



For Every Ole Task Force  
Report to St. Olaf Board of Regents  
MAY 2022

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Charge:** The President’s Leadership Team formed the For Every Ole Task Force in December 2021. The group was charged with the research and formation of an action plan around the Board of Regents Visioning Task Force Recommendation #1: ***to develop a collaborative and comprehensive advising and mentorship model which will include a four-year, personalized development plan for each student.***

Many of the desired program components currently exist at the College. Therefore, the Task Force’s target has been to assemble these components in a coordinated effort while identifying any additional requisites to accomplish the vision set forth by the Board of Regents. Below is a snapshot of the program components as proposed by the For Every Ole Task Force.

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**Four-Year Development – A Plan for Every Ole:** The four-year plan cultivates a channel of meaningful touch-points for all students throughout their time on the Hill while championing student agency in the curricular and co-curricular realms of their St. Olaf experience. The Four-Year Development Plan advances students through four co-curricular Threads – Belonging, Holistic, Career, and Impact – all anchored by the Curricular Core.

- **Curricular Core** - The academic curriculum is the foundation, or “core” upon which students’ four-year plan rests. The For Every Ole Task Force acknowledges the significant work of the faculty to establish the new OLE Core curriculum in fall of 2020. For Every Ole proposes the development of two additional curricular elements– an enhancement to the SOAR program, and development of the “Interim Pathway”. These elements work in conjunction with a student success-focused advising model and build on St. Olaf’s existing tradition of student engagement in high quality, innovative high impact practices.
- **Belonging Thread** - The Belonging Thread is comprised of intentional moments through which all students will build deeper connections to the institution, its people, and to each other. The experiences expand across students’ four-year trajectory, while allowing transfer and non-traditional students to enter the community with greater ease.
- **Holistic Thread** - Beyond being engaged leaders and scholars, Oles are whole people, and the Holistic Thread of the Four-Year plan recognizes and champions this understanding. Through a structure of embedded, extended initiatives, Oles will be challenged to consider their personal needs and values across the multiple realms of wellbeing and cultivate life skills to construct a base on which to build meaningful relationships and experiences.
- **Impact Thread** - The Impact Thread will help Oles unlock their leadership potential. It is intentionally designed to be integrative, not additive. The thread provides students with the tools they need to articulate and act on the leadership skills they have cultivated on the Hill.
- **Career Thread** - The Career Thread is designed to provide targeted opportunities for St. Olaf students to be connected with staff, faculty, alumni, and industry experts and to aid in students’ reflection about and ultimate transition into a meaningful life post-graduation.

**A New Advising Model – An Advising TEAM for Every Ole:** Running parallel and aligned with the four-year development plan, For Every Ole envisions a team approach to advising – one that supports every student **equitably** from their first day on campus. Student advising teams will **intentionally attend to the whole person** – academically, socially, emotionally, physically, spiritually, and vocationally.

*The PRE-MAJOR Advising Team Redefined (first and second years)*

The pre-major advising team will consist of three advisors/mentors offering integrated whole-student support while leveraging the distinct competencies and resources of each individual advisor. The team will consist of the following:

- Academic Advisor – a faculty member linked to the student via a first year, first semester course\*
- Success Coach
- Peer Leader

*The MAJOR Advising Team Redefined (third and fourth years)*

The team approach to advising, begun in the student’s first and second years, will continue throughout their junior and senior years. Teams include:

- Academic Advisor – a faculty member linked to their major
- Piper Center Career Coach
- Alumni Mentoring Groups

\*For Every Ole recommends trialing an enhanced and expanded St. Olaf Orientation to Academics and Resources (SOAR) and advising program. This will create a cohesive, consistent, and connected team for each student– first, by linking the academic faculty advisor to the student via a first year, first semester course– ideally SOAR 2.0 (Option 1) or another first year, first semester course such as the First Year Seminar (FYS), Writing and Rhetoric (WRR), the Conversations programs, Calculus, or a Foreign Language (Option 2). This linkage would create an “advising cohort” of 15-19 students. The cohort and their academic advisor would then be linked to a success coach and peer leader. Each faculty advisor, success coach, and peer leader would have clear touch points to assess an individual student’s well-being and the well-being of a cohort of first year students.

**Elimination of the Gap – Highlighting and Elevating Campus DEI Efforts:** To ensure the development plan and advising teams are of the highest impact, all student populations must have equal and full access. We know that students from marginalized groups are less likely to feel a sense of inclusion and belonging, and they are less likely to retain than their majority peers. The College has made significant investments in this effort but must continue to lift up current and additional efforts. For Every Ole proposes both supplemental and new solutions to address financial security, food security, addressing inequities in transportation availability, and access to the necessary technology and tools to succeed academically.

## FOR EVERY OLE PROCESS AND THEMES

The For Every Ole Task Force launched its work in early 2022. The group first attended a structured retreat for ideation and clarification around launching the board-articulated whole-person focus. For Every Ole then participated in information gathering activities to inform the development of a plan that is encompassing of current campus programming and identifies new opportunities to build on campus work. See Appendix A for a detailed account of the research reviewed and the stakeholders that were consulted.

Through our review of internal and external research, survey findings, through conversations with subject matter experts, and by benchmarking institutional exemplars, three threads consistently emerged:

1. A desire to focus on the development of *the whole person* – through a scaffolded **four-year plan**
2. The perceived value of an integrated and proactive **advising model**
3. The need to address the **lower satisfaction and retention rates of marginalized populations**

It is with this context that For Every Ole recommends the following plan.



## The Four-Year Plan

*A Plan for Every Ole.*

Oles are extraordinary, empowered change-makers - with an educational experience to match. A St. Olaf education is intentional and focuses on each student as a holistic person, learner, and doer. Through an embedded academic, personal, career advising and mentoring system, St. Olaf cultivates a blend of challenge and support that remains grounded in a sense of campus community and connection. We recognize and uphold the developmental needs of collegians and the benefit of intentional guidance during the college experience, balancing the value of student agency in crafting an experience that is unique to each Ole. The four-year plan cultivates a channel of meaningful touch-points for all students throughout their time on the Hill while uplifting purposeful advising and mentorship as well as championing student agency in the curricular and co-curricular realms of their St. Olaf experience. **The Four-Year Development Plan advances students through four co-curricular Threads – Belonging, Holistic, Career, and Impact – all anchored by the Curricular Core.** By combining a fresh approach to leadership development, integrated career exploration activities, and common curricular experiences, the four-year plan will not only be delivered with student development at the forefront, but will also provide a transformative, personalized experience that is distinctly St. Olaf.

## FOUR-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN MODEL

### the FIRST-YEAR: explore

Gold font color indicates a new program

Blue font color indicates an enhanced program

	<b>Belonging Thread</b>	<b>Holistic Thread</b>	<b>Curricular Core</b>	<b>Career Thread</b>	<b>Impact Thread</b>
<b>FALL</b>	New Student Orientation SOAR Program Academic Program Fair Co-Curricular Fair Residential Experience	New Student Orientation SOAR Program Wellness Mapping Residential Experience Success Coaching	SOAR Semester 1: <i>A Successful Transition</i> Regular Advising Meetings	SOAR Program: Values and broad-based goal setting	SOAR Program: Values and broad-based goal setting
<b>INTERIM</b>	CATALYST SEMINAR				
<b>SPRING</b>	SOAR Program Academic Program Fair Co-Curricular Fair Residential Experience	SOAR Program Wellness Mapping Residential Experience Success Coaching	SOAR Semester 2: <i>Exploring Self + Opportunities</i> Regular Advising Meetings	SOAR Program: Self exploration, getting involved, summer plans	SOAR Program: Self exploration, getting involved, summer plans
<b>SUMMER</b>					

**the SECOND YEAR: *envision***

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	<b>Belonging Thread</b>	<b>Holistic Thread</b>	<b>Curricular Core</b>	<b>Career Thread</b>	<b>Impact Thread</b>
<b>FALL</b>	NSO: Transfer Track SOAR Program Sophomore Experience Kickoff to Sophomore Year Residential Experience	SOAR Program Wellness Mapping Residential Experience Success Coaching	SOAR Semester 3: Career Readiness Regular Advising Meetings	SOAR Program: self-assessment, resumes, DEI in the workplace, networking Quo Vadis Retreat Meeting with Piper Center	TIER ONE: <i>an INDIVIDUAL perspective</i>
<b>INTERIM</b>	EXPERIENTIAL CONNECTION - IOS, Academic Civic Engagement Course, Ole Career Launcher, Internship, Innovation Seminar				
<b>SPRING</b>	SOAR Program Sophomore Experience sopho <b>MORE</b> Major Declaration Celebration Sophomore Soiree Residential Experience	SOAR Program Wellness Mapping Residential Experience Success Coaching	SOAR Semester 4: Cultivating Impact Regular Advising Meetings	SOAR Program: Storytelling Meeting with Piper Center: exploration and application	TIER ONE: <i>an INDIVIDUAL perspective</i>
<b>SUMMER</b>	Summer Job, Internship, Undergraduate Research				



**the THIRD YEAR: activate**

Gold font color indicates a new program

Blue font color indicates an enhanced program

	<b>Belonging Thread</b>	<b>Holistic Thread</b>	<b>Curricular Core</b>	<b>Career Thread</b>	<b>Impact Thread</b>
<b>FALL</b>	Junior Jumpstart Residential Experience	Wellness Mapping Residential Experience	Regular Major Advising Meetings	Meeting with Piper Center industry coach: exploration and application Alumni Mentoring Pods	TIER TWO: a COMMUNITY perspective Leadership Practicum
<b>INTERIM</b>	EXPERIENTIAL CONNECTION - IOS, Academic Civic Engagement Course, Ole Career Launcher, Internship, Innovation Seminar				
<b>SPRING</b>	Junior Night Residential Experience	Wellness Mapping Residential Experience	Regular Major Advising Meetings	Meeting with Piper Center industry coach: exploration and application Alumni Mentoring Pods	TIER TWO: a COMMUNITY perspective Leadership Practicum
<b>SUMMER</b>	Summer Job, Internship, Undergraduate Research				

**the FOURTH YEAR: launch**

Gold font color indicates a new program

Blue font color indicates an enhanced program

	<b>Belonging Thread</b>	<b>Holistic Thread</b>	<b>Curricular Core</b>	<b>Career Thread</b>	<b>Impact Thread</b>
<b>FALL</b>	Senior Summit Residential Experience	Wellness Mapping Residential Experience	Regular Major Advising Meetings	Meetings with Piper Center Industry Coach: Post-Grad Transition Planning Alumni Mentoring Pods	TIER THREE: a GLOBAL perspective
<b>INTERIM</b>	SENIOR CAPSTONE OR EXPERIENTIAL CONNECTION - IOS, Academic Civic Engagement Course, Ole Career Launcher, Internship, Innovation Seminar				
<b>SPRING</b>	Residential Experience New Alumni Orientation Senior Week/Commencement	Wellness Mapping Residential Experience	Regular Major Advising Meetings	Meetings with Piper Center Industry Coach: Post-Grad Transition Planning Alumni Mentoring Pods	TIER THREE: a GLOBAL perspective
<b>SUMMER</b>	Life After Olaf Series (launch during Senior Week)				

## the CURRICULAR CORE

The academic curriculum is the foundation, or “core” upon which students’ four-year plan rests. The For Every Ole task force acknowledges the significant work of the faculty to establish the new OLE Core curriculum in fall of 2020. The first-year experience courses, namely the First Year Seminar (FYS) and Writing and Rhetoric (WRR) are new elements of the St. Olaf curriculum, along with the addition of St. Olaf Orientation to Academics and Resources, or SOAR. First-Year Seminar emphasizes reading, critical thinking, conversation, and academic habits for the liberal arts. Writing and Rhetoric introduces and engages students in writing for multiple purposes and audiences related to a particular topic. Students enroll in one of these courses each semester during their first year at St. Olaf. SOAR is designed to support their academic and co-curricular development, and to build community and self-reflection into their first-year experience.

For Every Ole proposes two core curricular elements— an enhancement to the SOAR program, and development of the “Interim Pathway”. These elements are working in conjunction with a student success-focused advising model and build on St. Olaf’s existing tradition of student engagement in high quality, innovative high impact practices. For Every Ole acknowledges that in order to proceed with any curricular idea, each element would need to be inspired by and created by faculty, routed through the Curriculum Committee and would need a favorable faculty vote.

### ST. OLAF SOAR PROGRAM 2.0

We propose to build upon the success of the new first year experience and SOAR program, expanding, strengthening and connecting students with a more robust, integrated advising and mentoring team. Over the first two years, students earn .25 credit SOAR course each term for a four semester sequence (1.0 total credit). The course is taught by a faculty member. In year one, the program is designed for first-year students to enhance their academic and social integration into college, providing an introduction to the nature of higher education and an extended orientation to the functions and resources of the College. The program will build upon and expand the existing non-credit bearing SOAR curriculum. In the first year of the program, all sections will have SOAR Peer Mentors serving as a Teaching Assistant. Year two provides focused engagement on career readiness and leadership cultivation for sophomore students, folding in more complex ideas and activities at key developmental markers. The common curriculum for years one and two will be designed and led by St. Olaf faculty, resulting in a distinct approach to student development and learning resulting in a smooth transition and increased student success.

As students declare majors and transition out of year two, they will belong to a new advising team in years three and four. A faculty advisor in their major will work with students to create a unique curricular plan. Outside of the classroom, students will also have a Piper Center industry coach to explore their industry(ies) of interest, to help them apply for experiential learning opportunities, and develop a post-graduate plan. Students will also be given access to Ole Connect, our alumni/student networking platform. Students can join a wide variety of industry and identity specific mentorship pods to engage with the helpful and robust alumni network.

### I-TERM, or INTERIM PATHWAY PROGRAM

While January term is not unique to the College, it does provide an opportunity to cultivate an energized, fresh, and powerful learning experience that is distinctly St. Olaf. Within the Interim Pathway, we propose three experiences:

- Catalyst Seminar (FIRST YEAR)
  - With the vast majority of first-year students living and learning on campus during their

first interim, this first January is a critical opportunity to engage them within the greater Four-Year plan. Rooted in exploration and self-discovery, the Catalyst Seminar will engage first-year students in a series of workshops, projects, excursions, and activities that allow for an expanded sense of who they are and what is possible. The seminar will serve as the initial introduction to the Leadership and Career Arcs of the Four-Year plan and will cement a deep sense of belonging and connection to this place and its community. The Catalyst Seminar will have overlap with the Senior Capstone, allowing first-year students to interact with and learn from seniors.

