Opportunity Orange Scholars
Program Report
2024

Opportunity Orange Scholars (OOS) is a comprehensive transition program (CTP) at Oklahoma State University - Stillwater. Students admitted into the OOS program pursue a two-year, non-degree academic certificate in Career and Community Studies. While enrolled, students are fully immersed in the OSU experience as they live and learn on campus and gain valuable skills and experience in career exploration and interdependent living. Data on basic student demographics and across the four program cornerstones (a) career exploration and preparation, (b) interdependent living, (c) community engagement and belonging, and (d) academic development are collected to track student progress toward program outcomes.

SUMMARY REPORT

Data across the four program cornerstones are collected through a series of longitudinal student surveys collected at baseline (within the first two weeks of beginning the program), and at the conclusion of each semester while enrolled in the two-year program as well as through students' grades on specific assignments and/or overall course grades. Data in the summary below includes baseline data for the first two cohorts in the program through to the most recent iteration of data collection from both cohorts collected in May 2024.

Cohort 1 refers to students who entered the program in Fall 2022. Cohort 2 refers to students who entered the program in Fall 2023. Cohort 1 data reports five data points collected across a four-semester time span, including Baseline (August 2022), and the end of each semester of the program: Fall 2022, Spring 2023, Fall 2023, and Spring 2024.

Cohort 2 data reports on three data points collected across two semesters (Baseline, Fall 2023, and Spring 2024). It should be noted that both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 started with five students. Cohort 1 experienced a 60% retention rate from Year 1 to Year 2 of the program, thus Year 2 data for Cohort 1 includes data from the three students who continued the program.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS AT BASELINE

At Baseline, students in Cohort 1 ranged in age from 19 to 24 (M = 21.2) and Cohort 2 ranged in age from 18 to 22 (M = 20). Overall, students ranged in age from 18 to 24 (M = 20.6) upon entering the program. When asked to identify their race/ethnicity, and told to select all that apply, students across both cohorts self-reported: White (n = 6), American Indian (n = 3), African American/Black (n = 2), Latina (n = 1), and two students also reported being unsure of their race/ethnicity.

Among Cohort 1, two students (40% of cohort total) identified as male, and three (60% of cohort) identified as female. Among Cohort 2, four students (80% of cohort) identified as male, and one student (20% of cohort) identified as female. Across both cohorts four students (40% of program) identified as female, and six students (60% of program) identified as male.

In line with program admissions criteria, all students admitted into the program have a diagnosis of intellectual disability. When asked if they have a disability at Baseline, nine out of 10 students (90%) reported 'yes' Students self-reported disabilities, including "Autism", "Learning Disability", "Growth Delay", "Down Syndrome" and "ADHD". Two students reported that they knew they had a disability but were not sure of their official diagnosis and two students stated they preferred not to share their diagnosis.

CAREER EXPLORATION & PREPARATION

Career exploration and preparation is a primary goal for many young people attending college. OOS does not require students attending the program have a baseline of prior work experience, thus students enter the program with a wide range of experience and expectations. Across the two years of the program, students take a career-focused, program-specific course every semester and receive individualized instruction and support that empowers students to ultimately identify a career area of interest and gain valuable professional skills in that area.

At Baseline, all students were asked about work experience prior to starting OOS. A majority of students (n = 8; 80%) reported having some paid work experience and two (20%) reported volunteer experience. Of the eight students with previous paid work experience, two were not sure of their pay rate, and the remaining six students reported hourly pay rates ranging from $8.00 to $10.00. Seven of the eight students worked in part-time positions and one student worked full-time (defined as 35 - 40 hours per week). While a majority of students reported some previous work experience, no students started OOS with previous paid-work experience in their stated career area of interest. Among all 10 students in the program, four students (40%) reported previous experience submitting a job application, three (30%) reported previously interviewing for a job, and two (20%) reported having a resume prior to starting OOS.

By the end of Spring 2024, all students in Cohort 1 had participated in a minimum of six interviews (a combination of mock and professional) and students in Cohort 2 had all participated in at least three mock interviews. By the end of Spring 2024, all three students in Cohort 1, completed between 90 and 100 hours of internships in their desired career area of interest (i.e., customer service, athletics, early childhood education), and all students in Cohort 2 had secured their internship for the following school year. At the end of Spring 2024, all students (100%) across Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 had updated resume.

INTERDEPENDENT LIVING

OOS emphasizes development of skills that enhance interdependent living. In juxtaposition to independent living, interdependent living views the self as socially embedded and mutually obligated to others. Thus, students in the program are encouraged to explore and identify their own support needs, and then identify available supports to meet their needs. This approach promotes self-awareness and collaboration as opposed to focusing on mastering specific skills. By providing students the opportunity to identify their support needs and preferences, students increasingly become the person who causes things to happen in their own life, while successfully working toward the goals they have set for their lives after graduation.

