

# Connect For Success Scholars (CFSS) Program Guide and Information 2023-24

**CONNECT  
FOR SUCCESS  
SCHOLARS**



A program dedicated to supporting  
BIPOC, First Gen and Low-Income  
students.

# The College Mission

Approved by the St. Olaf College Board of Regents, May 2016

St. Olaf College challenges students to excel in the liberal arts, examine faith and values, and explore meaningful vocation in an inclusive, globally engaged community nourished by Lutheran tradition.

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## Taylor Center Mission

The Glenn and Myretta Taylor Center for Equity and Inclusion aims to foster an inclusive environment across the intersections of race and identity that students bring to St. Olaf College.



THE TAYLOR CENTER  
FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION

# Welcome Messages

## Greetings from Dr. Hassel Morrison:

The William Etnyre and Michael Lonesome Etnyre Vice President for Student Life

### Dear Connect For Success Scholars:

On behalf of St. Olaf College, it is my distinct pleasure to welcome each and every one of you to our vibrant campus community. As we embark on this new academic journey together, I want to extend a particularly warm and heartfelt welcome. Your presence enriches the diverse tapestry of our institution, and we are truly honored that you have chosen to be a part of our community.

Starting college is a significant milestone, one that is marked by excitement, curiosity, and maybe a few butterflies in your stomach. We understand that this journey might come with its own set of challenges and uncertainties. But let me assure you, you are not alone. Our college is committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment where every individual's unique experiences and perspectives are valued. We are dedicated to creating spaces where diverse voices are not only heard but embraced. You are scholars, thinkers, creators, and leaders. Your stories are unique, and they are a source of inspiration for us all.

As you step onto this campus, take a moment to breathe in the promise of what lies ahead. Embrace the opportunities for growth, the friendships waiting to be forged, and the knowledge that will expand your horizons. I encourage you to engage with one another, to listen and learn from each other's stories, and to work together to create a campus environment that is truly inclusive, respectful, and empowering.



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# Dr. Hassel Morrison Greetings Cont.

The William Etnyre and Michael Lonesome Etnyre Vice President for Student Life

Let us embark on this journey with open hearts, open minds, and a shared commitment to making the most of every moment. Welcome to St. Olaf College, where each of you plays an integral role in shaping our collective future.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Hassel Morrison

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## Greetings from Mr. Martin Olague:

The Director of The Glenn and Myretta Taylor Center for Equity and Inclusion

### Dear Connect For Success Scholars:

Welcome all to the Connect for Success Scholars program. Working in higher education for over 14 years, I have witnessed first hand the power of upper class students guiding first years to success. Peer mentorship is used across campuses all across the nation as a way to help students feel welcomed and connect with resources which can be helpful to them. This is the goal of Connect for Success Scholars.

We hope you have a good experience with Connect for Success, and your partnership with your mentor guides you to a successful first year. Also remember to use the Taylor Center as a resource. We are here for you and our staff, and space is open to you. Many students use our area everyday and we hope to see you there as well.



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# Mr. Martin Olague Greetings Cont.

The Director of The Glenn and Myretta Taylor Center for Equity and Inclusion

Thank you for your participation and we wish you much success this school year.

Sincerely,  
Martin Olague

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Welcome to St. Olaf College from the  
entire staff team in the Division of  
Student Life!

For more information about Student Life at St. Olaf visit [Here](#) or  
<https://wp.stolaf.edu/current-students/student-life/>



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# About The Connect For Success Scholars Program

The Connect For Success Scholars (CFSS) peer-mentorship program is a new initiative which has as its main goal to support first year students, especially students who self-identify as BIPOC, First-Gen, or Low-income, during their first year at St. Olaf College. The CFSS peer-mentorship program through its features and activities aims to build upon the positive heritage and tradition of peer-mentoring which past peer-mentorship programs created to support BIPOC and First Gen students at St. Olaf - *Heritage Scholars and Connect for Success* have achieved.

## About Mentorship

The research tells us that mentorship makes a world of difference in the lives of BIPOC, First Gen and other underrepresented individuals, academic, and career trajectory. Furthermore peer-mentorship, whether formal or informal, makes a difference in helping students navigate their environment especially at Predominantly White Institutions (PWI).

