



Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives

2024-25
ANNUAL REPORT

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OAMI BY THE NUMBERS

2024-2025

14,155+

Program, initiative, and event participants

2,100+

Coaching sessions

170+

Events and training workshops

840+

Tutoring sessions

\$185,000

In grant funding awarded to students

148

Student leadership team and committee planning meetings

A LETTER FROM OAMI'S CO-DIRECTORS

Dear colleagues, partners, and friends,

This past year has been one of transition and change for the Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives (OAMI). In moments like these, we are reminded that our work is rooted in a powerful legacy, a legacy built through the courage and advocacy of faculty, staff, and students who fought long and hard to create the very resources and programs we are now charged to sustain. Honoring that history means ensuring that these supports not only remain in place, but grow stronger for the generations of Wolverines to come.

Our mission is to ensure every student feels seen, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential. We honor the journeys of students who overcome unique challenges in reaching the University of Michigan, knowing that their success enriches our entire community. These students bring extraordinary resilience, creativity, and determination to the University of Michigan. They deserve a campus environment that is both inclusive and actively supportive of their academic, social, and personal growth. We also recognize the importance of creating spaces where students from a wide array of communities feel a true sense of belonging, a value that has always guided our work and will continue to shape it moving forward.

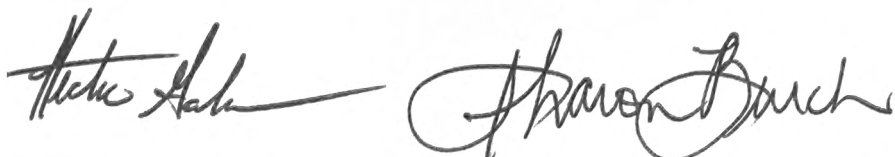
Our staff and peer success coaches have embodied this vision, working side-by-side with students to nurture their holistic development. They work to ensure they thrive not only academically, but also personally, socially, and professionally. Their dedication reflects OAMI's core belief that addressing student success is never one-dimensional; it is the integration of mentorship, opportunity, and belonging that allows Wolverines to flourish.

Through partnerships with the state and local organizations, OAMI places a strong emphasis on serving students across the state of Michigan. OAMI partners with the Detroit Promise Scholarship and multiple grants administered through the State of Michigan's Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity to enhance student success and drive degree completion. Additionally, we play a proactive role in advancing the success of U-M's expanded Go Blue Guarantee, a university initiative that provides tuition support to qualifying Michigan residents. OAMI reinforces this commitment by ensuring that students who benefit from the Go Blue Guarantee receive comprehensive, holistic support from the moment they arrive on campus. Our programs and services are designed to foster their academic achievement, sense of belonging, and overall well-being, empowering them to thrive at U-M.

In the years ahead, OAMI will continue to work with campus partners to ensure that students are not just enrolled, but deeply connected to the academic and social fabric of the university. By aligning with faculty, academic units, and student affairs partners, we are enriching pathways that link classroom learning with career preparation, research opportunities, and community engagement. As an office that is centrally operated, we have unique touchpoints with students across all schools and colleges. This allows us to create structures that offer a baseline layer of support for every student, no matter where they are in the university. This central position enables us to connect resources, reduce barriers, and strengthen the safety net that students rely on throughout their Michigan journey.

We extend our sincere gratitude to every partner, donor, colleague, and student who walks alongside us in this work. Together, we will sustain this legacy and continue to build a Michigan where all students not only find their place, but also discover the confidence and capacity to thrive and lead.

Sincerely,



Hector Galvan, M.A. & Sharon Burch, M.A.

Interim Co-Directors



MISSION, VISION & VALUES

Our Mission

The Office of Academic and Multicultural Initiatives (OAMI) at the University of Michigan supports and promotes academic excellence, leadership development, and multicultural understanding through innovative programs, services, and initiatives. We empower students to achieve their full potential and celebrate their unique backgrounds and experiences while enriching the campus community.

Our Vision

We envision a university where every student feels a true sense of belonging, is fully supported, and is prepared to lead in an ever-changing world. Through strong partnerships with campus, government, and community organizations, we ensure students have the resources they need to thrive. Our work develops leaders, cultivates connection, builds resilience, and expands opportunity so that students graduate not only with a degree, but with the confidence, skills, and perspective to create meaningful change.

Our Values

Resilience and Belonging

We foster environments that affirm students' identities, reinforce their strengths, build confidence, and sustain them through challenges.

Student Development

We prioritize the holistic growth of every student, academically, socially, and personally.

Equity in Access

We are committed to ensuring that every student feels seen, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential and have equitable access to Michigan's resources.

Leadership Through Opportunity

We create pathways for students to lead, contribute, and thrive.

Collaboration for Impact

We strengthen student success by partnering across campus and with communities statewide.

2025-26 OUTLOOK

Core Areas of Focus Entering OAMI's 36th Year



Strengthening Signature Programs

- Enhancing SuccessConnects, M-Connect, and the First-Generation Gateway.
- Building our service options for a greater number of students and broader impact.
- Ensuring that first-generation and working-class students can fully access and benefit from Michigan's opportunities.

