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Student Organization for Accessibility and Resources (SOAR) Program: A Policies and Procedures Manual

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ABSTRACT

Students with disabilities who attend college face many challenges with little support; and therefore are at a higher risk of preemptively dropping out of college (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). Some of these challenges and barriers include but are not limited to roles and responsibilities of support staff and a greater demand for students’ self-reliance (Garrison-Wade, 2012). The Student Organization for Accessibility and Resources (SOAR) Program is a current peer mentorship program missioned to provide guidance and mentorship for college students with disabilities as they negotiate the complexities of transitioning and attending college (Morrison, personal communication, September 13, 2016). Peer mentorship programs, similar in nature to SOAR, have proven to influence higher academic achievement, improve student retention, and enhance general self-confidence, personal growth, self-empowerment and social integration of students with disabilities (Ward, Thomas, & Disch, 2014). Research with college students with disabilities who participated in a peer mentorship program indicated that college students with disabilities additionally demonstrated an increase in persistence and graduation rate (Garrison-Wade, 2012; Vaccaro, Daly-Cano, & Newman, 2015). However, there has been limited evidence regarding a document that provides structure and guidance to create and promote longevity of a peer mentorship program.

A policies and procedures manual was developed that will guide and govern the actions of college students and staff who wish to enact and utilize a peer mentorship based program with the goal of enabling college students with disabilities to attend and
fulfill academic and social desires within the college realm. The primary objective of the policies and procedures manual is to provide successful and efficacious services for students with disabilities. A secondary objective is to provide a template for other student organizations to create a similar program to serve college students with disabilities throughout the country. This scholarly project will provide support for the development and facilitation of the current SOAR program.
INTRODUCTION

The percentage of students with a disability attending postsecondary education has increased 11 percent for both male and female students from 2011-2012 (National Center of Education Statistics, 2016). Despite the increase in attendance rates for students with disabilities, their success rate and integration into postsecondary education settings have not matched that of their counterparts (Griffin, McMillian, & Hodapp, 2010; Grigal, Hart, & Miglior, 2011; Stodden & Whelley, 2004). Even though federal legislation, specifically the 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), has been enacted to ensure that students with disabilities who attend postsecondary education receive appropriate accommodations, students with disabilities continue to face academic and social barriers (Hong, 2015). As times evolve and legislation improves, it is essential for alternative supports and services to become implemented in the college arena in order to create an inclusive atmosphere that facilitates those with disabilities to integrate academically and socially into the college lifestyle.

Peer mentorship programs serve as one method of ancillary support that may fill the gap of services for college students with disabilities. Peer mentorship provides an ongoing relationship with a supportive person who can assist students with disabilities to maneuver challenges and opportunities (Ward, Thomas, & Disch, 2014). Moreover, peer mentorship programs offer benefits to both the mentor and the mentee who are involved (Ward, Thomas, & Disch, 2014; Muwana, 2011). A successful peer mentorship relationship promotes higher academic achievement, improves student retention, and
enhances general self-confidence, personal growth, self-empowerment and social integration of students with disabilities (Ward, Thomas, & Disch, 2014). A successful peer mentorship program is needed for students with disabilities as an alternative service to the traditional disability services that are currently implemented in postsecondary education settings.

Two problems have been identified that have indicated the need for the development of this product. First, beyond difficulties associated with various disabilities, college students with disabilities face daunting barriers when entering the collegiate realm including unawareness of availability of supports, lack of self-advocacy skills, financial difficulties, inconsistencies in educational supports, and reluctance to disclose their disability due to stigma or negative reactions from others (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). These barriers lead to difficulties with complete and satisfying transition and integration into college life, both academically and socially (McCall, 2015). Second, academic institutions face challenges as well with supporting students with disabilities due to financial constraints, insufficient staffing, and lack of interagency collaboration (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). Both problems are equally concerning because each contributes to students with disabilities attending college with unmet social and academic needs.

To address these problems, a policies and procedures manual has been developed to support and promote a peer mentorship program entitled Student Organization for Accessibility and Resources (SOAR). SOAR is a student organization missioned to provide guidance and mentorship for college students with disabilities as they negotiate the complexities of transitioning and attending college (Morrison, personal...
communication, September 13, 2016). Occupational therapy students work in teams within the SOAR program, as part of the student occupational therapy club, to address the needs of students with disabilities on the college campus (Morrison & Hanson, 2016). The SOAR teams collaborate with the participant to identify challenges, set goals, and work through collegiate obstacles in weekly meetings. This relationship emphasizes both participant satisfaction in all realms of college, and occupational therapy student learning alike by forming a mutually supportive educational process (Morrison & Hanson, 2016). Some key support factors such as self-awareness, self-determination, advocacy, and obtaining assistive technology have been shown to be pivotal in collegiate success for students with disabilities, and may seamlessly be addressed by the peer mentorship program (Garrison-Wade, 2012). Additionally, SOAR is fashioned to innately provide a sense of belonging to students with disabilities. The mentors who assist students with disabilities are students themselves, facing college challenges and barriers, while negating the barrier of intimidation while addressing faculty and staff for traditional services.

In the SOAR program, volunteer peer mentors from the local occupational therapy program work with students on campus with disabilities in four major areas of assistance: social participation/leisure, resource identification, advocacy, and organization (Morrison & Hanson, 2016). Peer mentors work with the individual to determine their unique needs, and help increase social and academic integration in college. Mentors provide academic and social support, suggestions regarding course work organization, assistance obtaining necessary equipment, and work to increase collaboration between SOAR participants and the college faculty. In addition to services
provided to SOAR participants with disabilities, SOAR mentors also experience positive effects as a result of involvement. Occupational therapy students who serve as peer mentors address the concept of occupational justice. SOAR participants understand that college students with disabilities have a right to access and experience meaningful occupations in all areas of the college setting (Morrison & Hanson, 2016). Service learning, such as that completed by SOAR mentors, has shown to influence career preparation, increase awareness of community problems, encourage occupational therapy students to become involved in social problems in their communities, and heighten the connections of theory to practice (Muwana & Gaffney, 2011).

SOAR activities occur throughout the college school year. Mentors from the occupational therapy program are divided into groups containing four members and are assigned to assist one SOAR participant throughout the academic year (Morrison & Hanson, 2016). Mentorship teams meet with participants throughout the week as determined collaboratively by the SOAR participant and SOAR team to address the unique needs of the SOAR participant (Morrison & Hanson, 2016). Additionally, mentors gather two times per month in a larger mentorship group to discuss SOAR participant meetings and collaborate to provide participant-centered ideas and suggestions for future work with SOAR participants (Morrison & Hanson, 2016). The program is designed to be implemented and maintained from an occupational therapy student perspective, however it is anticipated that the program may be generalized to additional settings. The SOAR program and the policy and procedure manual follow concepts of the occupational therapy model, Ecology of Human Performance (EHP) (Dunn, Brown, & McGuigan, 1994).
The Ecology of Human Performance (EHP) model has been chosen to guide the development of this product because of its nature and focus of the environment, tasks, and skills that influence-occupational participation (Dunn, Brown, & McGuigan, 1994). Furthermore, the EHP model recognizes a performance range that occurs when there is congruency among the three concepts (Dunn, Brown, & McGuigan, 1994). The concepts of EHP are used throughout this program to reinforce the importance of interdependent nature of the relationship between the person and the environment; and how this relationship impacts human performance (Dunn, Brown, & McGuigan, 1994). The emphasis of ecology is what distinguishes this model from other occupational therapy theories; specifically, the model describes a dynamic and unique relationship of the person and environment, thus if you change one aspect, it changes the other (Turpin & Iwama, 2011).

To this date, the SOAR program has been implemented for two years, with an additional two years of program planning, and is still considered to be in the infancy stages of the program. In order to provide successful and efficacious services to students with disabilities, a policies and procedures manual is a necessary document to govern the actions and decisions of current members of the program. The creation of the policies and procedures manual explicitly defines the policies in place that coordinate activities within the organization and among colleagues and staff members. These policies additionally correspond with the policies of the University of North Dakota and Casper College to ensure cohesiveness among the larger organizations. Included in the policies and procedures manual is an initial participant census survey, a satisfaction survey for participants, and a peer mentorship evaluation for mentors in order to facilitate
participant-centered program planning and determine efficacy of the program. Also included in the manual is a resource guide addressing the four areas of focus, consent forms for SOAR program participation, confidentiality agreements for mentors, and permission forms for discussing SOAR topics with college faculty and staff.

Subsequent sections of this scholarly project include a review of literature, methodology, the policies and procedures manual, and a summary. The literature review provides a theoretical basis for the product by evaluating the history, benefits, and drawbacks of peer mentorship programs. The methodology is a description of the methods under which the policies and procedures manual was compiled and created. The product includes the policies and procedures guiding and governing the implementation of the SOAR peer mentorship program. This product will provide structure and explicitly describe the actions of active members. Assessments and supporting documentation for the program are also included as an appendix in the policies and procedures manual. The summary provides main components of the product, limitations, and recommendations for future program development.

A list of primary operational definitions utilized throughout this project are outlined below:

Disability: A disability is considered a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (Americans with Disabilities Act, 2008).

Disability Services: Post-secondary disability service centers coordinate accommodations and services for students with disabilities and provides general
information about campus-wide access for persons with disabilities (Yale University, 2016).

Peer mentoring: Peer mentoring is a service provided by another student who can serve as a resource, a helping hand, a sounding board, and a referral service. Peer mentors provide support, encouragement, and information to other students (Washington University in St. Louis, n.d.).

Policies and procedures manual: A policies and procedures manual provides the constancy necessary to deliver services in an efficient and logical manner. A manual exists to answer the “what” and “how” of operations of a program (Rao, 1991).
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There has been an increase in attendance by students with disabilities in postsecondary education settings within the past decade; however only 12% of college students with disabilities graduate according to multiple sources as cited by Garrison-Wade (2012). Entering the collegiate atmosphere is a unique and pivotal experience for many individuals; however, many students with disabilities have increased challenges that impede their ability to satisfactorily experience the college lifestyle (White, Ollendick, & Bray, 2011). For example, students with high functioning autism experience disorder specific challenges (organizational skills, planning skills, social interaction skills, etc.) that may contribute to a difficult integration into college academically, socially, and emotionally (White, Ollendick, & Bray, 2011). Those with disabilities similarly should be afforded the opportunity to attend, assimilate, and succeed in college. College success is not only indicated by passing scores and completion of college courses; success may also be measured by meeting personal, social, and psychological needs and integration into physical and social environments (Hong, 2015). Students with disabilities, who may otherwise experience the heavy burden of barriers, social isolation, and academic struggle, may gain a more fulfilling college experience through a peer mentorship program. There is a need for effective strategies, such as peer mentorship programs, to be implemented in postsecondary education settings to successfully navigate the challenges that are present in the college culture (Garrison-Wade, 2012; Kleinert, Jones, Sheppard-Jones, Harp, & Harrison, 2012).
Peer mentorship offers a holistic, non-threatening alternative to help navigate through the barriers and challenges present on the college campus, while enhancing social opportunities, feelings of belonging, and a sense of camaraderie (Ward, Thomas, & Disch, 2014). Peer mentorship is defined as another student who can serve as a resource, a helping hand, support, encouragement and source of information for students with disabilities who are enrolled in a support program (Washington University in St. Louis, n.d.). Additionally, a peer mentor supports a fellow student to navigate the campus culture such as supporting a student to actively participate in class, tutoring, academic coaching outside of class, and socializing both on and off campus (Jones, Weir, & Hart, 2011). Peer mentors serve as a vital function to undergraduate students during their critical transition from secondary to postsecondary educational settings (Ward, Thomas, & Disch, 2014). Currently, there is a postsecondary education program that utilizes peer mentorship titled Student Organization for Accessibility and Resources (SOAR) implemented in one small community college in the Western United States (Morrison & Hanson, 2016). SOAR is a peer mentorship program that addresses the needs for students with disabilities participating in college. Peer mentors consist of students who are completing a graduate master’s degree in occupational therapy and is based on volunteerism (Morrison, personal communication, September 13, 2016). A review of current literature supports the need for peer mentorship programs on the college campus to provide additional support for students with disabilities to help develop academic, personal, and social skills, self-advocacy, and a sense of empowerment (Hong, 2015; Ward, Thomas, & Disch, 2014).
Statistics Regarding Disabilities in the College Realm

According to National Center of Education Statistics (2016), the percentage of students with a disability attending higher education was 11 percent for both males and females from 2011-2012; this includes 21% of veterans enrolled in schools and a higher percentage for students above the age of 30. The number of college students with disabilities is continuing to grow as social acceptance and legislation focusing on inclusion in higher education improves (Jones & Goble, 2012). Students with disabilities are five times more likely to enroll in a four-year university and 10 times more likely to enroll in a two-year college than they were in 1987 (McCall, 2015, p. 162). Despite the increase of college students with disabilities, the average time students took was twice as long as non-disabled students (National Council on Disability, 2003). Additionally, retention rates among students with disabilities in postsecondary education are and have remained persistently low (Agarwal, Calvo, & Kumar, 2014). In fact, just 34% of students with disabilities complete a degree within eight years of finishing high school (Newman et al., 2011).

