

Administrative Activities Review

Office of Student Academic Success

(Tutoring Services):

Division of Student Success

Basic Facts and Description of Unit

Mission and Goals:

The Office of Student Academic Success (OSAS) offers direct, individual student services to help UA's diverse student population persist to degree. OSAS services target both traditional and non-traditional students and provide the support needed to help them succeed in their academic courses. OSAS coordinates student academic support provided at Bierce Library (Tutorial Services, Bierce Writing Commons, Bierce Math Lab, and the Learning Assistant Program), the Polsky Building (Math Lab, Writing Lab, and Reading and Study Skills Center) and online tutoring through eTutoring.

Two of the University's central aspirational goals are to "increase diversity with measurable improvements" and to "improve year to year persistence to graduation" (Vision 2020 4). OSAS strives to provide the academic support students need to make these aspirational goals a reality. The tutors available to work one-on-one with students struggling with challenging STEM courses, the Learning Assistants are embedded into gateway general education courses, and the writing consultants providing support for writing projects at all points of an academic program are the individuals who can make a difference for students facing roadblocks to academic success. Most important to the vision of OSAS is that its services are not limited by a particular program or college. These programs connect with students across disciplines and across the University to support persistence and retention.

Services:

OSAS offers students and the campus community services in math, writing, and general education courses. The goal of the department is to make students' academic journey an easier one by helping them acquire the skills, knowledge, and confidence to become independent and successful learners in subjects or with topics they find challenging. OSAS includes Bierce Library Tutoring and the Polsky tutoring labs.

Math Labs: Skilled, professional faculty and fully trained peer tutors help students learn the problem-solving skills and strategies needed in the most common math courses offered on campus. Step-by-step guidance, clarification, and study strategies are provided to allow students to master concepts and overcome the anxiety many students experience toward math courses.

Writing Labs: Experienced faculty and fully trained peer tutors offer help with any paper in any course by assisting in all stages of the writing process, from gathering ideas to revising and proofreading. This includes not only assistance with undergraduate coursework but also coursework at the graduate level.

eTutoring: Online tutoring is available to all UA students as part our participation in the Ohio eTutoring Consortium through the Ohio Board or Regents. Students receive assistance in math courses using synchronous eChats, while writing assignments in any subject area can be submitted asynchronously for feedback via the eWriting Lab. In addition, students can post questions in science courses and other select courses for asynchronous feedback. eTutoring allows students to receive tutoring help on a more flexible schedule and allows UA to provide tutorial support to students enrolled in online courses, College Credit Plus, Distance Learning, and in courses offered off-campus.

Tutorial Services: One-on-one peer tutoring is available to all UA students in a wide variety of disciplines, with an emphasis on General Education and foundation courses.

Learning Assistants: Specially trained, in-class tutors, who offer study sessions and support for General Education classes, team with faculty mentors to help students master and gain confidence in the coursework. Learning Assistants are often placed in math, science, and language courses with larger enrollments that have been historically challenging.

Critical Partners:

OSAS has developed cooperative partnerships with several internal units at UA, as well as external organizations at the community and state levels. On campus, OSAS regularly collaborates with several academic units, especially those within the College of Arts and Sciences, Nursing, Audiology, the College of Applied Science and Technology (including College Credit Plus programs), and Developmental Programs, to identify key courses for tutorial support and those courses that would most significantly benefit from Learning Assistants. Additionally, OSAS works closely with several other administrative units, such as the Office of Accessibility, the Office of Multicultural Development, Adult Focus, and Academic Advising, to coordinate services, identify students who could benefit from tutorial services, and to develop tutorial programs and areas of assistance best serving the campus community. As part of the Student Success Center, OSAS regularly collaborates with Learning Communities, the Akron Experience, and New Student Orientation.

OSAS also maintains strong off-campus relationships. Major partners at the state level are the Ohio eTutoring Collaborative and the Ohio Technology Consortium (OH-TECH), with whom OSAS works closely to in provide online tutorial services to the UA community. Additionally, OSAS collaborates with a number of community organizations, including the Greater Akron Math Educator's Society (GAMES), Ohio Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and Cleveland Clinic's eExpressions program.

Customers/End-Users or Services:

OSAS's customers/end-users are students and the academic departments of UA, and the department is focused on serving their needs and fostering their success through intensive, professional tutoring and

academic assistance. Learning assistants serve as vital liaisons between faculty and students, fostering increased mastery and deeper application through increased communication and interpretation of course concepts, goals, and objectives. During the 2017-2018 academic year, the department served 5,183 students, who attended 27,149 tutoring sessions. During the 2016-2017 academic year, the department served 6,218 students, who attended 32,739 tutoring sessions. During the 2015-2016 academic year, the department served 6,700 students, who attended 41,254 sessions.