Deepening Students' Connection to the University

- In support of growing enrollment, provide more programming to help students feel academically, professionally, and socially-integrated.
- Strengthening partnerships that serve students across:
 - » All schools and colleges
 - » Student Life and campus collaborators
- Enriching pathways that connect students to success:
 - » Classroom learning to career preparation
 - » Academic growth to research opportunities
 - » Student development to community and leadership engagement
- Leveraging OAMI's central role to:
 - » Serve students across all schools and colleges
 - » Provide a baseline support system for every student
 - » Connect resources and reduce barriers

Reaching Students Across the State

- Continue to focus on engaging with and supporting Michigan students and their families.
- Provide robust support to Go Blue Guarantee, Wolverine Pathways, and other pipeline programs.
- Reinforce the effectiveness of financial aid by ensuring access to guidance, community, and resources once students arrive on campus.

Aiding the University in Achieving Our State's Goals

- Furthering the impact of the university as it uplifts the people of our state.
- Continue to develop programs and partnerships to ensure:
 - » Students graduate as Wolverines
 - » Graduates are leaders prepared to serve, innovate, and inspire
 - » Graduates feel deeply connected to the state and are committed to its growth and development

2024-25 CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

With a diverse range of programs and initiatives, the OAMI event calendar is always full. Here are some of the highlights from last school year:



Detroit Promise SEEDS Pilot



First-Gen Student Welcome



SuccessConnects KICKO



M-CLIC Monthly Barbershop Kickoff



Transfer Week



Weekly Study Zones



First-Gen Gateway Open House



SuccessConnects: Managing Your Success



SuccessConnects: Acing Your Interview



M-Connect: Commuter Conversations



Harambee Fall Fest



M-STEP Critical Conversations



OAMI hosts Communita at Trotter



First-Gen Week



39th Annual MLK Symposium Keynote



SuccessConnects Finals Frenzy



SuccessConnects x Wolverine Wellness: Progress Not Perfection



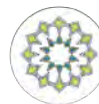
M-Connect: Imposter Syndrome Workshop



51st Annual Dance for Mother Earth Powwow



OAMI Pride Night



OAMI Student Celebrations

OAMI STUDENT STORIES

OAMI empowers our students, amplifies their voices, and celebrates their achievements. Here are just a few examples of our exceptional Wolverines and their remarkable journeys.

Entering community college later in life and finding her path to Michigan

While some students may not welcome the return to classes, Breanna Rawlins is not one of them. When asked what she was looking forward to this year, her answer was, "I am so excited for everything this year!"

Her unique enthusiasm is likely because she is a unique student. Breanna grew up in Armada, Michigan, a small, rural town in southeast Michigan, never thinking she could get a college education. She spent the past fifteen years in the quick-service restaurant business, working in various managerial roles. It was work that helped her develop essential skills, but ultimately, she was looking for more. In 2021, the State of Michigan launched Michigan Reconnect, which Breanna says changed her life. Like the 200,000-plus Michiganders who have earned a scholarship through the program, Breanna enrolled tuition-free at St. Clair County Community College (SC4).

Here, not only did she earn her Associate of Science degree, but she also found people who pushed her to continue pursuing higher education. Breanna



Breanna Rawlins
Bachelor's of Science - Mathematics
Class of 2027

shared that, "at SC4, my professors were so, so supportive of my academic journey...they are even the ones that convinced me to apply to the University of Michigan, something I never would have dreamed about!"

With such encouragement, she did just that. While she admits that applying to Michigan was scary, and the thought of being at such a large school and campus was initially intimidating, she says she lucked out when she found the

M-Connect program. While on campus that summer, she attended one of the program's welcome mixers. Breanna enthused that Erika Johnson, M-Connect Program Director, and fellow transfer students, "were some of the very first people I met on campus, and they came with a built-in community!" Erika coached Breanna through the SuccessConnects program, which exposed her to helpful resources and another supportive community. Such connections, she says, were vital to her success at Michigan.

Breanna has excelled with the support of the U-M transfer community and the staff and faculty she's met along the way, but she's always been generous with her own time and knowledge. She's been a peer tutor since her time at 4C, and OAMI was fortunate to have her as a math tutor in SuccessConnects. Focusing on precalculus and calculus, Breanna tutored one-on-one for some of Michigan's most challenging courses. She says working with one student at a time allowed her to "really dig deep and figure out learning on an individual level."

Breanna stresses that "people always think that learning math is formulaic and one size fits all. It is not!" One could say the same about higher education. As Breanna's journey demonstrates, the path to a degree doesn't have to begin right out of high school. What is crucial, as OAMI understands, is to recognize that there are as many educational paths as there are types of people – a compelling formula for a university looking to grow and flourish.

"I think one of the things that SuccessConnects does best is their focus on the tutoring being one-on-one. This allows tutors and students to really dig deep and figure out learning on an individual level. This is especially important to me."

Friends help Breanna Rawlins (center) start her new life at Michigan





Donovan Fleurina
Bachelor's of Arts - Political Science
and Government
Class of 2028

“Even if I myself don't know, I probably know someone else who does know.' I like to use that little quote to encourage myself and others to network!”

A Wolverine Pathways alum and SuccessConnects scholar who knows the power of networking

Donovan Fleurina, or “Donnie” as he likes to be called, gets that networking happens in all kinds of ways. As he sees it, you help yourself, you help others, and you have the potential to make lasting connections. He started seeing this in action when he joined Wolverine Pathways (WP), a key partner with OAMI. Since seventh grade, he and his family have participated in year-round WP programming focused on college preparation and academic development. In the program, Donnie was connected to academic and enrichment resources while building diverse personal connections. “I met some of my best friends in WP!” he said. “I also talk to many WP staff and faculty members and regularly participate in panels for WP events.”

