College Fairs 101
(A Handbook for Alumni Recruiting Network Volunteers)

It’s all here. Oberlin.
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So You’re Representing Oberlin at a College Fair…

Whether you’re staffing a college fair for the first time or you’ve done the same fair for the past 5 years, this handbook should make the experience easier for you. You’ll find useful information to use when speaking with students and parents so that they come away from the fair thinking, “I have a good sense of what Oberlin is really about.”

The most important thing to remember about being at the fair is that you should relax and enjoy yourself. You are at the fair to provide information to interested students and family members. You’re likely to be able to answer many of the questions they might have without any difficulty but don’t worry if you can’t—we don’t expect you to know the answer to everything. Students and family members will appreciate your enthusiasm and willingness to represent your alma mater.

If, at any time, you have questions about the college fair or your materials, please contact the Alumni Recruiting Network toll free at 800.622.6243.

Starting in 2009, we decided to send only our basic travel piece for distribution at college fairs. We know that you will have less material to hand out to interested students but we have found that only having the introductory piece cuts down on wasted literature. It is therefore very important that every student who visits your table completes the information request card fully. We will send information to students so long as they request specific information.

Before the fair starts…
Please look over the materials we send you before going to the fair. While you will not receive lots of materials to be distributed, it is important to familiarize yourself with the information that you do have.

Try to arrive at the college fair early so you have time to set up your table.

If there are refreshments provided by the organizing institution, please help yourself.

Remember…
There is no guarantee that you will be busy at the fair. One of our admissions counselors felt that Oberlin should be represented at the fair. It is possible that few students will have heard of Oberlin; for these students, simply telling them about what we have to offer is the way to get Oberlin’s name out there. For students who know about Oberlin, please try to answer any and all of their questions as best you can.

The most important thing is to have interested students complete an information request card. When this card is returned to our office, the student’s information is entered into our database and they are added to the mailing list. While students can do this online as well, having the completed cards also gives us a sense of how many students are being seen at these fairs.
When the fair is over…
After the fair has ended, we ask that you do one simple thing: please use the enclosed business reply envelope to return the tabletop banner, the tabletop sign, the completed information request cards, and the fair evaluation form to us. If there are materials left over, please keep them to use at the next fair you attend.

Troubleshooting
The most common complaint we hear from alumni volunteers is that we did not send enough materials for the fair. We do our best to provide you with enough materials to cover the fair, but we can never know precisely how many students will want information. If you do run out of materials, please let us know on the fair evaluation form.

If you find that you are running low on the information request cards, please take a sheet of notebook paper and have the students provide the following information: name, mailing address, email address, telephone number, high school, and graduation year. We can enter them into our database with this information.

In Conclusion
Thank you very much for representing Oberlin at this college fair. The time you spend speaking with prospective students and their family members is extremely important in the recruiting process—your willingness to share your Oberlin experiences and the enthusiasm with which you speak about Oberlin really makes an impression on students today. Without your help, we would never be able to reach out to and recruit as many talented scholars, artists, musicians, scientists, and athletes as we do.
Frequently Asked Questions

*Where is Oberlin?* Oberlin is located approximately 35 miles southwest of Cleveland and approximately 25 miles from the Cleveland-Hopkins International Airport. It takes around 30 minutes to drive to the airport and around 50 minutes to drive into downtown Cleveland.

*How big is Oberlin?* Oberlin’s student population is approximately 2900 (2300 in the College of Arts and Sciences and 600 in the Conservatory of Music). The population of the town of Oberlin is around 8000 people.

*What are the most popular majors at Oberlin?* Historically, the most popular majors have been English, Politics, Biology, History, Environmental Studies, East Asian Studies, Psychology, Economics, Religion, Creative Writing, and Neuroscience.

*What are the strongest departments?* Everything at Oberlin is taught very well; there are no “bad” departments on campus. That being said, the sciences (as a whole) are very strong and quite popular, as are East Asian Studies, Creative Writing, Environmental Studies, Politics, History, and Music (of course).

