



OFFICE OF ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Annual Report

2022-2023



Oregon State
University

Office of Academic Support
summer 2022-spring 2023

This annual report is the first using our new departmental name, the Office of Academic Support (OAS if you are partial to a technical acronym, or TOAST if you're looking for something catchy). Until now, the Academic Success Center, Writing Center, and ALS/ UEXP department were interwoven in practice and work, but not in name. The OAS name acknowledges the connection between these units, as well as the projects and initiatives that we contribute to the broader campus.

In AY23, we supported over 6,335 unique students in more than 29,614 contact hours. While growth was not our primary goal, we were committed to delivering across modalities and enhancing the point of service for students.

Across our programs, we are united in the use of a peer educator model, a highly effective, efficient, and impactful approach to service delivery. Our work is focused not only on the students we serve but on creating a supportive and developmental work environment for the 113 student employees who worked for us this year. In the pages that follow, you'll see how supervision and support of student employees has been an area of intentional focus in AY23.

Organizationally, we've had a strong year, bringing in \$16,100 in grant funding, ending the fiscal year under budget, stewarding our physical spaces with care, and completing three hiring cycles to bring our team back to fully staffed. These metrics are important, but equally so are the ways we as a team have come together around learning and mutual development. Later in this report, we highlight our evolving support of student employees, the adaptations we've made to services, and collaborative efforts within and beyond our unit.

As we wrap up our highlights from the 2022-23 academic year, we're already looking ahead to the 2023-24 year. I look forward to the conversations, learning, and collaboration yet to come.

Clare Creighton
Director, Office of Academic Support

Contents

4	Database & Program Highlights
6	Creating Dynamic Opportunities for Student Employee Leadership Development
8	Investing Time & Energy in New Student Employee Training
10	Behind the Scenes: Intentional Planning to Enhance Student Employee Development
11	Reducing Stress for Students in the Moment of Service
12	Embracing Feedback & Adaptation
13	Thinking & Working Together

Database & Program Highlights

Academic Coaching

Academic Coaching is designed to enhance students’ well-being and academic performance through a series of peer-facilitated conversations. These individualized sessions help students navigate transitions and make plans that match their needs. In AY23, Academic Coaches supported 360 students and engaged in a total of 679 contact hours. Coaching is most effective when students attend multiple sessions, and 64% of winter and 63% of spring appointments were with students who attended 2+ sessions that term (AY22: 49% and 48%, respectively). Overall, 56% of students attended 3+ sessions across the entire academic year.

ALS 116: Academic Success

ALS 116: Academic Success is a two-credit course where students study the science of learning and practice skills for making intentional decisions around academics. In AY23, 178 students enrolled in 9 sections (5 Corvallis campus, 4 Ecampus). Students who passed the course averaged a GPA increase of 0.55 during the term of enrollment. Students who passed the course and who were in negative academic standing prior to enrollment averaged a GPA increase of 1.18 during the term of enrollment.

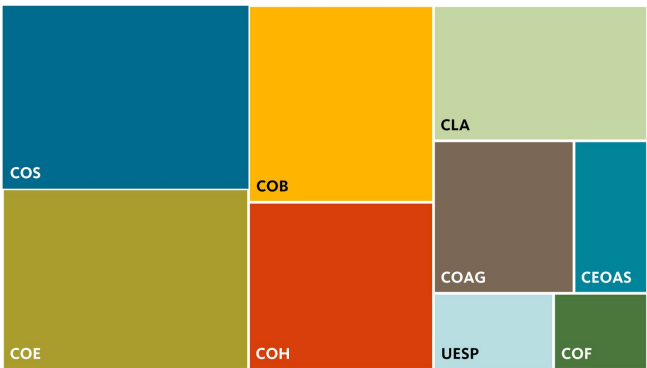
ALS/UEXP Department

The Academic Learning Services (ALS) and University Experience (UEXP) department offered 32* sections to 711* students in AY23. This year, we introduced a new quarterly gathering for ALS & UEXP instructors called “Coffee & Conversations,” an opportunity for instructors to connect with each other, the department chair, and the course coordinator to talk about teaching, facilitating, and supporting students. We also introduced new documentation for guidance and best practices to better support new instructors.

