

2006-2007 New Student Orientation Program Review

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND SCOPE

In an effort help new students make a smooth transition to Ohlone College, new students are required to attend an orientation session. Although there are a variety of orientation options available to students, each orientation option covers similar information: programs and services at Ohlone, college success strategies, placement scores, degree and transfer requirements, registration procedures, and one-on-one advising with a counselor to develop an educational plan.

The first type of orientation available to students is an online orientation. This option was developed to meet the needs of students who are taking distance education courses and other students who are unable to come on campus for an in-person orientation. With this option, students read through the online orientation information and then complete an intake form at the end of the orientation. The intake form asks students questions such as their major, intended transfer institution, number of hours the students plan to work, and what classes the students are thinking about taking. This form is emailed to our electronic counselor, who then works with students via email and the phone to create an educational plan. For the 2006-2007 academic year, which was the first year that this option was available to students, 523 students completed the online orientation and online advising.

Another option for students is to come on campus for an in-person orientation. During these sessions, a counselor conducts a presentation to explain information such as Ohlone student services, recommended classes for first-semester students, placement results, and how to register via WebAdvisor. Other counselors then join the orientation to assist students with selecting courses, developing an education plan, and registering for classes. During the 2005-2006 academic year, 1,687 students attended an in-person orientation (due to a temporary transition in staffing, 2006-2007 data is unavailable).

A third orientation option is an English as a second language (ESL) orientation for second language learners. These orientations are combined with the ESL placement testing so that the enrollment process can be as seamless as possible for ESL students. ESL faculty also attend these sessions to help with scoring the writing portion of the test and in advising students on appropriate classes to take. During the 2006-2007 academic year, 440 students participated in the ESL testing/orientation sessions.

Another component of the orientation program is Welcome Day. This is a one-day event that is held a week before classes begin in the Fall. Students have to register for

Welcome Day since it's a ½ unit class. The day is designed as a more interactive orientation to Ohlone. It's a way for new students to meet other new students and to become better connected with the Ohlone campus and community. Throughout the day, students participate in workshops, panel discussions, a barbeque lunch, and a scavenger hunt of campus. The number of participants in Welcome Day continues to increase each year. In Fall 2004, there were 105 participants. In 2005, there were 177, and in 2006, the enrollment was 206. In Fall 2005 and Fall 2006, the course generated 2.49 FTES and 2.9 FTES respectively. The WSCH/FTEF ratio in 2005 was 2392 and in 2006 was 1392. This data shows that the apportionment generated by Welcome Day easily covers the costs for teaching it. If additional funding could be given to help grow this class, even more apportionment could be earned.

One final part of the orientation program is a Parent Orientation. Parent Orientations are held each semester so that parents of prospective students can learn more about the campus and have their questions answered. The orientation that is held in the Fall semester is usually not well attended, however the one in Spring usually brings 40-50 parents. At the Spring 2007 orientation, there were parents of students ranging in age from 7th grade through seniors in high school. Because the Fall orientation is not well-attended, it has been discussed that the Fall orientation could be eliminated, however another Parent Orientation would then be offered in August in conjunction with Welcome Day.

Not only are orientations beneficial to the students and parents who participate in them, they also have a positive impact on other students and the college community. Part of the role of the Student Ambassadors is to help at orientations with the presentation, familiarizing students with WebAdvisor, and advising them on classes. This experience helps Ambassadors develop their leadership and communication skills. Additionally, orientations help to alleviate the student services in building one during peak times by answering students' initial questions regarding course selection and registration.

RELATIONSHIP TO OHLONE COLLEGE MISSION AND GOALS

Orientations support the following Ohlone College goals:

- Technology is utilized to improve access to the orientations. Students who are enrolled in distance education courses are now able to learn about the college and its support services via the online orientation. They also receive counseling from Ohlone's electronic counselor to ensure they are enrolling in the appropriate courses. Students at in-person orientations are introduced to the benefits of WebAdvisor. Students also have access to computers so that they can research course, program, and transfer requirements.
- Orientation staff help increase the number of full-time students by educating students about learning communities and encouraging students to enroll in them.

Orientations also support the Student Services curriculum:

Purpose: At orientations, students meet with counselors to complete a Student Educational Plan. They begin to see how Ohlone will help them fulfill their academic and career goals. Counselors also assist undecided students in selecting classes that will help them discover their purpose for attending college and a possible major.

Leadership: Orientations provide Student Ambassadors with leadership experiences. It is their role to ensure the computers are set-up and materials are prepared. They also greet the students, conduct part of the presentation, and answer students' questions. Participating in orientations helps Ambassadors develop their organization and communication skills.

Responsibility: At orientations, students learn what it means to be a responsible college student. They are taught about college expectations, the importance of seeing a counselor, and the skills necessary for being successful in college. After they have these tools for success, it is up to the students to take responsibility for their own learning and college experience.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

To develop the student learning outcomes (SLOs) for orientation, the program review team listed the most important aspects of orientations. We asked ourselves, "What are the key components to an orientation?" and "What do we want to make sure students leave orientations knowing?" After we answered these questions, we were able to group some of the outcomes together under a common theme. Below are the final three learning outcomes that were created:

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of effective decision making and its impact on college success.
2. Students will have a clear understanding of what Student Services are available to them, including hours of operation and locations.
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to create an initial Student Education Plan in order for them to register for the upcoming semester.

