Strategic Goal**

Invest in student and staff opportunities to deepen their learning, growth and development

## Highlights

### Student Employment Experience Program Expansion

Ohio State employs nearly 15,000 students across our campuses and the medical center, giving important opportunities for students to engage in real-world, experiential learning. To enhance the professional development outcomes achieved through on-campus jobs, more than ten years ago the Student Employment Experience (SEE) program was designed to help students make connections between their job responsibilities and what they are learning in the classroom, all of which they can apply to their future aspirations.

The SEE program, housed in Buckeye Careers, was developed to recognize that everything a student does on campus should be intentional and focused on learning, and that includes work. SEE uses a three-pronged approach that focuses on students mastering their jobs, attending professional development workshops and, most importantly, having intentional conversations with their supervisor about their growth. These are known as Guided Reflection on Work, or "GROW[1]," conversations, an opportunity for student employees to make connections between their work, their academics and their future careers.

All the 4,600+ student employees in Student Life have been engaged in SEE for many years. At the beginning of the 2023-24 academic year, Student Life set the goal to increase the number of students in the program by 40%, from 4,600 students to 6,440. With tremendous support from campus partners, this goal was exceeded, with more than 6,600 students participating in the program, a 44% increase. This includes students on all of Ohio State's campuses and departments across the Columbus campus. Moving forward, Student Life will continue to offer support, training and resources to supervisors who want to be engaged in this learning-focused program.

[1]*GROW is used with the permission from the University of Iowa.*

## Reusable Containers

As part of the university's efforts to achieve zero waste, Student Life Dining Services launched a reusable to-go container program at each of their all-you-care-to-eat locations. The program diverts waste from landfills while also encouraging a culture of environmental responsibility among students, staff and faculty. The containers utilize advanced identification technology to create an efficient and simple platform for diners to use. After enjoying their meal, diners simply return the container to one of the many conveniently located drop-off bins across campus. The containers are then washed, sanitized and put back into circulation. Over 10,000 students have taken part in this program at least once, and containers have a return rate of 99%. During the 2023-24 academic year, 248,639 containers were diverted from landfills and 24,733 pounds of waste were saved.

### Collin's Law Anti-Hazing Education

Ohio State has zero tolerance for hazing in any form and all members of the university community are expected to do their part to support an environment free of hazing. Student Life works to advance this environment through robust anti-hazing education. All members of the university community can access the Collin's Law Anti-Hazing virtual education module 24/7. All Ohio State students must complete the anti-hazing education in BuckeyeLearn before participation or membership in any activity, sport, club or organization. All staff and volunteers who advise an organization and who have direct contact with students must complete the training as directed by the university in accordance with Collin's Law. The module provides information on how Ohio State defines hazing, how to report hazing, criminal penalties for hazing, university policies and resources and how to intervene when hazing occurs. In addition to the online module, trained Student Life staff provide in-person training to groups that request it.

Ohio State also participates in Ohio's annual Anti-Hazing Summit, bringing together college professionals from around the state to focus on prevention education, innovative resources, best practices and strategies to eliminate hazing. Twenty-one staff from Ohio State attended the 2023 Summit. Six staff from Student Life presented at four different sessions of the Summit on topics like handling Student Conduct cases for organizations, hazing prevention efforts in student organizations and changing culture within groups.

## Buck-I-SERV

Buck-I-SERV offers weeklong, substance-free programs centered on community service and civic engagement, which are offered during winter, spring and summer academic breaks. The goal of Buck-I-SERV is to offer students challenging and engaging opportunities to travel, learn about various service experiences, reflect on the importance of civic engagement and serve the communities they visit. Focus areas for past trips have included environmental sustainability, health and wellness, hunger and poverty.

