

Program Review   
External Review Team Final Report

Dean of Students Office

Division of Student Affairs

June 29-30, 2021

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# Timeline and Process

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The external review team was composed of two non-Ohio University affiliated reviewers from other institutions with expertise in the work of a Dean of Students office, case management, and critical incident response, one internal reviewer from another department, and a closely connected community member.

The program review consisted of documents review and a series of interviews with key stakeholders. The documents reviewed included: DoS Self-Study, DoS and DoSA organizational charts, and departmental websites.

The review committee conducted a series of interviews over two days in June 2021. Interview groups included:

* Individual members of DoS staff
* Dean of Students Leadership Team members
* Students and DoS student staff members
* Representatives of the Margaret Boyd Scholars Program
* The Dean of Students and the Interim Vice President for Student Life
* Members of the VPSA Leadership Team
* Campus stakeholders and partners
* Community partners

## *Committee Members*

**Suzie Baker**

Suzie Baker is the Senior Assistant Dean of Students and Director of the COVID-19 Student Care Hub at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. She has 14 years of experience in K-12 and higher education institutions leading student support, advocacy, crisis response, and case management efforts. At UNC Chapel Hill, Dean Baker chairs the Student Care Team, serves on the Critical Incident Response Team, works closely with students to help them navigate complex situations, partners with departments across Student and Academic Affairs to develop cohesive and collaborative processes in support of students, and provides consultation to faculty and staff regarding student-related matters. Baker is a licensed professional counselor and holds a bachelor’s degree in English, a post-graduate diploma in Careers Guidance, a Master’s degree in Counselor Education, and is currently working towards a doctorate in Educational Leadership with a concentration in Higher Education at the University of North Carolina Wilmington.

**Andrew Chiki**

Andrew Chiki is the Deputy Service-Safety Director for the City of Athens. He has worked in municipal government for nearly 15 years and is a main point of contact between the City and Ohio University. In his role as Deputy Service-Safety Director he assists in navigating crisis and disaster management, planning and preparedness for large scale events, reducing exposure to liability and risk, and the implementation of special projects for the enhancement of the community. His background was originally in recreation management before a career change took him down the path of city service administration. He currently specializes in consensus building, policy development, and creative problem solving. Andrew has a Masters degree in Organizational Communication with an emphasis on consensus building.

**Sarah Daniels**

Sarah Daniels has worked in higher education for almost 23 years at three different institutions of higher education and is currently the Associate Dean of Students at the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor. Her professional background is in myriad areas of student affairs including summer conferences, student conduct, residence life, the dean of students office, and behavioral intervention and critical incident response. Sarah currently chairs the behavioral intervention team at Michigan and leads the critical incident response and student support work in the Dean of Students Office, including supervision of a team of case/program managers focused on critical incident response in addition to other program areas. Sarah has a Masters degree in Counseling and Human Resource Development and is currently pursuing her PhD in Educational Leadership at Eastern Michigan University.

**Jen Washko**

Jen Washko is serving in her third year at Ohio University, currently in the role as Director of Academic Advising & Student Success in the College of Business. She has spent over 10 years in education ranging from residence life, high school public education, retention and academic advising at Southern New Hampshire University, University of New Hampshire and at Ohio University. In her current role, Jen oversees the academic advising and career management teams in the College of Business. She works with students to explore their opportunities and connect them to campus resources while also creating strategic plans for future support. She holds a bachelor’s degree from Heidelberg University in Spanish and Multi-age education as well as a Master’s degree from the University of Akron in Education with a focus in Instructional Technology.

# Department Introduction

The Office of the Dean of Students at Ohio University has a core mission of advocating for students, responding in crisis situations, communicating with parents and families and responding to the varied needs of the students and community. The office functions as both the Dean of Students’ Office and also as the office of the Senior Associate Vice President.

## *Department History*

The Office of the Dean of Students was established at Ohio University in the early 1970’s under the leadership of Dean of Students Joel Rudy. Departments in the division of student affairs that

historically reported to the Dean of Students included:

a. Career Services

b. International Student & Faculty Services

c. University Judiciaries

d. Residence Life

e. Health Education & Wellness

f. Counseling and Psychological Services

g. Student Activities/Center for Community Service/Campus Programming/Greek

Life/Leadership Development Programs/

h. Baker Center Administration

i. Multicultural Programs

j. Public Occasions (Commencement, Performing Arts, etc.)

Upon the arrival of President Robert Glidden in 1997, the chief student affairs officer’s title

shifted to “Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students.” Upon VP/DOS Rudy’s

retirement in 1998, a stand-alone Dean of Students office was (re)established under the

leadership of VP Mike Sostarich and Dean of Students Terry Hogan.

Historically, the office focused on the following functions:

1. Advocate with the university and the community for students and their needs

2. Represent the University in responding to student and parent issues and crises

3. Coordinate initiatives designed to encourage student success

Dean of students Terry Hogan and Assistant Dean of Students Patti McSteen staffed the office

with one additional full-time classified staff member and one graduate assistant. The office

slowly increased in size with the addition of Merle Graybill as an assistant dean for intercultural

affairs and Rick Harrison (joint appointment with University Advancement). By 2007, due to

budgetary reductions, the office staff returned to 2 FT administrative staff (Hogan and McSteen),

1 classified staff (Sillery) and 1 GA (Pariano).

Jenny Hall-Jones has been the Associate Vice President and Dean of Students since 2012 (Senior

was added in 2017) and has worked in the office since 2009 when she was first hired as an

Assistant Dean. Patti McSteen has been either an Assistant Dean or currently the Associate Dean

and Director of the Margaret Boyd Scholars since 1997. Chad Barnhardt has worked in the office

since 2009, first as parent coordinator and currently as an Assistant Dean for crisis case

management, Student Review and Consultation Committee (SRCC). Tammy Andrews joined the

office as our administrative specialist in 2017. Kathy Fahl started working as the Assistant Dean

for Basic Needs in 2018 once we shifted our focus from supporting parents to supporting

students with basic needs because of the DOSA strategic planning efforts.

