OFFICE OF MINORITY STUDENT AFFAIRS

Annual Report
2019-2020

ILLINOIS
Office of Minority Student Affairs
STUDENT AFFAIRS

Mission Statement

The Office of Minority Student Affairs' (OMSA) mission is to provide exceptional support services that enhance the academic achievement, personal development, and graduation rates of first generation, low-income, and historically underrepresented students at Illinois.

OMSA's vision is to become the campus leader and national trailblazer in transforming the lives of first generation, low-income, and historically underrepresented students.

Executive Summary

The 2019-2020 academic year was another successful year for the Office of Minority Student Affairs. The OMSA continued to expand its efforts serving students at the University of Illinois and throughout Central Illinois through our precollege TRIO programs. This has been a year of increased collaboration, outreach, and student support. Although the Spring 2020 semester brought unforeseen challenges, the OMSA quickly rallied to meet them by ensuring all its academic support services were available the day classes resumed remotely.

FY 20 also saw the return of the OMSA to full staffing. Several new colleagues joined our ranks including three additional Student Success Advisors, Danette Griffith (A&M), Clare Pratt (TRIO SSS), and Haro Wade (A&M); a new Academic Outreach Advisor, Brian Becker (A&M); two Office Support Specialists, Hannah Mattingly and Katy Pyer; and an Office Support Associate, Jennifer Jenkins. The Business Office also added a new Office Manager, Denise Davis, to take over from Angela Clark Terrall who earned a promotion to become our Business Administrative Associate. While this return to full staffing comes with budgetary and space challenges, it has better positioned the OMSA to carry out its mission to provide exceptional support services and has positioned the department to reach new heights of excellence in service delivery and student support.

Accomplishments
Once again, the OMSA has reached a new high watermark in services provided. Below please find an overview of the OMSA's FY 20 achievements:

- The OMSA participated in multiple new collaborations with direct benefits to students including the iClicker Loan Program, a new email series with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, and a more robust National First Generation Student Day celebration.
- **1,119 unique students** had individual interactions with an OMSA Mentor, an increase of 16.4% over the 2018-2019 academic year.
- The OMSA Tutoring & Academic Services **provided 4,427 individual visits totaling 6,352 hours in tutoring services**. While unique students, visits, and hours slightly decreased over the entire year, FY20 tutoring numbers far outpaced FY19 prior to the switch to digital instruction.

- **100% graduation rate** of TRIO Talent Search High School Seniors, an increase from 93% last academic year.
- The OMSA successfully stewarded **$1,445,951 of federal TRIO funding** in FY 20, up 7.47% over FY 19
- The OMSA earned **$115,676 in revenue** for the campus from the indirect cost of stewarding the TRIO grants; up 7.47% over FY 19
- The TRIO Talent Search program secured **$39,983 in new federal dollars** for a supplemental STEM program in FY20.
- The OMSA continued to expand and implement technology to make our services more accessible and more efficient for staff to use, including our new StudentLingo and TutorLingo online workshop platforms.

While this year will certainly be remembered for the devastation wrought by COVID-19, it should also be recalled for the unprecedented lengths that the OMSA went through to provide high quality support services to our students at both the precollege and collegiate levels.

Challenges
Space and funding shortages continue to be the OMSA's greatest challenges. Since FY14, the OMSA has sustained a 9% reduction in its state allocation—roughly $95,000.00. In the past, the OMSA leveraged resources from vacant positions to bridge this funding gap. Increasing demand for OMSA services and incremental growth among the OMSA's eligible student population required the OMSA rebuild its workforce. As a result, there is no salary savings to offset the ongoing shortfall in state funding.

In addition to the state funding shortage, the new state minimum wage requirements will exceed the OMSA's resources. To maintain current staffing levels, the OMSA will require approximately $154,334 between FY20 and FY26. To grow our efforts to meet our students expanding demand we will need additional $247,500 dollars. Additional details are provided in the expanded Challenges section in the body of this report and the appendices.

The OMSA's Strategic Goals
In FY 21, the OMSA will hold its course and continue focusing on the strategic goals and organizational priorities that support its mission, vision, and the campus' 2018-2023 Strategic Plan. Find them articulated below:

1. Provide exceptional academic mentoring, advocacy, and support services for first generation, low-income, and historically underrepresented undergraduate students that bolsters their success and eases their adjustment to the rigor of college;

2. Support the recruitment and yielding activities for first-generation, low-income, and historically underrepresented students at Illinois (i.e., African American, Latinx, Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Island students);

3. Collaborate with colleagues in Academic and Student Affairs to create safe and welcoming environments that encourage academic success, personal growth, collegiate persistence, and graduation.

Metrics for the OMSA's Strategic Goals
1. Retention rates
2. Graduation rates
3. Learning outcomes
4. Student satisfaction

Organizational Priority
We will continue enhancing our organizational culture by operationalizing the following principles: **S.O.A.R.**—"**Excellence in Service, Organizational wellness, Assessment and Results**". Metrics for this priority include student satisfaction assessment, learning outcomes assessment, employee satisfaction assessments, and evidence of student success as defined by the metrics for goal number one above.

Accomplishments and Challenges

FY 20 was most remarkable. Even during this time of uncertainty, the Office of Minority Student Affairs highly successful in meeting our strategic goals, organizational priorities, and contributing to the campus' strategic plan, despite the challenges we faced.

Accomplishments
Goal 1: Foster collaboration, discovery, and innovation (this goal correlates to OMSA's 2nd and 3rd strategic goals).

Selected examples of campus and system collaborations:
- The OMSA participated in (or was scheduled to participate in) dozens of recruitment, yielding, and outreach activities. Events include, but are not limited to, Summer Registration, Grainger College of Engineering's ARISE Program, Inbound, Salute to Illinois Scholars, Salute to Academic Achievement, the Chicago Public Schools COMPACT Initiative, and numerous middle and high school visits.
- One of our most exiting new partnerships is with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. Through the OUA, we emailed all new accepted/admitted students once a month, beginning in February and continuing through to their arrival on campus. In the first year of this program, many more students attended the OMSA Fall Welcome Reception, with many students recognizing Director Cobb by name due to these emails. We are excited to continue this partnership.
- Collaborated with Illinois Student Government to restructure the iClicker Program (e.g., communication, application, pickup etc.) and established an iClicker donation campaign. This year we facilitated the distribution and tracking of over 320 iClickers, primarily loaned to I-Promise and OMSA SSS students that

demonstrated a substantial need. The Illinois Student Government recently appropriated more money to expand this program next year.

- Collaborated with Divisional and Campus partners on dozens of fairs, tabling, workshops, and events including, but not limited to, the JCPenney & Career Center's Fall Suit Up Program, McKinley Health Center's Special Populations Board and activities, the OIIR lunch series, and the Residential Life Advisor's Academy.
- Collaborated with the OMSA TRIO precollege programs to host a day of events celebrating National First-Generation Day. Through this partnership, we were able to expand the program to include an interactive experience for TRIO Talent Search and Upward Bound students. These students interacted with First Generation college students to learn of their experiences and gain an understanding of the challenges and unique opportunities associated with First Generation status.

Selected examples of academic collaborations:
- The OMSA's Advising & Mentoring and Tutoring & Academic Services units continued to partner with the colleges of AHS, ACES, BUS, EDU, ENG, FAA, LAS, MEDIA, SSW, and the Division of General Students (DGS) to provide advising, mentoring, and tutoring to vulnerable first-time, co-eds.
- The OMSA Tutoring & Academic Services collaborated with CARE in Engineering, the Chemistry Learning Center, and the Writers Workshop to represent campus tutoring at the DGS Majors and Minors Fair.
- The OMSA collaborated with the Campus Honors Program again this spring to host its fifth annual recruitment luncheon for talented, underrepresented, second-semester freshmen.
- The OMSA's Tutoring & Academic Services unit continued to coordinate activities for the campus-tutoring network, the Illinois Learning Support Professionals.
- The OMSA also worked with several external retention agencies to serve Illinois students. These organizations include the Chicago Public Schools, Noble Network of Charter Schools, Evanston Scholars, One Goal, Chicago Scholars, College Possible, The 7th University LLC Educational Consultant Group, and the Institute of Young Minds.

Selected examples of student affairs collaborations:
- The OMSA Excellence Awards—awarded annually to four graduating students who exemplified excellence in academics, leadership, and community service. Each year the OMSA collaborates with La Casa and the Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center to present these awards at their respective congratulatory ceremonies.
- R.I.S.E. (Readying Illinois Students for Excellence)—a pre-enrollment, residential first year experience for 1st generation and underrepresented students

cosponsored by with Office of the Dean of Students, New Student Programs, Office for Inclusion and Intergroup Relations, Provost, the OMSA, etc.

- The Black & Latino Male and Female Summits—a program designed to explore the intersections of race and gender cosponsored by Office of Inclusion and Intergroup Relations, Bruce Nesbitt African American Cultural Center, La Casa, Office of the Dean of Students, the OMSA, etc.
- D.I.N.E (Diversity Inclusion Network Exchange)— a career development activity focused on inclusion and diversity cosponsored by the Career Services Network, the OMSA, University Housing, Office of Inclusion and Intergroup Relations

Goal 2: Provide transformative learning experiences (this goal correlates to the OMSA's 1st and 3rd strategic goals)

Providing transformative learning experiences is central to the OMSA's mission and was a major area of success this year. This year, and particularly this fall before the transition to digital services, the OMSA continued our trend of increasing the reach of our support services through increases in mentoring, tutoring, workshops, and outreach at both the precollege and collegiate levels.

This year, our TRIO programs have been successful in accomplishing their objectives outlined in their grants. Highlights include meeting targets in recruitment, program participation, and graduation rates.

Finally, our Mom's Day Scholastic Achievement Ceremony highlights just how successful the OMSA's students have been at achieving academic excellence. This year, 3,939 students were eligible for recognition, having earned a 3.67 or higher during the spring or fall 2019 semesters. Among these students, 1,079 students earned high honors, having earned a 4.00. Please refer to the Assessment section for more details on our transformative learning experiences.

Goal 3: Make a significant visible societal and community impact

The OMSA is deeply engaged in community outreach and the delivery of educational services to local youth. The OMSA's effort in providing the TRIO precollege programs for nearly 600 Champaign County youth has required continuous collaboration with local and regional school districts, city governments, park districts, churches, and community centers for more than five decades. We are proud of the service we provide the youth of this community and honored to contribute to the land grant mission through our legacy of service in this area. Please refer to the Assessment section for more details on our visible societal and community impact.

Goal 4: Steward current resources and generate additional resources for strategic initiative.

The OMSA continues to exercise sound fiscal judgment and to operate in the black.
- The OMSA successfully stewarded $1,445,951 (up 7.47% from FY 19) in federal grant funding.

- The OMSA earned the campus $115,676 or 8% of the total federal grant dollars award in FY 20. This represents a 7.47% increase over last year.
- The OMSA has been successful in garnering financial support from alumni and community members. Developing these relationships and our ability to continue to provide direct scholarships to our students remains a priority.

The OMSA has also been successful in maximizing existing resources and making strategic investments to improve the efficiency of many of our services. This includes the addition of an online scheduling system, improving systems to track and log interactions with students, providing access to online workshops, and an overhaul to many internal Human Resources and Business Office processes. These partnerships and updates to practice have allowed for more time to be spent directly working with and for students.

Challenges

Space and funding shortages continue to be the OMSA's greatest challenges. Since FY14, the OMSA has sustained a 9% reduction in its state allocation—roughly $95,000.00. In the past, the OMSA leveraged resources from vacant positions to bridge this funding gap. Increasing demand for OMSA services and incremental growth among the OMSA's eligible student population required the OMSA rebuild its workforce. As a result, there is no salary savings to offset the ongoing shortfall in state funding.

In addition to the state funding shortage, the new state minimum wage requirements will exceed the OMSA's resources. To maintain current staffing levels, the OMSA will require approximately $154,334 between FY20 and FY26. (See Chart 1 for details).

Chart 1: Cost to maintain current services with new minimum wage rates.

Employees	# of employees x # of hrs worked x # of wks worked	Year and Rate(s) of Pay								Totals
		The Base Rate reflects the FY19 fiscal budget with the minimum wage at 8.25 per hour.								
		FY19 $8.25 fa $8.25 sp	FY20 $8.25 fa $9.25 sp	FY21 $10 fa $11 sp	FY22 $11 fa $12 sp	FY23 $12 fa $13 sp	FY24 $13 fa $14 sp	FY25 $14 fa $15 sp	FY26 $15 fa $15 sp	
Undergraduate receptionists	3 staff x 11 hrs x 30wks	$8168 (Base Rate*)	Base + $462	Base + $2195	Base + $3185	Base + $4175	Base + $5165	Base + $6155	Base + $6683	$28,019.00 above the base.
		FY19 $8.25 fa $8.25 sp	FY20 $8.25 fa $9.25 sp	FY21 $10 fa $11 sp	FY22 $11 fa $12 sp	FY23 $12 fa $13 sp	FY24 $13 fa $14 sp	FY25 $14 fa $15 sp	FY26 $15 fa $15 sp	
Undergraduate tutors	65 staff x 3.731 hrs x 30 wks	$72,750 (Base Rate*)	Base + $0	Base + $3438	Base + $10,713	Base + $17,988	Base + $25,263	Base + $32,538	Base + $36,375	$126,315.00 above the base
Annual Total Increase			**$462**	**$5633**	**$13,898**	**$22,163**	**$30,428**	**$38,693**	**$43,057**	
								Grand Total		**$154,334.00**

The OMSA is lean. We have few options to address the projected fiscal shortfall. Without new dollars, the OMSA will enter deficit spending in FY21. By FY22, the OMSA will have to cut core student services (i.e. tutoring, advising, supplemental instruction, and mentoring) by reducing the number of student employees who deliver those critical services. A reduction in the student workforce will have a two-fold impact on OMSA eligible students. First, since we employ a good percentage of OMSA eligible students, they will lose their income. Second, our students will lose access to the advising and academic services that contribute to their persistence. Furthermore, any population growth among OMSA eligible students will exacerbate the negative impact of the aforementioned cuts.