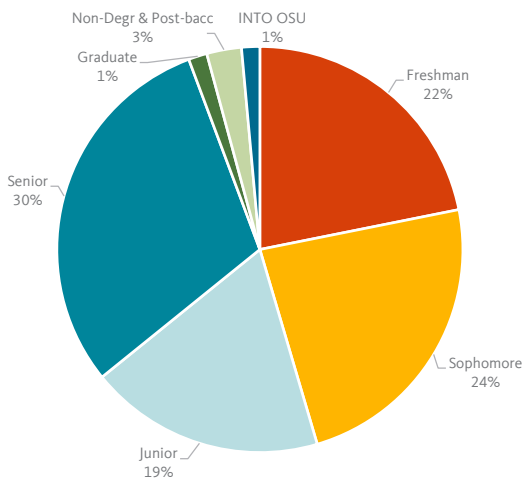
*Totals do not include INTO OSU courses.

ASC Strategists

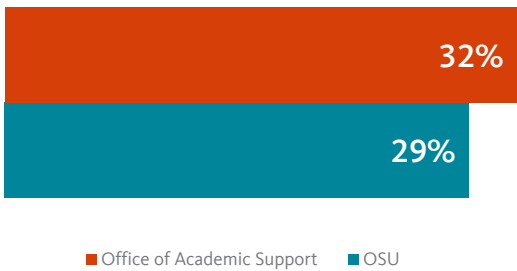
Strategists answer questions, connect folks to campus resources, introduce academic success strategies and tools from the Learning Corner, and create social media content for the ASC. In AY23, Strategists engaged in a total of 1,097 interactions. This year, we focused on deepening collaborations between Strategists, Academic Coaches, and the Outreach Specialist to streamline support for students using our services and improve the student employee experience. Strategists also played a critical role in redesigning our drop-in space with accessibility and wellness in mind.



OAS served students across all colleges.



OAS served students at all levels.



Compared to the OSU student population, a greater percentage of students served by OAS were Students of Color.

29,614
total contacts across
OAS services

6,335
unique students served

Corvallis: 85%
Ecampus: 13%
Cascades: 1%

1,358
first-year students
served

890
students who used two
or more OAS services

27%
students served who
were Pell-eligible

High Promise Scholarship

The High Promise Scholarship (HPS) recognizes students’ progression toward graduation and provides connections to academic and professional resources and opportunities. This year, the HPS supported 45 students across two cohorts, and 31% (N=14) of HPS students earned their bachelor’s degrees.

Learning Corner

The Learning Corner is our online resource that offers tools and strategies to support academic progress and wellbeing. Topics include planning, practice, test prep, and more. In AY23, we received a grant to develop and revise writing & learning tools for the Learning Corner and the new webpage, [Tools for Writers](#). Our goals were to increase accessibility, topics and tools, and the diversity of voices and experiences being shared.

Supplemental Instruction

After tripling in size in AY22, Supplemental Instruction’s goal for AY23 was to ensure stability and sustainability for SI Leaders and students using our services. Across six locations on the Corvallis campus and remotely for a number of Ecampus tables, a staggering 4,641 study tables were held supporting 2,290 unique students. Additionally, SI Leaders offered over 40 midterm and final review sessions for students in supported courses, pushing our student contact hours over 21,000 for the year.

Workshops

This year, the ASC workshop program had a total of 954 interactions. These occurred through by-request workshops, the remote workshop series (34 total workshops), and Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life (CFSL) workshops. This year we brought back in-person workshops for CFSL, continued to offer remote workshops, and hosted a train-the-trainer event to equip scholarship chairs and members in academic roles to deliver in-chapter finals-planning programming.

