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The Office of Student Life consists of more than 40 departments that are dedicated to helping students achieve success. Student Life programs and services foster student learning and development, enhance the educational experience and prepare students for their chosen professions and to be contributing members of a diverse global society. The Office of Student Life is committed to eliminating barriers to student success; helping students develop their skills in leadership, teamwork, decision-making, communications and problem-solving; creating a climate of support and appreciation for all; and collaborating with academic units to integrate classroom and co-curricular activities to provide a meaningful and cohesive total learning experience. We also provide opportunities for students to interact with faculty, staff and other students, allowing them to tap into the university’s far-reaching network of diverse resources and perspectives in ways that will enrich and transform their lives. In all of our efforts to serve students The Office of Student Life also strives to be leaders in collaboration both on our campuses and with outside “partners,” and to contribute significantly to the field of student affairs.

Our efforts are comprehensive and touch the lives and development of students in nearly every aspect of their Ohio State experience. We provide everything from the fundamentals of food and shelter to personal health, wellness and growth to support for academic and professional development.

As a result of our efforts, Ohio State students on all of our campuses have enhanced opportunities to be successful both at the university and in their lives after graduation. The extraordinary student experience we have created will leave our students with memories that will last a lifetime, and create an alumni base more likely to be engaged with the university in meaningful and mutually beneficial ways.
# Strategic Vision of Student Life

Creating the extraordinary student experience at The Ohio State University.

# Strategic Mission of Student Life

The Office of Student Life fosters student learning and development, enhances the educational experience and prepares students for their chosen professions and to be contributing members of a diverse society.

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STUDENT LIFE
DEPARTMENTS
Buckeye Careers
Buckeye Leadership Fellows
BuckID
Building and Mechanical Services
Career Counseling and Support Services
Center for the Study of Student Life
Conference and Business Development
Counseling and Consultation Service
Development
Dining Services
Disability Services
Energy Management and Sustainability
Environmental Services
Facility Planning and Design
Facility Services
Financial Management
Fiscal Compliance
Housing Administration
Human Resources
Marketing
Multicultural Center
Off-Campus and Commuter Student Services
Office of the Senior Vice President for Student Life
Ohio Union Events
Parent and Family Relations
Procurement Shared Service Center
Recreational Sports
Residence Life
Risk and Emergency Management
Social Change
Social Entrepreneurship
Sorority and Fraternity Life
Strategic Communications
Student Activities
Student Advocacy Center
Student Conduct
Student Health Insurance
Student Health Services
Student Life Graduate Assistantship Program
Student Life Orientation
Student Philanthropy
Student Wellness Center
Technology Services
University Catering
Younkin Success Center
The Changing Career Landscape

There are more career options available to today’s workforce than ever before, and the landscape of careers is changing. Today’s college students are no longer expected to stay in one or two careers for their lifetime, but are likely going to change careers many times. Millennials are the most likely generation to switch jobs and are expected to have four jobs in the first ten years after college (LinkedIn, 2016). Employers are specifically looking for transferable skills from recent college graduates. According to data from the National Association for Colleges and Employers (NACE), the top skills employers want to see on graduates’ resumes are leadership skills, teamwork, communication and problem-solving (NACE, 2016). The challenge at the collegiate level is to prepare students with transferable skills for their ever-changing futures, while offering the discipline-specific training for their initially chosen career.

Student Health and Wellness

Health and wellness are foundations for the academic success of students, and the promotion of healthy holistic lifestyle behaviors is both a priority and challenge for many colleges and universities (LaFountaine, Neisen, & Parsons, 2006). On a national scale, the mental health needs of college students have increased dramatically over the past decade. Almost one in five adults in the United States have a mental illness, including college students (National Institute of Mental Health, 2015). Anxiety and depression are growing concerns among students, with 21% of students reporting being diagnosed with or treated for anxiety in the past year and 17% diagnosed or treated for depression (AUCCCD, 2017; ACHA, 2017).

In addition, risky behaviors centering on alcohol and other drug use on campus are rising throughout the U.S., and the opioid epidemic is reaching college campuses (Malone, 2017). Further research and new strategies are needed to determine effective practices to combat these risky behaviors and support student success.

It is also imperative for college campuses to provide access to affordable health care through provider services and health insurance. Students expect many services from their health insurance plan, and some studies suggest that higher education must adapt to student expectations and health care costs (Liang, 2010).
// Access and Affordability

Access to affordable higher education remains a challenging issue. College costs continue to increase, with the average loan balance of 2015 bachelor’s degree graduates of public or private nonprofit institutions at $30,100. In this same cohort, 68% of bachelor’s degree graduates had student loan debt (Cochrane & Cheng, 2016). Results from Student Life’s 2017 Study on Collegiate Financial Wellness found that the majority of college students report feeling stressed by their finances even if they are engaging in positive financial behaviors and practices (SCFW, 2017). The returns on a college degree are significant with college graduates reporting greater happiness and more stability – in both financial and personal aspects (Goldin and Katz, 2007; Hout, 2012). It is important for colleges to provide students with access to high quality education at an affordable price, and ensure their success and learning once enrolled.

