of a college campus. One cannot fully assist students in their development without a concerted effort to help them understand and meet the expectations and demands of an undergraduate education. Without the needed support, students may find themselves on the "treadmill" with little hope of reaching the "staircase" to upward mobility.

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Orientation Programs: A Synopsis of Their Significance

Heather L. Hadlock

In order to make adjustments that will help better meet the needs of new students, orientation directors must constantly evaluate their programs. The decisions that are made should be individualized to each individual college or university and the type of students it enrolls. Student populations are changing, and orientation staffs need to be aware of these changes and adjust their programs accordingly. This article explores the history, trends, purpose, participants, and goals of orientation programs.

Leaving for college brings about many anxieties for students and their families. Orientation programs provide opportunities for students to become acquainted with and adjusted to the campus, to meet faculty and staff, and to interact with other new and returning students. Orientation seems to make the college transition a bit easier for everyone involved.

There are many aspects of orientation. In order to provide these opportunities in a successful way, the orientation program must be well thought out and planned. There are several things to consider when planning and organizing orientation including when to conduct orientation, how to fund orientation, who to recruit to help (faculty, staff, administration, upper classmen, etc.), and what programmatic aspects to include.

History and Trends

Orientation programs date back to the beginning of higher education. Harvard was the first to implement a system in which experienced students assisted new students in their transition to the institution (Strumpf & Sharer, 1993). As late as three decades ago, orientation often reflected the racist and sexist assumptions of the times. There were generally separate orientation sessions for men and women and very little for the few minority students. Orientation programs were almost completely social with little academic content. In the past, according to Gardner and Hansen (1993), college officials would sometimes tell students to "look to the left and look to the right and the two students you just looked at will not be there four years later when you graduate" (p.185). They tried to "weed-out" the students who wouldn't succeed instead of helping them achieve their goals. Fortunately, orientation programs no longer make negative predictions about the impending failure of students; rather, they are used as a tool to promote successful student learning. Orientation is now a highly sophisticated component of enrollment management which links admissions to orientation and advising to registration and matriculation to actually starting and continuing the first year of college (Gardner & Hansen, 1993).

Heather L. Hadlock is a Graduate Student in Higher Education at the University of North Texas. Hadlock@flash.net

During the 19th century, Harvard began to see a need for more personalized attention for its students and assigned responsibilities to faculty outside the classroom, such as the orientation of new students to the academic community. The population of students attending college began to change following World War II due to the President's Commission on Higher Education and to several legislative acts that made higher education available to some who never had the opportunity. With this, college enrollments began to soar and the individual attention that students had been receiving from faculty began to decrease.

Colleges continue to report tremendous growth in the number of women, ethnic minorities, and adult students attending, and orientation programs simply must address their diverse needs. Current orientation programs are responding to the changes in the population of higher education students, and have evolved from individualized faculty attention to programs that focus on a variety of important issues. At the same time, they are expected to meet the needs of this increasingly diverse student population (Jacobs, 1993).

According to Strumpf and Sharer (1993), there are major trends that have occurred in orientation. They report that a majority of institutions of higher education now include academic advising as a part of orientation. Ninety-nine percent of all freshmen in 1992 received academic advising during orientation, representing an eight percent increase from 1982. More students are attending orientation because of the intentional focus by campuses on the academic community. The number of freshmen attending orientation rose from 70% in 1980 to 84% in 1992. Orientation programs will need to continue to evolve and prepare for the diverse populations that await higher education in the future.

Purpose

One purpose of orientation is to acclimate the students to the university, including its facilities, services, administration, faculty, and staff. Orientation is often the first time students get a complete picture of the university and it therefore plays a pivotal role in student success. An orientation program helps new students begin to develop a value system about what is important to the campus (Nadler, Miller, & Casbere, 1998). The activities of orientation involve a series of experiences that allows individuals to understand the characteristics of their new setting. Orientation helps them understand what will be expected of them through providing an expression of campus life and a focus to clarify the campus image (Mullendore, 1998). Orientation provides the smooth transition that students need by integrating them into campus life and providing opportunities to meet other students, faculty, and staff in a relaxed setting (Smith, 1998).