Here at St. Olaf College many BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) and/or First Generation (students of parents who didn't graduate with a 4-year degree) students have reported having a mentor was helpful in finding a sense of belonging on campus. Navigating community life can bring its own twists and turns. The CFSS Peer-mentorship program will *walk alongside* our students as they navigate the first year at St. Olaf College and help them accomplish their goals.



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## Weekly/Biweekly Connections

This year-long program September 14, 2023 - May 16, 2024 is a positive and enriching experience that pairs each freshman participant with an upper-class student with a similar self-identity or interest who together engages in a peer-mentoring experience with regular weekly/biweekly connection points guided by agreed upon goals which the peer-mentor and peer-mentee have confirmed. This year's long peer-mentorship journey is supported by the professional staff at the Taylor Center for Equity and Inclusion.

## Positive Psychology

This year-long peer-mentorship experience is undergirded by a program of activities and engagements aimed to support the program participants in their goals and aspirations during their time here on *The Hill*. Thanks to the partnership with the Piper Center for Vocation and Career, every program peer-mentor and peer-mentee will be able to take the StrengthsFinder test and have the opportunity to attend a workshop on Strengths tentatively scheduled for Sept 28, 2023 during community hour.

StrengthsFinder is a positive psychology tool which program participants can add to their toolbox as they continue to design, create and build their self-authorship journey at St. Olaf College as individuals and as scholars.

## Belonging and Community

CFSS will support program participants in - connect them with other Ole including faculty and staff who identify as BIPOC, First Gen and Low-income to make meaningful bonds and build future networks.

## Monthly Events and Off-campus Excursions

This year will see two financial literacy workshops to support students' financial planning for their future. In addition to this in partnership with other campus offices participants will have the chance to engage in cultural events both on and off campus as well as the opportunity to engage in a wellness event to support their holistic goals.

## Individual Student Support

At its core our peer-mentees are at the center of the Connect For Success Scholars program. Every mentee is valuable for the overall success of the program. We are committed to supporting the individual needs and striving of our students centrally undergeared with the ray of programs, activities and services by the Taylor Center for Equity and Inclusion and our campus partners for our St. Olaf Community.

For more information about First Gen Student, BIPOC and Low-income students resource please visit:

| [Here](#) |

| <https://wp.stolaf.edu/firstgen/> |

| [Here](#) |

| <https://wp.stolaf.edu/smithcenter/equity-resources/low-income-and-first-gen/> |

| [Here](#) |

| <https://firstgen.naspa.org/why-first-gen/students/are-you-a-first-generation-student> |

| [HERE](#) |

| <https://wp.stolaf.edu/taylorcenter/multicultural/> |



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## 2023-2024 CFSS Peer Mentors

The Connect For Success Scholars peer-mentorship program includes a strong leadership component for upper class students, many of whom have been a mentee in the past and nearly half of the 2023-2024 cohort are returning for their second or third year as a peer-mentor in the program. Peer-mentors are at the heart of the program and are the face of the program. Below are the peer-mentors for the 2023-2024 academic year.

Name	Email	Class Year
Zuri Venegas-Garcia	venega1@stolaf.edu	'24
Aya Alsadig	elawad1@stolaf.edu	'26
Ashley Cardenas	carden4@stolaf.edu	'25
Evelyn Salgado	salgad4@stolaf.edu	'26
Mazen Nour	nour1@stolaf.edu	'24
Natalie Gonzalez	gonzal44@stolaf.edu	'26
Gissel Inamagua	inamag1@stolaf.edu	'25
Carlos Erives	erives1@stolaf.edu	'24
Zumritmo Zarifko	zarifk1@stolaf.edu	'26
Angelica Peña	pena3@stolaf.edu	'24
Hiba Samad	samad1@stolaf.edu	'25
Jacky Tapia	tapiag11@stolaf.edu	'24

**CFSS Program Contacts**  
Jacky Tapia|**Intern for FYP**| tapiag1|

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Damian Waite|**Taylor Center**|waite1  
|929-350-4581 (c)|507-786-3487(o)|

