



SOAR

Sophomore Opportunities &
Academic Resources

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Sophomore year is about **BIG DECISIONS**:

- declaring a major and creating a course plan through graduation;
- exploring career directions;
- planning meaningful summer and winter term opportunities.

SOAR is an exciting new opportunity to support you with these big decisions. It will help you come up with your college game plan.

SOAR begins with a two-day retreat on February 1st and 2nd, immediately after Winter Term ends. Housing and dining will be provided free-of-cost for any students participating in SOAR. Working individually and in groups, you will have the opportunity to engage professors within the major of your choice, along with professional staff and trained students. There will also be three follow-up sessions during the Spring semester.

What Can I Get Out of SOAR?

- Get serious about your interests, values, passions and commitments!
- Declare a major and develop a holistic plan for the next five semesters.
- Build your network of connections and prepare to launch into meaningful internship and post-graduate opportunities.

Application & Deadlines

[Fill out this quick and easy application form here!](#)

Apply by **Tuesday, November 27th** to be considered in the early decision pool of applicants, or by the hard deadline of **Monday, December 10th**.

FAQs

Am I eligible to participate in SOAR?

All College Sophomores and Dual-Degree Sophomores can participate in SOAR.

Do I have to have my major declared?

No, SOAR is intended for **both** declared and undeclared students! Have a major? Great! Don't have one? Still great! SOAR is perfect for helping you figure out a major.

When does SOAR happen/ What is the time commitment?

The SOAR Retreat is only two-days, Friday February 1st, and Saturday February 2nd, right after Winter Term ends. Housing and dining will be provided **free-of-cost** for any students participating in SOAR. There will be three short follow-up sessions during the Spring Semester: Following add-drop, early March and following Spring Break.

What are the academic majors represented in the SOAR program?

Economics, History, Chemistry, Environmental Studies, Biology, Politics, Biochemistry /Pre-Vet, Neuroscience/Pre-Med, Computer Science, CAST, Dance, Psychology, Theater, Cinema Studies, and English.

Why are there only 15 academic majors available in the SOAR program?

Since this is the first year of SOAR we are starting with a carefully curated group of 15 Oberlin majors. As SOAR grows we will offer the program for all majors.

Take a look at the SOAR Retreat Calendar below, and read about the awesome SOAR Student Leaders!

If you have any further questions about SOAR, please contact Dana Hamdan at dhamdan@oberlin.edu

SOAR Retreat

Friday, February 1st

Saturday, February 2nd

Welcome!

Follow-Up Discussion from day one

Identify, Reflect & Explore

Pathways from Academic Majors to prospective careers

Meet with your SOAR Leaders and start working on your academic plan

Networking 101: Ins & Outs of Networking & Communication

Group work with a faculty member from your prospective department

Craft a plan for your upcoming summer and winter term opportunities

Building Mentoring Relationships

SOAR Leaders Panel

Imposter Syndrome Workshop

Check In and plans for the Spring semester

MEET the SOAR LEADERS



Meg Parker
History SOAR Leader

Meg Parker (she/her) is a 4th-year **History and Politics double major with minors in GSFS and CAST** from Portland, Maine. She is interested in American history and is excited to finish her major this spring with a research seminar on Terror in Early America with Matt Bahar. To complement her history and politics double majors she has worked as a curatorial assistant at Maine's Historical Society Library; a research intern for the United Way; a junior field organizer

on Congressional Campaign; a congressional intern for Representative Chellie Pingree, a Cole Scholar Fellow for Mayor Marty Walsh's re-election campaign; a social media intern for DIS Copenhagen; a finance intern for the Maine Democrats; and as a digital communications intern for EducateMaine. Meg spent the past spring studying international law at a program in Copenhagen, Denmark and she hopes to return someday soon. A little-known fact about her would be: At the age of nine, Rihanna came to her hometown and led a dance class which Meg took.