Writing Center

The Writing Center supported 3,130 unique writers through 5,070 interactions this year. In-person consultations (N=1,964) increased 13% in AY23 compared to AY22. Remote options for writing support also continue to be highly utilized, with 56% of the Writing Center’s consultations occurring through written feedback via email (N=2,069) or Zoom (N=479).

Creating Dynamic Opportunities for Student Employee Leadership Development

Employment in the Office of Academic Support is a high impact practice for students. We intentionally design transformational experiences for student employees that produce outcomes aligned with OSU’s [objectives for undergraduate education](#), including “providing a supportive and healthy learning environment for student success and leadership development.” Peer educators and other student employees are an essential part of our programs and services, and in AY23, we employed 113 student employees over the course of the year.

In our view, continuous learning and professional development, which includes cultivating a robust set of leadership skills, are fundamental to the OAS student employment experience. We collaborate with student employees to create individualized opportunities for them to support others in their learning, practice facilitation skills, give feedback, and participate in decision-making, both within and outside of their day-to-day roles. Here are a number of ways OAS student employees developed and practiced leadership skills in AY23 that went beyond their typical job duties:

Eleven OAS student employees took on the opportunity to **design and/or facilitate a team meeting**. Topics included:

- Activated Students & Coaching
- Defining Boundaries in the Workplace
- Developing Content Warning Language and Processes
- Identifying Perfectionism & Practicing How to Undo It
- Multilingualism & Coaching
- Multimodal Learning
- Personal Response Menus for Activated Situations
- Reflection & Resumes: Taking Inventory of our Work Experience
- Setting Intentions & How We Work Together
- Strategist Case Studies

*

Outreach Specialists, Strategists, and Academic Coaches helped **plan and facilitate several campus events**, including Bring Your Kids to Campus Day and our annual Plants, Puns, & Poetry sale for the OSU Food Drive. The Cupcake Event and Sips & Skips were two student employee-led hype events designed to engage students and promote the Academic Success Center.

In summer 2022, five student employees across OAS programs were selected to work on a special project known as **Writing & Learning Tools** to **develop, revise, and draft content** for the Learning Corner and Tools for Writers websites. In only 10 weeks, the team of student employees created 17 drafts for new content and completed revisions for over 20 existing tools, all which aligned with the project’s guiding values of right-sized portions, diversity in ideas, opportunities to individualize, contributions to a body of knowledge, source diversity, and audience awareness.

*

A team of Writing Consultants **developed and implemented a content-warning field** for the Online Writing Support submission process and contributed to the redesign of administrative documents.

*

Student employees across programs **met with candidates and gave feedback** during the search for an Academic Coaching Coordinator, Writing Center Coordinator, and SI Assistant Coordinator.

Many Academic Coaches and Strategists engaged in aspects of **recruitment, hiring, and onboarding** of new student employees, including giving feedback on the position description, helping develop interview questions that aligned with qualifications, participating in interviews, giving feedback about candidates according to guidelines, and designing and facilitating training content.

*

Supplemental Instruction Leaders engaged in a **SWOT analysis** (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) of the mid-term and final review sessions they host, which will inform fall planning.

*

Academic Coaches gave input on processes and helped **design better systems** for training, technological tools & resources, and managing time off.

