

OBERLIN
COLLEGE & CONSERVATORY

**Center for
Student Success**

YEAR IN REVIEW

2023-24





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Photo credit: John Seyfried

ON THE COVER

The Class of 2027 learns about CliftonStrengths in the CSS Overview during orientation, fall 2023.

Photo credit: John Seyfried

THE MISSION

The mission of the Center for Student Success (CSS) is to address and nurture the evolving and diverse needs of all students at Oberlin College and Conservatory by providing purposeful and enriching cocurricular learning and developmental opportunities. Guided by student feedback, data, and best practices, the center aims to positively influence institutional retention as well as student engagement, belonging, and satisfaction.

THE VISION

The Center for Student Success will be nationally recognized as a highly impactful and student-focused center fostering holistic student success and functioning as the bridge between student affairs and academics.

CORE VALUES

Student-Centered

Maintaining a focus on the success of Oberlin students and their experiences as it relates to CSS departmental initiatives.

Integrity

A dedicated commitment to our shared standard for both students, one another, and the institution as a whole.

Belonging

Committing to creating an environment where Oberlin's community feels included, valued, and accepted.

Impact

Remaining cognizant of the effect we have on students, each other, and the institution as a whole.

Collaboration

Working together to fulfill the mission of CSS.

Students who engage with the services and programs offered by the Center for Student Success will gain a variety of holistic developmental skills:

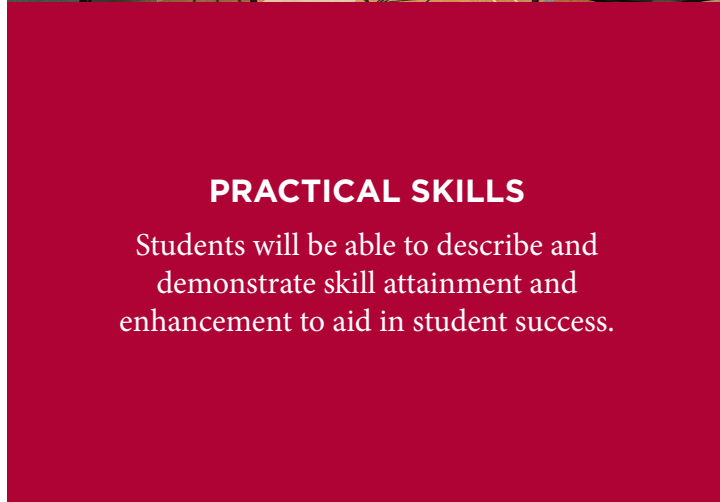
INTRAPERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Students will be able to articulate and apply values, skills, interests, and strengths, as well as identify and apply strategies that promote self-efficacy and resilience.



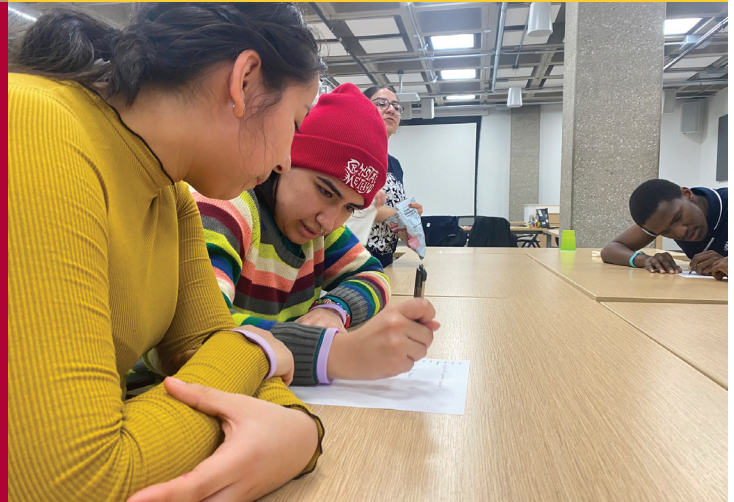
INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCE

Students will be able to identify, curate, utilize, evaluate, or apply a network of support.



PRACTICAL SKILLS

Students will be able to describe and demonstrate skill attainment and enhancement to aid in student success.





Harmony Morel

Dean of Student Success

- Appointed as a board member for the Consortium of High Achievement and Success (CHAS).
- Selected as a peer reviewer for the *Journal of College Orientation, Transition, and Retention* (JCOTR).
- Participated as a panelist at the CHAS Student of Color Conference: “Skinfolk or Kinfolk?: Building Trust between BIPOC Students and Administrators” and at NASPA’s Professional Development and Learning (PDL) webinar, “Student Success Coaching Panel: Building and Implementing Success Coaching Programs in Higher Education.”



Rebecca Morrow

Assistant Dean of Student Success

- Developed and delivered a new Winter Term Group Project, “CliftonStrengths Student Ambassadors” and Student Ambassadors Program.
- Co-presenter for “Creating a Culture of Lifelong Learning” at the Ohio College Personnel Association Annual Conference.

- Coordinated the “Moving Forward: Building Supportive Appreciative Education & Strengths Strategies for Working with Students of Color” in collaboration with the Learning & Development Advisory Board.