According to the National Council on Disability 2003 report, 80% of students in college with disabilities need some type of assistance, however, many students with disabilities do not seek the assistance they require for college success (Hong, 2015, p. 209). Students with disabilities often wait until it is too late to obtain ancillary services to help with collegiate work, or may not be aware of the accommodations available (Hong, 2015). Some students with disabilities in college may not seek the assistance that may be helpful to successfully integrate into the college culture (Barnhill, 2016). This neglect to seek services results from negative experiences with previous disability services, lack of
knowledgeable disability service practitioners, intimidation regarding asking for assistance, and a desire for increased autonomy in the collegiate setting (Hong, 2015). According to Cortiella & Horowitz (2014), only a quarter of students who received help in high school, acknowledged that they may need additional services and assistance in college (p. 28). Although 94% of students with a learning disability received help in high school, only 17% sought and received assistance and support in the postsecondary educational setting (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014, p. 28). Current research and literature regarding postsecondary education and students with disabilities suggest that additional support and assistance is needed to transition and integrate into the complexities of a higher education setting (Barnhill, 2016; Glennon, 2016; Ward, Thomas, & Disch, 2014).

**Transition from High School to College**

As a student transitions from high school to college there are inevitable challenges that he/she will face. These challenges are exponentially increased for a student with disabilities entering into a postsecondary institution (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). According to Garrison-Wade (2012), some of these challenges and barriers include but are not limited to roles and responsibilities of support staff and a greater demand for students’ self-reliance. Additionally, students with disabilities are often faced with challenges in respect to developing a sense of belonging, a necessary part of the college culture (Vaccaro, Daly-Cano, & Newman, 2015). Students with disabilities face these challenges with little support; therefore, they are at a higher risk of preemptively dropping out of college (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). Despite the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004, which requires that students are
provided a coordinated transition plan through public education services, many students with disabilities receive inadequate support in the area of college preparatory planning (McCall, 2015). Additionally, IDEA supports and services terminate when a student turns 22 years old, often neglecting college students over that age (IDEA, 2004). The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) has added new provisions to the Higher Education Act (HEA), to increase access, retention, and degree completion rates of students with disabilities (Council for Exceptional Children, 2008). Additionally, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ensured adjustments and equal access to students with disabilities (2008). Folk (2012) cites multiple sources supporting that although there is an increase in legislation and an increase in available programs for transition planning, students with disabilities are still experiencing gaps in preparedness, missed opportunities to participate, and inadequate supports for postsecondary education settings.

Common barriers for many students with disabilities include a lack of knowledge of the accommodation requirements and supports available at the college and challenges negotiating accommodations with instructors (McCall, 2015). Students with disabilities scored lower on measures of social adjustment to college, therefore creating an additional barrier when transitioning from high school to college (Adams & Proctor, 2010). In conjunction to the lack of knowledge regarding collegiate supports for students with disabilities, many students are reluctant to disclose their need for the disability-related supports due to the potential stigma and negative perceptions from others (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). College students with disabilities are responsible for managing their own accommodations as well as their academic coursework, which presents additional
and unique challenges that other students may not experience (Shepler & Woosley, 2012).

There are many colleges that have supports available, however, there are still many colleges that offer minimal supports (Melekoglu, 2013). According to Mamiseishvili and Koch (2011), traditional services in college settings have inconsistencies in the delivery of educational supports, insufficient staffing and space, and lack of campus wide coordination and cooperation which inhibit the occupation of education for students with disabilities. Furthermore, many institutions are unprepared to support students with disabilities beyond the basic federal mandates of equal access and reasonable accommodations (Hong, 2015). According to ADA (2008), higher education institutions are only required to provide reasonable accommodations and often leave out the need for social participation and a sense of belonging. The most common supports offered by colleges and universities were testing accommodations (Vogel, Fresko, & Wertheim, 2007). Testing accommodations are important services for students with disabilities, however, there is a multitude of supports and services that can be utilized to facilitate an inclusive educational environment.

There are key support factors that are essential for students to be successful in the integration into a higher education setting. Key support factors include the development of self-awareness, self-determination, and advocacy (Garrison-Wade, 2012; McCall, 2015). Support services can increase efficacy and effectiveness to help students to persist and remain in college by addressing skills that develop students’ self-determination and self-management, expose students to assistive devices, and promote career development (Getzel, 2008). According to McCall (2015), best practice for transition services address
five domains that include student development, student focused planning, interagency collaboration, family involvement, and strong program structure. Support services that address these domains are beneficial for students with disabilities who desire to receive the benefits of a college education including social participation, advocacy, and engagement in the college experience (Klienert, Jones, Sheppard-Jones, Harp, & Harris, 2012; Thoma, 2013).

Benefits to Attending College

One of the many benefits of participating in college activities is social inclusion. It is imperative for any student to experience the social aspect of college as well as the academic component of education. Students that experienced increased belonging were better able to self-advocate, master the student role, and develop more numerous and deeper relationships with other students (Vaccaro, Daly-Cano, & Newman, 2015). When a student is included in the college experience, the involvement influences the overall college progress and relates to outcomes such as satisfaction with college, learning achievement, persistence, social and leadership skill development, and personal and moral growth (Farley, Gibbons, & Cihak, 2014). The benefits of these experiences can attribute and reinforce the student’s sense of purpose (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). Universities need to find ways to support students with disabilities, moving beyond simple compliance with federal legislation. These supports must aim to foster environments, which support equally meaningful access to the academic and social aspects of college, and support a sense of belonging among students with disabilities on the college campus (Agarwal, Calvo, & Kumar, 2014).
A sense of belonging can include social and academic integration. Social sense of belonging can be attributed to increased or deepened relationships with other students on the college campus; whereas, academic sense of belonging is closely tied to the student’s ability to self-advocate for disability services (Vaccaro, Daly-Cano, & Newman, 2015). Interestingly, social integration has a stronger positive influence on persistence than does academic integration (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). Students who foster a sense of belonging through social integration have been shown to develop feelings of confidence and mastery of the student role (Vaccaro, Daly-Cano, & Newman, 2015). A peer mentorship program can form social relationships with college students with disabilities; this in turn can promote a sense of belonging (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). A sense of belonging is critical for a student’s academic success and his or her ability to continue in an educational career (Vaccaro, Daly-Cano, & Newman, 2015).

It is not enough to follow legislative requirements, rather, it is imperative that the college environment be created to allow inclusive, equal participation opportunities for students with disabilities. Furthermore, it is the responsibility for all who are part of a college community to create an inclusive environment that promotes a sense of belonging for all students, faculty, administrators, and disability service practitioners (Huger, 2011). An inclusive college setting improves participation for those with disabilities and provides educational, moral, and diversity growth opportunities for all persons involved on the college campus (May, 2012). Students with disabilities bring unique viewpoints and opinions to the classroom and some have shown to have increased openness to share ideas, providing a lead for other students and enhancing participation and acceptance in the wider classroom setting (O’Connor, 2012).
There are several benefits associated with postsecondary education that include economic, work-related, and social benefits (Thoma, et al., 2012). According to Folk, Yamamoto, and Stodden (2012), better performance in college coursework may translate to better employment outcomes. Despite the benefits of a college education with regard to obtaining employment, 17.5% of adults with disabilities participated in the labor force as compared to 65% without disabilities (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). Additionally, studies have found that students with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed and work at lower wages, and ultimately are isolated from their communities and friends (Thoma, 2013). These alarming statistics support the implementation of an ancillary peer mentorship program to help address the needs of college students with disabilities.

**Peer Mentorship**

The aim of a peer mentorship program is to create a socially inclusive, individualistic, and academically satisfying environment for college students with disabilities. Peer mentorship programs, similar to SOAR, emphasize skill building such as time management, learning strategies, organization, self-advocacy, communication, and social interaction (Folk, Yamamoto, & Stodden, 2012; Hong, 2015). These critical aspects provided by peer mentorship programs are ancillary services to other support services in a college setting. In order to serve all students in the college arena, a comprehensive service delivery model is necessary to increase the persistence and graduation rate of college students with disabilities (Garrison-Wade, 2012; Vaccaro, Daly-Cano, & Newman, 2015).

A peer mentorship program is an ideal supplementary service to meet the needs of college students with disabilities because it focuses on collaborative teaming and
naturally creates inclusive support atmospheres (Folk, Yamamoto, & Stodden, 2012). According to Shepler and Woosley (2012), the greatest attrition of college students occurs in the first semester of college enrollment; this suggests that in order to increase the persistence rate of college students with disabilities, ancillary peer mentorship services should be provided as early as possible. Unlike, traditional academic services, a peer mentorship program not only focuses on goal attainment but also on providing emotional support via interpersonal relationships and larger visions of personal growth (Ward, Thomas, & Disch, 2014).

Peer mentorship is a concept that benefits both the mentor and the mentee, and encompasses a holistic approach that facilitates academic performance and socialization (Ward, Thomas, & Disch, 2014). Peer mentors experience a myriad of benefits including changes in prejudice and increased knowledge of special needs for those with disabilities following increased exposure to participants with disabilities (Melekoglu, 2013). Students with disabilities experience many benefits from involvement in a peer mentorship program and the college experience including increased self-determination and self-advocacy abilities (McCall, 2015). Peer mentorship programs may be just one means through which students with disabilities learn these valuable skills. A comprehensive goal for a peer mentorship program is to assist students in maneuvering challenges and opportunities (Ward, Thomas, & Disch, 2014). There are a variety of avenues a peer mentorship relationship can take. According to Vogel, Fresko, and Wertheim (2007), the aim of the peer mentor sessions can focus on developing self-awareness, self-advocacy, communication skills, and/or the ability to deal with one’s disability. In addition, peer mentors and fellow students may function by ensuring events
and activities on campus are exclusively held at accessible venues, bringing in speakers to teach about disability awareness, encouraging participation in clubs by all students, and fostering social integration of students with disabilities (Huger, 2011).

College students with disabilities often encounter barriers with the limited disability-related support systems (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). A peer mentor can provide that needed support for college students with disabilities. Despite the effectiveness of faculty mentoring, peer mentors are often times preferred due to the added benefits that accompany a peer mentorship program (Ward, Thomas, & Disch, 2014). Peer mentors can serve as social and academic coaches, as liaisons between students and professors, and can facilitate social bonding between mentor and mentee beyond what may occur in a traditional mentee-disability service professional relationship (Barnhill, 2016). Some additional benefits provided by a peer mentorship program include social and leadership skill development, and personal and moral growth (Farley, Gibbons, & Cihak, 2014). Additionally, a peer mentorship relationship can facilitate self-confidence and self-empowerment for the student with disabilities (Ward, Thomas, & Disch, 2014). A peer mentor can provide simple services by being present and an attentive listener to provide emotional availability and supportiveness (Ward, Thomas, & Disch, 2014). They can serve as a social support system to prevent isolation and withdrawal, in conjunction with providing academic support (White, Ollendick, & Bray, 2011).

