



Office of the
Dean of Students

STUDENT AFFAIRS | THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

ANNUAL REPORT



2025 - 2026

OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mission Statement

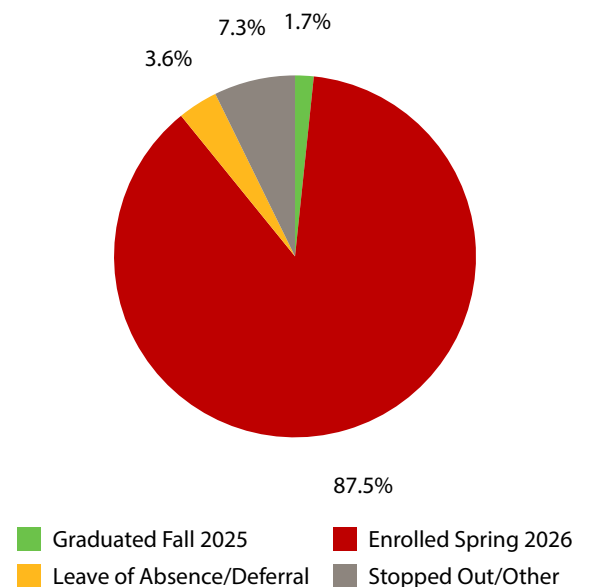
We support student well-being and success by providing care, promoting accountability, and encouraging individual growth and development.

Our Purpose

The Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS) works to advocate, support, and develop students as they navigate their time at the University of Utah. We create and offer educational and leadership experiences that help students thrive in a communal environment. We actively engage in conversations that promote compassionate, welcoming, and safe campus communities. In working with students, we are responsive to their needs and assist them in their academic and personal endeavors. In addition to these core principles, the ODOS serves as an advocate for students facing challenges to their success as students and work to empower students to know and understand their rights and responsibilities as members of our community.

Persistence After Engagement

The ODOS continues to examine the relationship between our work with students and their persistence by tracking student outcomes. Data from Fall 2025 indicate that 87.5% of students who engaged with ODOS services subsequently enrolled in Spring 2026. Another 3.6% took a leave of absence or deferred enrollment, and 1.7% graduated at the end of Fall 2025. The ODOS plans to continue to track and review enrollment patterns among the students we work with, and to look for other ways to analyze student success.





Integration of the Office of Residence Life

Integrating Residence Life into the Office of the Dean of Students has enhanced collaboration, improved coordination, and strengthened student support through joint training, consistent engagement, and shared initiatives.

A key component was embedding Student Rights & Responsibilities staff within Residence Life and empowering ORL staff to address community-impacting incidents. This enabled the team to manage a 32% increase in the number of students involved in the accountability process while maintaining timely case resolution and improving responsiveness to community concerns. Continued collaboration will be essential as the university expands its housing capacity.

Students Served

This year **3958** Students engaged in either the support or accountability processes with the Office of the Dean of Students, an **increase of 11.3%** from 2024-25.

11%

Compliance Score

This year, the ODOS worked with the Director of Compliance in the Office of General Counsel to randomly sample and evaluate 10 cases each month for compliance with the recommendations of the 2022 Husch Blackwell audit. The percentage of fully compliant cases, among those randomly sampled for review, improved from 76% for Fall 2025 to **89% for Spring 2026**.

89%

Formal Resolution

Cases resulting in formal resolutions **increased by 50%** from 2024-25, with notable growth in both cases with and without student engagement. In particular, the increase in Formal Resolution case where students are engaging with the process indicates that more students are understanding and exercising their rights through policy.

50%

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Integration of Office of Residence Life

Integrating the Office of Residence Life (ORL) into the Office of the Dean of Students has strengthened collaboration and unified student support efforts. ODOS staff participated in summer training for ORL professional staff, attended monthly meetings, and joined 3-4 tabletop exercises. They also assisted with ORL events such as Move-In, Move-Out, and Late-Night Breakfast. Staff from both teams connected at the ORL end-of-year picnic, ODOS field trips, and countless lunches. Through these intentional collaborations, our teams have developed shared practices, stronger relationships, and improved coordination—resulting in more seamless, student-centered services across functional areas.

As part of this integration, staff from the Student Rights & Responsibilities (R&R) team were embedded in Residence Life, and ORL staff were empowered to address community-impacting incidents. These changes enabled the R&R team to manage a 32% increase in students engaging in the accountability process without negatively impacting case processing timeliness and also enhanced the team's ability to address community concerns, such as noise complaints. As we prepare for anticipated growth with the opening of Trailhead and additional housing facilities, continued collaboration and investment in staff, such as this, will be critical to maintaining this standard of care.