Jacob Dunwiddie

Senior Director of Student Success

- Launched Oberlin’s inaugural “Optimize Sophomore Year,” a Sophomore Success initiative.
- Completed Gallup’s Successful Strengths Coaching.
- Achieved new certification through LinkedIn Learning, “Instructional Design Essentials.”



Amanda Shelnutt

Director of Student Success Operations

- Created and implemented Oberlin’s inaugural FIRST Generation Week.
- Completed the ACPA Mid-Level Management Institute on leadership development.
- Achieved certification in Mental Health First Aid.

Staff Highlights



Maddie Libao

Director of Student Success & Success Coach

- Completed graduate coursework on Universal Design for Learning and Online Courses.
- Awarded the SAGE Publishing Keith Roberts Teaching Innovations Award.
- Headed the success coaching tools accessibility project.



Photo credit: Tanya Rosen-Jones '97 (staff portraits), Center for Student Success (group photos)

WELCOME TO THE TEAM!



Siir Cole

Director of Student Success & Success Coach

- Completed Gallup's Successful Strengths Coaching.
- Proposed the student connections project: a multi-pronged initiative aimed at increasing student connections with CSS.



Bour Opoku

FGIE Coordinator



Natasha (Tasha) Greene

Administrative Assistant

- Completed Gallup's Successful Strengths Coaching.



CSS staff pose for a picture during an Oberlin Human Resources employee engagement event.

Photo credit: Center for Student Success



Experienced

4,650

total touchpoints across all CSS services

1,507

students serviced across all CSS services

Engaged with

50%

of the total student body across all CSS services

Engaged with

20%

of faculty and staff across LEAD and L&D

Department Outcomes

Photo credit: Jennifer Manna

Success Coaching

The Oberlin Success Coaching Model continued to thrive this year with increasing student engagement, high levels of student learning and satisfaction, and a national award!

A **Success Coaching Advisory Board** was established in fall 2023 to foster continued collaboration and innovation within the Success Coaching core function via guidance from students, faculty, and staff. Members of the Success Coaching Advisory Board include:

- **Jacob Dunwiddie**
Senior Director of Student Success
- **Eboni Johnson**
STEM Librarian & Head of the Science Library
- **Samantha Rohner**
Assistant Director for Career Readiness
- **Tyrone Wicks**
Assistant Director of Campus Safety
- **Leah Brockman**
Associate Dean for Student Academic Affairs
- **Rebecca Smith**
Assistant Dean & Director, Office for Disability and Access
- **William Plavan-Masters '27**
BGM Scholar

Photo credit: Center for Student Success

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Success Coaching experienced increases in student engagement throughout the year including a **13%** increase in overall Success Coaching appointments and a **3%** increase in unique appointments. A snapshot of the students utilizing our individual coaching services are provided in the following graphs. Of note, Success Coaches have the privilege of serving a large population of first-year students, first-generation students, and students of color.

01

92% of respondents reported satisfaction with success coaching

02

13% increase in total success coaching appointments

03

33% of the students who utilized success coaching engaged with it two or more times

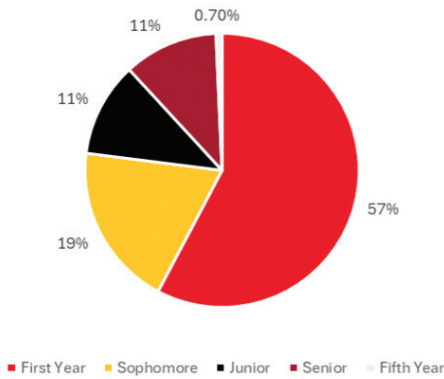
04

Honored with the **Outstanding Program of the Year Award** by the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA)

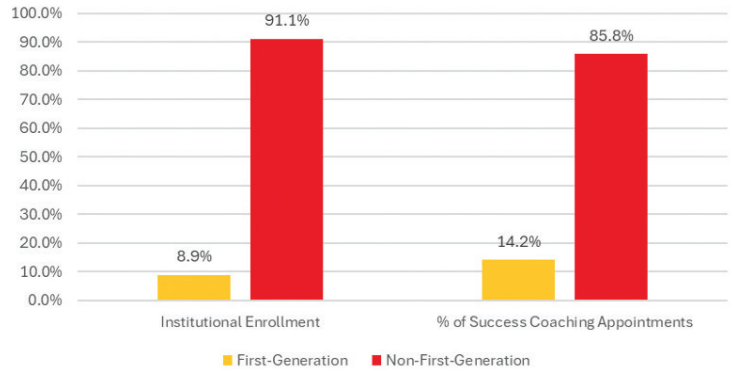
05

Created a subset of success coaching geared toward Sophomore Success, titled **Optimize Sophomore Year**

Unique Individual Success Coaching Engagement by Undergraduate Student Classification