Donnie also loves sharing his time and insights in programs connected with OAMI. He has joined several events for SuccessConnects, M-STEP, and a youth non-profit called Racquet Up Detroit. One of his goals this year is to gain more knowledge and skills through networking in the SuccessConnects community. His main goal is to land a summer internship and get accepted to the Ford School of Public Policy. But while he's thinking about his future, he's also thinking about his community. He said, “I also plan on doing what I can to help others reach their academic goals. ‘Even if I myself don't know, I probably know someone else who does know.' I like to use that little quote to encourage myself and others to network!”

A SuccessConnects scholar gets guidance for pursuing a master's and supports OAMI with marketing and outreach

Going from a creative writing bachelor's degree to a graduate program in information science was a big jump, but for Julie Zhou it made sense. While they're very different fields, she said, "they both share the common goal of understanding other people's thoughts and emotions."

Julie feels fortunate to have had a mentor who helped her work through her own thoughts and emotions. "Joining SuccessConnects gave me access to personalized support that I wouldn't have known where to find otherwise," she said. "From applying to grad school to pursuing internships, my SuccessConnects coach guided me through everything, and I'm truly grateful to have had that kind of support before graduating."

Julie sees OAMI as one of the communities on campus that "truly sets our school apart from others," so she was thrilled to contribute in her role as a marketing assistant for OAMI. She used her writing skills to compile newsletter content to spread the word. She said, "knowing that other people were learning about OAMI and its wide range of resources made the work feel especially meaningful," highlighting that "OAMI is connected to so much more than just its own office."



Julie Zhou

**Bachelor's of Arts - Creative Writing
and Literature
Class of 2025**

**Master's of Information Science
Class of 2027**

"In my senior year, I made the sudden decision to apply to graduate school and explore a completely new field of study. Joining SuccessConnects gave me access to personalized support that I wouldn't have known where to find otherwise."

OAMI and M-Connect help open doors for a Navy veteran and his family

Brandon Keyes has always wanted to earn a college degree, but he took a more circuitous route to Michigan. Brandon built his technical skills in the Army as a network switching systems operator. Working out of Fort Bragg in North Carolina, he helped manage telecom equipment and oversee subordinates with installation and troubleshooting. The experience helped him recognize that “the world was becoming more and more connected and that my best chance at success was to remain in the digital orbit.”

After his military service and some time in corporate IT roles, he began Detroit Wired, a network cabling company serving Metro Detroit. Over the next decade, he found success as an entrepreneur, but he began to see its limits. “Low-voltage cabling is good work, but it can be a dog-eat-dog world. The margins aren’t ‘to die for’ either,” he said, adding, “I got tired of climbing the ladder and itching from ceiling installation in my shirt.”

At this point in Brandon’s life, the idea of college not only felt enticing but took on a new urgency. With a wife and young children, he recognized it was time to earn a degree: “I told myself either I’ll be 41 with it or 41 without it, so I committed to school full-time.”

Though Brandon had served in the military and run a successful business, coming to U-M was not easy. “I did not anticipate imposter syndrome and the vulnerability I felt,” he said. This is not an unusual sentiment to hear from



Brandon Keyes

**Bachelor’s of Arts with Distinction,
Organizational Studies,
Entrepreneurship
Class of 2025**

**Master’s of Science in Information
Class of 2027**

“My experience coming to U-M was complex. I had to move a family of four, so that comes with its own challenges. Housing was difficult but Erika and M-Connect helped keep me sane. More than anything, [they] gave me a community and made me feel like a valued student in this vast place.”

first-generation, transfer, and non-traditional students. It's one reason why Erika Johnson, M-Connect director, puts particular energy into meeting students where they're at. That first year of undergrad, Erika provided success coaching to Brandon. During these one-on-one sessions, Erika would help with everything from finding housing to building a campus support network. Like many students who connect with OAMI, it had a profound impact. "Erika and M-Connect helped keep me sane," Brandon said. "More than anything, [the program] gave me a community and made me feel like a valued student in this vast place. I felt at home, and M-Connect is a huge part of that."

Once Brandon had made a home at the university, he helped do the same for other transfer students. As a mentor in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, he found fulfillment helping people achieve their own dreams of admittance to U-M. His time in M-Connect was formative to his mentorship approach. He remarked that "Erika's passion and enthusiasm to help is infectious and really informed my approach to assisting others in higher ed. [She] is an uplifting

soul, and what I took most from her interactions with me was that it was my duty to uplift others."

When Brandon reached graduation, it was clear that he was uplifting more than just fellow students. Brandon attended the First-Generation Student Celebration and Black Celebratory during spring commencement week. The events brought home how much a college degree transforms him and the people around him. "It feels amazing being the first to open a door that was closed to my family for generations," he reflected. "That's what it's really about to me – shifting the trajectory of my family."

At Black Celebratory, Brandon crossed the Power Center's stage with his wife and two boys. As they made their way across, with stage lights bright and the audience cheering, both Brandon and his sons could see the world in a completely new way. From a 'navy brat' to a college graduate pursuing a master's in Information Science, Brandon made something once so distant readily available for his children to grasp: "My boys are growing up seeing education as normal, as accessible, as something that belongs to them."