*

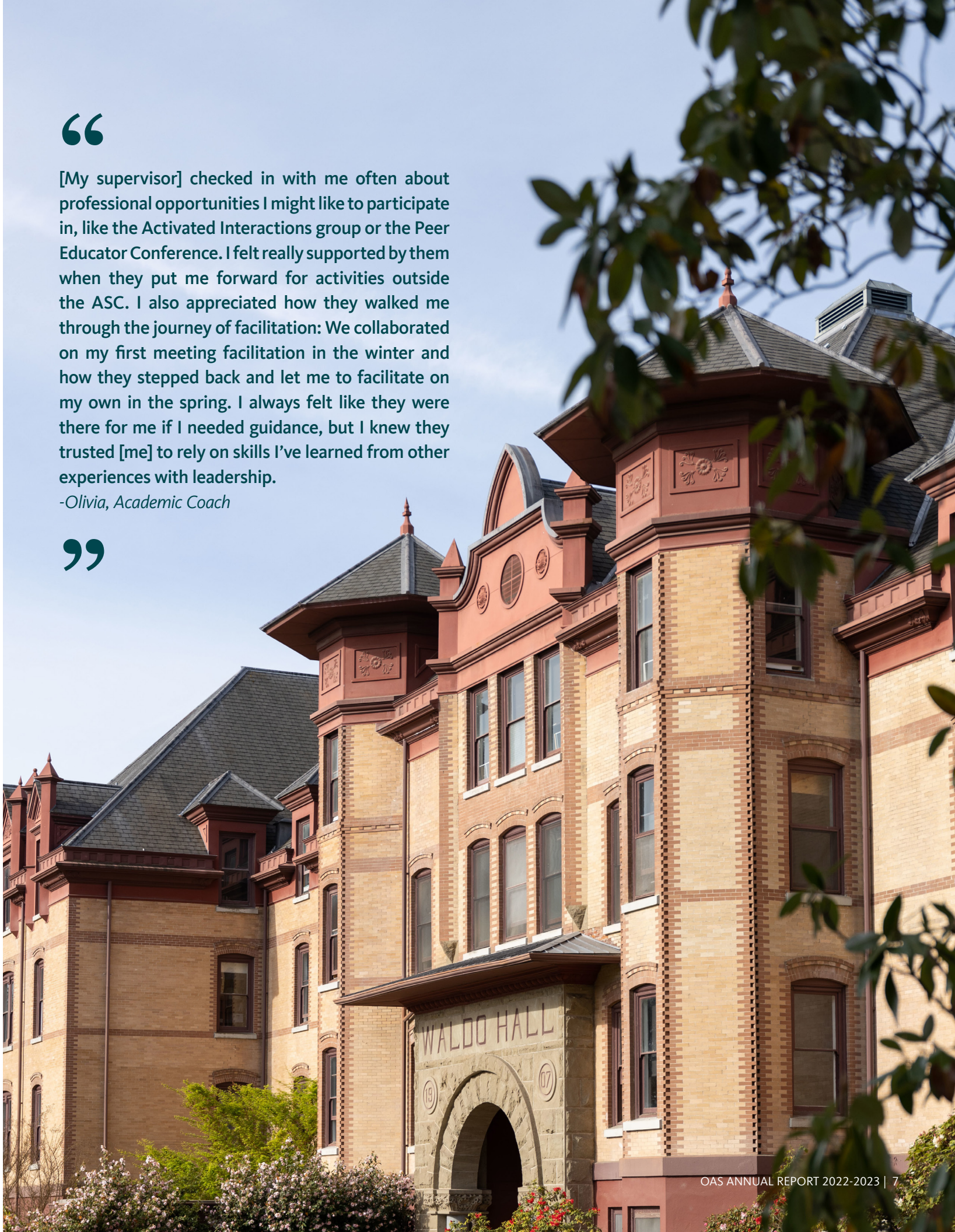
The Peer Educator Conference Leader (PECL) team, which includes 12 student employees, was instrumental in the **design and planning of the Fall 2023 Peer Educator Conference**.

“

[My supervisor] checked in with me often about professional opportunities I might like to participate in, like the Activated Interactions group or the Peer Educator Conference. I felt really supported by them when they put me forward for activities outside the ASC. I also appreciated how they walked me through the journey of facilitation: We collaborated on my first meeting facilitation in the winter and how they stepped back and let me to facilitate on my own in the spring. I always felt like they were there for me if I needed guidance, but I knew they trusted [me] to rely on skills I’ve learned from other experiences with leadership.

