



June 1, 2022

To the Oakland University Senate Steering Committee:

This is the end-of-year report for the Student Academic Support Committee, 2020-2021.

Chair: Tara Diesbourg

Committee members: Hoda Abdel-Aty-Zohdy, Robert Uptegraff, Betty Tonui, Erin Dwyer, Nick Lauer, Amy Hardison Tully, Courtney McCarrey, Shane Lewis, Lori Marsh, Jessie Hurse, Andrew Romano (*student rep*), Aaeshah Siddiqui (*student rep*)

Meetings: We met monthly, on the third Monday of the month from 10/18/2021 to 4/18/2022. The 12/20/2021 meeting was cancelled due to its conflict with final exams and the holiday break.

In our initial meeting, we discussed what the focus of this committee should be for the 2021-2022 Academic Year. In the past, this committee has focused fairly heavily on mental health resources for students, and we felt that they had been quite successful last year in moving this initiative forward with the development of a mental health subcommittee. We were open to continuing this work, but discussed other potential areas of focus for this committee to tackle. In the end, we decided that the availability of resources and the information related to those resources is difficult to find on the current OU websites.

Oakland University has several student-oriented websites (oakland.edu/students, [/support](http://oakland.edu/support), [/campuslife](http://oakland.edu/campuslife), [/ggg/my-first-year](http://oakland.edu/ggg/my-first-year)) that list available resources, however the links to some of these resources are dated and broken. Furthermore, each of these sites has a different purview and therefore lists different available resources, so finding the information that a student may be looking for can be difficult and tedious. We reached out to the different departments in charge of these sites to see what kind of flexibility there was in the presentation of resources. Student Affairs and Communications and Marketing were willing to allow us to add resources to their pages as needed, but in a limited capacity due to their having concrete plans for these sites.

The committee thought that a permanent Moodle page that would show up in every student's dashboard may be a good way to go. This Moodle page would house all of the links to the various student resources, and would be an easily accessible location, since we all use Moodle daily. We added Dan Arnold from e-LIS to our committee in January. He joined us for every subsequent meeting thereafter and had some excellent insight for us. Some concerns voiced were that potential/incoming students without a NetID would not be able to access these Moodle pages, and that it is too easy to hide any courses that you aren't currently using, so if a student hide this resource "course" they may forget that it exists. Dan suggested improving the layout of the "Students" tab at the top of the Moodle page to make it more user-friendly. He also suggested that a Moodle Tour or Orientation walkthrough is triggered at the start of every term to orient students to the various resources linked through Moodle. At the close of the year, Dan was working on completing these items with his e-LIS team. The "students" tab layout was presented and was vastly improved, and the walkthrough video should be ready in time for the start of the Fall 2022 term.



By the second half of the year, we turned our attention to understanding the resources that are currently available for students and identifying how to access them. We compiled a table of available resources and where they are currently linked using the aforementioned OU websites. In March, we also distributed a survey to OU Students to see which services they use most frequently, and which ones they have never heard of. Due to the lateness of completing and distributing this survey, the response rate was low, however some trends emerged. We intend to distribute this survey again in Fall 2022 to try and reach more students, and use the results obtained to plan our focus for next year.

A secondary objective for the SAS Committee this past year was to evaluate the information sharing between the University and High School Guidance Counsellors regarding Disability Support Services (DSS) and the continuation of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in University. Some members of the Committee expressed concerns that students needing help may not be taking advantage of DSS, either because they do not know that this service exists, or that they do not know the extent to which they would be accommodated as they were in High School. Furthermore, High School students with IEPs may be under the misunderstanding that they would not be able to succeed in University given their learning difficulties and that similar accommodations are not available at the University.

Upon investigating these concerns, the Committee was satisfied to know that there is an annual information day for High School Guidance Counsellors, hosted by Advising and Student Affairs which covers all of this information in detail, and that Student Affairs does their best to ensure that every High School has all of the relevant DSS information. If students are not using DSS, it is not likely because they are unaware of what services DSS provides, but rather that they choose not to disclose any learning disabilities or difficulties at the University, opting instead to attempt to complete their degree without support. The SAS Committee was satisfied with the information we obtained and as such, did not pursue this initiative beyond February 2022.

The SAS Committee has discussed plans for the upcoming year, beginning with the Student Resources and Availability Survey, and we look forward to using our findings to improve the availability and accessibility of information related to OU Student Resources in the coming year.

Please Note: We would like to make Dan Arnold (or an e-LIS representative) a permanent member of the Student Academic Support Committee moving forward. Since we rely so heavily on Moodle and digital accessibility, it is important that an expert in this area is included in any conversations surrounding their use for promoting student success.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tara Diesbourg".

Dr. Tara Diesbourg
Assistant Professor

Public and Environmental Wellness Department, School of Health Sciences