There are apparent benefits of a peer mentorship program for a college student with disabilities, however, it is important to note that there are added benefits for the mentor. Service learning, such as that through peer mentorship programs, is a practical
means by which mentors can explore the disability culture (Muwana, 2011). Career preparation, improved academic performance, community awareness, increased accountability, and heightened insightfulness are a few of the benefits peer mentors experience (Muwana, 2011; Ward, Thomas, & Disch, 2014). The design of a peer mentorship program incorporates these benefits as well as the uniqueness of each student; therefore, the peer mentor is required to respond in a holistic manner to meet the needs of a variety of students (Ward, Thomas, & Disch, 2014). By looking at the benefits to both the mentor and the mentee, it is easily recognizable that a friendship and companionship often develops throughout the process.

Policies and Procedures Manual for SOAR

This policies and procedures manual is a document created and provided for the SOAR program. The SOAR program is a student peer mentorship program started through the efforts of the University of North Dakota occupational therapy students and faculty located on the Casper College campus in Casper, Wyoming. The mission of the program is to facilitate participation in the various college occupations and activities for current students who are experiencing disabilities limiting optimal performance in the college environment (Student Occupational Therapy Association [SOTA], 2015). The SOAR program focuses on four primary areas including organization, self-advocacy, social participation and/or leisure activities, and resource identification (SOTA, 2015).

The goal of the SOAR program is to advocate for and assist college students with disabilities in gaining a fulfilling college experience through self-directed integration of student activities aimed at promoting self-fulfillment (SOTA, 2015). SOAR team members utilize a peer mentorship model to assist with education by the identification of
resources to maximize independence and efficiency to complete scholastic tasks. It is necessary for a policies and procedures manual be created for the SOAR program to provide structure and stability in order to coordinate and organize students and staff working within its structure, and to provide a template for other student organizations interested in developing a similar program.

During the development of the SOAR policies and procedures manual, the Ecology of Human Performance (EHP) model was chosen to provide guidance and theoretical support. The EHP model stresses that the environment is the primary context influencing occupational performance (Turpin & Iwama, 2011). There is an ongoing need for individuals to attempt to conform to society’s behavioral expectations, which emphasizes the importance of the environmental role on human performance (Dunn, Brown, & McGuigan, 1994). An individual’s performance range is dependent upon the consistency between the tasks of an individual, the skills and abilities, and how the environment influences the individual’s capability to complete the task (Cole & Tufano, 2008).

EHP is particularly relevant to college students with disabilities because the environment of postsecondary institutes may affect the student's ability to perform in college courses. EHP breaks down context into physical, cultural, social, and temporal aspects, and therefore the context encompasses a full college experience (Brown, 2014). Additionally, the increased complexity in tasks and greater demand for self-reliance of a college student may impede on their ability to perform occupations and tasks within the student role. According to the EHP model, there is a dynamic interplay between person, environment, and task that affect the occupational performance within a given setting.
(Brown, 2014). SOAR aims to increase this congruency, by decreasing environmental barriers and increasing participant skills regarding the academic and social college tasks placed upon the student participant. For example, SOAR mentors can increase the occupational performance of a participant by obtaining assistive devices, simplifying the environment and increasing the ability to perform an academic task. Additionally, person aspects of the EHP are addressed by SOAR mentors by providing stress management techniques to student participants in order to increase the student’s occupational performance. These are simply two examples that SOAR mentors and participants can take as they navigate the tasks of college, using the EHP model. The EHP model is the theoretical basis of the SOAR policies and procedures manual; therefore, the model will influence the layout of the manual.

This policies and procedures manual provides guidance and structure through two primary methods. Following an overview of the SOAR program and a brief review of literature providing evidence-based support for a peer mentorship program, governing policies and procedures will be developed. A second section will provide resources with the four focus areas of facilitation. This manual will be used as a guide and governing document for college students and staff who wish to enact and utilize a peer mentorship based program with the mission of enabling college students with disabilities to attend and fulfill academic and social desires within the college realm. This peer mentorship program is a contributing essential tool and service for students with disabilities in conjunction with standard disability services.
Conclusion

The college experience has many benefits that extend beyond academics, therefore all students with or without disabilities should have the same opportunities. Students with disabilities are faced with increased challenges during the transitioning process from high school to postsecondary education, such as unawareness of the available supports, reluctance to disclose their need for disability supports, and resistance from faculty members who lack general knowledge about students with disabilities and their rights (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). Disability services in colleges are not well equipped to provide comprehensive supports for students with disabilities in order to ensure adequate inclusion practices (Hong, 2015).

The chief concern of college administrators is the extent to which a postsecondary education program will burden college faculty (Plotner & Marshall, 2015). Additionally, disability services have proven difficult in the past due to difficulty with implementation, restricted funding, staffing limitations, low perceived responsibility to provide support, and lack of interagency teaming (Garrison-Wade, 2012; Glennon, 2016). Interestingly, many programs increase charges for students with disabilities above the already rising cost of tuition. For example, The University of the Ozarks in Arkansas, has a learning center which serves 65 students, and costs $22,900 per year, on top of the university’s $23,750 tuition (Krupnick, 2014). SOAR aims to negate these common problems through the use of mutual learning between mentor and mentee. This increases motivation and decreases staffing limitations due to SOAR being a volunteer-based service, which renders the program absolutely free of cost to the participant. Mentoring programs have demonstrated their ability to support student retention and success, as well as social
skills, a sense of belonging, and friendship development (Farley, Gibbons, & Cihak, 2014).

A peer mentorship program is not meant to serve as a comprehensive disability service, rather it serves as one means for which a college student with disabilities may gain some of the support necessary for success in college. A peer mentorship service such as SOAR increases available services for these students while lessening the burden on the college or university. The SOAR program works with existing disability services by providing in-service sessions, gaining referrals, and deepening interagency collaboration between counseling services, faculty and staff, and other student support departments. This results in increased avenues for students with disabilities to gain the help they require for college success. It also increases campus wide disability awareness to promote inclusion. SOAR creates a reciprocal relationship in which students with disabilities gain services tailored to their individual needs, while volunteering student mentors gain experience and practice working with and learning from a person with a disability.

Occupational therapy students may serve well as peer mentors due to having extensive education on disabilities. Additionally, occupational therapy students address psychosocial aspects of the human experience and can gain valuable skills, which may serve well in future careers. Peer mentorship programs also have demonstrated benefit for mentors including teaching valuable skills for working with individuals with disabilities, furthering problem solving skills, improving sensitivity for individuals with disabilities and enhancing an awareness of the unique needs for these individuals (Melekoglu, 2013). After reviewing the need for additional collegiate supports for
students with disabilities, it has been determined that an efficacious program, through the use of volunteer peer mentors, would help students with disabilities navigate the social and academic complexities of college. The following pages will address the activities and methodology utilized to develop the policies and procedures manual for the SOAR program.
METHODOLOGY

The topic of peer mentorship for students with disabilities in the college setting was initially used in the creation of the Student Organization for Accessibility and Resources (SOAR). The topic of this study was presented to a team of student researchers by the faculty member who helped create the SOAR program. This project was designed to help the SOAR members provide successful and efficacious services to college students with disabilities, through the creation of policies and procedures guiding program implementation from beginning to end. For example, the manual supports the implementation of the program by providing policies and procedures such as referrals, team selection, role description, documentation, and evaluation. The policies and procedures manual is used to enhance and further develop the structure to the overall existing SOAR program. In addition, the policies and procedures manual can be generalized to other postsecondary education settings and used as a template for other student organizations.

A search was completed by using a variety of databases such as ERIC, PsychINFO, PubMed, and AJOT for peer-reviewed articles regarding peer mentorship and the lack of services available to college students with disabilities. Data was gathered about the barriers that students with disabilities in the postsecondary education setting face, benefits of peer mentorship, and the importance of the college experience for a young adult. There was no research found on occupational therapy students as peer mentors for college students with disabilities. However, it was the student researchers’
personal experiences as a SOAR member that led to the creation of a policies and
procedures manual for the SOAR program. The policies and procedures manual will be
used by the SOAR members to facilitate the peer mentor process with college students
with disabilities, and thus both parties will benefit from the structural document.

After an extensive literature review was conducted, a policies and procedures
manual for SOAR, a program which supports peer mentorship in the college setting, was
developed. The Ecology of Human Performance (EHP) model was chosen to guide the
development of the policies and procedures manual. The EHP model was utilized and
adapted to influence the manual and for the role of the peer mentor. More specifically,
EHP influenced the content of the documents as well as the organization of the
documents, all representative of the presence of the EHP model within the policies and
procedures manual. Additionally, pre-existing documents created by the University of
North Dakota Casper Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) were modified
and used to fit the needs of the manual. EHP guides the program, thus the manual.

For the SOAR policies and procedures manual layout and design, concepts of
EHP were utilized and interwoven to ensure congruence with occupational therapy
beliefs and theories. The manual was organized using EHP’s foundational concepts
including aspects of the person, task, and context. Each policy and procedure was
categorized within the context concept of EHP. The policies and procedures helped
current and future implementers, thereby creating a supportive piece of the college
context for students with disabilities. It thus makes sense to categorize the policies and
procedures for program implementation within the context aspect of the student
experience. Within the college setting, the context which includes supports, barriers, and
social aspects, affects the person’s abilities to perform tasks associated with the college student role. Similarly, performing student-associated tasks affect how the student views, interprets, and interacts with their context (Cole & Tufano, 2008).

The second section of the overall manual is designed as a resource that effects the person-task aspects of the EHP model. It is intended to be used as a resource for program facilitation by providing documents that address the person or task aspects and therefore can be used by the peer mentors to tailor the support services for the unique and individualized needs of the SOAR participant. There are four focus areas that are emphasized in the resource guide including organization, resource identification, social participation/leisure, and advocacy. The SOAR program views that these areas were most pertinent to college students with disabilities. The concepts of EHP influenced the design of the policies and procedures manual, leading users to utilize SOAR as a peer mentorship model with methods that focus on maximizing performance range by ensuring congruence of environment, tasks, and aspects of the person.

Following detailed discussions with faculty and experience as peer mentors within the SOAR program, the authors of the manual felt that a policies and procedures manual in conjunction with a resource guide for program facilitation was needed to enhance program structure. Upon completion of the literature review, policies and procedures for existing SOAR methods were drafted. New policies and procedures were additionally created as needed with reference to personal experiences working within the SOAR program. Supporting documentation was created and provided as an appendix to facilitate ease with copying and distribution of documents in future years of program facilitation. All policies, procedures, and supporting documents were created and structured to
support the mission of the SOAR program, helping to ensure college students with disabilities are provided as much ancillary support as possible.
STUDENT ORGANIZATION FOR
ACCESSIBILITY AND RESOURCES (SOAR):
A POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

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# POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL:
STUDENT ORGANIZATION FOR ACCESSIBILITY AND RESOURCES (SOAR)

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Importance of a Policies and Procedures Manual

This manual is used as a guide and governing document for college students and staff who wish to enact and utilize a peer mentorship based program with the mission of enabling college students with disabilities to attend and fulfill academic and social desires within the college realm. The policies and procedures manual is used to enhance and further develop the structure to the overall existing SOAR program. In addition, the policies and procedures manual can be generalized to other postsecondary education settings and used as a template for other student organizations.

Defining Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures manual: A policies and procedures manual provides the constancy necessary to deliver services in an efficient and logical manner. A manual exists to answer the “what” and “how” of operations of a program (Rao, 1991).
SOAR Program

Ecology of Human Performance: A Theoretical Guide

Student engagement in college cannot be separated into distinct concepts; all aspects of college influence the student including the environment, the tasks of college, and the unique skills and abilities of the student. In congruence with this notion, the Ecology of Human Performance model (EHP) was used as a theoretical document to guide the creation and organization of the policies and procedures manual for the Student Organization of Resources and Accessibility (SOAR) program. There are three important constructs that help describe the nature of EHP: these include person, task, and context. An individual’s performance range is dependent upon the consistency between the tasks of an individual, the skills and abilities, and how the context influences the individual’s capability to complete the task (Cole & Tufano, 2008). The three constructs of a college student interplay to create a transaction that affects the student’s performance within the school setting. EHP believes disability to be evident when an incongruence emerges between the person, task, and context; therefore, impeding the student’s performance (Cole & Tufano, 2008). EHP strongly emphasizes the role of context in task performance, and therefore the context can either facilitate or inhibit student performance (Cole & Tufano, 2008). Through the perspective of the EHP model, the college environment affects the student’s abilities to perform college tasks. There are many colleges that have environmental supports available, however, there are still many colleges that offer minimal supports (Melekoglu, 2013).