Buck-I-SERV began at Ohio State in 2003. During the 2023-24 academic year, nearly 300 participants took 33 trips to 14 states, Washington DC and six countries. Students completed 7,657 service hours through projects like supporting local masons in partnership with Constru Casa to construct homes for families from under-resourced communities in Guatemala and serving alongside Cherokee Nation's Community and Cultural Outreach Program in Oklahoma to assist with home repairs and landscaping for elderly and disabled Cherokee citizens, as well as a renovation project at a community center in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. When Buck-I-SERV participants aren't volunteering, they engage in cultural and educational immersion activities. Throughout each trip and at the conclusion, trip leaders guide reflection sessions so students can describe their learning, including articulating how the experience has impacted them and inspired their future leadership and service goals.

Buck-I-SERV is such a powerful experience that Student Life created the Student Access Fund to raise funds to support, expand and improve Buck-I-SERV by offsetting costs for student participants. This past year, the program utilized $23,000 in donor gifts to support 34 students in financial need. This included fully funded trips for 15 students and partially funded trips for 19 additional students.

### Student Learning Goals and Staff Professional Development

The Office of Student Life's work is grounded in a foundational set of Student Learning Goals:

- Embrace self-discovery
- Cultivate community
- Foster health and well-being
- Think critically

The goals were created in the 2021-2022 academic year after a rigorous review of literature, review of the general education curriculum and Student Life's offerings. An initial implementation team worked during the 2022-2023 year to create resources and to socialize the goals across all Student Life departments. This past year, a team worked to expand the understanding of the Student Learning Goals and provide professional development for staff across the division to assist in implementation.

One professional development program focused on writing student learning outcomes and another offered discussion guides that assist supervisors in having clear, intentional conversations with student employees about each goal. Student Life is also incorporating learning goals in other processes, including program review and annual planning.

# Thrive

**Strategic Goal**

Promote a holistic culture of health and well-being to empower students and staff to thrive

## Highlights

### Monda Student Resource Center

For the past several years, Student Life has been working to help students meet their essential needs. Research shows that fulfilling one's essential needs, like food, housing or clothing, are closely linked to students' academic success, yet many Ohio State students struggle to make ends meet. According to the Student Life Survey (2024), 30% of undergraduate, graduate and professional students qualify as having low levels of food security. Five percent of graduate students, 4% of undergraduates and almost 1% of professional students report that they experienced housing insecurity in the last year.

Ohio State has many university programs and community partnerships established to meet the essentials needs of students. Given the size of Ohio State and the decentralized nature of these efforts, barriers exist for students when accessing timely, seamless and holistic essential needs support.

Scheduled to launch in early 2025, the Monda Student Resource Center will open in the Younkin Success Center to provide a centralized hub for essential student services. The center aims to provide a one-stop shop for students to access amenities such as a food pantry, a Career Closet offering free professional attire and dedicated office space for students to collaborate with campus and community partners. Construction on the center began in June 2024.

# Ash Williams

## Featured engagement

Ohio Welcome Leader Coordinator and Community Ambassador

## Major

Biology, with a minor in business

## Rank

Third year

## Campus

Columbus

Getting involved has been a core part of Ash's Ohio State experience, from participating in student organizations to on-campus employment. In summer 2024, he served as one of two Ohio Welcome Leaders (OWL) Coordinators with Housing and Residence Education, a role in which he helped prepare 500 OWL student volunteers to help with move-in. Working with the OWL program is important to him because it helps students find their place at Ohio State and to know they belong here.

Getting involved helped Ash make campus feel smaller. Coming to Ohio State, he did not know anyone. In his first year, he was part of the Biological Sciences Scholars living-learning program. And now he mentors new students in the Scholars program because he knows that mentoring was important for his success in his first year, and he wants to pass that on to other students.

Ash's on-campus job working with the Willie J. Young, Sr Off-Campus and Commuter Student Engagement Office as a Community Ambassador also helps him to feel connected to Ohio State and to help students access resources. He is driven to support his fellow students, and his on-campus job helps him do just that.