As part of the Division’s restructuring in 2019, an emphasis was placed on well-being which led

to a shift in departments reporting under the Dean of Students. As a result, the departments of

Counseling & Psychological Services, Health Promotion, Campus Recreation and the Student

Health Insurance office were aligned together and under the Sr. Associate VP/Dean of Students.

Mark Ferguson serves as the Associate Dean of Students for Well-being and Executive Director of Campus Recreation overseeing these areas.

In October 2020, the Vice President for Student Affairs left the institution and Jenny Hall-Jones stepped into that role on an interim basis, Patti McSteen became interim Dean of Students and Senior Associate. Vice President, and Kathy Fahl took on the interim Associate Dean of Students role. As Dean of Students, prior to interim appointments, Jenny supervised Patti and Kathy, Patti supervised Chad, while Chad supervised Tammy and oversees the budget. In the SAVP role, Jenny also supervised Associate Dean for Well-being Mark Ferguson (University Well-being and Recreation, Counseling and Psychological Services), Assistant Dean Taylor Tackett (Community Standards and Student Responsibility), Assistant Dean Char Kopchick (Campus Involvement Center) and Director Ariel Tarosky (Sorority and Fraternity Life). In support of the SAVP role, Patti also supervises Director Kim Castor (Survivor Advocacy).

## *Organizational Framework*

The following paragraphs describe the current staff, key job duties, and credentials of the Office

of the Dean of Students.

**The Senior Associate Vice President (SAVP) works with the Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA) (Currently Patti McSteen as interim).**

1. The Senior Associate Vice President (SAVP) works with the Vice President for Student

Affairs (VPSA) to design and execute division-wide alumni and development work

including determining annual fundraising goals and strategy. In addition, the SAVP

partners with the VPSA to develop strategic priorities, professional development and

assessment efforts for a division of ~272 employees, 47 graduate students and budget in

excess of $110 million.

1. This position is the second in command within the Division of Student Affairs. In this role the SAVP position functions as a spokesperson for the division on a myriad of university governance committees, develops strategies for capital and facilities projects, including repair and replacement and space planning, creates reports for state and national agencies and associations, leads divisional trainings, divisional sexual misconduct training, division-wide well-being efforts and presents student affairs best practices to institutional, regional, national colleagues and stakeholders.
2. As the Dean of Students (DOS), this position sets the mission and vision of the Dean of Students’ office. The DOS is the chief advocate for students and the voice of students at Ohio University. The Office of the Dean of Students serves as the point of contact for

crisis response involving students and often serves in the role as spokesperson for the

University in student crisis situations. As such, the DOS office serves as the liaison to the

City of Athens and to the campus and city police departments regarding student

behavior. The DOS office also has primary responsibility for the university’s behavioral

intervention team, which is the campus response team for students who are suicidal or

homicidal. In addition, the DOS office is the primary communicator with OHIO parents

and families, and is the division lead on OHIO’s basic needs initiatives (Cats’ cupboard

food pantry, meal swipe donation program, micro-grants emergency fund project and associated fund raising, etc.) Finally, the DOS also is the home to the Margaret Boyd

Scholars program, a co-curricular enrichment program for women designed to enhance

leadership skills.

1. As SAVP, this position also has oversight for the following departments: Campus

Recreation, Campus Involvement Center, Community Standards and Student

Responsibility, Counseling and Psychological Services, Sorority and Fraternity Life, Health Promotion and the Survivor Advocacy Program.

**Associate Dean of Students and Director of the Margaret Boyd Scholars Program (currently Kathy Fahl as interim)**

1. Develop and oversee the overall delivery of programs and services of the Student Review

and Consultation Committee (SRCC)

* Lead weekly SRCC meetings, prepare annual reports on behavioral intervention trends, and supervise the Assistant Dean in the case management of the SRCC process.
* Consult with faculty, staff, students, law enforcement, legal counsel and other external constituents regarding students of concern, including from the regional

campuses and with our e-learning colleagues.

* Participate on university-wide threat assessment team lead by OUPD
* Provide intervention and case management with students and coordinate

appropriate support to students in crisis

1. Respond to student crisis and emergency calls including those from students, faculty,

staff, and parents/families with concerns related to students in crisis and follow-up with

appropriate response, including serving on the on-call crisis duty rotation for the Athens

campus.

1. Develop and oversee the overall delivery of programs and services of The Margaret Boyd

Scholars Program.

* Collaborate with academic units/departments and markets programs and services

to students.

* Develop strategic partnerships with students, faculty, staff, alumni and donors
* Develop and upholds the mission of the program by aligning goals and objectives

in relation to the mission of the university and division of student affairs.

* Develop income generation model (grant writing) and advancement (fundraising)
* Manage annual budget of approximately $25K

1. This position serves as second in command within the Office of the Dean of Students.

* Functions as the liaison with campus stakeholders to respond in cases of

emergency and/or crisis.

* Represents the Dean of Students on various committees and is responsible for

responding on their behalf when not available.

* Bridging relationships with academic partners to assist students and parents

when needed.

* Provides guidance, oversight and strategic direction for the Survivor Advocacy

Program.

* Managing one Assistant Dean and indirectly one classified staff.

**Assistant Dean of Students (Chad Barnhardt)**

1. Respond to student crisis and emergency calls including those from students, faculty,

staff and parents/families with concerns related to students in crisis and follow-up with

appropriate response, including serving on the on-call crisis duty rotation for the Athens

campus. Serve on the behavioral intervention team (Student Review & Consultation

Committee – SRCC) and provide case management for students experiencing crisis

including suicidal ideation, suicide attempt and other mental health crises. Cultivate and

maintain relationships across campus and within the community to best support

students.

1. Supervise the financial and administrative function of the Office of the Dean of Students

(the DOS budget is approximately $800,000). Respond to daily questions, concerns, and

issues posed to the Office of the Dean of Students. Represent Office of the Dean of

Students on university committees such Tuition and Appeals, Assistant Deans Council and coordinate the return to campus process for students who leave for medical reasons.

