

## OSU Bridge Model Summary

The OSU LSAMP Bridge model is unique in that it is not remedially focused nor does it offer any course credit to participants. This saves money, time, and allows participants and staff to instead encourage community building, mentor relationships, exploration of all STEM programs, interest in undergraduate research opportunities, and utilization of campus resources.

During the 10-day program, students live together in conference housing for the first seven days before transitioning to their permanent housing assignments for the duration of the program. Peer Leaders live in with the students during the time in conference housing to ensure inclusivity, bonding, and that expectations are being met regarding conduct. Living together has shown to be one of the most important factors in determining the success of our program. This situation allows students to continue bonding outside of bridge programming, in the evenings, with other participants and mentors. This is where a lot of relationship building occurs.

Participants and mentors are required to attend all activities within the bridge program. Exceptions are only made in emergency situations or in advance to accommodate student participation in selected academic and extracurricular activities (ROTC, Marching Band, etc.). Disability accommodations are made for all students who request them to ensure participation in activities is accessible and inclusive.

### Community Building

As a pre-dominantly white institution in a relatively homogenous state, our primary goal of bridge is to build community and give students the opportunity to develop a sense of belonging. Many of the bridge activities are meant to get students connected to each other, work together to solve problems, encourage one another, and provide valuable social connections for students to build lifelong friendships. These activities include:

- *Whitewater Rafting* – Outdoor Recreation Staff are trained to facilitate team work activities and other icebreakers to encourage connections during the day-trip rafting down the McKenzie River.
- *Challenge Course* – Challenge Course Staff facilitate various activities during this half-day program that allow students to work in teams to solve complex intellectual and physical problems, move out of their comfort zone to achieve goals on the high ropes course, support each other through encouragement as well as physical assistance, and focus on the positive aspect of each situation.
- *Peer Leader Activities* – Bridge mentors are responsible for planning programming in the evenings with a focus of bringing the group together to bond socially. While these activities are left up to the mentors, they often include organized sports activities, craft nights, scavenger hunts, and other engaging programming.

- *Classroom Schedule Activity* – Participants are given a print out of their fall term course schedule and Peer leaders facilitate an activity that allows students to identify others in the program that are taking the same classes as them, sometimes in the same section with the same professor. This encourages students to organize study groups with familiar peers, and offers comfort that they'll know someone in their class on the first day of school.
- *Capture the Flag* – This outdoor activity is purely social and meant to get students out of the residence halls after they've transitioned into their permanent housing assignments. We continue to require attendance at evening programming after they've moved out of conference housing to ensure they are meeting program expectations.
- *Coast Bonfire* – As a wrap-up to a busy and engaging day on the Oregon Coast (HSMC and Marine Discover Tours), we take students to the beach for pizza and a bonfire. This often occurs later in the program, once students have transitioned out of conference housing and ensures participation and continuation of bonding. Students will also light and release wishing lanterns with their mentor families after talking about their hopes and goals for their first year of college.
- *Football Tailgater* – Each year our program ends on the Saturday before classes start and often that is also a home football game day. Depending on kick-off time, we will schedule activities during the day that lead up to a tailgater, including a tour of downtown Corvallis and the Saturday Market, or a hike up Bald Hill. The tailgater includes a BBQ outside of our Student Center with students playing football and soccer, learning the OSU fight song and other traditional cheers to use during the game. Participants and Mentors are encourage to wear their LSAMP t-shirts and attend the game together, all sitting in one section to cheer on the Beavers.

## **Mentor Relationships**

Bridge participants are automatically enrolled in our LSAMP Mentor Program. Peer Leaders during bridge serve as mentors throughout the participants first year on campus and spend valuable time during bridge developing those mentor relationships. We use a mentor family model rather than one-on-one mentor pairing as it has proved to be more effective for OSU LSAMP students. Generally, 3-5 participants are assigned to each Mentor for the year and will engage in various family activities as well as one-on-one mentoring. More information about our Mentor program can be downloaded in the Mentor Program Resources section of our website. Mentor related activities during bridge include:

- *Mentor Family Activity* – This is our pairing activity where we use participant and mentor surveys to identify potential matches. Mentors are set up at stations for each potentially matched participant to visit for a limited amount of time. At the end of rotations, participants and mentor submit preferred matches and families are assigned based on that feedback.
- *Dinner with Mentor Families* – This serves as a participant introduction to their assigned mentor family. While we encourage participants and mentors to connect with all students, especially during meal times, this night is set aside specifically for the families.