Nathan Carpenter
Environmental Studies SOAR Leader

Nathan Carpenter is a 3rd-year **Environmental Studies and Comparative American Studies double-major with a pathway in environmental justice**. At Oberlin, he participates in a community-engaged environmental justice research partnership in Africatown, Alabama. The project, led by Professor Janet Fiskio, prioritizes local knowledge in environmental scholarship, and encompasses a range of methods, including oral history, community presentations,

and digital archiving. Off campus, Nathan is a Doris Duke Conservation Scholar at the University of Michigan and a Fund II Roots & Shoots National Fellow at the Jane Goodall Institute. Through his fellowship at UM, Nathan worked this past summer with the City of Detroit's Office of Sustainability, helping to analyze data that will inform the city's first Sustainability Action Agenda. Nathan has experience with grant-writing and fellowship applications, both at Oberlin and through outside organizations. After Oberlin, Nathan hopes to spend some time traveling and researching environmental justice issues in a global context before returning to graduate school and eventually

working with environmentally-focused non-profits. He is a Cancer sun with an Aquarius moon and rising and is always happy to pretend like he knows anything about astrology.



Sydney Allen
English SOAR Leader

Sydney Allen is a 4th-year **English major with a Rhetoric and History minor and an interest in journalism**. Sydney has a passion for writing and currently serves as the Editor-in-Chief of *The Oberlin Review*, as well as a Course Writing Associate, and a Peer Advising Leader. During her time at Oberlin Sydney has also worked with *The Wilder Voice* and in the Peer Support Center. She has held internships with *Indianapolis Monthly*, *The Times of Noblesville*, and her Congressional representative

in Washington D.C. When she's not practicing on Heisman Field with the varsity women's lacrosse team, Sydney loves hanging out in the *Review* office in Burton Basement.



Kameron Dunbar
Politics SOAR Leader

Kameron Dunbar is a 4th-year **Politics major with a minor in Rhetoric and Composition**. He feels fortunate to have taken part in a lot of great opportunities at Oberlin, including chairing the Student Senate. Outside of Oberlin, Kameron has spent time working for U.S. Senators, Congressman, and Mayors. He has also spent time developing communications strategies for some really cool public advocacy organizations. In Kameron's spare time, he loves watching Luke Cage on Netflix with his

new cat Ava. Hailing from Detroit, MI, Kameron has a deep appreciation for Coney dogs as well as Faygo.



Kyndelle Johnson
Economics SOAR Leader

Kyndelle Johnson is a 3rd-year **Politics and Economics double major with a minor in Hispanic Studies and a concentration in International Studies**. This fall Kyndelle is having a blast studying abroad in Alicante, Spain, but she is very excited about her return to the Oberlin community in January. Here on campus, Kyndelle is a co-chair of Model UN and loves

learning about international affairs and politics inside and outside the classroom. She has conducted research focused on the progression of immigration policy in the US, mainly focusing on how racial identity continues to affect the immigration process. Kyndelle is currently the Assistant Financial Controller in the Office of the Student Treasurer, processing thousands of dollars of payments and purchase requests. Beyond that, Kyndelle also works really closely with the Oberlin Admissions Office as a tour guide, Summer Intern, Snapchatter and Student Panelist. When she is not studying or working with admissions, she also really enjoys listening to and learning about music; she has had the opportunity to host a few radio shows on WOBC and to DJ at the 'Sco, Solarity, and TGIF.



Ify Ezimora
Psychology SOAR Leader

Ify Ezimora (pronounced EE-FEE) is a 4th-year (and the senior class president) with a **double major in Psychology and Environmental Studies**. Ify's aspiration in life is to become a clinical psychologist who specializes in nature therapy. In her time at Oberlin she has worked one-on-one with a professor conducting psychology research looking at how people transform negative feelings around climate change and environmental degradation, taken numerous psychology

classes, and worked at Wediko Summer Program, a residential treatment program for 9 - 19-year-olds with social, emotional and behavioral challenges. Because of these experiences, among others, Ify gained a lot of experience networking and leveraging her skills to further her professional possibilities. Additionally, on campus Ify works in various peer leadership and tutoring situations, as a Ninde Scholars Tutor for students at Oberlin High School, and America Reads Site Leader at the Boys and Girls Club. Throughout her time at Oberlin Ify has applied lessons and insights garnered from her psychology seminars to her everyday tutoring and work situations. Fun fact about Ify: she really hates bananas, but absolutely adores mini-M&Ms.



