



**Sophomore Opportunities and
Academic Resources Program**
February 2022 Retreat

Introduction



Dear Sophomores,

Welcome to the 2022 Sophomore Opportunities and Academic Resources (SOAR) retreat! At its core, this retreat is goal-oriented. After six very efficient hours together, you will have built a personalized Sophomore Toolkit, which comprises the following:

- A compelling, multipurpose bio;
- A detailed academic and co-curricular plan for your remaining semesters;
- A thoughtful, comprehensive resume, customizable for various audiences;
- A collection of stories that you can use in personal statements, cover letters, fellowship applications, and interview preparation;
- A well-crafted LinkedIn profile.

What your toolkit will contain is relatively straightforward. What it will mean is more complex.

Through building your toolkit, you are taking steps to plan for the future. This process is crucial — and is especially effective when reinforced by a sense of urgency.

By urgency, we don't mean stress. We mean identifying the steps that you can be taking now, while you still have plenty of time, and proactively crossing those to-dos off your list. By the end of the SOAR retreat, you will have taken five very concrete steps in support of your future success — leaving plenty of room for the exciting opportunities that await by allowing you to shift from planning to acting (or pivoting) when the time is right.

So, again, welcome to the SOAR retreat! We're glad you'll be joining us. Now let's get to work.



LAURA BAUDOT

Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Interim Director of the Career Development Center

TANIA BOSTER

Director of Experiential Learning; Executive Director of the Bonner Center for Community-Engaged Learning, Teaching, & Research

NATHAN CARPENTER

Director of Academic Peer Advising; Coordinator for Strategic Initiatives



Sophomore Toolkit

Throughout the SOAR retreat, you will develop your Sophomore Toolkit: a collection of materials and resources that will support your continued personal, academic, and professional development. Your toolkit will be organized in a digital portfolio, which will take the form of a personal website. An overview of each toolkit element is included below, in the order that you will develop them.

- 1. Academic and Co-Curricular Plan:** By the end of sophomore year, you will need to declare at least one academic major. Some of you have already taken this important step. No matter the path of your academic journey, having a clear sense of what you need to do — and when you need to do it — in order to walk across the stage at Commencement is crucial. Through sketching out a plan for your remaining semesters, you will renew and sharpen your sense of direction while identifying the moments when it will be possible to pivot and pursue an unexpected opportunity.
- 2. Comprehensive Resume:** Not simply a transactional representation of your previous experiences, a resume also tells a story about who you are, how you approach your work, and where you see yourself going next. During the SOAR retreat, we will take a “2.0” approach to resume development, which will include an exploration of how to adapt your comprehensive resume to specific opportunities. Starting with a current draft of your resume (it doesn't have to be perfect!), you will be introduced to tools that will allow you to build a resume that stands out in its reflection of who you are and what you've achieved.
- 3. Collection of Stories:** Starting a cover letter or personal statement or preparing for an interview can seem like being handed a blank canvas. But that canvas becomes less daunting when you've already picked out the paints you're going to use. Assembling a collection of stories that reveal your unique skills, strengths, and values in a compelling and succinct way is similarly helpful.
- 4. Bio/“About Me” Statement:** Holistically representing your values, achievements, and responsibilities is a real challenge. But when done right, a bio can help a print or digital profile really stand out — and lend important depth to a resume. During the retreat, we'll workshop how best to approach and become skilled at this important genre.
- 5. LinkedIn Profile:** In a digital age, a compelling profile on a platform such as LinkedIn can be where it all comes together. Building on all the other toolkit elements, you will explore how to develop and leverage a strong digital presence to effectively build your network and identify opportunities.

PEER MENTORS

Supporting you in your toolkit development will be a team of dedicated Peer Mentors. The Peer Mentors are juniors and seniors with a demonstrated track record of success inside and outside the classroom and across a range of academic majors and career interests. All are also trained as Peer Advising Leaders (PALs). Peer Mentors will introduce and provide feedback on elements of your toolkit, facilitate opportunities for peer workshop, and debrief large group sessions facilitated by professional staff.

Speaker Bios



SADIE KELLER is passionate about improving public policy to better support working families. Before joining Family Promise, Sadie taught university-level English in Mexico City. She graduated from Oberlin College in 2019, where she studied politics and Hispanic studies. At Oberlin, Sadie founded and directed the EI Centro Volunteer Initiative, connecting Oberlin students to Lorain residents studying for the U.S. citizenship exam.

As a policy and program manager, Sadie researches and oversees policies related to homelessness prevention. She focuses on diverting families from shelter and stabilizing families as they continue their independent lives. Sadie guides the national initiative *A Future Begins at Home*, including grants to affiliates designed to keep families in their homes and avoid eviction. She manages a portfolio of corporate partnerships, connecting with thought leaders and business professionals to develop new programs and to support the work of Family Promise.

Sadie lives in the Boston area and loves to try new recipes, travel, and play soccer.



SULAN WU is a recent Oberlin and Caltech graduate who currently works for Molecular Instruments, a Caltech spin-off pioneering next-generation DNA nanotechnology for bioimaging. As a molecular product associate at a rapidly growing start-up, Sulan applies both engineering and liberal arts skills when pioneering data analysis projects and working with major company partners on key projects.

During her time at Oberlin, Sulan studied biochemistry while participating in the 3-2 Engineering program. She was a member of the Student Finance Committee, co-chair of the American Student Medical Association, Peer Advisor at the Career Development Center, artist and writer for the *Synapse*, and a teaching assistant for various chemistry classes. Outside of Oberlin and Caltech, Sulan worked on a diverse range of research projects ranging from translational cancer research to machine learning at NIST, University of Maryland School of Medicine, and UCSD. At Caltech, she was awarded a Women Mentoring Women Award and received a SURF Rossum Fellowship.

Sulan graduated from Oberlin College and California Institute of Technology in June 2021 with dual degrees: a B.S. and B.A. in Bioengineering and Biochemistry.

Detailed Schedule

The retreat is organized across two Saturday afternoons, the details of which are outlined below. Meeting locations will vary by student working groups; this information will be provided to students directly. The retreat is entirely remote-accessible.

Please note that students are expected to bring some materials with them to the first day of the retreat; these are outlined below.

Session One | Saturday, February 12

1:00–4:00 pm EST

What to bring:

- Your most up-to-date resume/CV draft;
- Any personal statements or cover letters you've already written;
- Any essays, projects, or other work of which you're particularly proud.

During this session, you will:

- Attend an opening conversational keynote with Sadie Keller '19, policy and program manager at Family Promise, and Sulan Wu '19, molecular product associate at Molecular Instruments;
- Access your digital portfolio, which you will use as a personal website to collect and organize your Sophomore Toolkit;
- Begin developing your academic and co-curricular plan;
- Participate in a hands-on workshop about how to tell a story through your resume.

Session Two | Saturday, February 19

1:00–4:00 pm EST

What to bring:

- A bullet-point list of 4–6 ideas for stories you can tell about yourself;
- Two 300–400 word personal narratives.

Instructions for completing these tasks will be provided directly to students during the first retreat meeting.

During this session, you will:

- Attend a practical demonstration of how to edit a personal narrative draft to bring out its most salient content;
- Workshop and edit your own narratives with your peers;
- Draft your bio/"About Me" statement;
- Add everything you've worked on to your LinkedIn profile.

OPTIONAL | Thursday, March 3

12:15–1:30 pm EST

Following the retreat, students who have not yet declared a major are invited to attend this optional session about identifying and reaching out to potential advisors. *Reminder: all students are expected to declare a major by the end of their sophomore year.*