Current research and literature regarding postsecondary education and students with disabilities suggest that additional assistance is needed regarding environmental supports to transition and integrate into the complexities of a higher education setting (Barnhill, 2016; Glennon, 2016; Ward, Thomas, & Disch, 2014). The SOAR program is an alternative support system that fills the gaps that are present in the college environment. Occupational therapy students work under the SOAR program as peer mentors. The student participants are empowered to be the agent
of change within the college environment. Students are not functioning as occupational therapists rather as supportive peers. With that being said, the SOAR program refrains from using the word intervention to prevent any confusion. Instead, peer mentors are advised to use the words facilitation or activities when interacting with the student participant to attain common goals.

The current organization of the SOAR policies and procedures manual has been separated based on concepts of EHP. Although the EHP model is believed to be interdependent and transactional, it was necessary to divide the sections into two to explain how SOAR provides the context for college students with disabilities and how the peer mentors address the person and task aspect of the college student with disabilities. The first section includes policies and procedures guiding the development of a SOAR program which creates a supportive context for maximizing students’ ability to perform within the college setting. The second section entails a resource guide for implementation of the SOAR program with emphasis on the four areas of focus: advocacy, resource identification, social participation/leisure, and organization. The following sections will provide detailed information related to the SOAR program policies and procedures.

**How to Use this Manual**

This manual in its entirety consists of three sections that include the policies and procedures, a resource guide, and an appendix. All sections have been influenced by the Ecology of Human Performance (EHP) model. Additionally, each policy and procedure is organized in a fashion that coincides with the process of the SOAR program, from beginning to end.
SOAR PEER MENTORING PROGRAM

Program History

SOAR is a program implemented in collaboration with the University of North Dakota Casper College Campus Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA). The program was founded in 2013 and implemented in 2014 as a peer-mentorship program aimed at helping students attending Casper College with disabilities. Years prior to implementation, students and faculty worked to create a foundation upon which the program may be based. During these formative years, a name and basic structure for the program was brought forth and voted upon by existing SOTA members. Through in-service presentations and advocacy efforts SOAR has created growing relationships with organizations on the Casper College campus such as the Student Success Center, Student Activities Center, and English as a Second Language organizations in order to gain program referrals and support alliances to increase interagency collaboration.

Students in the UND occupational therapy program and student club continue to carry out the SOAR vision and expand upon the scope of program services. SOAR currently operates beneath the peer mentorship model to ensure students with disabilities are afforded every opportunity possible to succeed academically and socially in college. Since its 2014 implementation, SOAR has served approximately 10 students with varying disabilities, helping these students to gain access to campus resources, explore social opportunities, enhance organizational skills, and deepen self-advocacy abilities. The program continues to expand with ongoing in-service and advocacy efforts aimed at increasing program visibility and awareness on the Casper College campus.
SOAR PEER MENTORING PROGRAM

Mission Statement

SOAR (Student Organization for Accessibility and Resources): Is a student peer mentorship program whose mission is to facilitate participation in the college occupations of education, social participation, and leisure activities including resource identification for current Casper College students who are experiencing disabilities impeding optimal performance in the college setting. This is facilitated by the collaborative efforts of the University of North Dakota occupational therapy students located on the Casper College campus.

(SOTA, 2015)

SOAR PEER MENTORING PROGRAM

Overall Program Goal

The SOAR organization advocates for and assists college students with disabilities in gaining a fulfilling college experience through self-directed integration of student activities aimed at promoting self-fulfillment. SOAR team members will assist with education by the identification of resources to maximize independence and efficiency to complete scholastic tasks.

(SOTA, 2015)
SOAR Scope Policy

It is the policy of the SOAR program that peer mentorship teams will provide unique and student-centered mentorship services within the scope of the SOAR program. SOAR mentorship services must be provided in association with college-sponsored activities, including academic and social events. SOAR teams will work with SOAR participants using interview and basic rapport building to determine college-sponsored activities which may enhance academic and social success in college.

Peer mentorship services will be tailored to fit the needs of the SOAR participant. Teams will work to adapt the environment, increase participant skills, and select activities within four aspects of the SOAR program scope including:

1) Organization  
2) Social participation or leisure activities  
3) Resource identification  
4) Self-Advocacy

SOAR teams will meet with their assigned SOAR participant at minimum of two times per week. Mentors will make every attempt to arrange personal schedules in conjunction with participant schedules to ensure weekly meetings. Ideally, individual mentors will meet with their participant in pairs one time per week to ensure mentors have adequate time to manage personal course loads.

Further details and resources pertaining to the four aspects of SOAR will be located in the faculty advisor’s office. These areas are the basis of the in-service educational modules that are held in the beginning months of the semester.
SOAR Program

Ecology of Human Performance: Context

The college context demands performance from all college students, both academically and socially. The SOAR program is a created contextual support for college students with disabilities to assist with meeting the contextual demands of college. The SOAR policies and procedures that are included in this manual provide structure and guidance for the development of a SOAR program. The policies and procedures of this program set the stage for designing and sustaining a peer mentorship program that provides efficacious support in conjunction with existing contextual supports for students with disabilities. The overall goal of SOAR is to fill the current gaps that are present within the college setting to ensure students with disabilities are afforded a fulfilling college experience.

EHP was designed to be applied and used within a variety of settings and across the lifespan, including a community college that enroll students of varying demographics (Cole & Tufano, 2008). EHP is an ecological model that focuses largely on the context. EHP breaks down the context into environment and temporal aspects. The environment addresses physical, social, and cultural aspects including college building accessibility, following social routines, creating meaningful relationships in college, and following behavioral standards appropriate for college students (Cole & Tufano, 2008). The temporal aspect of context strongly influences the structure of the SOAR program. The temporal aspect addresses developmental stages, disability status, and tasks within the lifespan (Cole & Tufano, 2008). Attending college is a common period in a person’s life where one develops self-efficacy, autonomy, life skills, and social skills through fulfilling the student role. SOAR is an ancillary service to create a context that efficiently assists students to develop these skills.
SOAR POLICY

SOAR Coordinator Policy

The SOAR Coordinator oversees the development and implementation of the program. The SOAR coordinator ensures program quality and performance related to referral, matching, monitoring, and closure of the relationship with the student mentor and the SOAR participant. Additionally, the SOAR Coordinator communicates with the student mentors, parent/guardian, SOAR participant, and faculty advisor throughout the SOAR program to ensure effective team cooperation.

The SOAR Coordinator reports to the faculty advisor once a week along with the president of the SOTA club to address any issues related to the student occupational therapy organizations.

Duties:

- Perform and oversee mentor training, matching, support and supervision, recognition, and closure activities
- Develop and manage relationships with Casper College persons and agencies
- Build a strong working relationship with the established referral organizations (Casper College’s Disability Services, Student Success Center, etc.)
- Manage the planning and implementation of mentor/participant group events (recognition meeting)
- Facilitate SOAR dissemination meetings during bi-monthly SOTA meetings
- Oversee program evaluation activities
- Complete other duties and activities as needed
SOAR PROCEDURE

SOAR Coordinator Election Procedure

1. Potential SOAR Coordinators will present to the current student mentors in a SOTA meeting relating to justification of why they should be chosen as the new SOAR Coordinator.

2. Students at the SOTA meeting will vote on paper and hand it to the current SOAR Coordinator. The current SOAR coordinator does not vote.

3. There must be >50% vote in order for a new SOAR Coordinator to be appointed.

4. Within two business days of the vote, the current SOAR coordinator will email the student mentors with the results of the new SOAR Coordinator.

5. The voting for the SOAR Coordinator will begin no later than the end of January. This ensures that the former SOAR Coordinator will mentor the new SOAR Coordinator on activities, policies, and procedures.
**SOAR POLICY**

**Eligibility Policy**

The program receives referrals from Casper College’s Disability Services, Student Success Center, English as a Second Language (ESL) program, and the Activities Center. It is the policy of the SOAR Program that each participant must meet the defined eligibility criteria. Mentoring staff should be knowledgeable of and understand all eligibility criteria required for student participation in the program.

*Eligibility Requirements:*

- Must be enrolled or auditing at least one class at Casper College
- Must have a documented disability
- Must demonstrate a desire to participate in the program and be willing to abide by all SOAR policies and procedures
- Must be able to obtain parental/guardian permission (if applicable) and ongoing support for participation in the program
- Must be willing to communicate with the SOAR mentor team weekly
SOAR POLICY

Inquiry Policy

It is the policy of the SOAR program that all inquiries regarding participation in the program are responded to within a timely manner. The faculty advisor will handle all inquiries.

Professional communication must be provided to all potential student participants at all times, regardless of the final outcome. It is the policy of the SOAR program that the faculty advisor handling calls from prospective student participants must be patient, courteous, and respectful in all interactions.

Confidentiality for all potential participants will be upheld from this initial point of contact forward.

(Adapted from Ballasy, Fulop, & Garringer, n.d.)
SOAR PROCEDURE

Inquiry Procedure

All persons inquiring to be program participants must speak directly to the faculty staff advisor. The faculty staff advisor must follow the inquiry procedure as outlined below:

1. All participant inquiries regarding participation in the program must be answered within two business days.

2. The faculty staff advisor will provide a verbal overview of the program to all phone, email, and in-person inquiries. This overview includes:
   - An overview of program purpose
   - Any obligations or requirements from the participant
   - Next steps to become a part of the program

4. All prospective participants requesting to learn more will receive a SOAR program brochure in person or by email or mail.

5. The faculty staff advisor and SOAR Coordinator must then hold an intake session to provide more detailed information about the program. Intake sessions are held primarily to create interest among prospective participants and alleviate any concerns they may have about the program.

After prospective participants attend the intake session, the faculty staff advisor and SOAR coordinator may then match the participate with the SOAR team utilizing the SOAR Peer Mentor Preference Inventory Form (see Appendix A), previously completed by SOAR members in the orientation meeting.
SOAR POLICY

Referral Policy

The program receives referrals from Casper College’s Disability Services, Student Success Center, English as a Second Language (ESL) program, and the Activities Center. It is the policy that current SOAR members provide once per year in-service meetings to above listed referral sources to ensure appropriate up-to-date information regarding SOAR program activities are shared. An in-service presentation will additionally be provided to potential new referral sources by the SOAR Coordinator. Brochures will be distributed around the Casper College campus to ensure awareness and potentially increase referral sources.
SOAR POLICY

Initial Interview Policy

It is the policy of the SOAR peer mentorship program that each potential SOAR participant complete an initial interview prior to becoming a participant of the program.

Attendees of the interview session at minimum will be:
- Potential SOAR participant
- Potential participant guardian(s), if participant is not own legal guardian
- SOAR faculty advisor
- SOAR Coordinator

The decision to accept an applicant into the program will be based upon participant desire to participate and participant congruence with SOAR eligibility policy. The faculty advisor, in conjunction with the SOAR Coordinator, have final approval for SOAR participant acceptance into the program.

SOAR participants that are interested in the program and fit eligibility requirements will be accepted into the program as long as the program is able to support participant numbers. In the event that the SOAR program has too many interested participants for available mentors, a waiting list will be created, giving priority to participants with most time on the list, using a “first come, first serve” method. Students placed on the waiting list will provide written contact information to the faculty advisor. The waiting list and contact information will be maintained and place in a confidential file within the faculty advisor’s office.

Documents completed at the initial interview session will be placed in confidential files and locked in a filing cabinet within the faculty advisor’s office.
SOAR POLICY

Initial Interview Procedure

SOAR Interview Procedures will include:
- Explanation of SOAR mission and methods to potential SOAR participant
- Verbal consent to participate from SOAR participant
- Written consent of participant and legal guardian(s) (if applicable)
  - SOAR Consent Form (see Appendix B)
- Written consent for exchange of information with college-associated stakeholders outside of the SOAR program
  - SOAR Exchange of Information Form (see Appendix C)
- Fielding of questions regarding the SOAR program/SOAR participation
SOAR POLICY

Orientation Policy

It is the policy of the SOAR Program that all new mentors attend an initial training session. The agendas must cover basic program guidelines such as the peer mentorship model and the areas of focus (resource identification, organization, advocacy, and social participation/leisure). The SOAR process will be explained in depth and focus on the sequence of referral to closure, to better understand the process of the SOAR program. Additionally, safety issues (including mandatory reporting), and communication/relationship building skills will be addressed during this orientation process. Lastly, new members will complete the SOAR Peer Mentor Preference Inventory Form (see Appendix A) to identify diagnoses/conditions in which they are interested.