Interdependent living skill development is assessed and tracked in the form of students' course grades earned across lab assignments, rather than through program outcome data collected once a semester. This allows for a student-centered approach and ensures that students are progressing from week to week all semester. Interdependent living skills that are graded for all students include accessing public transportation, increasing financial literacy, and skills related to selecting recipes, purchasing items needed for their recipe, and cooking the recipe.

At Baseline, 90% of students reported having a state-issued ID or driver's license. Of the nine students with state issued IDs, one stated their ID was expired and three reported that they had not brought their ID with them to college. By the end of Fall 2023, all eight students had an active state-issued ID in their possession. Prior to starting OOS, two students (20%) reported having applied for HCBS Medicaid waiver services. By the end of Fall 2023, all students across Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 completed and submitted an application for state supports and services.
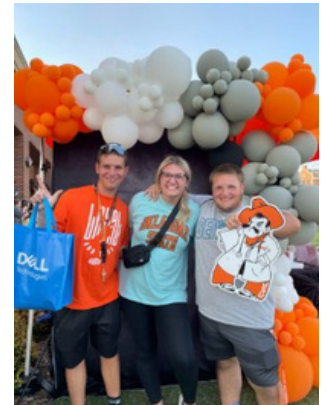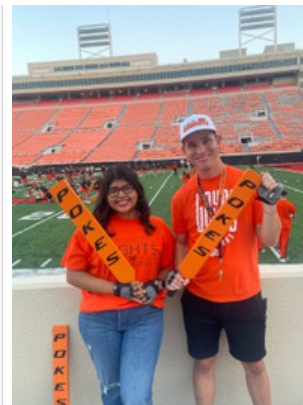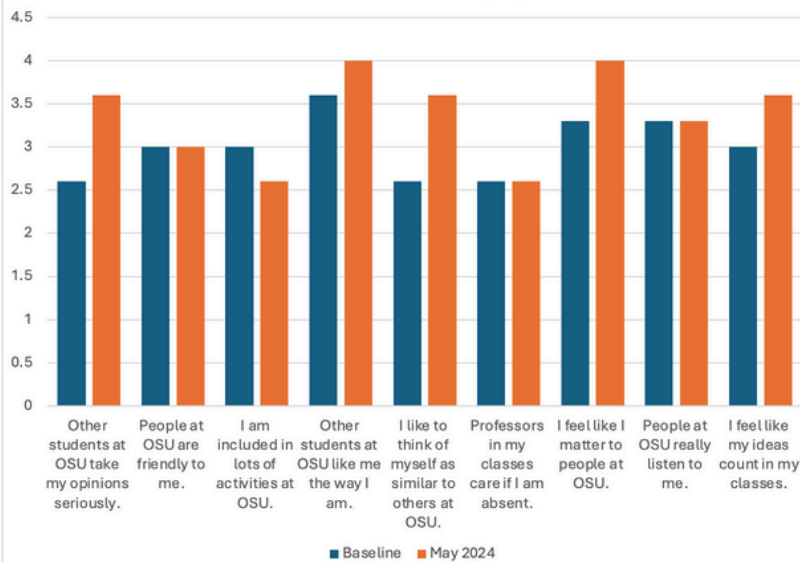
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & BELONGING

Sense of Belonging

The Simple University Belonging Scale (SUBS) was utilized to measure students' perceived levels of belonging and changes in level of belonging over time from baseline to follow-ups. The SUBS is comprised of 9 items on a four-point Likert scale (Novosel-Lingat, 2020[GK1]), total scale scores range from 9-36 with higher scores indicating a higher sense of belonging. At baseline, average student belonging scores for Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 were relatively high, M = 27.3 and M = 34.6, respectively. Cohort 1 reported a slight increase in overall belonging from Baseline (M = 27.3) to end of Spring 2024 (M = 30.6). Cohort to reported a slight decrease from Baseline (M = 34.6) to end of Spring 2024 (M = 32.2). Scores for specific items on the SUBS scale can be found in Table 1 for Cohort 1, and Table 2 for Cohort 2.


Table 1: Cohort 1 Belonging Data

Community Engagement

Campus engagement is assessed through students participation in university recognized clubs and organizations. By the end of Spring 2024, all eight OOS students (100%) were actively participating in at least one campus club/organization, with the majority of students (75%) participating in two more clubs/organizations, and one student (12.5%) serving on the executive committee of a club for which they were a member.