-Olivia, Academic Coach

”





“

I had a few circumstances where students would be visibly stressed, overwhelmed, and verbalize their struggles with depression while in school and how it was affecting how they learned. Our training and preparation on how to just sit and listen and be there for a student (not necessarily looking for active solutions) prepared me for this case.

-Hailey, Strategist

”

Investing Time & Energy in New Student Employee Training

We intentionally invest substantial time onboarding new student employees and seek to continuously improve our training year-to-year. Across programs, we

- build off of what student employees already know and bring to the role;
- emphasize building strong relationships and community amongst the teams;
- scaffold new information, theory, and skills over time to build confidence;
- engage new staff in observations, debriefing, and one-on-one conversations;
- and incorporate new trainings on ideas and content relevant to their work.

In summer 2022, new and returning Consultants in the Writing Center participated in revised training on **navigating challenging situations** and exploring techniques for de-escalating and setting boundaries.

*

In spring term, for the first time, new **Academic Coaches and Strategists were trained together** across six weeks, in addition to completing separate training dedicated to their unique roles. Our goal for intentionally integrating these two teams in training was to develop a strong group of employees who partner in their work supporting students.

Spring training for Academic Coaches and Strategists focused more time on the **conversational model using the WISE approach**. This approach created a cohesive framework for conversations to support students while allowing flexibility to individualize to the student and trusting the staff member to have their own style and approach.

*

In spring 2023, new Supplemental Instruction (SI) Leaders conducted **informational interviews with current SI Leaders**, an exercise designed to build connections amongst the team, acknowledge experience of current SI Leaders, and make the role feel approachable and relatable.

In summer 2022, five student employees across OAS contributed to the **Writing & Learning Tools** project. We designed training to reflect the needs of the compressed summer timeline with varied student employee availability. Training included synchronous discussion and exploration of guiding values, clear expectations, intentional practice of process steps, and evaluation of value and process alignment. This comprehensive onboarding, combined with weekly synchronous meetings and individual feedback, created an experience that developed connections, invited engagement, and supported autonomy.

"I am grateful for how understanding [my supervisor] has been in accommodating any needs I share. I also think she did an amazing job in training me for my role. Facilitation is something I think you learn through experience, but being able to slowly transition from listening to workshops to doing workshops on my own made trying to learn how to facilitate less daunting."

-Kayla, Outreach Specialist

"I really loved the fact that after learning something each training, we were expected to do a practical demonstration of it with our peers which helped us to understand the learning more."

-Shreya, Strategist

Behind the Scenes: Intentional Planning to Enhance Student Employee Development

Supporting and developing student employees takes intentional planning and investment. In AY23, we made strategic moves within the department to better support student employees, and we designed structures for learning that contributed to our own development as program leaders and supervisors. We collaborated, shared resources, taught one another, and worked to ensure that capacity existed for meaningful conversations and mentoring.

Many of our OAS team meetings and informal conversations focused on the leadership and support of student employees. Here’s a small sample of **questions we discussed in team meetings** in AY23:

- *What was your approach to supporting the wellbeing of student employees this year?*
- *How do we reconcile offering flexibility to student employees while also ensuring that we deliver high-quality programs?*
- *How can we clearly communicate expectations of roles and boundaries of work for student employees?*
- *What are our programmatic values around student employee observations?*
- *How have you hired student employees in the past and why? What values guide your decision making?*

✱

As a unit, we created a structure for learning and **explored the topic of “Facilitation Through an Equity Lens.”** One focus area for many team members was on the facilitation of student employee meetings. Individually and collectively, we identified and articulated values around facilitation, collected facilitation techniques, and conducted observations of our colleagues’ facilitation in various contexts.

✱

The Writing Center **redesigned a Coordinator position** to increase student employee support and capacity for observation and mentoring.