Fiona Brennan
Cinema Studies SOAR Leader

Fiona Brennan is a 4th-Year **Cinema Studies/ English double major**. At Oberlin she is a PAL, Media Associate and Major Rep for cinema studies, co-chair of the film co-op, and captain of the club soccer team. As a Cinema Studies major Fiona has been fortunate to be hired as a videographer for Live From Studio B, serve as a Story Lens fellow and work PR on faculty films. She has also been a research assistant for Anu Needham in English (Summer 2017), as well as the content creator for

the PAL program (Summer 2018). After school Fiona hopes to pursue documentary film, and is specifically interested in editing and post-production. She is also the very proud owner of a 13-year-old pup!



Joy Udoh
Neuroscience/Pre-Med SOAR Leader

Joy Udoh (she/her/hers) is a 4th-year **Neuroscience/Pre-Med major** and an international student from Nigeria. Outside of academics, Joy is a student mediator, the first vice president for the senior class council and a co-chair for the African Students Association. Joy is also enjoying her second year as an Oberlin College Research Fellow. During the first summer as a fellow, Joy conducted research on campus in a neurodevelopmental lab, and for the second summer she did research off-campus through Stanford University's Cardiovascular Institute. Joy plans on being a medical doctor after she graduates, but will be taking a year to work and finish the application process. She enjoys cooking and spending time with friends whenever she can.



Juan Contreras
Biology SOAR Leader

Juan Contreras (he/him) is a 4th-year from Chicago, Illinois. Juan studies **Biology and Environmental Studies, with minors in Jewish Studies and French**. He currently works on the population genetics of Arctic mosses with Professor Roles in the Department of Biology as an undergraduate research assistant. Juan has spent two summers working through the Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) program under the National Science Foundation. He has a deep love and curiosity for the natural world, and is always looking for new experiences! Juan hopes to eventually become a global explorer, sharing the intricacies and beauty of the biodiversity on Earth throughout marginalized communities with limited access. Juan would say that those who know him, know that he is loud, confident, and always ready for a chat!



Tyler Hartman
Chemistry SOAR Leader

Tyler Hartman is a 3rd-year-student with a **Chemistry major and a Mathematics minor**. Within the chemistry department, Tyler favors the analytical and environmental side of the field. During his time at Oberlin College, Tyler has spent two semesters in the Thompson Lab and will be continuing a third semester of research there this spring semester. In Professor Thompson's research lab, Tyler has worked on projects such as the Determination of Arsenic in Rice Products, the Determination of Contaminants in Milk, including antibiotics and heavy metals like Lead and he is just starting a project on Micro-plastics in Water. At the beginning of the spring semester, Tyler will have spent two winter terms in laboratory Settings; one winter spent in a Municipal Water Treatment and Quality Laboratory and the other at Mote Marine Aquarium Ocean Acidification and Chemical Ecology Lab. After graduating, Tyler plans on attending graduate school and then entering the workforce in a chemical research or industrial setting. Beyond academia, he is a PAL, an officer on of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and a member of the Oberlin Club Golf team.



Yasmine Ramachandra
Biochemistry & Pre-Vet SOAR Leader

Yasmine Ramachandra (she, her, hers) is a 4th-year **Biochemistry and Biology double major and Politics minor**. Yasmine has been an OWL for intro chemistry since her second year and absolutely loves OWLing! Since she was little, she has wanted to be a veterinarian, and is currently on the pre-vet track. Yasmine also tutors in the local Oberlin schools through the Ninde Scholars program. She would also like to go into education at some point in her career, to design accessible curriculums for disadvantaged students. Yasmine conducts research for Professor Lisa Ryno's biochemistry lab here at Oberlin where she studies different methods to combat antibiotic resistance. In past summers and winter terms, she has shadowed and worked at veterinary clinics in India and the USA, growing her love for all animals (including humans) and is a proud mom of three special needs chihuahuas. Her oldest chihuahua is 16 years old! Yasmine grew up surrounded by Dr. Patel's and always encourages people to let her know if she can help with connections or medical internships. Yasmine tells people that "Thanksgiving in her house is the safest place to have a medical emergency; from kidney failure to a stroke, her family has you covered!"