The figures above represent what the OMSA needs to maintain its current level of service. The figures that follow represent what the OMSA needs to meet the demands of our expanding population. In the fall of 2019, 3122 of 7664 new first-time freshmen met at least one of the OMSA's eligibility requirements. Of the 3122 eligible students, 419 qualify for mentoring service elsewhere on campus (e.g., DIA, iLeap, AAP undeclared, Student Support Services, etc.), leaving 2703 students eligible for OMSA services. Given our current staffing and physical space capacities, the OMSA must target students for service according to need. We assign students with three or more eligibility criteria for mentoring first (see appendix A). Currently, the OMSA has the capacity to assign 1230 students to one-on-one mentoring, leaving 1473 new first-time, first-year students without a mentor—our most intensive service. We simply do not have the organizational bandwidth to provide these students with the services we know to be most beneficial to their development and persistence.

Upon closer review of those unassigned students, we discover that nearly 698 of them have two eligibility criteria. Within the cohort of students with two criteria, 396 of them have combinations of eligibility criteria that are strongly associated with lack of persistence (Arminio, Torres, and Pope, 2012; Atherton, 2014; Choy, 2001; McCarron & Inkelas, 2006; see also Appendix C). 186 of the students identify as historically underrepresented and first-generation, 108 identify as first-generation and low-income, and 102 identifying as historically underrepresented with low SAT or ACT scores. Ideally, the OMSA would be able to assign all 698 of those students a mentor. Securing additional resources to serve these 396 students would represent a strengthened commitment to our students we know to be at particular risk. Further, OMSA Advising & Mentoring is a longstanding and integral component in the array of services designed to support underrepresented and underserved populations. A stronger Advising and Mentoring service only reinforces other services offered by the unit and across the Division, leading to real gains in student performance and persistence (see Appendix B). Below please find the additional cost associated with expanding the OMSA's capacity to serve all 698 students with two or more eligibility indicators versus the cost associated with servicing the 396 with the concerning eligibility criteria associated with lowered persistence.

Chart 2: Cost to serve all 698 additional students with one-on-one mentoring:

Employee classification	# of employees	Cost of salary	Cost of equipment	Totals
Academic Professional	5	$48,000x5=$240,000	$1500x5=$7500.00	**$247,500.00**

Please note, the totals above do not include costs for additional office space.

Chart 3: Cost to serve the 396 additional students with one-on-one mentoring:

Employee classification	# of employees	Cost of salary	Cost of equipment	Totals
Academic Professional	3	$48,000x3=$144,000	$1500x3=$4500.00	**$148,500.00**

Please note, the totals above do not include costs for additional office space.

Succinctly, the OMSA has a unique opportunity to make strategic investments in increasing the retention and graduation outcomes for its students. Increased retention and graduation outcomes for historically underrepresented students are aligned with the campus' 2018-2023 Strategic Plan, so despite the nation's dire post-COVID-19 fiscal realities, the OMSA is forwarding a vision for greater equity and excellence for the campus' most academically vulnerable students.

Beyond these challenges, the OMSA is also experiencing a severe space shortage. Due to space constraints at both the Student Service Building (SSB) and the Academic Service Center (ASC), the OMSA currently has full-time APs sharing office space (in the Student Services Building) and 12 employees housed with partners in academic and student affairs. All 12 displaced staff members (i.e., 12 part-time graduate employees) occupy temporary spaces in college offices (i.e., LAS, DGS, ENG, MEDIA, EDU) and two housing facilities (i.e., SDRP and FAR). As guests in those borrowed spaces, the OMSA's staff has no control over facility scheduling, no access to after-hour space for student meetings or programs, and no access to the office outside of standard business hours. Additionally, our displaced staff members have reduced access to OMSA's shared supplies and equipment. Although we are grateful to our partners for taking us in, we recognize this model poses a critical threat to our ability to deliver services and is utterly unsustainable.

Assessment

The OMSA has continued to make great strides in terms of the quality of data collected and analyses conducted to better support the mission of the office. This year, the OMSA expanded our data collection infrastructure to more accurately represent the number of interactions we have with our students, started analyses using archived longitudinal data demonstrating our impact on academic outcomes (see Appendix B), and made progress towards the OMSA Assessment Action Plan.

Continuing to Build an Assessment Infrastructure

Collecting accurate end of semester surveys on perceptions of services has been a struggle for many offices, given the high levels of survey fatigue on campus. This is a

large problem for our programs operating in the Academic Services Center. To remedy this, the OMSA has employed a quick feedback system that gives students the opportunity to answer 3 multiple choice questions as they leave the ASC (tutoring) or via email after their mentor logs their meeting (A&M). This year, we collected 264 A&M and 574 tutoring responses. This represents a 10x-25x increase in the amount of useable data collected, compared to when we last administered full-length end of semester surveys.

In another major assessment advancement, the Advising & Mentoring Management System was put into production. This system, adapted from the former ODOS case management system, allows for more efficient and more accurate logs and more accessible records of the interactions between mentors and mentees. Through this system, more time is spent on student interactions instead of paperwork. TRIO SSS will be adopting an interaction management system based on the AMMS in Fall 2020.

The OMSA Services in 2019-2020

Once again, this year saw the OMSA continue to expand services and increase the quantity and quality of the support we provide to the campus. This section gives a "by the numbers" highlight of just how engaged the OMSA is with our students.

Advising & Mentoring
- 1,119 unique students had individual interactions with an OMSA Mentor, an increase of 16.4% over the 2018-2019 academic year.
- 5,980 interactions were logged across 1,323 total hours. Both logged interactions and total hours of interaction logged increased over the 2018-2019 academic year, 83.5% and 7.6% respectively. This demonstrates the much higher efficacy of tracking interactions with our new system.

Tutoring at the Academic Services Center
- 776 unique students attended tutoring, a decrease of 10.9% over the 2018-2019 academic year.
- 4,427 individual visits totaling 6,352 hours in tutoring services were provided. While unique students, visits, and hours decreased over the entire year, Fall 2019 figures outpaced Fall 2018 numbers. The transition to digital services in the Spring 2020 semester severely limited the number of tutoring interactions.
- We continued to offer matched tutoring, walk-in tutoring, final exam review sessions, Supplemental Instruction, study skills consultations, workshops, and individual study opportunities, in addition to the newly released StudentLingo and TutorLingo platforms. StudentLingo served 496 unique students, across 893 visits and 96.8 hours of online workshops.

TRIO McNair Scholars
- 36 total TRIO McNair Scholars Participants
- Graduating and Continuing Scholars = 27
- New Cohort Enrollees = 9
- December Graduates = 1

- May Graduates = 19
- Students entering Graduate Programs=9
- All 36 McNair scholars participated in research activities at least once during 2019-2020.

TRIO Student Support Services
- 272 total TRIO Student Support Services participants
- 57 scholars graduated (or are scheduled to graduate) in May or August of 2020 with baccalaureate degrees
- 93% persistence rate; 90% good academic standing rate
- 86.6% average graduation rate for the 2009-2014 SSS cohorts
- 561 one-on-one advising sessions; 3,513 total interactions. These increases in interactions come despite being down one SSS Advisor during the Fall 2019 semester.
- Over 843 hours of logged interactions between students and SSS staff.

TRIO Talent Search
- 500 total TRIO Talent Search participants
- 100% graduation rate among TRIO Talent Search High School Seniors, an increase from 93% last academic year.
- 100% of TRIO Talent Search students (6th grade-11 grade) persisted in school, advancing to the next academic grade level
- 78.4% low-income and first-generation college students
- 91.6% traditionally underrepresented minority students

TRIO Upward Bound
- 102 total TRIO Upward Bound participants
- 38 students participated in the 2019 Summer Residential Program
- 20+ college acceptances for 2019 seniors from institutions across the Mid-West, the South, and the East Coast
- Tutoring sessions, student grades, and GPAs have increased 30% over FY 19.

Longitudinal Analyses

As the OMSA continues to make strides in improving our live data collection strategies, we have also turned to archival data to conduct longitudinal analysis. The goal of this effort is to determine the impact of the OMSA's services on 3rd semester persistence, graduation rate, GPA, and other academic success indicators. This February, the OMSA shared initial findings of a study demonstrating a sharp increase in 3rd semester persistence for students who participated in OMSA tutoring. This analysis of 85,569 students from 2008 to 2018 found a 3-percentage point increase in the predicted probability of persistence to the 3rd semester for any students who had attended OMSA tutoring. For some students in our population, this effect was as high as 11 percentage points. Early findings can be found in Appendix B. As more analyses are conducted and refined, we will continue to share our results with our campus partners, students, and

alumni communities to better guide our collective practice and demonstrate the positive influence the OMSA has had and will continue to have at the University of Illinois and beyond.

Assessment Action Plan

The OMSA continues to build on its Assessment Action Plan. Over the past year, all OMSA units further refined their learning outcomes and developed a two-year plan prioritizing assessment initiatives in the coming semesters. This spring, the Research and Assessment Analyst met with each of the Assistant and Associate Directors to review these plans and begin early work on projects for the Fall 2020 semester. With this foundation, the OMSA's assessment efforts are well placed to further improve the services we offer and give new insights into the impact that the OMSA has on our students' academic and personal success.

Diversity

Diversity amongst OMSA Staff

The Office of Minority Student Affairs has an abiding commitment to diversity. The OMSA's staff is among the most diverse on campus. Of our 22 FTE employees in FY 20, 59% were African American/Black, 14% were Latinx, and 27% were White. 64% of those professionals were women and 36% were men. Amongst our hourly, graduate, and undergraduate staff, we employ individuals across a variety of races, genders, and geography (e.g., American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Latinx, African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White, as well as international students, etc.)

Diversity within OMSA Services

The OMSA also leads the campus in providing services for our diverse student body. In FY 20, 100% of the OMSA's programs and services were designed to meet the unique needs of the 13,175 first-generation, low-income, and historically underrepresented or underserved undergraduate students at Illinois.

	Number of Students	Percent of Undergraduates
Race-Eligible	6,704	20.9%
First-Generation	7,084	22.1%
Test-Eligible	5,084	15.9%
Low-Income	4,256	13.3%

In addition to the aforementioned services for our undergrads, the OMSA delivered college preparatory services to more than 600 middle and high school students from

Champaign, Decatur, and Urbana in FY 20. More than 80% of these students hail from first-generation and low–income households.

Succinctly, serving diverse students is a point of pride for the OMSA. We have been committed to inclusive excellence for more than five decades and we are committed to sustaining our efforts indefinitely.

Innovation and Change

This year, the OMSA further capitalized on changes introduced last year, continued to expand the services we have traditionally offered, and made changes to better connect with our students, alumni, and partners on campus.

Expanded Existing Services and Increased Availability via Online Platforms
Beginning in Fall 2019, the OMSA was excited to announce that drop-in Advising & Mentoring services were now available to all OMSA eligible students. Advising & Mentoring sessions are often some of our most popular and beneficial services but are generally limited to first year students and by the number of mentors we employ. However, with the addition of a new scheduling system, a new interaction logging and note keeping system, and additional professional staff, we were able to open our doors to all our students. The OMSA also announced our partnership with StudentLingo and TutorLingo, online platforms that provide all students and tutors 24/7 access to a wide array of workshops on time management, note taking, and various other academic skills for themselves or the peers they work with. Together these technological advancements have expanded our capacity to connect with students, track our interactions with them, more readily identify stressors they face, and build programming around relevant subject matter in a timely manner.

Spring 2020 brought a multitude of unforeseen changes campus-wide, as instruction and services moved online. The OMSA was able to quickly respond. By the time classes resumed, all services provided by the OMSA had successfully transitioned online. Digital programming will continue this summer as the McNair Summer Research Institute and Upward Bound Summer Programs will be offered digitally. While we are saddened that we will not be together in person, we are excited for the innovation and new opportunities that these virtual experiences will bring our TRIO students.

Revived Newsletter, *The Advocate*
This spring, the OMSA was happy to bring back its semesterly newsletter, redubbed *The Advocate*. Like our past publications, "The EOP News" (circa early 70s - early 80s) and "The Spectrum" (circa 1985- 2008), this circular will keep the OMSA's students, alumni, colleagues, and friends informed about our endeavors and inspire them to invest in our mission to help first-generation, low-income, and historically underrepresented students succeed at the University of Illinois. *The Advocate* will be released at the beginning of May and November to reflect our two signature events, the Mom's Day Scholastic Achievement Ceremony and the new-to-fall OMSA Scholarship

Awards Brunch. We received extremely positive reviews from our inaugural edition and look forward to the second edition this upcoming fall.