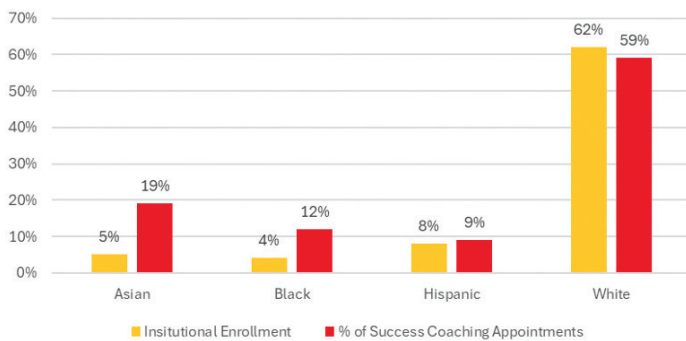


Unique Individual Success Coaching Engagement by First-Generation Status as Compared to Institutional Enrollment



Source: Oberlin College and Conservatory Enrollment Factbook

Unique Individual Success Coaching Engagement by Race/Ethnicity as Compared to Institutional Enrollment



Source: Oberlin College and Conservatory Enrollment Factbook

92%

of students engaging in individual Success Coaching reported being strongly or somewhat satisfied with the service they received from their Success Coach.



Along with individual Success Coaching, our staff facilitated **11 group sessions** throughout the year. These sessions engaged students in academic and cocurricular courses, Winter Term groups, and athletics teams. A snapshot of group coaching topics covered this semester is provided on the left.



Julian Anderson poses with Jacob Dunwiddie, senior director of student success.

Photo Credit: Center for Student Success

SOPHOMORE SUCCESS

The inaugural Sophomore Success Series, Optimize Sophomore Year, was launched this year focusing on building supportive relationships by leveraging students' strengths.

The first cohort included eight students who successfully completed the entire program by participating in the following activities:

- CliftonStrengths assessment
- Attended a "34 Way To" CliftonStrengths event
- Participated in a networking with your strengths workshop
- Attended a final event at the president's house with alumni to practice their new skills



The Optimize Sophomore Year kick-off event in August 2023.
Photo credit: Center for Student Success



Optimize Sophomore Year participants have dinner with President Ambar.
Photo credit: Office of Communications

FINANCIAL LITERACY WEEK

Oberlin's inaugural Financial Literacy Week (sponsored by the Center for Student Success Success Coaching core function and the Office of Financial Aid) kicked off in February of 2023 in collaboration with the Office of Financial Aid. The week-long event focused on teaching Obies critical skills around money management and fiscal wellness. Achieve Credit Union sponsored its second annual financial literacy workshop series, and the United Way of Greater Lorain County sponsored a tax workshop and free tax assistance sessions for students. Oberlin College Libraries, Student Senate, and the Office of the Dean of Students also provided support by sponsoring additional events for students to expand their knowledge of financial health strategies.



Right: Student and staff speakers from “Financial Fitness Friday: A Forum on Personal Finance” during the inaugural Financial Literacy Week. Pictured left to right: Omoukoko Okoth, DeJah Pittman, Ernest Kwayke, Bridget Adu-Dapaah, Yoshiko Tsompanos, and Amanda Fronek.

Photo credit: Center for Student Success

Below: Achieve Credit Union hosting a financial literacy workshop.
Photo credit: Center for Student Success



First-Generation and Income-Eligible (FGIE) Support

Support for first-generation and income-eligible (FGIE) students expanded this academic year within the Center for Student Success through multiple initiatives.

A **First Generation and Income Eligible (FGIE) Advisory Board** was created to bring students, staff and faculty together within the FGIE community to offer insight and professional guidance with the goal of expanding FGIE support services.

- **Amanda Shelnett**
Chair; Director of Student Success Operations
- **Anthony Pernell-McGee**
Executive Director of Career Exploration and Development
- **Courtney-Savali Andrews**
Assistant Professor of African American and African Diasporic Musics
- **Michele Kosboth**
Director of Financial Aid
- **Jackie Zubin**
International Student Program Coordinator
- **Chris Donaldson**
Assistant Dean for Inclusion and Belonging
- **Eryn Lundy '23**
Bonner Scholars Program Coordinator
- **Ezra Pruitt '25**
Oberlin Student Scholar

Photo credit: Center for Student Success

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1

Implemented the inaugural FIRST Generation Week Celebration

2

Secured a grant from Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA)

3

Introduced the bi-annual FIRST newsletter

4

Increase of 5% unique students served

5

Creation and implementation of a student staff professional development

In collaboration with ResLife, the creation of a **first-generation thematic living community** is underway to further first-generation student support and foster an increased sense of belonging on campus. The anticipated launch date of the FIRST Gen living community is **fall 2025**.



Photo credit: Center for Student Success

Notable Highlight

The CSS Peer Mentors were honored to be a part of Shiho Kawano’s (Assistant Professor and Faculty of Law at Niigata University, Japan) U.S. research tour on first-generation student support in the spring. Kawano interviewed five Peer Mentors on their experience as first-generation students studying in America, and how first-generation support services aid in the success of the students. Her research on the American higher education industry’s understanding of the first-generation student population aims to expand the foundation of support for first-generation students in Japan.

29
Total number of FGIE events offered
in 2023–24

5%
Increase in FGIE program and event
attendance in 2023–24

Peer Mentor Professional Development Program

CSS launched its inaugural student staff professional development program in AY2023–24. Students were trained in professional communication, presentation skills, spreadsheet creation and management, Oberlin policies and procedures, and more.