// The Digital World

Today’s college students interact and engage with the world differently than any other generation due to the rise of technology in their day-to-day lives. It is estimated that 41% of college students spend at least six hours a week on social media (Higher Education Research Institute, 2016). College students need to navigate the world both online and in-person, facing challenges with online harassment, developing an appropriate online presence and communicating multi-modally. The unlimited access to technology and new media can interfere with academic success. High frequency of cell phone use is associated with lower grade point averages and higher levels of anxiety among college students (Lepp, Barkley, & Karpinski, 2014). Meanwhile, colleges need to respond to students’ changing preferences and expectations to interact and receive programs, services and learning opportunities digitally.
Changing Student Population

The university’s student population continues to arrive at Ohio State better prepared than ever before. Among the 2017 incoming cohort, 65% of students ranked in the top 10% of their high school class and the average ACT score was a record high of 29.2 (Enrollment Services, 2017). At the same time, the population is diversifying with 21.6% of first-year students from minoritized populations and the number of international students has almost doubled in the past 10 years. With the American Talent Initiative working to bring more talented low-income students to the university, our population will continue to diversify in coming years. This provides the university with a unique opportunity to enrich students’ learning about themselves and others through meaningful, inclusive experiences. The university will also be challenged to provide services and support to an increasingly diverse population of students.

Redefining the Student Experience

The university continues to strive to redefine the student experience by providing students with transformational experiences. It is imperative that we work across the university to deliver a seamlessly integrated, comprehensive educational experience for our students that fosters interactions between students and faculty, provides deep communities of engagement and access to academic and co-curricular learning. Collaborating to create an extraordinary student experience is essential to ensure we are fostering teaching and learning in and out of the classroom.
// Talent Acquisition and Retention

To reach our goals, we must acquire and retain increasingly higher levels of talent among our staff members, as is true throughout the university. Without new and significant funding sources, the Office of Student Life must create new strategies to successfully compete for qualified employees. As all areas of the university experience this challenge, internal competition for talented staff members will exist. The Office of Student Life intends to work with internal stakeholders and partners to create systems and procedures that ensure equity across similar jobs while promoting a collaborative approach to the advancement of high-performing employees.

// Evolving Funding Model of Higher Education

The Ohio State University has a strong commitment to providing students access to an affordable education. There is also increasing competition among colleges and universities to provide state of the art facilities and spaces to recruit incoming students as well as transformational learning opportunities for students. As the university strives to increase affordability, the Office of Student Life must work to reallocate or reprioritize current resource allocations while maintaining the highest level of educational opportunities and services for students. It will be increasingly important for the Office of Student Life to pursue and secure alternative sources of funding to support the mission of providing the extraordinary student experience. Moving forward, it is essential that the Office of Student Life balance differing demands and initiatives while containing costs.
STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS
Strategic Focus Area 1
Student Development and Leadership

As the leading land-grant institution in the nation, we will advance a culture in which students are provided with a wide range of opportunities to learn, develop and grow. We will create integrative learning environments that link co-curricular experiences with academic endeavors, allowing students to engage with each other, and individually, on many different platforms. By producing the most current and well-researched methods, practices and models, we will ensure Ohio State graduates are leaders who think differently and create change in the face of complex, unstructured, real-world problems. Strategic concentration areas include leadership, service, student involvement and engagement, interpersonal and intergroup communication and advancing Ohio State tradition. Likewise, Student Life will continue supporting team members’ national contributions to the field of Student Affairs.

Initiatives

1. Create a comprehensive approach to understanding and supporting student leadership development
   • Advance Student Life Leadership Project
   • Develop College Student Leadership Needs Assessment
   • Increase impact of Buckeye Leadership Fellows
   • Enhance Keith B. Key Buckeye Social Entrepreneurship Program

2. Contribute to the national field of student affairs
   • Influence the field of student affairs by sharing research and practice in publications and presentations
   • Develop resources for applied learning in Student Affairs administration and student development theory
   • Incorporate Student Affairs expertise in formal learning environments

3. Expand the culture of student philanthropy

4. Advance student development through technology and innovation
   • Create eSports laboratory(ies) and associated co-curricular programming
   • Innovate in deployment of technology to support student learning
   • Collaborate to develop and implement applications for the iPads related to student development and success
Strategic Focus Area 2
Inclusive Excellence

The Office of Student Life will provide an extraordinary experience for all students that is rich with opportunities to become citizens in a global society, while also contributing as citizens of the Columbus community. In an environment in which all are supported and respected, students will actively engage in diverse and inclusive experiences, learning about themselves and others. Student Life will provide opportunities for students to invest their time in important dialog and challenge themselves to critically consider the thoughts, experiences and values of others. Student Life will also foster students’ contribution to our local, national and international communities.