Reorganization of BIT to Increase Efficiency & Align with Best Practices

The ODOS reorganized the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) by establishing core and ad hoc teams and streamlining meeting organization and training. These changes aligned BIT with national best practices and improved meeting efficiency.

Personalized Referrals for Alcohol and Cannabis Sanctions

The Student Rights & Responsibilities (R&R) team takes an individualized approach to alcohol and cannabis education by personally reviewing and grading every alcohol and cannabis sanction quiz submitted on Canvas. This process creates a meaningful touchpoint with each student, allowing staff to provide tailored feedback, reinforce learning outcomes, and connect students with campus resources. This year, **284 students** completed the Alcohol and Cannabis Canvas courses, and each received personalized outreach with information about resources such as the Center for Campus Wellness, University Counseling Center, and other support services. By providing educational guidance and resource referrals, the team promotes student well-being, responsible decision-making, and academic success.

Continued & Sustained Success with Professional Development

The ODOS continued to strengthen professional development to include a MasterClass subscription for departmental leadership across the Office of Residential Life, the Student Parent Support Center, the Veteran Support Center, Fraternity & Sorority Life, and the ODOS. Additionally, we offered several opportunities for staff to attend professional trainings connected to:

- NASPA trainings
- ASCA trainings
- Trauma-informed training and ongoing reading group
- Motivators (a personality-type indicator)
- DiSC assessment (a work personality-type indicator)
- StrengthsFinder (a strengths-type indicator)

and other development tools. These investments have increased staff engagement, implementation of best practices, morale, and a strong sense of purpose within the office.

Responsible Stewardship of Resources

The Office of the Dean of Students demonstrated responsible budget stewardship by strategically investing in areas that directly support student success, staff effectiveness, and organizational growth. Careful financial management funded key initiatives, including professional development, equipment and technology updates, ongoing support for the Utah Asia Campus, and increased participation in campus-wide committees, task forces, and collaborative initiatives. These investments ensured resources were allocated for maximum impact, strengthening effectiveness, and increasing the office's contributions and visibility across the university.

MAJOR CHALLENGES

The ODOS is facing a number of challenges in the next academic year. These challenges are significant and will require ODOS to make some difficult decisions. However, the ODOS is committed to meeting the needs of the campus community and will work to address these challenges in the coming year.

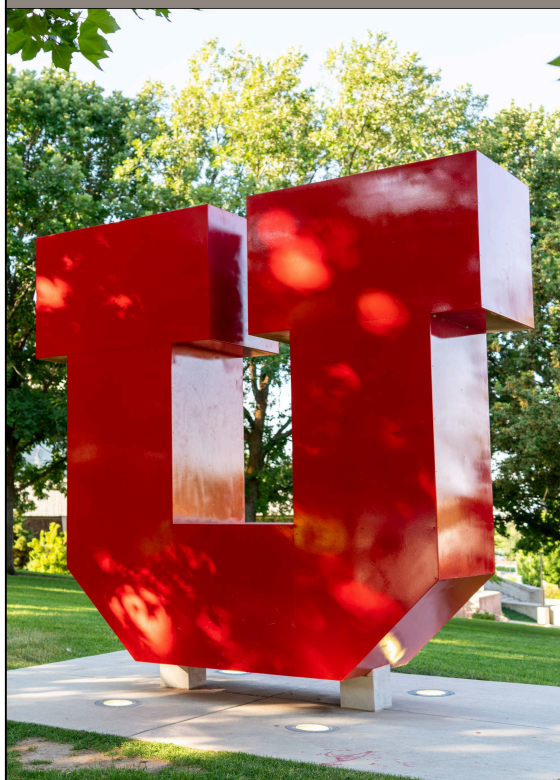
Sustaining Cohesion Across an Expanding and Distributed Team

As the Office of the Dean of Students grows, maintaining cohesion, communication, and collaboration across multiple locations remains a key challenge. While integrating Residence Life has created new partnership opportunities, geographically dispersed teams and evolving student needs require ongoing attention to ensure a unified, student-centered approach. To address this, the office has embedded Student Rights & Responsibilities staff and Resident Outreach Coordinators within the residential community, strengthening connections between student support, conduct, and residential experience. Embedding an Assistant Director from Student Rights & Responsibilities within Residence Life has also created a vital link between functional areas, facilitating communication, coordinating services, and reinforcing shared goals. These staffing structures, regular team engagement, and ongoing collaboration will further strengthen the office's culture of connection and seamless student support.