Student Voices

What students are saying about Brenda Grier Miller Scholars (BGM) program:

“Being a BGM Scholar helped me get rid of the feeling of isolation.

— BGM Scholar, 2024

“As a BGM Scholar, I have a huge sense of community. I feel like I belong.

— BGM Scholar, 2024



Peer Mentor Satoru Uchida during his end-of-year professional development presentation.

Photo credit: Center for Student Success



The CSS Peer Mentors 2023-24. Back row, L-R: Daniel Cruz, Satoru Uchida, Summer Stevens, Omukoko Okoth. Front row: L-R: Melissa Nova, Natalia Alvarado, Mya Valdez.

Photo credit: Center for Student Success



Photo booth in FIRST Gen Week 2023.

Photo credit: Dae Williams '20



FGIE graduates in the Class of 2024.

Photo credit: John Seyfried

FIRST GENERATION WEEK

The Center for Student Success was able to expand its annual First Generation College Celebration Day activities into a week-long celebration, largely due to securing a grant from the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA). The week was dedicated to recognizing the hard work and achievements of first-generation students, staff, and faculty, and celebrated their shared experiences of triumph in educational arenas. Oberlin's inaugural FIRST Generation Week took place from November 6 to 10, 2023 and multiple events were hosted across campus by various partners including the Allen Memorial Art Museum, Career Exploration and Development, Oberlin College Libraries, Student Leadership and Involvement, and the Multicultural Resource Commons.

As the highlights of the week, CSS hosted its first annual FIRST Gen Community Dinner, and in partnership with the Office of Communications, its inaugural FIRST at Oberlin student, staff, and faculty photo.



FIRST Gen Week 2023.
Photo credit: John Seyfried



Above: First-generation Obies at the inaugural FIRST Gen Week Community Dinner.
Photo credit: John Seyfried

Below: Prize winner Erika Flores pictured with staff from Campus Safety, the bike giveaway sponsor.
Photo credit: Campus Safety





Photo credits: John Seyfried (all images except bottom-right), Center for Student Success (bottom-right)

Learning Enhancements Across the Disciplines (LEAD)

Learning Enhancement Across the Disciplines experienced many “firsts” during academic year 2023–24:

- Pre- and post-assessment to measure student learning
- Efforts to build extra learning and development for instructors
- Advisory board of campus partners

Innovative initiatives emerged to increase students enrolling in LEAD courses because of the **LEAD Advisory Board**, comprised of:

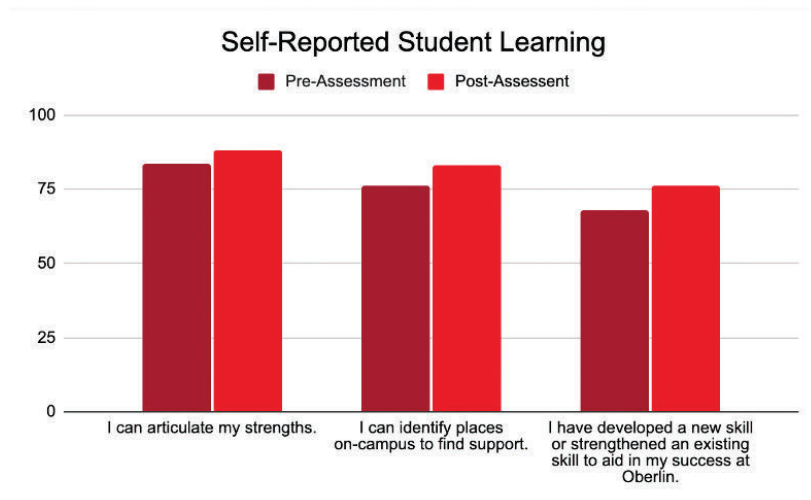
- **Jacob Dunwiddie**
Chair; Senior Director of Student Success
- **Chris Drennen**
Director of Academic Technology
- **Chris Jenkins**
Associate Dean for Academic Support; Liaison to the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion; Visiting Assistant Professor of Musicology
- **Laura Herron**
Associate Dean for Academic Standing; Assistant Professor of Jewish Studies
- **Mika Kawashima**
Lecturer in Japanese
- **Wyae' Stewart '24**
Student Senate Vice President of Academic Affairs

Photo credit: Center for Student Success

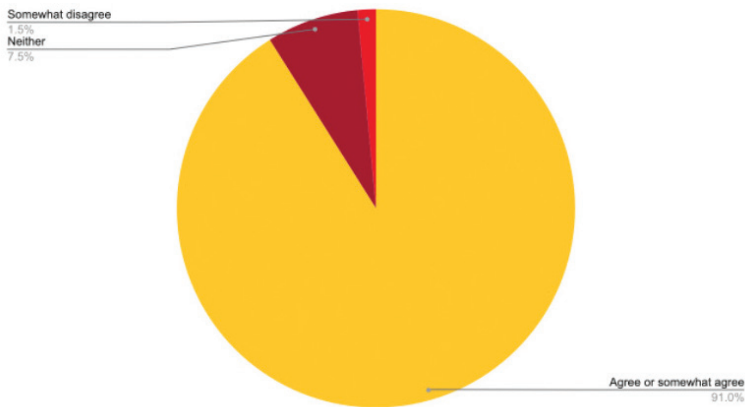
Key Accomplishments

The following are notable highlights this past year:

Students self-reported an increase in learning across all three LEAD student learning outcomes in the fall and spring post-assessments.