Initiatives

1. Provide opportunities for students to actively engage in experiences that challenge them to learn about themselves and critically consider thoughts, experiences and values of others
   • Grow Interfaith Council
   • Expand program offerings and partnerships
   • Expand practices and techniques to develop students’ and student organizations’ understanding of diversity
   • Develop Inclusive Excellence program in residence halls

2. Expand outreach, support and funding for underserved students

3. Advance comprehensive Columbus engagement strategy and reporting process
Strategic Focus Area 3
The Second-year Experience

The Office of Student Life will expand its ongoing commitment to redefining the student experience through the Second-year Transformational Experience Program, which has resulted in higher retention rates, improved student engagement and satisfaction and additional post-graduation success. Assessment data will be analyzed and advanced to identify areas for improvement, expansion, change and innovation, including opportunities to customize current broad-based programs for more in-depth implementation for second-year students. Further analysis and data will inform efforts to prepare second-year students for personal and academic endeavors beyond the second year.

Initiatives

1. Enhance Second-year Transformational Experience Program (STEP)
   - Increase overall participation in STEP and success of STEP students
   - Increase STEP participation in and success among underserved student populations

2. Explore need for third-year transitional experience
Strategic Focus Area 4
Innovation in Careers

Career development is critically important for the success of the university’s undergraduate, graduate and professional students. To this end, the Office of Student Life will advance Buckeye Careers, a department that provides stronger university-wide career services while maintaining the strengths of the decentralized model. Likewise, Student Life will facilitate university-wide growth of learning and development programs aimed at advancing the knowledge and skills of student employees, creating intentional links between theory and practice.

Initiatives

1. Implement Phase 2 of Buckeye Careers
   - Implement Buckeye Certified and new virtual career platform (Handshake)
   - Increase employer engagement and internship development
   - Update content of Buckeye OnPACE

2. Expand opportunities for transformational undergraduate and graduate student employment experiences
   - Expand and enhance Student Life Student Employment Experience
   - Expand professional development opportunities for GAAs and their managers through Student Life Grad Pad
Strategic Focus Area 5
Health and Wellness

Ohio State is a diverse learning environment where students engage with their surroundings to learn and grow. This strategic focus area will provide undergraduate, graduate and professional students with evidence-based resources for education and interactions that can help them reach their full potential in all facets of their lives. Student Life units will continue to advance the nine-dimension wellness model, which recognizes that all of these issues are interconnected and raises the need for a holistic wellness approach. A focal point will be creating and improving educational efforts that promote student and staff choices that lead to healthy behaviors.

Initiatives

1. Enhance resources and programs dedicated to students impacted by the opioid crisis
   - Develop connection to regional campuses to provide support for students affected by opioid crisis
   - Create outreach plan to promote Ohio State’s strong support structure for students in recovery
   - Advance knowledge related to college student opioid use via College Prescription Drug Study

2. Advance strategies for educating and responding to individual and group behaviors that adversely affect student success, health and wellness
   - Enhance and sustain Collegiate Recovery Community program
   - Create broad-based strategy for education about alcohol abuse

3. Offer access to affordable healthcare for students
   - Provide multi-modal mental health care for students
   - Offer student healthcare and insurance in a way that is accessible, efficient and affordable
Strategic Focus Area 6
Operational Excellence and Resource Stewardship

Operational excellence is core to the success of the Student Life and university strategic vision for the future. Student Life will be a responsible steward of its resources – for example, human, financial and capital – identifying opportunities to reallocate funds and redirect investment in support of strategic priorities. Student Life will continue to review operational processes and pursue best practices in resource stewardship, operational effectiveness, efficiency and innovation. We will also provide an employment experience for all staff members, one that values unique contributions and realizes employees’ collective impact on the advancement of the extraordinary student experience. The unit will also emphasize career development opportunities for staff members in an effort to attract, retain and reward our most valuable resource, our Student Life team.

Initiatives

1. Implement energy savings and sustainability processes for cost avoidance
   • Increase sustainable and local foods in dining operations

2. Recruit, retain and recognize a talented workforce
   • Deliver comprehensive onboarding for new employees
   • Provide robust learning and development opportunities for staff
   • Implement talent retention strategy

3. Strategically generate funds and revenue from alternate sources

4. Design and implement Operational Efficiency projects

5. Advance use of innovative, accessible spaces for students to engage in co-curricular activities
   • Use of common space on residential areas of campus
References


CARMEN OHIO

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 show
How firm thy friendship O-HI-O!