Key Performance Analysis:

OSAS Unit	Visits/Students 2017-2018	Visits/Students 2016-2017	Visits/Students 2015-2016
Bierce Math Lab	3222/496	3678/566	5479/671
Tutorial Services	3369/966	3885/1177	4692/1579
Bierce Writing Commons	1796/833	1970/883	2767/1292
Learning Assistants	6013/863	8908/1401	9662/1365
eTutoring	996/405	1136/485	1202/518
Polsky Labs*	10,037 attendance/ 1387 students	10,890 attendance/ 1400 students	15,180 attendance/ 1118 students

*Polsky Labs' statistics are maintained for attendance (the total number of students present during all times the labs are open and reflects students with tutoring sessions lasting longer than the standard 30-minute visit). Visits would reflect only 30-minute sessions, but the Polsky Labs specialize in 60-minute sessions to allow for accommodations and in-depth, individualized sessions.

OSAS Unit	Visits/Students Summer 2017	Visits/Students Summer 2016	Visits/Students Summer 2015
Bierce Writing Commons	548/87	681/108	721/116
Math/Subject Tutoring	1168/146	1591/198	1666/211

OSAS currently is measured by number of visits per unit. These numbers are not growing, but rather are holding constant or declining slightly in a manner consistent with and mirroring UA enrollment trends. This is actually quite remarkable, given the drop in enrollment, fewer hours of operation (because of budget cuts), and fewer available tutoring staff (also because of budget cuts).

Available Services: OSAS has had to limit hours of service in math, tutoring, and writing, providing fewer hours of availability and fewer tutors at peak times. These cuts, combined with declining UA enrollment, have resulted in fewer opportunities for students to receive and utilize tutorial services.

Learning Assistants: In 2008, OSAS had funding to support 50 Learning Assistants and reached students in math, science, business, modern languages, and general education social sciences courses. This academic year OSAS could fund 12 Learning Assistants and focused efforts on science and math courses with high DFW rates. Given the demonstrated results of supplemental instruction for at-risk student populations, a robust Learning Assistant program is key to student retention and persistence.

Outreach and Marketing: With such limited resources, OSAS units are unable to support the outreach activities they used to offer for students and are unable to offer expanded programming. The writing commons, for example, had developed multiple classroom outreach presentations, but no longer have the staff or resources to provide these services.

Brief Assessment:

The units included in OSAS (Tutorial Services, Learning Assistants, the math and writing centers at Bierce and Polsky, and eTutoring) could not be more central to student academic success, retention, and persistence to degree. This is especially true for first-generation students, adult students, and students from underserved populations. OSAS units provide qualified, trained one-on-one academic support for students. Students build relationships with tutors and learning assistants, and these professionals are the first line of support to the faculty of the University in modeling study strategies to students at risk.