Growing Demand for Services

This year **3958** Students engaged in either the support or accountability processes with the Office of the Dean of Students, an **increase of 11.3%** from 2024-25. As student enrollment continues to grow, the Office of the Dean of Students faces an ongoing challenge in meeting increasing demand for its services and programs. This challenge is amplified by the simultaneous growth of the on-campus residential population, which creates additional needs related to student support, behavioral intervention, case management, and community well-being. While the office has taken proactive steps to increase capacity through strategic staffing investments, process improvements, and enhanced collaboration, demand continues to grow every year. Ensuring that students receive timely, effective, and personalized support will require continued assessment of staffing needs, student demand, and available resources. Sustained institutional investment will remain essential as the office scales services in line with the university's ongoing enrollment and housing growth.



Communication and Change Management Across Campus

A major challenge for the Office of the Dean of Students will be effectively communicating changes to faculty and staff across the university. As student needs continue to evolve and Student Affairs adjusts supports, services, and structures, changes are occurring faster than traditional communication channels can accommodate. This has created a gap between the implementation of new policies and faculty and staff awareness. Since faculty and staff are often the first point of contact for students, timely and accurate information is critical. The office will need to develop improved strategies for communicating updates, increasing resource visibility, and keeping campus partners informed.

STATUS OF STRATEGIC PROJECTS

Centralization of Student Support & Accountability Efforts

Over the past year, the Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS) has made significant progress in centralizing student support and accountability efforts in keeping with the 2022 external audit recommendations. The integration of ORL into ODOS has established a strong foundation for a more cohesive, collaborative, and student-focused model of support. Enhancements in case coordination, compliance oversight, and cross-team engagement are improving both staff alignment and the consistency of the student experience. Sustained refinement and evaluation will ensure the model stays responsive, effective, and consistent with institutional priorities.



Project Highlights

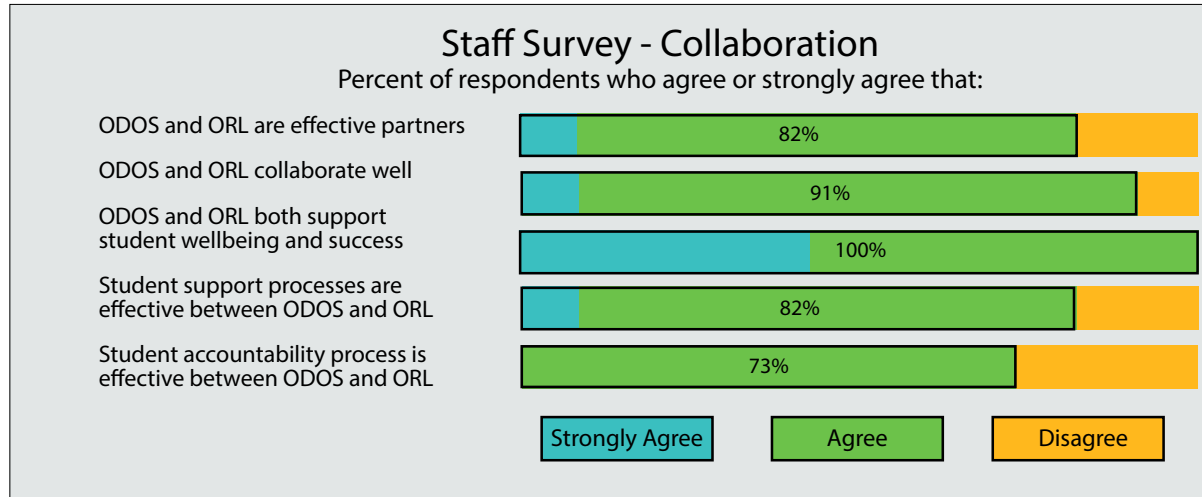
- » **Enhanced Case Coordination**
Created a dedicated staff position responsible for reviewing all incident reports and support requests. This role ensures that cases are efficiently routed to the appropriate teams, that case classifications under the Clery Act are recorded, and that appropriate referrals are made to the Office of Equal Opportunity & Title IX when applicable, thereby strengthening compliance and responsiveness.
- » **Compliance and Case Review**
Implemented a monthly review of support and accountability cases conducted by the Director of Campus Compliance. This ongoing review has given valuable feedback to improve processes and maintain consistency in outreach and documentation.
- » **Cross-Team Engagement**
Prioritized cross-team involvement in projects, meetings, and morale-building initiatives to promote a unified culture and strengthen relationships across teams.