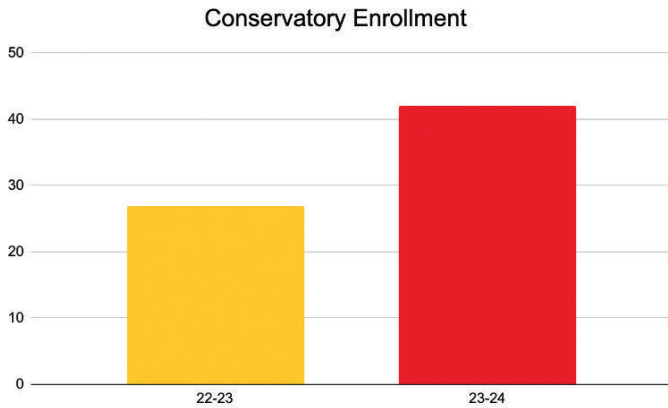


I would recommend a friend or peer to take a LEAD course

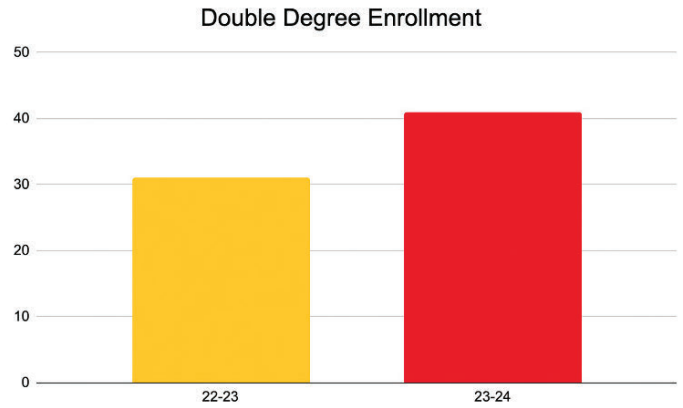


91% of students reported being satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the entire LEAD program.

55.5% increase in conservatory enrollment compared to academic year 2022-23.



36.6% increase in double-degree enrollment compared to academic year 2022-23.



Student Voices

What students are saying about LEAD:

I think [LEAD] helped me overall in gaining more skills and knowledge on how to handle my goals and priorities.

You will learn ... life skills, academic skills, and personal skills that will really strengthen your time here at Oberlin.

[LEAD 110] Allowed me to be more comfortable with my own skills and really develop skills that would be very integral for my time here at Oberlin.

[LEAD] Taught me so much!!! So happy I have the ability to take LEAD classes here as someone who didn't learn a lot of these skills growing up!

Learning and Development

Established in September 2023, the **Learning & Development Advisory Board** hosted three events during AY2023–24: “Engaging with Appreciative Education: Ongoing Conversation” (October 19); “Moving Forward: Building Supportive Appreciative Education and Strengths Strategies for Working with Students of Color” (February 20); and a focus group session (May 1).

- **Rebecca Morrow**
Chair; Assistant Dean for Student Success, Center for Student Success
- **Shannon Miller**
Departmental Assistant; Facilities Operations, Procurement and Auxiliary Services
- **Caroline Wood Newhall**
Assistant Professor of History, Department of History
- **Kristen Surla**
Director of Diversity and Inclusion, Department of Human Resources

Photo credit: Center for Student Success

The Learning and Development core function facilitates opportunities for Oberlin students and employees to recognize, develop, and apply their unique talents. The Center for Student Success leads the way in promulgating Appreciative Education, an asset-based framework, among Oberlin employees, providing the foundation for each interaction with students. Rooted in positive psychology, this student-centered approach focuses on recognizing, leveraging, and maximizing each individual student’s natural talents.

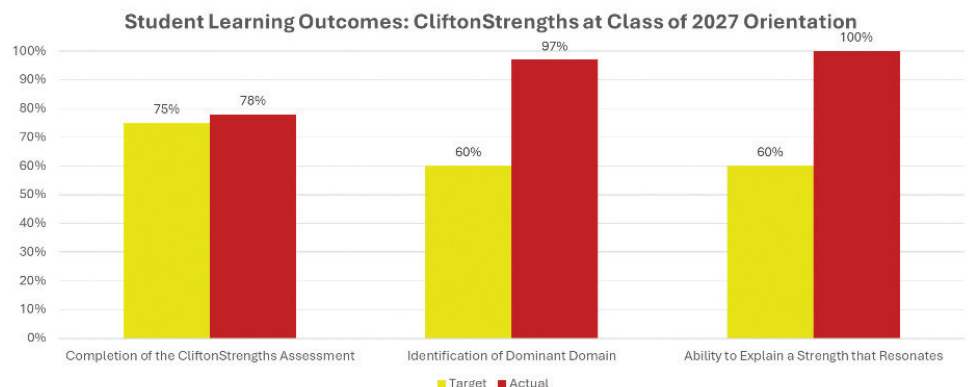
For CSS employees in particular, learning opportunities focus on achieving competency in Success Coaching to deliver an effective and consistent experience for all students, modeling transformative student-facing interactions for fellow employees throughout the college.