Additionally, all mentors will attend four in-service training sessions once per year. These in-service sessions will be offered by existing members of the SOAR program and will pertain to the four areas of focus. These additional educational modules will be presented in the beginning month of the semester.

It is the responsibility of the SOAR coordinator to plan all training sessions with assistance from other student colleagues and staff. Evaluation forms will be collected from each training session for the purposes of evaluating/improving the content of the trainings and trainer performance.
Orientation Procedure

1. The initial orientation procedure will be held in the beginning of the Fall semester during the SOTA meeting.

2. The orientation committee and SOAR coordinator will lead the role in facilitating the meeting and distributing the necessary materials and forms to the group.

3. Each new mentor will complete the *SOAR Peer Mentor Preference Inventory Form* as part of the matching process of the program.

4. Content for the orientation meeting must include the basic program guidelines, safety issues, and address the four areas of focus.

5. Orientation materials will be reviewed and updated upon the changes of the program. These revisions will be made by the third year students.

6. If a peer mentor would like to be a part of the SOAR program it is required to attend the orientation meeting.

In-service Training Sessions

7. Mentor training sessions will be offered after the orientation meeting and ideally will be held within the first month of the semester.

8. There will be a total of four educational modules that will pertain to the four areas of focus (i.e. resource identification, social/leisure, advocacy, and organization).

9. The third year students will present this material to the first and second year students who are SOAR members.

10. If a peer mentor would like to be a part of the SOAR program it is required to attend the in-service training sessions.
SOAR POLICY

Unacceptable Behavior Policy

It is the policy of the SOAR Program that unacceptable behaviors will not be tolerated on the part of mentors or mentees while participating in the program. This policy is in addition to behavioral requirements stipulated in other policies or procedures within this manual. This policy in no way is intended to replace or take precedence over other policies or procedures including, but not limited to, the following:

- Confidentiality Policy
- Transportation Policy
- Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect Policy

A number of behaviors are regarded as unacceptable according to the SOAR program goals, values, and standards and therefore are prohibited while participants are engaged in mentoring activities:

- Unwelcome physical contact, such as inappropriate touching, patting, pinching, punching, and physical assault
- Unwelcome physical, verbal, visual, or behavioral mannerisms or conduct that denigrates, shows hostility, or aversion toward any individual
- Demeaning or exploitive behavior of either a sexual or nonsexual nature, including threats of such behavior
- Display of demeaning, suggestive, or pornographic material
- Known sexual abuse or neglect of a child
- Defamation, public or private, of any mentee parent/guardian or family member
- Defamation, public or private, of political or religious institutions or their leaders
- Intentional violation of any local, state, or federal law
- Drinking while driving under the influence of alcohol
- Possession of illegal substances

Any unacceptable behavior, as specified but not limited to the above, will result in a warning and/or disciplinary action including suspension or termination from participation in the SOAR program.

(Adapted from Ballasy, Fulop, & Garringer, n.d.)
SOAR POLICY

Supervision Policy

It is the policy of the SOAR program that a faculty advisor attends the biweekly SOTA meeting where SOAR participants disseminate information regarding the successes and barriers SOAR teams are experiencing.

The role of the faculty advisor is to assist in facilitating student discussion when needed and guide the peer mentors through any hardships they are facing and provide resources to explore.

The faculty advisor will also be present at the orientation meeting and all in-service training session to address any questions.
SOAR POLICY

Transportation Policy

It is the policy of the SOAR Program that mentors are not allowed to transport SOAR participants in personal vehicles in association with the SOAR program. It is the responsibility of the SOAR participant to arrange transportation to SOAR meetings and events. SOAR mentors may assist a SOAR participant with arranging for transportation if the participant indicates a need to do so.

A known violation of the SOAR transportation policy may result in a written warning or disciplinary action such as suspension or termination from the SOAR program.
Confidentiality Policy

It is the policy of the SOAR Program to protect the confidentiality of its participants and their families. SOAR members and faculty will only share information about mentors, mentees, and their families with other SOAR program mentors and staff, with the exception of the limitations provided below. All prospective mentors, mentees, and guardians will be informed of the scope and limitations of confidentiality by the SOAR faculty advisor and the SOAR Coordinator at the initial interview session and upon signing all consent forms. Mentors are required to keep information regarding their SOAR participant and their family confidential.

Limitations of Confidentiality

Information from mentors and mentees may be shared with individuals or organizations as specified below and under the following conditions:

- Information may be gathered about SOAR participants and shared with other individuals, organizations, and college staff only upon receipt of signed Exchange of Information Form (see Appendix C) from mentors, mentees, and/or mentee guardians.

- Identifying information such as photographs, videos, etc. of SOAR participants may be used in SOAR publications or promotional materials only upon receipt of signed Photo, Video, and Sound Recording Release and Consent Form (see Appendix D) from mentors, mentees, and/or mentee guardians.

- Information may only be provided to law enforcement officials or the courts upon presentation of a valid and enforceable subpoena.

- Information may be provided to legal counsel in the event of litigation involving the program. Such information is considered privileged information, and is protected by law.
Program members and professional staff are considered mandatory reporters and must disclose information indicating that a mentor or mentee may be dangerous or intends to harm him/herself or others.

**Safekeeping of Confidential Records**
The SOAR Coordinator and the SOAR faculty advisor are considered the custodians of confidential records. It is the responsibility of these two positions to supervise and maintain confidential information and ensure safekeeping, accountability, and compliance with SOAR program policies.

**Violations of Confidentiality**
A known violation of the SOAR confidentiality policy may result in a written warning or disciplinary action such as suspension or termination from the SOAR program.

(Adapted from Ballasy, Fulop, & Garringer, n.d.)
Permission to Ask Policy

It is the policy of the SOAR Program that in the beginning of the academic semester the SOAR participant with his/her student mentor team will discuss the process of exchanging information. The SOAR Exchange of Information Form (see Appendix C) will be signed by all SOAR participants at the initial interview meeting. This document will be effective for one semester and the participant will need to sign another document each semester.

In addition to the signing of the document, it is policy of the SOAR Program that student mentors will discuss and plan the process by which the SOAR participant and student mentors will talk to any Casper College persons or agencies on the behalf of SOAR and the participant.
SOAR POLICY

Documentation Policy

It is the policy of the SOAR Program that each step of the program process be documented by creating a file for each potential and accepted participant. All forms for managing mentor and mentee case file are included within the appendix of this manual and may be reproduced and distributed as appropriate.

It is the policy of the SOAR Program that SOAR mentors complete a *Participant Meeting Documentation* form (see Appendix E) immediately following any meetings with participants. This document must have all sections completed and should be emailed to SOAR team members, the faculty advisor, and the SOAR coordinator. These documents should be compiled by the SOAR coordinator as received and placed within the participant’s confidential file.

It is the policy of the SOAR Program that SOAR mentors additionally complete the *SOAR Dissemination Meeting* documentation form (see Appendix F) following bi-monthly dissemination sessions as outline within the Supervision Policy. This document must have all sections completed and should be emailed to SOAR team members, the faculty advisor, and the SOAR Coordinator. These documents should be compiled by the SOAR Coordinator as received and placed within the participant’s confidential file.

SOAR Participant and Dissemination meetings documentation should focus and support the four areas of focus: 1) **Organization**, 2) **Self-Advocacy**, 3) **Social Participation and Leisure Activities**, and 4) **Resource Identification**. These areas are in line with the SOAR mission and are supported by the foundational theoretical framework, the Ecology of Human Performance model. These areas should provide focus for peer mentorship sessions, dissemination sessions, and documentation alike.
All records are to be kept confidential and are covered by the conditions contained within the confidentiality policy. The SOAR Coordinator in conjunction with the faculty advisor must keep careful record of all program activities, utilizing provided forms. All files should be maintained and updated as needed to ensure documentation reflects the dynamic nature of the program.

The creation of new forms or revisions of existing forms must be documented and kept within the policy and procedure manual.
SOAR POLICY

Mandatory Reporting Policy

It is the policy of the SOAR Program that all student mentors and faculty advisors must report any suspected abuse and/or neglect regarding the student participant. Any suspected abuse must be reported to the faculty advisor and a formal report must be made to appropriate state and/or local authorities. In addition, all student mentors and faculty advisors must follow the mandatory reporting procedure.

Mandatory reporting will be addressed during the orientation training to educate all student mentors as to what constitutes abuse and/or neglect and how to properly report any suspected abuse.
**SOAR PROCEDURE**

### Mandatory Reporting Procedure

**NOTE:** Any instructions, agencies, or statutes noted within this procedure are specific to the state of Wyoming. Please consult with your state’s legal counsel for guidance in developing a tailored Mandatory Reporting procedure for your program.

All student mentors and faculty advisors must adhere to the following mandatory reporting procedures:

**Suspected Abuse or Neglect**
1. All suspected incidents of abuse or neglect, must be reported to the faculty advisor immediately.

2. The SOAR program coordinator in conjunction with the faculty advisor must call the Wyoming Department of Family Services local field office or the local law enforcement agency.

3. The faculty advisor must fill out applicable documentation in accordance with state law. Any documentation related to suspected incidences will be kept in the student participant’s file folder.

**Local Contact Information:**
(307) 473-3900  
851 Werner Court No. 200 82601  
District Manager - Paul Fritzler  
Family Assistance Region Manager - Jacque Herb

**State Contact Information:**  
Wyoming State DFS Office and Division of Social Services  
2300 Capitol Avenue, Third Floor  
Hathaway Building  
Cheyenne, WY 82002-0490  
Phone: 307.777.7561  
FAX: 307.777-7747  
E-mail: ilaine.brown@wyo.gov  
https://sites.google.com/a/wyo.gov/dfsweb/
SOAR POLICY

Peer Mentor Team Creation Policy

It is the policy of the SOAR Program that the SOAR Coordinator will follow guidelines for matching mentees to mentorship teams. These guidelines are outlines in the Peer Mentor Team Creation Procedure. The SOAR Coordinator should use the factors outlined in the team creation procedure to determine most suitable and effective matches.

The SOAR Coordinator will determine team suitability based on the following criteria:

- Preferences of the mentor and/or parent/guardian as determined in initial interview. Preferences may be based upon age, gender, common interests, and mentor experience.

- Preferences or experiences of peer mentors regarding various diagnoses and disabilities.
  - Preferences will be determined by SOAR Peer Mentor Preference Inventory Form (see appendix A) completed by all new SOAR mentors.

The SOAR Coordinator will attempt to match participant disability with mentor disability preferences as based upon ranked preferences on the SOAR Peer Mentor Preference Inventory Form (see appendix A). When not possible to perfectly match mentor and mentee preferences, the SOAR Coordinator will use personal judgment to match mentors and mentees as closely aligning to preferences as possible. The SOAR Coordinator and the faculty advisor have final approval of mentorship teams and team creation.

Participation for peer mentors and mentees in the SOAR program is completely voluntary. If for any reason a mentor or mentee feels they are unable to participate on the team satisfactorily due to peer mentorship team membership, the SOAR faculty advisor should be notified immediately. The faculty advisor and SOAR Coordinator will replace the appropriate mentor with an alternative available mentor, referring to the SOAR Peer Mentor Preference Inventory Form (see appendix A) to ensure congruency of new team members.
Peer Mentor Team Creation Procedure

1. The SOAR Coordinator along with the faculty advisor will create the peer mentor teams.

2. SOAR teams will be created based upon the referrals that are received from the variety of agencies at Casper College.

3. Student mentors who are entering their second year of the SOAR Program will stay with their past SOAR participant unless otherwise noted, to ensure consistency with team members and SOAR participants.

4. The SOAR Peer Mentor Preference Inventory Form (see appendix A) will be utilized to identify preferences of the student mentors to better match the mentors and participants.