# Martha Cibasu

## Featured engagement

Student Organization Success Coach

## Major

Chemical Engineering with a minor in Pharmaceutical Sciences

## Rank

Graduate (Spring 2024)

## Campus

Columbus

Martha graduated with a job in biotech waiting for her, and during her last year at Ohio State, she prepared by remaining actively engaged on campus. Martha served as a Student Organization Success Coach, a role that offers one-on-one coaching appointments to the university's more than 1,400 student organizations. She started out as a coach manager during her first year on campus despite not having any prior leadership experience. Her role grew over time as she made important contributions such as providing feedback to make the student organization website easier to navigate and creating educational content for coaches. When asked about her experience, Martha shares that being a Student Organization Success Coach taught her about working on a team and how to collaborate on projects. As a commuter student, it also provided insight into what different students' paths can look like and helped her find a sense of belonging on campus. As Martha enters her career field, she is eager to leverage what she has learned during her time as a success coach.

### Mental Health and Well-being Investments

Thanks to a nearly $2.5 million award from the state of Ohio, Ohio State is bringing specialized teletherapy, academic accommodation support and expanded mental health and well-being resources and programs to students. These efforts will be funded for two years as part of the $20-million Governor Mike DeWine and Ohio's General Assembly have dedicated for college and university mental health support. Student Life will be at the forefront of investing in new services, programs and offerings that are evidence-based and will help enable students to thrive in college and beyond.

The resources supported by the new funding include:

- Teletherapy that provides a specialized service for after-hours and wellness programming.
- Mental health grants that provide funding to students for off-campus mental health resources. These dollars also fund positions for graduate students who work with grant recipients.
- Student organization wellness ambassador program which incentivizes and trains student organizations to identify a formal mental health ambassador position within their organization.

- Graduate student administrative associates who focus on promoting health and well-being resources. One assists the Student Wellness Center with programming, outreach and assessment of initiatives and another assists Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) with outreach, including expanding the Let's Talk program and suicide prevention training.
- Academic accommodation support for mental health through Student Life Disability Services. 70% of registered students select mental health as either their primary or secondary accommodation need. These funds will increase their ability to offer support, such as exam accommodations, attendance and deadline modifications as well as adaptive technology.
- Biofeedback equipment at Counseling and Consultation Service that enables users to learn how to influence physiological activity to improve health and performance.
- Student Employee Experience (SEE) wellness program, which will offer health and well-being programming and resources to student employees.
- Digital mental health modules and self-help tools available on demand.
- Monda Student Resource Center will receive investments to support its opening.

### Suicide Prevention Program

Ohio State's Suicide Prevention Program was founded in 2007 and funded by a grant until 2013, when the Office of Student Life and College of Education and Human Ecology partnered to continue the program. The ambitious and nationally recognized program created REACH© trainings that help faculty, staff and students recognize warning signs, engage with empathy, ask directly about suicide, communicate hope and help individuals with suicidal ideation access care and resources.

In 2022, the Suicide Prevention Program underwent a program review that recommended the program should transition from the College of Education and Human Ecology to the Office of Student Life. Working in close collaboration with the College, Student Life transitioned the program this academic year under the umbrella of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service. This structure bolsters the Suicide Prevention Program's keen focus on supporting current Ohio State students and aligns well with the Office of Student Life's multi-modal approach to supporting mental health and well-being.

During the 2023-24 academic year, more than 2,100 campus community members were trained in REACH©. The Suicide Prevention Program also hosted the Out of the Darkness Walk, which included over 400 participants on four different Ohio State campuses, raising over $22,000 for suicide prevention efforts.

### Collegiate Recovery Community 10th Anniversary

The Collegiate Recovery Community (CRC) celebrated its 10-year anniversary this year. This achievement highlights the important, expanded efforts that Student Life has put in place to support students in recovery from substance misuse. The CRC is a welcoming and inclusive environment for students in or seeking recovery through a community of support while they navigate the collegiate experience free of alcohol or other drugs.

Located in Baker Hall, near the Ohio Union, members of the CRC can engage with staff, access resources, attend recovery meetings or spend time in the student lounge. Financial support has also played a crucial role in the CRC's development. Starting with modest grants, the program now boasts two funded scholarship endowments and receives contributions from alumni dedicated to supporting students in recovery.

Since its founding, the program has celebrated the successful graduation of more than 70 students who have been a part of the CRC. As the CRC looks to the future, its focus remains on adapting to meet the changing needs of students, such as gambling addiction.