*What areas of study are not offered?* Pre-professional areas of study – business, communications, journalism, nursing – are not offered at Oberlin.

*If I have taken AP or IB exams, can I get credit for them?* That depends on the score earned by the student. The guidelines for approval of AP credit vary from department to department. Some departments will grant general credit while others will grant departmental credit and exempt students from certain classes. Generally speaking, a 5 on an AP exam will result in some credit being awarded; as for a score of a 4, it’s possible. For students taking IB exams, credit is awarded for students receiving a 5, 6, or 7 on a Higher Level exam. For complete information, students should consult individual departmental web pages.

*Can I transfer credits from a local college class I took?* If a student has taken a class that falls within the scope of a liberal arts curriculum and has achieved at a C level or better, it is likely but not guaranteed that the credit will transfer. The Registrar’s Office makes the final determination of what will transfer in the summer before the student enrolls at Oberlin.

*What is Winter Term?* Winter Term encompasses the month of January and is a time for students to do an independent or small-group project that involves a commitment that is not possible during the semester. Students are required to complete three Winter Term projects to graduate; they are not required to stay on campus for their project. Many students will complete a project that will have some benefit for a potential career (science internship, internship on Capitol Hill, following a newspaper reporter for the month, etc.) while others will steer towards something that would be considered personal development (learning self defense, acting in a play, singing in a choir, etc.).
What is ExCo? ExCo (short for Experimental College) is an ever-changing set of classes taught by Oberlin students for Oberlin students. Classes may not be a part of the traditional liberal arts curriculum. Students propose classes on a subject that they know well and, if the class is accepted, teach them for the rest of the student body. Classes cover a wide range of topics, from steel drumming to tap dancing, from self defense to scuba diving, from “The Simpsons” to Steven King novels, from women’s health to introduction to bridge.

What music opportunities exist for non-Conservatory students? There are four general areas in which College students can be involved in Conservatory life: 1) auditioning for secondary or private lessons; 2) taking Conservatory classes; 3) auditioning for ensembles; and 4) using the practice rooms. In addition, there are some ensembles that are intended for College students and faculty/staff/townspeople – Musical Union and the College of Arts and Sciences Orchestra are the two most popular. Finally, many students find friends and form their own ensembles, whether is a rock band or a string quartet, and then play for fun.

What is a normal class load for students? A typical class load is 4 courses each semester. To graduate in 4 years, students will have to average 4 courses per semester.

Is there a core curriculum? Oberlin does not believe in having a set of classes that every student is required to take. Students must complete a few simple distribution requirements to graduate: 1) Curricular Exploration → students are required to take a minimum of 2 classes in each of the three divisions—humanities, social sciences, and natural science and math; in additional, students will complete two additional classes outside of the division in which they have completed the greatest number of classes; 2) Cultural Diversity → students are required to take 3 classes that would be considered culturally diverse – classes that expose students to other cultures and ways of thinking; 3) Quantitative and Formal Reasoning and Writing Requirement → these have the student understand that quantitative and writing skills are fundamentally important for engaging with issues and themes regardless of one’s occupation.

I’m interested in medical school. What’s Oberlin’s track record? Oberlin has a very strong record of placing graduates in excellent medical schools. 84% of students with a minimum 3.3 GPA and a 30 MCAT score were accepted to one of their medical schools last year.

What study abroad opportunities exist? Oberlin has several programs that it runs. Oberlin is also part of the Great Lakes College Association—Oberlin students are permitted to go on the programs run by these other schools as if it were an Oberlin program. If students want to go somewhere else, they can speak with faculty members and the Study Abroad Office to find other programs.

What is the student-to-faculty ratio? 11:1 in the College of Arts and Sciences. 8:1 in the Conservatory of Music. 10:1 overall at Oberlin.
What is the average class size? The average class size is around 20. 75% of the classes have fewer than 20 students; 90% of the classes have fewer than 30 students.