**Assistant Dean of Students (currently vacant)**

1. Develop and oversee the overall delivery of programs and services of OHIO Basic Needs

Programming: Manage the Baker University Center Food Pantry. This includes leading

the Food Pantry committee, creating a marketing and advertising plan for the pantry,

developing and launching a fundraising plan and assessing the success of the pantry.

1. Develop and launch a “mini-grant” funding system for students at risk of not graduating

because of a basic needs emergency and being the non-clinical case manager for

students of this process. This includes working with University Advancement to

continually raise funds for the mini-grant fund.

1. Serve as the Division of Student Affairs representative and leader on the university-wide

OHIO basic needs committee and developing relationships with other units on campus

and on the regional and extension campuses in regards to this effort.

1. Lead the case management of the non-behavioral intervention interaction with students

and parents. Maintain a constant presence in the office for one-on-one

counseling/advising/problem solving with students, faculty, staff and parents/families

and coordinating the responses to the general Dean of Students and Parents email

accounts.

1. Coordinating the administrative case management of non-behavioral intervention post-crisis work, including but not limited to following up with students, parents, faculty and staff after off-campus fires, student deaths, and other large scale campus emergencies; Serving on the on-call crisis duty rotation for the Athens campus. Duty includes nights and weekend responsibilities.
2. Represent the division and the university by speaking at university wide events, and

serving on university-wide committees. Implementing project work assigned by

supervisor. Greeting prospective parents and students at Admissions Events and student

orientations.

**Basic Needs coordinator (Doug Schmaltz)**

1. Manage the Cats’ Cupboard Food Pantry. This includes leading the Food Pantry Steering

committee, creating a marketing and advertising plan for the pantry, purchasing or

sourcing food for the pantry, coordinating pantry sign-up and orders, managing pantry

donations, working with community and campus volunteers to support pantry donations,

developing and launching a fundraising plan and assessing the success of the pantry.

1. Manage the Emergency Microgrant Program. This includes coordinating the case

management of students who apply to the program, providing referrals and support to

the students, leading the case review process, promoting the resource across all campus

stakeholders, assessing the program and working with University Advancement to

continually raise funds for the mini-grant fund.

1. Supervising a graduate student, 3-5 student pantry workers, 1-2 PACE students, and 1-2

student interns that are involved with Basic Needs programming and support.

1. Everyone in the Division of Student Affairs is charged with ensuring a framework of

equity and social justice is embedded into our day to day work. Specifically, this staff

member should advance understanding across the university and division of students

struggling with basic needs by helping to coordinate, advocate for and expand our

Bobcats Helping Bobcats Initiatives. The staff member will also represent the division and the university by speaking at university wide events and serving on university-wide

committees.

**Administrative Specialist (Tammy Andrews)**

1. Screens incoming calls for the three offices (Dean of Students mainly, but also back-up

for Community Standards, CSSR and Sorority and Fraternity Life, SFL) and acts as first line contact with public, other departments, student/parents, city officials, students and internal staff to bring inquiries to resolution and/or delegate inquiries to appropriate

office or university staff member. Prepares correspondence and responds to general

email inquiries.

1. Maintains and manages electronic calendar for the eight full-time staff and manages

appointments and schedules for others as needed. Prepares and coordinates meeting

materials, e.g. presentation development (PowerPoint or Prezi), research topics, and

gathers additional information as needed.

1. Manages the budget processes for four offices (DOS, SFL, CSSR and Survivor Advocacy). Processes requests for payment and billing authorizations, audits and approves P-card purchases for individual accounts, completes purchases through Bobcat Buy, prepares monthly reporting and reports discrepancies as needed. Supports the Survivor Advocacy office in budget management as well as needed.
2. Interviews, supervises, trains, completes performance evaluations and coordinates work

assignments of 7-15 student employees throughout the three offices. Verifies, processes and approves time in Work Force for student office assistants and student interns.

Provides educational experiences for the students and encourages them to reflect on the

skills they are learning outside the classroom, including but not limited to cultural

competency skills to welcome and create inclusive working environments.

1. Special projects include coordinating travel for administrators and students, planning for

special events, review/editing the three office's external communications and managing

the Student, Parent/Families and Dean of Student, Sorority and Fraternity Life and Community Standards websites.

## *Constituents Served*

The following information gleaned from the self-study highlights the identifiable programs and services provided by the Dean of Students Office that serve students, faculty, staff, and community members.

**Basic Needs**

The Office of the Dean of Students reorganized to focus on serving students struggling

with food, housing and other basic needs. As a result, the office served constituents in the following ways:

* Rebranding all of our basic needs efforts with help from our DOSA Marketing and

Communications team as “Bobcats Helping Bobcats”. This includes the newly named

Cats’ Cupboard, our Meal Bank program collaboration with Culinary, the Career Closet

collaboration with the CLDC, the pilot Cap and Gown program in collaboration with Event Services, and our Emergency Microgrants Program, funded by generous donors to OHIO.

* Taking over management of the Cats’ Cupboard. In the fall of 2018, we successfully

secured permission from the Ohio University Foundation Board of Trustees to use the

501(c)3 status for our pantry. This enables us to purchase food from the Southeastern

Ohio Food Bank as well as apply for grant funding. Cats’ Cupboard has had an average of 110 users per week, and over the course of the FY19 year over 18,000 pounds of food

were donated to the pantry and then distributed to students. We were able to also

successfully move the pantry to the fifth floor of Baker, where the space was renovated

to be the new home of the Cats’ Cupboard in the Fall 2019.

* We launched a pilot of the Emergency Microgrant program in spring semester of 2019

and expanded to pilot with one regional campus in the fall of 2019. These emergency

micro-grants are designed to help OHIO students facing financial difficulty due to

emergency situations or one-time hardships. Once COVID hit in the spring of 2020 we

used the pilot process for emergency grants piloted on our regional and Athens campus

to use for COVID-19 emergency grants and managed over 1,200 student applications for

assistance across all campuses during the initial three months of the pandemic. Now,

Emergency Microgrants are open to all students.