## Life in Motion

Recreational Sports continually advances its motto of living a life in motion. During the 2023-2024 academic year, Recreational Sports rolled out several new initiatives and celebrated student successes in sport. The intramural program launched a new pass, giving students access to unlimited intramural participation in a semester, rather than signing up for each sport individually. A total of 4,358 students utilized the pass in its first semester and total intramural sports participation was 30,477 for the academic year, a 25% increase over the prior year.

Club sports also remain popular among students, with over 2,200 participants. Student Life was certainly rooting for the Sports Club All Girl Cheer team as they won their national championship. The Esports Arena hosted the first Big Ten Esports LAN (Local Area Network) Championship in April 2024, where more than 200 participants from 14 institutions attended the event.

## Years of Service Recognition

Student Life actively works to promote our culture commitments of Appreciation, Care, Support and Connection. As part of Student Life's focus on appreciation, we held our inagural Years of Service recognition event. The university annually holds a Years of Service recognition event for those with 25 to 55 years of service or more, and Student Life complemented that event to recognize individuals within the Student Life team who completed 5, 10, 15 and 20 and more years of service within the 2023 calendar year. This year's event celebrated more than 1,425 total years of university service.

# Vattsa Mehta

## Featured engagement

Peer coach in Scarlet and Gray Financial

## Major

B.S. degree in Business Administration with a specialization in Finance and Economics

## Rank

Graduate (Spring 2019)

## Campus

Columbus

During Vattsa's time at Ohio State, she combined her studies with a passion for helping others by becoming a student program assistant in the Scarlet and Gray Financial coaching program. Scarlet and Gray Financial is a nationally recognized peer financial coaching program that assists thousands of Ohio State students each year in creating the life they desire through a goal-driven financial coaching process. Vattsa's work as a student program assistant included mentoring other peer financial coaches, regularly presenting to student groups and tracking student completion of peer coaching. She even had the opportunity to present about the program at a national conference in Washington, D.C.

When Vattsa reflects on her time in the program, her favorite memories include seeing fellow students have a "lightbulb" moment when teaching them something new and practical. She still uses what she learned working with Scarlet and Gray Financial in her current role as a Management Consultant at Accenture. She says her job is to ask questions and find issues that clients face, and then come up with solutions, and that working as a coach prepared her for this. She reflects that "Consulting is very much a relationship business, so I would say that learning to navigate and manage a client relationship comes down to getting to know people and what their interests are."

# Warren Lor

## Featured engagement

Graduate Teaching Associate in
Student Life Disability Services

## Program

Higher Education and Student Affairs

## Rank

First-year Master's student

## Campus

Columbus

Warren came from Wisconsin to Ohio State for graduate school to study Higher Education and Student Affairs. As part of the decision process for graduate school, he interviewed with potential Graduate Teaching Associate roles. After interviewing with Student Life Disability Services (SLDS), he knew he had found his number one choice. Warren was looking for an experience where he would be student-facing and working to create personalized support. At SLDS, this is exactly what he does by coordinating notetaking by peers for students registered with SLDS, managing flexible accommodations around assignments and assisting with exams. He says this hands-on experience has provided him with knowledge of how to provide well-rounded support and exposed him to the many diverse needs of college students. His biggest challenge in the role has been launching a new module in SLDS's online portal and database to support students and faculty. To do this successfully, he had to think outside of the box and collaborate with many other staff members and solicit student feedback. He is proud that he made the process as smooth as possible and that he was able to lean on others for support. Warren is excited to pursue a career in student affairs after he finishes his graduate program and believes his academic program, coupled with his work in SLDS, has prepared him well for his next steps.

# Operational Excellence

### Strategic Goal

Advance operational excellence initiatives to ensure Student Life continues to leverage our administrative structure to be a strong and successful organization

## Highlights

### Events and Conferences

In September 2023, Student Life announced a new and innovative approach to maximize our events, conference services and associated units such as conference housing, catering and sponsorship. The goal of the transition is to achieve operational efficiencies and new revenue generation, leading to affordability gains for students. This will also make it easier for clients to contact one department within Student Life when exploring our portfolio of facilities. The results are a consolidated event sales and management team, a streamlined process for clients, higher levels of organizational efficiency and opportunities for increasing crucial revenue streams.

