

University of Oakland
THE OAKLAND CHALLENGE





W

elcome to the University of Oakland, home of the tigers! We are an institution of higher learning that is committed to the holistic development of students. The university prides itself on student engagement and encourages social interactions through student clubs and organizations, service learning, global engagement, and living learning communities. We strive to provide students, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or sexual orientation with equitable resources and programming towards the advancement of identity development. We prioritize cultivating a safe space where students can challenge the status quo.

We know our students at the University of Oakland, and worldwide, are struggling to build connections and remain engaged, especially our first-year students who may not be residing on campus. With this being said, we are excited to announce the **OAKLAND CHALLENGE!**

Do you have what it takes to rule the jungle?

It is time to find out!



About the University of Oakland

- Located in Allegheny County – Pennsylvania
- 28,642 students
 - 25,797 Full Time
 - 2,845 Part Time
- 59.8% Female
- 59.6% Male
- 65.5% White
- 8.71% Asian
- 4.88% Black or African American
- 3.69% Hispanic or Latino
- 3.44% Two or More Races
- 0.0698% American Indian Alaska Native
- 0.0524% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders.
- 59.7% Acceptance Rate
- 82.5% Graduation Rate



What is the Oakland Challenge?

Inspired by the hit TV show, *The Amazing Race*, students will virtually compete on teams to complete several challenges. The challenges will allow students to build connections, develop teamwork and time-management skills, while also learning about important resources on campus!

Getting Started

01

Students will RSVP using the program link.

Link will be sent through all marketing strategy components e.g. email blasts and social media posts. Program link will prompt them to fill out a google form.

02

After registration closes, students will be randomly assigned a team.

No choosing teams here!
We want students to get out of their comfort zone and build connections with students from all over campus.

03

Students will be notified of their team via mail.

The Office of Student Affairs will mail a colored T-shirt featuring the challenge's logo on it, as well as an information packet that includes a discord link for students to initiate contact with their team ahead of the challenge.

*Materials will be shipped one week before the date of the challenge to account for any delivery delays. If a student does not receive their package in the mail or registers late, they may reach out to the student affairs office and we will provide them with the necessary information to participate and link up with their team.

Day-of Details

01

The challenge will take place on Saturday April 24, 2021 at 2pm.

02

All Students will log onto the provided zoom "home-base" link a few minutes ahead of 2pm. Student affairs staff will be on this zoom throughout the challenge to answer questions.

03

At 2pm, a video will play reiterating the rules and presenting students with their first challenge. *All instructional videos will feature prominent university administration/faculty/staff

04

Students will log off of the zoom to complete the first challenge. They can collaborate through their discord group, or a different communication platform if they prefer.

05

Students will log back onto the home-base zoom to submit a challenge. Once a staff member approves the submission, the students will be sent the link to the next challenge's instructional video.

06

Challenges will increase in difficulty. The first team to complete all 6 challenges will win. A second winner will be selected as "Staff Favorite" for quality of challenge submissions.

The Challenges

01

"Tiger Team Building"

Teams will choose a name, slogan, and song to be their anthem.

02

"Let's Do A Silly One!"

Teams will create a collage of everyone's pictures. Bonus points if some people actually look like they could be together!

03

"Tigers 'Round the World"

Teams will find out where everyone is from, and create a map plotting each member's location and linking them all together.

The Challenges (cont.)

04

"Tiger Trivia"

Teams will receive a fill-in-the-blank worksheet with trivia about the University of Oakland. They will be able to find all of the answers on the institution's website.

Ex. In 1955, a team of University researchers earned approval for the first _____ vaccine.

05

"Scavenger Hunt"

Teams will be sent a list of items such as baby clothes, a can opener, a snow shovel, etc. Between team members, they will need to physically find all the items, take & submit selfies with the items, and create a collage of the pictures.

06

"Tigers in the Know"

Teams will choose one student affairs department or student resource they think a first-year student should know about (for example, the Career Center, Student Health Services, Cross Cultural and Leadership Development, etc.) and create an Instagram-friendly graphic summarizing what it is and how students can get involved. (Students can create this graphic however they want, but we will recommend Canva.)



Social Outcomes

- Collaborate with other students to complete the tasks given.
- Contribute to the challenges on a team.
- Interact with other students in a virtual setting, promoting friendships and interactions outside of the event.







Goals and Objectives

Goal:

To promote healthy social interaction and engage students (specifically first-year students) with peers, faculty, and staff in programming that will support their overall success through team-building, virtual communication practices, knowledge of campus resources, and creative problem solving.

Objectives:

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- Increase participation in social engagement activities by end of spring semester
 - Promote interaction between peers, faculty, and staff to provide students with social engagement opportunities outside of the virtual classroom
 - Create awareness of campus resources available to students during virtual learning
 - Enhance school spirit and affinity during the virtual learning period to motivate and retain students for once in-person learning can resume









Marketing Strategy

Social media posts will begin three weeks ahead of the Challenge- student affairs-specific socials will post weekly across three platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter), and the primary institutional accounts will post on all three platforms twice. The first week will consist of teaser graphics, the second week will include the release of the video trailer, the sign-up link, and information about the prize, and the third week/days before posts will consist of clues about the challenges and reminders to sign up. Information about the challenge and the video advertisement will also be included in all student affairs email blasts that are sent out during the four-week period.