- Experiential Connection (SECOND, THIRD, AND FOURTH YEARS)
  - A recent *Chronicle of Higher Education* survey found that nearly 80 percent of college students said it was “important for their undergraduate curriculum to include real-world activities.” Students seek to apply their learning and build concrete skills that will make them both marketable for the moment and adaptable for what’s next. Our 4-1-4 academic calendar presents a unique opportunity for students to spend a month engaging in experiential learning– exploring an organization, career field, or industry, and building relevant skills through project-based learning. Expanding upon the successful International and Off-Campus Study programs, Academic Civic Engagement projects and interim internships already taking place, possible options for the Experiential Connection include collaborative alumni-faculty real-world application courses on topics such as epidemiology, global leadership, community organizing and social action. The Piper Center has benchmarked and tested out various models (e.g. Mayo Innovation Scholars Program, Investigative Journalism project with Gretchen Morgenson ’76 and Karla Hult ’95), and the faculty has a few successful models already in place (e.g. Math Practicum, Engineering Design Practicum).
  
- Senior Capstone (FOURTH YEAR)
  - The Senior Capstone is a culminating experience in which students create a project of their own design that integrates and synthesizes what they've learned in and out of the classroom. Tied to a student’s area of study, the Senior Capstone will challenge students to weave together their academic pursuits, career trajectory, and leadership philosophy in a creative setting. The Senior Capstone will have overlap with the Catalyst Seminar, allowing seniors to interact with and learn from first-year students.

### the BELONGING THREAD

At St. Olaf, we are a community that centers on belonging and, as such, belonging must play a central role in the four-year plan. The Belonging Thread is comprised of intentional moments through which all students will build deeper connections to the institution, its people, and to each other. The experiences expand across students’ four-year trajectory, while allowing transfer and non-traditional students to enter the community with greater ease. Cultivated through cross-campus partnerships, the Belonging Thread creates meaningful touchpoints through which students will be able to galvanize their learning in both the curricular and co-curricular realms to foster a transformative St. Olaf experience. A brief overview of the proposed connection can be found below:

## THE FIRST YEAR

- New Student Orientation (NSO)
  - New Student Orientation is the official orientation experience for all incoming St. Olaf students. The mission of NSO is to introduce incoming Oles to St. Olaf and to provide the tools to navigate their academic and co-curricular experience while living in a vibrant residential community. Focused on cultivating an initial sense of belonging and a smooth college transition, NSO serves as the base on which students will construct their on-campus experience.
- Co-Curricular Fairs
  - Strengthening the importance of involvement beyond the classroom, the Co-Curricular Fairs are programmed for new students to identify opportunities to exercise their passions, to discover new areas of interest, and to get involved in campus life. The fairs are staffed by current students in organizations and leadership roles, building in opportunities for peer advising and support.
- Academic Program Fairs
  - Offered both in the Fall and Spring semesters, the Academic Program Fairs are designed to provide meaningful opportunities to first-year students to connect with various majors, concentrations, and learning communities within the curriculum prior to registration. Additionally, the fairs will be staffed by junior and senior student leaders who have declared their academic pursuits, building in opportunities for peer advising and support.
- SOAR (Fall and Spring)
  - Starting in the NSO experience, incoming first-year and transfer students are connected to the St. Olaf Orientation to Academics and Resources (SOAR) program. Acting as an extended orientation for all students, SOAR works to equip students with the knowledge and tools to be successful at St. Olaf, along with a developmental, scaffolded pathway focused on self-discovery and creating an intentional four-year plan.

## THE SECOND YEAR

- New Student Orientation (NSO): Transfer Track
  - NSO: Transfer Track is an experience specifically catered to supporting our incoming transfer students through their unique experience of joining our community as a sophomore, junior, or senior student. Built with the same core principles as NSO, NSO: Transfer Track aims to cultivate a successful transition for new Oles.
- Sophomore Experience
  - The Sophomore Experience is a series of events and opportunities built into the second year to support students and their wellbeing by helping them further connect to the campus community and better engage with academic and career resources. The sophomore year presents its own distinct academic, social, and transitional challenges and the Sophomore Experience aims to disrupt the “slump” often associated with the second year of college, energizing students with additional resources, support, and reflective opportunities. Events included in the Sophomore Experience include: the Kick-Off to Sophomore Year, the Quo Vadis Retreat, the Major Declaration Celebration, a Sophomore Soiree, and the Sophomore Bucket List.

- SOAR (Fall and Spring)
  - All sophomores enroll in a credit-bearing, extended SOAR program throughout the second year.
- sopho**MORE**
  - Connected to the Sophomore Experience, the sopho**MORE** program is a condensed retreat for all sophomore students at the start of their spring semester. The program is built around four learning realms (health & wellness, academic success, community connection, leadership & career) and is designed to intentionally reconnect students to specific resources, introduce elements of the Leadership and Career Arcs, and address key areas of sophomore thriving.

### THE THIRD YEAR

- Junior Jumpstart
  - Offered in the fall semester of the third year, Junior Jumpstart is designed to help students navigate their next steps at (and after) St. Olaf and respond to the specific needs of junior Oles. Operating at the intersection of leadership and career, Junior Jumpstart is designed with a conference-style model to allow each student to craft an experience that is true to their interests and needs. Junior Jumpstart will contain a myriad of sessions that offer young alumni connections, tips and timelines for gaining internships and research experience, planning for graduate school applications, resume and interviewing techniques, networking opportunities, and much more.
- Leadership Practicum
  - Connected to the Impact Thread, the Leadership Practicum is a .25 credit, semester-long project for all students in the fall or spring of their junior year. Students will select a community leadership project and identify a staff or faculty mentor, engage in a “high-impact practice” during their third year, and earn their OLE Experience in Practice (OEP) core requirement. The Leadership Practicum will also present a targeted mentorship opportunity to integrate reflection on career and leadership trajectory.
- Junior Night
  - Currently, there are no defining community experiences for junior students. Junior Night will offer an opportunity for Oles with junior standing to come together for a meaningful evening of community building and social fun.

### THE FOURTH YEAR

- Senior Summit
  - The Senior Summit is an intentional moment of reflection as a senior student enters their final year at St. Olaf. Designed to be a synthesizing experience, students will connect in small staff/faculty/alumni led cohort meetings and engage a number of questions about what is next and what is yet to be accomplished.
- New Alumni Orientation
  - New Alumni Orientation is an immersive experience for seniors as they prepare for life after graduation. Offered off-campus, the senior class will connect with campus partners on how to be active, engaged members of the alumni network. The event will incorporate common senior “to-do” items such as GradFest and the Senior Survey while blending in fun, traditions, and alumni connections.

- Senior Week/Commencement
  - The culminating celebration of the St. Olaf experience. Senior Week/Commencement allow for a smooth transition out of the institution while cementing a lasting connection to the Hill.

### the HOLISTIC THREAD

Beyond being engaged leaders and scholars, Oles are whole people, and the Holistic Thread of the Four-Year plan recognizes and champions this understanding. Through a structure of embedded, extended initiatives, Oles will be challenged to consider their personal needs and values across the multiple realms of wellbeing and cultivate life skills to construct a base on which to build meaningful relationships and experiences. One of the means through which to integrate the Holistic Thread within life on campus is to reinvigorate our understanding and facilitation of our vibrantly residential community. Students intentionally live and learn on campus for the majority of their St. Olaf experience and by integrating a holistic residential curriculum into our housing program, we can center wellbeing and better support students in their continued developmental trajectories.

In addition to a reconceptualized approach to residential education and development, there are additional offerings that feed into the Holistic Thread throughout the Four-Year plan. These opportunities include the following:

- SOAR (FIRST & SECOND years)
  - Much of the SOAR curriculum is developed with holistic wellbeing in mind, covering topics ranging from sleep to stress management. As such, first- and second-year students are introduced to various concepts, practices, and resources targeted to focus their learning on skill cultivation and meaningful life design rooted in wellbeing.
- Wellness Mapping (All FOUR years)
  - Historically, students at St. Olaf were required to attend a number of “wellness-swiped” events that were tied to their “Studies in Physical Movement” courses within the former general education curriculum. With the shift to the OLE Core, that requirement has lapsed. By establishing a Wellness Mapping initiative, students will engage with topics and discussions pertaining to the nine areas of wellbeing (emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, physical, sexual, social, spiritual, and substance) over the course of their St. Olaf experience. Structured so that students will be exposed to all nine areas of wellbeing, the Wellness Mapping initiative will aid in creating an individual and community culture that empowers students to make balanced lifestyle decisions through education and resource support. The initiative will be fed by existing programming offered by the Wellness Center, Campus Recreation, the Counseling Center, College Ministry, and others.
- *Life After Olaf* series (Late SENIOR year and SUMMER after SENIOR year)
  - The *Life After Olaf* program is a series of “adulting” workshops centered around skill cultivation for post-graduation. The initiative will cover a range of topics including housing, job preparation, budget management, food, and more.

### the IMPACT THREAD

The Impact Thread will help Oles unlock their leadership potential. It is intentionally designed to be integrative, not additive. The thread provides students with the tools they need to articulate and act on the leadership skills they have cultivated on the Hill. Rooted in researched leadership development theory, the arc

is built to engage students in competency development and reflection across their experience. The curriculum of the thread is structured so that students apply a different perspective as they travel through the program, starting with the self and expanding outward to a global lens. Within each tier, students will engage in meaningful reflection, workshops, and activities to aid in the cultivation of competencies across the four realms listed below. The selected competencies will be derived from literature from the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), American College Student Personnel Association (ACPA)/National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), and the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

<b>Competency Realms</b>	<b>Tiered Approach</b>
Understanding Self and Others	TIER ONE: an INDIVIDUAL perspective
Building Community	TIER TWO: a COMMUNITY perspective
Discerning Purpose	TIER THREE: a GLOBAL perspective
Taking Action	

As mentioned above, junior students will engage in a Leadership Practicum as a means not only to expand their conceptual understanding of leadership, but also to put their philosophy of leadership into action. The experience is bolstered by a strong mentoring relationship with a staff or faculty member and will blend into the Career Thread’s required career connection. To allow for greater student agency, leadership tracks may also be incorporated.

### **the CAREER THREAD**

During their time on campus, Oles are challenged to find the path that leads them towards not only a fulfilling career, but also a deeper understanding of what a life of meaning and purpose entails for them. The Career Thread of the Four-Year plan is designed to provide targeted opportunities for St. Olaf students to be connected with staff, faculty, alumni, and industry experts and to aid in students’ reflection about and ultimate transition into a meaningful life post-graduation. In addition to existing programmatic offerings from the Piper Center, the following programs will be implemented within the Four-Year plan:

#### **STUDENT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM: A TOOL FOR SELF-REFLECTION AND PROFESSIONAL SKILL BUILDING**

During FY 2022-23 and as of mid-April 2022, St. Olaf had distributed 2,356 work awards to 1,770 students. Work authorizations covered 3,871 jobs with 1,041 students holding more than one job. Given this level of participation in on-campus student employment, the college has an opportunity to support students in developing skills and professionalism, as well as learning to reflect on connections between their academic curriculum, on-campus employment, and future career interests. To support students in making the most of their on-campus employment, the student employment portion of the Career Thread will focus on enriching this experience primarily for first-year and sophomore students. Plans include the following: implementing the GROW program (mentoring between the supervisor and



student employee to link academics to employment and a future career); trialing and then rolling out a first-year student employment “service” program to introduce first year students to St. Olaf’s mission and servant leadership; collaborating with Carleton College to build more integrated relationships with our Northfield Community Partners; reevaluating all student employment jobs and instituting a pay differential for roles with varying levels of leadership and responsibility; and developing workshops addressing onboarding of student employees, workplace expectations and communication, transferable skills and building a resume, DEI in the workplace, and applying and interviewing for roles.

### QUO VADIS SOPHOMORE RETREAT

Quo Vadis is a unique opportunity for sophomores to step away from campus for 24 hours to reflect on who they are and where they are going within a supportive community of fellow students, staff, faculty, and alumni.

### EXPERIENTIAL CONNECTION J-TERM SEMINAR

Building upon the success of the Piper Center’s new Ole Career Launcher program, the Innovation Seminar will provide seed money to faculty to initiate new applied January term courses in collaboration with an alumni expert or other external partner across a wide variety of industries.