Brandon Keyes walks across the stage during Black Celebratory with his wife and sons

Managing Your Success creating an Action Plan



SUCCESSCONNECTS

Building upon the impact of a resource-rich community

As OAMI's signature initiative, SuccessConnects provides a supportive and resource-rich community that encourages holistic student success at Michigan. From tutoring and academic coaching to leadership development and professional preparation, students strengthen their skills within an empowering network of peers and mentors.

This year, the program increased its reach with more personalized coaching, new workshops on well-being, leadership, and career readiness, and broadened tutoring options in high-demand courses. These additions complemented the strong foundation of SuccessConnects and ensured that students could access support tailored to their unique needs.

Building on OAMI's long history of college preparation and increasing student retention, SuccessConnects was launched in

**From 2022 to 2024,
there was a 74.4%
increase in registration,
with an average six-
year graduation success
rate of 90%.**

2016. Since then, the program has seen significant growth not only in terms of participants but also campus reach and program efficacy. From 2022 to 2024, there was a 74.4% increase in registration, with an average six-year graduation success rate of 90%. SuccessConnects has also partnered with other programs on campus and across Michigan, including Wolverine Pathways, MI-LSAMP, and Detroit Promise.

The program's greatest strength continues to be the integration of its core elements: success coaching, one-on-one tutoring, skill-enhancement workshops, and community-building activities, which together create a consistent layer of support.

Looking ahead, OAMI remains dedicated to supporting student success by seamlessly connecting participants from M-Connect and the First-Generation Gateway to SuccessConnects. OAMI continues to strengthen collaborations with schools, colleges, and campus units to ensure that every student can maximize their talents and take full advantage of the university's vast opportunities. Through comprehensive access to staff coaching, peer mentorship, and tutoring resources, OAMI is committed to empowering students throughout their Michigan journey.



WORKSHOPS & COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

This past year, SuccessConnects hosted 24 events to support scholars. Workshops are designed to offer opportunities for personal and professional growth, covering a variety of topics including exploring majors, careers, and internships, managing finances, and engaging in candid conversations about imposter syndrome. The goal is to help participants develop valuable skills and insights while fostering stronger connections within the community.

BREADTH OF DEMOGRAPHICS

SuccessConnects is open to all undergraduate U-M students and actively welcomes the diverse experiences and unique contributions that each scholar brings to our community. We place particular emphasis on supporting students from Michigan's pipeline programs, which often serve first-generation college students and those from limited-income families. We recognize that students come to the University of Michigan through many different paths, and we are committed to honoring and supporting their unique journeys, past, present, and future, as they navigate opportunities to reach their goals for success.

**First-Generation • Go-Blue Guarantee • Wolverine Pathways
Detroit Promise • Community College transfers • Limited-income**

SUCCESSCONNECTS COACHING

2,020
ONE-ON-ONE
SESSIONS

Success coaching focuses on preparation for the rigor and demands freshmen and transfer students experience during their first year at Michigan. Peer coaching at the sophomore through senior years delves more into navigating the specifications of majors, campus involvement and leadership, while exploring future goals and the tools to help achieve them.

SUCCESSCONNECTS TUTORING

842
ONE-ON-ONE
SESSIONS

SuccessConnects offered tutoring for all active participants in the Fall and Winter semesters. 20 tutors worked one-on-one with 140 tutees, providing help for 23 courses within eight subjects.

These included:

Biology; Chemistry; Economics; Electrical Engineering and Computer Science (EECS); Math; Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology (MCDB); Spanish; Statistics.

SUCCESSCONNECTS STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

“The SuccessConnects program has provided me with a strong sense of community and support. **My mentor offered valuable advice and motivation, which helped me stay on track academically and personally.** It’s been a great space to grow and feel connected.”

“It’s been hugely beneficial, acting as a moment to sincerely reflect on and consider my thoughts, direction, and goals for the future, and how I’m achieving them or putting myself in a good position to achieve them. My mentor was also hugely beneficial in bridging resource information access gaps, exposing me to invaluable resources, such as tutoring for challenging courses, academic advising, housing, and **even valuable strategies to effectively plan and approach everyday activities.**”

“The sense of community and belonging I found through SuccessConnects gave me the encouragement to keep pushing forward, especially during stressful times in nursing school. **Knowing there are people and spaces on campus that truly care about students like me has made a big difference in my college experience.**”



M-CONNECT

Helping transfer students feel at home at Michigan

M-Connect is designed to support both prospective and current University of Michigan transfer students from partner community colleges across the state of Michigan, anchored by funding through the State of Michigan's King-Chavez-Parks Initiative (MICUP).

For prospective students, M-Connect provides guidance throughout the transfer process, offering support with the U-M application, advice on transferable courses, and exploring opportunities such as workshops, information sessions, and summer research programs.

For current U-M students who have transferred from partner colleges,

M-Connect fosters a sense of belonging by connecting them to staff and peer mentorship, academic workshops, one-on-one coaching, and free tutoring in collaboration with SuccessConnects.

The program welcomes a diverse range of transfer students, including non-traditional students, commuters, students with families, and often extends invitations for partners, spouses, and children to attend community events.

In-state community college transfer students are invited to join M-Connect, ensuring that those making the transition to U-M have a clear pathway of support and resources.

STRENGTHENING BELONGING

In addition to students receiving one-on-one coaching, M-Connect provides regular touchpoints throughout the school year. These include events and workshops, a community newsletter, end-of-semester gatherings, and a graduation celebration. As shown in the testimonials below, students consistently express a sense of belonging that may otherwise not have been found.