**Margaret Boyd Scholars**

Named in honor of Margaret Boyd, Ohio University's first female graduate [of the class of 1873], the program is a collaboration between the Division of Student Affairs, the Division for Diversity and Inclusion and University College. The Margaret Boyd Scholars Program was a 2012 grant recipient of the prestigious 1804 Fund and now programmatically operates solely on dollars raised by donors.

The Margaret Boyd Scholars Program seeks to inspire and encourage undergraduate women to

become engaged, confident and connected leaders at Ohio University and beyond. Women are

selected as Boyd Scholars in fall semester of their first year. The four-year program includes a

two-credit hour first-year seminar, a second-year residential component, a third-year internship

experience and a fourth-year one-credit hour capstone seminar. The scholars receive access to mentors, a special lounge, programming, and access to the other scholars in the program.

**Student Review and Consultation Committee (SRCC)**

The Student Review and Consultation Committee was initially formed in the Dean of Students

Office in 2006 to provide a centralized response and follow-up for students who had suicidal

ideation or suicide attempts. In 2007, following the tragedy at Virginia Tech, the scope of SRCC

expanded to received reports for students of concern from the University, Athens community,

and any others who wish to raise a concern for a student.

The purpose of the Student Review and Consultation Committee is to ensure a timely and

coordinated university response to students whose behavior is disruptive to others around the

student by way of raising alarm, fear or other concern, or reflects a credible potential for harm

to self or others.

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# Executive Summary

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## *Introduction*

This program review provides a summary of findings from the external review conducted by a committee to critically examine the Office of the Dean of Students (DoS office) based on information gathered in June 2021. The committee included three reviewers external to Ohio University and one reviewer internal to the institution. Two external reviewers had specific expertise and experience in case management, critical incident response, and crisis intervention, gathered through their lengthy tenure working in Dean of Students’ offices. The third external reviewer was a closely connected community member whose portfolio included town gown relations and special event response and management. The internal reviewer was a campus partner who has context of the department and an understanding of institutional history and organization.

The process was initiated by a departmental self-study authored by the DoS office staff that offered a detailed history of the organization, their programs and services, roles and reporting lines, and perceived strengths and opportunities of the department. After reviewing the self-study and associated questions posed to the review committee, the committee met to review the interview schedule, establish a framework for facilitating rich discussion, and develop questions for participants to maximize listening sessions. The committee compiled their findings and met to discuss recommendations designed to assist the department in improving its overall performance.

## *Themes of Excellence*

The self-study and virtual visit revealed consistent appreciation for the DoS staff as professionals, their approach to working with each other and campus partners, and the value of some specific programs and services associated with the office. The following themes were most notably indicative of excellence:

* Relationships with campus partners
* Longevity of staff provides continuity and institutional knowledge
* Identified by stakeholders as central to Ohio University
* Well-respected and positive view of the Dean of Students office by stakeholders and constituents with whom the office is currently connected.
* Specific functions of the DoS office were identified as working well to achieve their individual goals, namely Bobcats Helping Bobcats, crisis response, and SRCC.

## *Themes of Opportunity/Aspirations*

The self-study and virtual visit highlighted opportunities for long-term restructuring and strategic alignment of roles and responsibilities in light of current interim roles and shifting portfolios. This was further supported by during the interviews/listening sessions during which the following themes became evident:

* The organizational structure is confusing, unclear, illogical, and in places, creates unnecessary risk to the University.
* Roles of individuals would benefit from being more clearly defined and determined by program area/function rather than by the specific individual.
* Some programs and services could be better served if realigned outside of the DoS office and would increase opportunities for DoS staffing to be refocused on the departmental mission and stronger connection and assessment of direct student needs.
* Strategic, proactive, and collaborative programming would support a more flexible, nimble infrastructure by reducing reactivity and engaging resources.
* Case management assessment and record-keeping needs a comprehensive and inclusive approach that extends beyond SRCC cases. Determining what is elevated to a case, beginning a case file, reporting on those cases, and assessing the case management work was not clear.
* Further communication and clarity about the office and how it serves its constituents is a high priority as there was a consistent lack of awareness and understanding about the work of the office among the student body.
* The mission statement does not capture the work of the office.
* Inadequate staffing for workload and scope of the office is too broad. Current staffing also lacks diversity.
* It was mentioned several times that the DoS Office has moved more toward a reactive approach to crisis management.
* DoS Office is perceived by both students and staff as being represented by as a person (Jenny Hall-Jones), rather than a team
* Lack of strategic planning for the office, especially when absorbing new areas of work (parent programs, basic needs, e.g.)
* Specific tangible examples of D&I work was not mentioned in many conversations, or at least not tied directly back to the D&I priorities of the institution; some concerns about the make-up of the office not being reflective of the overall student body in regard to identity.

# Step 1: Response to Self-Study, Virtual Visits & Questions

## *Response to Self-Study*

One of the strengths of the self-study was the level of detail provided about the current structure and relationships of interim roles to current functions. Of particular benefit was inclusion of information about the history of the office and the decisions that were made previously that contributed to the current organizational structure, roles, and responsibilities.

While the self-study outlined staff roles and their individual goals (including information about graduate assistants/student workers), no information was included that referenced Mark Ferguson. Mark self-identifies and is positioned in the organizational chart as part of the DoS office team and attends weekly staff meetings. However, his role, relationship to the office, and goals for the upcoming year related to DoS objectives were not included in detail in the self-study. Additionally, no explanation was provided about his involvement in the office or the DoS office’s engagement in the wellness efforts for the division.

The self-study also did not include in-depth information about certain DoS program areas such as parent programs or survivor advocacy programs. Both of these program areas came up in conversations with staff members but were not evident in the self-study; therefore, committee members did not have context for these discussions nor was the committee prepared with follow-up questions when these program areas were identified during virtual interviews.

## *Response to Virtual Visits*

The virtual visits highlighted the support and investment of stakeholders in the continued success of the Dean of Students office. The Teams meeting platform worked effectively to conduct the visits and no technical difficulties were encountered. Stakeholders and constituents who were able to attend were interested in contributing their thoughts and engaging in discussion. The visits provided the most rich information from which this report developed.