### CAREER CONNECTIONS

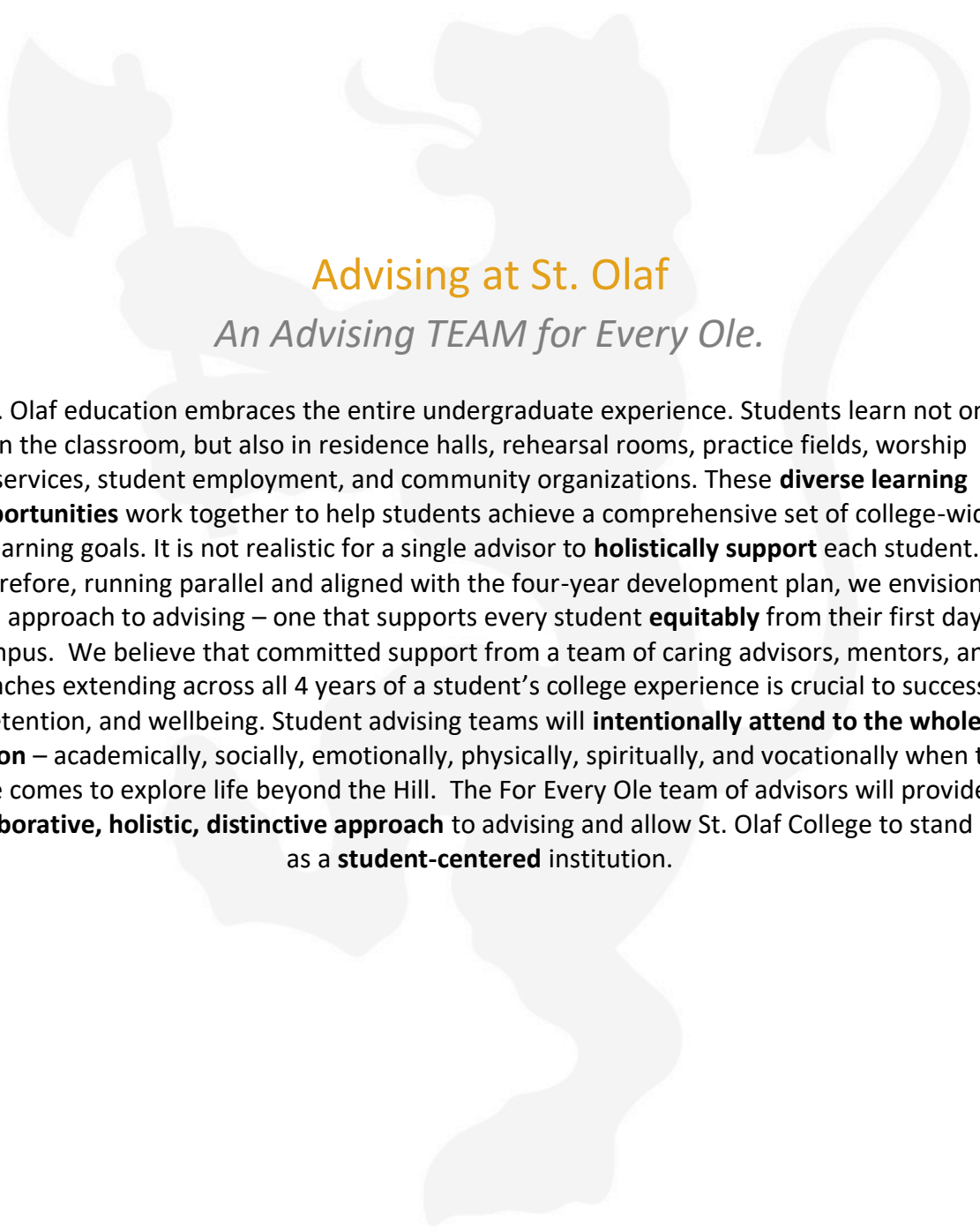
All St. Olaf students will meet individually with a Piper Center staff member in their sophomore, junior and senior years. Career Connections will provide students with meaningful Piper Center touchpoints and will aid in expanding their on-campus support team, integrating career discernment and preparation throughout their St. Olaf experience.

### ALUMNI MENTORING PODS

Alumni and Parent Relations and the Piper Center for Vocation and Career will launch Ole Mentorship Affinity Pods (or Ole Professional Mentorship Pods) to connect alums and students in small pods or groups based on self-identified industry interests and shared identity, with the goal of creating supportive connections that foster a sense of belonging and identity formation, and support exploration of academic interests and career paths. Ole Mentorship Affinity Pods will create a sense of connectedness within the St. Olaf College community.

The mentoring pods will be piloted in Spring 2022 in collaboration with Alden Adolph, Assistant Professor, Physics, and Director of Engineering Studies. Current students in the engineering concentration will be matched with alumni engineers in an 8-10 person pod for group discussion on academic interests, career pathways, graduate school, and other topics. Each pod will include approximately 3 alums and 5-7 students to increase the opportunity for productive dialogue. The program will be expanded in Fall 2022 to include both industry and shared identity pods with a goal of a college-wide rollout in Spring or Fall 2023.

Designed to create connections based on shared identities and career interests and to support personal and professional development, mentorship pods will provide an opportunity for participants to ask questions, seek guidance, share experiences and resources, and offer informal networks for career development.



## Advising at St. Olaf

*An Advising TEAM for Every Ole.*

A St. Olaf education embraces the entire undergraduate experience. Students learn not only in the classroom, but also in residence halls, rehearsal rooms, practice fields, worship services, student employment, and community organizations. These **diverse learning opportunities** work together to help students achieve a comprehensive set of college-wide learning goals. It is not realistic for a single advisor to **holistically support** each student. Therefore, running parallel and aligned with the four-year development plan, we envision a team approach to advising – one that supports every student **equitably** from their first day on campus. We believe that committed support from a team of caring advisors, mentors, and coaches extending across all 4 years of a student’s college experience is crucial to success, retention, and wellbeing. Student advising teams will **intentionally attend to the whole person** – academically, socially, emotionally, physically, spiritually, and vocationally when the time comes to explore life beyond the Hill. The For Every Ole team of advisors will provide a **collaborative, holistic, distinctive approach** to advising and allow St. Olaf College to stand out as a **student-centered** institution.

## The Elements

### The PRE-MAJOR Advising Team Redefined (first and second years)

The pre-major advising team will consist of three advisor/mentors offering integrated whole-student support while leveraging the distinct competencies and resources of each individual advisor. The team will be assigned to each student prior to their arrival on campus. The team will consist of the following:

- **Academic Advisor** – With the guidance of a faculty advisor, who also serves as an instructor for one of the student’s first semester, first year classes, each student will explore the liberal arts education under the watchful eye of a tenured/tenure track or long term visiting faculty member. This faculty member will be alert to any signs of academic distress – as well social, emotional, and physical concerns.
- **Success Coach** – The Success Coach functions as a support for the student as they transition into the College. Success coaches will partner with the academic advisors. They will co-lead the SOAR program allowing them regular touch points with students throughout their first year. SOAR provides an extended orientation for all students in their first year to equip them with the knowledge and tools to be successful at St. Olaf. Students learn key skills such as how to utilize campus resources and implement college level reading and study techniques through small group conversation, reflection, and the practice of successful academic habits. During the second semester SOAR sessions, students will be supported in creating their **4-year development plan**. Success coaches will also be available to students outside the classroom to provide holistic support. These coaches will **impact retention** by meeting regularly with students who are at high risk for retaining or on probation, students with early alerts or roommate issues, or those who are not attending class. Success coaches will be housed in the Center for Advising and Academic Support (CAAS).
- **Peer Leader** – Student leaders play a vital role on campus. This is especially true of our SOAR Peer Leaders. Peer leaders partner with academic advisors and success coaches, and co-lead the SOAR program. They help new students adjust to college life and serve as a resource throughout the first year, formally and informally. Peer leaders are a key part of creating a sense of belonging for students during their first days and weeks on the Hill.

The pre-major advising team continues across a student’s first two years at the College. Our goal is to create a cohesive, consistent, and connected team for each student– first, by linking the academic advisor to the student via a first year, first semester course– ideally SOAR 2.0 (Option 1) or another first year, first semester course such as the First Year Seminar (FYS), Writing and Rhetoric (WRR), the Conversations programs, Calculus, or a Foreign Language (Option 2). This linkage would create an “advising cohort” of 15-19 students. The cohort and their academic advisor would then be linked to a success coach and peer leader. Each faculty advisor, success coach, and peer leader would have clear touch points to assess an individual student’s well-being and the well-being of a cohort of first year students.

In benchmarking competitive colleges, we see the team advising model, where the academic advisor also serves as an instructor for the first year student, as the best practice model. While this new team-based advising model may not be nationally distinctive for St. Olaf, we do believe that it would be a competitive advantage regionally. Carleton College and Macalester College, notably, continue to assign students randomly

to first year faculty advisors and have not created a cohesive team approach to pre-major advising. Creating a SOAR 2.0 model (Option 1) is detailed below and could create a nationally distinctive advising model.

### **ST. OLAF SOAR PROGRAM 2.0**

Peer institution benchmarking played a critical role in developing the proposal detailed in this document. On a regional level, the advising structures at Carleton College, Macalester College, and Grinnell College were reviewed. In conversations with Credo and campus colleagues, Furman University, Sewanee: The University of the South, University of Denver, and Agnes Scott College emerged as benchmarks for innovations in advising, four-year planning, and holistic student support. Several of these institutions have branded their approach and are leveraging it in external communications – Furman University promotes [The Furman Advantage](#), University of Denver touts the [4D Experience](#), and Agnes Scott has leveraged their [SUMMIT](#) program to move them into a [#1 ranking](#) for innovative liberal arts colleges in the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings for 4 consecutive years. These innovative programs are gaining widespread recognition and are impacting students' sense of belonging, student outcomes, retention and rankings.

Through our benchmarking, the For Every Ole Task Force uncovered an emerging and truly extraordinary model for pre-major advising at Furman University, one that has awarded Furman national attention. It has fostered a greater sense of belonging, led to better student outcomes, increased retention and improved Furman's *U.S. News and World Report* rankings. For Every Ole recommends trialing an enhanced and expanded SOAR and advising program from the model delineated above, adapting Furman's approach to St. Olaf, in order to explore the possibility and evaluate its potential for our campus.

First year students currently register for the SOAR program in conjunction with their FYS and WRR course. In fall of 2021, the program engaged 604/755, or 80% of first year students. 97% of survey respondents who participated in SOAR reported making a meaningful connection to a SOAR peer leader or fellow student in the cohort. 80% of survey respondents who participated in SOAR made a meaningful connection with their SOAR peer leader. SOAR is working - but it can be stronger! SOAR is not credit bearing, and the program is currently being led by a team of two SOAR peer leaders, with robust training and support from CAAS staff, and various college partners. SOAR does not have sustainable funding beyond May of 2024. The SOAR program is currently funded by a donor through the 2023-2024 academic year. Student attendance at SOAR sessions is not always required by faculty as part of FYS/WRR and is not consistently written into the syllabus for these courses. To enhance the current SOAR program, For Every Ole proposes attaching a 0.25 credit each semester for SOAR, and expanding the course from two semesters to four. Tenured, tenure track, or long-term visiting faculty would teach the SOAR curriculum in collaboration with a SOAR peer leader. SOAR faculty would serve as the pre-major advisor for students enrolled in their SOAR section. Success coaches would be assigned to each of the SOAR sections for supplemental support. Group advising would be integrated into the SOAR curriculum, with supplemental individual advising meetings with the SOAR faculty, success coach, or peer leader. SOAR content would be integrated and expanded into a two year program, focusing on a broader arc of student development. Students would have an hour-long, weekly touch point with a consistent group of students, a caring faculty member, and, in the first year, a peer leader for support, continuity and guidance.

In order to succeed, this model needs to be designed collaboratively and transparently, trialed, tested and evaluated by faculty. It also must be approved by the Curriculum Committee and a faculty vote. We also propose support for assessment of the entire First Year Experience and beyond. The assessment will take place in consultation with Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment, and may require additional staffing and financial support.

PRE-MAJOR ADVISING MODEL

**the FIRST-YEAR: explore**

<i>Academic Advisor</i>	<i>Success Coach</i>	<i>Peer Leader</i>	<i>SOAR Programming</i>
<p>Fall semester instructor <i>OR</i> SOAR instructor</p> <p><b>Focus on:</b> Academic Advising Referrals to campus resources</p>	<p><b>Co-lead SOAR</b></p> <p><b>Focus on:</b> Group/Individual Student Advising Case Management Referrals to campus resources</p>	<p><b>Co-lead SOAR</b></p> <p><b>Focus on:</b> Informal, independent peer support Referrals to campus resources</p>	<p><b>Semester 1:</b> <i>A Successful Transition</i></p> <p><b>Semester 2:</b> <i>Exploring Self + Opportunities</i></p>

**the SECOND-YEAR: envision**

<i>Academic Advisor</i>	<i>Success Coach</i>	<i>SOAR Programming</i>
<p>Continue to teach SOAR (Option 1) Continue with first-year advising cohort (Option 2)</p> <p><b>Focus on:</b> Academic Advising Referrals to campus resources</p>	<p><b>Lead or Co-lead SOAR (depending on model)</b></p> <p><b>Focus on:</b> Group and Individual Student Advising Case Management Referrals to campus resources</p>	<p><b>Semester 3:</b> <i>Career Readiness</i></p> <p><b>Semester 4:</b> <i>Cultivating Impact</i></p>

## **The MAJOR Advising Team Redefined (third and fourth years)**

Following major declaration in March of their sophomore year, all students will select an academic advisor from the major department they have chosen. This process has been quite successful and remains unchanged from prior years. We see this approach consistently at competitive and aspirational liberal arts institutions. The team approach to advising, begun in the student's first and second years, will continue throughout their junior and senior years. This continuation represents an enhancement over prior years. The faculty advisor will be joined by a career coach from the Piper Center and structured alumni mentoring pods based on career interest area or identity. Success coaches from CAAS will continue to be a resource for students. Specifics about the third and fourth year advising team include:

- **Academic Advisor** - Students transition to a faculty advisor within a declared major by the end of their sophomore year. Major advisors assist their advisees to select courses in the major and introduce students to opportunities in their field of study.
- **Piper Center Career Coach** - Coaches in the Piper Center are aligned by industry and can provide resources and opportunities designed to help students explore a variety of fields to fit their interests and skills. Piper Center coaches assist students to gain experience (e.g., internships, research opportunities), and develop and pursue a sustainable plan for life after college.
- **Alumni Mentoring Pods** - Alumni & Parent Relations and the Piper Center will develop and launch Ole Mentorship Pods to connect alumni and students in small pods or groups of 6-10 members based on self-identified industry interests and shared identity, with the goal of creating supportive connections that foster a sense of belonging and identity formation, and support exploration of academic interests and career paths. (See Four Year Plan for more information.)

## **Considerations and Acknowledgements**

### **LEADERSHIP ROLE CRITICAL TO SUCCESS WITH FACULTY (Option 1 & 2)**

Acknowledging the leadership needed to develop and implement a distinctive, innovative advising program, we recommend creating a senior-level faculty leadership position, an Associate Dean of Advising and Mentoring, reporting to the Provost and Dean of the College, on par with the current Associate Deans. Strategic oversight, coordination of advising, mentoring efforts, and faculty advising assignments, allocation, development and supervision of SOAR curriculum, rigorous evaluation of advising and assessment of student learning, and advocacy for the importance of advising in the tenure and promotion process are all components of this position. The person hired for this role would collaborate regularly with the faculty, CAAS, the Registrar's Office, and leadership in Student Life.

### **CURRENT ST. OLAF FACULTY COURSE LOAD**

The current St. Olaf faculty course load appears to be a deterrent to a strong advising model - particularly during the pre-major period. St. Olaf appears unique amongst the institutions we benchmarked in the college's requirement for faculty to teach 6 courses per academic year. Five courses is the standard teaching load at many selective liberal arts colleges, including Furman University, Sewanee College of the South, Macalester, Carleton College, and Grinnell College. If St. Olaf faculty members are already fully engaged in teaching courses, advising majors, serving on committees, and conducting their own research and scholarship, they might find it difficult to approach a new pre-major advising model with excitement. This might be particularly challenging for faculty in "oversubscribed" majors. In an effort to acknowledge the critical role that faculty play in academic advising, the proposal offers faculty course releases or financial incentives to acknowledge the time that faculty would need to dedicate to pre-major advising.