369

Students directly served

49

Major activities and programs

79

Transfer student graduates

PARTNER SCHOOLS

- Jackson College
- Oakland Community College
- Wayne County Community College District
- Michigan Reconnect participants from any in-state community or tribal college

M-CONNECT STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

"M-Connect does an excellent job of outlining the critical path to admission and greatly assists throughout the matriculation process. Erika has done an amazing job of easing and facilitating my family's transition to Ann Arbor and U of M. **One question that struck me, 'Do I feel like I belong here?' and the answer is YES.**"

"What I love about M-Connect is going to events and learning so much about the school, as well as smoothing out the transition as a transfer student. It's been so helpful knowing there are people there to guide and assist you. **I've never felt more at home at a school than I do at U of M, and it's all thanks to M-Connect.** I've met so many amazing people that I still keep in contact with."

"I met my first friend at U-M through M-Connect and we studied abroad together and still are in touch! **I'm super grateful for M-Connect for providing me with the opportunity to connect with other students who had a path similar to mine.**"



FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT GATEWAY

Enriching the university's hub for First-Gen community engagement and campus resources

The First-Generation Student Gateway serves as a central hub of support, community, and resources for the over 4,000 first-generation students at the University of Michigan. More than just a physical space, the Gateway provides opportunities for students to connect with peers who share similar experiences, attend signature events such as First-Gen Week and community dinners, and access workshops and trainings tailored to their unique needs. It is also a campus-wide resource that educates faculty and staff on the experiences of first-generation students, offering consulting and training to departments across U-M.

This year, the Gateway expanded its collaborations with campus partners, ensuring that first-generation students are supported both academically and socially. Through the establishment of the First-Generation Coordinating Council, staff, faculty, administrators, and students reflect on the needs and gaps for supporting first-generation students and aim to create a campus-wide culture that supports them in all aspects of university life. This council serves as the guiding body for campus-wide first-generation student success, setting a shared vision and strategy for the university while advocating for systemic change in policies and practices.

PROGRAM IMPACT

12 signature events + 7 student organization-supported events, including:

- First-Gen New Student Welcome
- First-Gen Gateway Open House
- Community Dinners
- First-Gen Celebration Week

First-Gen Future: Unlocking Career Potential (University Career Center)

The First-Gen Futures Program at U-M is a five-week, in-person experience where first-year, sophomore, and transfer students connect, grow, and boost their career game. Students connect with peers, explore careers, and gain valuable insights to advance future careers.

First-Generation Alumni Panel

A virtual panel focusing on the journeys of first-generation college alumni. The graduates shared how being a first-generation graduate has influenced their lives and careers post-graduation. Co-hosted with the Alumni Association.

Coordinating Council Representation

Consisting of four schools and colleges, and the University Career Center, each member represents a specific program dedicated to supporting first-generation college students.

Faculty and Staff Engagement Form

A pipeline for staff, faculty, and administrators who are interested in engaging more with first-generation college students and the campus-wide First-Generation Initiative.

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

We May Be the First, But We Won't Be the Last: The trials and triumphs of the U-M's first-generation students, *Ann Arbor Observer*, March 25, 2025

With perspectives from a variety of students, past and present, Dwight Lang and Sylvia Wanner Lang show how attitudes towards these students have evolved while the community continues to advocate for future progress.

[Read the article on the *Ann Arbor Observer* website](#)



CAMPUS-WIDE EVENTS

The 39th Annual MLK Symposium: Bringing the community together with an urgent call for justice

The University of Michigan’s annual Martin Luther King Jr. Symposium is one of the nation’s largest and longest-running celebrations of Dr. King’s life and legacy. Organized in partnership across schools, colleges, and student groups, it reflects Michigan’s ongoing commitment to social justice, education, and dialogue.

The 39th Annual MLK Symposium theme “Restless Dissatisfaction: An Urgent Call for the Pursuit of Justice and Equality” continued the exploration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s legacy. The concept urges not just dissatisfaction with injustice but an active refusal of complacency, especially in challenging times.

Organized by faculty, staff, and community members, the symposium’s centerpiece was an inspiring keynote by Erika Alexander—acclaimed actress, activist, entrepreneur, and creator—held at Hill Auditorium on the MLK Day holiday. Dr. Daphne C. Watkins of the School of Social Work facilitated a conversation around the symposium

theme, with Alexander urging attendees to transform their dissatisfaction into action for justice.

Beyond the keynote, Alexander engaged more than 75 student leaders at the Trotter Multicultural Center in a candid discussion about being a committed activist while prioritizing personal well-being. She encouraged students to study previous social movements and use that knowledge to guide their own advocacy, creating space for questions, guidance, and supportive connections.

The symposium spanned over thirty events throughout the month, involving talks, performances, and community collaborations across campus and southwest Michigan, reflecting Dr. King's legacy and the ongoing call for justice and equality.

For OAMI, the symposium is both a celebration and a call to action. It offers students opportunities to engage in meaningful dialogue, take on leadership roles in planning, and embody Dr. King's vision through action. In a time of division, the symposium continues to reaffirm Michigan's role as a space for reflection, learning, and collective progress.