We chose to keep the video advertisement one minute based on research that demonstrates most people only watch videos on social media for one minute (Carlson, 2008).

Extra efforts will be made to target first-year students as they have had the most difficulty connecting to campus. This will consist of partnering with residential life to put up materials in first-year residence halls (for those on campus), asking RAs to remind their residents to sign up, requesting that first-year seminar instructors send emails to their students to ensure each first-year is contacted individually, and doubling the social media campaign on first-year programming accounts.

Social Media Calendar

April 3rd	April 10th	April 17th	April 23rd
<p>Post graphic</p> <p>Caption: TIGERS!!   We are excited to announce THE OAKLAND CHALLENGE, a one-of-a-kind, exciting competition with fabulous prizes! Visit www.uoak.edu/theoaklandchallenge to read more and sign up!!</p>	<p>Post video teaser</p> <p>Caption: The Oakland Challenge is only two weeks away! Visit www.uoak.edu/theoaklandchallenge to read more and sign up!!  </p>	<p>Post graphic</p> <p>Caption: The Oakland Challenge is NEXT SATURDAY!!   Visit www.uoak.edu/theoaklandchallenge to read more and sign up!!</p>	<p>Post graphic</p> <p>TIGERS!   It's your last chance to register for The Oakland Challenge which will take place TOMORROW!! Visit www.uoak.edu/theoaklandchallenge now!!</p>

*These posts will be on multiple institutional accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. On Instagram, the captions will say "Visit the link in our bio" instead of the actual bio for easier accessibility

Social Media Graphic Examples



FAQ

Is the event open to all students?

YES! The more tigers, the wilder the jungle gets!

How do I sign up?

Students can register at www.uoak.edu/theoaklandchallenge.

Do I get to pick my team?

We pick teams for you! You can't have enough friends, right?

What if my package does not arrive before the event date?

If your package does not arrive up to one business day prior to April 24th, email studentaffairs@ufoak.edu. A staff member will monitor the email account to ensure that each tiger receives all of the proper information and discord links to communicate with their team, prior to the event (don't worry -- we will still send you a shirt!!)

What if I encounter technical difficulties the day of the event?

The good news is that only ONE team member has to submit answers for it to qualify for the entire team. Also, to mitigate any issues, we advise that each student use their university issued laptop that is equipped with all the necessary technology to successfully complete the challenge.

How does my team win?

To rule the jungle, your team must be the first team to successfully complete all 6 challenges OR be the judges' choice for most creative! There will be a total of 2 team winners.

What do I win?

Roaring rights, duh?? Oh, and each team member also wins a \$100 Visa gift card!

*FAQ will be included with information packet mailed to students

Rationale

Why The Oakland Challenge?

Adopting, *The Amazing Race*, method allows students to engage with campus resources in a relaxing and entertaining setting. Incorporating challenges that inform, educate, and encourage strong collaboration among teammates, foster connections with other students, as well as other faculty and student affairs staff that will be virtually administering the challenges. The fast-paced nature of the show cultivates excitement, and the gamification creates motivation to advance to all six legs of the challenge (Angell & Boss, 2016).

Why Discord?

Discord is accessible on all internet browsers and can be downloaded to a phone or computer, making it available for all students. The app allows for multiple exchanges of instant messages and can be supervised to allow student affairs staff members to monitor team engagement and answer questions prior to the day of the challenge. In a recent classroom study, monitoring four sections of a class, 98.5% of students enjoyed the fast-paced interaction feature and would like to see Discord implemented in more higher education practices (Cacho, 2020).

Why one day only?

The Oakland Challenge takes place as a one-day only event to increase participation and motivation. More time (for example if the challenge was to be completed over the course of a week) allows for procrastination, and scheduling conflicts among team members, which may result in more stress. The purpose of the challenge is to promote healthy social interaction and incorporate resource education and team-building skills into a creative and fun program. A Saturday date was chosen to allow optimal availability for most students and to prevent interferences with classes. Hosting the event as a one-day only program, also allows the staff members to host a Zoom home base room to actively engage with students in real time, helping to foster meaningful connections. Currently operating in a virtual campus setting, students are missing out on valuable informal interactions with faculty and staff. Our hope is that this event provides a time to engage in a non-academic manner (Burke et. al., 2017).

Why mail verses electronic communication?

With virtual programming becoming the new reality, students are yearning for a sense of normality. T-shirts, a staple of campus involvement, are an extra incentive to participate. We thought mailing a package would generate anticipation and allow students to gain free tiger swag, especially for freshman who may not have any campus interaction yet.

Why not allow students to pick their own teams?

Assigning teams will allow students to meet new people and build connections with students they may not know. It eliminates the pressure to form a team and seek out teammates, especially if students have not built meaningful connections with classmates or with members of student activities. Staff members can intentionally create teams with a diverse background of majors, identities, and generation status, to promote the voices of all students when completing the various challenges.

References

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Case Study Team Members

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- Glen Edward
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