Jay Messina
Computer Science SOAR Leader

Jay Messina is a 4th-year from the Boston area studying **Computer Science and Philosophy**. In addition to being a part of SOAR, Jay participates in hackathons and programming competitions, he leads coding interview workshops, and also plays lacrosse. Jay generally enjoys being outdoors, visiting national parks and playing golf. On rainy Oberlin days, Jay also enjoys writing travel stories, making pottery on the wheel, and developing websites and iPhone apps. Since declaring his computer science major, Jay has found his professors and classmates in the department have been great resources for brainstorming projects and finding internships. This past summer he interned as a Software Developer at IBM, working in the Watson IoT/Cloud space. Jay also interned in IT as a Network Engineer and at a startup making a money management web app. Jay is currently working part time for IBM during the school year and will start working full-time for them after graduation this spring. In the future Jay plans to attend graduate school while he works and eventually become a senior software developer.



Eder Aguilar
CAST SOAR Leader

Eder Aguilar (he/him/his) is a 3rd-year **Comparative American Studies Major and Sociology minor** from Chicago, with a strong interest in Latinx identities and education. On campus he is involved in student organizations: La Alianza Latinx and Movimiento, as well as PALs, and intramural basketball. Eder is also a Posse Scholar and Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow, and he is currently conducting research on Latinx students and their social networks at Oberlin College. Eder spent a summer at Oberlin conducting research, during which he got to know and love Oberlin in the summertime. Currently, Eder wants to pursue further higher education and a career in education, ideally becoming a professor and getting the chance to publish within Sociology, American Studies, or Latinx studies. Eder loves to critique music, movies, and other media, and his friends would call him “very grounded” given his Taurus sun, Virgo moon, and Libra rising.



Kara Nepomuceno
Dance SOAR Leader

Kara Nepomuceno (she/her/hers) is a 3rd-year from San Diego, California. She studies **Biology and Dance** and has a minor in Comparative American Studies. Kara is interested in movement, health, and the body, and the ways that they both inform and express the experiences of marginalized communities. She aspires to address social disparities through work in community health and dance performance and research. Kara has had a range of different professional experiences related to health and movement. She has interned in health data and biotech, shadowed in genetic counseling, and volunteered in organizations supporting immigrant communities. This summer Kara interned in an immunization clinic in Escondido, California. She also performed with Oberlin Dance Project at Cleveland Public Theater, and apprenticed with a traditional Filipino performing arts group in San Diego. While Kara knows firsthand that connecting academic interests to professional experiences is not always easy, she has been fortunate to find supportive communities and peers at Oberlin that have helped her when she felt lost. This motivates her to continue to reach out to members of the Oberlin campus and community, and to remind others that they can always reach out to her!



Morgan Thomas
Neuroscience SOAR Leader

Morgan Thomas (she, her, hers) is a 4th year **Neuroscience major on the pre-med track** from Chicago, Illinois. At Oberlin she is a QS Tutor, which means that she hosts office hours during the week during which she is available to offer tutoring to any students in the STEM field. One thing that Morgan loves about Oberlin is the fact that campus offers so many resources for students to take advantage of. Morgan feels that the in-addition support students can find on Oberlin's campus, it is rather diverse, allowing students to find their niche as they navigate through the campus. Her hobbies including reading, shopping, cooking, eating, and watching movies.



Jad Kaiss
Theater SOAR Leader

Jad Kaiss is a 4th-year majoring in **Theater and Economics and minoring in Rhetoric & Composition**. Over his last three years at Oberlin he has enjoyed acting in plays in Hall Auditorium and the Kander Theater, directing a one-act as part of the Directing II Class, and working as an acting intern at the Oberlin Summer Theater Festival. This Spring Semester Jad will be directing a play he wrote for his Senior Capstone as part of the New Works Festival. He currently plans on moving to LA after he graduates and working to become involved in the film industry. His current favorite movie is

Coco and his favorite TV show is Money Heist.