Students and employees alike have the opportunity to learn their Top 5 CliftonStrengths, and through individual and team coaching conversations, are able to employ their unique talents in ways that help them to achieve their goals.

STUDENTS

Introduction of CliftonStrengths

Fall 2023 marked the introduction of CliftonStrengths to students at Oberlin with the completion of the assessment by members of the Class of 2027 and a classwide session at orientation.



The Class of 2027's Top 5

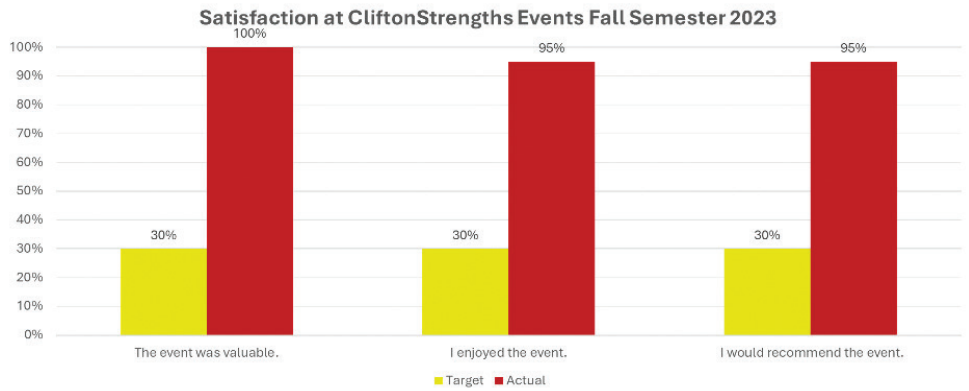


Your Team Leads With Strategic Thinking CliftonStrengths themes ⓘ

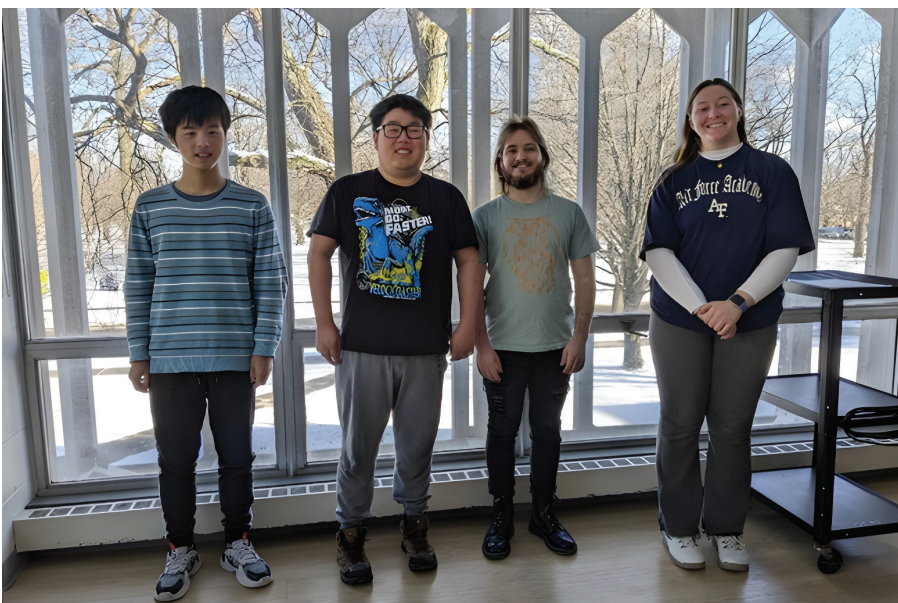


Fall 2023 Events

Education about CliftonStrengths continued through fall semester with those attending events reporting satisfaction with their experience.



Winter Term

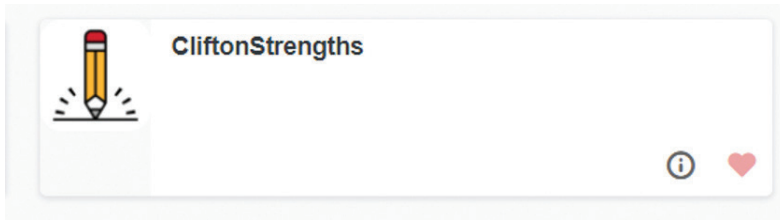


Four participants (one from each CliftonStrengths domain) successfully completed a newly developed group Winter Term project, which led to the creation of the CliftonStrengths Ambassadors.

Student members of the inaugural CliftonStrengths Student Ambassador Winter Term project, 2023.

Photo credit: Center for Student Success

Single Sign-On



On March 12, the CliftonStrengths task went live in OberView, allowing all members of the Oberlin community to access their Top 5 reports through single sign-on.