Facilities

The OMSA's space shortage remains dire. Over the past year, the OMSA has filled all staffing vacancies and hired an additional Office Support Associate for the Academic Services Center, bringing our total full-time staff count to 22. The OMSA invested significant resources across both the OMSA Main Office and the Academic Services Center to repurpose existing space to best accommodate new staff and operational needs. Improvements include a new floor plan for the cubicle farm in OMSA Main and the addition of a new, freestanding office in its center corridor. Due to a loss in donated space from campus partners, OMSA took its only conference room offline to provide space for its Graduate Mentors to meet with their student advisees.

Renovations at the OMSA Academic Services Center occurred in July 2019. The Academic Service Center's computer lab was converted to four new offices for OMSA Student Success and Academic Outreach Advisors. Additionally, in an effort to make it easier for our internal and external audiences to find us, we worked with JSM and the US Postal Service to change our address, making it more aligned with where the physical structure is located and made sure these changes were reflected in a new Google Maps location profile.

During Spring 2019, we issued and completed a needs assessment, the findings of which were addressed for the Fall 2019 semester. This assessment sought to identify the office equipment our Graduate Mentors need to perform employment-related duties. To that end, we discovered many of our graduate employees did not have adequate access to computers, telephones and 2-factor authenticators required to access institutional systems. In response to these findings, the OMSA purchased the necessary equipment to ensure access to adequate equipment for all our Graduate Mentors.

While the OMSA has managed to adapt to the strained environment we have been in, we are at the end of our ability to adjust our current space, both physically and financially. The OMSA needs to find a more suitable, single home to unify our programs and strengthen the impact we can have on the students we serve.

Goals

In FY 21, the OMSA will hold its course, and continue to focus on the strategic goals and organizational priorities that support its mission, vision, and the University's 2018-2023 Strategic Plan. Find them articulated below:

1. Provide exceptional academic mentoring, advocacy, and support services for first generation, low-income, and historically underrepresented undergraduate

students that bolsters their success and eases their adjustment to the rigor of college;

2. Support the recruitment and yielding activities for first-generation, low-income, and historically underrepresented students at Illinois (i.e., African American, Latinx, Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Island students);

3. Collaborate with colleagues in Academic and Student Affairs to create safe and welcoming environments that encourage academic success, personal growth, collegiate persistence, and graduation.

Metrics for the OMSA's Strategic Goals
1. Retention rates
2. Graduation rates
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Organizational Priority
We will continue enhancing our organizational culture by operationalizing the following principles: **S.O.A.R.**—"**Excellence in Service, Organizational wellness, Assessment and Results**". Metrics for this priority include student satisfaction assessment, learning outcomes assessment, employee satisfaction assessments, and evidence of student success as defined by the metrics for goal number one above.

Appendices

Appendix A: OMSA Advising & Mentoring: Population, Impact, and Scope of Practice

Appendix B: Effects of OMSA Tutoring on 3rd Term Persistence: A Long-Term Perspective

Appendix C: Defining the Needs of OMSA's Population: The Necessity of Academic Support Services for Traditionally Underrepresented and Minority Populations in American Higher Education

Appendix D: Transition to Digital Services Feedback Report

Appendix A

OMSA Advising & Mentoring: Population, Impact, and Scope of Practice

Fall 2019

By Ryan Young, Ph.D., Research and Assessment Analyst

The OMSA Population

The Office of Minority Student Affairs is charged with serving first generation, low-income, historically underrepresented, and other marginalized U.S. student populations. Specifically, for the most wide-reaching programs (tutoring, workshops, and some other non-TRIO programs), the OMSA targets students based on three categories of criteria:

Racial/Ethnic Identity

- African American/Black
- Latinx/Hispanic
- Native American/Alaskan Native
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Pre-Collegiate Characteristics

- First Generation College Student
- Maximum ACT Composite score between 17 and 24 (inclusive) **and** maximum SAT Combined score between 890 and 1190 (inclusive)
- Graduated from a High School in a traditionally Low Sending Illinois County
- Obtained a Financial Hardship Application Fee Waiver

## Association with other Campus Programs and Services

- Educational Opportunities Program (EOP)
- President's Award Program- Traditional (PAP-T)
- President's Award Program- Honors (PAP-H)
- Illinois Promise

Together, these criteria represented 12,440 students in the Fall 2018 semester—nearly 37% of all undergraduates. Of these students, 1,600 (5%) were targeted for High-Impact Services (TRIO SSS, TRIO McNair, and A&M Mentoring) through the within the OMSA in the Fall 2018 semester.
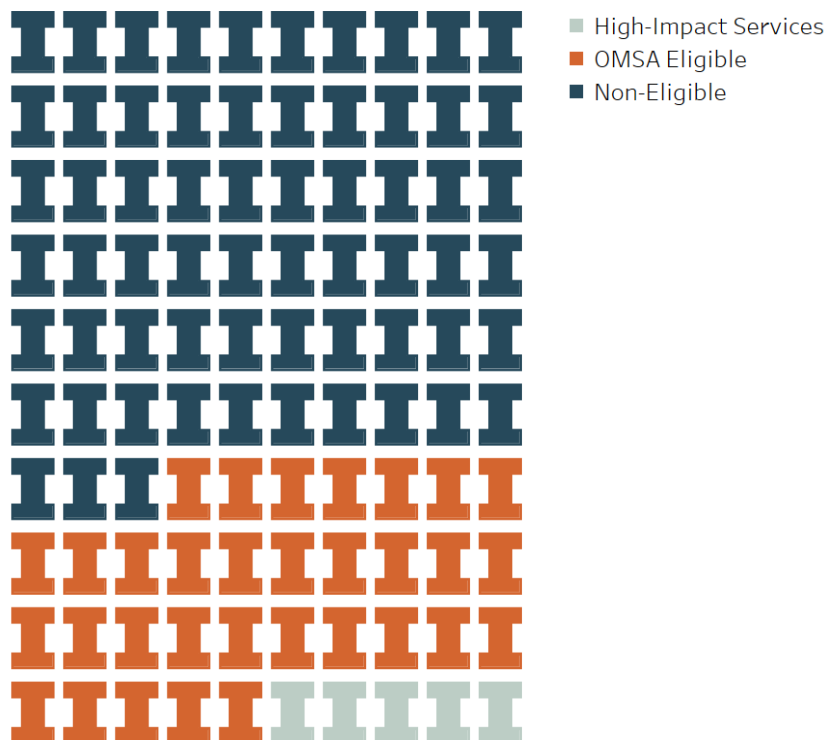
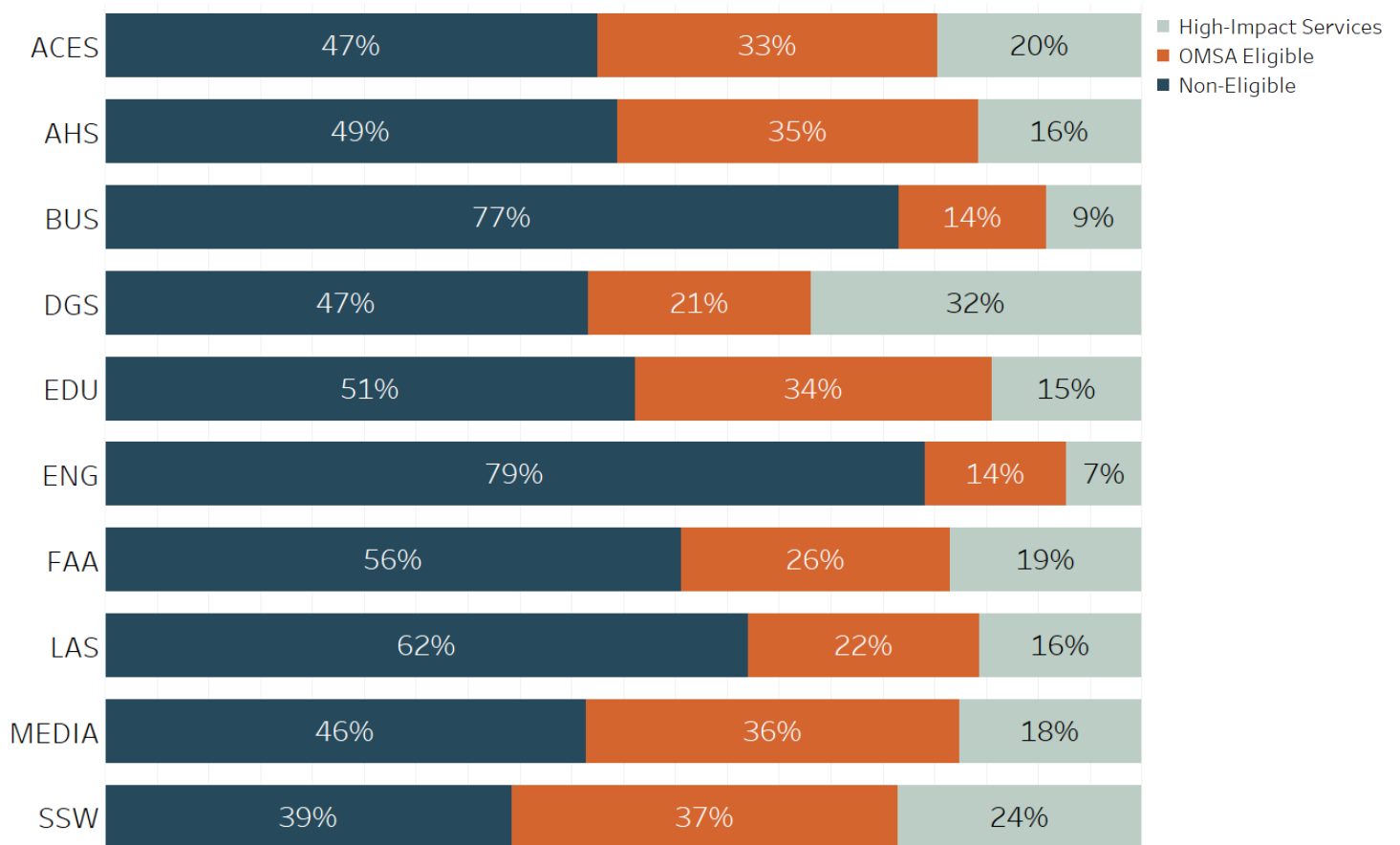For the Fall 2018 New First Time Freshmen cohort, given the wide range of criteria the OMSA uses to target its student population, students from an incredible array of backgrounds qualify for OMSA services.
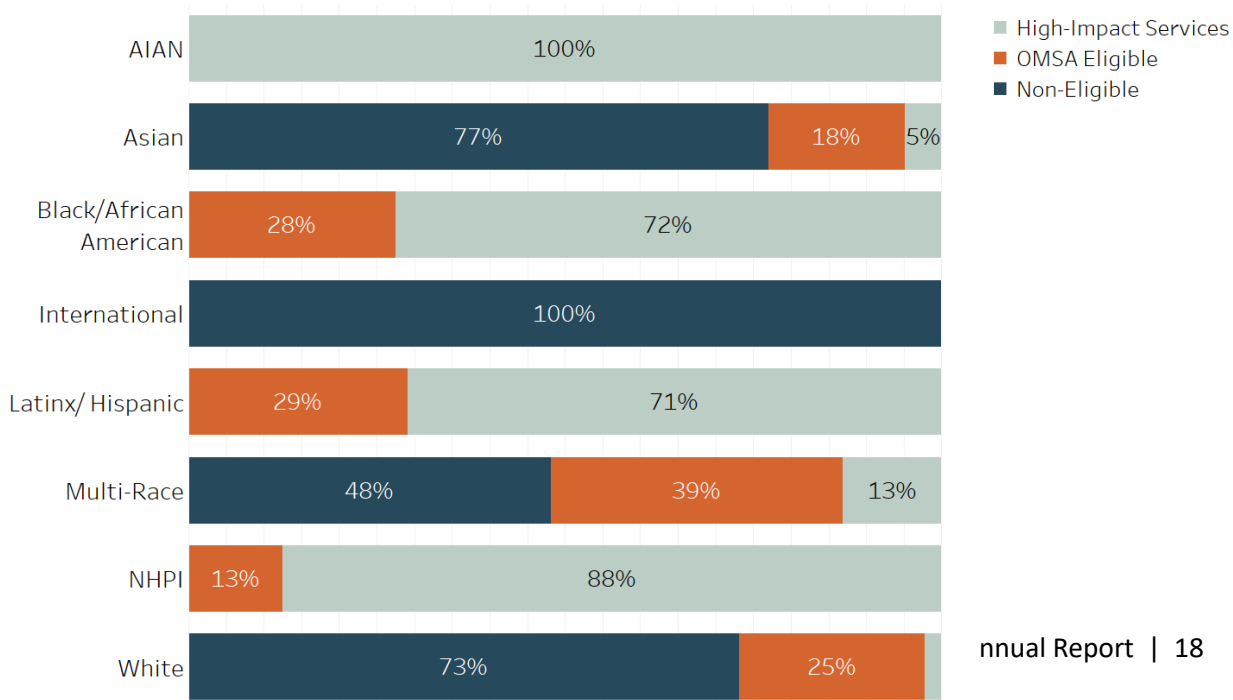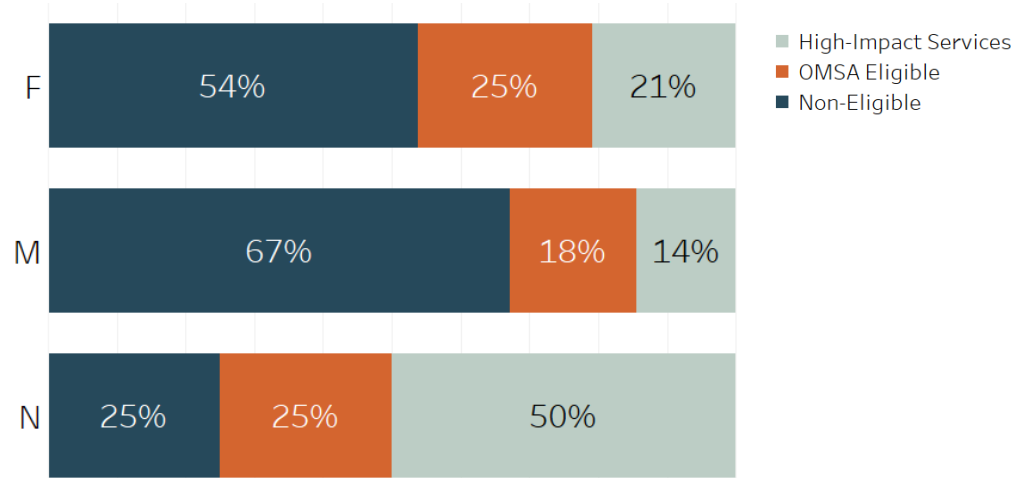
Note: F=Female, M=Male, N=not reported.

