

Oberlin Switchboard Ask Me Anything (AMA) Week – April 11-15, 2016

Background:

The Oberlin Switchboard is a place for Oberlin people to ask for the things they need and offer the things they have, both of the tangible - “I need a job or place to live.” - and intangible - “How do I pursue this specific path with the interests I honed at Oberlin?” - variety.

The site launched in late April of 2014, and since then, thousands of connections have been made between Oberlin students, alumni, faculty, staff, and parents around the topics of jobs/internships, housing/hosting, and advice of all shapes and sizes. As of April 2016, 2050 members have signed up for the Oberlin Switchboard and of those members, 88% have actively engaged as least once since signing up.

April 11th through 15th is a dedicated week of programming for graduating seniors about Life After Oberlin, and with your help, we'll be extending that experience online, too. To facilitate meaningful conversations between members of the Oberlin community, we're hosting an Ask Me Anything (AMA) Week on the Oberlin Switchboard.

We have 40 alumni sharing during AMA week that show the breadth and depth of the Oberlin community, particularly through job, life path, years of post-Oberlin experience, and locational diversity. Our aim is to have each post from our alumni have at least three meaningful interactions with fellow alumni and current students.

Your time commitment:

A week before:

- Read our preparation materials and sign up for Switchboard - 20 minutes

The week of the AMA:

- Each day, read posts from contributing alumni and ask questions based on their experiences - 10-15 minutes per day

The week after the AMA:

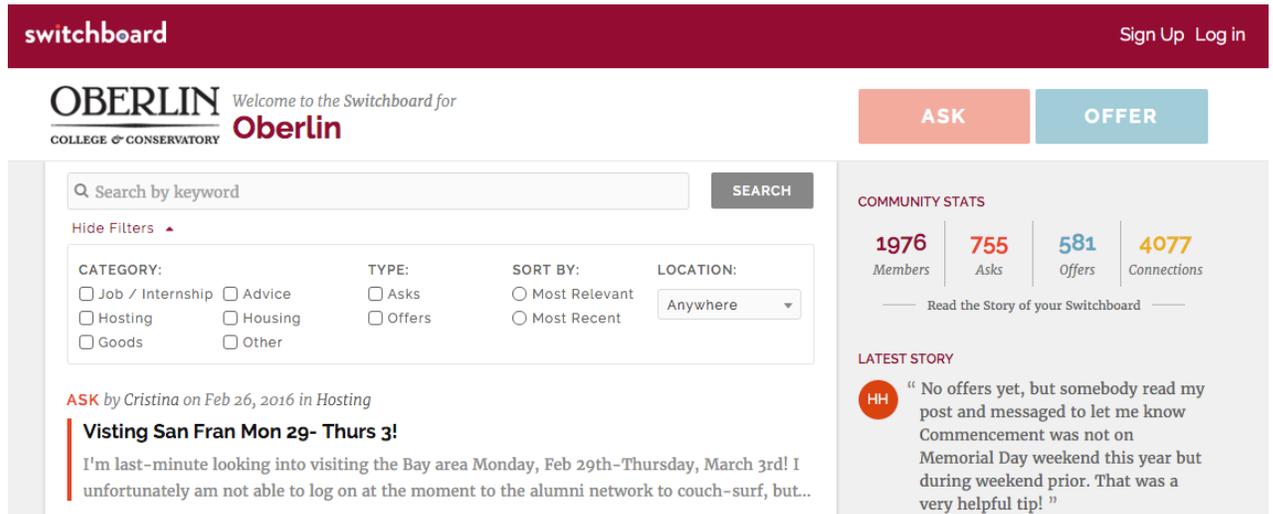
- If a conversation or interaction sticks with you, follow up via private message - 15-30 minutes per person you'd like to talk to more

THE WEEK BEFORE OUR AMA PANELS

Let's get ready!