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**Taylor Center Office Staff**  
**|taylorcenter@stolaf.edu | 507-786-3060|**

Martin Olague| **Director:Taylor Center**|Olague1  
|507-786-3727(o)|

Norma Charlton|**Taylor Center**|charlt1  
|507-786-3462(o)|

Brisa Zubia|**Taylor Center**|bzubia  
|507-786-3267(o)|

Caitlin Lamont|**Taylor Center**|lamont3  
|507-786-3060(o)|



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## Program Expectations for All Participants

All participants in the CFSS are expected to take the program seriously in order to maximize the full potential of each participating student. The following principles are expected of all participants in order for a successful program year:

- Make time to **CONNECT** as a mentor-mentee peer.
- **COMMUNICATE** with each other as best as possible.
- Create your peer-mentoring **GOAL/S**. What do you want out of the mentoring relationship?
- Be **PATIENT** and **OPEN** with each other.
- **ENJOY** the experience of peer-mentoring and connecting with others in your first year of St. Olaf College.

# Introducing: **THE CHALLENGE**

A series of campus activities and opportunities

## **THE CHALLENGE:**

### **SEASON 1**

**Adventure - September 14,  
2023 - May 16, 2024**



#### **Mentee/Mentor Individual Plan Details:**

The Connect for Success Scholars **The Challenge: Season 1** helps peer mentees participating in the Connect for Success Scholars program focus their connection and discovery experience at St. Olaf College by exploring a ray of activities that can help in their early success at the College. Complete at least 10 meaningful activities over eight weeks anytime during the academic year. Upon completion of **The Challenge** the Connect for Success Scholars mentee will receive a **\$50 gift card of their choice!**

#### **2023-2024 School Requirements:**

##### **Week 1-8 Challenges (challenges with **S** denotes must be completed):**

- Attend the *Co-Curricular Fair (Sep. 15, 4-6 PM)* with your mentor or friends and learn about opportunities for co-curricular activities **S**
- Meet at least four times with your CFSS Mentor over eight weeks (at least 7 times by the end of Semester I classes) **S**
- Attend two (2) Taylor Center activities during the first five weeks of the semester and one (1) college event by week eight.
- Schedule a 20 minute meeting with a professor to learn about an academic area of interest/curiosity **S**
- Attend one of your community council meetings to learn about the role of the council in your residence hall



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## More **THE CHALLENGE** ACTIVITY CONT.

- Spend time in a mindfulness painting activity and create something of your imagination.
- Introduce yourself to the next door neighbors in your residence hall, along with your RA. Then get a signature from your RA. **S**
- Attend a St. Olaf sports event on campus (check [schedule](#) here!)
- Introduce yourself to a campus custodian or say hello to a college staff member.
- Go off campus in the city of Northfield and learn about the community and visit Northfield Library
- Create a study/homework routine with the aid of Academic Success Center or peer mentor **S**
- Attend at least one student organization event/meeting
  
- Get at least 7 hours of sleep twice every week for 4 weeks.
  
- Select two activities that are not listed above that you participated in that have been meaningful to you in your experience at St. Olaf.

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To participate in **The Challenge** which is optional but strongly encouraged - Peer-mentee can find the complete set of activities [GO HERE](#) to see all the requirements. A \$50 gift card will be given to each mentee at the completion of **The Challenge** activities.

Best of Luck on this **The Challenge** Adventure!



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# Introducing StrengthsFinder

## **Creating your Own St. Olaf Journey by utilizing Your Strengths**

Our diverse community of students is filled with talent and greatness. Each one of them has their own unique talents and gifts which they bring with them everyday and can impact their experiences and their time as a student at St. Olaf College.

The Clifton strengthsFinder test is a positive psychology tool that can help support both the student- scholar and the student- leader.

BIPOC and First Gen and Low-income self-identified students can utilize this test to support their individual self-awareness and play to their strengths in all spheres of the endeavors

All participants will be sent a link to take the test following the Kick-off event on September 14, 2023.