Amongst New First Time Freshmen, the percent of students varies greatly by academic college, but OMSA students comprise a large cohort across all campus units.

As widely discussed with both internal and external stakeholders, the Fall 2019 New First Time Freshmen cohort continues to push the University of Illinois student population in terms of size, diversity, and academic achievement.

For the first time, the Fall 2019 cohort has surpassed 40% OMSA eligibility, with 3,122 (40.7%) of students qualifying for OMSA services. While it is encouraging that the University of Illinois is taking steps into expanding accessibility to world-class higher education, the University must be similarly prepared to support these students once they are on campus—nothing has changed since the advent of Project 500 necessitated the student support services that grew into the Office of Minority Student Affairs that we have today.

Explaining the OMSA's Eligibility System

At the conclusion of the Spring 2018 semester, the Office of Minority Student Affairs adopted a new, consistent methodology to systematically determine which students would be invited to the limited spaces of our most impactful services, namely the Advising & Mentoring program (note: we also include TRIO Student Support Services amongst our high-impact services; however, eligibility and capacity for TRIO SSS is explicitly determined by the grant and students are selected through application before their first term on campus).

Introduced in the white paper "Defining the Needs of OMSA's Population: The Necessity of Academic Support Services for Traditionally Underrepresented and Minority Populations in American Higher Education" (see Appendix A), this system takes into account the unique constellation of student attributes to identify the students who are most likely to 1) benefit from the high-impact services offered by the OMSA and 2) participate in high-impact services offered by the OMSA when invited to do so.

In practice, the OMSA considers the number of eligibility criteria each student brings with them to campus; new first-time freshmen with three or more of these criteria and who do not have mentors through TRIO SSS or programs across campus are assigned a Graduate Mentor or Student Success Advisor. The decision to assign a mentor to students with three or more criteria is based 1) data trends in 3rd semester persistence over the past six years and 2) staffing realities within the OMSA.

Third semester persistence, all NFTF by number of OMSA criteria, 2013-2018.
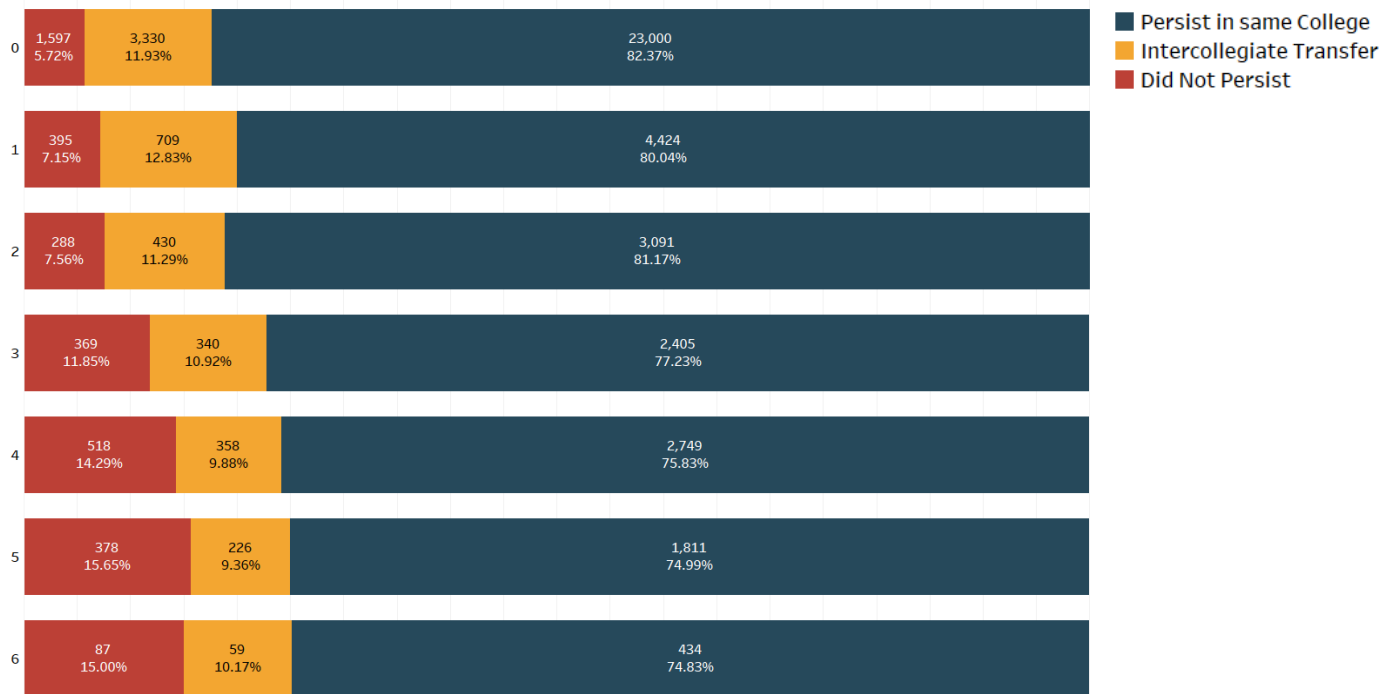
As demonstrated above, a major jump in the percentage of students who do not persist to their third term exists between those students with 2 eligibility criteria (7.56%) and those with 3 criteria (11.85%).

The intention of this eligibility system is to use student records information in a consistent manner that reflects the traditional goals and student populations served by the OMSA. However, it should not be interpreted as a system that establishes an infallible hierarchy of experiences or one that discounts the very real lived experiences of those who may demonstrate fewer eligibility criteria. If fact, since the implementation of this system and a return to full staffing within the OMSA, we have endeavored to open up mentoring services to any OMSA eligible student, including targeting invitation of Spring semester transfer students.

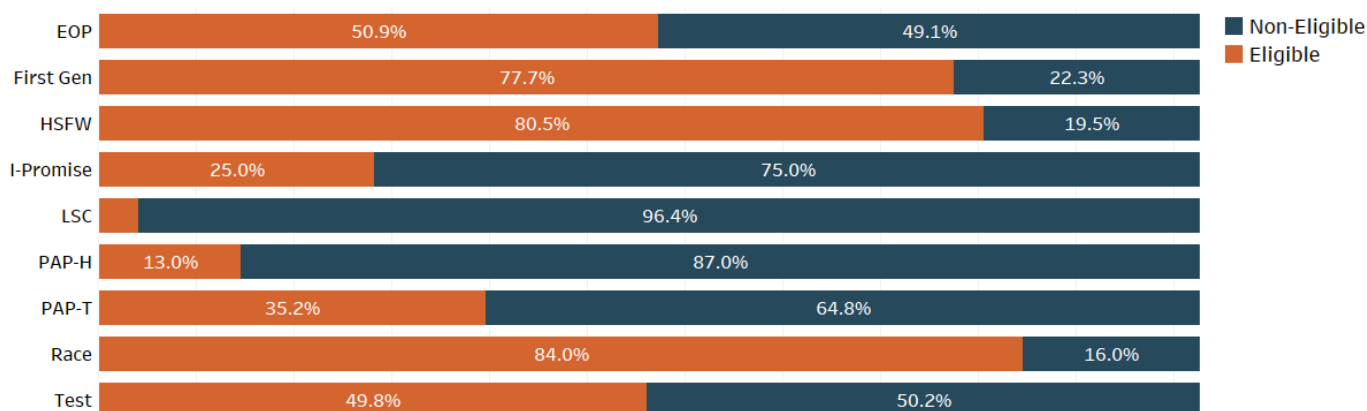## Fall 2019: Who are we targeting for high-impact service?

Number of Fall 2019 NFTF by OMSA eligibility criteria.

In the Fall 2019 semester, the OMSA identified 3,122 of the 7,664 new first-time freshmen who met at least one of the OMSA's eligibility requirements and 1,511 students had 3 or more eligibility criteria. Of these 1,511 students, 87 were selected for the TRIO SSS program and 279 students were identified as participating in programs across campus who have mentoring functions or registered late after mentor assignments were made. Currently, 1,145 students have been assigned a mentor through OMSA Advising & Mentoring based on their constellation of student attributes.

6	2.1%	164
5	5.9%	452
4	6.0%	458
3	5.7%	437
2	9.1%	698
1	11.9%	913
0	59.3%	4,542
Grand Total		**7,664**

These 1,145 students demonstrate that the current eligibility criteria system allows for the consistent identification of students who backgrounds align with the historical and contemporary mission of the Office of Minority Student Affairs, while identifying students who may most benefit from the high-impact services the OMSA provides: 84% come from traditionally underrepresented racial/ethnic backgrounds; 80.5% received a fee waiver when applying (low SES proxy); and 77.7% are first generation college students.

Fall 2019 Advising & Mentoring Assigned Cohort.

	Eligible	Non-Eligible
EOP	50.9%	49.1%
First Gen	77.7%	22.3%
HSFW	80.5%	19.5%
I-Promise	25.0%	75.0%
LSC		96.4%
PAP-H	13.0%	87.0%
PAP-T	35.2%	64.8%
Race	84.0%	16.0%
Test	49.8%	50.2%

For all its merits, this system has its faults. Unlike the application-based system of TRIO SSS, there is no qualitative component that seeks to gauge the disproportionate impact that certain experiences have had on incoming students—all eligibility criteria are treated equally and of equal weight. However, most critically it is a mechanical justification that draws a line cutting off over half of the students we are charged with serving from the high-impact services we know to be most beneficial in promoting persistence and graduation. Of the 3,122 OMSA eligible students, the 1,611 students with 1 or 2 eligibility criteria a simply not considered for participation in Advising & Mentoring simply due to budgetary and infrastructure constraints within the OMSA, in spite of their connection to our mission, values, and strategic goals.

Of particular concern are certain subpopulations that exist within those students with 1 and 2 eligibility criteria. For example, 186 traditionally underrepresented students/first generation, 102 traditionally underrepresented students with low SAT/ACT scores, and 108 first generation/low-income students were not assigned a mentor. It is particularly within these subpopulations with limited overall college-going habitus that mentoring and other high-contact support interventions may been demonstrated to have a strong impact on student success outcomes (see Budge, 2006).

Fall 2019 NFTF OMSA Eligibility Criteria by Number of Eligibility Criteria.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	Grand Total
First Gen	1	402	204	267	317	421	164	**1,775**
Test	1	237	170	153	208	300	120	**1,188**
HSFW	1	145	139	181	419	447	164	**1,495**
Race	1	63	414	311	384	439	164	**1,775**
LSC	1	37	51	32	10	8	1	**139**
EOP	1	23	18	59	170	411	164	**845**
I-Promise	1	3	21	52	80	82	163	**401**
PAP-H	1	3	195	105	76	26	4	**409**
PAP-T	1		184	151	168	126	40	**669**
Grand Total		**913**	**698**	**437**	**458**	**452**	**164**	**3,122**

Note: With the exception of 1 eligibility criteria, columns are not additive.

APPENDIX B

Effects of OMSA Tutoring on 3rd Term Persistence: A Long-Term Perspective

Ryan Young, Ph.D., Research & Assessment Analysist, Office of Minority Student Affairs

The Office of Minority Student Affairs has provided academic and student support services since its inception. One hallmark of those services is tutoring services, currently offered through the OMSA's Academic Services Center. For the past 12 years, the OMSA ASC has collected and maintained consistent and comparable tutoring service usage data that provides the ability to examine the influence participating in OMSA tutoring has on student outcomes.

Early analysis shows that participating in the OMSA's tutoring services is highly correlated with increased 3rd semester persistence. Using student records data from 2007-2019 from 85,869 Fall New First Time Freshmen, this analysis indicates that **students who participate in OMSA Tutoring are <u>2.50 times more likely to persist</u>** than their peers, even when **controlling for race, gender, first generationality, low ACT/SAT score, socioeconomic status (fee waiver), coming from a low sending county, participation in EOP and PAP, and which college they are enrolled in.** Full results of the analysis can be found in Table .