Since the announcement of this organizational change, Student Life realigned reporting structures, reviewed all event space rates, reviewed revenue reporting, increased alignment with finance, launched a new, one-stop events and conference website (slec.osu.edu) and streamlined processes for guests and clients to book, plan and experience events at Ohio State. During the 2023-2024 academic year, the team assisted with 26,574 event bookings, a 39% increase from the prior year.

### Staff Engagement Survey

In an effort to best support staff engagement and well-being, Student Life administered its second Student Life Engagement Survey in January 2024. This was an opportunity for staff to provide anonymous feedback on their experiences as a team member. The goal was to outline concrete steps for advancing staff engagement within the division.

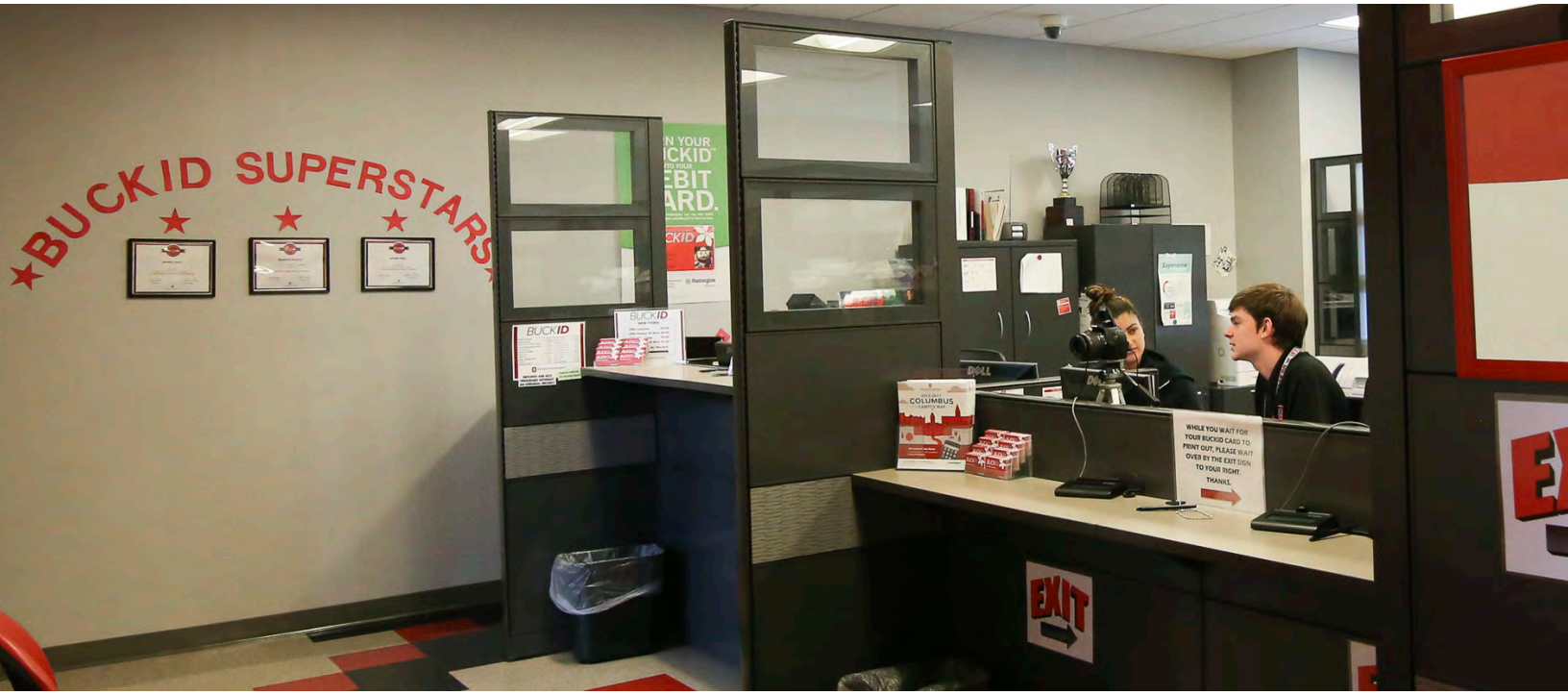
More than 700 staff members responded to the survey. On most key metrics of staff engagement and satisfaction, Student Life saw positive improvements over the 3-year time period since the last survey administration. More than three-quarters (78%) of staff agreed or strongly agreed that they are proud to work in the Office of Student Life, which was a 9% increase from 2021. Seventy percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend working in Student Life to others, a 6.5% increase from 2021.