## **FACULTY CONSIDERATIONS: INCENTIVES & COURSE SIZE**

### Under Option 1

If St. Olaf pursues development of SOAR 2.0 (an adaptation of the Furman model), For Every Ole proposes that faculty teaching the SOAR 2.0 course have a teaching load of 5.5 courses, instead of the current load of 6, to create time and space for advising.

### Under Option 2

If St. Olaf pursues the current SOAR model with advising attached to a first-year course, we propose incentivizing faculty to take on an additional advising load (up to 19 students) with a stipend of up\* to \$4000 in the first year, and \$2000 in the second year, or, the opportunity to teach a section of Directed Undergraduate Research (DUR) course (small class typically focused on advancing the faculty member's research).

(\* sliding scale dependent on number of total advisees)

## **SUCCESS COACHES (Option 1 & 2)**

With either model, For Every Ole proposes hiring a robust team of success coaches to be housed in the Center for Advising and Academic Support.

## **STUDENT SUCCESS SOFTWARE (Option 1 & 2)**

CAAS currently uses Tutortrac software for managing student visits and will be adopting TracCloud for fall 2022. The software is antiquated and not connected to any other office on campus. St. Olaf plans to implement a new Enterprise Information System beginning in the fall of 2022. The student-centered module will launch in fall of 2024. Until then, For Every Ole recommends implementing EAB Navigate. If that is not possible due to time to implement, adding additional modules to TracCloud (e.g. SAGE Early Alert), Maxient or Slate should be given high priority.

## **FOUR YEAR PLAN OF STUDY SAMPLES FOR EVERY MAJOR, CONCENTRATION, PRE-PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM (Option 1 & 2)**

Simplifying early academic planning is an important strategy to improve student success and provide a more equitable experience for all learners. For Every Ole recommends simplifying early academic planning by providing a Plan of Study sample for every major, concentration and pre-professional program. Plan of Study samples would increase student success by ensuring St. Olaf procedures are easier to navigate. Recently, all students with registration holds were asked if they needed assistance to resolve their holds. One sophomore responded, "I haven't completed my holds because I do not know how to determine which courses I need to take to complete my majors. I find the navigation between SIS, catalogs, and DegreePath to be confusing and I have no idea what to sign up for."

The St. Olaf catalog software, Courseleaf, has the capability to provide a Plan of Study sample for every major, concentration and pre-professional program offered at St. Olaf. Locating the Plan of Study in the catalog ensures that the sample can be easily found by students and advisors in a centralized, standard location. In addition, there is a process in place that ensures the catalog material is reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

## **PRE-PROFESSIONAL ADVISING**

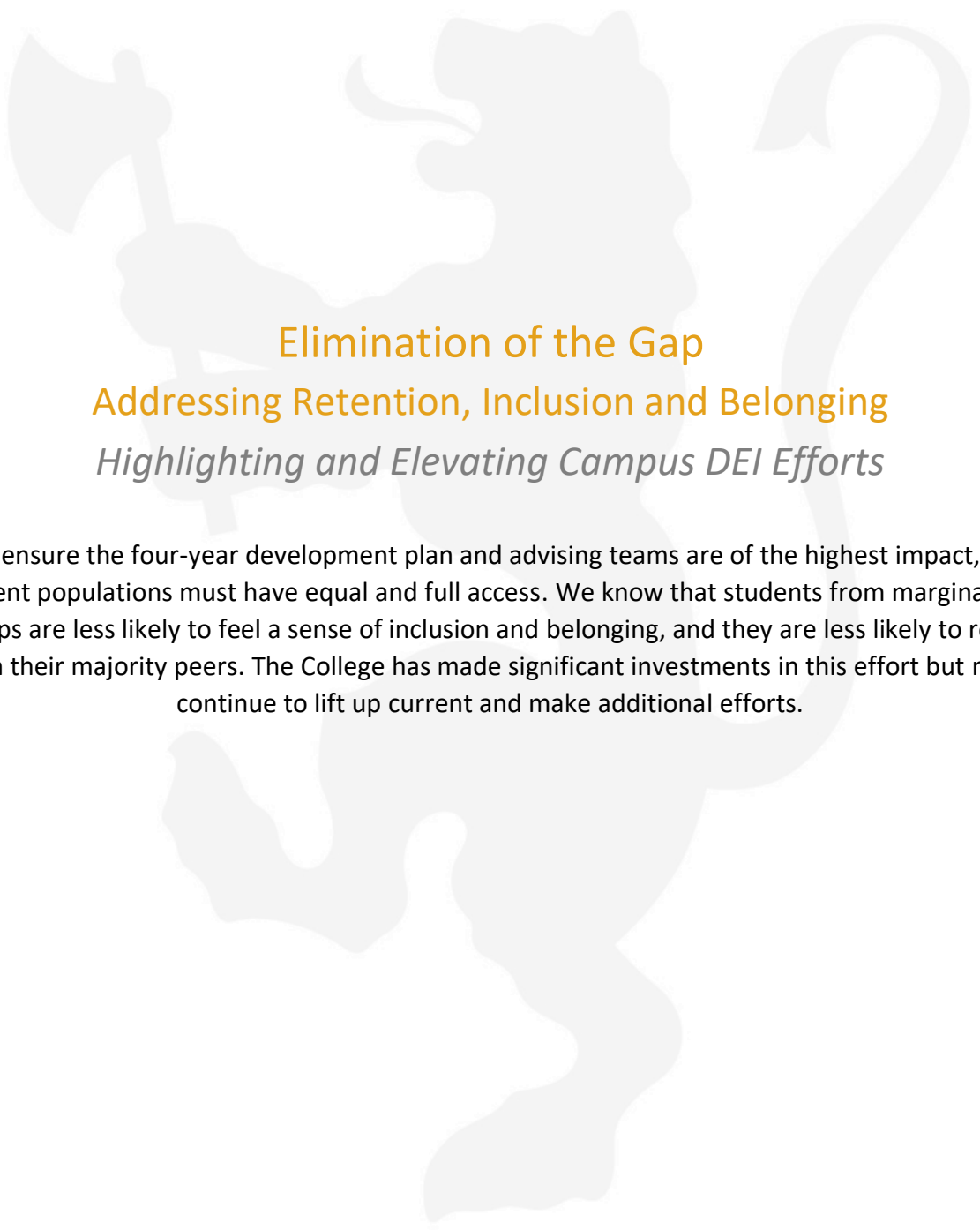
Between 20-25% of seniors pursue further study after graduation—and typically attend graduate and professional schools, with many more applying within five years post-graduation. St. Olaf currently provides

an outline of curricular, co-curricular, and experiential options for students interested in a wide range of pre-professional programs, including: accounting, architecture & design, business & management, computer engineering/software engineering, engineering, journalism, law, performing arts, pre-health studies, public policy and theology/seminary schools. Beyond this outline of program listings in the course catalog, our approach to pre-professional advising has been inconsistent. For Every Ole recommends a more unified approach to pre-professional advising. We propose the following: update the list of pre-professional tracks, and establish a uniform digital presence for each pre-professional program, with curricular and co-curricular plans delineated for students. This information will be updated on an annual basis. Also, we recommend that a faculty member be aligned the pre-professional track and collaborate with offices such as the Piper Center to help design and encourage engagement in events and opportunities, host alumni panels, graduate/professional school visits, and information sessions, or the Alumni and Parent Relations office to facilitate student participation in the alumni/student mentoring pods. Faculty will also be available for individual meetings with students seeking curricular advice. A stipend will be offered to compensate faculty for their pre-professional advising efforts.

### **FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE – A NEW ENDEAVOR**

The First Year Experience (FYE) - which includes SOAR and two required first year courses, First Year Seminar (FYS) and Writing & Rhetoric (WRR) - is very new to St. Olaf. The new “OLE Core” general education curriculum was launched in the fall of 2020. We want to acknowledge the efforts of the faculty and staff who worked on developing the First Year Experience, a solid foundation on which to build the new pre-major advising model and SOAR programming. First Year Seminar (FYS) guides students in responding to the OLE question: In what ways can I understand the world and my role in it? As such, the course provides a strong foundation for students to learn how a college is organized, to practice accessing resources, and to understand the purpose of a liberal arts education. It also provides a wonderful complement to the proposed SOAR 2.0 program, which provides students with the skills they need to embrace the education they are receiving and to apply it to their lives.





## Elimination of the Gap

### Addressing Retention, Inclusion and Belonging

#### *Highlighting and Elevating Campus DEI Efforts*

To ensure the four-year development plan and advising teams are of the highest impact, all student populations must have equal and full access. We know that students from marginalized groups are less likely to feel a sense of inclusion and belonging, and they are less likely to retain than their majority peers. The College has made significant investments in this effort but must continue to lift up current and make additional efforts.

To address retention, and to reach the goal of the Strategic Plan to achieve 95% retention with an 85% four-year graduation rate, the Retention and Success Committee provided the following report and recommendations to the President’s Leadership Team in March, 2022:

## **RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING RETENTION, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING**

1. Implement an integrated and proactive advising model that follows a 4-year developmental advising approach, including a mentoring component that encourages students to engage in transformational experiences while providing more equitable awareness of opportunities. This approach will allow advisors to nudge students to utilize existing academic support services, as students’ academic success in the first year and progress towards degree are the most critical elements leading to a student’s persistence and eventual graduation.
2. Continue to build on the Orientation and Transition Experience.
  - A re-envisioned New Student Orientation, a new Sophomore Experience, and the St. Olaf Orientation to Academics and Resources (SOAR) were introduced in 2021-22.
  - Continue to assess and refine existing opportunities and initiatives.
  - Invest in the development of continued transition experiences for upper class students.
  - Implement a student case management approach, utilizing functionality in a new enterprise information system. A case management approach utilizing a student success management system uses data and predictive analysis to identify students who will benefit from proactive outreach and advising at key times. It also connects key faculty and staff to allow for better collaboration and support for students. Although this approach could predict which students are less likely to retain, providing additional outreach relies on more advising staff.
  - Ensure that a robust student success management system is part of the new enterprise information system, with a commitment to implementing a supplemental system if needed.
3. Reduce caseloads for Disability and Access professionals to the national average by hiring additional DAC staff and also hiring a Testing and Note-Taking Specialist.
  - The average student-staff ratio for small postsecondary institutions is 94 students with disabilities (SWD) to one Disability and Access professional, and 159 students to one Disability and Access professional at large institutions. With the significant rise in the number of students with mental health conditions, the current caseload at St. Olaf is approximately 350 SWD to one Disability and Access professional. Ten years ago, in 2011-2012, the caseload at St. Olaf was 107 SWD to one Disability and Access professional.
4. Create additional affinity spaces and programs for underrepresented students
  - Hire a Taylor Center professional who will focus on creating affinity spaces of support such as Men of Color, Women of Color, Queer and Trans People of Color, Indigenous Student groups, LGBTQIA student groups, and Sustained Dialogue groups, as well as developing other best practices such as learning living communities. This lines up with the PCG College Experience report recommendation to improve equity and inclusion by “making students feel that they are being heard and providing a safe avenue to share their concerns.”

For Every Ole supports implementation of the Retention and Success Committee’s recommendations, specifically noting strategies targeted at addressing the retention of marginalized populations. In addition, For Every Ole proposes additional areas of attention needed to eliminate the gap in student experience and provide full and equitable access to the whole person development and advising models.

## ADDRESSING THE GAP IN STUDENTS’ EXPERIENCE

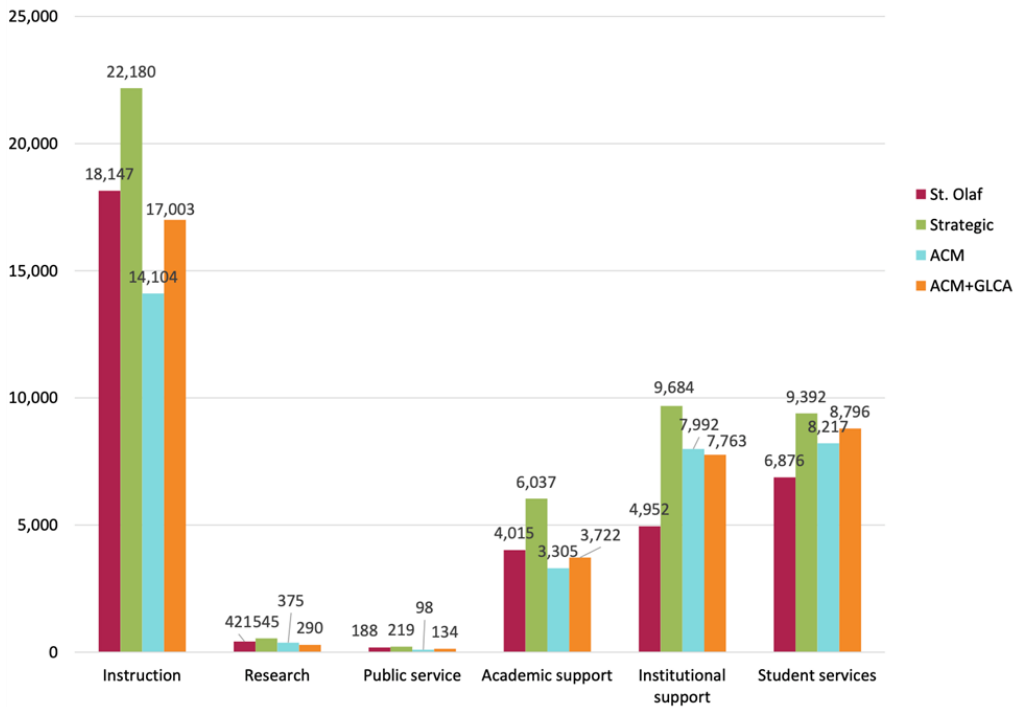
### RECOMMENDED ACTIONS TO CREATE AN EQUITABLE FOUNDATION AND FULFILL BASIC STUDENT NEEDS

In addition, For Every Ole has identified foundational elements of the student experience that are not equitable and should be addressed. Ensuring that the basic needs of all St. Olaf students are met is vital to a feeling of community and belonging. These foundational needs include financial security, food security, addressing inequities in transportation availability, and access to the necessary technology and tools to succeed academically. St. Olaf has made attempts to address these issues through transitional and emergency funds, but they have proven inadequate to equitably support our students. We recommend increasing funding by \$140,000 per year to satisfy identified needs.

