

New Student Orientation Annual Report

June 2009 – May 2010

1. Programs: Changes in scope of activities, volume of activities, and special achievements of significance, special program reviews, studies, or plans

- a) **First-year and Transfer Orientation Programs:** New Student Orientation (NSO) coordinated twenty-two Orientation programs for incoming students during the 2009-2010 year – seventeen two-day programs for first-year students, two one-day programs for transfer students, and three one-day programs that included both first-year and transfer students. The overall attendance numbers remained very similar to 2008-2009, with the numbers going down slightly for first-year students (-95), and increasing slightly for transfer students (+118). See the table below for information regarding attendance numbers for the orientation programs.

Year	First-year Students			FY Total	Transfer Students			TR Total	Overall Total
	Summer	Dec.	Jan.		Summer	Dec.	Jan.		
2008	4752	22	23	4797	879	102	133	1114	5911
2009	4667	16	19	4702	990	89	153	1232	5934
	-85	-6	-4	-95	+111	-13	+20	+118	+23

- b) **New First-year Student Orientation Model:** After much review over the past two years, a new Orientation model was adopted for Summer 2009. As a result of increased attendance numbers over the past six years, the need for improved methods of delivering messages to incoming students, and the desire to improve the overall orientation experience, New Student Orientation moved to an overlapping model consisting of 17 sessions. The change model also provided an opportunity for new and revised messages during Orientation, including a joint session with students and their parents which was not possible in the previous model.

The process of creating and approving the new model involved a wide range of campus partners, including the Associate Deans Council, Student Affairs leadership team, the New Student Orientation Advisory Committee, and the New Student Orientation Steering Team.

- c) **New Transfer/One-day Orientation Model:** New Student Orientation restructured the one-day Orientation programs that include Transfer Orientation, Late/August Orientation, and our Spring Entry Orientation programs. After reviewing research on transfer student needs and feedback from students, the NSO staff created a new program which incorporates more faculty involvement and academic content while providing participants with more options for break-out sessions. The new model also provides a more streamlined and cohesive feel by combining multiple offices into theme-based presentations, reducing the number of presenters to which students will be exposed to during their orientation experience. The new model will be implemented beginning with the Summer 2010 Transfer Orientation program.
- d) **Handbook for Incoming Students:** The Office of New Student Orientation created, edited, and paid for the Handbook for Incoming Students. The Handbook provides students with a single, hard-copy source for important transition-related information. The *Handbook* was created in the format of a student planner to provide all students with a planner while also increasing the likelihood that students will keep the publication through their first year at NC State. The Handbook will be distributed during the Summer 2010 Orientation programs.

- e) **NC State University Open House Assistance:** On Saturday, October 17 staff members (including both professional and student staff members) from New Student Orientation assisted participants of the University Open House by welcoming students and family members as they arrived at the Open House. Over a five-hour period, NSO staff members assisted hundreds of students and family members, providing information on the schedule, activities, and offices present at the Open House.
- f) **Partnerships:** Again in 2010, New Student Orientation is partnering with the Student Wolfpack Club and the Students Today Alumni Tomorrow (STAT). The Student Wolfpack Club became a sponsor of the New Student Orientation program during the past two years and has agreed to serve as a sponsor again in the summer of 2010.

STAT has again agreed to partially sponsor the lanyards that are given to and used by every first-year student at New Student Orientation. This partnership continues the relationship that has grown between the two offices over the past few years. In exchange for the donation of the lanyards, STAT will have an increased presence at Orientation while still following the guidelines set by New Student Orientation.

New for 2010, New Student Orientation is working with the Office of Public Affairs and Creative Services in an effort to provide a more creative, inviting, and cohesive program.

- g) **Wolfpack Welcome Week:** New Student Orientation coordinated a panel discussion for incoming students entitled "What to expect in the college classroom". There were two separate sessions held, each with the same three panelists. Those participating in the panels were Brian Koehler (Coordinator of the First Year Engineering Program), Jim Michnowicz (Assistant Professor of Spanish), and Michelle Crossley (Academic Adviser, First Year College). The panels were facilitated by Michael Coombes (Assistant Director, New Student Orientation). There were 22 total students in attendance at the two panels who gave the program positive comments.
- h) **Conversion of ECD 223 to USC 223:** During the fall of 2009, New Student Orientation received approval to convert their Orientation Counselor Training course from a Counselor Education course (ECD 223) to a University Studies course (USC 223). As part of this process, NSO reviewed and revised components of their course include the syllabus, student learning outcomes, and activities included in the course.

2. Compact Plan: Major initiatives from your Compact Plan

- a) **Orientation Publication:** There are currently no plans to create the originally described Orientation publication. A committee has been formed to create an advising handout that will provide some standardized course recommendations and advising assistance.
- b) **Focus Groups:** There is nothing new to report regarding this item.
- c) **Orientation Model Research:** This item has been completed. A new Orientation model was adopted for Summer 2009 after extensive work with the NC State campus.

3. Diversity: Initiatives and progress

New Student Orientation continues to dedicate time and resources into ensuring that our staff is informed and trained on diversity-related issues. As part of their training, each student staff member participates in the National Coalition Building Institute and hears from the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs and the Office for Equal Opportunity. We also work closely with our

campus partners to ensure messages related to diversity are included in the Orientation programs. In the planning and delivery of information, NSO regularly includes the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, the GLBT Center, and the Office for Equal Opportunity. In particular, there are specific messages during Orientation related to the Free Expression Tunnel and the expectations the NC State community has for all of its members.