Orientation programs increasingly are regarded as effective retention strategies (Mann, 1998). They often provide an opportunity for institutions to assess, at a very early date, the needs and concerns of students, and to help students understand the culture of the institution. When colleges better understand the needs of students and make efforts to meet those needs, the students are more likely to remain at that institution (Smith, 1998). Retention strategies are designed to establish bonds among individual students and

between students and faculty and staff. Therefore, in developing a successful retention-based orientation program, it is imperative that a campus create multiple opportunities for new students to interact with faculty and with continuing students (Mullendore, 1998).

Participants

Ideally, the president, the chief academic officer, and the chief student affairs officer will initially set the tone of the campus community. Furthermore, developing an effective orientation program requires positive support and involvement from the entire campus including students, senior administrators, faculty, student affairs staff, educational support programmers, support staff, and service personnel (Smith & Brackin, 1993). The orientation director should be the one to communicate with and involve the institution in the implementation of programs (Mullendore, 1998). They also must have a strong foundation in communication, programming, leadership, and administration (Rentz and Associates, 1996). In addition, Cawthon & Ward-Roof (1999) found in their study that orientation professionals believed the following skills were necessary in order for orientation directors to be effective: organizational skills, communication skills, human relations skills, flexibility, creativity, vision, administrative knowledge, a desire to work with students, humor, endurance, patience, motivation, problem solving skills, and the knowledge and application of student development theory.

A majority of the orientation programs today divide new students into small groups or "families" that allow for more personal attention. Upper classmen are strong leaders for these "family groups" because new students tend to value their opinions. For these student leaders to be effective, however, ample training should be provided in the areas of leading group discussions, advising, and policy enforcement (Mann, 1998). The more opportunities provided for new student interaction with faculty, staff, and the existing student body, the more comfortable they generally will feel.

Goals and Planning

The goals of an orientation program as stated by Perigo and Upcraft (1989) include assisting new students to succeed academically, helping new students adjust to college, assisting parents and family members in understanding the adjustments new students face, and assisting the institution in learning about its new students. The director should develop a program that complies with national standards, balances academic and social components, and provides opportunities for informal interaction between and among students and faculty (Mullendore, 1998). In order to meet these goals, there are key issues that should be addressed. First, the primary emphasis should be to assist students with adjustment to the academic environment. Secondly, orientation should assist with personal adjustment to the social environment. Thirdly, orientation should provide parents and family members with educational information and services to increase awareness of possible changes the student may experience. Finally, orientation should provide the institution with a better understanding of its entering students (Smith &

Brackin, 1993).

The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) (1986) lists eighteen goals that will help institutions to successfully incorporate these four aspects. They are as follows:

* assist students in understanding the purpose of higher education;
* assist students in understanding the mission of the specific institution;
* assist student in determining their purpose in attending the institution and developing a positive relationship with faculty, staff, peers, and other individuals in the community;
* help students understand the institution's expectations of them;
* provide information about the opportunities for self assessment;
* identify costs in attending the institution, both in terms of dollars and personal commitment;
* improve the retention rate of new students;
* provide an atmosphere and sufficient information to enable students to make reasoned and well-informed choices;
* provide information concerning academic policies, procedures, requirements, and programs;
* promote an awareness of non-classroom opportunities;
* provide referrals to qualified counseling and advising;
* explain the process for class scheduling and registration and provide trained supportive assistance to accomplish these tasks;
* develop familiarity with the physical surroundings;
* provide information and exposure to available school services;
* help students identify and evaluate housing and commuting options;
* create an atmosphere that minimizes anxiety, promotes positive attitudes, and stimulates an excitement for learning;
* provide appropriate information on personal safety and security; and
* provide opportunities for new students to discuss expectations and perceptions of the campus with continuing students. (p. 97)

In planning a specific orientation program, Smith and Brackin (1993) suggest that one should first determine the appropriate structure of the program based on such variables as the characteristics of the student body, size and location of the campus, availability of facilities, administrative and faculty concerns, and finances. Secondly, program content needs to be determined. There are six broad categories included in most orientation programs: academic information, general information, logistical concerns, social/interpersonal development, testing/assessments, and transitional programming (Smith & Brackin, 1993).