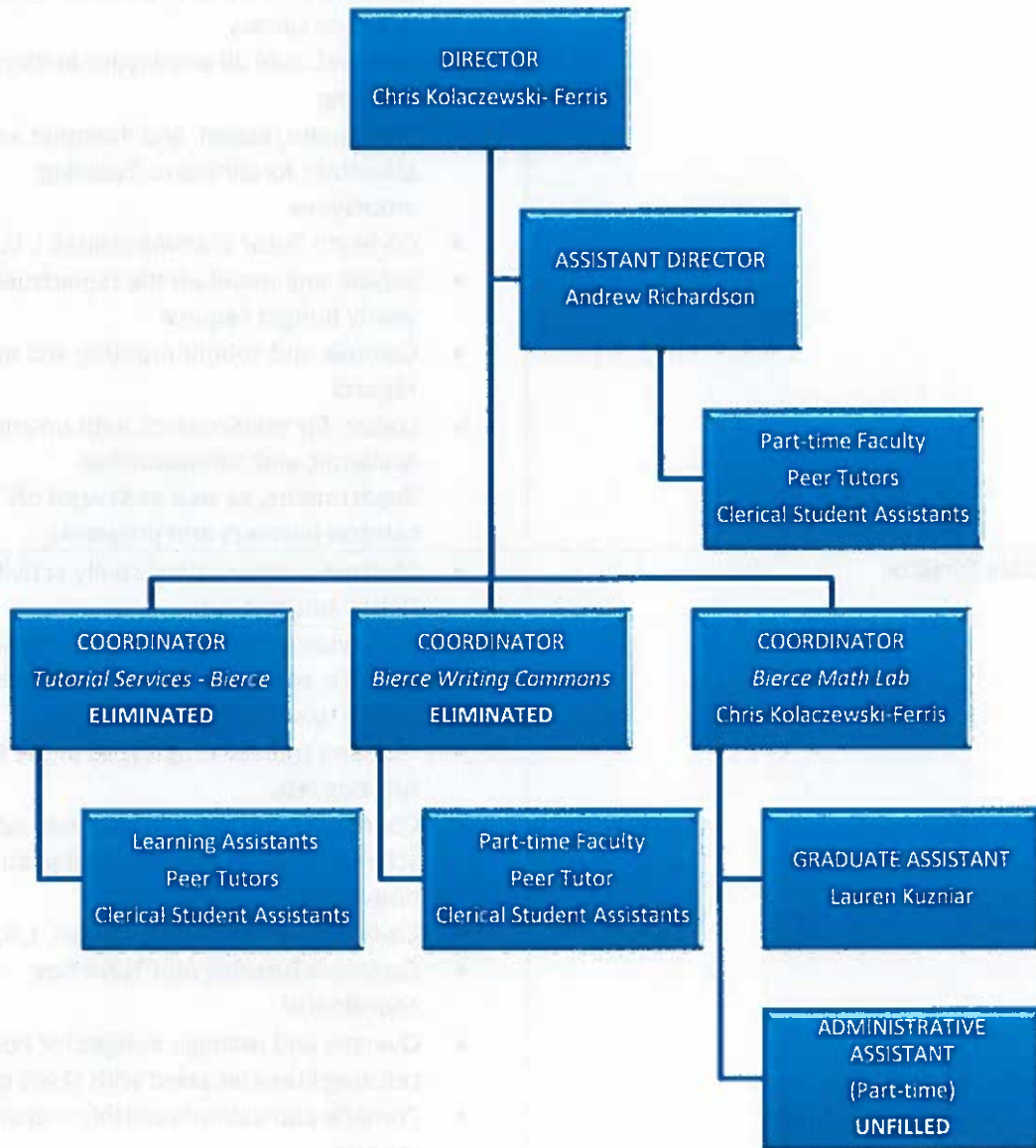
At the completion of the academic year 2017-18, OSAS held its own despite declining enrollments, increased class size, budget cuts, and a reduced tutoring staff. OSAS is focusing on providing the most effective academic support it can by directing its resources at those areas most critical for retention and persistence. Gateway courses with high DFW rates (e.g., General Organic Biochemistry, Anatomy and Physiology) are top priorities for both tutors and LA's. Cuts are made where student demand is limited.

The writing centers are focusing resources on working with first-year writing students and non-native speakers, who now comprise more than 25% of the students seeking writing support. The consultants focus on their one-on-one work with students rather than the larger outreaches and workshops.

Resources:

The biggest challenge for OSAS continues to be funding. The tutoring units at UA have weathered major cuts, including a 30% cut in 2013 (plus additional subsequent yearly cuts) and the loss of three full-time positions since 2011. OSAS is struggling to recover and provide the hours and services our students need. Underfunding of tutoring and supplemental instruction has profound impacts on our services.

Personnel:



Two Full-time Contract Professionals, Director (1) and Assistant Director (1)

<p>(1) Director</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental administration and coordination with Assistant Director to create a campus-wide tutoring service • Supervise and coordinate the operations of OSAS, as well as the Bierce Math Labs, Bierce Writing Commons, Tutoring Office, and Learning Assistants Program
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervision of PT faculty, peer tutors, learning assistants, and clerical assistants in Bierce Library • Hire and train all employees in Bierce Tutoring • Coordinate, assign, and maintain work schedules for all Bierce Tutoring employees • Co-teach Tutor Training classes I, II, III • Submit and maintain the department's yearly budget request • Compile and submit monthly and annual reports • Liaison for relationships with on-campus academic and administrative departments, as well as several off-campus partners and programs
<p>(1) Assistant Director</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage and coordinate daily activities of Polsky tutoring labs • Supervision of PT faculty, peer tutors, eTutors, and clerical assistants in the Polsky tutoring labs • Hire and train all employees in the Polsky tutoring labs • Coordinate, assign, and maintain work schedules for all Polsky tutoring lab employees • Co-teach Tutor Training classes, I, II, III • Campus eTutoring and TutorTrac coordinator • Oversee and manage budget for Polsky tutoring labs and assist with OSAS budget • Compile and submit monthly and annual reports • Liaison for relationships with on-campus academic and administrative departments, as well as several off-campus partners and programs

One Graduate Assistant

The Graduate Assistant for OSAS plays a critical role in the department's tutor training program, daily operations, long-term planning, reporting, and analysis. The Graduate Assistant co-teaches the Tutor Training I, II, and III courses with the Director and Assistant Director, provides administrative assistance

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and oversight for clerical student assistants and the tutoring labs as necessary, and plays a key role in data gathering and analysis that forms the foundation for several departmental reports.

