

University: **North Carolina State University**

Program: **New Student Orientation**

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Description of Program:

NC State's New Student Orientation program provides newly admitted first year and transfer undergraduate students introductory assistance and continuing services that will aid in their transition to NC State. As a component of the Division of Undergraduate Affairs, the office of New Student Orientation also provides leadership in the development of a cooperative effort among the independent orienting initiatives of the university's undergraduate academic and student support programs. In addition to traditional one and two day orientation formats, New Student Orientation coordinates the WolfStop information booths, Student Success Institute, Orientation Volunteer Corps, Virtual Orientation (under development), and partners with Student Affairs in planning and conducting an outdoor experiential education program for new students, WolfCamp.

Over 97% of new first year students participate in one of eight 2-day Orientation sessions. Students are required to attend the orientation session designated for their college or curriculum, and are provided information and experiences pertinent to their academic program, university processes and resources and ultimately to their success as a NC State student. New Student Orientation coordinates this student experience with Parents' Orientation, conducted by the office of Student Activities.

Three one-day orientation sessions for transfer students are also scheduled during June, July and August. First year and transfer students admitted to begin classes in the spring semester attend either of the one-day orientation programs scheduled in December and January.

To whom is the strategy or initiative directed among first-year students?

New Student Orientation (NSO) coordinates NC State's collective efforts to provide programs and services to newly admitted first year and transfer undergraduate students that will facilitate their transition into the institution, prepare them for the institution's educational opportunities, and initiate their integration into the institution's intellectual, cultural, and social climate. This coordination has four primary thrusts:

- securing effective venue,
- providing evaluative information to continually enhance the quality of programming,
- training current students as effective resources for new students, and
- responding to requests for assistance.

NSO aspires to communicate an ethic of care that is genuinely based upon the belief that each student is important, and that the University is committed to helping students succeed. NSO embraces its unique position to serve the university community as a resource on issues of new student transition and development.

Among these targeted students, how many or what percentage participate or benefit? If not all targeted students participate, how are participants selected?

In effect, all new students are “targeted,” that is, they are expected to participate in one of the orientation programs. In fact, attendance rates for the past 7 years have been approximately 97% of the new student population.

What connections does the program or strategy have to formal classroom experiences and learning outcomes?

New Student Orientation is the “business end” of the classroom experience in that within its structure is included training for and actual student registration for classes. This class scheduling function is preceded by the connection of students with their colleges and academic advisers during Orientation to begin the important associations with their academic communities. NSO also provides students with information regarding academic and personal success by connecting them with current students, faculty, and university resources that help new students prepare for their academic experience.

What qualitative or quantitative assessment data are available to suggest effectiveness?

- Summer Program Evaluation
This is NSO’s primary assessment piece. The purpose of this instrument is fourfold: (1) to gather feedback on the effectiveness of meeting stated objectives of the orientation experience that students have just completed; (2) to assess the potential impact that orientation attendance may have had on the transition needs and preparedness of new students prior to their entry into a traditional college experience; (3) to gather feedback relative to the level of functioning of the orientation student staff; (4) to provide information on student experience that will be used to influence and sensitize academic and student service partners (i.e. colleges, student affairs) as they attempt to improve the components of orientation for which they are responsible.
- University Non-Registrants - Phone Interview
The purpose of the phone interview format for university non-registrants is to provide structure to the process of developing an understanding of why certain students chose not to register at the institution, even though they had persisted through all university entry processes including attendance at New Student Orientation. This specific population is presumed to have had experiences that, once related, may be helpful to the university as it prepares for its next orientation cycle.
- Evaluation of New Student Orientation by Colleges
Orientations for new students address not only the needs students have to receive information and services, but also the needs specific academic units/colleges have to effectively communicate and connect with these students as they prepare to incorporate them into their academic and administrative structures. This evaluation form provides an opportunity for these academic units/colleges to provide New Student Orientation with feedback regarding the orientation experience from an academic/administrative perspective.
- WolfStop Volunteer Evaluation

WolfStop is an information delivery program coordinated by New Student Orientation. Information booths are set up throughout campus, and function as information "oases" during the first week of the fall semester. This orientation service is primarily for new students, but in fact serves any on-campus pedestrian in need of information assistance. These information booths are staffed by volunteer faculty, staff and students. These volunteers participate in a one-hour training program in partial preparation for their assigned duties as a WolfStop attendant. The WolfStop Volunteer Evaluation Form is used to obtain information from the volunteer staff regarding their experience in this "helper" role.

- WolfCamp Evaluation
WolfCamp is a "homegrown" program, supplementary to orientation for new students, that utilizes an experiential education format. This evaluation instrument obtains from program participants an indication of how successful they felt the program was in attaining its 4 established goals: (1) to enhance the process of identification with NC State; (2) to develop peer support among new students; (3) to promote personal preparation towards academic success; (4) to communicate core values of a university community.
- Orientation Counselor Peer Evaluation
The experience of orienting new students to college not only impacts new students, but also the growth of the current students selected as orientation counselor staff (OCs). Because of its mission within an educational institution, NSO has a responsibility to attend to the personal and educational development of its student staffs. Through this assessment instrument student staff members receive feedback from their peers with whom they have lived and worked for an extended period of time. The feedback focuses on a variety of characteristics, such as communication skills, leadership, confidence, organizational skills, motivation, etc.
- On-line Evaluation of One-Day Program
NSO's most recent assessment tool (currently being tested) enables orientees to evaluate their orientation program on-line through the NSO homepage.

How long has the program strategy been practiced? How has it evolved?

The orientation of students to the university has been practiced in some form since the founding of the institution. The movement of New Student Orientation from Student Affairs to Undergraduate Affairs in 1992 reflects an institutional philosophical shift that emphasizes the academic support role of orientation programming. In 1993 NSO began to interpret its mission beyond a traditional single intervention model, adding program elements that recognized and responded to students' transition needs over a greater period of time, extending well into the first year experience.

Have others emulated the practice, or has it received formal recognition for effectiveness?

New Student Orientation's professional staff regularly presents workshops and seminars on the various aspects of NSO's model to national and local audiences. Evaluations of these presentations as well as less formal collegial interactions clearly reflect the intentions of other colleges and universities to model aspects of their orientation programs on elements that are in place at NC State. More formally, NSO just completed an internal and external review based on the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS), national standards for orientation programs. The results of this evaluation recognized and reaffirmed the effectiveness of the New Student Orientation program.

What is the source of funding? Is the funding available?

The entire (100%) NSO budget is supported by the new student orientation fee charged to all newly matriculated (first year and transfer) undergraduate students. The fee levels are reviewed annually, and recommendations for adjustments are submitted to the University's budget office as dictated by changes in personnel and programming costs. As non-appropriated funds, they provide the flexibility in spending essential to such a program with such varied elements.

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