



From Safety Netting to Bridge Building: *Mapping Provisions at Oakes College*

A participatory action research (PAR) project by Brandie Bowen, Jimmy Sanchez, Alexander George, Ivan Barragan, Mextli López and Nate Greensides

Our Ultimate Goal...

- Map the spaces and financial resources at Oakes through focus groups and individual interviews to identify the role they play in students' academic success
- Propose solutions to the identified problems



Oakes Staff in the Conversation

Information obtained from individual interviews

Pros

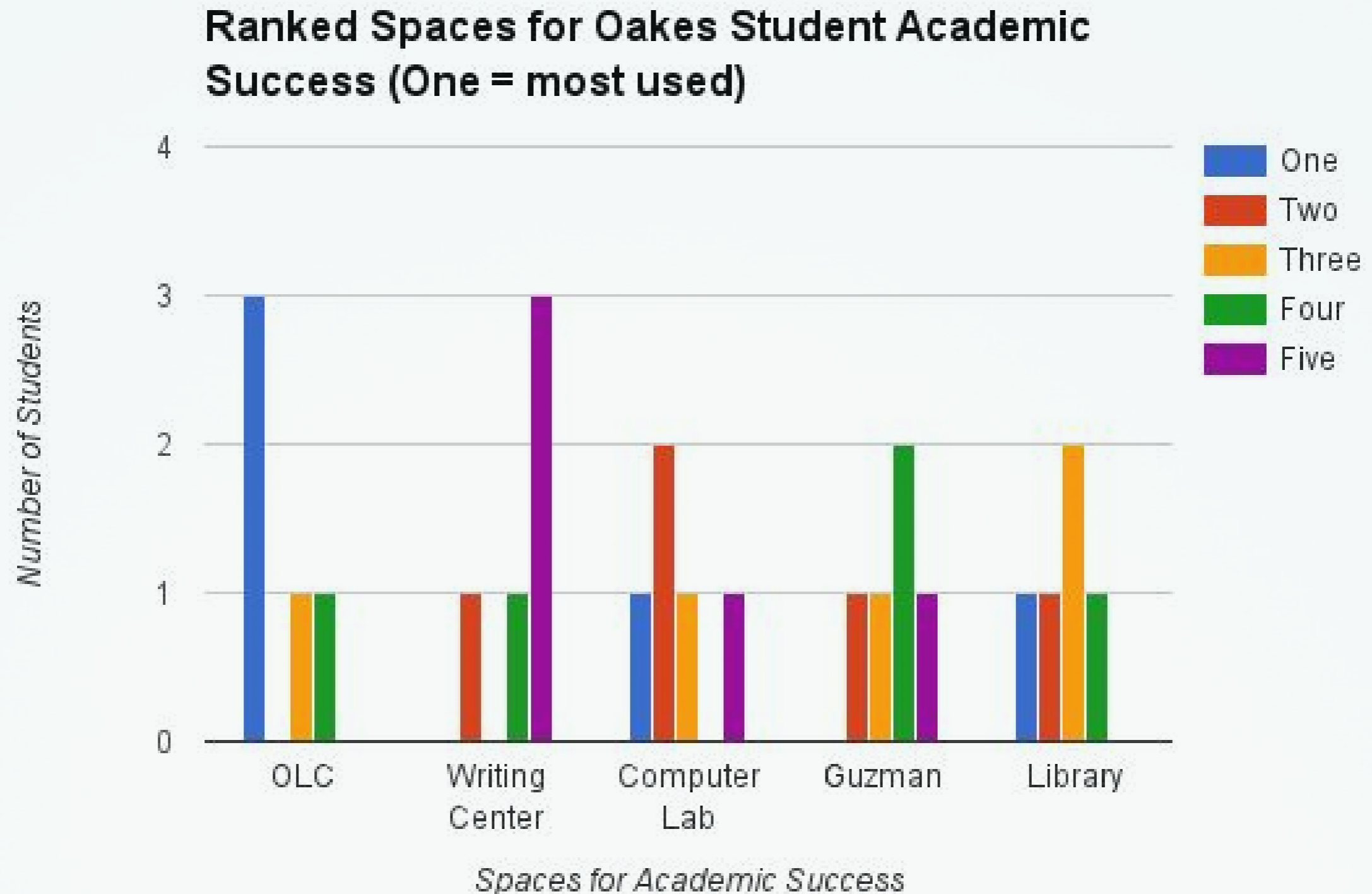
- Oakes has the largest endowment behind Porter college
- Highly dedicated staff
- Strong sense of identity and connection between Oakes students
- Malcolm X fund is available to students in need

Cons

- Oakes needs building repairs but funding is at mercy of CHES (campus facilities)
- Homepage has inaccuracies and is outdated
- High dropout rate for Oakes students
- Oakes financials can be “opaque” at times
- In need of more faculty, advisors

What Oakes Students had to say

Information obtained from focus group



*Note that the most emphasized space was the OLC / least emphasized space was the writing center

What Oakes Students had to say

Information obtained from focus group

OLC

- Great! *But...*
- Intimidating to walk into with no signage
- Not enough power outlets for electronics
- Tendency of STEM tutors to dominate space

West Side Writing Center

- Again, great resource *but...*
- Space is too small (run down)
- Lack of privacy for sensitive sessions

Computer Lab

- Old equipment that works okay, but “why do all the other colleges have better?” (i.e C8)
- Stevenson and Baskin labs are open 24 hours a day (poor lighting around Oakes)
- “The room gets too hot”

