

Orientation Assessments

During the 2008-2009 academic year, we undertook a number of assessment projects ranging from participating in a national benchmarking survey to program satisfaction surveys to statistical reports. Leading up to each semester, we look at the students that have attended an orientation program and not registered for classes. Beginning for Fall 2008, we ran this report in August and contacted all of the students by phone who fell into this category. Our intent with this outreach was to ascertain why the students had attended orientation but not registered for classes in a timely manner and to enable them to register for classes if they still wished. For Fall 2008, we found that the reasons students had not registered varied greatly and that with the majority of them still needed to meet with an academic advisor. Based on the results of this assessment project, we were able to determine that orientation was meeting the needs of students; however, we need to emphasize more clearly the importance and methods for contacting an academic advisor. For Fall 2009, when we completed the same outreach and had fewer students who related that they were needing academic advising as their reason for not completing their registration.

We conduct an Outdoor Orientation program for entering First-Year students in the fall. This program underwent a change for Fall 2009 based on information we gathered from participants in this program for 2008. We altered the schedule and expectation of this program to include an overnight camping trip component based on the feedback from participants. The results of this addition for 2009 were positive and we anticipate continuing this component for 2010.

We offer two Outdoor Orientation programs for students entering in Fall 2009. One of the questions on the satisfaction survey that students completed at the conclusion of their program was to rate on a scale of one to five what type of activity they would like to participate in during an evening of the program. During the first program, we took the participants to a local minor league baseball game. In their feedback of this event, it ranked as the least desirable activity they could select. After reviewing these results, we changed the evening activity for the second program and spent the time bowling, playing pool and engaging in activities in the Student Union.

National Student Exchange:

The National Student Exchange program provides the opportunity for University of Utah students to exchange to one of 200 institutions in the United States, its territories and Canada. Students apply for this program and work with a coordinator in the office of Orientation and Leadership Development to place them on exchange. Not all students who are placed for an exchange complete the exchange. Some decide to withdraw placement for a variety of different reasons including personal, academic and financial. The completion rate for exchange is calculated by dividing the number of students who complete an exchange, by the number of students who were placed on exchange for a given academic year. It is the goal of the University of Utah National Student Exchange program to increase the completion rate each year.

In 2007-2008, the University of Utah's outgoing completion rate was 76%, above the national rate of 72%, while the incoming completion was below the national average at 50%. The low completion rate forced our staff to review the policies and procedures regarding exchange to identify potential barriers for students wanting to exchange. Based on this review, efforts were made to assist incoming students by sending earlier communications from the University, and helping students attain earlier registration dates and earlier access to housing applications. The results of these efforts produced an incoming student completion rate of 86% for the 2008-2009 academic year, which is a 36% increase from the previous year.