This method of analysis also allows us to examine the predicted probability of persistence for a prototypical student. For example, based on 12 years of student data, the likelihood that average female student persists to the 3rd term is 95.3% while the likelihood that the average male student persists is 92.2%. For students targeted for service by the OMSA, these likelihoods are much lower. For students eligible for participation in OMSA due to their race/ethnicity (African American, American Indian Alaska Native, Latinx, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander), participation in OMSA tutoring increases their probability of persistence to 3rd term by 6.2 percentage points, from 89.1% to 95.3%. This approach allows for as much specificity as desired. One of the largest differences in predicted probability was that of Male, First Generation Students, who are low income. Participating in OMSA tutoring increased their predicted probability of persistence 9.9 percentage points, from 82.1% to 92.0%. We can also build fully formed hypothetical students and see their probability of persistence: an African American, male, first generation, low income, low ACT/SAT score student in DGS has a 71.6% probability of persisting to his 3rd term. Participating in OMSA Tutoring increases that likelihood to 86.3%.

Like all programs on a college campus, it is difficult if not impossible to disentangle the numerous experiences and interactions that affect a student. What this data clearly demonstrates, is that academic and student support services, like OMSA tutoring and OMSA Advising & Mentoring, make a sizable impact on persistence and student success. To realize these effects, the entire panoply of student support services must be robust, interreferential, and well-advertised. Particularly for the OMSA's student population, having strong, welcoming services like Tutoring, Advising & Mentoring, TRIO Student Support Services, and positive relationships with College offices, Academic Advisors, and the Office of Student Financial Aid are indispensable.

Table 1. Odds ratio of 3rd Term Persistence based on Term, Individual Background, and Academic Indicators of Fall New First Time Freshmen, 2007-2018 (n=85,569).

	Odds Ratio	Standard Error
Term (ref=Fall 2007)		
Fall 2008	0.958	0.069
Fall 2009	1.051	0.072
Fall 2010	0.904	0.070
Fall 2011	1.103	0.071
Fall 2012	0.973	0.070
Fall 2013	1.064	0.070
Fall 2014	1.029	0.071
Fall 2015	1.008	0.070
Fall 2016	0.853	0.068
Fall 2017	0.973	0.068
Fall 2018	1.038	0.069
Background		
OMSA Eligible	0.993	0.051
Race Eligible	0.504***	0.056
Male	0.585***	0.030
First Generation	0.916*	0.042
Low Sending County	0.523***	0.100
Test Eligible	0.921	0.052
SES (fee waiver)	0.691***	0.051
EOP	0.754***	0.062
PAP-H	2.606***	0.137
PAP-T	1.478***	0.062
Academic		
College (ref=other)		
LAS	0.997	0.038
DGS	0.801***	0.040
ENG	0.884**	0.043
Participated in OMSA Tutoring	**2.500***	**0.075**
Constant	24.582***	0.061

Table 2. Predicted Probability of Persistence by Characteristics of Interest and OMSA Tutoring Participation.

	Probability of Persistence		
	Without Tutoring	With Tutoring	Difference
Race Eligible	89.1%	95.3%	6.2
Test Eligible	93.0%	97.1%	4.1
First Generation	93.0%	97.1%	4.1
Low Income	91.2%	96.3%	5.1
Low ACT/SAT	92.6%	96.9%	4.3
Race and First Gen	88.4%	95.0%	6.6
Race and Low ACT/SAT	88.4%	95.0%	6.6
First Gen and Low Income	90.6%	96.0%	5.4
Male, Race and First Gen	85.6%	93.7%	8.1
Male, Race and Low ACT/SAT	82.1%	92.0%	9.9
Male, First Gen and Low Income	88.3%	95.0%	6.7

Appendix C

Defining the Needs of OMSA's Population: The Necessity of Academic Support Services for Traditionally Underrepresented and Minority Populations in American Higher Education

Ryan Young, Ph.D., Research & Assessment Analysist, Office of Minority Student Affairs

For more than 50 years, the Office of Minority Student Affairs and its predecessors have sought to support the experiences of minority students at the University of Illinois, a Historically and Predominantly White Institution. As access to higher education has expanded, an increasing population of racially/ethnically minoritized students have come to call Illinois home. Further, the visibility of some groups, like First Generation students, have become better acknowledged, and the student debt crisis continues to strain those from lower socioeconomic statuses.

The Office of Minority Student Affairs is itself at a precipice. Improved access to data about our students has reinforced just how prevalent populations targeted for services by OMSA really are. During the Fall 2017 semester, 12,089 students qualified for OMSA services—35.6% of the entire undergraduate population. In effect, OMSA was charged with serving the largest academic college on campus. The Fall 2018 semester is primed to surpass years before, with New First Time Freshmen nearing 39% OMSA eligibility. These increases are a testament to the expansion of college access to all members of our society.

However, the growth of OMSA's population is approaching a point where the methods used in the past to invite students to our most intensive academic intervention, Academic Mentoring Programs and Services, are beginning to not be as effective at identifying the students most in need. Therefore, as part of a new initiative to use available campus data to better target and track students, this report outlines current research on the needs of traditionally underrepresented, first generation, and low socioeconomic status students. These populations make up, at a minimum, 19.7%, 21.2% and 11.6% of Illinois student body and 51.6%, 54.3%, and 32.5% of the OMSA eligible student body, respectively.

In recognition of programmatic limitations and the needs of OMSA students, starting in the Fall 2018 semester, consideration for highly intensive academic services will depend on the unique constellation of identities and lived experiences of a student, rather than an automatic invitation based on specific, limited characteristics. However, it is important to note that the identities, experiences, and associations used to invite students will be made up of those that have long defined OMSA's population and that racial/ethnic identity is still at the core of the students who will be invited to these programs. It is in fact the extraordinary growth of some racial/ethnic groups on campus that these changes need to be made.

Below is a brief review of current research on student services, and in particular mentoring, for students from our three largest populations and a list of recommendations for student affairs offices who work with these students groups.

Literature Review

Academic Services for Traditionally Underrepresented Populations. For those in our field, the need for student support services for traditionally underrepresented students should be apparent. Issues of climate, marginality, tokenism, overt and covert racism, systemic bias, and campus policies tailored to a historically upper-middle class majority student population present a myriad of barriers for students of color (see Arminio, Torres, and Pope, 2012). While we know a fair amount about these broad concerns facing minoritized students, less is known about the effects of mentoring programs and other academic services.

Most of the research done on mentoring does not directly focus on the specific effects on specific populations. However, what work has been done demonstrates that students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds in higher education can benefit immensely from mentoring programs. As summarized by Budge (2006), "Because traditional mentoring has typically excluded individuals of less represented races, ethnicities, sexual identities, and socioeconomic status, minority populations are in even more need of mentoring. Many minority students are unaware of the types of mentoring resources that are available to them. Even if the students are aware, they may believe that mentoring services will not help them (Jacobi, 1991). Research based on mentoring in corporate and university settings demonstrates that formal, or planned, mentoring is successful in assisting minorities to accomplish goals in unfamiliar settings (Redmond, 1990). Similarly, research has established that students who are involved in mentoring programs are more fulfilled by their experiences in college than individuals who are not involved in these programs (Pope, 2002)" (p. 77).

However, research by Strayhorn and Terrell (2007) shows that not all forms of tutoring were equally as beneficial: "Establishing a research-focused relationship with a faculty mentor has a positive effect on Black students' satisfaction with college while establishing a personal mentoring relationship does not. This may point to the importance of structured mentoring relationships and programs. Formal relationships that are organized around meaningful activities (e.g., research) may provide unique "added value" to the mentoring partnership. It appears that both mentor and protégé stand much to gain from engagement in learning about research and interpersonal exchange (Kuh, 2001)" (p. 77).

Services for First Generation Students. As changes in the economy and the public's perception of the value of a college degree pushes a greater percentage of America's population into higher education, the percentage of first-generation students has been steadily declining: in 1980, 77% of high school sophomore's parents no collegiate experience. By 2002, that percentage had fallen to 62% (Cahalan et al., 2006). Similarly, the percentage of first generation college students has similarly declined, from 37% in 1999 to 33% in 2011.

This represents a bittersweet trend for college students. Virtually every study shows that first generation students are at a much higher risk for leaving college prior to completing a degree, often showing factors such as academic unpreparedness, financial strain, working while being enrolled, living off-campus, social integration, fewer non-academic peer interactions, and fewer student-faculty

interactions (Woosely & Shepler, 2011; Engle, Bermeo, and O'Brien, 2006; Cataldi, Bennett & Chen, 2018; Kim & Sax, 2009). Unfortunately, as fewer first-generation students enroll in college, the gulfs in assumed knowledge and college-going habitus are only going to widen. Compounding these observations is the fact that a disproportionate number of first-generation college students also come from traditionally underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds as well (Atherton, 2014; Choy, 2001; McCarron & Inkelas, 2006). According to a new report by Redford and Hoyer (2017), first-generation students are now a minority-majority group—in the most recent available data, only 49% of first-generation students identify as White. Many studies fail to account for the conditional effects that race and first-generation status combine to produce, meaning relatively few studies fully capture information about these students.

Unfortunately for Student Affairs professionals, much of the research that has been done on first-generation college students highlights the influences of pre-collegiate experiences. As described by Pascarella et al. (2004) and reiterated by Atherton (2014) three main dimensions of first-generation student research has been explored: demographics and preparation for college; transition to college; and attainment and persistence. Choy (2001) still rings true today and highlights the challenges educators have ending the cycle of socioeconomic bias in college degree completion. 86% of continuing generation sophomore students had bachelor's degree aspirations and 65% of those students were enrolled in a four-year institution two years later. For first-generation students whose parents had no collegiate experience at all, not only was initial aspiration much lower (46%) the attrition rate of those who actually enrolled was double that of continuing generation students (21%).

Services for Students with Low Socioeconomic Status. Higher education scholars have long recognized the impact that coming from a low socioeconomic status has major implications for college student. "Researchers have found that this group of students is less likely to attend college, is more likely to attend less selective institutions when they do enroll, and has unique college choice processes (Astin, 1975, 1993; Hearn, 1984, 1990; Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper, 1999; Karabel, 1972; McDonough, 1997; Paulsen & St. John, 2002; Tinto, 1987, 1993). Furthermore, they are less likely to persist or to attend graduate school" (Walpole, 2003). Similar to the research on First Generation students, work on students from low socioeconomic students highlight a lack of social and cultural capital as a major barrier to the success of students. Difficulty in navigating campus policies, a multitude of programs offering similar services, and climate issues all lead to these students having lower collegiate and post-collegiate aspirations.

While research on low socioeconomic status student college choice process and completion is fairly robust (see Castleman & Page, 2015), work examining different collegiate processes while enrolled are less developed and oftentimes merged with work on First Generationality. However, work by Lana Muraskin, John Lee, and the Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education (2014) note that some of the biggest impacts on the eventual graduation rate of low socioeconomic status students are large-scale campus-level factors that are difficult to change—class size, special programming, faculty interaction, campus values, availability of merit-based aid, and retention policies. While not directly cited in this review, mentoring programs can serve as a buffer in many of these areas at a campus like Illinois. The creation of a positive and supportive academic environment through mentoring programs and other academic services can help to transform a large, difficult to navigate campus.

What can Student Affairs Offices like OMSA Do?

Define the roles of our mentors, how we view them organizationally, and the goals are for individual relationship and the program as a whole. In summarizing the one of the most recent comprehensive reviews of mentoring literature, Gershenfeld (2014) posited that "For university administrators, there is a need to create partnerships with researchers to achieve higher levels of evidence-based practice. At a minimum, university administrators should be clear about the goals of the mentoring program, the function or role of the mentors, the measures that will be used, and collect baseline and ongoing data to evaluate if program objectives are being met. University administrators should not only be guided by the scholarly literature but also understand the limitations and work to employ best practices" (p. 387). Without such clear definition, programs often suffer from the weight of varied expectations from mentees, mentors, program staff, and division-level administrators.

As an example of a program with a well-defined and culturally consistent mentoring program, Rios-Ellis et al.'s (2012) description of the *Mi Casa: Mi Universidad* program at California State University Long Beach. At CSULB, program staff made concerted efforts to integrate the cultural realities of the target population in the very fabric of the program, through the specific goals, policies and practices. While OMSA serves a larger, less defined population, a similar analysis of how our mentees identity influences their perceptions and needs of a tutoring program could have serious benefits in program efficacy.

Reconsider how Mentees view the program and what services they are seeking. In its current form, AMPS operates as a formal and pseudo-hierarchical mentoring service. As described above, the nature of the relationship between mentor and mentee can have a large impact on the benefits and perception of the program. As new programmatic goals and learning objectives are developed, attention should be paid to the type of relationship fostered between our mentors and mentees. How we market the program, recruit mentees, frame the initial meeting, and establish expectations can have major consequences. Each of these decisions can be used to emphasize the peer or hierarchical aspects—and thus have a major impact on the reception and ultimate efficacy of the mentoring program.

Acknowledge, examine, and cultivate a positive racial/ethnic climate. Given the name of the Office of Minority Student Affairs, fostering a welcoming and supportive climate for students of all backgrounds is a *de facto* mission of the department. Cho et al. (2008) found that, across multiple racial/ethnic groups, first-generation students frequently cited the racial/ethnic climate as a major component of their college choice process, in some cases on par with parental input. Further, for African American students, both first- and continuing-generation, finding good fit between their psychosocial needs and campus environment was particularly important, more so than any other group. Retention issues may arise when trust in fit during the college choice process does not materialize when students experience the racial/ethnic climate first hand.

