2008
New Student Orientation
Survey Report

Prepared by
Leticia Bazan, Director
Office of Student Recruitment and New Student Programs
November 2008
ORIENTATION SURVEY REPORT

1. Introduction

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi holds New Student Orientation for newly admitted students prior to the beginning of each academic semester. Students admitted to each fall semester attend a two-day orientation session during the months of June, July and August. Admitted students are required to attend an orientation session prior to the enrolling for courses at the University. New Student Orientation is an important transition mechanism for students. During orientation multiple departments facilitate specific programs related to academic, social and university transition. The two-day program consists of both optional and required activities.

A manual survey was conducted at the conclusion of each orientation session. The 2008 survey was designed to be general in nature with both quantitative and qualitative questions. This report will supply a summary of findings in the executive summary and conclude with recommendations.

2. Executive Summary

Of the 3,808 students admitted to Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi for the fall 2008 semester, 1,344 attended a New Student Orientation session. Of the 1,344 students that attended New Student Orientation 58 did not matriculate by the University’s census date of September 16, 2008.

Notification to students about completing New Student Orientation was corresponded through their initial acceptance letter, letter from the Office of New Student Programs, email and follow-up phone calls. After a student had selected an orientation date additional correspondence is continued through arrival for the session.

Students had the option of selecting one of the following dates for the 2008 fall academic term:

- June 19, 2008 – June 20, 2008
- August 14, 2008 – August 15, 2008
- August 19, 2008 – August 20, 2008

The attendance at the conclusion of all orientation sessions was 1,344 students which provided a 1% increase over the 2007 orientation attendance number of 1,063 students.
In general, the majority of students found New Student Orientation to be useful to extremely useful.

Of the required sessions needed to be attended by students a favorable session is considered when survey results for an “Excellent” rating where 50% or higher. From reviewing the survey results “Advising and Registration” received the highest favorable rating at 69%. While of the required sessions “Financial Assistance” was the only session below the 50% mark with a rating of 44%.

It was found that when optional activities were rated the quantity of non-applicable responses was at a high proportion. In particular instances, such as Question 3: Rate the Housing Presentation and Tours; 53% of respondents rated this session by selecting non-applicable. This percentage was two times higher than the next rating of “Excellent.”

From analysis of the open-ended questions, it is obvious that students rated social oriented sessions as their “most enjoyed” part of orientation at 24%, while academic sessions rated just as high at 21%. (Additional information regarding “Most Enjoyed” will follow in the analysis of QL4.) Additionally, students rated Academic Presentations at 23 % as the issues the “enjoyed least” at orientation. (Additional information regarding “Most Least” will follow in the analysis of QL5.)

Changes:

A number of recommendations to enhance the orientation experience for students was recommended, and can be found at the conclusion of this report.

3. Methodology

The survey was supplied to students as part of their orientation packet. Students were asked to complete the survey at the conclusion of the day and return at the designated check-put location. Students completing the survey would receive an official orientation t-shirt upon submission.

Information supplied by students was anonymous. No personal information was requested, but generic IDs were assigned when implemented into the survey system. The Office of New Student Programs use Survey Monkey to create and analyze the results from each orientation session.

The survey asked students to rate sessions on a scale from “poor” to “excellent” with the option to select non-applicable. Open-ended questions were also asked to allow for personal comments.

Note: Rating scale included Poor, Fair, Average, Excellent and Non-applicable
4. Quantitative Analysis

For this survey there were 25 questions asked and 6 open-ended questions. This section will analyze questions 5-9, 11-15, and 17-23. A brief summary will follow for questions 2-4 pertaining to optional sessions.

**Question 5: Orientation Welcome**

Of the 1055 respondents:
- 59% rated this session as “Excellent”
- 30% rated this session as “Average”

**Question 6: Academic Basics and Expectations**

Presentation conducted by Dr. Patricia Hill, Director of the Academic Advising Transition Center. Presentation included information regarding advising and registration, academic rules and regulations, academic calendar information and helpful tips for transitioning to the University.

Of the 1051 respondents:
- 56% rated this session as “Excellent”
- 40% rated this session as “Average”

Combined “excellent” and average rating equal 96%, only 4% rated is session poor or fair, while 1% selected non-applicable.
Question 7: Orientation Leader Meeting

One of three sessions lead by the Orientation Leaders, this session provided opportunities for networking with fellow students.