5. Peer mentor teams will consist of a total of four members, two from the year two class and two new students from the year one class. This allows the year two students to mentor the year one students.
Initial SOAR Team Meeting Procedure

1. Upon creation of a SOAR team and assignment of a SOAR participant, mentors will contact their assigned participant using methods indicated during the intake meeting session. SOAR teams will be provided documentation and contact information for their participant and legal guardian gathered during intake meeting from the SOAR Coordinator.

2. On the arranged initial meeting day between all four SOAR team members, the participant, and legal guardians (if applicable), SOAR members will build rapport through one self-chosen method. SOAR members may use formal interview, a “get-to-know-you” activity, or other appropriate methods to build rapport with the SOAR participant.

3. Following rapport building, SOAR mentors will request the SOAR participant complete the Initial SOAR Interview Questions document (see appendix H), or will ask the participant questions from the document verbally, depending on the abilities and needs of the participant.

4. SOAR teams will use data provided during the initial interview and from the Initial SOAR Interview Questions document (see appendix H) to guide mentorship services and future meeting agendas.

5. Upon meeting completion, SOAR mentors will arrange and schedule regular meeting times with their SOAR participant to ensure structure within the mentorship relationship. The initial meeting will be completed by verbalizing the next anticipated meeting time to the participant.
SOAR POLICY

Evaluation Policy

It is the policy of the SOAR Program that evaluation will be a key component in measuring the success of its mentoring program and for making continuous improvements in the efficacious delivery services of the mentoring program.

Evaluation data will be collected once a year for SOAR participants and student mentors, including the following evaluation forms: *Participant Satisfaction Survey* (see appendix I) and *Student Mentor Evaluation* (see appendix J).

Additionally, data will be collected through the exit surveys from the student mentors, participant, and parent/guardian when people who are involved with the program are no longer actively participating. Further details are outlined in the closure policy and procedure.

The SOAR Coordinator will be responsible for evaluations, and will oversee the actual evaluation activities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The SOAR Coordinator will be responsible for overseeing SOAR Program evaluation efforts and collecting evaluation data from the student mentors and mentees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. All evaluations will be kept in a sealed envelope and will be opened during the weekly meetings with the SOAR Coordinator and faculty advisory to ensure confidentiality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The evaluations from the parents/guardians will be sent to the faculty advisor by email or mail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Data from the evaluations will be used to guide future developments and improvements of the SOAR program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SOAR POLICY

Closure Policy

It is the policy of the SOAR Program that all SOAR mentors and participants must participate in closure procedures when their SOAR relationship ends, requiring closure. Closure is defined as the ending of a formal SOAR relationship regardless of the circumstances of the relationship ending or whether they intend to have future contact informally beyond SOAR participation.

Closure can occur for any number of reasons including: enrollment in college has ended (for either mentor or mentee), one or both participants do not want to continue in the SOAR program, or there are changes in life circumstances of either the mentor or mentee. Hence, SOAR relationships may end at the discretion of the mentor, mentee, parent/guardian, and/or program supervisors (faculty advisor/SOAR Coordinator).

Future contact will be at the mutual and informal agreement of the mentor, the mentee, and the parent/guardian. If future contact is agreed upon, the SOAR Program will not be responsible for monitoring and supporting relationships after participation in the formal SOAR Program has ended. The SOAR Coordinator and the faculty advisor will verbally and in writing inform all parties—the mentor, mentee, and parent/guardian—that participation in the SOAR program has ended and that SOAR will not be liable for any incidents that occur after the match has closed.

(Adapted from Ballasy, Fulop, & Garringer, n.d.)
## SOAR PROCEDURE

### Closure Procedure

The SOAR Program supervisors (faculty advisor/SOAR Coordinator) will follow the closure procedures as closely as possible and will vary the procedures based on the reasons for the participation ending:

- At the point it is decided that a SOAR relationship is closing indefinitely, the faculty advisor and the SOAR Coordinator will fill out a *SOAR Closure Summary* form (see appendix K) and supervise and instruct all participants through the closure process. A copy of this form will be placed in both the mentor and mentee files.

- All closures must be classified as to the reason for the relationship ending. The major classifications are as follows and the circumstances will dictate the procedure to be followed:

  **Planned**
  A planned closure is one that has been known about for a period of time such as three months or more. Common reasons for planning a closure procedure may include the SOAR participant or mentor reaching the end of their academic program, the participant expressing an advance desire to cease participation in the program, and/or all goals of the program have been achieved.

  **Extenuating**
  Extenuating circumstances for closure are usually more sudden in nature, and beyond the control of the program and/or its participants, i.e., relocation or moving away, or an unexpected personal crisis.

  **Difficult**
  A difficult closure is due to relationship or behavioral difficulties, i.e., lack of cooperation or contact, parental disapproval, irreconcilable issues, lack of compatibility, and/or violations of program policies.
• In all cases, attempts will be made to have a closure meeting to include faculty advisor, SOAR coordinator, the mentor, and the participant. The parent/guardian may attend if he/she desires. The meeting agenda should cover the following, depending on the circumstances of closure:
  ▪ Open discussion about the relationship ending
  ▪ Complete the closure Exit Surveys (see appendices L, M, N)
  ▪ Discuss SOAR’s policies around future contact (see Closure Policy)
  ▪ Distribute participant Closure Letters (see appendix O)

In the absence of a meeting, the faculty advisor will attempt to contact all parties by phone (or email if applicable) to inform them the SOAR relationship is closing and discuss how best to proceed in closing. Closure Letters and Exit Surveys will be mailed out or handed to the mentor, mentee, and parent/guardian.

In all circumstances, the mentor, mentee, and parent/guardian should all receive a Closure Letter stipulating the match has formally ended and any future contact is beyond the scope and responsibility of the SOAR Program.

SOAR Program mentors and support staff must coordinate closure proceedings with evaluation requirements and assist in any way necessary to gather evaluation data during this process.

Copies of the Closure Letters and all completed Exit Surveys should be placed in the respective mentee files.

(Adapted from Ballasy, Fulop, & Garringer, n.d.)
End of Year Meeting Procedure

1. During the final SOTA meeting at the end of the calendar school year the student mentors will discuss the successes and barriers of the year related to the SOAR Program and personal experiences of the SOAR teams.

2. Tentative plans for the next year’s developments and improvements will be discussed during the final meeting.

3. Additionally, current student mentors will volunteer as a member of a sub-committee group that addresses the details of the orientation meeting that is held in the Fall for the following semester.
SOAR POLICY

Recognition Policy

It is the policy of the SOAR Program that all participants—including mentors, mentees, and parents/guardians—be recognized as important to the success of the mentoring program.

It is the responsibility of the SOAR Coordinator and the SOTA club to, at minimum, plan and implement the following recognition activities:

- Host an annual recognition event at the end of each spring semester for mentors, participants, family/guardians, and others involved with the SOAR program. This recognition event may be an event serving food such as a pizza party, however the format for the event will be discussed and decided upon in student club meetings prior to the event.

- Establish a mentor recognition award system for participation. This will be an annual certificate indicating participation as a mentor and year for which the mentor participated. Mentors participating in multiple years will get a certificate for each year of participation. SOAR Coordinator will receive a certificate specific to the SOAR Coordinator position (see appendices P & Q).
Recognition Procedure

The following outlines required recognition activities for mentors in the SOAR Program. This procedure, however, does not limit recognition to once per year.

1. Each mentor in the program will receive personalized Mentor Recognition Certificates (see appendix P) that recognize their effort and participation in the SOAR Program. These certificates will indicate the name of the mentor, their status as a peer mentor, and the year for which the certificate is issued.

2. Each SOAR Coordinator will receive a personalized SOAR Coordinator Recognition Certificate (see appendix Q). This certificate will indicate the name of the SOAR Coordinator, their status as a SOAR Coordinator, and the year for which the certificate is issued.

3. Every year the SOAR Program and SOTA club will host a participant recognition event such as a picnic, dinner, or other activity. Recognition will include distribution of certificates. The SOAR Coordinator will lead the planning and implementation efforts with input, assistance, and attendance of other SOAR mentors, SOTA members, and faculty associated with SOAR.

4. Planning for the annual event will be completed in SOTA meetings during which SOAR topics may be discussed. The SOAR Coordinator will ask for volunteers to create event committees of 3-4 mentors approximately one month prior to the event.
   - Committees will be created for food, decoration, invitation, and certificate completion and distribution.
   - The food committee will be responsible for obtaining quotes for food vendors, reporting estimates to the SOTA club, and ordering food once a food vendor is decided upon.
   - The decoration committee will be responsible for decorating the event space prior to the event using existing and purchased decorations as budget allows.
- The *invitations committee* will be responsible for designing and distributing invitations to all mentors, participants, families/guardians, and faculty.
- The *certificate committee* will be responsible for personalizing each certificate utilizing the certificate template and distributing certificates at the event.

5. Invitations will be distributed to mentors, participants, family/guardians, and associated faculty at minimum of two weeks prior to the event. Attendance of the event is voluntary.
Ecology of Human Performance: Person and Task

Although this manual is divided into two sections based upon the EHP belief system, person, task, and context must be looked at as one entity, equally influencing each other. EHP is a transactional model, depicting the image of human performance as an ecology. A person interacting with their environment influences task performance and in turn, task performance affects the person, the context, and the relationship between the two (Cole & Tufano, 2008). Within the college setting, the context which includes supports, barriers, and social aspects, affects the person’s abilities to perform tasks associated with the college student role. Similarly, performing student-associated tasks affect how the student views, interprets, and interacts with their context. SOAR’s mission is to enable and support this transaction through the utilization of the four areas of focus.

EHP assumes the person is composed of unique and complex skills and are listed as the person’s values, interests, and experiences (Turpin & Iwama, 2011). Additionally, EHP believes these skills and abilities to be constantly changing, and therefore affecting the person’s performance range. Within the college setting, the student’s values and interests may change, thus changing the student’s context and tasks. Similarly, within the college setting the tasks are different in comparison to the high school setting. Students are expected to advocate for their needs, and become a self-directed learner. These changes within the student’s tasks and abilities overall affects the student’s performance as a college student. The SOAR peer mentorship program applies these EHP beliefs by tailoring the support services to the needs of the SOAR participant, addressing the person and tasks aspects. There are four areas in which SOAR focuses, however the person’s needs are what determines the process of the peer mentorship.
The Four Areas of Focus

Advocacy:
Students in the college setting succeed with the help of those within their social context, including instructors, peers, and supporting college staff. Self-advocacy is the ability and action to ask for support, represent one’s own ideas, find people who will provide support, reach out to others, and make decisions based upon one’s own interests and needs.

Organization:
College students fill many sub-roles within their role as student. It is a necessary piece of collegiate success to organize oneself to effect optimal functioning. Organization is the action students make to categorize, manage, remember, and understand time, academic, and social obligations. This may be especially pertinent to the college student as they manage course assignments, testing dates, and social meetings.

Social and Leisure Participation:
Attending and satisfactorily assimilating into the college environment reaches far beyond success in the classroom. College students attend college for various reasons including the development of a sense of self, creating meaningful relationships, learning to take autonomous actions, and enjoying being a college student. Many college campuses contain opportunities to spend time with other students, make new friends, and develop a meaningful support system— all important aspects of social participation. Additionally, college students are afforded opportunities for enjoyment and exploration of hobbies and activities in pursuit of leisure participation.

Resource Identification: Various departments and staff on campus focus on meeting the needs and requirements of the student body. College students are expected to independently identify the necessary resources in order to successfully complete college tasks. These may include testing accommodations, adaptive equipment acquisition, wellness programs, financial aid services, and language-translation services.

The following pages are intended to be a resource for program implementation. This manual is not all inclusive; there will be an additional binder with additional resources that will be adapted and updated each year by students within the program.
## ADVOCACY

### Problems

- **SOAR participants may:**
  - be apprehensive to discuss personal disabilities with faculty and college staff.
  - be unaware of accommodations that are available.
  - not know what they want or need.
  - have communication deficits leading to issues with communicating needs.
  - require development of the skills needed to self-advocate.
  - be unsure of the process to schedule and implement a student-instructor meeting.
  - lack the confidence required to asked for what is required.