Table 2: Cohort 2 Belonging Data
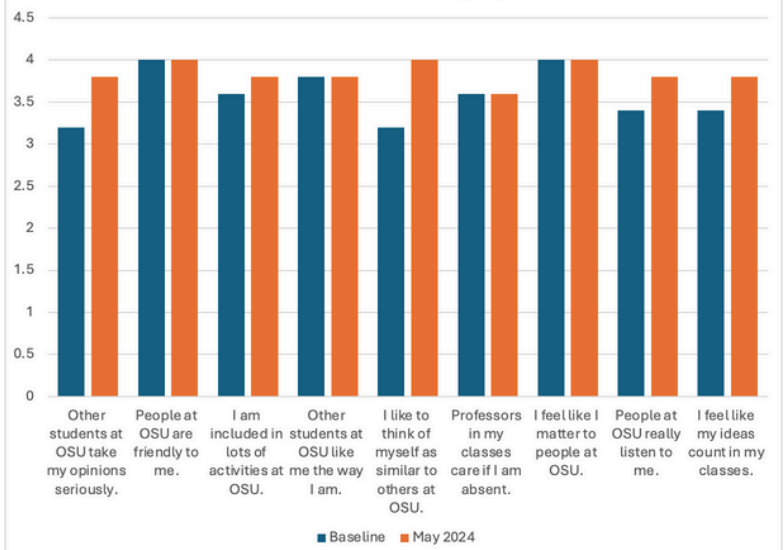
ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT & STUDENT LEARNING PLANS

Each semester of the program students enroll in a combination of program-specific courses and university-wide courses alongside other OSU students. Students enroll in all courses through OSU's campus-wide enrollment system and receive a letter grade (A-F) based on their performance in the course. All courses are reflected on their university transcript. Students must maintain satisfactory academic progress in order to be retained by the program, which is measured by a combination of student GPA and successful program in student learning plans.

Student learning plans were reviewed and analyzed as part of the student learning outcome data for the 2023-3034 academic year. Student learning plans include one goal established by the student across each of the four program cornerstones (i.e., career exploration and preparation, interdependent living, community engagement and belonging, and academic development) and one general program goal, for a total of five goals per student. Students meet with their learning plan advisor (i.e., program faculty or staff) at the beginning of each semester to establish their five goals and then meet once a month with their advisor throughout the semester to monitor goal progress.

An example of a deidentified learning plan is included below as Figure 1. Goal progress is scored at each monthly check-in on a five-point Likert scale: 1= much less than expected progress, 2 = less than expected progress, 3 = expected progress, 4 = more than expected progress, 5 = much more than expected progress. Satisfactory progress for student learning plans is established as students scoring a 3 or higher on 80% or more of their goals.

STUDENT LEARNING PLANS CONT.

At the end of Fall 2023, two of eight students (25%) scored a three or higher on all five of their goals (100%), five students (62.5%) scored a three or higher on four of their five goals (80%), and one student (12.5%) scored a three or higher on three of their five goals (60%). At the end of Spring 2024, five of eight students (62.5%) scored a three or higher on all five of their goals, two of eight students (25%) scored a three or high on four of their five goals, and one student (12.5%) scored a three or higher on two of their five goals. Given that this was the first year to track learning plan progress in this format, interpretation is limited. However, it is encouraging that across the first and second semester the majority of students, seven of eight (87.5%), made satisfactory progress (i.e., 3 or higher) on their student learning plans. We believe this highlights a standard of high expectations, while also empowering students to work toward the goals they value most.

Learning plans are guided by the principles of the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction, which students learn about and engage with each semester while in OOS. A vital component of increasing self-determination is the process of setting and working toward goals. Individualized student learning plans provide an opportunity to track a student's skill development in setting and working toward goals across all program cornerstones. While we currently only have two semesters of data for student learning plans, future semesters of data collection will allow us to track changes in students goal progress over time, indicating increased, decreased, and/or maintained skill in setting and working toward goals across all four program cornerstones. Future thematic analysis of actual goal content may also provide insight on strengths and growth areas of program curriculum. For example, if multiple students set a similar goal for interdependent living that is not explicitly addressed through program curriculum (e.g., completing housing applications for life after graduation) an assignment could be added to a program course to ensure all students are receiving support in this area.

Career and Community Learning Plan - Year 2 Fall

Student Name		Student Semester	Fall 23	CWID	
Plan Coach	Dr. Tucker				
Goal Bucket:	Program Requirements				
	Goal #1:	Student will attend 85% of all program required meetings and events, including partner meetings and one-on-ones with Dr. Tucker			
Goal Bucket:	Academics				
	Goal #2:	Student will identify an elective for Spring 24 semester, and meet with the instructor of the elective to plan any needed assignment modifications.			
Goal Bucket:	Interdependent Living				
	Goal #3:	Student will tour 3 apartments by the end of winter break to live in after program completion. Student will make a list of two things they like and two things they don't like			
Goal Bucket:	Employment				
	Goal #4:	Student will increase his customer service experience, and improve his communication with supeirvsors and co-workers (as evidence by a servuey completed at the end of the semester) while at internship.			
Goal Bucket:	Engament/Belonging				
	Goal #5:	Student and Dr. Tucker will meet with [campus information officer for campus police] one time befor winter break to ask about all of the differnt jobs someone can have for the police department			