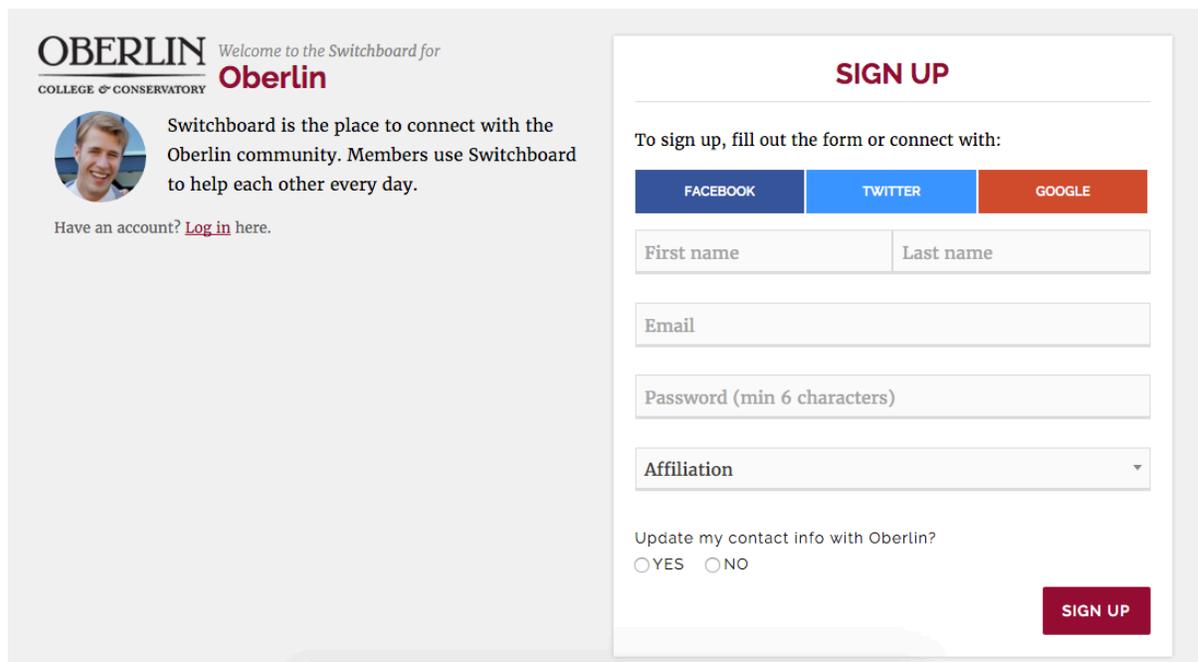
If you've never used Switchboard before:

1. Visit switchboard.oberlin.edu and click on the Sign Up button in the top right corner of the screen.



The screenshot shows the Switchboard website interface. At the top, there is a dark red navigation bar with the 'switchboard' logo on the left and 'Sign Up Log in' on the right. Below this is a white header area with the Oberlin College & Conservatory logo and the text 'Welcome to the Switchboard for Oberlin'. There are two buttons, 'ASK' and 'OFFER', in the top right of the header. The main content area is divided into several sections: a search bar with a 'SEARCH' button; a 'Hide Filters' section with checkboxes for 'CATEGORY' (Job / Internship, Advice, Hosting, Goods), 'TYPE' (Asks, Offers), 'SORT BY' (Most Relevant, Most Recent), and 'LOCATION' (Anywhere); a featured post titled 'Visting San Fran Mon 29- Thurs 3!' by Cristina; and a 'COMMUNITY STATS' section showing 1976 Members, 755 Asks, 581 Offers, and 4077 Connections. A 'LATEST STORY' section is also visible with a post by HH.

2. Enter your name, chosen email address and password, indicate your student affiliation with Oberlin and add your class year



The screenshot shows the 'SIGN UP' form on the Switchboard website. The form is titled 'SIGN UP' and includes the following fields and options: 'To sign up, fill out the form or connect with:' followed by buttons for 'FACEBOOK', 'TWITTER', and 'GOOGLE'; 'First name' and 'Last name' input fields; 'Email' input field; 'Password (min 6 characters)' input field; 'Affiliation' dropdown menu; and a checkbox for 'Update my contact info with Oberlin?' with 'YES' and 'NO' radio button options. A red 'SIGN UP' button is located at the bottom right of the form.

3. Switchboard includes a small guided tour as a part of your introduction to the site. There are a few prompts to click and read through. We encourage you to follow along to assure you'll have the best experience in the future.
4. Once logged in, proceed with instructions for "I already have a Switchboard account."