### COMPETITIVE CONTEXT

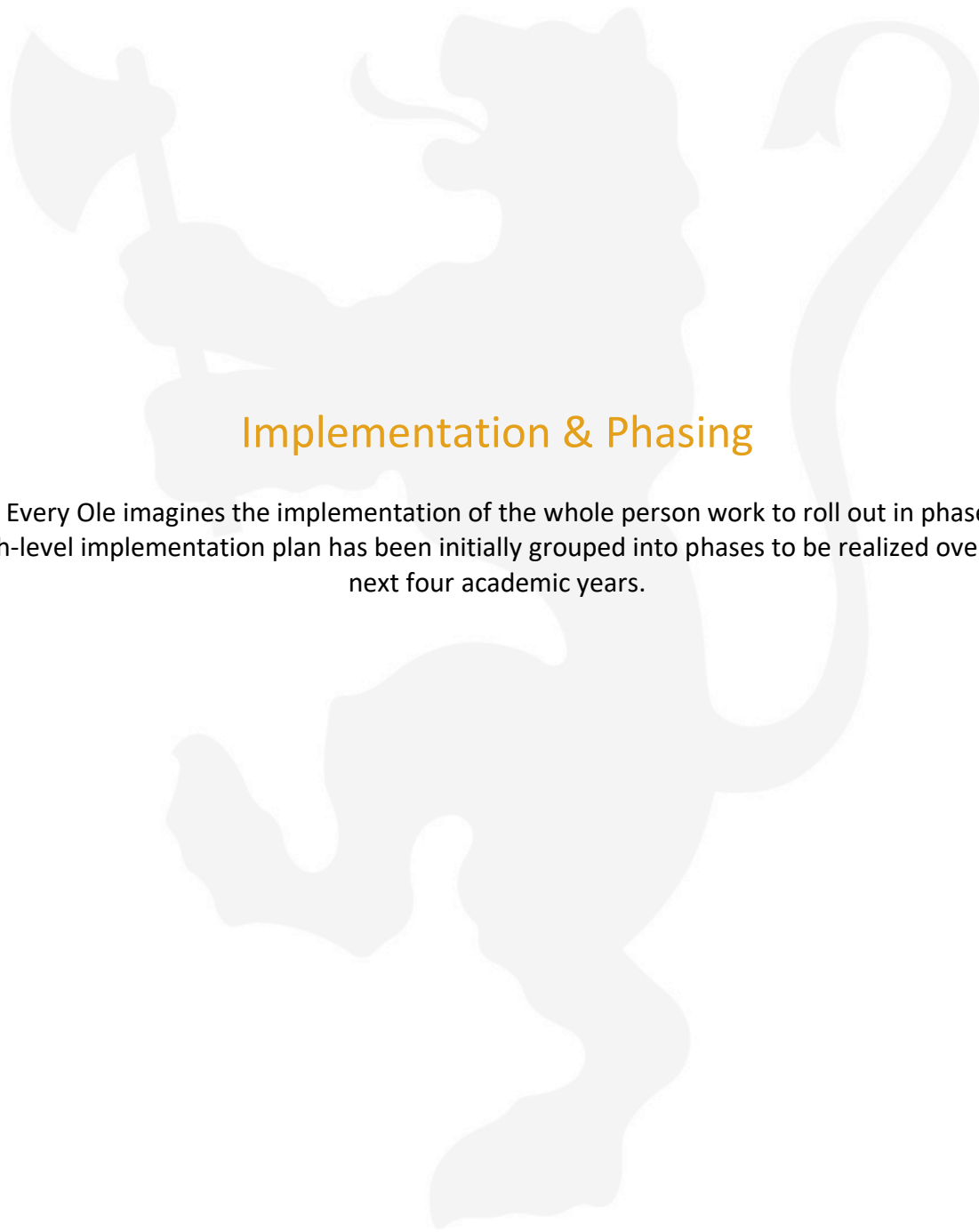
As Institutional Evaluation and Assessment (IE&A) benchmarking has revealed, St. Olaf lags our strategic comparison group in spending per student. Overall, St. Olaf spends 28% less per student than the college in our strategic comparison group—colleges with an average ranking of 37 among National Liberal Arts Colleges. Our overall spending is roughly comparable to our regional Associated Colleges of the Midwest (ACM) comparison group—a group with an average national ranking of 73. The resources outlined above to improve retention and create an equitable experience largely fall in the **Student Service** category, where St. Olaf falls well below all three of our comparison groups in funding per student—Strategic comparison group (27%), ACM (16%) and ACM + GLCA (22%).

Core expenses per FTE enrollment, by source: Fiscal Year 2020



Expense categories relevant to this report–

- **Instruction:** faculty compensation, academic department and program operating expenses, academic chair endowments, faculty professional development, international programs, Academic Civic Engagement, TRIO programs, grant matching funds, music organizations, Institute for Freedom and Community
- **Academic support:** faculty recruitment, professional development, travel expenses, research support; academic computing, media services, world language center, library, archives, Flaten Museum, CILA, Kierkegaard Library, academic advising, CAAS
- **Institutional support:** Board of Regents, President, Legal, Mission, IE&A, Administrative Computing, Telecommunications, Finance, insurance, Business Office, college vehicles, post office, print center, HR, benefits admin, communications (separate from marketing), broadcast media and video production, retiree health benefits
- **Student services:** Posse, Title IX, Athletics, campus ministry, Lutheran Center, Registrar, Disability Student Services, student accounting, student emergency fund, Dean of Students, Student Activities, Wellness Center, counseling, residence life, campus rec/intramurals, Taylor Center, orientation, admissions, financial aid administration, student health services, marketing (separate from communications!), music ensembles, Piper Center, COVID-19



## Implementation & Phasing

For Every Ole imagines the implementation of the whole person work to roll out in phases. A high-level implementation plan has been initially grouped into phases to be realized over the next four academic years.

## the FIRST YEAR (2022-2023)

### *The Four-Year Plan*

- Launch For Every Ole with incoming students - enhancing New Student Orientation for first years and NSO: Transfer Track. Begin to implement additional class year specific programming.
- Begin roll out of GROW program (mentoring between supervisor and student employee linking academics to employment and future career) student) with a focus on first year student employees
- Collaborate with Carleton College to revise the Northfield Community Partners student employment program
- Develop and implement for first year and transfer students (a) an onboarding workshop for student employment; (b) a workplace expectations and communication workshop; and (c) a transferable skills/resume workshop, primarily
- Reevaluate all student employment jobs and address the issue of a pay differential for roles with different levels of leadership and responsibility
- Develop sopho**MORE** experience; continue to offer Quo Vadis, Sophomore Experience programming
- Develop Junior Jumpstart
- Develop New Alumni Orientation, continue to offer and enhance Senior Week and Commencement
- Begin rollout of *Life After Olaf* series

### *The Advising Model*

- Link the transition from the new Orientation & Transition and Common Read programs to pre-major advising teams
- Address retention through a new team-based advising model, adding success coaches to the current advising structure. (Faculty Pre-Major Advisor + SOAR Peer Leader + Success Coach); Hire CAAS success coaching staff in summer 2022; Hire Associate Dean of Advising and Mentoring
- Develop extended SOAR curriculum and conduct a rigorous evaluation and assessment of student learning using several models for enhancing pre-major advising, SOAR program; share all findings with faculty
- Roll out a third and fourth year advising team (major advisor, industry specific Piper Center coach, alumni mentoring pods)
- Expand pilots of alumni/student mentoring pods (industry and identity) based on feedback from students and faculty involved in the inaugural program.
- Identify and support faculty pre-professional advisors
- Collect 'Plan of Study' samples from each department, concentration, pre-professional program

### *Elimination of the Gap*

- Address retention through increased support for the ~800+ students with temporary or permanent disabilities (physical, learning, sensory, health, psychological)
- Focus attention on implementation of the Retention and Success Committee's recommended strategies for increasing retention, inclusion and belonging
- Fund foundational needs programs outline in Appendix B: Transitional Grant, Emergency Fund, Taylor Center Equity Fund, Food Insecurity and Equitability, Access to Transportation, Access to Technology

## **the SECOND YEAR (2023-24)**

### ***The Four-Year Plan***

- Fund and staff faculty positions for the First Year Seminar.
- Continue roll out of GROW program to student employees
- Continue to review and implement a pay differential for roles with different levels of leadership and responsibility
- Develop and implement (a) a DEI in the workplace workshop and (b) an application and interviewing workshop for sophomore student employees
- Trial a first-year student employment “service” program to introduce first year students to St. Olaf’s mission and servant leadership
- Initiate rollout of Leadership Arc
- Expand *Life After Olaf* series
- Develop Leadership Practicum
- Assess student satisfaction related to the College’s residential experience

### ***The Advising Model***

- First Year Seminar is funded and staffed. SOAR is funded, staffed and expanded based upon evaluation and assessment of student learning. If applicable, the new SOAR program would go to the Curriculum Committee and, if approved by that committee, to the faculty for a vote. Advising and SOAR program continues to undergo evaluation and assessment.
- Configure a new enterprise information system (EIS) for comprehensive student information management (one portal for advising, success, academics, financials).
- Further expansion, evaluation and revision of alumni mentoring pods (industry and identity) based on feedback from students, faculty, success coaches, as well as data from outcomes, retention, surveys about belonging.

### ***Elimination of the Gap***

- Address retention of BIPOC, first generation, students with disabilities, men, low financial need/high academic need students by benchmarking and developing cohort programs for these groups

## the THIRD YEAR (2024-25)

<i>The Four-Year Plan</i>	<i>The Advising Model</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conclude implementation of GROW as part of all student employment jobs</li> <li>● Roll out the first-year student employment “service” program to all first year students</li> <li>● Develop Senior Summit</li> <li>● Expand <i>Life After Olaf</i> series</li> <li>● Develop I-Term, Interim Pathway in collaboration with faculty. Test various models of Interim Pathway.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Catalyst Seminar</li> <li>○ Experiential Connections</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue to expand and adapt Pre-Major Advising model/SOAR (based on student and faculty evaluations, assessment data, success metrics). Advising and SOAR program continues to undergo evaluation and assessment.</li> <li>● Implement a new enterprise information system (EIS)</li> </ul>

## the FOURTH YEAR (2025-26)

<i>The Four-Year Plan</i>	<i>The Advising Model</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Expand Leadership Arc</li> <li>● If I-term, or Interim Pathway proves to be a model worth adopting, it would go to the Curriculum Committee and, if approved by that committee, to the faculty for a vote.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Catalyst Seminar</li> <li>○ Experiential Connections</li> <li>○ Senior Capstone</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review Pre-Major Advising/SOAR program (updates and adjustments made on an annual basis).</li> </ul>

## RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

### Recommendations

For Every Ole recommends that the Board of Regents Board endorse the plans presented in this report with the intent to roll out phase 1 implementation plans in the fall of 2022.

### KEY CONSIDERATIONS

In order for the work to be successfully implemented, For Every Ole acknowledges several areas of consideration for the Board of Regents and campus leadership:

- The campus community will need to engage with this work in a morale building, phased approach, that includes college-wide discussions about change readiness.
- Campus change readiness plans should include HR initiatives such as “A Great Purge” – where supervisors talk collectively/individually with staff about how to make room for this strategic,



collaborative and scalable work, which may include releasing responsibilities and tasks that no longer fit within this vision.

- This work will need to be valued and supported by the new institutional leader and leadership team.

## **NEXT STEPS**

- **President's Leadership Team Retreat:** A structured time for the PLT and other St. Olaf-selected leaders to integrate findings and define actions to be taken to implement plan. This time will include the development of campus engagement strategies, resourcing needs, and milestones for a four-year implementation.
- **Develop Community Feedback Loops:** Begin to deepen community engagement and buy-in by inviting more community members into the development of the plan. This series of forums introduces potential initiatives to the campus community for meaningful input.
- **Storbeck and the Presidential Search Steering Committee** will inform prospective candidates about the For Every Ole plan. They will evaluate candidates based off of their interest and ability to carry out the plan.

## APPENDIX

- List of Sources
- Detailed Description of Funding Needs - Elimination of the Gap - Addressing Retention, Inclusion and Belonging
- Retention and Success Committee Report
- Existing Advising Mentoring and Planning Programs at St. Olaf College
- St. Olaf Orientation to Academics and Resources (SOAR) Program

## Appendix A

### List of Sources

The For Every Ole Task Force, launched in January 2022, has developed a preliminary model for a four-year student development plan supported by a team-based approach to holistic advising, which they will share in a plenary session at the May Board meeting. The Task Force has been examining current practices and research findings at St. Olaf together with the practices of other institutions known for innovative and effective mentoring and advising models. The model integrates data, theory, and practice pertaining not only to student learning and development, but also to student retention and success, student engagement, and equity and inclusion.

Among the internal resources that have informed their work to date are:

- The November 2021 Existing Advising, Mentoring and Planning Opportunities at St. Olaf College
- Pacific Consulting Group reports on the St. Olaf student experience
- A Center for Interdisciplinary Research (CIR) Retention Research Report
- A series of mentored undergraduate research reports on diversity, equity, and inclusion that emerged from projects in the Center for Undergraduate Research and Inquiry
- [Findings](#) from the Spring 2021 Co-Creating an Inclusive Community campus-wide discussion groups
- Reports from the four-year Mellon-funded [To Include is To Excel](#) initiative enhancing equitable and anti-racist teaching and learning
- Consultant reports on BIPOC faculty and staff thriving
- Interactive data dashboards on [retention](#) and on [diversity, equity, and inclusion](#) developed and maintained by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment

The Task Force has also conferred with a wide variety of internal stakeholders and subject-matter experts representing nearly every division of the college. In addition to academic and administrative leaders and members of key staff offices (e.g., the Center for Advising and Academic Support, Registrar's Office, Piper Center), the team has met with a variety of cross-functional groups, such as the First Year Experience Committee, the Retention and Success Committee, the Advising Study Group, and the OLE Core leadership. They also hosted two All-Community meetings in March to solicit input from the community, and facilitated student focus groups with student government leadership, Taylor Center leadership, and Piper Center student staff.