Create a positive academic space. As described by Means and Pyne (2017): "As universities seek to improve academic success for low-income, first generation college students, attention to the role of belonging in academic spaces is another crucial facet to developing comprehensive support opportunities. Professional development for faculty should include efforts (a) to improve the cultural competence and awareness of the challenges faced by many low-income, first-generation college students, (b) to provide functional strategies for building better relationships and demonstrating

academic care for student progress, (c) and to increase knowledge of how to support hidden or unexpected learning needs in ways that also build student self-efficacy" (p.921-922).

Further, in their meta-analysis of college student impact studies, Pascarella and Terenzini (2006) found that First-generation students also appear to derive greater benefits that other students in internal locus of attribution for academic success from several college experiences over the first three years of college, including coursework in various areas, academic effort, and extracurricular involvement. But not all college experiences are more beneficial to first-generation students that to others. The number of hours worked and doing volunteer work both negatively affected increases on measures of first-generation students' internal attributions for academic success while having no impact or a positive effect on other students" (p.625).

While these studies generally focus on traditional academic spaces, student affairs offices can model these practices and supplement the classroom environment with positive academic experience in the extracurricular. OMSA should also consider how its networks, interfaces, and supports faculty partners across campus.

Formalize and operationalize peer support networks. One of the major factors leading to first-generation student's lower retention and completion rates are less robust support networks. For continuing generation students, to a large degree, this is provided by parents and extended family. Fortunately, Dennis, Phinney, and Chuateco (2005) found that for first-generation students, these structural holes can be filled by peers: "Many students reported that peer support was the most helpful strategy for dealing with academic problems. Although the family members of first-generation college students can provide emotional support, most family members cannot provide vital instrumental support. These findings also correspond to those of Astin (1993) who found, in a large longitudinal study of diverse populations of college students, that some of the most important predictors of college outcomes were characteristics of students' peer groups" (p. 234).

Complete references available upon request.

Transition to Digital Services Feedback

Spring 2020

Overview of Request for Feedback

In response to the unprecedented transition to digital instruction and services at the University of Illinois, the Office of Minority Student Affairs distributed a request for feedback and invitation to participate in digital services on April 17, 2020. Following approval through the SARA process, the OMSA emailed all 12,275 OMSA eligible students enrolled in the Spring 2020 term.

The feedback form consisted of six closed-response questions and one free response question:
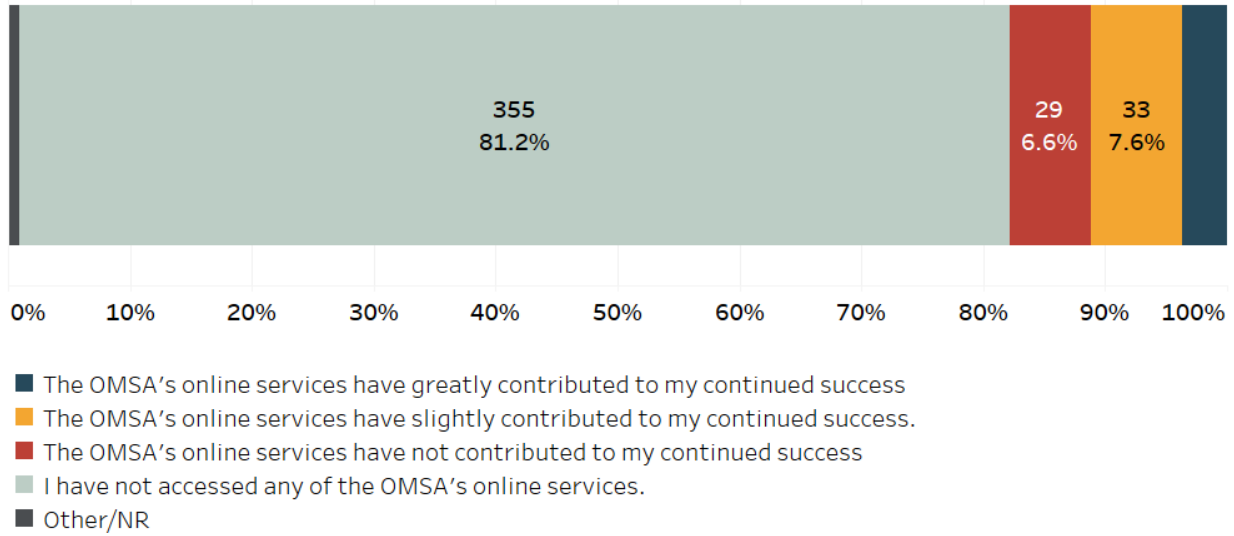
- The Office of Minority Student Affairs offers tutoring, advising, and a variety of support services. How have you interacted with the OMSA since campus transitioned to online services?
- What barriers have you faced in accessing OMSA's online services? Check all that apply.
- How does online instruction compare to the in-person instruction you received before the transition to digital delivery?
- What barriers have you faced in succeeding in your online classes? Check all that apply.
- Do you plan to enroll in classes for the Fall 2020 semester?
- What barriers have you faced in making future enrollment decisions? Check all that apply.

	Responded	Grand Total
Hispanic	159 36.38%	4,099 33.39%
White	146 33.41%	4,140 33.73%
Black/African Am..	75 17.16%	1,981 16.14%
Asian	32 7.32%	1,413 11.51%
Multi-Race	20 4.58%	567 4.62%
Unknown	3 0.69%	48 0.39%
AIAN	2 0.46%	10 0.08%
NHPI		17 0.14%

	Responded	Grand Total
F	304 69.57%	6,810 55.48%
M	133 30.43%	5,462 44.50%
N		2 0.02%

	Responded	Grand Total
FG	258 59.04%	6,580 53.60%
Non-FG	179 40.96%	5,695 46.40%

	Responded	Grand Total
LAS	175 40.05%	4,526 36.87%
ACES	72 16.48%	1,464 11.93%
FAA	36 8.24%	779 6.35%
DGS	35 8.01%	1,263 10.29%
AHS	35 8.01%	1,199 9.77%
ENG	28 6.41%	1,320 10.75%
BUS	23 5.26%	759 6.18%
MEDIA	15 3.43%	456 3.71%
EDU	10 2.29%	297 2.42%
SSW	8 1.83%	193 1.57%
CIT		19 0.15%

	Responded	Grand Total
Freshman	81 18.54%	2,034 16.57%
Sophomore	110 25.17%	2,897 23.60%
Junior	118 27.00%	2,982 24.29%
Senior	128 29.29%	4,362 35.54%
Grand Total	437 100.00%	12,275 100.00%

OMSA Multiplier	Responded	Grand Total
1	142 32.49%	4,523 36.85%
2	101 23.11%	3,018 24.59%
3	63 14.42%	1,661 13.53%
4	56 12.81%	1,374 11.19%
5	59 13.50%	1,315 10.71%
6	16 3.66%	384 3.13%

	Responded	Grand Total
Non-IPromise	387 88.56%	11,032 89.87%
IPromise	50 11.44%	1,243 10.13%

	Responded	Grand Total
Non-EOP	338 77.35%	9,675 78.82%
EOP	99 22.65%	2,600 21.18%

The Office of Minority Student Affairs offers tutoring, advising, and a variety of support services. How have you interacted with the OMSA since campus transitioned to online services?

355
81.2%

29
6.6%

33
7.6%

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%   60%   70%   80%   90%   100%

■ The OMSA's online services have greatly contributed to my continued success
■ The OMSA's online services have slightly contributed to my continued success.
■ The OMSA's online services have not contributed to my continued success
■ I have not accessed any of the OMSA's online services.
■ Other/NR

The majority (355, 81.2%) of respondents have not utilized the OMSA's services since we transitioned to online services. This proportion is consistent with the number of students who typically use the OMSA's services. Of those who had used the OMSA's services, 16 respondents (3.7%) found that they had greatly contributed to continued success, 33 (7.6%) found that they slightly contributed to continued success, and 29 (6.6%) found that they had not contributed to continued success. Given that the typical interaction students would have experienced since the digital transition (individual tutoring sessions, check-ins with advisors and mentors, etc.), these findings are not surprising.
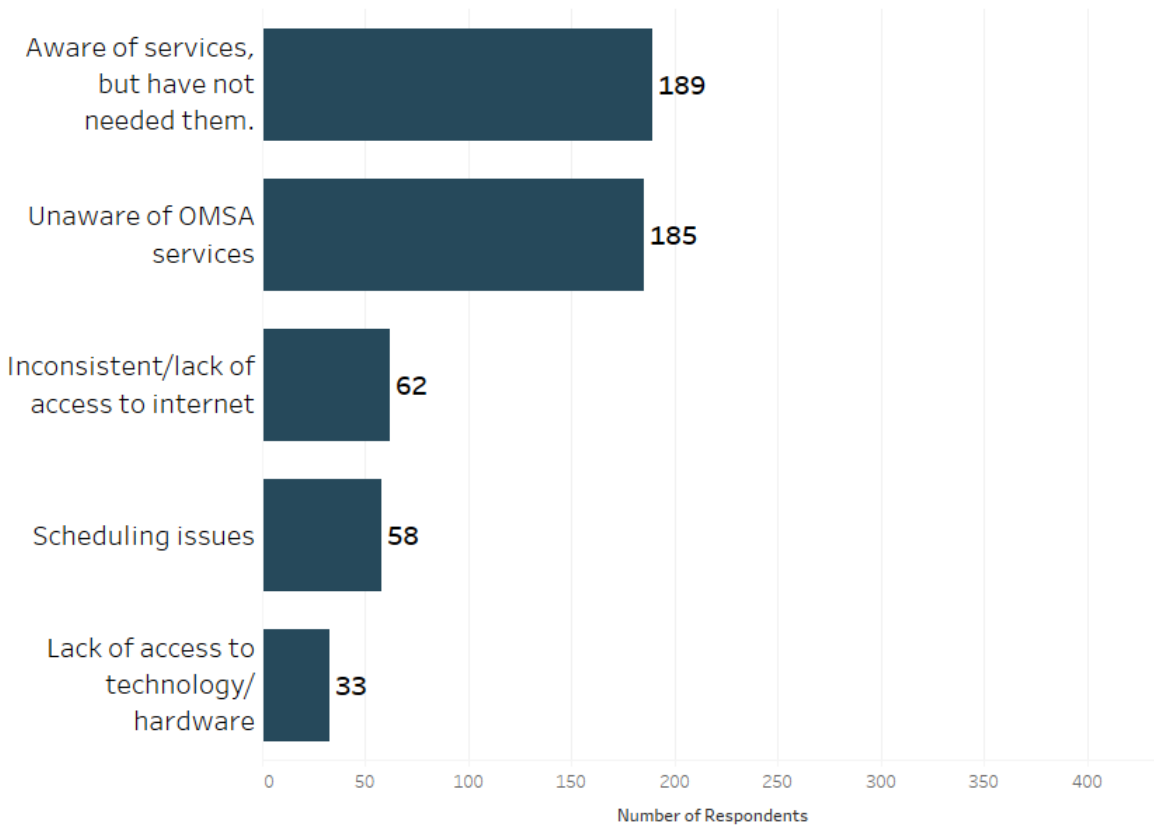
Barriers to Utilizing OMSA Services

The most commonly reported barrier to utilizing the OMSA's services following transition to digital delivery is a lack of awareness of services (185, 42.3%). In addition to student's simply not needing offered service (189, 43.2%), relatively few students report issues with lack of internet access (62, 14.2%), scheduling issues (58, 13.3%), and lack of access to technology/hardware (33, 7.6%) Other barriers listed include issues accessing the services, motivation/anxiety concerns, and lack of resources for specific courses. The full list of other barriers given is listed below.
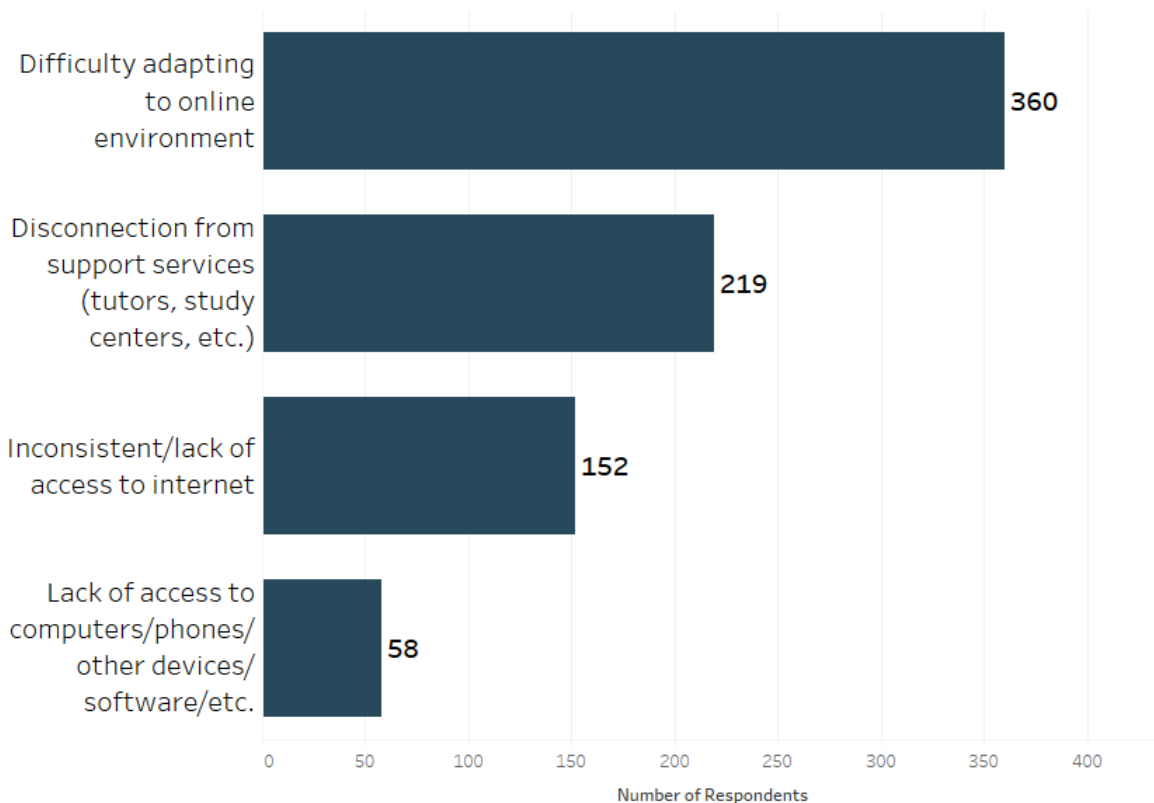
Other Comments on Barriers to Utilizing OMSA Services:

Anxiety, lack of structure

I dint read the information sent to me

I don't know how to access the services.