- Mentor Family Bowling Competition – This serves as a fun and social way to engage participants and mentors in a friendly competition and get to know their families better.

### **Exploration of all STEM Programs**

All students, regardless of their intended major when they enroll at OSU, are exposed to each of our five STEM Colleges (Agricultural Science, Earth, Ocean & Atmospheric Sciences, Engineering, Forestry, and Science) through various rotation blocks that are coordinated by each college. The purpose of these rotations is to give each college the opportunity to showcase unique or popular majors, cutting edge research, engaging activities related to offered disciplines, allow faculty and staff to engage with bridge students, and encourage participant exploration of other majors. We often see students at OSU migrating between STEM majors and while we encourage students to find the right fit, we acknowledge that the sooner that happens for the student, the better. By exposing our students to other opportunities early in their academic career, we can help to save the student time and money by encouraging placement in the right major early on.

Additionally, we take students on a boat tour out of Newport bay, lead by Marine Discovery Tours, that educates students about various aspects of STEM and research on the Oregon Coast. This includes talks about bridges and lighthouse (engineering), wildlife and estuaries (life sciences), commercial crabbing and fishing (environmental sciences and economics), and other unique aspects of the coast as they related to STEM fields.

### **Interest in Undergraduate Research Opportunities**

One of the defining values of the LSAMP program is encouraging students to participate in undergraduate research as an avenue to develop a STEM identity. Beyond the college rotations that offer exposure to each STEM college and the cutting-edge research on campus, we also include the following bridge activities that encourage students to consider these experiences as they move through their academic career at OSU:

- Why Research? Presentation – This is Peer Mentor led and includes a panel of mentors that have participated in various types of undergraduate research experiences (summer, academic year, on and off campus, international, etc.). Students share their experiences working on research, tips for connecting with professors, benefits of the experience, and career goals as they result to their research experience.
- Talking Gardens Tour – Tour of a local attraction that shows how research can be put into practice in the community. This tour is lead by a faculty member tied to the project and while this is not the exact activity that we do each year, it's a good example of showcasing the effect of university research on the local community.
- Hatfield Marine Science Center Tour – OSU's research center located in Newport, Oregon is home to various research programs, courses, and a visitor's center focused on community outreach and education. Students tour the facility and learn about research opportunities, coursework that can be completed at HMSC, and complete a STEM lab

activity led by faculty and staff. Research at HMSC is truly interdisciplinary and showcases how many faculty and staff work across colleges to contribute to various fields of knowledge.

### **Utilization of Campus Resources**

As many other state universities can be, Oregon State is large and can be difficult to navigate when students are needing assistance to succeed. During bridge, we have opportunities to educate participants about valuable resources on campus that students will often utilize during their first year. While we try not to overwhelm participants with too much information regarding resources, we absolutely highlight key resources available to URM and STEM students. Mentors are often sought for advice and follow up on these resources from their family members throughout the year. Bridge activities focused on campus resources include:

- Tools & Rules Workshop – This presentation focuses on the various online tools that are available to students at OSU to ensure they successfully navigate their classes, curriculum, and academic advising (online registration system, degree tracking system, and course logins). The ‘rules’ portion of the workshop informs students of various academic policies and deadlines in place that may become valuable information as they move through their first term and year at OSU (add/drop/withdraw, S/U, warning/probation/suspension, etc.)
- Academic Skills Conference – All bridge programs at OSU (LSAMP, EOP, SSS/TRiO, CAMP, SMILE) come together to attend a day long conference that offers valuable workshops on a variety of topics related to student success at OSU. Topics typically include:
  - o Academic & Community Standards (Conduct)
  - o Goal Setting (Academic Success Center)
  - o Not your grandparent’s library (Library Resources)
  - o Financial Aid basics
  - o Don’t be that roommate (University Housing & Dining Services)
  - o Working while in college
  - o Responding to challenges
  - o Financial Literacy
  - o Career Development Center Resources