MLK

MLK Symposium Keynote

1,300+
in-person attendees

4,300+
participants via U-M
livestream

3,000+
streams on Facebook
via Detroit PBS



Helping students bring two visionaries to campus

OAMI offers a special SAMI Grant for student programs that occur alongside or thematically connect with the MLK Symposium. This year, SAMI supported LS&A Student Government in bringing Angela Davis and Ta-Nehisi Coates to U-M for "The Arc of Activism: Bridging Intergenerational Legacies." OAMI was proud to join schools and colleges across campus to support a deeply meaningful conversation.

The 51st Anniversary of the Dance for Mother Earth Powwow: Continuing to strengthen ties between the university and Native communities

The Dance for Mother Earth Powwow remains one of the most significant cultural gatherings hosted at the University of Michigan, celebrating Indigenous traditions, resilience, and community. In 2024, the Powwow proudly celebrated its 51st anniversary, bringing together thousands of attendees from across the state and region in a vibrant space for cultural expression, education, and intergenerational connection. The event featured dancers, drummers, artisans, and community leaders who shared their traditions with both Native and non-Native audiences, strengthening ties between the university and Native communities statewide.

Beyond its cultural importance, the Powwow serves as a living example of the University of Michigan's commitment to student development and belonging. The Native American Student Association (NASA), working alongside dedicated staff and faculty, plays a central role in leading the planning and coordination of the annual event, gaining invaluable leadership experience throughout the process. Their work, supported by OAMI staff, the Native student community, and external partners ensures that the Powwow continues to thrive as a welcoming space for celebration and cultural pride.

OAMI remains committed to sustaining the Powwow as a cornerstone of Michigan's commitment to community and belonging. The event not only honors Native heritage but also reinforces the values of community, identity, and inclusion that help students feel connected to the fabric of the university. For many attendees, the Powwow is both a celebration and a powerful reminder that U-M is enriched when it honors and sustains the diverse legacies of the people it serves.

Powwow Engagement

3,000+
in-person attendees

100+
volunteers

27
student and staff
committee members

50+
vendors and non-
profits

Student Celebrations continue to grow and spread joy across campus

Each year during the exciting season of Spring Commencement, OAMI has the privilege of hosting graduates and their loved ones at student celebrations. All graduating students are invited to attend these events, which recognize and honor the wide breadth of experiences and identities on campus. Here, their ambition and accomplishments, along with those of faculty, staff, and other community members, are commemorated within culturally resonant ceremonies. From first-generation graduates on stage sharing stories of their family's sacrifice to staff and faculty receiving awards that highlight their impact on generations of students, generosity and gratitude fill these spaces.

OAMI was proud to welcome a new student celebration this year, the Oceania Student Celebration (OSC), which came about through the advocacy and vision of students. While originally part of the Asian & Pacific Islander celebration, members of the Oceania Student Association proposed the idea for a separate event that would be more meaningful for them. With the support of the department of A/PIA and Native Studies, the students designed a ceremony that focused on Native Hawaiian and Indigenous Pacific Islanders as indigenous peoples, creating a space for ceremony and commemoration of shared practices in a Pasifika-centered environment. Eight graduates and their loved ones gathered for an intimate evening made real by students' passion to strengthen and honor their community and traditions.

“Being part of the planning committee has meant not only uplifting our voices, but also making space to joyfully honor, make known, and celebrate my friends’ journeys and the Pasifika community. Thank you to the Oceania Student Celebration Committee and OAMI for helping make this happen!”

Maekayla Dimatulac
Oceania Student
Association member

CAMPUS-WIDE EVENTS

MLK SYMPOSIUM



STUDENT CELEBRATIONS



POWWOW





PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Detroit Promise: SEEDS

A new program preparing incoming Detroit students for college through urban public policy research projects

OAMI's newest program, Detroit Promise: Scholars Succeeding in Education with Excellence for Detroit Success (SEEDS), combines intensive, research-based group projects and college readiness orientation. This multi-faceted approach builds students' confidence to tackle real-world problems through policy briefs while connecting them to resources for achieving a successful first year.

This immersive initiative has engaged entering freshman students in a program that includes early move-in and an early start to the rigor of college, with a goal of building knowledge for the betterment of the future of Detroit. Building on the state's Growing Michigan Together Council Report, each student group focused on one of three areas for urban renewal: transportation, education, and housing. Detroit practitioners and U-M faculty, through teaching and research on each core topic area, engaged the students with presentations, practical examples, and reference materials to support their exploration and assessments. An intensive timeline, teamwork, and use of U-M resources provided a glimpse into the benefits of rigor, critical thinking, and a focus on achieving a goal. SEEDS scholars were also connected to the campus via community activities, campus resource exploration, and engagement with programs and opportunities.

SAMI Student Grants: Providing resources for student leaders to share their knowledge, cultures, and creativity

For over 25 years, Student Academic Multicultural Initiatives (SAMI) grants have funded individual students' educational and research pursuits and student organizations' projects and events. The goal is to empower students to educate themselves and the broader community by exploring culture and identity through an academic lens. They are a key part of OAMI's mission to provide opportunities for campus leadership and prepare students to contribute positively to their communities and the world.

Project examples:

- Tech for Social Good Hackathon
- MedLink: A Health Access Project
- Philippine Culture Night
- SHEI Culture Magazine

Conference participation examples:

- American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE)
- UN Forum on Indigenous Issues
- Society For Linguistic Anthropology
- American Educational Research Association

M-CLIC: Building community with dialogue

M-CLIC continues to serve as a vital space where students gather to reflect, dialogue, and lead with purpose. The Barbershop series had another impactful year facilitating thoughtful conversations about pressing social and cultural issues. Serving 44 students, the most participants since the program's launch, these six dynamic events reinforced M-CLIC's role in shaping leaders grounded in authenticity, community, and critical reflection.