I find it difficult to reach out for help even though I know I need it.

I spend 12 hours a day watching my 3yo daughter

Intangible motivational barrier that comes with the fact that I'm not not leaving my house.

not relevant for my current classes/major

professors not knowing how to use technology

Transition to Digital Instruction

How does online instruction compare to the in-person instruction you received before the transition to digital delivery?
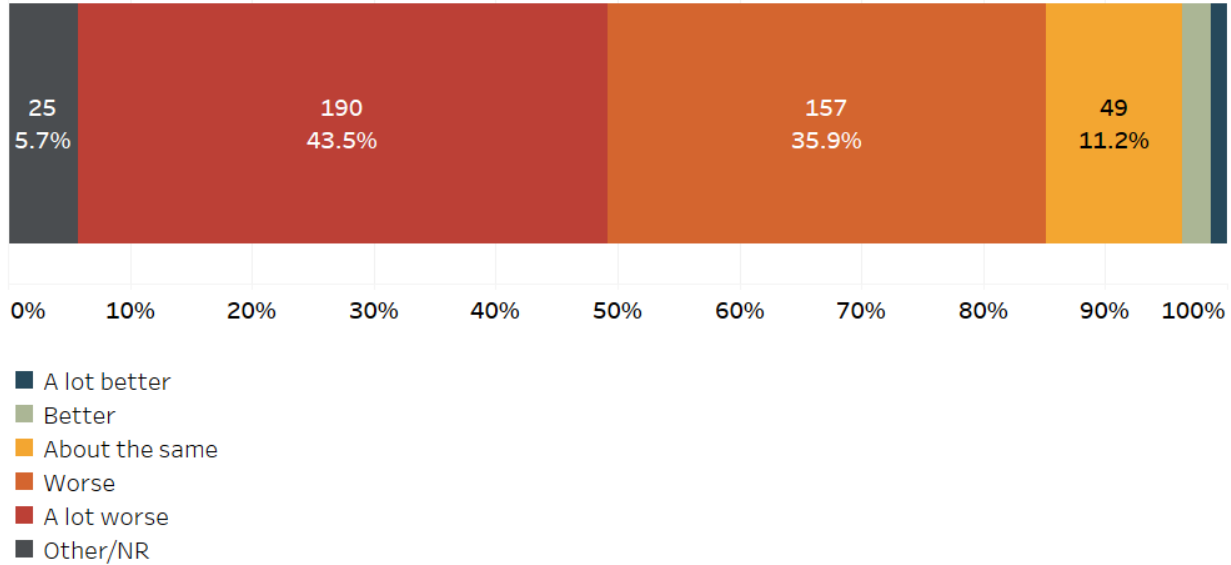
Students are extremely unhappy with online instruction compared to the in-person instruction received before the transition to digital delivery. 347 students (79.4%) reported that online instruction was "Worse" or "A lot worse" than in-person instruction. Alternatively, only 6 students (1.4%) reported that online instruction was "A lot better" and only 10 students (2.3%) reported that online instruction was better. These findings were consistent across all demographic dimensions and OMSA eligibility criteria.

The chart shows "Number of Respondents" on the x-axis with the following bars:
- Difficulty adapting to online environment: 360
- Disconnection from support services (tutors, study centers, etc.): 219
- Inconsistent/lack of access to internet: 152
- Lack of access to computers/phones/other devices/software/etc.: 58

Barriers to the Transition to Digital Instruction

The most common barriers to the transition to digital instruction include a general difficulty adapting to the online environment (360, 82.4%) and a disconnection from support services (219, 50.1%). Many of the other barriers listed by respondents also fall into these categories. Of particular note are issues securing quiet spaces to attend classes, study, and complete homework. Additionally, struggles with academic skills (time management, procrastination, motivation) seem to be amplified by changes in setting, course tasks, and the added concerns of the current global context. Of note, access to internet (152, 34.8%) and access to hardware (58, 6.4%) was noted more commonly as a barrier for class attendance, as compared to access to OMSA Services. The full list of other barriers given is listed below.

Other Comments on Barriers to the Transition to Digital Instruction:

All classes being online and be flooded with emails and lack of motivation and being distracted by wanting to go to bed or eat or other things. All issues I've encountered

At home I have no privacy. I have a lot of distractions. It's hard to work on.

At home life and responsibilities to help care for my siblings

Balancing attitude towards work online.

Being at home not having the space and environment offered on campus

Busy home

Class discussion online is difficult

Classes Barriers Qual

Depression from being a 2020 grad. Home life is incredibly hard and professors are adding more work than being understanding.

Difficulty in actually absorbing knowledge

difficulty in time management

Difficulty with initial online exam

Digital reading. My learning type is not best suited for a cold digital environment.

disconnect from resources ex; campus buildings

Distractions of technology

Don't have a quiet place to do homework, don't have a quiet place to study, live class lecture times do not work with being at home at everyone is at home and I have more expectations to do things and help around the house during the day

Everyone is home and causing a lot of distractions

Family

family situations

financially struggling to pay utilities, unexpected expenses, and personal bills

Hard time focusing at home

Hard to hear some students in the classroom.

having to work overtime at an essential job due to whole family being unemployed

home environment does not cater to a full time student

Home environment not ideal for learning

I don't have a place at home that I can dedicate to do my classwork. There's no one that's very quiet for me to work.

I love online lectures because of the ability to pause, take notes, and rewatch sections for better understandings

I really miss studying at the library or a cafe or any other public building that is not my house.

I share a laptop with my nephew, niece, brother, and mom. I also have no place to study in private and quiet. The house environment is loud and there is no center that I could go to.

I'm just not motivated to do anything school related since I'm back at home in an environment that isn't the best for studying or doing online class

Inability to focus, stop procrastinating, have a schedule

Increased Workload in each course

Instruction format is not instructive, it has been information on someones paper for me to copy to my paper. That doesn't teach me; learning isn't being taught.

Interference due to at-home responsibilities and expectations

Isolation

Isolation takes a toll on mental health, making it hard to put work into classes.

it is hard to juggle family chores/necessities with completing school work. My family adds more responsibilities.

It is very hard to focus and stay motivated at home, especially when you are already an over-worked student who needs to take a break. The environment of home triggers relaxation for many students as well, taking our mindsets out of "school mode" on top of the stressors and uncertainty with the present circumstances

Lack of ability to be alone away from my family while doing school work

Lack of access to optimal work environment at home

lack of communications with the professors.

lack of empathy from professors

Lack of focus

Lack of motivation

Lack of motivation

Lack of motivation

Lack of motivation

Lack of motivation

Lack of motivation

Lack of motivation

Lack of motivation and routine

Lack of motivation due to being home (where I'm not used to doing work)

Lack of motivation to complete material. Possible mental health issues.
Lack of organizational utilities. Usually when you leave a class it's punctuated by the expectations the instructor has for next class, but not having any sort of olfactory change has made their presentation of their expectations less impactful

lack of proper communication

Lack of quality instruction

Lack of quiet spaces

Lack of structure of in person learning lead to lack of motivation to complete online tasks

Library's are closed and I need quiet.

Limiting distractions
Living back with parents who work essential jobs 2nd shift, i.e. up until 3/4am every night and many classes have exams at 8am or 9am

Losing motivation and lots of distractions

Mental health, death due to Covid

Money and lack of social interaction

Motivation
Not everyone lives in a home environment that is set up for online zoom calls multiple times a day. Please consider the various SES that students come from and were expect to return to and maintain proper grades.

Not feeling as though I am learning the same amount I was in class.

Nothing, more pressure on yourself I guess

Other events and people being at home distracting.
Overall disinterest and extreme lack of motivation to continue or even to care to continue in addition to a decline in mental health.

Peers reliable and study groups are gone
Personal/ family issues resulting in lack of time and inconsistent schedule to complete assignments and attend online lectures

Professor organization

Professors changing classes entirely

Sleep schedule, lack of motivation being at home

Sometimes there are WiFi problems from zoom
Still worrying about how to come up with sufficient $ to pay rent for an apt no one was using for a bit more than a month, and inability to remove distractions from the home -- however, I did recently move back to campus so that I may now better adjust to focus on school, projects, and work.

Sudden increased family responsibilities

Super hard to focus when family is going through difficult times, hard to keep motivation

teachers wanting to change to load to heavy when it was not as bad in person

Terminated from my internship

The online classes are much less stimulating than being in a physical lecture.

The scheduled lectures format isn't great. It would be better to just have videos avaliable and just go at my own pace (I understand this wouldn't work for everyone however)

Time zone issues

Unable to have a quiet area to work.

Understanding topics that may have been easier to teach in person.

Websites/services that are used by my classes crash and do not work often. I have had issues with Moodle and Pearson

Working in a non-learning environment proves problematic.

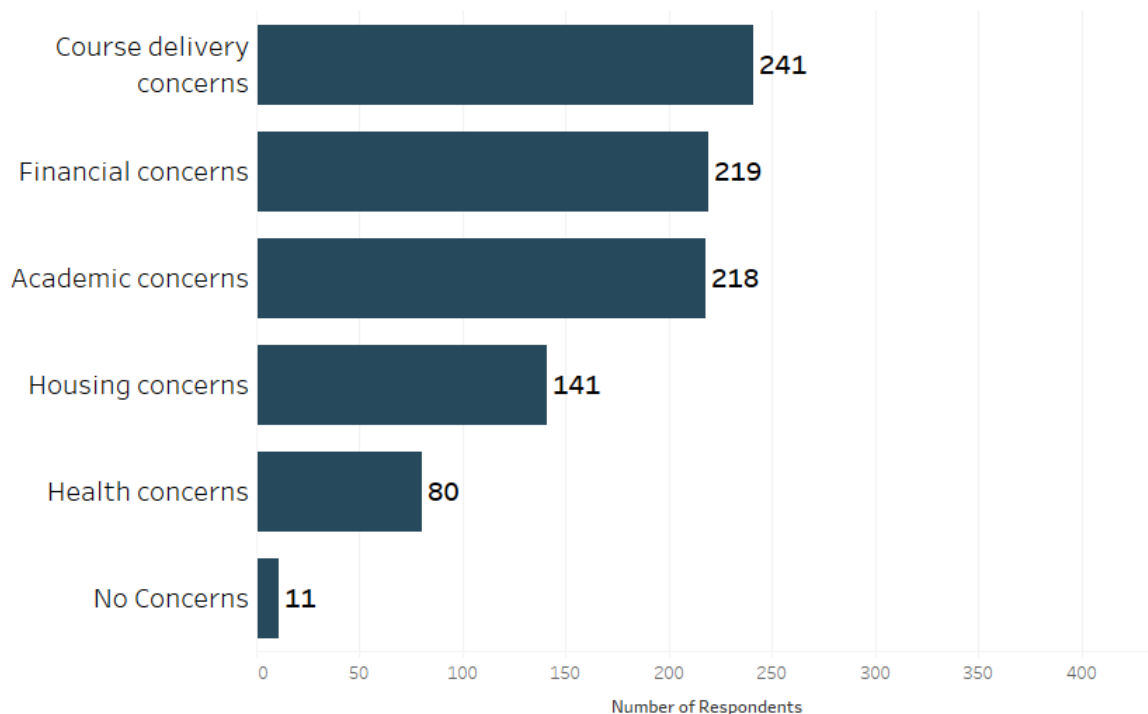# Plans for Fall 2020 Enrollment

Do you plan to enroll in classes for the Fall 2020 semester?
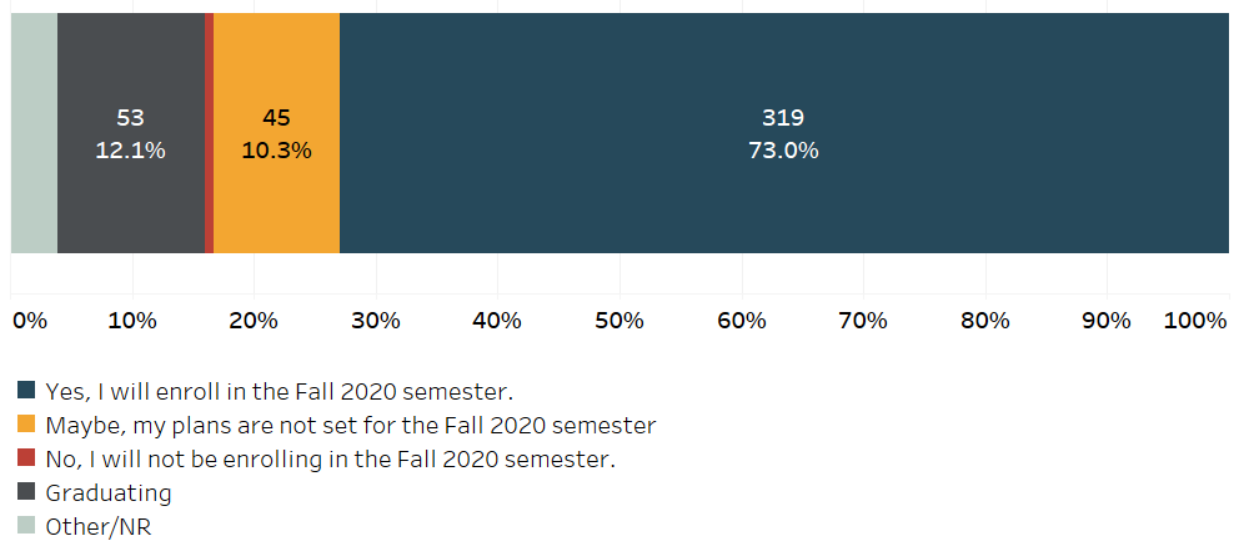
In general, students are planning on enrolling for the Fall 2020 semester. Only 3 students (0.7%) indicated that they are planning on not enrolling this fall. Alternatively, 319 students (73.0%) indicated that they will be enrolling for Fall 2020 and 45 students (10.3%) reported that their plans are not set for Fall 2020.