Of the 1051 respondents:
- 60% rated this session as “Excellent”
- 35% rated this session as “Average”
Question 8: Passport to the Island

Of the 1056 respondents:
- 57% rated this session as “Excellent”
- 33% rated this session as “Average”

Note: Follow up questions regarding length of time and what students did not find will be analyzed in the qualitative portion of the report.

Question 9: University Services Presentation

Of the 1046 respondents:
- 57% rated this session as “Excellent”
- 36% rated this session as “Average”
Question 11: Islander Spirit 101

Second Orientation Leader Meeting; activities to build school spirit, demonstrate and teach university fight song, traditions

Of the 1036 respondents:
- 50% rated this session as “Excellent”
- 35% rated this session as “Average”

Question 12: Safe Living

Session conducted by Division of Student Affairs. Presentation topics include University Code of Conduct, Safety on Campus, Health Services and Hurricane Preparedness.

Of the 1039 respondents:
- 57% rated this session as “Excellent”
- 34% rated this session as “Average”
Question 13: Student Activities/Affairs

Introduction to student organizations and methods of involvement; information for being successful outside of the classroom

Of the 1036 respondents:
- 56% rated this session as “Excellent”
- 38% rated this session as “Average”

Question 14: Academic Introductions (Meet the Deans)

Session conducted by the Academic Dean or College Representative. This presentation provides the students with a welcome to their academic college. Students are encouraged to attend the session linked to the major selected as part of admission to the University. Undeclared students are encouraged to attend the session closest to their interest or attend the undeclared session for more information.

Of the 1037 respondents:
- 58% rated this session as “Excellent”
- 36% rated this session as “Average”
Question 14: Academic Introductions (Meet the Deans) - Continued

![Bar Chart]

Question 15: Navigation through Registration

This session is conducted by the Academic Advisors from the five University Academic Colleges. Students begin selecting courses and preparing schedules for registration.

Q15A: Respondents by College

![Pie Chart]

- College of Business: 31%
- College of Education: 17%
- College of Liberal Arts: 14%
- College of Nursing and Health Sciences: 19%
- College of Science and Technology: 18%
- Undecided: 1%
Q15B: Rate Navigation through Registration

Of the 807 respondents:
- 62% rated this session as “Excellent”
- 32% rated this session as “Average”

Question 17: Financial Management

Session conducted by Office of Financial Assistance to discuss processes for future semesters and how current distributions of funds occur.

Of the 1031 respondents:
- 44% rated this session as “Excellent”
- 39% rated this session as “Average”
Questions 18 through Question 23 are all part of the Registration Advising Rotation. All six parts of this rotation are 40 minutes long. While all sections are required it is noted that participation drops in some of the last sessions leading up to the conclusion of orientation. The advising and registration component of the rotation is required for all students to attend. Failure to attend this portion will result in an orientation hold on a student’s file.

Advising and Registration is one-on-one advising with a faculty member or professional academic advisor. Students are matched when possible based on major.

Advising and Registration is the highest session at New Student Orientation with a 69% “Excellent” rating.

**Question 18: Advising and Registration**

Of the 952 respondents:
- 69% rated this session as “Excellent”
- 20% rated this session as “Average”

![Rating Chart]

**Question 19: Islander Email/SAIL Tutorial**

This tutorial was an important component of the rotation as it introduced the new required student email system as well as training of the online student information system needed for online registration and personal student information.
Of the 994 respondents:
- 56% rated this session as “Excellent”
- 28% rated this session as “Average”

**Question 20: Orientation Leader Session**

Final orientation leader session; topics include registration and involvement

Of the 1005 respondents:
- 60% rated this session as “Excellent”
- 31% rated this session as “Average”
Question 21: College Student Inventory

The College Student Inventory is given at orientation to assist the Tutoring and Learning Center and Academic Advising Transition Center identify at-risk students in need of additional assistance. This survey is conducted with the cooperation of computer services. Student self identify issues that they feel they are most at-risk. Results are communicated to the TLC and AATC for further communication and intervention.

Of the 1000 respondents:
- 55% rated this session as “Excellent”
- 35 % rated this session as “Average”

![Bar Chart]

Question 22: Orientation Leader Panel

Panel to answer final questions and give first hand advice about being and A&M-Corpus Christi student.