The committee found that the virtual visits were frequently too short to accommodate detailed comments and follow-up with attendees who wished to participate. The amount of time dedicated for meetings with stakeholders were typically 30 minutes, frequently scheduled without a break in between. This limited discussion offered little flexibility in exploring topics in more depth, and did not allow time for the committee to debrief or regroup before the next meeting. To maximize the opportunity for review, the committee recommends a minimum of 45 minutes per meeting with 15 minutes in between each meeting and extending visits into a third day if necessary.

The timing of the visits also presented some challenges as they conflicted with the end of the fiscal year resulting in important stakeholders taking vacation time to reduce a loss of banked hours. This resulted in some meetings that had very sparse attendance (one student speaking on behalf of 10 invitees who could not attend, e.g.). Additionally, there were some notable groups who were not included in the virtual visits such as staff from the Survivor Advocacy Program or students who were not directly connected with the DoS office as graduate assistants, student workers, or program participants.

Finally, it was apparent that some groups did not understand the purpose of the meeting or the feedback they were being asked to provide. The review committee had to provide context and a cursory overview of the external review process, which may have unintentionally excluded important information better shared by Ohio University staff members, for adequate context and framing. It would be helpful, in the future, for each group to have a more comprehensive understanding of the review process, why they were invited in particular to these discussions, why their contributions were important, and what they were being asked to share on behalf of their constituent group.

## *Response to Questions Posed in the Self-Study*

The committee designed their interview questions and listening sessions around gathering information pursuant to these questions. As such, responses are captured throughout the report, specifically in the identification of strengths, opportunities, and in the recommendations.

While the proposed questions provided helpful framing for the discussions with each group and highlighted particular areas to focus on, the committee also developed their own questions in advance of and throughout the interviews. This was an iterative process as more information was shared by meeting participants; new and interesting information from earlier interviews was used to inform later sessions. There were some areas and information that the review committee felt were important to explore further that were not included in the proposed self-study questions but that came up during interviews and warranted additional discussion.

In addition, some proposed questions were either repetitive or did not warrant being asked of a particular group, based on what they were sharing and the direction of the interview once the meeting commenced. (In other words, it was clear that there was information that some individuals wanted to share while they had the opportunity, that was not necessarily directly responsive to the proposed self-study questions.)

**Self-Study Questions**

***General Questions***

1. How is the purpose/mission of the Dean of Students office perceived within the Division and campus as a whole?
2. Are there ways in which we could utilize faculty differently to more effectively support students?
3. Should we be training division staff to respond to lower-level concerns (e.g. parents, upset students, holistically?)
4. Are there trends the reviewers are seeing in their Dean of Students offices’ provision of services that our office is not currently doing?
5. Basic Needs is a newer functional area for DoS. Has it been effectively integrated into the office mission?
6. Office: Are we structured appropriately?
7. Moving forward, how should we tell the story of the impact of the Dean of Students office?
8. What is missing from the DoS scope of work that would be best situated in this office?
9. How do we set up the workload to keep the distribution equitable?
10. When would students/staff/others approach the Dean of Students office or visit the physical space?

***Student Review and Consultation Committee Questions***

1. Do you recommend any changes to current practice in order to be more proactive in our SRCC practice?
2. Is our clearance to return from medical withdrawal handled consistently across the institution?
3. Should the scope of SRCC include just students in more serious crisis or should we recognize students who are in early development of a crisis? Are there different ways we can be doing this work that are more effective?

***Margaret Boyd Scholars Program***

1. What could be done to enhance the program experience for the scholars?

***Basic Needs***

1. Is basic needs work set up as best as it could be in order to reach the intended students?

# Additional Foci Reviewed

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## *Areas of Excellence*

### Campus Relationships and Partnerships

* The Dean of Students Office and its staff members have developed very strong relationships and partnerships with other campus offices.
* There is longevity and institutional knowledge in many key positions in the Dean of Students Office.
* The office was described as “the life blood” of a lot of what occurs at Ohio.
* Most external stakeholders have a positive view of the Dean of Students Office and appreciate the relational connection they have with members of the office.
* The Dean of Students Office is well-respected on campus.
  + The office was described as “extremely responsive” and “very helpful in working with people to understand how to work with students”.
* The role of Dean of Students staff members on key institutional committees that discuss students who return from medical leave and tuition appeals, respectively, are tangible examples of the connections DoS staff have made with other units across campus, the vital role that DoS plays in supporting students at any point in their journey at Ohio, and reinforces the DoS as experts in student concerns, case management, and support.

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### Operations/Functions

* The Student Review and Consultation Committee (SRCC) weekly meetings and discussion about elevated student concerns and incidents is a good way to share information, get feedback, and develop a plan.
  + SRCC members work well together and is a very functional group. There is a lot of honesty in the group and no issues with discussion, debate, and disagreement in order to work through issues. The team is able to brainstorm what makes the most sense in regard to student support and response to an incident, based on diverse viewpoints in the room.
  + There is a great amount of trust within the group; individuals can confront one another without concern about damaging relationships with one another.
  + The clear goal of the team is to identify issues and support and help students.
  + The relationships on the team “run deep”; individuals work together in other contexts as well, which strengthens their relationship on SRCC.
* The Bobcats Helping Bobcats program appears to have a real positive impact, especially for international students.
* The DoS Office has been very responsive during crisis situations.
* The DoS Office works well with parents when they reach out.

### Student Support

* There is a clear ethos of care and support for students in the work that the staff does on a daily basis.
* From a staff member: “Without them, the institution is in immense trouble because of how they (DoS) do the work that is expected of them.”
* The staff are role models for the basic needs work across the campus.
* They are student focused; connected and responsive to students in need.

