

The Oberlin College Strategic Plan 2016-2021:
*Institutional transformation through an inclusive approach to
academic and musical excellence*

All Strategic Recommendations

Direction 1: Foster academic and musical excellence in an equitable and inclusive educational environment

Connected learning and integration

Strategic recommendation 1.1: Adopt a framework of connected learning that integrates all aspects of an Oberlin education.

1.1a: Deepen educational collaboration among the Arts and Sciences, Conservatory, Allen Memorial Art Museum, and the Libraries.

1.1b: Develop theme-based course clusters, with several courses offered simultaneously by faculty in different fields that encourage integration of learning across disciplines.

Advising and Oberlin 4+4

Strategic recommendation 1.2: Create individually tailored, equitable systems of guidance and support that help students build personally meaningful pathways through the curriculum—from first-year seminars to culminating experiences—along with mentoring, advising, and coaching that help students connect their academic, artistic, personal, social, and professional development at Oberlin and beyond.

1.2a: Connect students and young alumni to professional pathways by developing and investing in **Oberlin 4+4**: a new model for integrating academic and applied learning experiences with multiple on-campus resources and Oberlin’s alumni network.

1.2b: Further develop Oberlin’s programs in entrepreneurship (Creativity and Leadership/LaunchU) by cultivating relationships with faculty, staff, alumni, and outside experts to help students create and develop their entrepreneurial ideas.

1.2c: Create opportunities for students to master the latest technological advances as part of their education and their transition to a post-Oberlin life.

The learning environment

Strategic recommendation 1.3: Ensure an inclusive and equitable learning environment.

1.3a: Implement new strategies to help Oberlin succeed in hiring and retaining an outstanding faculty and staff from a broad range of racial, ethnic, gender identity/identities, sexuality/orientation, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

1.3b: Enroll and retain students from a broad range of racial, ethnic, gender identity/identities, sexuality/orientation, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Increase the number of students from historically underrepresented communities in the United States and the number of students from lower-income families.

1.3c: Enroll and retain international students from a broad range of countries and cultures, and focus on addressing their distinctive needs.

Teaching and support for all students

Strategic recommendation 1.4: Facilitate teaching and support for all students

1.4a: Support faculty development of inclusive pedagogies, so all students can succeed, by offering regular pedagogy workshops for faculty across the disciplines.

1.4b: Offer regular workshops for administrative and professional staff members to develop their capacity to advise and mentor students from all backgrounds.

1.4c: Address structural barriers that inhibit student success, and further develop and create institutional structures that enable each person to succeed to their fullest potential.

Support for faculty and staff

Strategic recommendation 1.5: Support faculty and staff

1.5a: Seek new ways to encourage and support faculty to develop as scholars, musicians, and artists throughout their Oberlin careers.

1.5b: Support professional development of faculty and staff members to deepen their abilities as effective, engaging, and innovative teachers, advisors, and mentors.

1.5c: Provide faculty and staff with innovative technology and training commensurate with their pedagogical and/or professional goals and explore ways that technology can help overcome geographic hurdles.

Engagement with the world

Strategic Recommendation 1.6: Prepare students to connect effectively to their global environment by enhancing opportunities to study and engage with languages and cultures through coursework, study abroad, international co-curricular opportunities, and interacting with Oberlin’s international students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

Direction 2: Develop the residential experience to ensure that it serves as an intellectual and artistic incubator for educational excellence

Active Engagement

Strategic recommendation 2.1: Enrich Oberlin as a residential community of learning by expanding support for students, faculty, and staff that helps everyone develop the understanding and skills essential for interacting effectively across lines of racial, ethnic, and cultural difference.

Strategic recommendation 2.2: Address the needs of students from historically underrepresented communities, those who are the first in their families to attend college, and those who are lower income.

Strategic recommendation 2.3: Develop new and enhance existing programs and services to support mental, emotional, and physical health and wellness, including athletics and physical education and support for students with disabilities.

Oberlin’s location, shared resources, and civic engagement

Strategic recommendation 2.4: Further develop opportunities for students to be involved in civic engagement in Oberlin, Lorain County, and greater northeast Ohio.

Strategic recommendation 2.5: Continue and deepen our connections with the larger community. This comprises both our support of the Oberlin public schools and our embrace of the Oberlin Project as a vehicle for community education, artistic access, environmental sustainability, and economic development.

Direction 3: Define and set in motion the necessary steps to achieve sustainability—educational, financial, and environmental

Our enrollment

Strategic recommendation 3.1: Slow the rate of annual increases in student charges—tuition, fees, room, and board. Continue and intensify efforts to increase our resources for financial aid and other forms of student financial support.

Our endowment

Strategic recommendation 3.2: Continue efforts to build the endowment through philanthropic gifts, sustainable levels of spending, and top-quartile long-term returns. Slow the rate of annual endowment draw, including withdrawals for all purposes—operations (unrestricted and restricted), capital spending (including debt service), and other expenditures—to ensure long-term financial sustainability and growth.

Our people

Strategic recommendation 3.3: Maintain commitments to achieve competitive faculty compensation.

Strategic recommendation 3.4: Create new and diverse pathways for judicious stewardship of the institution by alumni and also by faculty, staff, students, and parents. Engage all members of the wider Oberlin community in stewardship of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Conservatory of Music.

Our governance

Strategic recommendation 3.5: Streamline all of our systems of governance so that they can act more quickly and effectively in addressing the rapidly changing environment of higher education, while still delivering thoughtful and transparent decisions backed by broad consensus among all stakeholders.

Our campus

Strategic recommendation 3.6: Review campus educational, residential, and other spaces and assets necessary to support our entire educational enterprise, especially all aspects of connected learning.

Strategic recommendation 3.7: Fund institutional priorities by generating new revenue streams and by analyzing current operational and capital expenditures, determining appropriate tradeoffs, and reallocating resources accordingly. Redesign policies, practices, and processes to achieve greater efficiencies and synergies in operations.

Strategic recommendation 3.8: Use the campus year-round, offering programs and facilities that will enhance both the reputation and revenue of the Arts and Sciences and Conservatory. Direct resources to this effort and leverage our investments in improved and new facilities and physical assets.

Strategic recommendation 3.9: Reaffirm and take tangible action toward meeting Oberlin's commitment to environmental sustainability. This includes creating an actionable and financially feasible plan for achieving Oberlin's commitment to carbon neutrality by 2025.

Strategic recommendation 3.10: As part of analyzing expenditures and operations, pay particular attention to technology and opportunities it may provide to improve our educational and administrative processes.