What is diversity like on campus? Diversity can be interpreted in many different ways: racial, socio-economic, geographical, political, etc. Depending on what the student or parent is looking for, you’ll want to answer differently.

- Oberlin enrolls students from all 50 states and approximately 50 countries.
- Approximately 24% of the entering freshman class self-identified as a student of color.
- Geographically, our students are from New England (11%), Mid-Atlantic (30%), Midwest (19%), West (20%), South (9%), Southwest (3%), and International (8%).
- We have students at Oberlin from across the socio-economic spectrum. There are full pay students and there are first generation students whose families are paying nothing for them to be at Oberlin.
- Politically, there are students from all backgrounds. While it is true that the student body leans left politically, there are active student organizations for more conservative-leaning students as well.

What is the co-op system? Oberlin has a series of student-run, cooperative residence halls and dining halls. The first co-op opened in 1950 to practice social and political goals while preparing members for a future as productive and resourceful members of society. Today, the students who live and eat in co-ops use the opportunity to forge strong community bonds in a fun atmosphere. There are 8 co-ops on campus: Keep, Tank, Harkness, Old Barrows, Pyle, Fairchild, Third World, and Kosher-Halal.

What do students do in their free time? LOTS! There are upwards of 500 concerts annually, plenty of speakers to hear, athletic events, almost 200 active student organizations with their activities, a bowling alley on campus, a single-screen movie theater in town, and much more. It’s rare to find a student bored in the evening. It’s common to find a student with several things to do at the same time. Students should explore the Daily Events Calendar on-line.
“Did You Know?”

Some Interesting Bits of Information about Oberlin

• The Kohl Building for Jazz Studies opened in May, 2010. This building is far and away the most impressive jazz studies building on a college campus. Containing faculty offices, a concert hall, and ensemble rehearsal spaces, the building is LEED gold certified, meaning that the design, construction, and environmental quality of the building will sure to make this an environmentally friendly and conscious building. Bill Cosby and Stevie Wonder both performed on campus as part of the dedication weekend.

• When the Adam Joseph Lewis Center for Environmental Studies opened, it was a testament to the belief that a college campus could have a building that had no negative impact on the environment. With the construction of a parking pavilion to the west of the AJLC, the building is now completely solar powered and contains the largest array of solar panels in the state of Ohio. A solar powered water sculpture was recently added to the atrium.

• This fall will see the unveiling of a new football field and athletic complex. Through an $8 million gift, Oberlin is creating a multipurpose field with artificial turf and lights that is suitable for almost every athletics team or club sport. There will also be a state-of-the-art press box, new grandstands for spectators, and new locker rooms.

• Oberlin students continue to win graduate fellowships at a remarkable rate. For the 2014-2015 academic year, Oberlin has:
  o 3 Goldwater Scholarship winners – this is a scholarship for science majors conducting high-level research
  o 1 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow
  o 1 Beinecke Scholarship – the Beinecke Scholarship provides substantial funding toward graduate education in the arts, humanities, or social sciences
  o 12 Fulbright Fellowships

• eighth blackbird, a contemporary music ensemble formed at Oberlin in 1996, won their third Grammy in 2013.

• Vijay Seshadri ’74 was awarded the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry for his work, 3 Sections.

• A 2011 graduate of the Conservatory of Music was one of six winners of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

• This spring saw the groundbreaking for the Peter B. Lewis Gateway Center at the northeast corner of College and Main Streets (yes, this is where the Oberlin Inn sits). This center will be a mix-use development space, combining a 70-room hotel and conference center with commercial and office space, a culinary training facility, and a restaurant.
• The Apollo Outreach Initiative (AOI) offers students an education in nearly every fact of filmmaking. Under the tutelage of current Obies and recent graduates, these students spend two weeks over the summer learning about filmmaking and having their films screened at the Apollo. AOI also operates during the school year, working with students in the Oberlin public schools on projects like stop-motion video to illustrate poetry.