If you already have a Switchboard account:

1. Visit switchboard.oberlin.edu and click on the Log In button in the top right corner of the screen.

switchboard Sign Up Log in

OBERLIN Welcome to the Switchboard for
COLLEGE & CONSERVATORY **Oberlin**

ASK OFFER

Q Search by keyword SEARCH

Hide Filters ▾

CATEGORY: TYPE: SORT BY: LOCATION:
 Job / Internship Advice Asks Most Relevant
 Hosting Housing Offers Most Recent
 Goods Other

ASK by Cristina on Feb 26, 2016 in Hosting
Visting San Fran Mon 29- Thurs 3!
I'm last-minute looking into visiting the Bay area Monday, Feb 29th-Thursday, March 3rd! I unfortunately am not able to log on at the moment to the alumni network to couch-surf, but...

COMMUNITY STATS
1976 Members 755 Asks 581 Offers 4077 Connections
Read the Story of your Switchboard

LATEST STORY
HH "No offers yet, but somebody read my post and messaged to let me know Commencement was not on Memorial Day weekend this year but during weekend prior. That was a very helpful tip!"

2. Click on the icon with your initials in the top right corner, and then click on "Edit Profile." Here, you can add a profile photo, a website, your location, a one-sentence bio, and any chosen social media accounts. Then save your changes

switchboard Admin ▾ 

OBERLIN Welcome to the Switchboard for
COLLEGE & CONSERVATORY **Oberlin**

ASK

Q Search by keyword SEARCH

Hide Filters ▾

CATEGORY: TYPE: SORT BY: LOCATION:
 Job / Internship Advice Asks Most Relevant
 Hosting Housing Offers Most Recent
 Goods Other

ASK by Cullen on Feb 29, 2016 in Goods
Washer | Dryer
Greetings,I'm in the market for a washer/dryer unit and would rather give a unit a second life as opposed to buying new. Electric connection needed.Please let me know if you're in t...

COMMUNITY STATS
1981 Members 760 Asks
Read the Story

RECENTLY HEARTED
Looking for new fo
Public Health sum
Foot-in-the-door: Financial Services in Denver/Boulder

Logged in as Ma'ayan Plaut
Messages 0
Notifications 0
My Activity
Edit Profile
Settings
Support
Logout

You can add your interests to your profile by clicking on "Interests" in the left sidebar. Some will be suggested to you, or you can add them from the "I'm interested in..." box. Interests allow you to network with other Oberlin people who care about the same things and including your comprehensive interests here on Switchboard keeps you in the loop with email notifications for future Switchboard posts that include tags that match your interests. (Be sure to check "Interesting post emails" noted below the interests section to receive these!)

Select Your Interests
Tell the Oberlin community what brings you here

Ma'ayan Plaut
Alum · 2010
Staff · Communications
Oberlin, Ohio
<http://maayanplaut.com>

Personal Interests: education, technology, networking, blogging, storytelling, content strategy, strategy, digital marketing, tech, social media, writing, food, content marketing, journalism, photography

Community Interests: music, travel, design, marketing, programming, web development, running, project management

Interests marked with the 📍 icon are used to find posts by location. Location interests are private.

Receive interesting post suggestions by **Email** or in your **Notification Feed**

You can always edit these and other notification preferences in [settings](#)

Below your personal interests, you can add a selection of community interests if you'd like to see more posts of this nature:

- ✦ **Curate your post recommendations.** We'll suggest posts in the sidebar.
- ✦ **Receive custom updates.** We'll alert you of particularly relevant posts based on your notification preferences above .
- ✦ **Strike up conversations with like-minded members.** View an individual's profile to learn what interests them.

Oberlin Community Interests

Job Offers	Job Asks	Hosting	Advice
Housing Offers	Housing Asks	Goods or Services	Other

Only you can see which of these categories you select. Use them to keep tabs on broad Oberlin community topics.

3. You can adjust your email and app notifications by clicking on your icon in the top right corner, then clicking on “Edit Settings.” We suggest turning on comment and message notifications so you’ll receive a reminder to visit Switchboard to respond to notes directed at you, but the other notifications will provide opportunities for you to continue to contribute to the Oberlin Switchboard in meaningful ways in the future.

The screenshot shows the 'Settings' page for a user named Ma'ayan Plaut. On the left is a navigation menu with options: Profile, Edit, Messages (with a red notification badge), Notifications (with a red notification badge), Interests, Settings (highlighted in red), Support, and Logout. The main content area is titled 'Settings' and is divided into several sections: 'General Settings' with a checked option 'Update my contact information with Oberlin'; 'Email Notification' with checked options for Comment, Message, Heart, Mention, and Interesting Post Emails; 'In-App Notification' with checked options for Comment, Message, Heart, and Mention Notifications; 'Post Digest' with a checked option 'Send me an email digest of new posts'; and 'Digest Frequency' with radio buttons for 'Weekly' (selected) and 'Daily'. At the bottom right are two buttons: 'UPDATE SETTINGS' (red) and 'UNSUBSCRIBE FROM ALL' (grey).