Impact

To better understand the impact of the centralization on staff, a staff experience survey was administered in early May 2026 to gather feedback on employee experience under the new organizational structure. This effort reflects a commitment to improvement and responsiveness to staff needs.

Survey Insight

Overall, staff reported a highly supportive office environment and high levels of trust across the organization. Section 4 of the survey on ODOS and ORL Collaboration provides direct insight into areas of strength and potential for continued growth. Encouragingly, 100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that ODOS & ORL both support student wellbeing and success, and more than 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that ODOS & ORL are effective partners and collaborate well.



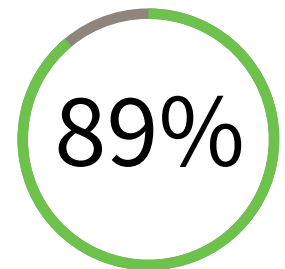
However, the open-ended responses indicate opportunities to strengthen collaboration between the offices through increased team building, joint meetings, aligned interoffice processes, and shared training. When considered alongside the quantitative results, the responses indicate that while opportunities for improvement remain, the efforts ODOS has implemented, to date, appear to be advancing progress and propelling the relationship in a positive direction.

Compliance Report Cards

ODOS has engaged in monthly compliance reviews to assess for:

- Timely Review
- Appropriate Referral
- Timelines Followed Prescribed Workflow
- Closing Notes
- Blank Fields

Over the 9 months the ODOS has engaged in this process, the approximate compliance rate has improved from 76% for Fall 2025 to 89% for Spring 2026.



Next Steps

Building on the progress achieved, the next phase will focus on refinement, assessment, and sustainability. Priorities include:

- » Utilizing insights from compliance reviews to further standardize practices and improve consistency
- » Leveraging staff feedback to improve student outcomes and team experience
- » Continuing to strengthen collaboration and shared ownership of student support and accountability processes across ODOS and ORL

Understanding and Monitoring the Reengagement of Students Who Did Not Graduate or Persist

The Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS) continues to investigate the relationship between engagement with ODOS and student persistence by developing more intentional methods to track and analyze outcomes for students who engage with our services. By utilizing improved data systems, ODOS is working to better understand students' enrollment behavior following engagement. Successfully advancing this work requires collaboration and cannot be accomplished by the Office of the Dean of Students alone. Partnership with Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management is essential to improving our understanding of student pathways, strengthening data-informed decision-making, and supporting efforts to improve student persistence, retention, and success across the institution.

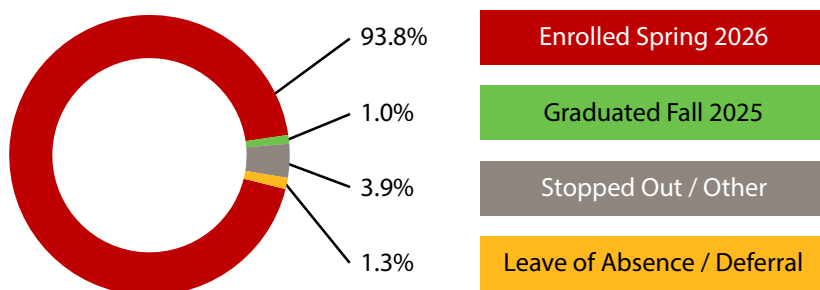
Project Highlights

- »» **Development of Tracking System**
 Created a process to review whether students who were enrolled at the time of ODOS engagement subsequently enrolled in the following semester.
- »» **Categorization of Outcomes**
 Established key categories to better understand non-enrollment patterns, including students who graduated, filed a leave of absence, were suspended, or stopped out for other reasons

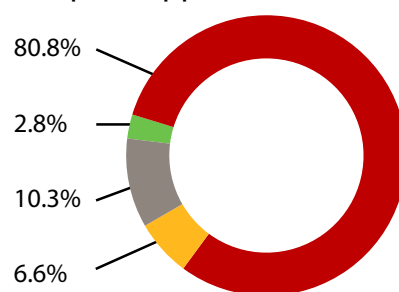
Impact

Fall 2025 to Spring 2026 Persistence Data

Student Rights & Responsibilities



Campus Support & Intervention



Next Steps

- »» Continue to refine data collection processes to ensure accuracy and completeness.
- »» Further analyze trends across student populations, engagement types, and outcomes.
- »» Explore methods to better understand and reduce the "unknown" stop-out category.