The internal research and consultation has been supplemented by external research into the practices of other institutions widely regarded as exemplars in comprehensive and holistic mentoring and advising. Some of these institutions have improved their retention rates and enhanced their visibility and reputation as a result of their initiatives. To date, the Task Force has examined comparable initiatives at Agnes Scott College, Carleton College, Denver University, Furman University, Grinnell College, Macalester College, Thiel College, University of the South (Sewanee), Wellesley College, and Williams College.

## Appendix B

# Elimination of the Gap - Addressing Retention, Inclusion and Belonging: Detailed Description of Funding Needs

### **Building on Our Commitment**

Ensuring that the basic needs of all St. Olaf students are met is foundational to providing an equitable, positive experience on campus. These foundational needs include financial security, food security, addressing inequities in transportation availability, and access to the necessary technology and tools to succeed academically. As we have seen from the benchmarking, St. Olaf has spent far less per student on institutional support and student services. We suggest a nominal increase in our support for the following programs as soon as possible.

### **TRANSITIONAL GRANT FUNDING**

A Transitional Grant for low-income domestic students to assist with initial costs of the college transition including books, residence hall supplies, and winter gear. This grant is currently available only to low-income international students.

### **EMERGENCY FUND**

The Emergency Fund currently holds a budget of \$30,000 to assist students with unexpected costs such as non-routine medical bills and sudden trips home for a family emergency. Past recipients of the emergency funding have a retention rate of 97%. With increased funding, we will be able to serve additional students.

### **TAYLOR CENTER EQUITY FUND**

The Taylor Center Equity Fund addresses the systemic barriers some of our students face as they navigate their St. Olaf experience, which often includes the need to support family members through a crisis. An increase in this important fund would allow the College to increase the annual support per student.

### **FOOD INSECURITY AND EQUITABILITY**

Adequate, accessible, culturally appropriate food choices are fundamental to a student's wellbeing, as well as their sense of belonging and being cared for by our community. Funds would be used to support:

1. "St. Olaf Grab & Go" market offering a primary source of nutrition for students remaining on campus during the summer and over breaks. It would also offer supplemental food options for all students during the academic year.
2. Stocking Residence Hall kitchens with cooking utensils for students who wish to cook for themselves, have food sensitivities, cultural restrictions, or want to create a sense of community by cooking a meal with fellow students.

### **ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION**

Students without an effective way to leave campus and move about the Northfield community or to access to the Twin Cities, report feelings of isolation and a lack of agency. This feeling is more prevalent among our international and domestic BIPOC students. The task force suggests working in partnership with Carleton College and the City of Northfield to identify solutions to this important issue.

### **ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY**

The College currently has a Laptop Lending programming allowing students to check out a device for a semester at a time. With 80 laptops in the current rotation, the program has experienced 90% utilization. Additionally, 77% of the students checking out devices are international or domestic BIPOC students and 90% are students with medium or high financial need. Clearly, we are meeting students where they are! We seek to expand the program from 80 to 250 laptops allowing students to retain their computer throughout their time on the Hill.

Our research, survey data, and conversations with students and campus partners indicates that retention requires a whole-of-campus approach. As the college continues to admit ever more diverse classes and to celebrate all that these students bring to the college, we have a responsibility to deliver an equitable experience for all.

## Appendix C

# Retention and Success Committee Report, January 31, 2022

## Retention and Success Committee Members

Jillian Rowan (chair), Brandon Cash, Susan Canon, Jason Engbrecht, Lauren Feiler, Justin Fleming, Chris George, Kathy Glampe, Charles Gray, Brian Greening, Nate Jacobi, Hassel Morrison (advisor/consult) Martin Olague, Ericka Peterson, Kirsten Cahoon (ad hoc)

## Introduction

The Retention and Student Success Committee reviewed four areas of focus in Fall 2021: students who are underrepresented in college (Black, Indigenous, or a Person of Color (BIPOC)/first generation/low income/students with disabilities); male students; students who have low or no financial need and are less prepared academically; and students who have “stopped out” of St. Olaf before earning a degree. The committee reviewed data, conducted interviews, and read literature on retention strategies. As we researched our four areas of focus, themes and strategies emerged that would improve the experience of *all* students. Thus, our report recommends strategies that are institution-wide and seek to improve the experience and retention of *all* students, as well as targeted strategies for student groups with higher attrition rates.

## Retention and Graduation “Snapshot”

The [Retention Dashboard](#) as well as other data analysis by Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment show the following trends:

- Male student retention and graduation rates are lower than rates for female students.
- Students with less academic preparation, especially those with low or no financial need, retain at a lower rate than their more academically prepared peers.
- Retention rates, and especially graduation rates, for many Black or African American students and Hispanic/Latinx students are lower than rates for the overall student population.
- Students registered with a disability retain and graduate at a lower rate than the overall student population.
- Low-income and first-generation (LIFG) domestic students retain at a similar rate to their non-LIFG peers, but they do not graduate at the same rate.
- International students retain and graduate at a higher level than the general student population.

In 2020-2021, a Center for Interdisciplinary Research (CIR) team worked to create a predictive model of First-Year retention. The regression analysis found that, holding all other factors constant (including demographic background and Fall term GPA), a student who receives support from DAC, TRIO/Student Support Services (SSS), or the Posse Scholars program is more likely to retain than one who does not. The success of the SSS program for First-Year students emphasizes that individualized student support works to improve retention. For the 2016-2020 cohorts, the retention rate for SSS students was 90.7%, slightly above the rate of 90.6% for Domestic students not in SSS. For students with an ACT score of 23 or below (or the SAT equivalent), the difference is more dramatic: those served by SSS retained at a rate of 89.1%, compared to 81.5% for those not served.

Another finding of the CIR project was that lower GPA and fewer completed credits in the first term were associated with lower retention rates. In an exit survey conducted by the Retention Group, students withdrawing with no intent to return cited mental health issues, student attitudes and values, and connection with other students as their top three reasons for leaving the college. Holistic advising could help prevent students from getting low grades by catching problems early and pointing students toward resources, while also serving to help students make connections. By providing the resources for all students to receive personalized support throughout their time at St. Olaf, we can improve retention rates across the board.

## **Recommended Retention Strategies and Resources Needed**

Implementing retention strategies that are institution-wide and positively impact the experience and academic progress of all students is considered one of the most effective ways to increase retention and graduation rates. At the same time, it is important to focus on groups of students with higher attrition rates. The St. Olaf College Experience [Report](#) by Pacific Consulting Group (PCG), a comprehensive analysis done in Fall 2019 of students' experience at St. Olaf, identified several areas in which we could improve, and it serves as one of the guiding documents in developing our retention recommendations. In order to improve the overall student experience, PCG recommends focusing on elevating the campus life experience and helping students to feel personally supported (PCG Report-slide 1).

The Retention and Success Committee recommends the following strategies and resources.

### **Recommended Strategies:**

1. Implement an integrated and proactive advising model that follows a 4-year developmental advising approach, including a mentoring component that encourages students to engage in transformational experiences while providing more equitable awareness of opportunities. This approach will allow advisors to nudge students to utilize existing academic support services as students' academic success in the first year and progress towards degree is the most critical element to a student's persistence and eventual graduation ([Kalsbeek and Cortes](#), 2013, p. 3).
  - a. The Retention and Success group plans to research advising models as an area of focus for the spring and to collaborate with the *For Every Ole* committee to support their work by sharing what we learn.
2. Continue to build on the Orientation and Transition Experience.
  - a. A re-envisioned New Student Orientation, a new Sophomore Experience, and the St. Olaf Orientation to Academics and Resources (SOAR) were introduced in 2021-22.
    - i. Continue to assess and refine existing opportunities and initiatives.
  - b. Invest in the development of continued transition experiences for upperclass students (see PCG report, especially for junior students).
3. Implement a student case management approach, utilizing functionality in a new enterprise information system.
  - a. A case management approach utilizing a student success management system uses data and predictive analysis to identify students who will benefit from proactive outreach and advising at key times. It also connects key faculty and staff to allow for better collaboration and support for

students. Although this approach could predict which students are less likely to retain, providing additional outreach relies on more advising staff.

- b. Ensure that a robust student success management system is part of the new enterprise information system, with a commitment to implementing a supplemental system if needed.
4. Reduce caseloads for Disability and Access professionals to the national average by hiring additional D&A staff and also hiring a Testing and Note-Taking Specialist.
  - a. The [average student-staff ratio for small postsecondary institutions is 94 students with disabilities \(SWD\)](#) to one Disability and Access professional, and 159 students to one Disability and Access professional at large institutions. With the significant rise in numbers of students with mental health conditions, the current caseload at St. Olaf is approximately 350 SWD to one Disability and Access professional. Ten years ago, in 2011-2012, the caseload at St. Olaf was 107 SWD to one Disability and Access professional.
5. Create additional affinity spaces and programs for underrepresented students
  - a. Hire a Taylor Center professional who will focus on creating affinity spaces of support such as Men of Color, Women of Color, Queer and Trans People of Color, Indigenous Student groups, LGBTQIA student groups, and Sustained Dialogue groups, as well as developing other best practices such as [learning living communities](#). This lines up with the PCG College Experience report recommendation to improve equity and inclusion by “making students feel that they are being heard and providing a safe avenue to share their concerns,” (PCG Report-slide 2).

#### **Resources needed:**

1. Increase staffing for Professional Advisors—the number of FTE and amount of resources needed will depend on the model recommended in spring 2021 by the Retention and Success committee and the *For Every Ole* committee.
2. Add one FTE for an Orientation & Transition Experiences Assistant Director position to explicitly focus on helping students with the transitions throughout college and reduce student anxiety - approximately \$XX for salary, benefits, and staff development and \$15,000 to expand transition initiatives.
3. Restore staffing for the Class Dean program—1 Dean for each class—to lead the case management approach, approximately \$XX/Dean for salary and benefits
4. Implement a supplemental student success management software, such as EAB or Starfish at approximately \$XX annually, if the new enterprise information system does not meet our needs.
5. Add five Disability and Access Specialists, approximately \$XX/staff member for salary, benefits and staff development expenses and one Testing and Note-Taking Specialist, approximately \$XX/specialist.
6. Add a Taylor Center Professional: Assistant Director, Intersectional Student Identities, \$XX staff salary, benefits and staff development expenses.

These resources would begin to put us in line with comparable schools. Appendix A shows that St. Olaf lags behind our strategic comparison group in spending per student. We are also behind the group in retention rates. For the cohort entering in 2018 (pre-pandemic), the schools in our strategic comparison group had an

average retention rate of 92.9%<sup>1</sup>, while St. Olaf’s rate was 90.7% and ranked 12th out of the 13 colleges. Most of the resources outlined here to improve retention fall in the category of *Student Services*, where we currently spend even less than our regional comparison groups.

## Subcommittee Reports

A detailed summary of each area of focus, including tables which summarize retention and graduation rates, is provided below.

### Area of Focus #1: Underrepresented Groups in Higher Education

Subcommittee Members: Brian Greening, Jillian Rowan, Martin Olague, Kristi Kehrwald Adair (ad hoc), and Chang Dao (ad hoc)

Students who are underrepresented in higher education--students with disabilities, students who are BIPOC, are in the first generation to go to college, and/or are low-income--often retain and graduate at a lower rate than the overall population of students. Also, in reviewing findings from the [PCG Report](#) and the National Study of Student Engagement (NSSE; see pages 22-25 of [this report](#)) we see this same subset of students lacking positive feelings of belonging, and/or having very different experiences at the college from their white peers. Many students have intersectional identities, which can increase the barriers to retention and graduation. The following pages show retention and graduation rates for BIPOC students; students with disabilities (SWDs); and low-income students and first-generation students. (In regards to BIPOC students, after disaggregation, data reveals that Asian students retain and graduate at higher rates than other BIPOC students.)

The following tables show rates for 5 cohorts. For retention data, these are students entering in 2016 through 2020, and for 4-year graduation data, these are students entering in 2013 through 2017. For more detailed charts and information, please see the Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Interactive Dashboards: [Retention Rates](#) and [Graduation Rates](#).

#### Race/Ethnicity/Citizenship Group

TABLE 1: OVERALL FIRST-YEAR (FY) RETENTION RATE, 2016-2020 COHORTS						
FY Retention All Students	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic/Latinx	International	Multiracial	White
91.0%	91.6%	89.9%	84.7%	94.7%	91.2%	90.7%

TABLE 2: OVERALL 4-YEAR GRADUATION RATE, 2013-2017 COHORTS						
4-Year Graduation Rate	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic/Latinx	International	Multiracial	White

<sup>1</sup> Source: Common Data Set for each school.



<b>All Students</b>						
80.6%	82.1%	64.4%	70.9%	85.1%	77.0%	81.5%

### Disability Status

Note: The retention chart is for SWDs who registered with Disability and Access Services (DAC) during their first year, whereas the graduation chart includes students who registered with DAC at any point.

<b>TABLE 3: OVERALL FY RETENTION RATE FOR SWDs REGISTERED WITH DAC, 2016-2020 COHORTS</b>			
Cohort Years	Students NOT registered with DAC in FY	SWDs Registered with DAC in FY	Difference
2016-2020	91.8%	85.5%	<b>6.3%</b>

<b>TABLE 4: OVERALL 4-YEAR GRADUATION RATE FOR SWDs REGISTERED WITH DAC, 2013-2017 COHORTS</b>			
Cohort Years	Students NOT registered with DAC	SWDs Registered with DAC	Difference
2013-2017	82.6%	70.0%	<b>12.6%</b>

### Low Income and First Generation Status

First-year retention rates for students with a Low Income (LI) and First Generation (FG) background are higher than retention rates for non-LIFG students. Comparing all Low Income students to non-Low Income students (domestic only), the rates are comparable: 90.6% and 90.7% over the past 5 years. Retention rates are higher for all First Generation students (domestic and international) than non-First Generation students, 91.5% compared to 90.9%. This early sign of success does not play out in graduation rates, though. For the 2013-2017 cohorts, 75.7% of First Generation students graduated in 4 years, compared to 81.7% of their peers. 78.8% of (domestic) Low Income students graduated in 4 years, compared to 80.6% of students who were not Low Income. Tables 5 and 6 show rates for specific Low Income and First Generation combinations.