✱

Adam (SI Coordinator) **participated in the Student Affairs Leadership Institute (SALI)** and brought ideas and learning back to SI Leaders, including the invitation for SI Leaders to complete a leadership inventory assessment and reflect on what leadership looks like for them.



Reducing Stress for Students in the Moment of Service

Recognizing that stress can impact communication and learning, our professional staff and student employees prioritized improving interactions and program spaces to decrease stress for students while they use our services.

In writing consultations, Consultants intentionally offer **authentic praise** to elements of writing, helping students identify their strengths as writers and build confidence. The Writing Center model also encourages students to come in and work with a Consultant **before they start a writing project**, which can help writers overcome barriers to getting started.

"[My writing consultant] focused on what I did great first, giving me some sense of accomplishment, which was refreshing."

-Ecampus student writer

Supplemental Instruction Leaders acknowledge participants as whole people and provide emotional support through a variety of routine and informal activities, including sending **weekly encouraging emails** to their table participants and checking in with each participant at their table through a group **“vibe check.”**

"As an SI Leader, my first priority is to meet students where they're at. I'm mindful that while some students show up excited to learn, others are experiencing challenges with navigating college, mental health, or simply having a bad day. I encourage my students to participate in a way that works for them and connect with them to offer resources. I love being an SI Leader because I get to know my students throughout the term and can be a mentor and a friend."

-Julia, SI Leader

Academic Coaches and Strategists are trained on how and when to offer **executive function support** to students during coaching appointments and drop-in consultations. Support can include but is not limited to taking notes while a student speaks, helping students create checklists or track steps in a process, keeping track of time, or other techniques that free up students’ working memory and support deeper thinking and follow-through with tasks.

"Today's appointment was really helpful. It helped me make a plan on where to go next. I often struggle with the organizing of my tasks and having someone to talk it through with is very helpful. Today put things into perspective so my assignments don't seem as daunting and I can prioritize better. I don't feel paralyzed by stress and I feel like I could get work done."

-Student being coached

The Academic Success Center’s Waldo 125 **drop-in and coaching spaces were refreshed to reduce stress.** We added more plants, ambient lighting, relaxing music, more inviting seating arrangements, tea and snacks, visible encouraging messages, fidgets, and cozy elements, while also reducing visual clutter around the space.

Services across all OAS programs continued to be offered in **multiple modalities** in order to help students access support through whichever platform best suits their needs. We fully train student employees across each modality to ensure high quality services, regardless of whether students are seeking support in-person, virtually, or through written feedback.

Across programs, our peer educators are trained to **support students holistically**, and our models of conversation include validation, praise, appropriate self-disclosure, and normalizing student experiences. Many students using our services have reported feeling less stressed after conversations with peer educators.

"I manage to release my stress by scheduling and take care of my thoughts in a way that is useful for me. I also like how aware I am of what I can do and the problem-solving skills that I obtain from attending academic coaching."

-Student being coached

Embracing Feedback & Adaptation

We are constantly seeking opportunities to learn from our current context in order to evolve our programs. As we made observations, gathered feedback, and reflected on our programs and services, some changes to our workflow and approach emerged as a result of our values around responsiveness.

We noticed that half of consultations at the Writing Center were requests through the Online Writing Support (OWS).

And so we used grant funding from the Women's Giving Circle to enhance the physical work space available for Consultants providing written feedback and Zoom consultations.

We gathered student feedback from focus groups about what they liked and didn't like about the Transition Communication Campaign (TCC).

And so we shortened messages, added more visual elements, reordered content, and made the text snappier and easy to read. As a result, the open rates and click rates were up from Fall 2022.

We noticed that students in coaching appointments were more open and vulnerable about their experiences, needs, and stress.

And so we made space in student employee professional development meetings to talk about supporting students holistically while maintaining strong boundaries.

We noticed that more conversations around burnout were surfacing amongst students.

And so we adjusted one of our workshops to address burnout and developed a new workshop on identifying and undoing perfectionism.