(Adapted from materials created by Berendt, Hills, Hoskinson, & Schiller, 2016)
How SOAR Can Help

- **SOAR teams can:**
  - identify weaknesses in self-advocacy.
  - use assessment tools to collaborate with participants.
  - help participants’ role play or practice speaking with instructors.
  - help participants find activities for which they may be interested in participating.
  - provide resources on campus for people that can help with self-advocacy.
  - give personal tips learned from experience.
  - answer any questions participants may have.

(Adapted from materials created by Berendt, Hills, Hoskinson, & Schiller, 2016)
## ADVOCACY

**Suggested Activities**

- Complete assessments (in resource module) to identify areas for growth
- Talk about strengths and weaknesses with participant
- Provide handouts (in resource module)
- Write down steps required to talk with instructors
- Role play to practice scenarios prior to meetings
- Help write an email to instructors or other personnel
- Collaboratively make a plan for speaking with instructors
- Accompany SOAR participants to self-advocacy meetings
- Discuss the importance of self-advocacy on campus

(Adapted from materials created by Berendt, Hills, Hoskinson, & Schiller, 2016)
## SOCIAL PARTICPATION/LEISURE

### Problems

- **SOAR participants may:**
  - be unaware of social opportunities on campus.
  - be nervous in a new environment.
  - have difficulty relating to peers.
  - feel identity loss due to transitioning to college from high school.
  - feel peer pressure to participate.

(Adapted from materials created by Grun, Luers, Oppegarrd, & Shaffer, 2016)
### SOCIAL PARTICIPATION/LEISURE

**How SOAR Can Help**

- **SOAR teams can:**
  - provide support, encouragement, and information.
  - identify resources.
  - provide strategies.
  - accompany SOAR participants to social/leisure events.
  - educate regarding the importance of social participation.

(Adapted from materials created by Grun, Luers, Oppegarrd, & Shaffer, 2016)
### SOCIAL PARTICPATION/LEISURE

**Suggested Activities**

- Complete a Modified Interest Checklist to identify interests and strengths
- Compile a list of school-sponsored activities to try
- Make a plan to attend a number of activities
- Practice using a planner (or other method) to manage time for social/leisure activities
- Speak with participants about why social participation is important
- Role-play social events during meetings to alleviate anxiety
- Attend social/leisure activities with the participant
- Follow-up and discuss social events following the event to see if improvements can be made

(Adapted from materials created by Grun, Luers, Oppegarrd, & Shaffer, 2016)
ORGANIZATION

Problems

- **SOAR participants may:**
  - be unaware of resources that assist with the task of organizing.
  - not know where to look for the organizational resources.
  - not understand strategies or processes to assist with organizing schedules.
  - may not know techniques for organizing homework papers or various assignments.
  - may require additional assistance when initially organizing schedules or homework assignments.

(Adapted from materials created by Henderson, Palmer, & Trohkimoinen, 2016)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>How SOAR Can Help</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>SOAR teams can:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o identify weaknesses in organizational skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o identify resources, such as electronic organizational tools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o provide strategies that support organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o educate SOAR participants on the benefits of organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o provide support when addressing organizational skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o role model self-organizational skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o help the participant reward themselves when tasks are completed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from materials created by Henderson, Palmer, & Trohkimoinen, 2016)
### ORGANIZATION

**Suggested Activities**

- Complete a pre-test to identify strengths and areas of focus
- Create folders on a computer with titles to identify content
- Create checklists that prioritize tasks by due date
- Write due dates on calendars or on a phone calendar (SOAR participant preference)
- Mark pages in a book with a bookmark or paper clip to help find at a later time
- Set times with a clock to help stay on task for a specific subject
- Explore apps on an iPad or tablet that help assist with organization
- Show YouTube videos that give examples and ideas of different ways to organize study material

(Adapted from materials created by Henderson, Palmer, & Trohkimoinen, 2016)
## RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION

### Problems

- **SOAR participants may:**
  - be unaware of resources available in college.
  - have difficulties navigating the college campus.
  - have difficulties asking for help.
  - not be aware of the benefits of resources.
  - be unaware of the locations that offer resources.
  - be unaware of the need for resources to complete collegiate tasks.

(Adapted from materials created by Dietz, Hepworth, Jones, & Schriber, 2016)
## RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION

### How SOAR Can Help

- **SOAR teams can:**
  - Match the person’s needs with resources.
  - Support the SOAR participant’s ability to express his/her need in relation to campus resources.
  - Determine types of resources that are helpful.
  - Educate the SOAR participant on benefits of resources.
  - Assert positive perceptions of community resources.
  - Present resource information to the SOAR participant.

(Adapted from materials created by Dietz, Hepworth, Jones, & Schriber, 2016)
### RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION

**Suggested Activities**

- Complete a pre-test to help identify resources that may help
- Teach participants how to access specific resources on campus
- Locate correct buildings on campus
- Share positive experiences about collegiate and community resources
- Educate the SOAR participant about all resources available

(Adapted from materials created by Dietz, Hepworth, Jones, & Schriber, 2016)
Appendix A

SOAR PEER MENTOR PREFERENCE INVENTORY

Name: ________________________________ Date: ____________

Please complete all the following. This survey will help the SOAR Program know more about you and your interests and help us find a good match for you.

What are the most convenient times for you to meet with your mentee?

Please check all that apply.


Other: ______

Do you speak any languages other than English? If so, which languages?

__________

Please rank (1-5) each disability/impairment that you are interested in working with:

1 = Highest Interested… 5 = Least Interested

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADHD/ADD</th>
<th>Physical Impairments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autism Spectrum Disorder</td>
<td>Psychological Impairments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Down Syndrome</td>
<td>Intellectual Disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensory Processing Disorder</td>
<td>Traumatic Brain Injury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinal Cord Injury</td>
<td>Stroke (CVA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List any other areas of strong interest:

________________________________________

Choices are not guaranteed but efforts will be made to create appropriate peer mentor teams.
Date___________________

Name

First                Full Middle              Last

Consent for Participation - I (print your name) ____________________________ consent to participate in the SOAR program. I understand that there are potential risks associated with participating in college campus activities and that the Student Organization for Accessibilities and Resources (SOAR) is not liable for any injuries that occur while participating in this program.

I also hereby authorize SOAR members of the University of North Dakota at Casper College (UND-CC) Occupational Therapy Program to secure emergency medical treatment for me in an emergency or unanticipated condition necessitating immediate action for the preservation of the life or health of the participant.

____________________________________   __________
Participant Signature                    Date

____________________________________   __________
Parent/Guardian (signature if applicable) Date

Emergency Care - In case of emergency and parent(s)/guardian cannot be reached, who should be contacted?

Name _______________________________ Relationship __________________
Home Phone _________________________ Cell Phone _______________________

Name _______________________________ Relationship __________________
Home Phone _________________________ Cell Phone _______________________
SOAR EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

Student Name:__________________________________________________________

I authorize members of the SOAR program through the University of North Dakota Occupational Therapy Program at Casper College to communicate in person, by telephone or in writing for the purpose of coordination of educational, leisure, or resource identification support. This includes all Casper College persons or agencies pertinent to achieving success on campus.

This consent will be effective for the semester of __________________________

Student/Guardian Signature:____________________________________________

Date: ____________________
By signing this Photo, Video and Sound Recording Release and Consent Form, you are irrevocably giving permission to the members of the Student Occupational Therapy Association (SOTA) program through the University of North Dakota Occupational Therapy Program at Casper College to take and use photographs, video, and/or sound recordings of you for the following project:

A short explanation video to help potential Casper College student participants understand what the Student Organization for Accessibility and Resources (SOAR) program is all about. Additionally, the video may address why occupational therapy students are prime candidates for assisting their fellow students to succeed in their studies. This is completely voluntary.

Your consent to the use of the photographs, video, sound recordings and your image, likeness, appearance, and voice is permanent. You will not receive compensation for the use of your image, likeness, appearance, and voice now or in the future. The photographs, video and sound recordings may be used in whole or in part, alone or with other recordings. The photographs, video and sound recordings may be used for any educational, institutional, or informational purposes whatsoever, but not for commercial use.

You may further give permission to the SOAR program to use your name, biography, and any other personal data in connection with any such uses of the photographs, video and sound recordings. However, if you choose to prohibit the use of your name, biography, or other personal data, in whole or in part, this information will not be included in the making of this video.

I understand and agree to the conditions outlined in this photograph, video and sound recording release and consent form. I acknowledge that I am fully aware of the contents of this release and am under no duress or undue influence at the time of my signing of this instrument. Furthermore, I acknowledge that I am my own legal guardian or will otherwise obtain the signature of my legal guardian in order to participate in this project.

Printed Name of Participant

________________________________________

Signature of Participant

Date

Printed Name of Legal Guardian

________________________________________

Signature of Legal Guardian

Date
Appendix E

**Participant Meeting Documentation**

(To be filled out during and immediately after SOAR meetings and emailed to SOAR team the SOAR Coordinator and faculty advisor)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOAR Participant:</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team members Present</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Meeting Location:**

Aspect(s) of the SOAR mission statement identified (circle or highlight in yellow)

1. Organization
2. Self-advocacy
3. Social participation and/or Leisure activities
4. Casper College or other resource identification and communication

**Task / Activity Facilitated:**

**Concerns communicated by SOAR participant:**

**Upcoming relevant events**

(Include scholastic, social, family or relevant concerns)

**Identify next planned meeting time and SOAR OT members**

*Communicated every meeting i.e. “We look forward to meeting with you Wed. 3 PM on the 3rd floor of the student union.”*

**List next meeting’s anticipated topics or activities**

**Circle/highlight next week’s mission statement relevance**

1. Organization
2. Self-advocacy
3. Social participation and/or Leisure activities
4. Casper College or other resource identification and communication

Document Completed By:

(signature)
SOAR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

Appendix F

SOAR Dissemination Meeting Documentation Form

(Be ready to have 1 group member relay this information in an efficient manner to the SOAR group during meeting time)

Name of SOAR Participant: __________________________

SOAR participant’s concerns:


SOAR team member’s comments and concerns:


Professor Morrison’s and or other SOAR team member’s comments and suggestions


Team members Present
1.
2.
3.
4.
Appendix G

Initial SOAR Student Interview Questions
Participant Name:__________________

1. What courses are you taking? Major?

2. Are you involved in any student organizations or clubs?
   If not, would you like to be?

3. What is your favorite part about being in college?

4. What is your least favorite part about being in college?

5. What are 2 things you are really good at in college?

6. What are 2 things that make college difficult for you?

7. What do you like to do in your free time?


9. What are 3 things you would like help with that would add to your success in college?

10. What questions do you have for us?
Appendix H

SOAR Participant Satisfaction Survey

Please complete this evaluation, but do not write your name. Circle the best choice. If you need help, talk to your SOAR team to arrange for someone to help you. Please give this to the SOAR Coordinator when you are done.

Thank you!

0= Strongly Disagree  1= Disagree  2= Neutral  3= Agree  4= Strongly Agree

1. Throughout the semester, I felt like this program helped me become more involved in the college experience.
   
   0  1  2  3  4

2. My SOAR team helped me solve problems.
   
   0  1  2  3  4

3. I felt that my SOAR team listened to me and heard what I had to say.
   
   0  1  2  3  4

4. I felt that my SOAR enhanced my experience as a Casper College student.
   
   0  1  2  3  4

5. I met with my SOAR team an adequate amount of times throughout the semester.
   
   0  1  2  3  4

6. SOAR was beneficial to me in college.
   
   0  1  2  3  4

7. I would use SOAR to help me again.
   
   0  1  2  3  4

8. Throughout the semester, I felt that I could contact my SOAR team with questions or concerns about school.
   
   0  1  2  3  4

9. I felt that every member of my SOAR team helped me in some way.
   
   0  1  2  3  4

10. Please write how the SOAR program can improve:
Appendix I

SOAR MENTOR EVALUATION

Please individually complete this evaluation. Please circle the most appropriate response.