• 2 STEM students will be conducting summer research in 2014 through the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s Exceptional Research Opportunities Program. This program links undergraduate students from disadvantaged backgrounds with outstanding summer research experiences.

• The Conservatory of Music has embarked on an unprecedented relationship with the jazz bassist Milt Hinton. Oberlin has acquired several of his basses, his estate donated a large collection of his papers to Oberlin, the Allen Memorial Art Museum will exhibit 99 of his photographs, and the Conservatory hosted the inaugural Milt Hinton Institute for Studio Bass in June, 2014.
Admissions Guidelines and Timelines

Oberlin received almost 6200 applications for the Class of 2018. Of these, only 33% were ultimately offered a spot in the class. With more students interested in Oberlin, it is becoming more competitive than ever to gain admittance to Oberlin.

Here are some helpful words of advice that can be shared with prospective students and their family members:

- Oberlin engages in holistic review. We look at and read carefully everything that is submitted by and on behalf of an applicant. Decisions are not based on one piece of the application; they are made with everything in mind.

- The high school transcript is very important. We want to see students taking challenging classes and doing well in them. Students are not going to be penalized if their high school does not offer AP classes.

- Oberlin has found that the best-prepared candidates will have taken 4 years of English, 3 years of the same foreign language, 4 years of math through precalculus, 3 years of science, and 3 years of social studies. Failure to take this many classes in these areas will not automatically mean a student is not admitted; the reality, however, is that more students are taking classes in each of these areas every year in high school, regardless of their academic interests.

Some frequently asked question that you’ll hear:

*Is Early Decision binding?* Yes, Oberlin’s Early Decision plan is binding. If you apply and are admitted, we expect to see you in the fall.

*I want to apply ED but financial aid is a concern. What do I do?* Oberlin offers an Early Financial Aid Estimator Form. Here’s how it works:

- Students must begin completing the Common Application and add Oberlin to their “My Colleges” list. Then students must complete the Oberlin Questions section to indicate an interest in applying Early Decision.
- Students must complete the Online Early Estimate Request Form, found in the “First-Year Applicant” section of the Admissions Office website.
- Families must submit the CSS Profile to Oberlin’s Financial Aid Office.
- Students must submit a high school transcript and a record of SAT or ACT with Writing scores to the Admissions Office (unofficial copies are acceptable).
- All of this information is evaluated and both need-based and merit-based aid is determined. The family is emailed their financial aid estimate before the Early Decision application deadline.
- If the financial aid package is acceptable, the student completes the Common Application along with the required forms for Early Decision applicants. This is where the student, a parent, and the guidance counselor sign a paper that serves as the binding Early Decision agreement.
What is required for the application to Oberlin? Oberlin is an exclusive user of the Common Application. Everything you must fill out is available online at their website. In addition to the application and essay, we require a high school transcript, a guidance counselor letter of recommendation, two teacher letters of recommendation, and official results from either the SAT or the ACT with Writing. There are also Oberlin specific questions that are found when a student adds Oberlin to their “My Colleges” list.

Which standardized test is preferred? Oberlin accepts either the SAT or the ACT with writing examination. The student can choose which one s/he takes. If a student takes both, we have a conversion table and will “use” the higher result in our deliberations.

What is the average profile for an admitted student? For students admitted to the Class of 2018, the middle 50% scored between 1310 and 1500 of the SAT or between 29 and 33 on the ACT. The average unweighted GPA was 3.67.

What other schools do Oberlin applicants typically look at? Brown, Wesleyan, Yale, Carleton, Vassar, Kenyon, Swarthmore, Macalester, Tufts, and Haverford.