Of the 1024 respondents:
- 59% rated this session as “Excellent”
- 31 % rated this session as “Average”
Question 23: Payment Tutorial

This session began in June as a required component of the advising and registration rotation, but due to system upgrades the sessions in July and August became optional. The system was unavailable to demonstrate payment capabilities in July and August and students were informed through email how payments could be made. Student who attended this session where provided with information for future reference from the University Bursar.

Of the 661 respondents:
- 44% rated this session as “Excellent”
- 28% rated this session as “Average”
**Brief Summary – Questions 2 through 4: Optional Sessions**

**Question 2: Campus Tours** – Campus tours were conducted by the Orientation Leaders prior to orientation beginning.

Of the 1028 respondents:

- Poor: 1%
- Fair: 2%
- Average: 18%
- Excellent: 39%
- N/A: 41%

**Question 3: Housing Presentation and Tours** – optional sessions; majority of orientation attendees selected “Not Applicable” when answering the survey

Of the 1053 respondents:

- Poor: 1%
- Fair: 2%
- Average: 15%
- Excellent: 27%
- N/A: 55%
Question 4: Financial Assistance Loan Session

Student receiving loans as part of their financial assistance package are required to attend a FA Loan Session in order for funds to be dispersed, however attendance is optional at orientation because students can attend any session offered by the Office of Financial Assistance throughout the summer.

Of the 1052 respondents:
5. Qualitative Analysis

QL 1: What were you looking for and didn’t find at Passport to the Island?

Question 1 asked students “What were you looking for and didn’t find at Passport to the Island?” There were 923 responses to this question.

The responses were broken down into three separate categories:
- a. Found what I needed
- b. Did not find Organization Specific to my interest
- c. Needed more information in general

Overwhelmingly most students found Passport to the Island to meet their needs based on the results of the survey.

QL2: Do you feel orientation was a valuable experience? Why or why not?

Of the 1009 respondents:

- 84% of respondents stated orientation as a valuable experience
- 12% of respondents stated orientation was not a valuable experience
- 4% of respondents stated orientation was somewhat of a valuable experience
QL3: Was the length of orientation suitable?
QL4: Please tell us what you enjoyed the most?

**Question 4** asked students “Please tell us what you enjoyed the most from orientation?” There were 897 responses to this question.

The responses were broken down into nine separate categories:
- Meeting new students (16%)
- Meeting Faculty/Staff/Students (1%)
- Tours (6%)
- Meals (13%)
- Attending Academic Sessions (21%)
- Attending Social Activity Sessions (24%)
- General Comments (15%)
- Neutral (3%)
- Negative (1%)

QL5: Please tell us what you enjoyed the least?

**Question 5** asked students “Please tell us what you enjoyed the least from orientation?” There were 1114 responses to this question.

The responses were broken down into ten separate categories:
- Academic Presentations (23%)
- Social Presentations (5%)
- Lack of Interaction (3%)
- Faculty/Staff/Student Attitudes (1%)
- Length of Session (17%)
- Registration Issues (2%)
- Financial Issues (1%)
h. General Comments (19%)
i. Neutral (9%)
j. Positive (20%)

From the responses 23% of students indicated that the Academic Presentations are what they enjoyed the least, however in looking at the quantitative survey results the majority of the academic presentations where rated above the 50% “Excellent” mark. This shows that although the sessions perhaps were informative, there are reasons they also did not enjoy these presentations. A recommendation for the future will be to add additional questions related to the presentations and their effectiveness.

**QL6: What changes can we make in the future to make orientation better?**

**Question 6** asked students “What changes can we make in the future to make orientation better?” There were 890 responses to this question.

The responses were broken down into seven separate categories:

a. No improvements needed (30%)
b. More social activities (9%)
c. More interaction (7%)
d. More free time (5%)
e. Shorten Length of Program (3%)
f. Miscellaneous (24%)
g. Neutral (16%)
6. Recommendations

1. Conduct individual surveys at the conclusion on vital academic and social presentations to determine effectiveness.
2. Conduct a follow up survey after orientation through online method or standard mail-in to allow for more comprehensive questions related to programming and structure. Create survey questions to determine whether or not Orientation program is effective to students.
3. Evaluation programs and activities to determine if CAS standards are being meet.
4. Create more opportunities for personal interaction between students and faculty/staff and fellow students.
5. Evaluate Financial Assistance presentation and information to determine how to improve ratings for future.
6. Evaluate length of program day and session to determine if time allotment is appropriate.