## *Areas for Improvement*

### Organizational Structure

* Lack of clearly defined roles makes it difficult to understand how the office functions and who is responsible for which program area/function. Much of the work assigned to individuals is based on the person, not on the role or the work that needs to be done.
* Some functions and programs currently situated in the Dean of Students Office are misaligned:
  + Margaret Boyd Scholars Program
  + Food Pantry (operations/logistics specifically)
  + Survivor Advocacy Program
* The organizational structure is confusing and unclear. There are unclear reporting lines, exacerbated by numerous interim positions at the current moment.
  + At times during the program review, areas of work were discussed as being part of a person’s responsibility but were not on the organizational chart or in the self-study (parent programs, survivor advocacy, e.g.)
    - It is unclear how much attention is given to those areas, how much strategic planning and coordination is done, and how those areas are and feel connected to the work of the Dean of Students Office.
  + Some individuals are responsible for areas of work or functional areas that are outside their areas of expertise and knowledge. These responsibilities are confusing for staff members in those particular functional areas and for others within the organization in terms of how to work effectively and efficiently together.
  + In addition, reporting lines also demonstrate the priorities of the division and the office. For example, having Counseling Services report to an Associate Dean with no expertise in supervising a counseling center is confusing and indicates a lack of prioritization of the work of CPS.
  + It was difficult for individuals to identify the program areas that are part of the Dean of Students Office versus those that report to the Dean of Students position.
* The office is reactive to issues that arise quickly rather than establishing a strategic infrastructure that can focus on “big-picture” work while also being flexible and nimble enough to respond to immediate needs and crises.

### Assessment

* Only data specific to the SRCC cases are tracked. Any other data is not tracked comprehensively so much of the story of the work of the office is missing and not being told.
* There is not a clear assessment lead for the office who can pull together both qualitative and quantitative data about the DoS Office services and programs.
* There is no assessment of the student experience in certain programs (Bobcats Helping Bobcats, Boyd Scholars Program, etc.

### Students

* Students who are not currently connected to DOS through their involvement as a student worker or as part of a program do not know about the resources available through the Dean of Students Office and would not necessarily know when they could reach out to the office for assistance.
* Students shared that undergraduates don’t understand what the office is. Students indicated that the DoS office feels “intimidating - like a principal’s office”.
* The work of DoS was described by a student as “behind the scenes” and meetings with the Deans brings clarity to the work.
* However, graduate students who had an opportunity to interact with the staff recognized that the office is “warm, welcoming, personable” and the staff are strong advocates for students.
* Staff members indicated that students come to DOS because of a referral from another office or they are invited in by a DOS staff member due to a critical incident.

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### Other Challenges

* The mission statement does not reflect the work of the office.
* Documentation of processes, teams, referral, responsibilities, and other infrastructure is lacking.
* Significant concerns about supervisor of survivor advocacy program “opting out” of mandatory reporting obligations when in a supervisory relationship.
* Staff members reflected that the office “doesn’t publicize themselves well” and that campus partners give DoS the publicity through referrals to them but the office does not “put themselves out there”.
* For most constituents, the DoS office is most closely associated with a person, Jenny Hall-Jones, rather than as a department. This presents ongoing challenges for the present interim Dean of Students and the staff to establish the identity of the office beyond Jenny’s legacy.
* The office is short staffed for a lot of “heavy stuff” that they are working with. Each person is doing “double duty” and has more on their plate than could be done by one person. As staff has reduced across campus and in higher education, there may not be enough depth on the bench (in DoS) to respond appropriately and move forward strategically.
* Much of the work is not current in regard to effective use of technology and is still paper-based, which could affect efficiency as well as assessment in terms of tracking information and data.

## *Proposed Areas of Focus for the Future*

### Organizational structure within the broader context of the Division of Student Affairs:

* Look at reporting lines to the Dean of Students position, the Dean of Students office, and the VPSA
* Establish clear criteria for extending the Assistant Dean (or Associate Dean) title to Directors that report to the Dean of Students position. Extraneous use of the Assistant Dean title creates a lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities of those who work in the Dean of Students office and minimizes the scope and authority of those in the Dean of Students office. A “dean” title is not needed to serve in an on-call capacity or represent the university in town-gown relations.
* Some programs and services may be better served being managed by other departments, namely the Margaret Boyd Scholars Program, Student Advocacy Program, and the operational side of the Food Pantry.

### Staffing, case management, and student care and support:

* SRCC cases do not represent the full body of case management/critical incident response work conducted by the staff in the DoS office. All student support/critical incident cases should be tracked for assessment purposes and for student history of concerns and needs.
  + The definition of a “critical incident” must be clearly articulated for staff, to understand how to manage and track them appropriately.
* A case manager for the office would support the triage and assignment of cases within the office and create capacity for expanding a student-centered service that is proactive in preventing suicidal ideation and other early intervention practices.

### Communication and public relations:

* Marketing, publicizing, and communication from and about the DoS office warrants significant attention to create clarity and awareness about the purpose, programs, and services of the office, as well as reframe the identity of the office post-Jenny Hall-Jones. Dean Hall-Jones was frequently conflated with the DoS office, rather than the office as a stand-alone unit with multiple staff members who can support students.