Reimagining and Realigning the Residence Life Experience

Following the bifurcation of the Housing and Dining Programs and the Office of Residence Life (ORL), Student Affairs continues to reimagine and realign the residential experience to support a more student-centered campus. In partnership with the Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS), ORL is focused on developing a staffing approach that fosters deeper relationships with students through intentional community design, including a long-term vision for “neighborhood” models to create College-Town Magic™ in our communities. This work includes evaluating current staffing structures, benchmarking peer institutions, and aligning roles to better support student engagement, safety, and holistic development within the residential environment.

Project Highlights

In fall 2023, Residence Education (now Office of Residence Life) created the Community Advisor role for student staff. This splits the Resident Advisor (RA) role into two halves: RAs focused on community building and resident support, and CAs focused on after-hours on-call, emergency response, and safety checks. While the CA program has been successful, ORL plans to sunset the CA program in fall 2027 to create a unified RA model where RAs will do both student engagement and after-hours on-call. This decision is informed by two factors:

- 1) Significant issues with the resident-to-RA ratio, with some RAs having responsibilities for around 100 residents, and
- 2) Resident confusion on which role is responsible for what aspect of their residential experience.

To inform this decision, the entire leadership team of the Office of Residence Life, as well as the Associate Director of Student Support and Assistant Director of Student Accountability for on-campus residents, the Deputy Dean of Students, and the Associate Vice President / Dean of Students, is reviewing peer institution staffing models and ORL strategic priorities to create a unified RA role that better supports residents holistically.





Impact

Improved Student Experience

A unified RA model will reduce confusion for residents by providing a single, consistent point of contact for both support and response needs.

Stronger Relationships

Rebalancing responsibilities will enable RAs to develop deeper, more meaningful connections with residents, supporting student success and retention

Enhanced Role Clarity

Streamlining roles will improve communication and accountability within residence life operations.

Next Steps

- » Create a phased implementation plan for sunsetting the CA role by Fall 2027.
- » Develop and define the structure, expectations, and training model for the unified RA role.
- » Continue collaboration with ODOS and divisional leadership to ensure alignment with the broader student support strategy.

NEW STRATEGIC PROJECTS



Student Behavioral Committee Outcome Consistency

This project aims to evaluate and improve the consistency, effectiveness, and overall value of Student Behavioral Committee (SBC) outcomes within the Student Rights & Responsibilities (R&R) process. While consistency and fairness in decision-making remain critical, this initiative also creates space to strategically reassess the SBC model itself—examining whether the current process achieves its intended goals or if alternative approaches may better support students and the institution.

Given the relatively small volume of SBC cases compared to other resolution pathways, variability in outcomes and processes may have an outsized impact on perceptions of fairness and trust. Additionally, the SBC process can feel more formal, time-intensive, and potentially stressful for students. This project will explore opportunities to improve alignment, reduce unnecessary complexity or legalistic elements, and increase timeliness, while ensuring decisions remain equitable, thoughtful, and consistent.

Ultimately, this initiative seeks to determine whether the current SBC structure is the most effective mechanism for achieving unified, fair outcomes—or whether refinements or alternative models would better meet evolving student and institutional needs.

Scope

Goals

- Assess discrepancies between SBC outcomes and other conduct processes.
- Evaluate the effectiveness and value of the SBC process relative to other resolution pathways.
- Provide evidence-based recommendations on maintaining, modifying, or streamlining the SBC model

Deadlines

Benchmark by the end of Fall and revamp by the end of Spring

Key Deliverables

- Recommendations for process adjustments, streamlining, or alternative models.
- Updated guidance, training materials, and/or pilot process design.

Project Objective and Initiatives

Strategic Objectives

- Improve Collaboration & Strategic Partnerships
- Improve Management & Practices
- Improve Student Outcomes

Strategic Initiative

- Create Proactive & Personalized Pathways

Metrics

- Alignment between SBC outcomes and established guidelines
- Frequency and nature of discrepancies across resolution pathways.
- Student experience indicators (e.g., perceived fairness, stress, clarity).