Note: all students who have submitted an Application for Graduation are listed as "Graduating."

Category	Number of Respondents
Course delivery concerns	241
Financial concerns	219
Academic concerns	218
Housing concerns	141
Health concerns	80
No Concerns	11

Barriers to Planning for Fall 2020 Enrollment

Course delivery concerns (241, 55.1%) outpaced Financial (218, 50.1%) and Academic concerns (218, 49.9%) when it comes to how students are making enrollment decisions for the Fall 2020 semester. While it is clear that the University's pending decision on course delivery is on students' mind, it does not seem to be translating to whether or not they will enroll for Fall 2020. The full list of other barriers given is listed below.

Other Comments on Barriers to Planning for Fall 2020 Enrollment:

Available tutors

Concerns about in-person classes being shifted to online again in the Fall 2020 semester

I am hearing rumors about universities being online for fall 2020, and as an arts student, if that is true it is not worth it for me to enroll in the fall semester. My arts classes are all hands on and workshop based. I can not afford wasting a semesters worth of money for a less than adequate education.

I might not be able to work over the summer due to the virus. I need to work in order to be able to pay for my housing.

I worry if there will be in person fall classes.

If the semester is online. I wouldn't be able to handle, emotionally/mentally, doing an entire semester online

I'm worried I won't get a hold of an advisor and I'll lose out on the knowledge I need for that fall semester setup.

Lack of true college experience such as making friends

Online classes for Fall 2020

parking and whether I will need it (I really hope that classes in the fall are on campus)

So many concerns

White-privilege and racial micro-aggressions

Additional Comments

Please let us know if you have any questions, comments, concerns, feedback or needs that the Office of Minority Student Affairs can address.

Students were also given the opportunity to provide any additional qualitative feedback that the OMSA could respond to. In total, 44 responses were given. After initial review, 15 comments were identified that merited individual feedback from the OMSA. In the coming days, the OMSA will send a thank you email to all respondents that includes generalized feedback and university resources that address concerns raised in the feedback form.
While these additional comments address a wide array of topics, three major categories emerged: Academic and Financial Policies (including issues with communications from the University and concerns for specific populations within the campus community); Difficulty in Transitioning to the Online Environment (including individual academic and personal challenges and issues with unprepared faculty); and, comments regarding access to and availability of the OMSA's services. All additional comments are listed below, by theme.

Academic and Financial Policies

A fellow student wrote this and I want to share with you how everyone feels about this.

All the classes I was taking before the pandemic I LOVED them, learning about mental health in Latinx communities, cities of the worlds, graffiti, food nutrition, and learning about non state violent actors. My midterm grades were all A's. After spring break it all changed, life as we knew it changed, from every corner of the world to uiuc.

So when I wrote the two open letters, one addressed to the faculty and one to the University of Illinois system administration, I wasn't thinking of what was happening month ago. I was thinking about the future. When I wrote the letter, I knew that First generation students and Low Income students were going to be impacted the most.

Which is why I asked for tuition and fees to be refunded, the cancellation of the rest of the semester, and universal pass. Not because I wanted a handout, not because I am lazy. But because when first generation and low income students are back at home, we're no longer full time students. We are care givers, we are the bread winners, we're translators, we are everything BUT students.

Since the letter, I've been having countless meetings with administration-- some have been productive and some have been boring. However, I've still come to realize that no matter how well intentioned some of our administrators are, they are still part of a system that was built for and by rich white people. Meaning that at the core, it will only be helpful for those who are rich.

First generation and low income students aren't institutionally represented. Some of my friends aren't institutionally represented. And I find it upsetting and quite frankly disgusted that some professors are still grading for attendance, that some professors are forcing students to show their face during lectures, that some professors are not thinking of the

hardships people outside their social economic class are facing.

I mentioned that I loved all my classes and my midterm grades were all A's. I was on my way to once again get on the dean's list. But that was when I was a full time student, when I had world renowned resources, when I had La Casa Cultural Latina as a resource, when I had my friends and family as my support system, when I wasn't worried whether my parents, who are "essential workers", were going to come back home while they're being exploited by corporations that don't offer hazard pay, nor health insurance. I've literally went from on track to being on the Dean's list one again to dropping one of my classes and almost failing 2 of my classes, and no, the no credit/ credit will help me from picking up my grades.

We're literally in a pandemic, let it go. Grant us our A's. Prorate us tuition for next year idc. Stop making college students worry about some letter grade that will mean nothing (for most of us) after we graduate.

We, along with everyone in the world, are trying to see tomorrow. I ask for you, Univeristy Faculty and Administration, to let us see tomorrow.

Please read this and understand our struggles we student have to go through. Thankyou
All classes should be Pass/Fail. My classes have gotten significantly harder since switching the online and none of my classes are changing they're syllabus or assignments. We have exactly the same assignments, including nearly impossible group assignments, and 0 sympathy is given from my professors. Even though I'm a student with DRES, I feel very helpless.

Commencement make it happen please.
Do you know if the university will be going online next semester? Are there any updates because everything seems to be up in the air?
Going home from spring break fully expecting to return to campus a week later to being thrown into online classes within 5 days of the announcement with no help or transition phase was unprofessional by this university.
Holding face-to-face instruction in August is too early and will ignore a second wave of the virus spreading. please consider having online courses for fall semester
I believe that for the type of instruction we are getting we should not have to pay such large amounts of money because the delivery and effectiveness is very poor. For example summer classes will be held online yet prices are not going to change, but the effectiveness of the content is not worth as much as it is.
I believe that the University of Illinois should suspend all classes until further notice . I love school I really do but in a classroom environment. I cannot adapt to online nor can countless others in similar situations.
I have already received my award letter for the next school. Because of Covid-19, my parents are out of work. We might not be able to pay for the charges the school is asking for. Will there changes to the award letters due to this epidemic?
I know that you cannot fix the problem. Please put yourselves in our shoes as students and recognize how this situation is changing our lives. Our very expensive and meaningful education is being altered and the overall college experience is being taken away from us. If students are showing that they are doing their best from home then their grades should reflect that. I refuse to pay the money I am to receive grades that do not accurately

represent what my experience entailed and what I am capable of IN THE CLASS ROOM.

I would strongly suggest that we make sure that we do in-person fall 2020 classes.
If classes are going to continue to be online then there needs to be more clear instructions from professors about what they expect and classes should not be live. Lectures should be recorded and extended deadlines should be given as students are extremely displaced and not in the best learning environment
If I fall into academic probation again and or get academically dismissed, can I make an appeal because of the Covid-19 epidemic? I'm concerned my grades won't be above a 2.0 this semester and that I will get academically dismissed
I'm not sure if they're concerns that OMSA can address, but I don't believe online courses have the same value as in person classes. I'm no longer able to work on campus and I don't feel like I'm learning much even though I'm still paying for expensive tuition. As a first generation student, I feel overwhelmed and don't really want to come back in the fall.
Is there any information about courses in fall 2020? Will we continue to be using online courses rather than in-person instruction?

Please try to put everyone's thoughts into consideration

Should keep services open over the summer
The online classes are nowhere near as educating or helpful as the in person classes, and I think the University should offer a partial refund for the 8 week portion where we missed out on what we paid for.
The transition to online instruction by the University of Illinois has been horrible. The communication is bad, many instructors are not trained in teaching online courses (and it shows), and the University refuses to acknowledge the thousands of students that are calling for a partial refund for this semester. We are not receiving the education that we signed up for and paid for, and we deserve to get money back. On top of that, there are countless facilities that we, as students, fund and are no longer using. We deserve a refund for the difference in the education we are all receiving and for the services we are no longer using.
UIUC Housing should be investigated the way they treated me after returning from spring break this year. I was put in a bug infested room at PAR and unfortunately had to return home because of the unsanitary conditions. One of the many problems that occurred. I believe I was unfairly put on minor probation (in regards to violating the student conduct, for example they put a noise complaint against me because of the complaints I made regarding living conditions I brought up to staff) because of the complaints I made regarding the transition. Not sure if OMSA could help in appealing this, but I was too scared to appeal it myself because fear of expulsion.
We need to be notified early on if classes will proceed in person during Fall of 2020. The University should also urge student housing partners to consider shortening leases
Will Fall 2020 be online as well? I like being home and find it to be a lot better.

Also, I am taking Ling 307 Semantics and Pragmatics. Is that a Pass/Fail class? If not, is there the possibility of it being so?
Will students be refunded to compensate for tuition as we transition to online classes and for expenses students are facing in these uncertain times?

Will there be any accommodations for students who own on apartments on campus but are still required to pay rent? (Towers at Third)

Difficulty in Transitioning to the Online Environment

Although digital transition was necessary, it's very difficult to adapt to and I'm losing motivation from it.

Classroom interactive seem more limited than in the classroom.

Ever since everything has been online it's been harder to understand the material.
I have concerns with my schoolwork. My grades have been heavily impacted and they are only going down. I think my only option is to apply for credit no credit, but it would have been extremely useful if we could decide that after taking our final exams.
It has been difficult to pay attention to lectures than if I were in class and having motivation to do homework, but it's nice to have something to do during all of this at least. The worst is just not knowing when, and if, things will get back to normal.
Last semester CEE student and primary care taker of child during the day. Not enough time for changed learning and course expectations during the transition have been mostly unchanged.
My professors have been struggling to adapt to the online format and aren't being understanding on our end. It's very frustrating when lectures are not post and office hours are constantly cancelled.
One of my professors seemed ill equipped to online learning, and seemed as if he maybe was unable to get the necessary help to set up the course on compass, and has been sending a high number of emails as lectures and is more confusing as a student since compass is much more user friendly than this professors system.

Semester lease
The abrupt transition from in person learning to e-learning has been a little difficult. I am thankful that I have access to reliable internet and a place where I can do work, however, my motivation to do school work has decreased significantly
The transition was especially difficult for me because I was emergency evacuated from study abroad, and had to take many second eight week courses to maintain my scholarships, yet the courses did not count towards any of my requirements. The courses are fast paced and condensed, and it's very time consuming and tiring to work on them all daily.
This global pandemic (COVID-19) has proven to have several financial and academic challenges in my journey. Being an Acting Major, I have been taken away the opportunity to effectively learn, train, and experiment with my craft that I am paying for. Not saying it was stripped away completely, but it is simply not the same. It doesn't have the same rigor or experiential feel as before which has hindered my learning and effective usefulness in which I can take into my professional journey. My family has lost access to job security and with the world in Chaos, it's hard to stay motivated and connected. Zoom is not the most effective tool for all colleges and school institutions to participate in classroom instruction and it have had several technical difficulties and other challengers.
this has been the worst semester of my life i have never been more stressed out or had worse academic performance this is not fair AT ALL

The OMSA's Services

I am a transfer student and I feel as though I wasn't given a proper introduction to what this office is. I had no idea it existed until after my friends explained it to me like two weeks ago. I could have greatly benefited from your services.

I feel like you guys provide resources but do not advocate for the students against larger University decisions. It can be hard to want to work and contact when your office seems biases and nonsupportive to students.

I have greatly appreciated receiving emails from OMSA because it makes me feel included! Does OMSA offer mentoring services for upperclassmen? (I would like to have one, not be a mentor)

Is there a way to get help in choosing classes for me. I also would to know if there is any service or help I can get to help me choose a career path?

Thank you for all that you offer! You are appreciated.

Where can I access the OMSA services?

While I have not taken advantage of any of the online services offered by OMSA yet, I greatly appreciate them all as well as the great job with sending consistent emails to ensure that students are aware of them. I will most likely take advantage of at least one service before the semester is over