<b>TABLE 5: OVERALL FIRST-YEAR (FY) RETENTION RATE FOR 2016-2020 COHORTS</b>						
FY Retention All Students	Domestic, not LI or FG	Domestic, Both LI & FG	Domestic, FG only	Domestic, LI only	International, FG	International, not FG
91.0%	90.8%	91.5%	89.4%	89.8%	95.5%	94.3%

<b>TABLE 6: OVERALL 4-YEAR GRADUATION RATE, 2013-2017 COHORTS</b>						
4-Year Graduation All Students	Domestic, not LI or FG	Domestic, Both LI & FG	Domestic, FG only	Domestic, LI only	International, I, FG	International, I, not FG
80.6%	81.3%	75.1%	73.9%	81.5%	82.0%	86.4%

### Strategies/Resources to address this area of focus:

To improve the retention and graduation rates of underrepresented students, our committee strongly supports adopting an integrated advising model for all students. Professional advisors could be trained to address barriers facing BIPOC students as well as SWDs. We also recommend reducing the caseloads for Disability and Access professionals (recommendation #4) and creating additional affinity spaces and programs for underrepresented students (recommendation #5).

## Area of Focus #2: Male students

Subcommittee Members: Brandon Cash, Jason Engbrecht, Charles Gray, and Nate Jacobi

### Male students

Over the past five years, male-identified students have exhibited a lower retention rate than non-male students after the first year (Table 7 and [retention dashboard](#))

TABLE 7: OVERALL FY RETENTION RATE FOR FEMALE AND MALE STUDENTS, 2016-2020 COHORTS			
Cohort Years	Female Students	Male students	Difference
2016-2020	92.5%	89.1%	3.4%

Furthermore, male students with marginalized identities (domestic males of color, men with disabilities), persist at even lower rates. Males are utilizing fewer support services such as Supplemental Instruction (SI) and Piper Center coaching, they are engaging less in high-impact practices such as off-campus study, and there is also a lower sense of belonging and psychological well being as compared to their non-male counterparts.

Male-identified students also graduate at a lower rate than female-identified students (Table 8 and [graduation dashboard](#)).

TABLE 8: OVERALL 4-YEAR GRADUATION RATE FOR FEMALE AND MALE STUDENTS, 2013-2017 COHORTS			
Cohort Years	Female Students	Male Students	Difference
2013-2017	84.0%	76.1%	7.9%

In reviewing exit survey responses, men who St. Olaf does not retain are perhaps less likely to identify factors that led to their departure as “Extremely Important” or “Important” to their decision. Regarding these students’ campus experiences, resource utilization varied by gender. Of the men who do not persist at St. Olaf, the utilization of “Intramural, Club, and/or Varsity Athletics” and “Library Support” is greater than their non-male counterparts. In contrast, a lesser percentage of men who did not persist were connected to Disability and Access Services, the Counseling Center, and their Student Life Class Dean than their non-male counterparts, among others. The gendered disparities in resource access and utilization, as well as qualitative data collected from interviews with staff that directly support male-dominated spaces, present opportunities to dive further into the male student experience.

### Strategies/Resources to address this area of focus:

In order to make concrete recommendations to support male student retention at St. Olaf College, additional assessment of needs must be completed. A potential step forward in discerning strategies and opportunities is to facilitate focus groups with male students to garner a better understanding of their unique experiences and needs. Additionally, reviewing and expanding the exit interview process may prove helpful in closing the gaps in our understanding of the male student experience. The results of these focus groups, in addition to

reviewing literature on men’s engagement, can be utilized to develop key approaches to targeted support. Possible strategies may include but are not limited to:

- Advisor training on opportunities, programs, and resources for students facing particular challenges that may be more frequently observed with male students.
- Investment in existing male-dominated experiences and programmatic offerings.
- Cohorts/Male-specific programs to foster a stronger sense of community.

### **Area of Focus #3: Students with high academic need and low or no financial need**

Subcommittee Members: Lauren Feiler, Chris George and Kathy Glampe

#### **Students with high academic need and low or no financial need**

During the admissions process, students are given an academic rank based on their high school background and standardized test scores. The students with the lowest academic rank generally do not retain as well as their peers. Students with the lowest financial need rankings often do not retain well either, and students who have both low need and low academic rankings can be particularly unlikely to return to St. Olaf after their first year. The story is easy to imagine; a parent paying full price could be eager to have a student switch to another school, particularly if that student is struggling with St. Olaf’s academics.

While the overall retention rate was 90.5% for domestic<sup>2</sup> students in the entering cohorts of 2018-2020, those in the lowest 3 academic and need ranks (that is, those with a high need for academic support but very little need for financial support) had a retention rate over 4 percentage points lower, 86.4%.<sup>3</sup> The lowest retention rates come from students with low academic ranks, but need plays a large role in retention rates. Students with a need rank of 1 (those who do not apply for aid) have retention rates below or similar to those with the highest need rank. Coming from a financially privileged background does not mean a student will be successful at St. Olaf, and it may mean that families will continue to shop for a lower college cost.

Appendix B shows retention rates for each cohort from 2018 to 2020 at all academic and need ranks. While some small numbers make it difficult for patterns to immediately stand out, the overall trend is for lower retention at lower levels of need and lower academic rankings.

#### **Strategies/Resources to address this area of focus:**

Our recommendations for students who have high academic need, but low or no financial need dovetail with the recommendations for all students. We recommend an integrated advising model, a robust student success management system in which these students are flagged for additional attention and support from their integrated advising team. A case management system would allow advisors, class deans, coaches, and music organization staff to work together to support each student. Additional staff in disability services would increase the ability to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities who have high academic need, but low or no financial need.

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<sup>2</sup> Since need ranks are only given to domestic students, they are the focus of the data discussed in this section.

<sup>3</sup> The methodologies for assigning both academic rank and need rank changed during these years. While each rank means something slightly different in each year, combining the three years is meant to provide a quick picture of retention for low-ranked students.

An area for future consideration is a scholarship program that encourages this cohort of students to participate in a specialized program of proactive support and advising. Institutions that have implemented similar programs report that parents are pleased with the potential for their students to earn modest scholarships (\$500/semester for successful completion and continued retention) for participating in the program and the students benefit from their participation in the proactive support and advising.

#### **Area of Focus #4: Students who have “stopped out”**

Subcommittee Members: Susan Canon, Justin Fleming, and Ericka Peterson

Some students “fall through the cracks.” Better support and tracking, as well as some changes to procedures, could help them get through to graduation. This is a summary of current procedures for different student groups. Some of these procedures work well, although they are often not well understood by the community. We also describe suggestions to improve some outcomes.

##### **Students on academic suspension**

*Requirement for returning:* Students must reapply with an essay on why they want to come back and a reference from someone outside of the family. Students may be asked to do certain things while on suspension, such as taking courses elsewhere. The student is asked to address this in their essay.

*Follow-up:* We usually do not keep in touch with students while they are on suspension and students do not keep their *stolaf.edu* email address.

*Support:* When students return from suspension they are on probation and receive the same support that other students on probation receive. However, since it is a manual process to add them to the probation list in CAAS, some students do get missed. Students do receive a readmission letter from the Dean of Students that specifies everything they need to do to maintain their enrollment at the college.

##### **Students on an official Leave of Absence**

*Requirement for returning:* For most students, nothing is required to return beyond connecting with their advisor, contacting student accounts/financial aid, and then registering for the upcoming term. They also need to communicate with Residence Life regarding where they plan to live. This process applies to all students regardless of classification.

*Follow-up:* These students maintain access to their *stolaf.edu* email address and are asked to check it regularly. They receive standard email contacts about registration, room draw, etc. Students who do not register for the term for which they plan to return are contacted by the Dean of Students office, Res Life, etc.

*Support:* No specific support needed for this group.

##### **Students within 5 credits of degree completion**

Staff in the Registrar’s office reach out to all seniors to finalize a degree-completion plan. Students who are not meeting that plan receive further support to set up a new plan. For students who leave without graduating, it may not be necessary to return: we reach out to discuss transfer credits or the possibility of taking St. Olaf courses. However, students who leave the college do not keep their *stolaf.edu* email address, which can make it hard to keep in touch with students who have left. The Registrar’s Office works with them to maintain communication in order to complete their degree.

*Support:* A great deal of support is provided to seniors who are falling short of completion, but once students leave St. Olaf, it is difficult to provide outreach. We now annually review student data from St. Olaf and the National Student Clearinghouse to find candidates for completion, and then reach out to them if possible.

**Strategies/Resources to address this area of focus:**

With a new student information system that will include advising software, planning tools, and a degree audit, communication with all of the above students and between offices will be better integrated. However, even with increased efficiencies from improved software, adding two FTE for class deans and FTE for additional advising staff would allow for more support and engagement with the whole student (*For Every Ole*). Connecting in meaningful ways with students happens with people, not just with systems.

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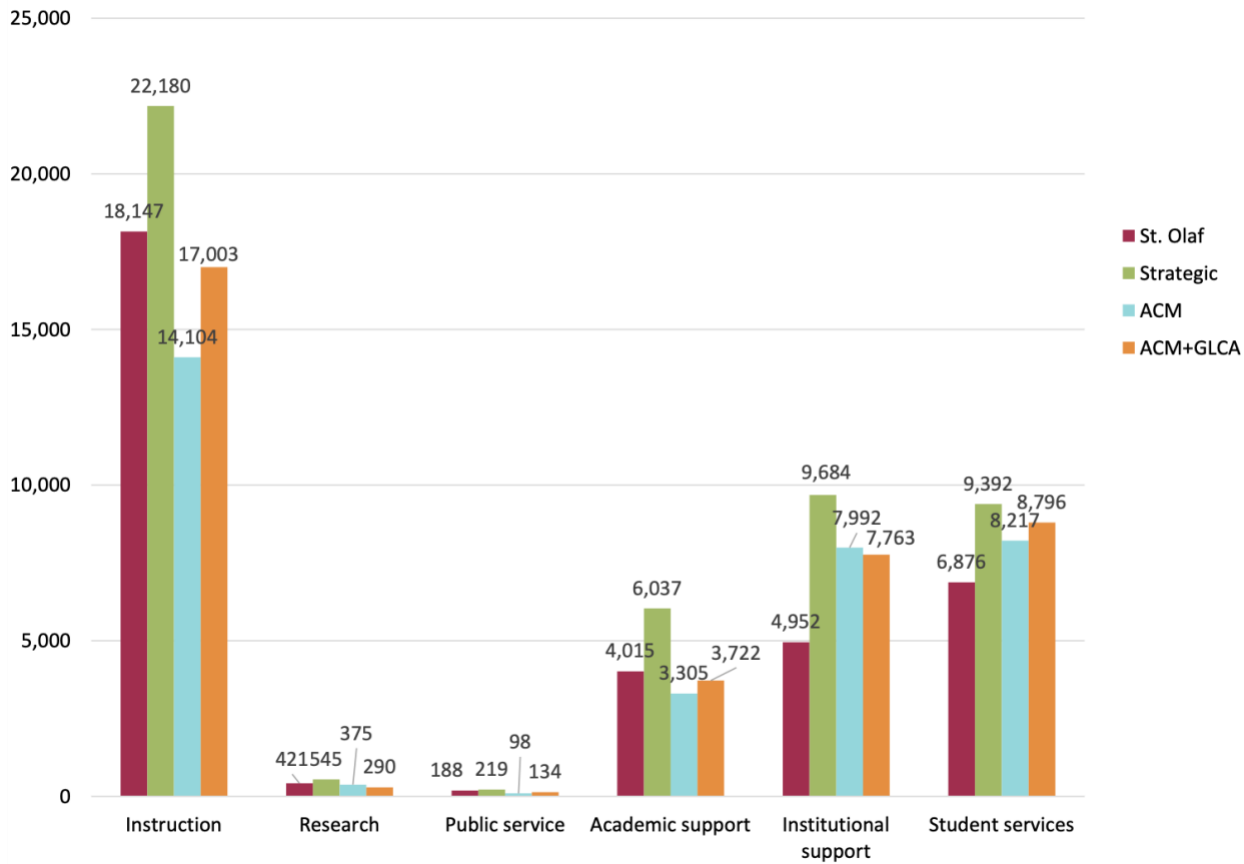
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**Appendix A.** Core expenses per FTE enrollment, by source: Fiscal Year 2020



Expenses categories relevant to this report

- *Instructional expenses* include the DOE grant for SSS (and now the grant for SSSD, which is part of CAAS and was not yet funded in fiscal year 2020)
- *Academic support* includes a few CAAS positions, as well as library, academic IT, and academic administration, museums, etc.
- *Student services* includes Dean of Students, Student Activities, Taylor Center, Disabled Student Services (part of CAAS), as well as Athletics, Admissions and Financial Aid, Piper Center, and Registrar, etc.

**Appendix B.** Retention Rates for Domestic Students by Academic Rank and Need Rank

The following charts show retention rates by academic rank and need rank for the past 3 years. Academic rank is in rows; 1 indicates the lowest rank and most need for support. Need rank is in columns; 1 indicates students who did not apply for aid and 2 is for students who applied but did not receive aid.<sup>4</sup> These charts are

<sup>4</sup> Some cells have fewer than 10 students and large differences in percentages can come about from 1 more student leaving. Unfortunately, the years cannot be combined since methods for ranking were different in each.

meant to provide a general picture of retention. Each cell shows the retention rate and the number of entering students in that category. The rates shaded in orange are below 90% and those in blue are above, with darker shades representing rates further from 90%.