Student Life will continue to regularly monitor staff engagement through formal methods, such as the Staff Engagement Survey, and informal methods including tables talks, listening sessions and opportunities for pulse surveys to provide feedback on specific topics. The results of the 2024 Student Life Staff Engagement Survey will be used to create an action plan to continue to improve the culture of Student Life and bolster our team's ability to engage, learn and thrive.

### BuckID Innovation and Collaboration

This past year has been one of innovation and collaboration for Student Life's BuckID unit. First, tap-card technology is now a feature on all newly issued BuckID cards. The new BuckID cards use Near Field Communications (NFC) technology, a short-range wireless communication system, that allows the card to securely exchange data with devices within close proximity. This will allow BuckID cardholders to simply tap their card to complete payments and unlock doors as compatible readers are installed across our campuses. In addition to being more convenient, this technology is also more secure. As of June 2024, BuckID exceeded their goal metrics, with 33% of students and 14% of faculty and staff using the new technology.

Collaboration has been another key advancement for BuckID this year. To improve security and the user experience, and to achieve efficiencies across the enterprise, BuckID is in the process of becoming Ohio State's sole identification card, including for the Wexner Medical Center (OSUWMC) and on the regional campuses. Historically, OSUWMC employees were required to carry two cards because of incompatibilities between OSUWMC systems and BuckID. Going forward, a single BuckID card will be able to provide a university affiliate with access to facilities, accounts and services across the university and the medical center. Distribution of the new cards began this summer.



### Student Life Disability Services

Since 2011, Student Life Disability Services (SLDS) has experienced exponential growth in the number of students registered with the service, from 1,464 in 2011 to more than 7,000 today – a 383% increase. This growth is reflective of national trends that are projected to continue, with an estimated 15% of K-12 students having a disability according to the Pew Research Center. The nature of accommodation requests is also changing, with students requiring more complex accommodations.

Student Life is critically reviewing the operations of SLDS through an operational excellence project, based in Lean Six Sigma methodology, to ensure resources are being effectively leveraged to meet student needs. It is fitting that as SLDS plans for the future, they also reflect on the past. Student Life Disability Services celebrated their 50th anniversary this year by acknowledging major milestones in the history of access and inclusion on campus. A complete history can be found online at slds.osu.edu.

# Carmen Ohio

## Ohio State's Alma Mater

*Oh come let's sing Ohio's praise*
*And songs to Alma Mater raise*
*While our hearts rebounding thrill*
*With joy which death alone can still*
*Summer's heat or winter's cold*
*The seasons pass the years will roll*
*Time and change will surely (truly) show*
*How firm thy friendship ... O-HI- O!*

*These jolly days of priceless worth*
*By far the gladdest days on earth*
*Soon will pass and we not know*
*How dearly we love Ohio*
*We should strive to keep thy name*
*Of fair repute and spotless fame*
*So in college halls we'll grow*
*And love thee better ... O-HI-O!*

*Though age may dim our mem'ry's store*
*We'll think of happy days of yore*
*True to friend and frank to foe*
*As sturdy sons of Ohio*
*If on seas of care we roll*
*Neath blackened sky or barren shoal*
*Thoughts of thee bid darkness go*
*Dear Alma Mater ... O-HI-O!*

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF STUDENT LIFE