# Step 2: Evaluation of Significant Items

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| **Report chapter** | **Proposed areas for future focus** | **Strengths** |
| **Section I: Response to self-study** | While the self-study outlined staff roles and their individual goals (including information about graduate assistants/student workers), no information was included that referenced Mark Ferguson. Mark self-identifies and is positioned in the organizational chart as part of the DoS office team and attends weekly staff meetings. However his role, relationship to the office, and goals for the upcoming year related to DoS objectives were not included in the self-study. Additionally, no explanation was provided about his involvement in the office or the DoS office’s engagement in the wellness efforts for the division.  The self-study also did not include in-depth information about certain DoS program areas such as parent programs or survivor advocacy programs. Both of these program areas came up in conversations with staff members but were not evident in the self-study; therefore, committee members did not have context for these discussions nor was the committee prepared with follow-up questions when these program areas were identified during virtual interviews. | The strength of the self-study was the level of detail provided about the current structure and relationships of interim roles to current functions. Of particular benefit was inclusion of information about the history of the office and the decisions that were made previously that contributed to the current organizational structure, roles, and responsibilities. |
| **Section II: Response to on-campus visit** | The committee found that the virtual visits were frequently too short to accommodate detailed comments and follow-up with attendees who wished to participate. The amount of time dedicated for meetings with stakeholders were typically 30 minutes, frequently scheduled without a break in between. This limited discussion offered little flexibility in exploring topics in more depth, and did not allow time for the committee to debrief or regroup before the next meeting. To maximize the opportunity for review, the committee recommends a minimum of 45 minutes per meeting with 15 minutes in between each meeting and extending visits into a third day if necessary.  The timing of the visits also presented some challenges as they conflicted with the end of the fiscal year resulting in important stakeholders taking vacation time to reduce a loss of banked hours. This resulted in some meetings that had very sparse attendance (one student speaking on behalf of 10 invitees who could not attend, e.g.). Additionally, there were some notable groups who were not included in the virtual visits such as staff from the Survivor Advocacy Program or students who were not directly connected with the DoS office as graduate assistants, student workers, or program participants.  Finally, it was apparent that some groups did not understand the purpose of the meeting or the feedback they were being asked to provide. The review committee had to provide context and a cursory overview of the external review process, which may have unintentionally excluded important information better shared by Ohio University staff members, for adequate context and framing. It would be helpful, in the future, for each group to have a more comprehensive understanding of the review process, why they were invited in particular to these discussions, why their contributions were important, and what they were being asked to share on behalf of their constituent group. | The virtual visits highlighted the support and investment of stakeholders in the continued success of the Dean of Students office. The Teams meeting platform worked effectively to conduct the visits and no technical difficulties were encountered. Stakeholders and constituents who were able to attend were interested in contributing their thoughts and engaging in discussion. The visits provided the most rich information from which this report developed. |
| **Section III: Response to departmental questions** | Some proposed questions were either repetitive or did not warrant being asked of a particular group, based on what they were sharing and the direction of the interview once the meeting commenced. (In other words, it was clear that there was information that some individuals wanted to share while they had the opportunity, that was not necessarily directly responsive to the proposed self-study questions.) | The committee designed their interview questions and listening sessions around gathering information pursuant to these questions. As such, responses are captured throughout the report, specifically in the identification of strengths, opportunities, and in the recommendations.  While the proposed questions provided helpful framing for the discussions with each group and highlighted particular areas to focus on, the committee also developed their own questions in advance of and throughout the interviews. This was an iterative process as more information was shared by meeting participants; new and interesting information from earlier interviews was used to inform later sessions. There were some areas and information that the review committee felt were important to explore further that were not included in the proposed self-study questions but that came up during interviews and warranted additional discussion. |
| **Section IV: Conclusion** | Strategic development in some particular areas could advance the Dean of Students Office into the next period of growth and expansion of services. The office suffers, like much of higher education today, from a lack of adequate staffing, staff members playing multiple roles (and often more than one person could reasonably do), and fulfillment of critical positions by interim appointments, out of necessity. While the interim and fluid nature of the current organizational structure presents challenges, it can also be seen as an opportunity to step back and take a critical look at the structure of the organization, function and role of staff members, strategic areas of focus, and historical systems that may no longer be effective in the current environment. This critical look could reveal areas of possible realignment, supervision adjustments, programmatic changes, and strengthening of existing practices that could evolve the work of the Dean of Students Office. Honest assessment of these critical areas, supplemented by the recommendations made by this external review team, is the first step to advancing the mission of the Dean of Students Office, and continuing to serve students in the most effective way possible. | The Dean of Students Office at Ohio University plays a very important and central role at the University. The office and its staff members are well respected by constituents from all areas of the university, including campus partners, students, staff members, divisional leadership, and community members. The ability of staff members to build and sustain critical relationships across campus, in support of students and their current needs and in response to crises that occur regularly, is to be commended. |

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# Step 3: Recommended Follow-Up Actions

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| 1. Strategically re-imagine the DoS office organizational structure and establish clear work portfolios for staff members. |
| 1. Move the leadership of the MBSP to another department or into an academic unit |
| 1. Continue high level oversight of the Bobcats Helping Bobcats Program but develop more robust tracking and assessment of the program’s impact and effectiveness. |
| 1. Transfer supervision of the functional and operational aspects of the Bobcats Helping Bobcats Program to the Executive Director of Well-Being and Rec Sports as part of a financial wellness portfolio. Transfer stocking of the Cat’s Cupboard to Culinary Services. |
| 1. Counseling and Psychological Services should have a direct supervisory relationship with the Dean of Students and provide oversight to the Survivor Advocacy Program rather than the Assistant or Associate Dean of Students position. |
| 1. Create a case manager position for the day-to-day operations, triage, and assignment of all case management including critical incidents. |
| 1. Create formalized training process and guidelines for on-call responsibilities and incorporate additional staff. It would be recommended that the Director for Community Standards be added to the rotation as well as the Director for Fraternity and Sorority Life. |
| 1. Partner with the International Student Service Office to better streamline and support international students who represent a significant group being served by Cats Cupboard. |
| 1. Consider all contacts with the DoS office as cases and document them accordingly in Maxient. Develop a coordinated, proactive plan for assessment and reporting. |
| 1. Facilitate a stronger and clearer understanding of the role of the DoS office among stakeholders and constituents through ongoing marketing, communication, outreach, and education. |

## *Recommended Follow-Up Actions: Organizational Structure*

Evaluate the organizational structure and strategically determine sets of work that logically fit together in different staff portfolios. Then determine each role that is responsible for the different areas of the work.