Student Voices

What students are saying about CliftonStrengths:

“It was cool to see my Strengths. I wasn’t surprised by the results; the Strengths confirmed my understanding of myself. I think CliftonStrengths brought more of my focus to how I lead. I knew that I am more of a behind the scenes leader, and the CliftonStrengths assessment helped me name these Strengths that I have.

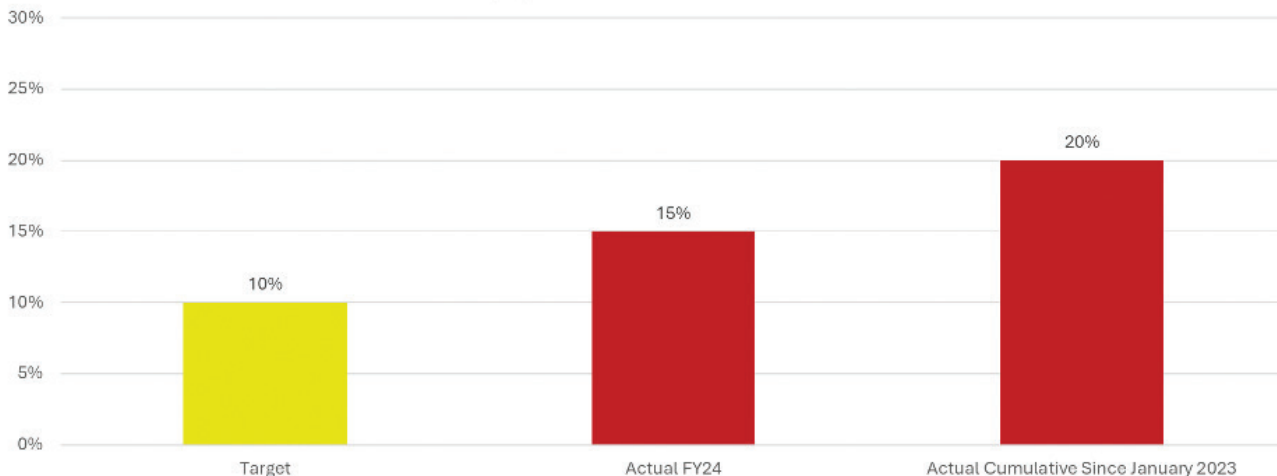
“I really enjoyed having someone help me be able to verbalize my Strengths in a more concrete way. I have discussed my Strengths in job interviews! It is really helpful to be able to have five Strengths off the top of my head and not have to think of them.

FACULTY AND STAFF

Appreciative Education

During AY2023–24, **108** unduplicated faculty and A&PS employees have attended Appreciative Education events, representing **15%** of these employee groups.

Faculty and A&PS Engagement with Appreciative Education Events





Staff attending the “Moving Forward: Building Supportive Appreciative Education and Strengths Strategies for Working with Students of Color” professional development workshop (February 2024).



Speaker Jesse Ford, assistant professor of higher education in the Department of Teacher Education and Higher Education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

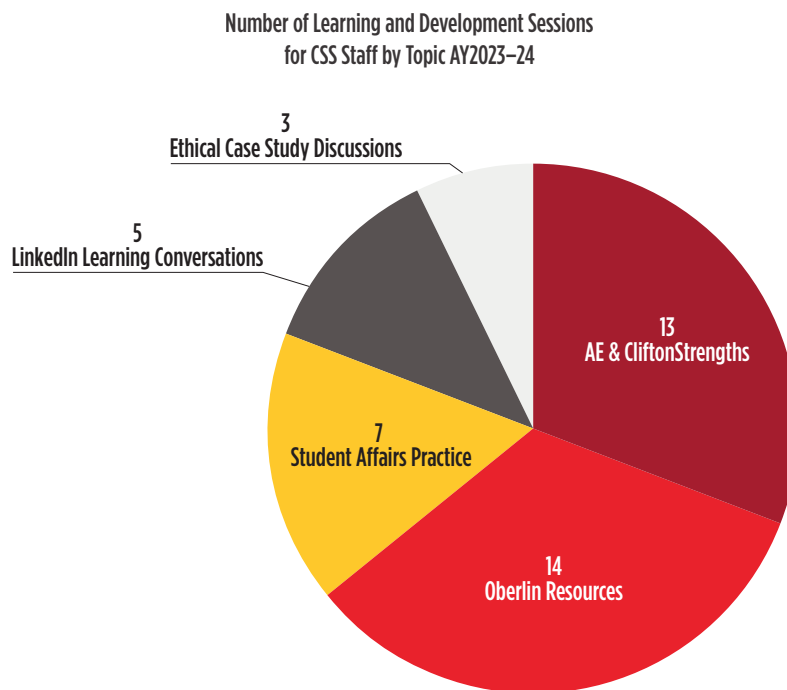


Photo credit: Kadrian Hinton

CSS STAFF

During AY2023–24, CSS staff engaged in sessions focusing on a variety of topics: the Appreciative Education framework and CliftonStrengths assessment which provide the foundation for all interactions with students; Oberlin resources to make effective referrals; and Student Affairs practice, including the Advising and Supporting and Personal and Ethical Foundations ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies. Additional sessions focused on the discussion of ethical case studies and the development of durable skills.