Case Life Efficiency

This project aims to improve the timeliness and efficiency of case resolution within the Student Rights & Responsibilities (R&R) team while maintaining a careful balance between speed and thoroughness. Delays in case resolution can contribute to increased anxiety, prolonged uncertainty, and negative impacts on student mental health, particularly when accountability processes remain unresolved. By improving timeliness, the project seeks to ensure that students feel heard and supported in a more responsive manner, while also enabling more timely repairs for the campus community when appropriate. Ultimately, this initiative focuses on delivering a more student-centered, fair, and efficient process that upholds accountability while reinforcing trust and well-being.

Scope

Goals

- Reduce average case resolution time.
- Increase consistency and predictability in case handling timelines and outcomes.
- Improve transparency and communication with students throughout the process.
- Strengthen staff capacity to manage caseloads effectively.

Deadlines

Fall to fall, spring to spring comparisons – review at the end of each semester.

Key Deliverables

- Standardized case resolution workflow and timeline benchmarks
- Performance dashboard for tracking timeliness metrics
- Updated communication protocols and templates
- Staff training materials and guidance documentation

Project Objective and Initiatives

Strategic Objectives

- Improve Management & Practices
- Improve Student Outcomes

Strategic Initiative

- Create Proactive & Personalized Pathways
- Optimize Health & Wellness Access

Metrics

- Average case resolution time (overall and by case type)
- Percentage of cases resolved within policy-defined targets.

Risk Assessment Impact

The Campus Support & Intervention team currently uses the NABITA risk rubric to assess student risk both before and after providing students with support and interventions. This project aims to leverage existing data to systematically evaluate whether interventions are producing meaningful improvements in student outcomes. By analyzing changes in risk levels over time, the initiative will assess the effectiveness of current support and intervention strategies in reducing student risk. Ultimately, this work strengthens a data-informed, outcomes-driven approach to care by validating and refining the institution's response to students of concern.

Scope

Goals

- Analyze pre- and post-intervention risk assessment data to evaluate intervention effectiveness.
- Ensure consistency and reliability in how risk assessments are applied and interpreted.
- Use findings to refine intervention strategies and improve student outcomes.

Deadlines

Review pre- and post-risk assessment data after each academic year. The next review will occur in May 2027.

Key Deliverables

- Analysis of risk level changes
- Identification of inconsistencies or gaps in scoring/application of the NABITA rubric
- Dashboard or reporting tool with aggregate data to monitor ongoing risk trends

Project Objective and Initiatives

Strategic Objectives

- Improve Management & Practices
- Improve Student Outcomes

Strategic Initiative

- Revitalize Engagement & Belonging Project
- Optimize Health & Wellness Access

Metrics

- Average change in NABITA risk levels from pre- to post-intervention.
- Percentage of cases demonstrating reduced risk, increased risk, or no measurable change.
- Variation in outcomes by concern type or other case characteristics.

Referral Source Analysis & Outreach Optimization



This project aims to analyze patterns in student support referrals to better understand which departments, units, and academic colleges are engaging with the Campus Support & Intervention (CSI) team and the Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS). By examining university departments, units, and colleges from which referrals originate—and identifying gaps where they may be underrepresented—this initiative will identify opportunities for targeted outreach, education, and partnership development on campus. Ultimately, the project seeks to ensure that all areas of campus are informed and equipped to connect students to support resources with ODOS, strengthening early intervention efforts and promoting a more coordinated, campus-wide approach to student care.

Scope

Goals

- Analyze referral data to understand what departments, units, and colleges on campuses are reporting concerns and where gaps may exist.
- Ensure all areas of campus are informed and equipped to refer students to support resources in ODOS.
- Use findings to strengthen campus partnerships to promote and utilize support and intervention strategies.

Deadlines

Review of referral data will occur after each academic year, with the next review occurring in May 2027. Based on the data, a plan for ODOS will be created and implemented to engage underutilized campus offices and colleges that can benefit from outreach and education.

Key Deliverables

- Identify trends in referral sources across departments, units, and academic colleges.
- Highlight gaps or under-engaged campus partners in the submission of referrals.
- Inform targeted outreach and engagement strategies for CSI and the ODOS.

Project Objective and Initiatives

Strategic Objectives

- Improve Collaboration & Strategic Partnerships
- Improve Management & Practices
- Improve Strategic Communications
- Increase Awareness & Access

Strategic Initiative

- Create Proactive & Personalized Pathways

Metrics

- Number and percentage of referrals by department/unit
- Distribution of referrals across campus functional areas
- Changes in referral volume from targeted outreach areas over time