1. How many times did you meet with your participant each week?
   
   0-1    1-2    2-3

2. On average, how long were the peer mentorship meeting (in minutes)?
   
   10 – 15  15 – 30  30 – 45  45 – 60  >60

3. On average, how many team members attended the meetings?
   
   1    2    3    4

4. How many times per week did you address advocacy with your participant?
   
   0    1    2    3+

5. How many times per week did you address social participation and/or leisure participation with your participant?
   
   0    1    2    3+

6. How many times per week did you address organization with your participant?
   
   0    1    2    3+

7. How many times per week did you address resource identification with your participant?
   
   0    1    2    3+
SOAR Closure Summary

*Note: Place copy in participant file*

Name of Participant: ______________________________________________________

Name of Mentor(s): ______________________________________________________

Start Date: ____________ Closure Date: _________ Length of participation: _______

Please circle the circumstance and check the reason for SOAR withdrawal/completion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>Mentor</th>
<th>Mentee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed academic program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decided to withdraw from academic program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decided SOAR services were no longer needed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, specify:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Mentee</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Life Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family/Personal/Health Issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, specify:</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficult</th>
<th>Mentor</th>
<th>Mentee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violation of Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Cooperation with Agency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/Guardian Withdrew Youth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost Interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, specify:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional details concerning the closure:

Recommend new SOAR team?

**Mentor:** ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A | **Mentee:** ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

Completed by: ___________________________ Date: ____________

(Adapted from Ballasy, L., Fulop, M., & Garringer, M., n.d.)
Appendix K

Mentor Exit Survey

Thank you for serving as a mentor in the SOAR Program. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. We are always looking for ways to improve the SOAR program and appreciate your feedback. Please complete the following and return in the enclosed envelope.

Name:___________________________________________________ Date:_______

Name of Participant: ______________________________________

Length of SOAR Relationship: _____years _____months

Check what best describes your relationship with your participant. Then please explain your answers below:

☐ Very close ☐ Close ☐ Not very close

☐ Very successful ☐ Successful ☐ Not very successful

Why is your SOAR relationship ending?

Do you feel like you made a difference in your participant’s life? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please explain below:

Did you feel you received adequate support and supervision from program staff?

Were you successful in asking for support from the SOAR program when you needed it to assist you with serving as a mentor?

What aspects of the SOAR Program did you like the best?

What aspects of the SOAR Program did you like the least?

If applicable, would you like to be re-matched according to your SOAR Peer Mentor Preference Inventory Form? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Appendix L

Parent/Guardian Exit Survey

Thank you for letting your child participate in the SOAR Program. We hope your child benefited from having a mentor. We are always looking for ways to improve our program and appreciate your feedback. Please complete the following and return in the enclosed envelope.

Name: _______________________________ Date: __________

Name of Child: _______________________________

Name of Mentor(s): _______________________________

Length of Match: ___years ___months

How would you describe your child’s relationship with his/her mentor? Please explain your answers below:

☐ Very close ☐ Close ☐ Not very close

☐ Very successful ☐ Successful ☐ Not very successful

Why did your child’s SOAR program participation end?

Do you feel like your child’s mentors made a difference in his/her life? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please explain below:

Did you feel you received adequate support and supervision from the program regarding your child’s participation?

What aspects of the SOAR Program did you like the best?

What aspects of the SOAR Program did you like the least?

What could we have done to make our program a better experience for you?
Participant Exit Survey

Thank you for participating in the SOAR Program. We hope you enjoyed being in the program. We are always looking for ways to make our program better. Your feedback will be very helpful to do that. Please complete this form and return it to the SOAR program at your closure meeting or in the mail. If you need help, please ask your SOAR team or another person you trust to help you.

Name:_________________________ Date:________

Length of SOAR Relationship: _____years _____months

Check what best describes your relationship with your SOAR team. Then please explain your answers below:

☐ Very close ☐ Close ☐ Not very close

☐ Very successful ☐ Successful ☐ Not very successful

Why is your SOAR relationship ending?

Do you feel like your SOAR team made a difference in your life?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

Please explain below:

Did you feel you received enough support from your SOAR team? Please explain.

Did you express your concerns or needs to the mentors while in the SOAR program?

What aspects of the SOAR Program did you like the best?

What aspects of the SOAR Program did you like the least?

What could we have done to make the program a better experience for you?
Appendix N

Closure Letter Template

Student Organization for Accessibility and Resources (SOAR)
Occupational Therapy Department
Aley Hall, Room 303
125 College Dr.
Casper, WY 82601

(Name of Mentor, Mentee, or Parent/Guardian)
(Address)

Dear (first name),

This letter is to inform you that the mentoring relationship managed by the SOAR Program has officially ended as of (end date).

(Optional if applicable) We have made attempts to contact you via phone and e-mail to no avail and regret that we are unable to meet with you and go through a formal closure process.

As participation in the program has formally ended, the SOAR Program no longer assumes responsibility for monitoring and supervising the mentorship process. Thus, any future contact between SOAR mentorship partners is at the discretion of all parties involved (mentor, mentee, and parent/guardian). Any incidents occurring due to future contact among match participants is beyond the responsibility of the SOAR program.

Thank you for your involvement in the SOAR program. We appreciated your participation.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

__________________________  ________________________
SOAR Faculty Advisor          SOAR Student Coordinator
SUMMARY

The intent of a policies and procedures manual for the Student Organization for Accessibility and Resources (SOAR) is to enhance and support the development and guidance for future implementation and ongoing facilitation of the program. The SOAR program is a student organization that provides ancillary support and mentorship for college students with disabilities as they navigate through the complexities of postsecondary education. Some of these challenges and barriers include but are not limited to roles and responsibilities of support staff and a greater demand for students’ self-reliance (Garrison-Wade, 2012). Students with disabilities face these challenges with little support; therefore, they are at a higher risk of preemptively dropping out of college (Mamiseishvili & Koch, 2011). The SOAR organization uses a peer mentorship model in which SOAR mentors and participants collaborate with college students with disabilities to identify challenges, set goals, and work through collegiate obstacles. The mentors from the SOAR organization who assist students with disabilities are students themselves, facing college challenges and barriers, while negating the barrier of intimidation with addressing faculty and staff for traditional services.

Peer mentors can serve as social and academic coaches, as liaisons between students and professors, and can facilitate social bonding between mentor and mentee beyond what may occur in a traditional mentee-disability service professional relationship (Barnhill, 2016). A relationship is created through the use of the peer mentorship model and therefore both parties experience mutual benefits from the
organization. To measure SOAR participant’s level of satisfaction with the SOAR program, an outcomes measures is utilized at the end of the semester. Data collected from these outcomes measures assist the development and enhancement of the SOAR program. To promote longevity of the program, a policies and procedures manual enhances program structure and implementation.

The policies and procedures manual is intended to be a guiding document and resource for current SOAR members as they themselves navigate through the process of peer mentorship. Within the manual is a separate section that includes resources specific to the facilitation of the SOAR program. These resource modules address four main areas of focus: resource identification, advocacy, social participation/leisure, and organization. These areas of focus were chosen to be emphasized within the manual because of their level of pertinence and supported research for college students with disabilities. The appendix section includes documents that are meant to be reproduced for current SOAR students. The goal of the policies and procedures manual is to create organization and ease of finding documents to assist SOAR members in providing effective and efficient services for college students with disabilities.

Additionally, the manual is intended to be generalized to other postsecondary education settings and used as a template for other student organizations. The authors of this manual have had two years of experience with the SOAR program and peer mentorship model which assisted in the creation of this document. Both authors have dealt first hand with the barriers and supports of the SOAR program, allowing them to enhance the program with their ideas. In conjunction with experience, the authors have had extensive education on disabilities and psychosocial aspects of the human
experience. Occupational therapy students understand the concept of occupational justice and the need for every student to have a college experience. It’s the authors’ idea that this manual will serve as a guiding document for other professional schools to implement similar programs. It is possible that the implementation of this manual will run into a few road blocks. Casper College in Casper, Wyoming is a small community college which may lead to limited generalizability for other colleges. In addition to limited generalizability, the SOAR program is still considered to be in its infancy stages. The program is still evolving, and therefore amendments may need to be made to the manual as seen fit.

Clinical strengths of the manual directly affect the population with which student mentors will be working. SOAR is a program that has the potential to reach a multitude of students with varying disabilities. Using the peer mentorship model, the manual was written to allow for flexibility and truly student-centered collaborative interaction. Through this model, student mentors meet the needs of SOAR participants by addressing items specifically inhibiting college performance. Just as no disability is alike, SOAR participants each exhibit varying needs. By following the policies and procedures provided in the manual for program implementation in conjunction with the resources provided to address the four primary areas of college concern. SOAR mentors meet SOAR participants where they are: helping where needed and indicated by the participant. The program, founded within the model of the Ecology of Human Performance (EHP) principles, provides a supportive service to shape and enhance the college context. Additionally, EHP aspects of person and task are influenced within the four primary areas of mentorship facilitation. SOAR teams may influence the
environment through the SOAR program, or may work on skills and abilities of the student to organize coursework, enhance social skills, self-advocate, or utilize resources to enhance performance within the college realm.

Although one primary aim of the SOAR program is to assist college students with disabilities to navigate the college experience effectively, another clinical strength of the program lies within the education of future occupational therapists. The students serving as peer mentors learn through experience, how to work with individuals with disabilities: a skill that will serve them well in future careers. Benefits of the peer mentorship model for mentors include career preparation, improved academic performance, community awareness, increased accountability, and heightened insightfulness (Ward, Thomas, & Disch, 2014; Muwana, 2011). Through extended contact with students with disabilities, an inherent respect, understanding, and value for service learning develops (Muwana, 2011).

Limitations of the SOAR manual have been identified. First, the program is intended, and the policies were written, so that the SOAR scope includes working with students with referrals for disabilities or with self-identified disabilities. It is a limitation of the program, that students that have not specifically been identified as having a disability will not be able to join the program. Some diagnoses or issues affected by this limitation may include attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or various forms of anxiety, for example. Additionally, the SOAR manual policies are written so that only students auditing or enrolled in college courses may be served. Although enrollment in formal classes is an important factor in college, some students with more advanced disabilities may be unable to manage a course load of any level. However, these students
would benefit from the social, leisure, and organizational skills developed through the formative college years and enhanced through the action of SOAR teams. It is hoped that with increased social awareness of disability rights and equality, more student with disabilities will be able to benefit from college activities, academic or not. With this understanding, it may be a possibility that SOAR teams could work with these students similarly to how teams currently work with enrolled individuals with disabilities. A third limitation to the policies and procedures manual includes the inability for the manual to be assessed regarding effectiveness. As a new guiding document, implementation of the manual is necessary prior to evaluation of outcomes. Changes and amendments to the documents may be required following implementation and after learning what aspects of the manual need to be adapted to fit the program. It is anticipated that the SOAR program will continue to change with new learning and experiences in the program to best address the changing needs of the targeted population.

For further improvements, future research needs to be conducted for the SOAR program while utilizing the policies and procedures manual. This will help determine what areas within the manual need to be revisited, expanded upon, or eliminated. The method in which the policies and procedures were created allows for future scholarly collaboration. This potential development within the SOAR program can help promote the concept of multidisciplinary action at a student level that can be carried into practice. Additionally, the authors would like to see the Mentor Exit Survey expanded to become a satisfaction outcomes measure for the SOAR mentors. This outcomes measure would include questions about the ease of navigating the processes of SOAR and their level of satisfaction as a SOAR mentor. The peer mentorship model that SOAR utilizes,
believes that both the mentor and the mentee create a reciprocal relationship with mutual benefits when participating in the program (Muwana, 2011). Therefore, it is imperative for the SOAR program to measure both the participant and SOAR members’ level of satisfaction with the program.

In conclusion, the authors’ intent was to create a governing document, the policies and procedures manual, to better enhance the structure of the SOAR program, as well as to provide a template for other student organization to create a similar program. The SOAR program has provided ancillary support to college students with disabilities for three continuous years. Although the program is still within its infancy years, the objective of the policies and procedures manual is to promote longevity of the program to continue to provide efficient and efficacious services to those college students in need.
References


Council of Exceptional Children. (2008). *Higher Education Act reauthorization: Summary of selected provisions for individuals with exceptionalities and the professionals who work on their behalf.* Retrieved from