We learned that support for Center for Fraternity & Sorority Life (CFSL) members to meet academic requirements needed to increase, and the ASC didn't have the capacity to offer additional workshops.

And so we offered a "train the trainer" workshop that trained Scholarship Chairs to deliver a finals planning workshop to their chapters and provided them with slides, talking points, and handouts.

We noticed that the Learning Corner handouts weren't as accessible or current in their research as we wanted them to be, and there was an absence of tools available to support students in their writing.

And so we wrote a grant to fund a project developing missing content and revising current content. The project became known as Writing & Learning Tools and laid the foundation for the [Tools for Writers](#) site.

We learned that the SI table layout in the Beth Ray Center was not ideal for hard-of-hearing students due to background noise.

And so we collaborated with Academics for Student Athletes to access a quieter room with more accessibility options and consulted with Disability Access Service to redesign the table layout in the main space to maximize accessibility.

Thinking & Working Together

Collaboration is a core value of OAS. Opportunities to collaborate offer us the chance to learn from and with others, improve the way we work, and solve problems together. Here are highlights from a few key collaborations in AY23.

In winter 2023, team members from the Office of Academic Support joined the **Basic Needs Center** in launching a community of practice with the goal of building knowledge and skills around training and supporting student staff through challenging situations, including **conflict or activated situations**. The group came together twice in AY23 and continues to meet quarterly for deep discussion, share resources through a Box folder, and engage in conversation through MS Teams chat. The group has grown to include memberships from five other units and a few student employees as well.



Partnering with the **Office of Student Orientation** and the **Valley Library** helped take the ASC **"First Day of School Photos & Welcome Table"** event to the next level. We made strategic changes to the location of the event and developed thoughtful messaging to help incoming students feel welcome, supported, and celebrated. This event commemorates the first day of school, provides wayfinding and informational support to incoming OSU students, and introduces students to central academic support services. Participants get a chance to take a photo with Benny, grab a snack and fun swag, connect with START Leaders and ASC student employees, get their questions answered, and receive a warm welcome to the OSU community.



Our team and a team of folks from the **College of Engineering** came together in a meeting series to explore working to **design and deliver a more cohesive student experience** between our central academic support services, and the support available to students in the college. We gained an in-depth understanding of each other's work, thought about pinch points and opportunities, engaged in a "user persona" exercise to explore student experiences, and started mapping resources, noting ways to create a more supportive network for students.

- The Office of Academic Support also contributed to the broader OSU community through acts of service and participation:
- OAS team members collaborated to deliver four issues of [The Success Kitchen](#) blog. In AY23, the 19 articles featured a range of topics, two guest writers, and contributions from colleagues and students across campus.
 - Adam and Chris G. co-presented at OSU's Data Day: *You Don't Have to Be an Analyst to Do Cool Things with Data*.
 - Woodrós and Clare facilitated trainings for both mentors and mentees for the College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences (CEOAS) GUIDE mentoring program, which pairs graduate mentors with undergraduate mentees.
 - Sarah served on the Transfer Student Experience Initiative workgroup.
 - Clare served on the College of Engineering Mental Health Improvement Plan Advisory Board.
 - Marjorie and Adam both served as panelists on the topic of AI text generators as part of the Ecampus Faculty Lunch Series.
 - Woodrós served on the Division of Student Affairs Community Compact Committee.
 - Clare chaired the Academic Transitions subgroup for the 2023 OSUWelcome Steering Committee.





Chessie Alberti
Writing Center Coordinator

Anna Bentley
Operations Manager

Marjorie Coffey
Center Director, Writing Center
Associate Director, OAS

Clare Creighton
Director, OAS

Chris Ervin
Writing Center Assistant Director

Adam Lenz
Supplemental Instruction Coordinator

William McDonald-Newman
Supplemental Instruction Assistant Coordinator

Sarah Norek
Outreach & Education Coordinator

Woodrós Welford
Academic Coaching Coordinator