Part-time Professional Faculty Tutors (Math, Writing, and eTutoring) – currently 22 (this number can vary slightly by semester)

Rationale for use of part-time faculty:

OSAS employs part-time faculty to work with undergraduate and graduate students, and these faculty positions are central to providing success and stability to the units they serve. Their importance has increased since the College of Arts and Sciences changed its policies relative to assigning graduate students to academic support units.

Part-time faculty provide the following to Bierce Tutoring and the Polsky tutoring labs:

- On-site supervision of peer tutors
- On-site training of peer tutors in math and writing
- On-site training and supervision of Practicum graduate assistants each fall semester in the Writing Commons
- On-site supervision during all lab open hours
- Classroom outreach activities
- Experienced tutors for developmental students and international students
- Expertise to support tutoring of graduate students
- Curriculum and discipline expertise to assist in programmatic development
- Skills to support OSAS activities (blogs, web support, Facebook)
- Exclusive staffing and support for the e-Tutoring initiative

Student Peer Tutors – currently 85 (this number varies each semester based on budget and demand)

Clerical Student Assistants – currently 17 (this number varies each semester based on budget and need)

Learning Assistants (students) – currently 12 (this number varies depending on budgetary funding)

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Financials:

Main Operating Account – 202820 (Includes Administration, Part-time Faculty, Graduate Assistant, Clerical Student Assistants, Fringe Benefits, and Supplies and Services)

	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Budgeted Amount	\$454,260.32	\$454,672.96	\$358,958.28	\$396,110.50	\$366,698.38
Actual Expenses	\$448,461.26	\$448,303.34	\$384,480.16	\$435,171.15	\$387,535.68

Bierce Peer Tutors Account – 202811

	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Budgeted Amount	\$138,269.17	\$124,159.67	\$142,423.06	\$186,972.73	\$189,944.02
Actual Expenses	\$103,316.99	\$118,138.32	\$116,444.10	\$140,199.20	\$184,624.74

Learning Assistants Account – 202812

	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Budgeted Amount	\$27,005.44	\$25,996.06	\$60,229.10	\$61,119.40	\$41,345.60
Actual Expenses	\$23,659.98	\$23,432.66	\$58,683.90	\$60,944.85	\$41,156.65

Polsky Peer Tutor and Clerical Assistants Account – 202850

	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Budgeted Amount	\$51,627.34	\$37,645.77	N/A	N/A	N/A
Actual Expenses	\$45,679.03	\$52,250.48	N/A	N/A	N/A

This account was controlled by Developmental Programs until 2016 and contains overlap with partial salaries and fringe benefits for two of that department's full-time faculty.

Future Plans

Focus on Primary Functions: OSAS will continue to focus on its primary function for the University, which is providing quality tutoring in math, writing, and general education courses to support student academic success at the Bierce Library and Polsky building locations, as well as through online tutoring.

Examine Services : Given the current fiscal challenges at the University, OSAS plans to examine their tutoring offerings thoroughly. The goal is to target tutors and Learning Assistants in courses and times that will be the most beneficial and effective in helping the most students. OSAS will continue to develop, revise, and expand eTutoring services to meet the increasing demand for online tutoring.

Reach Out to Additional Student Populations: OSAS will pursue new opportunities to build relationships with previously untapped student populations with new academic units, administrative departments, and organizations throughout the campus community.

Build on Partnerships with Other Campus Administrative Service Providers (Office of Accessibility, Office of Multicultural Development, Adult Focus, etc.): OSAS will build on its ongoing partnerships by coordinating academic support to students identified as in need of assistance to ensure persistence and degree completion.

Build on Existing Partnerships with Academic Units: OSAS already has in place partnerships with academic departments in the College of Arts and Sciences, Nursing, Audiology, College of Applied Science and Technology, and Developmental Programs, but the department will continue to seek ways to strengthen those partnerships and build new ones.

APPENDIX

Office of Students Academic Success (Tutoring) within UA Structure

Student Success Center