2018 Cohort, Retention into second year

Academic Rank	Need Rank					Grand Total	Retention Rate 0.0% 100.0%
	1	2	3	4	5		
1	84.6% 13	85.7% 21	83.3% 24	88.2% 34	92.1% 76	88.7% 168	
2	94.4% 18	88.2% 17	86.4% 22	91.8% 49	93.0% 43	91.3% 149	
3	79.3% 29	85.7% 28	80.0% 20	87.2% 47	83.3% 36	83.8% 160	
4	94.4% 18	100.0% 31	100.0% 17	96.8% 31	86.7% 15	96.4% 112	
5	93.3% 15	100.0% 38	90.0% 30	96.9% 32	100.0% 13	96.1% 128	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>88.2% 93</b>	<b>93.3% 135</b>	<b>87.6% 113</b>	<b>91.7% 193</b>	<b>90.7% 183</b>	<b>90.7% 717</b>	

2019 Cohort, Retention into second year

Academic Rank	Need Rank						Grand Total	Retention Rate 0.0% 100.0%
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
1	85.3% 34	72.7% 22	93.8% 16	83.3% 18	90.2% 41	91.3% 69	87.5% 200	
2	100.0% 21	89.7% 29	100.0% 5	69.2% 13	100.0% 15	92.9% 28	91.9% 111	
3	91.7% 12	100.0% 17	90.0% 10	90.0% 20	86.2% 29	87.1% 31	89.9% 119	
4	96.4% 28	90.6% 32	87.5% 16	95.0% 20	80.6% 31	96.6% 29	91.0% 156	
5	95.2% 21	100.0% 33	95.5% 22	90.9% 22	94.7% 19	100.0% 13	96.2% 130	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>93.1% 116</b>	<b>91.0% 133</b>	<b>92.8% 69</b>	<b>87.1% 93</b>	<b>88.9% 135</b>	<b>92.4% 170</b>	<b>90.9% 716</b>	

2020 Cohort, Retention into second year

Academic Rank	Need Rank						Grand Total	Retention Rate 0.0% 100.0%
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
1	80.0% 10	80.0% 5	0.0% 4	100.0% 12	85.7% 14	85.0% 40	82.4% 85	
2	93.8% 16	95.5% 22	62.5% 8	96.4% 28	80.0% 25	92.6% 68	90.4% 167	
3	81.8% 22	90.5% 21	90.9% 11	96.6% 29	84.2% 19	86.2% 58	88.1% 160	
4	90.9% 11	96.7% 30	90.9% 11	85.7% 21	100.0% 23	92.3% 26	93.4% 122	
5	83.3% 12	96.0% 25	71.4% 7	92.9% 14	100.0% 16	85.7% 14	90.9% 88	
6	88.9% 9	100.0% 13	100.0% 9	100.0% 13	88.9% 9	100.0% 3	96.4% 56	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>86.3% 80</b>	<b>94.8% 116</b>	<b>78.0% 50</b>	<b>94.9% 117</b>	<b>89.6% 106</b>	<b>89.0% 209</b>	<b>90.0% 678</b>	

## Appendix D

# Existing Advising, Mentoring, and Planning (AMP) Opportunities at St. Olaf College

*Prepared by Brandon Cash & Melody Geiger*

In presenting our finalized document, we thought it would be helpful to share our thought process and approach to narrowing down the 25 page divisional feedback document to only those activities that “directly support planning, advising, and mentoring”. While many of the items on the list are certainly valuable and assist with developing the “whole student”, they do not fit into our shared definition of planning, advising and mentoring.

**Step 1** - Coming to a shared definition of planning, advising, and mentoring.

*We believe that advising and mentoring share many components-guidance, encouragement, support, and, most importantly, there must be an interactive, relational component. This would generally mean that meetings are more than a one time interaction/experience (a few exceptions may apply - example - Quo Vadis Sophomore Retreat). As far as “planning” is concerned, we were less clear about the definition so in working to meet the deadline, we viewed planning as naturally rolling into advising and mentoring. As this work continues, a clear shared understanding of “advising”, “mentoring”, and “planning” will prove critical in cultivating intentional, cohesive engagement.*

**Step 2** - Split the list and color code it:

- Red-not directly supporting advising and mentoring
- Yellow-maybe/unsure
- Green-directly supporting advising and mentoring



**Step 3** - Create a new document with just the items coded green and yellow. Discuss yellow items to determine if they should be removed or changed to green.

**Step 4** - Organize and consolidate document by the following categories:

- Embedded AMP Opportunities - all Oles experience these
- Community-wide AMP Opportunities - open to all Oles, but not all participate
- Population-specific AMP Opportunities - designed for certain class years or campus groups

**Step 5** - Identify gaps and opportunities

The following pages outline the results of our process. Presented below is a concentrated understanding of the current AMP practices at St. Olaf from across the College. While not a perfect representation, we believe this summary allows for us as an institution to both recognize the work being accomplished, add additional layers of intention to existing programs, and develop innovative ways to address gaps in the St. Olaf experience.

### **Embedded AMP Opportunities**

- Within the recruitment window, the Admissions team establishes a strong undercurrent of personal connection and AMP support for incoming students throughout their St. Olaf experience.
- The “First-Year Experience” (including the New Student Orientation experience for incoming first-year and transfer students, SOAR program, First-Year Seminar, and Writing and Rhetoric) provide initial and ongoing support in AMP capacities in the curricular and co-curricular elements of the student experience.
- All students are paired with a faculty or staff academic advisor to discuss their collegiate experience at large while connecting to resources and experiences available to St. Olaf students.
  - In addition to their academic advisor, all students receive AMP within the academic realm of their experience from various sources of formal and informal support including but not limited to the Registrar’s Office, the Center for Advising and Academic Support, and the Dean of Students Office.
- Prior to the close of a student’s sophomore year, students collaborate with a number of faculty and staff in the formal declaration of their major, allowing for direct, meaningful advising opportunities.
- The “OLE Experience in Practice” requirement of the OLE Core provides specific, structured opportunities for AMP engagement with students throughout their experience.

### **Community-Wide AMP Opportunities**

- Many campus resources provide ongoing AMP support to students through general programming as a primary function of the office/department. Connecting with students on an as needed basis to assist with planning, answering questions, often expands relationships into longer term mentoring relationships. Offices/departments that communicated similar services included the Center for Advising and Academic Support, College Ministry Dean of Students, Office of Student Activities, Piper Center, Wellness Center, and others.
- On-campus student employment (representing 2000 students) was frequently cited as a key opportunity for staff, faculty, and students to connect in meaningful AMP capacities.

- Human Resources (in concert with multiple other areas) highlighted that using methods like the “Iowa Grow” model have led to a more meaningful student employment experience and supervisor-supervisee relationship.
- Multiple offices/programs (Bon Appétit, Buntrock Commons, Campus Recreation, the Lion’s Pause, SOAR, Taylor Center for Equity and Inclusion, and others) highlighted student employment opportunities where students not only receive intentional AMP engagement from staff, but also are provided embedded opportunities to connect with their peers in AMP capacities as student supervisors and mentors.
- Various campus groups including student organizations, athletic teams, music organizations, the Student Government Association, and others receive targeted AMP support from advisors/coaches with regards to their specific involvement and concerning their experience as a whole person.
  - Development of the student leaders within these organizations by staff and faculty across leadership and professional competencies was also cited as opportunities to engage their peers in AMP capacities within and external to the context of the shared involvement.
- Numerous academic programs and opportunities connect students to sources of AMP due to the close relationships established between faculty and students as well as the depth and duration of those connections. Undergraduate research opportunities (CURI, DUR, etc.), ACE courses, CIS majors all provide such opportunities.
- International and off-campus study excursions were cited as an experience concentrated in AMP, connecting students with both staff and faculty throughout the pretravel, travel, and post-travel windows.
- *As a observation, many AMP opportunities currently offered across campus (often through collaboration) would be classified as “High-Impact Practices”.*

## Specific AMP Programs

- First Year
  - In addition to the First-Year Experience, some First Year Seminar courses are connected to an embedded tutor program, expanding on SOAR.
- Sophomore
  - The Sophomore Experience has recently brought a refreshed approach to AMP practices on campus, building on existing opportunities including Quo Vadis, Pathways Leadership & Career Program, and the Ole Leadership Academy.
- Junior
  - *We were unable to identify specific, class-wide AMP strategies currently provided to junior students from the collected responses.*
- Senior
  - *We were unable to identify specific, class-wide AMP strategies currently provided to senior students from the collected responses.*
- Population-Based
  - There are a number of programs/opportunities that intentionally weave AMP into underrepresented student engagement. Programs shared include Connect for Success-Gold (DACA/Undocumented students), TRiO programs (SSS/SSSD, McNair, etc.), DAC, Posse, Eddie Phillips Scholars, and others.
  - Various academic and pre-professional programs embed AMP into programming and relationship building between students and staff/faculty/alumni.

- A number of offices including Admissions, Center for Advising and Academic Support, Piper Center, and Taylor Center, in addition to individual staff and faculty members holding marginalized identities shared an additional investment in underrepresented student populations, forming deeper, meaningful relationships through AMP practices.

## Parting Thoughts and Possible Opportunities

At large, St. Olaf College and its dedicated staff and faculty are providing a vast array of AMP services to students across campus and modalities. It is clear from reviewing divisional feedback that opportunities exist in both curricular and co-curricular spaces. The St. Olaf experience is one paved with meaningful relationships and support from students' transition in, through, and out of the College. And still, there are opportunities to grow:

In order to ensure that every Ole has experiences that support the growth of the "whole student", we propose further examination into and investment in the *embedded* AMP opportunities at the College. As proposed by the Board of Regents Visioning Task Force, a four-year approach to advising and mentoring that have specific touchpoints for all St. Olaf students will likely allow for the greatest support of student success and persistence.

Additional areas that we have identified as possible nodes for development include:

- More intention and consistency in the advising process across the four-year arc of a student's experience - Greater structure and more developmentally-conscious engagement with students that breaks from our traditional advisor:student model (possibly considering professional staff advising pre-declaration) could prove beneficial in developing the whole student.
- Further investment in "upper class" experience - Expanding the "Sophomore Experience" and developing concrete, embedded programming in the co-curriculum for junior and senior experience would allow for the St. Olaf experience to develop accordingly alongside our students.
- Evaluating AMP staffing structures - Many offices/departments shared high levels of AMP within the daily function of their teams. Implementing an evaluation of AMP loads on student-facing offices and investing in a more robust staffing model would likely allow for greater quality and quantity in student-staff/faculty relationships.
- Continuing to develop student employment opportunities - It was very apparent that student employment is a key AMP strategy at St. Olaf *and* the student employment experience differs significantly from office to office. There are exciting things on the horizon from HR and we believe continuing that momentum will prove greatly beneficial to our student's development.
- Utilizing current persistence and retention data - The IE&A team works hard to help us in being a data-driven institution. Cultivating additional AMP opportunities based on the stories our data analyses have illuminated may make a significant impact on our student's collective and individual success.
- Developing a means to track student engagement - As exhibited above, we offer a number of AMP connections to students throughout their St. Olaf experience. To provide an intentional four-year advising and mentoring plan, the ability to identify which students may not be connected to programs and opportunities will prove important to ensure they do not fall through the cracks. A new Enterprise Information System (which is being reviewed) will simultaneously allow staff and faculty to more intentionally connect with and support students in individualized ways and prepare the College as well as each individual Ole for future success.

## Appendix E

# St. Olaf Orientation to Academics and Resources (SOAR) Program

### SOAR Program description:

St. Olaf Orientation to Academics and Resources (SOAR) provides an extended orientation for all students in their first year to equip them with the knowledge and tools to be successful at St. Olaf. Students learn key skills like how to utilize campus resources and implement college level reading and study techniques through small group conversation, reflection, and the practice of successful academic habits.

### Current structure:

- Non-credit bearing, students register for the program, and it is “attached” to the First Year Seminar (FYS) or Writing and Rhetoric (WRR) section on students’ transcripts
- Two semesters in length
- Maximum section size of 15 first year students
- Taught by two student peer leaders
- Coordinated by Center for Advising and Academic Support (CAAS)
- Program was first piloted in 2018-19 with 151 St. Olaf athletes, in 2019-20—to 281 students (all athletes, first-generation college students, domestic students of color and students in the lowest quintile of academic preparation), and in 2020-21—to 275 students (all athletes and nine first year writing courses). 2021-22 was the first year that the program was scaled to all first years and transfer students.

### Proposed structure:

#### Model 1:

- Credit bearing, taught by a tenured, tenure track, or long-term visiting faculty member, with support from SOAR peer leaders, in collaboration with Center for Advising and Academic Support (CAAS) Success Coaches (staff members), and other subject matter experts across the college (e.g. the Wellness Center, Piper Center)
- .25 credit each semester, over four semesters (two years in length) – 1.0 total SOAR credit
- Maximum section size of 15 first year students
- Faculty teaching SOAR section to serve as students’ pre-major advisors
- Faculty sign on for a two-year commitment (no sabbatical, leave, or leadership of semester-length IOS programs)
- Curriculum extends the developmental arc to include more opportunities for self-reflection, vocational discernment, academic, experiential, and co-curricular planning
- Faculty incentive: teach 5.5 credits per academic year, instead of the current teaching load of 6 courses, to free up time for advising.
- Faculty led: St. Olaf to hire a new Associate Dean for Advising and Mentoring to create the expanded SOAR curriculum in collaboration with the faculty, to provide professional development and community building opportunities for faculty around advising and mentoring, to develop new advising assessment and feedback tools, to consider how to elevate advising in faculty tenure and promotion processes, and to propose the new SOAR model (created collaboratively by the faculty) to the curriculum committee and to the full faculty for a vote. Associate Dean for Advising and Mentoring is to collaborate with and coordinate work with the Advising staff housed in the Center for Advising and Academic Support (CAAS). The Associate Dean will also coordinate efforts with the First Year Experience (FYE) Committee, composed of Director of First Year Seminar, Director of the Writing Program, Registrar, CAAS and Orientation staff, etc.)

#### Model 2:

- Non-credit bearing, taught by Center for Advising and Academic Support (CAAS) Success Coaches (staff members), with support from SOAR peer leaders
- Students would continue to register for the program, and it is “attached” to the First Year Seminar (FYS) or Writing and Rhetoric (WRR) section on students’ transcripts
- One year in length
- Maximum section size of 15 first year students
- Faculty teaching one of the students’ first semester courses serve as students’ pre-major advisor
- Faculty sign on for a two-year pre-major advising commitment (no sabbatical, leave, or leadership of semester-length IOS programs) to take on additional advising load.
- Faculty incentive: Faculty are provided a stipend of up to \$4000 (first year) and \$2000 (second year) to take on the additional 15-19 advisees. Faculty may also elect to teach a Directed Undergraduate Research (DUR) course instead of the stipend.
- St. Olaf to hire a new Associate Dean for Advising and Mentoring to advance advising and mentoring efforts among the faculty (e.g. professional development, community building, evaluation and assessment, consideration of weighting in tenure and promotion, etc.). The Associate Dean will also collaborate with and coordinate work with the Advising staff housed in the Center for Advising and Academic Support, and coordinate efforts with the First Year Experience (FYE) Committee, composed of Director of First Year Seminar, Director of the Writing Program, Registrar, CAAS and Orientation staff, etc.)