* Because of interim roles, the DoS has an opportunity to strategically imagine their organizational structure and establish clear work portfolios for staff members.
  + Basic needs support (not operations), emergency micro-grants, critical incident response and student case management, SRCC, and behavioral intervention make sense to be situated organizationally under one person’s portfolio.
  + Identify operational functions (such as operations of Cats Cupboard) that could be assigned to individuals with that area of expertise, maintaining a connection between operations and student support through an established organizational structure.
* The Margaret Boyd Scholars Program (MBSP) is loved by those involved in it and is an understandable positive for the office considering the nature of the other DOS work, but appears to be a pull on needed time and attention that could be better used elsewhere. It is the recommendation of the committee to move the MBSP to another department or into an academic unit. The committee would urge members of the DoS office to remain engaged with the program but not run the day-to-day operation and oversight.
* The Bobcats Helping Bobcats program is an important externally facing program for the DoS office and has a direct and significant impact on students and their success. The program ought to continue to be overseen by DoS, including more robust tracking and assessment of program impact and effectiveness.
  + As stated by one staff member “often what a student is experiencing is more complicated than simply not being able to get enough food; there are a lot of other issues mixed in, and DoS is a good place to branch out and connect students with resources they will need to get through the situation.”
  + The student support aspect of Bobcats Helping Bobcats (emergency funding process, student access to food pantry, etc.) should continue to have a direct link (through supervision) to the Associate Dean of Students and the Dean of Students Office, as a core aspect of the critical incident response work.
* Transfer supervision of Bobcats Helping Bobcats and Counseling and Psychological Services.
  + Supervision and coordination of the operational/functional aspects of Bobcats Helping Bobcats should be transferred to the Executive Director of Rec Sports and Assistant Dean of Students for Well-being.
  + The Cats Cupboard’s stocking and supply ordering should be moved to another department such as Culinary Services.
  + Counseling and Psychological Services should have a direct supervisory relationship with the Dean of Students.
* Create a case manager position for the day-to-day operations of critical incident case management.
  + This position could also do some of the work related to emergency micro-grants, assisting students with accessing Cats Cupboard, and other basic needs.
  + Rather than filling a position specifically for basic needs, consider basic needs as part of the larger critical incident umbrella and establish a position responsible for critical incident case management broadly, inclusive of basic needs and critical incident student support.
* There are a number of different units that report to the Dean of Students that could be moved to a different part of the division, therefore strengthening and solidifying the work of the Dean of Students in general and the Dean of Students Office specifically.
  + Campus Involvement could be removed from the DOS organization and placed elsewhere within the Division.
  + The Margaret Boyd Scholars Program could also move to a different part of the Division or to the Honors program, with similar leadership/mentorship programs.
* The current dual-role of Assistant Dean as a responsible employee and supervising the Survivor Advocacy Program puts the University at risk of being sued by individuals and Office of Civil Rights, and incurring possible Clery fines. Responsible employees are representatives of the University and any information received by a responsible employee essentially puts the institution “on notice”. Given the extensive crossover in critical incident response and survivor advocacy work it would be almost impossible to clearly distinguish information received in one role vs. information received in another. If information is known by a responsible employee and isn’t shared or outreach isn’t provided on behalf of the University, the lack of response required by Title IX regulations could create conditions for a student to charge the University with failure to respond or indifference. The recommended course of action is that the Survivor Advocacy Program should report to a confidential resource such as Counseling and Psychological Services and any reporting line would be evaluated and approved by University legal counsel to ensure compliance with federal regulations. The committee feels it is not appropriate for the Survivor Advocacy Program to be under a position designated as a responsible employee.

## *Recommended Follow-Up Actions: Office Operations and Procedures*

* The on-call procedure needs a more formalized training process and the incorporation of additional staff. It would be recommended that the Director for Community Standards be added to the rotation as well as the Director for Fraternity and Sorority Life.
* Document information regarding SRCC, including team composition, types of cases discussed at SRCC, evaluative criteria in regard to determining next steps and response options.
  + Include documentation of intake processes in DOS and an expanded definition of a critical incident for which case management is utilized to respond.
  + With the number of interim roles, there is an opportunity for staff to expand their organizational understanding/create more cross training
* There is an opportunity to work more closely with international programs in relation to the Cats Cupboard. One person mentioned that they thought 80% of Cats Cupboard users are international students and another person said something similar.
* Expand the definition of critical incidents to include a spectrum of concerns and behaviors to include:
  + routine incidents or cases (for which minimal intervention and support is necessary)
  + behavioral intervention situations (that require SRCC involvement and enhanced coordination and collaboration between offices)
  + crisis management (immediate, significant incidents affecting an individual student or the community).
* Create opportunities for outreach and education about the functions and resources in DoS.
  + Because of the longevity of staff in DoS and the relationships across campus, it is assumed that faculty, staff, and students know what the DoS Office does. However, there is currently no intentional outreach plan to tell the campus community about the work of DoS, how students get connected to supportive resources, how staff and faculty can make a referral to the office, and other relevant outreach topics.
  + Most individuals seemed to know they could call the DoS for student support, but a proactive intentional outreach plan to campus partners, including students, would serve the office well and allow DoS to control the narrative in terms of telling stakeholders what they can and cannot offer the university community.

# Step 4: Conclusion

It is clear that the Dean of Students Office at Ohio University plays a very important and central role at the University. The office and its staff members are well respected by constituents from all areas of the university, including campus partners, students, staff members, divisional leadership, and community members. The ability of staff members to build and sustain critical relationships across campus, in support of students and their current needs and in response to crises that occur regularly, is to be commended. It should also be noted that the office does a lot in service to students and the university, with a very small but mighty team of staff members willing to roll up their sleeves, address immediate and emerging issues, and support students through various concerns they are experiencing at Ohio in whatever capacity is needed.

Strategic development in some particular areas could advance the Dean of Students Office into the next period of growth and expansion of services. The office suffers, like much of higher education today, from a lack of adequate staffing, staff members playing multiple roles (and often more than one person could reasonably do), and fulfillment of critical positions by interim appointments, out of necessity. While the interim and fluid nature of the current organizational structure presents challenges, it can also be seen as an opportunity to step back and take a critical look at the structure of the organization, function and role of staff members, strategic areas of focus, and historical systems that may no longer be effective in the current environment. This critical look could reveal areas of possible realignment, supervision adjustments, programmatic changes, and strengthening of existing practices that could evolve the work of the Dean of Students Office. Honest assessment of these critical areas, supplemented by the recommendations made by this external review team, is the first step to advancing the mission of the Dean of Students Office, and continuing to serve students at Ohio University in the most effective way possible.