Switchboard on mobile:

The Oberlin Switchboard is a responsive website, so you should be able to move easily between your computer and phone/tablet. If you use an Apple device, you may also want to consider [using the free Switchboard iOS app](#). Search for “Switchboard Community” in the App Store and download from there. Enter the name of our community (Oberlin) in the search bar and then log in using your preferred account.

Once you're in, you can:

- search for posts using the magnifying glass icon or write a new ask or offer using the “new post” icon (along the top bar)
- browse posts, send messages, or update your profile (along the bottom bar)
- write new comments or respond to existing comments (tap on the post you'd like to contribute to from the main post feed)

Communicating on Switchboard:

Beyond a post, there are two ways to communicate on the Oberlin Switchboard.

- **Publicly**, in the form of a comment. We encourage the use of comments during this exercise (and in general) because your questions and corresponding answers can and will be useful to more Oberlin people both in the moment and in the future. The comment box is immediately below the post.
- **Privately**, in the form of a private message. Private messages are ideal for exchanging personal information like addresses or phone numbers. You can send a message to a person who made a post (there is a small box at the bottom of a post that says “Message (poster's name)”) or from a user's individual profile (in the example below, clicking on Noel Anderson's name will send you to their profile, where you can select the “Message Me” button).



Posted in **JOB / INTERNSHIP**

NYC Geologists - Job Posting

OFFER by Noel Anderson · Alum '13 on Feb 19, 2016

1 47

Hello all - my office is hiring geologists and engineers!

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/oer/html/about-oer/careers-internships.shtml>

Message me for more details! Would love to see some more Obies in the office :)

New York City



Message Noel

Share

Flag

Edit



Noel Anderson

Alum · 2013



About

Posts

1

MESSAGE ME

About Noel

Oberlin Switchboard member since October 2014 — Alum · 2013

Noel has written 1 post.

Want to tell people about the interesting people you're meeting during our AMAs? SHARE!

The Oberlin Switchboard is for students, alumni, faculty, staff, and parents of Oberlin students & alumni. If you think a post is perfect for your friend, please tell them about it! Their questions will make this experience even more enjoyable for the alums, and for you, too.

Should you desire to talk about this project on social media, we'll be using the #askObies hashtag.

IT'S AMA TIME

Lights, Camera, Action!

Each day, we'll have a "virtual panel" of alumni available to answer questions about their lives and careers after Oberlin. There will be between six and nine alumni posting each day about:

- Monday, April 11: Health / Human Services / Medicine
- Tuesday, April 12: Tech & Non-Profit
- Wednesday, April 13: Music, Art, Performing Arts, and Design
- Thursday, April 14: Marketing, Communications, and Strategy
- Friday, April 15: Education

[A full list of participating alumni can be found on the Alumni Association's website.](#)

Good questions are short, sweet, and simple. Your question is as much about you as it is about the person you're contacting. Describe who you are, what your interests are, and how it connects to something that they do. Do a bit of research and personalize your response to their specific interests.

Followup:

The AMAS and the answers will live on in two forms:

- On the Oberlin Switchboard for future Oberlin people to read.
- In the form of an archived Q&A on the Oberlin Alumni Association Tumblr blog.

If you found yourself particularly drawn to an alum and the experiences they shared during their AMA, either based on your question or someone else's, consider reaching out to them and turn a question into a connection. Connecting and reconnecting with an alum will allow you to build a relationship. You're networking not only for your short-term goals, but for your long-term goals, too.

- **A week later (late April):** Thank them for participating in the AMA and ask if they would be willing to talk on the phone (the career center can help!) and share some advice about how to have a good summer experience.
- **Three months later (end of summer):** Connect with the alum and share what you did during the summer, including what worked and what didn't.
- **Six months later (fall break):** Touch base with the alum and ask them for advice around winter term.
- **Nine months later (end of January):** Reconnect with the alum and tell them about your winter term, including what worked and what didn't.
- **Twelve months later (around spring break):** Share with the alum your upcoming summer plans and ask them for advice.

If you stumble across our AMA a little late in the game, that's okay. You can still reach out to these alums for good conversations.