Are interviews required? Interviews are not a required part of the application process. They are recommended as a way for us to learn more about the applicant while also giving the applicant an opportunity to ask us questions about Oberlin.

How do I set up a visit to campus? If you want to visit campus, you are welcome to come at any time you are available. The best time to come is when classes are in session so you can have a sense of what the academic experience is like at Oberlin. When you’re on campus you can take a tour, attend our general information session, and have an interview. We ask that all students sign up for their visit in advance of coming to campus; this is done on the Admissions Office website, in the section called “Visit Our Campus.”

Admissions Deadlines and Notification Dates for First-Year Students

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Financial Aid and Tuition Information

Oberlin College meets 100% of demonstrated financial need for every student. We ask every family applying for financial aid to complete two forms (the FAFSA and the CSS Profile) and based on these forms, the Financial Aid Office determines what is reasonable for the family to pay towards an Oberlin education. The difference between what the family pays and the total cost is the financial aid package.

Useful information concerning financial aid:

- The cost for tuition, room, board, and fees at Oberlin for the 2014-2015 academic year is $61,788.
- The average financial aid package for the Class of 2018 is approximately $35,000.
- Financial aid packages consist of three components
  - Scholarship and Grant money: this is money that is never repaid.
    - Approximately 75% of the average financial aid package is grant money.
  - Work study: this is money earned from an on campus job.
  - Loans: this is money that is borrowed, whether from the government or another source, and repaid subject to an interest rate.
- Again, approximately 75% of the average financial aid package is grant money.
- As a family demonstrates that it needs more financial aid, the grant portion of the package changes. The loans and work study are limited.

Oberlin College also offers merit scholarships. These are awarded by the Admissions Office and do not have an application to complete. Merit scholarships are awarded on the basis of a student’s performance in high school and on standardized tests. There is no magic GPA or SAT/ACT score that will guarantee a student will receive a merit scholarship. The merit scholarships range from $5,000 to $20,000 and are received through a student’s time at Oberlin so long as they remain in good academic standing.

Finally, if a student achieves the status of National Merit Finalist and they designate Oberlin as their top choice, they will receive between $1,000 and $2,000 in additional scholarship money.

It is important to remember that only the most talented admitted students receive a merit scholarship. It often happens that a student is admitted to Oberlin without merit scholarships while they receive merit scholarships from other schools. There is no GPA or SAT/ACT score that will guarantee a student will receive a merit scholarship.
Athletics Information

Oberlin College is a Division III school and is a member of the North Coast Athletic Conference (NCAC), a group of colleges dedicated to fostering a complementary relationship between intercollegiate athletics and the pursuit of academic excellence. As a result, Oberlin’s athletes are still talented students. They have simply chosen to make athletics their top priority in terms of extracurricular activities. 10 schools make up the NCAC: Allegheny, Denison, Earlham, Hiram, Kenyon, Oberlin, Ohio Wesleyan, Wabash, Wittenberg, and Wooster.

Oberlin fields 22 varsity athletic teams, 11 for men (baseball, basketball, cross country, football, golf, lacrosse, soccer, swimming and diving, tennis, and track and field) and 11 for women (basketball, cross country, field hockey, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming and diving, tennis, track and field, and volleyball).

For students interested in athletics but at a different level, Oberlin offers a variety of club and intramural sports. The club sports are: aikido, bowling, equestrian, fencing, ice hockey, marching band, women’s rugby, scuba diving, table tennis, tumbling, men’s and women’s ultimate frisbee, and water polo. Intramural sports tend to vary from year to year, but will often include: bowling, soccer, softball, racquetball, squash, pool, dodgeball, badminton, and volleyball.

It is critical that nothing negative be said about the various programs. The emphasis should be placed on the personal achievements made by the athletes and the successes that several teams have achieved in the past few years. Should any student have specific questions about an athletic team, it is best to direct them to the Athletics Department website (www.goyeo.com) where they can find contact information for all of the coaches.
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