Strumpf and Sharer (1996) found that the top three program activities most frequently addressed in orientation programs are campus activities/clubs/events, get-acquainted exercises, and academic structure/ requirements/grading. These three areas each encompass many different aspects of college life that will help to integrate students into the university both academically and socially.

Evaluation and Assessment

For program assessment and evaluation, it is beneficial to use standards that enable the comparability of data and recognize unique features of the program. It is important to know if the program and activities meet the needs of students and if students are satisfied with them. Programs that students do not consider beneficial are not effective (Mullendore & Biller, 1998).

The Council for the Advancement of Standards for Student Services/Development Programs (1986) provides nationally endorsed criteria to assist institutions in developing and assessing effective orientation programs. Their focus is on self-assessment, evaluation, and short and long term planning of programs (Smith, 1998).

There are several questions frequently asked during the evaluation and assessment process. What and whom should be evaluated? Who should evaluate? What evaluation methods should be used? When and how should evaluations occur?

Every aspect of orientation should be evaluated including quality of interaction with the academic advisor, the program length, the quality of activities, and, most importantly, the orientation staff. Both participants and those involved in the program should be provided an opportunity to evaluate the program. While there are many different ways to conduct the evaluation, one of the most frequently used is a written evaluation using a computer-scored Likert scale with space provided for open-ended comments. The main benefit of this type of evaluation is the immediate feedback one can receive. The most ideal time for evaluation to occur is immediately after completion of the program when everything is fresh on the mind of the evaluators (Mullendore & Biller, 1998).

Conclusion

Orientation is extremely important to the success of students. It provides opportunities for new students to make friends, while introducing them to the academic aspects of the institution. Literature indicates that it is important to provide many opportunities for student and faculty/staff interaction. Opportunities that allow students to interact with faculty and staff allow them to feel connected to the university.

Orientation contributes to the "student-institution fit" because it allows the student to become familiar with the university and to meet other students before they begin classes. Orientation can be an asset to the retention of students only if the programs meet the personal needs of the students, allowing them to connect with the university.

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The Influence of Student Development Services in Articulation Agreements

Emily M. Lehning

Articulation agreements are effective tools in providing a seamless transition for students pursuing a degree at institutions of higher learning. It is essential for those involved in developing these functions to identify the developmental needs of the ever-changing population of transfer students. This article reviews the need for responsive partnerships between institutions to assist students in meeting their developmental and educational goals. The article addresses the importance of humanizing the transfer process with the inclusion of student service functions in articulation agreements. A model for practice is described and suggestions for effective student-centered articulation agreements will be offered.

To understand articulation and transfer between two-year and four-year institutions of higher learning, one needs to look no further than an elementary textbook on biology. In the natural environment, organisms of a dissimilar nature can join together in a cooperative relationship to serve one another. This relationship is characterized by the fact that each organism helps the other without compromising his or her own well-being. This phenomenon is classified as a symbiotic relationship that is based on mutualism or the mutually-beneficial partnership between two organisms.

Similarly, in higher education, community or technical colleges and four-year colleges and universities can form symbiotic relationships. This cooperative relationship is facilitated by articulation agreements and provides benefits for both institutions involved. These benefits include helping the community college to accomplish one of its many missions - the transfer of students to higher levels of education. The university receives assistance in combating declining enrollment and persistence among students. One characteristic of our hybrid example of symbiosis that causes it to vary from the natural, biological example is the introduction of a third party to the partnership - the student. Transfer students with their diverse interests, backgrounds, and academic goals receive benefits from the cooperative relationship fostered by articulation agreements to aid in the transfer process.

Articulation agreements are effective tools in providing a seamless education for students pursing a degree at institutions of higher learning. Articulation agreements are policies, procedures, and standards established between community colleges and universities that provide for the transition of students between the institutions (Mahon, 1994). According to Barry and Barry (1992), the agreements may take on one of three forms: formal and legal policies, state systems, and voluntary agreements. Regardless of the form of the agreement, each features the principles of collaboration, coordination,

Emily M. Lehning is a Graduate Student in Counseling and Educational Psychology at Kansas State University. Lehning@hotmail.com