M-STEP: Elevating academic success for the state's future

M-STEP, a grant program supported by the State of Michigan's King-Chavez-Parks (KCP) initiative, welcomed another cohort of first-year scholars, each embarking on their college journey with the support of OAMI's comprehensive coaching model. Students explored strategies for academic planning, self-discovery, and intentional goal-setting, while cultivating the resilience and balance necessary for long-term achievement. M-STEP scholars also benefited from SuccessConnects tutoring and connections to broader OAMI programs.

SAMI GRANTS STRENGTHEN PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Students who were surveyed selected a wide range of skills used in executing their work:

Leadership
development

57%

Budgeting

73%

Communication

70%

Decision making

67%

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

SEEDS



SAMI GRANTS

M-CLIC



M-STEP



OFFICE ENGAGEMENT

Student-supported engagement across campus

OAMI continues to expand its reach and impact by cultivating intentional relationships with student organization leaders and campus partners. Through consistent engagement, the office has fostered stronger connections between student leaders and OAMI, ensuring that their voices are heard and their organizations are supported. Notably, this year OAMI launched a Student Ambassador initiative, hiring undergraduate leaders to help spread awareness of the office's programs and events across the university. At the same time, OAMI is strategically deepening collaborations with partner organizations and academic offices, creating a more integrated support network for students. These efforts not only strengthen OAMI's visibility and accessibility but also reinforce its role as a hub for student success, leadership development, and community building across campus.

OAMI's efforts included:

- Training and coordinating student ambassadors
- Engaging in 43 outreach events
- Eight student-led celebration committees
- Powwow planning team
- Supporting and collaborating with student orgs such as First-Gen, the Wolverine Pathways Advisory Board, and SCOPE

Offering students diverse roles for professional development

OAMI offers a wide range of student employment opportunities, each providing meaningful roles for students to serve their peers and develop as future leaders. With intentional training and mentorship, student staff gain skills that extend OAMI's impact across campus. They support the office's mission through their insights and experiences, and gain a wide variety of skills to prepare them for future endeavors.

55

students employed

Opening the office for studying and connection

OAMI offers a welcoming space for student team meetings, open house sessions, presentations and workshops, and gatherings to build community while nourishing the spirit and the body. Continuing from the success of last year, OAMI Sammy invited students to break bread and connect. Surveyed students shared that OAMI Sammy provided an important resource that contributed to their well-being.

OAMI's Study Zone provided 50 sessions for students to have a weekly distraction-free space to read, write, and collaborate. With prime study locations in high demand around campus, Study Zone encourages the consistent habit and discipline of productive study in a comfortable environment.

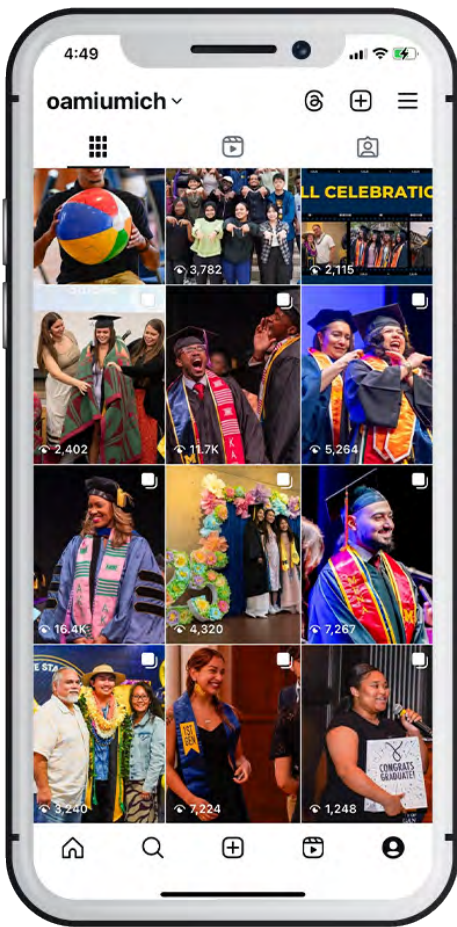
STUDENT STAFF POSITIONS

- 1. Welcome Desk Staff:** These students gain professional experience by answering phones, greeting and assisting guests, supporting office staff, and participating in program and event support.
- 2. Academic Success Partners (ASPs) and Graduate Success Partners (GSPs):** These peer mentors support students' success in SuccessConnects through success coaching, event planning assistance, program communications, special projects, and resource connections. They work collaboratively to address the needs of a diverse student community and ensure students maximize their university experience.
- 3. Tutors:** These tutors help students navigate U-M's most challenging courses, fostering academic excellence, and a community of shared support. Providing one-on-one guidance on coursework in weekly sessions, tutors gain important communication, organization, and interpersonal skills.
- 4. Student Program Coordinators (SPCs):** SPCs develop and coordinate activities that recruit, retain, and enrich the experiences of students involved in OAMI's programs. Their work includes content design, event planning, communications and marketing, special projects, and resource connections. SPCs use their perspectives and passions to tailor these programs so they are as meaningful and useful as possible.