CSS Staff Training and Development



Attended Conferences

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Conference in Cleveland, OH
- FGLI Consortium Conference in Chicago, IL
- “Inclusive Futures: Belonging in Higher Education and Beyond” through University of Virginia (virtual)
- Higher Learning Commission Peer Reviewer Training and Annual Conference in Chicago, IL
- 2024 NASPA Annual Conference in Seattle, WA



Photo credit: Center for Student Success

Completed Trainings

- UndocuAlly training
- SAAL Applying and Leading Assessment in Student Affairs course
- ACPA Mid-Level Management Institute
- Excelling as a Manager or Supervisor by Skillpath
- LGBTQ+ Cultural Competency and Humility Training
- Trauma Aware Training
- Accommodations 101: Flexibility Training
- S.H.E. (Support, Help, Empower) Series Conversations
- SAAL Applying and Leading Assessment in Student Affairs Online Course
- Data Equity workshop series Demographic and Social Identity Data Collection and Analysis
- CliftonStrengths Coaching training

Completed LinkedIn Learning Courses

- “Essential New Skills in Learning & Development”
- “Advancing Your Skills as an L&D Professional”
- “Banish Your Inner Critic to Unleash Creativity”
- “Communication Foundations”
- “Creating Inclusive Learning and Experiences”
- “Critical Thinking for Better Judgement and Decision-Making”



CSS staff take part in a summer retreat professional development workshop with the Department of Human Resources.
Photo credit: Center for Student Success

Behind the Scenes at CSS

Staff within the Center for Student Success had several opportunities to have fun on campus this year. Team bonding opportunities were a regular occurrence, and many events with students and colleagues offered time to connect, reflect, and enjoy campus culture.



CSS staff dress up for Halloween on campus!
Photo credit: Center for Student Success



CSS staff and Rachel Najdek from the Office of the Dean of Students participate in a trivia event.
Photo credit: Center for Student Success



The Center for Student Success went bowling at College Lanes for a spring retreat day!
Photo credit: Center for Student Success



The winner of the inaugural CSS Halloween Costume Contest.
Photo credit: Center for Student Success

Internal Partnerships

- Academic Advising Resource Center (AARC)
- Arts & Sciences Faculty
- Athletics
- Campus Safety
- Career Exploration and Development (CED)
- Center for Information Technology (CIT)
- ConPALS
- Conservatory Administration
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Office of the Dean of Students
- Mary Church Terrell Main Library
- Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship
- Office of Disability and Access (ODA)
- Office of Financial Aid
- Peer Advising Leaders (PALs)
- Student Health and Wellness
- Student Senate Finance Committee
- Women and Non-Binary in Finance and Economics Club
- Writing and Speaking Center
- Allen Memorial Art Museum (AMAM)
- Multicultural Resource Commons (MRC)
- Student Leadership and Involvement (SLI)
- Office of Communications
- Office of the President
- Residence Life
- Academic Technology
- Office of Admissions, Arts and Sciences

External Partnerships

- Achieve Credit Union
- The United Way of Greater Lorain County
- Shiho Kawano, Niigata University, Japan
- Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA)
- Consortium on High Achievement and Success (CHAS)



Staff from the Center for Student Success and Career Exploration and Development show off the new Career Closet during FIRST Generation Week 2023.
Photo credit: Center for Student Success



Staff from Residence Life pose during the second annual Fun in the Sun Day, sponsored by CSS, AVI, and ResLife.
Photo credit: Center for Student Success

Remembering Eric Estes

The Center for Student Success honors and celebrates Eric Estes, who played a pivotal role in shaping Oberlin's membership and involvement in the Consortium of High Achievement and Success (CHAS), the oldest and largest consortium dedicated to the academic success of students of color at selective liberal arts institutions.

*Eric (center) speaking as a panelist at Haverford College, during the CHAS 2024 Student of Color Leadership Conference.
Photo credit: Ella Mbanefo*



The **Center for Student Success** partnered with the **Oberlin Alumni Club of Washington, D.C.** for two separate webinars in the spring of 2024.

Attending alumni learned about the **various initiatives and programs** that CSS offers, and were invited to campus for upcoming events.

CSS is eager to continue growing its relationship with Oberlin alumni and looks forward to **creating opportunities for alumni** to participate in CSS initiatives.

Parents and Alumni

The Center for Student Success thanks the Oberlin campus and community for its continued support and collaboration. We look forward to welcoming new Obies for the 2024–25 academic year.

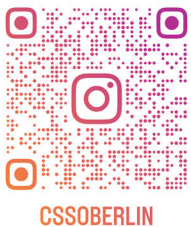


The Center for Student Success moved into its newly renovated space in Stevenson Hall in October 2023. The peaceful atmosphere offers visitors a quiet place to work or study while CSS continues its daily operations.

Photo credit: Center for Student Success



The Center for Student Success
Stevenson Hall (Longman Commons), Room 106
155 N. Professor St.
Oberlin, OH 44074
(440) 775-8600
css@oberlin.edu
<https://www.oberlin.edu/center-student-success>



Follow us on Instagram for departmental updates!

CSSOBERLIN



Photo credit: Tanya Rosen-Jones '97