In order to assess these outcomes, two assessment measures will be used:

Survey: A survey will be given to a random sampling of orientation participants, asking about the usefulness of the orientation. (measures SLOs 1 and 2)

Tracking: A tracking system was created to determine how many students at each orientation complete a Student Education Plan. (measures SLO 3)

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT SUCCESS

To assess how well students reached the student learning outcomes, a survey was developed. Part of the survey was administered to students before the orientation to assess their current knowledge. Students then completed the remainder of the survey after the orientation to assess how much they learned. Because the survey was developed close to the end of the Spring orientation season, only a small number of students completed the survey. In future semesters, more students should receive the survey.

Students were asked to rate themselves on each of the following questions, with 1 being low and 5 being high.

Before orientation:

	1) How informed do you feel about Ohlone's student services?						
	1	2	3	4	5		
<i>total</i>	8	4	11	1	2		26

	2) Do you know what classes you should be taking this semester?			
	yes	no	maybe	
<i>total</i>	9	7	10	26

	3) How would you rate your comfort level with using Webadvisor?						
	1	2	3	4	5	Never heard of WebAdvisor	
<i>total</i>	1	2	5	7	1	10	26

After orientation:

	1) How informed do you feel about Ohlone's student services?					
	1	2	3	4	5	
<i>total</i>			2	16	8	26

	2) Do you know what classes you should be taking this semester?		
	yes	no	
<i>total</i>	25	1	26

	3) Are you aware of what behaviors in college are acceptable/unacceptable? (1 score missing)		
	yes	no	
<i>total</i>	25		25

	4) How would you rate your comfort level with using Webadvisor?					
	1	2	3	4	5	
<i>total</i>			3	11	12	26

	5) How helpful were the counselors in helping you select your classes? (2 score missing)					
	1	2	3	4	5	
<i>total</i>			3	4	17	24

	6) Did you register for your classes? (1 survey wrote "some"-not included and 1 score missing)		
	yes	no	
<i>total</i>	13	11	24

7) Overall, would say the orientation was helpful?

	yes	no
<i>total</i>	26	

26

The survey indicates that after the orientation, students felt more informed about Ohlone's student services, what classes to take, and how to use WebAdvisor. Students also felt that they were aware of what behaviors in college are acceptable and unacceptable. One troubling piece of data is that only a little over half of the students registered for classes at the orientation. The most common reasons students cited for not registering for classes was that their placement scores weren't uploaded yet and because their applications weren't complete. Of the students without the placement scores, the majority of them had come to orientation directly from the testing session, so their scores were not yet in Datatel. Of the students without a complete application, many applied a couple semesters ago and didn't take classes. They were unaware that they needed to complete a new application for the current semester. This seems to be a recurring issue at orientations and is something that should be addressed by Admissions and Records.

In addition to this survey, a tracking system was created to determine whether or not students completed a Student Educational Plan (SEP) at orientation. As students arrive to the orientation, they sign in. Once their SEP is signed by a counselor, a Student Ambassador or a counselor puts a check mark next to the student's name on the sign-in sheet. Unfortunately, this is not a very effective tracking system. Sometimes students leave without "signing out," even though they had a completed SEP. Additionally, sometimes an Ambassador is not present at the orientation and the counselors are too busy to check people off. Therefore, a better tracking system is needed. Using the current system, for the Spring 2007 semester, approximately 80% of students complete an SEP at the orientations.

For future semesters, other areas that would be useful to research are how many students who attended orientation visited various student services and how many students made an appointment with a counselor during the following semester. It would also be helpful to survey students a semester or two after completing an orientation to have them reflect on the usefulness of the program. All of this data would indicate whether or not students actually applied the information learned during orientation.

Two groups of students who were not surveyed are ESL students and online orientation students. A survey should be administered to them in order to assess the effectiveness of those two types of orientations.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAM

Overall, it appears that orientations have a positive impact on students' transition to college. They gain a better understanding of the Ohlone campus, its programs and services, and the registration process. Students also feel that the one-on-one interaction with counselors is very beneficial. Students leave orientations with a clear academic plan for their first semester and many leave already enrolled in classes.

One area that needs to be worked on is determining how many new students do not attend an orientation and how we can get them to attend one. Approximately 2,650 students are oriented each year. How does this compare with the number of new students enrolling at the college?

Another area that could use improving is making the orientation more interactive so that students have the opportunity to meet other new students. Although approximately 200 students attended Welcome Day in 2006, it would be great to have more students benefit from a more social orientation program. If some of the approximately \$12,000 in apportionment that was generated by Welcome Day was given back to the program, more students could attend and benefit from it.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

The following were goals for the orientation program during the previous program review cycle in 2002-2003:

- Create an online orientation
- Create an orientation CD
- Power point for orientation presentations
- Create an orientation video
- Train Student Ambassadors to play a more active role in orientations
- Develop a replacement for orientation folders
- Coordination of ESL orientations

Of these goals, the only two that have not yet been met are creating an orientation cd and replacing orientation folders. The need for these two goals should be reevaluated.

One major goal for the orientation program is to have it more closely linked with the placement testing. Too many students take the placement tests but then do not attend an orientation or enroll. If testing and orientations could be more of a seamless process, fewer students would fall through the cracks.

Currently, there is no budget earmarked specifically for orientation. The majority of it is lumped under matriculation. If there was money set aside for orientations, additional first-year programs could be developed such as a convocation, special events for first-year students, and expanding Welcome Day.