4. Staff: Major new appointments, kudos, professional activities and recognitions

Professional Activities:

- Michael Coombes
 - Currently serving on the Planning Committee for the 2011 National Orientation Directors Association Conference
 - Member of the National Orientation Directors Association
 - Serves on the Wolfpack Welcome Week Committee
 - Serves on the Alliance for Sexual Assault Prevention
- Kathleen Curp
 - Serves on the Advisory Committee for Harassment Prevention
 - Member of the National Orientation Directors Association
 - Served as a mentor during the fall and spring semesters for transfer students taking USC 298
 - Completed the Equal Opportunity Institute, Spring 2010
- Gabe Wical
 - Serves on the First Year Transition Committee
 - Serves on the Open House Committee
 - Serves on the ACCESS Committee
 - Served as a mentor during the fall and spring semesters for transfer students taking USC 298
 - Presented at the Annual Conference on the First Year Experience in February, 2010
- Lori Wilson
 - Serves as one of the LanTechs for the Division of Undergraduate Academic Programs

5. Recommendations and concerns for the future

Recommendations:

Office of New Student Orientation should transition to a First-year Experience/New Student Programs Office: Given the list of recommendations made by the Undergraduate Student Transition Task Force, it is clear that NC State struggles to provide consistent messages to incoming students throughout their transition process. With the current positioning of the Office of New Student Orientation and the history that NSO has of working closely and effectively with the full range of campus constituents, it makes sense for NSO to take on additional responsibilities associated with the full transition process and not just the summer Orientation program.

The creation of a First Year Transition Committee has provided a venue for a representative group of campus personnel to discuss issues related to the first-year student transition process, but it is important that there be a central office to take the responsibility of coordinating recommendations and efforts that result from this committee. It is currently unclear what specific roles this office would play, but it is recommended that this idea be considered.

Concerns:

Purpose of Orientation: There has always been campus-wide interest in the activities and information included in the New Student Orientation programs, but throughout Spring 2010 there seems to have been an increased amount of attention given to this topic. While it is encouraging that there is an interest in providing a program that appropriately prepares incoming students and accurately represents NC State, it can be concerning if proposed changes come from sources with limited knowledge about the program or perspectives that may be skewed too much in any one direction.

During this time of change on NC State's campus it is important to clarify the purpose of the New Student Orientation programs. While we work to provide a program where students leave Orientation feeling excited about their choice to come to NC State, we know that a successful transition involves more than just feeling enthusiastic about your school. Students need to connect with faculty, staff, and other students to develop relationships that will help them be successful while at NC State. They need to understand the day-to-day realities of being a student on campus, not all of which are easy to hear or easy to accomplish. They need to be able to navigate campus and find their way to the primary buildings and services available to them. They need to know what to do when they are not in class, how to stay safe, healthy, and involved. Most importantly, students must understand the expectations, both academic and social, they undertake by becoming a member of the Wolfpack family and what the consequences may be if they do not meet those expectations.

New Student Orientation Fee: The New Student Orientation fee is charged to all incoming students. There is a specific purpose code for the fee, which indicates that the fee can only be used for "normal orientation expenses". Over the years, there have been a number of attempts by groups across campus to use the NSO fee to pay for items or services that are not coordinated by of New Student Orientation and/or do not fit within the purpose code specified for the fee. A service may be of benefit to incoming students, but if it does not fit within the purposes specified for the fee, the Orientation fee cannot be used to support it. Our primary concern is that as budgets continue to be reduced, offices on campus will continue to seek new ways to pay for their programs and services. The Orientation fee should not be seen as a viable option in these situations.

Five University Focus Areas

#1) Producing leaders for the state, nation and the world:

New Student Orientation puts a tremendous amount of time and energy into developing student leaders. Approximately 35 undergraduate students are hired and trained to welcome incoming first-year and transfer students to NC State. Through an extensive training course (ECD 223) and their service to the university, the Orientation Counselors develop their interpersonal communication and presentation skills, campus knowledge, and learn how to be productive and responsible members of a team. Some of the highlights of their training and skills acquired:

- **National Coalition Building Institute:** all students participated in a diversity training program
- **Presentation skills and experience:** a representative from the Writing and Speaking Tutorial Services program provided the students with presentation basics and strategies to use to be successful speakers; the students honed their presentation skills throughout the semester through a number of required and voluntary speaking opportunities
- **Professionalism:** as representatives of the university, the students are held to an extremely high standard where being prompt, alert, prepared, and polite are expected in their position of serving as role models

The skills, competencies, and experiences that New Student Orientation student staff gain while serving with the program remain with them long after their position ends. The position in which they serve is much more than just a summer job – it is an opportunity for students to become a leader for the state, nation, and the world.

Special Notes About the Office of New Student Orientation

- During 2009-2010, nearly 6,000 first-year and transfer students attended one of the twenty-two programs coordinated by the Office of New Student Orientation
- Over the past two years, the Office of New Student Orientation has revised both its first-year and transfer student programs.
- New Student Orientation continues to partner with a variety of offices from across NC State's campus to provide supportive, informative, and representative programs for all incoming degree-seeking students.