COMMUNICATION & MARKETING

Building a brand that is memorable and meaningful

In such a large university, it's critical that an office like OAMI takes a strategic approach to informing and engaging the community. Building on the momentum of previous years, the marketing team continues to enhance and tailor OAMI's design and branding to resonate with diverse audiences and stakeholders. Leveraging this strengthened identity, the office connects to students and the wider community with engaging and informative content through a number of marketing channels.



Instagram becomes a key connection to campus

The second school year with OAMI's Instagram channel led to significant growth and engagement. Using a diverse range of shared content (reels, photos, and stories) plus collaborative posts with other units, schools, and colleges, the office became a dynamic presence within the U-M Instagram community.

45,000

accounts reached

5,600

interactions

815

followers

Skill-building opportunities for the evolving marketing and media space

An increasing number of professional roles require mastery of communications and content marketing. OAMI offers opportunities for students to learn these skills in a dynamic, collaborative environment. Students hone their photography, web design, social, and writing to enhance their professional portfolio while assisting OAMI with devising creative solutions to address a diverse array of program and event requirements.

OFFICE ENGAGEMENT

EMPLOYMENT



OUTREACH



OAMI PRIDE NIGHT

WP LEGACY NIGHT



HARMBEE FALL FEST

The donors and government partnerships that help OAMI succeed

State and donor partnerships are central to sustaining student access and success at Michigan. Donor contributions provide critical resources that directly shape the student experience, helping students not only access Michigan but also thrive once they are here. From scholarships that ease financial barriers to funding for mentorship, leadership development, and academic support, donor investments position students for long term success at the university and beyond.

Complementing this, state programs through the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, such as the Michigan College/University Partnership (MICUP) and the Select Student Support Services (4S) grants, align with Michigan's educational goals and strengthen student achievement. Together, these state and local partnerships, alongside donor support, do more than open the doors to Michigan; they fuel persistence, growth, and thriving throughout the student journey.

OAMI is immensely grateful for this crucial support and is excited to collaborate with our donors to champion student success at Michigan.

Together, we're not just closing the gap — we're empowering dreams and building a brighter future for all.





**Let's work together to enrich
our campus community and
prepare future leaders for
success at Michigan and
beyond.**

Scan the QR code or visit
oami.umich.edu/support-oami



OAMI'S STAFF

Sustaining a legacy and adapting for the future

The dedication of OAMI's professional staff has been instrumental in advancing the office's mission. Their expertise, adaptability, and unwavering commitment to student success have been key to keeping OAMI moving forward. Just as importantly, their vision and innovation continue to position the office to meet future challenges and opportunities with strength and creativity.



Julia J. Barron, M.S.

Success Coach

Julia has a Master's in Developmental Psychology from the University of Michigan and began her educational journey at Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC). She is passionate about supporting students in achieving their academic, personal, and professional goals. Julia is currently pursuing a Master's of Social Work at Michigan.



Sharon R. Burch, M.A.

Interim Co-Director

Sharon manages administrative and operational functions to maximize outcomes of staff and programs that serve OAMI's mission. Her experience in higher education includes pre-college outreach, admissions, and program development. As a U-M graduate, she values student success as a paramount goal!



Hector Galvan, M.A.

Interim Co-Director

Hector advances OAMI's mission by developing impactful programs and leading teams that drive student success through advocacy, mentorship, and leadership development. A proud U-M alumnus from Detroit, he is passionate about fostering a supportive campus environment where students can thrive academically and personally.



Erika Johnson, M.A.

M-Connect Program Director

Erika, the director of M-Connect and a Success Coach, has worked with transfer students for over 25 years in admissions and new student programs. She holds a B.A. and M.A. from U-M and helps students recognize how they belong.



Janice Jones, Ph.D.
M-STEP Program Director

Janice is dedicated to helping students achieve academic and professional goals and encourages meaningful personal growth. In her free time, she enjoys watching classic movies, taking walks, drawing, and spending time with loved ones.



Samrawit Kahsay, B.A.
Program Manager, Success Coach

Samrawit coordinates Graduate Success Partners in SuccessConnects and holds a B.A. in Women's Studies from U-M. Passionate about mentorship, she facilitates holistic student success. Samrawit is currently pursuing a Master's of Social Work at Michigan.



Brendan Kirwin, M.A.
Assistant Director of Marketing & Communication

Brendan supports OAMI with all aspects of marketing and communication development and strategy and is co-chair of the MLK Symposium. He is an alum of U-M's Performing Arts Technology program and has an M.A. from Georgetown University in Communication, Culture & Technology.



Nrupali Kulkarni, M.S.
Data Manager

Nrupali manages data systems for OAMI, ensuring alignment with its mission, and holds an M.S. in Information Systems Management with a specialization in Data Analytics from Arizona State University.



Terra Molengraff, Ph.D.
Program Director of First-Generation Initiatives

Terra is the Program Director of First-Generation Initiatives, a two-time U-M alum, and completed her Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota, focusing on support for first-generation college students.



Gregory O. Thomas, M.A.
Assistant Director, Success Coach

Greg is the Program Director of M-CLIC, Co-Chair of the U-M MLK Symposium, Coordinator of the Black Celebratory, and a Success Coach with SuccessConnects. He holds a Master's in Higher Education/Student Affairs from Eastern Michigan University.

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Office of Academic
Multicultural Initiatives

2024-25

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 3009 Student Activities Building
515 E. Jefferson
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1316

734-936-1055

oami-uofm@umich.edu