Advising

LOVE IT, let's get more of it

Overall College environment

- Close knit, feel comfortable in community
- Upper and Lower Lawns are beautiful and peaceful
- Not enough dedicated space for separate purposes of study and relaxation/play
- Study facilities and equipment seems lacking in comparison to other colleges (“other colleges have Macs, better set-up/ organization and “real” libraries)

OAKES COLLEGE STUDENT



- First generation
- Underrepresented
- Undocumented
- New environment

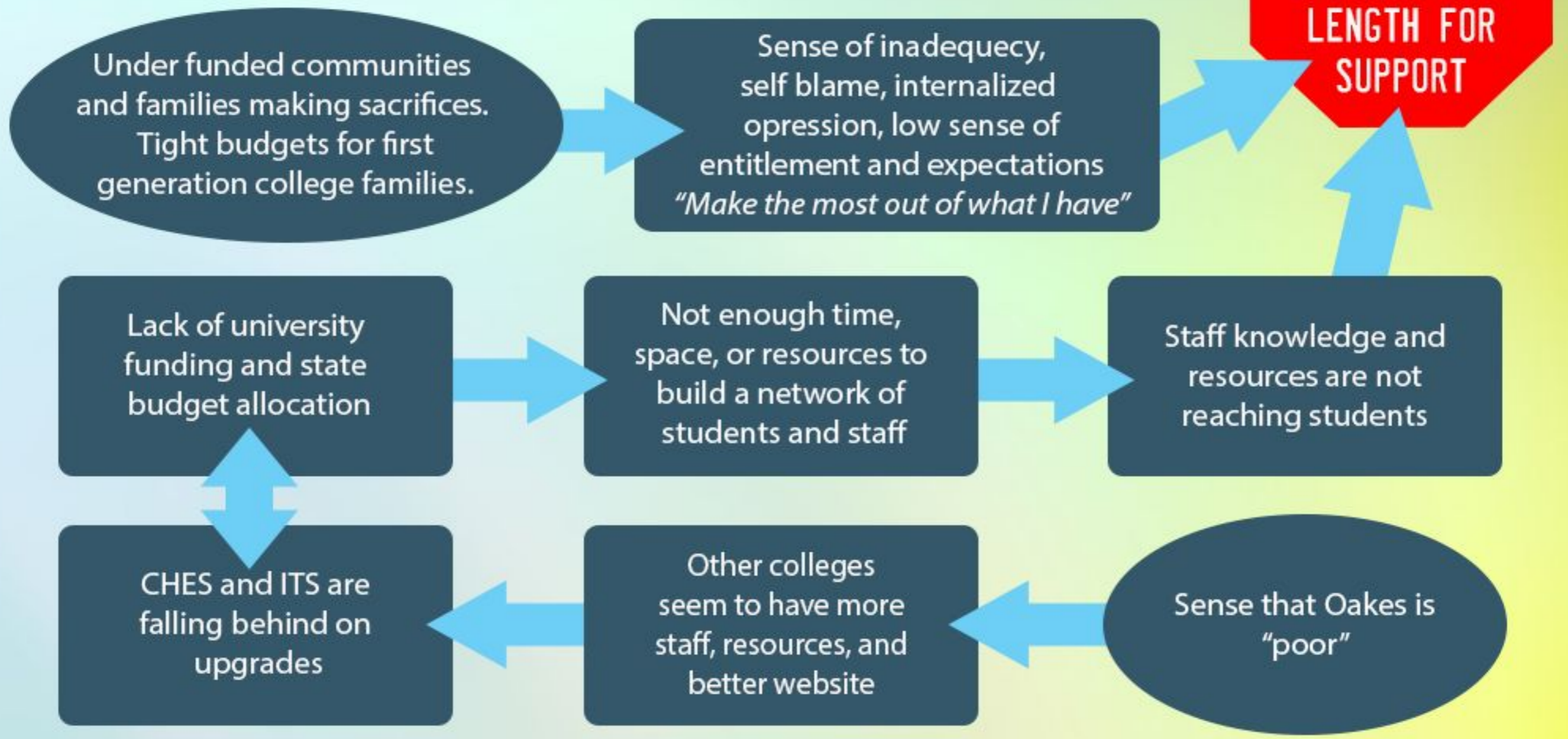
scholarships? outreach? funding?

General disorientation;
not knowing about
available resources

SYMPTOM

BEHAVIOR

POSSIBLE CAUSES:



Moving Forward

Short term solutions

Staff / Time

- Computer Lab staff 24hrs
- Student Budget liaison
- Student Mentors (increase outreach)
- More hours for mailroom

Space

- Fix electrical outlets
- Install new computers
- Bring books/computers to library

Communication

- Signage
- Transparency
- Brochure
- Strengthen partnerships
- Update Oakes website



Bridging the Gap

Long term solutions

- Work with CHES to facilitate the needed upgrades and building modifications - Possibly propose a new building? (Not impossible!)
- Create and maintain a way to effectively disseminate information about resources - both financial and practical
- Modify existing programs to strengthen the Oakes community
- Fight to hire more career staff - Reduce stress/pressure on currently overworked staff

S U C C E S S

- Staff/Faculty
- Scholarships
- Communication

- Students
- Those in need
- Dissemination

From Safety Netting to Bridge Building

“**WE** are People
People...there’s a special
value to that in **Oakes**”

Sara Radoff
Oakes Academic Preceptor