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# Strengthsfinder 34 Strengths

## STRATEGIC THINKING

**Analytical**

**Ideation**

**Learner**

**Context**

**Input**

**Strategic**

**Futuristic**

**Intellection**

## RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

**Adaptability**

**Empathy**

**Individualizatio**

**Connectedness**

**Harmony**

**n**

**Developer**

**Includer**

**Positivity**

**Relator**



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## INFLUENCING

**Activator**

**Competition**

**Significance**

**Command**

**Maximizer**

**Woo**

**Communication**

**Self-Assurance**

## EXECUTING

**Achiever**

**Consistency**

**Focus**

**Arranger**

**Deliberative**

**Responsibility**

**Belief**

**Discipline**

**Restorative**

For more information on Clifton  
Strengthsfinder please visit [Here](#):

Or

(<https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/252137/home>)



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# Peer-mentors Weekly/Biweekly Connection

## One on one/small groups

Peer-mentors in the CFSS program are expected to regularly meet and connect with all four of their peer-mentees by utilizing a routine schedule that is agreed upon by both mentor and mentee. It is recommended that peer mentors take the first couple of weeks to meet both individually with each mentee and as well as all together for the purpose of goal setting and getting to know each other in the beginning stages of the program.

## Mentoring Goals

Peer-mentors need to spend one on one time with each mentor as a regular part of peer mentorship. This can be accomplished utilizing a biweekly model which can also allow for group activities on alternative weeks. While there is no set prescription for the peer-mentoring experience of individual peer-mentor/mentee pairings, each peer-mentor will spend time engaging with their mentees in a What do you want out of the mentoring relationship session which is part of the agreed upon goal between mentor and mentee.

## Peer-mentors are Expected to:

- Communicate with their mentees regularly in order to establish a solid relationship
- Engage in a conversation with the mentee about what they want from the mentoring relationship.
- Create a regular routine for mentorship with the mentee that include providing opportunities for them to learn about campus offices and programs that are helpful to students at St. Olaf.
- Check-in with mentees about how things are going for them academically and overall. Mentors can help to connect mentees to campus resources if the mentee might be able to utilize the campus resources for their own development at St. Olaf. The Taylor Center-Staff is a vital resource for mentees if they need any support.
- Peer-mentors are responsible to report any concerns about their mentee- that might be harmful to them immediately to the Taylor Center or College staff of faculty.
- Set healthy boundaries with their mentees as a best practice for personal wellbeing.

Best for a worthwhile mentoring journey!



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## Some Topical Issues for Peer Mentors and Mentees During the Academic Year

- Connecting and introduction to St. Olaf /Northfield/Campus Life
- Resources for creating a study schedule
- Studying for a test and study skills
- Life in the Residence Hall
- Campus resources for wellness and community
- Navigation Campus as a First Gen/BIPOC/Low income student
- Time management
- Loneliness, isolation and making new friends. Campus resources available to students.
- Minnesota weather and activities to do for fun
- Navigating test and studying for exams

This is not an exhaustive list



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## Introducing Financial literacy Workshop for College Students

A new program feature this academic year is a financial literacy workshop (part I and II) for college students. The goal of this workshop is to provide students with practical tools and information to support their wealth creation and budgeting aspirations.

Through this workshop we hope to engage students with practical tools and information focused on the questions below which we hope will provide students with support and information as they begin their college careers here on The Hill. Planning for a secure financial future begins now!

- What are your financial goals?
- How do you build credit?
- How to manage a budget?
- How to save to create wealth?

Workshop Part I- Week of Nov 6th, 2023

Workshop Part II- Week of Jan 8th, 2024



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## Calendar of Events:

Program calendar to be sent via email following the Kick-off Celebration today!

**Event:** Strengthsfinder

**Office:** The Piper Center for Vocation and Career

**Who:** Peer mentees

**What:** Take the test and come to the event

**When:** Sept 29, 2023 @ 4:00 - 05: 00 PM

**Where:** BC Valhalla

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Please Connect with your Peer Mentor if you have questions about the CFSS Program or Damian Waite @ waite1@stolaf.edu

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