

ship via the journal publication has been a similar experience. All of the editors have planned how to achieve this task and fretted over the quality and quantity of manuscripts. Each editor has, in his or her own unique way, contributed talents and heartfelt concern toward this endeavor.

All historical endeavors are accomplished through partnership and coalitions. I am grateful to a number of individuals who served our need for scholarship and have come forward to support that effort. Dan Robb and Victor Wilson have been supportive throughout their presidencies and have put agendas in motion to make this happen. The Associate Editors have been brilliant cohorts and have gone beyond expectations to ensure that this venture comes full fold. NODA owes a debt of gratitude to them: Harrison Greenlaw, Cathie Hatch, Dr. Walter Kimbrough, Dr. Gary Morgan, Dr. Dan Nadler, and Dr. Denise Rode, for they saw the importance of scholarship and approached this effort with vision and determination.

In addition, Dr. Dick Mullendore set the tone for professionalism in the association with his emphasis on strategic planning and scholastic review. The monograph was an important step in our seeing ourselves as educators, scholars, and visionaries.

This is our first edition in the new series of journal editions. It is now up to our membership to support this effort, submit manuscripts, and encourage faculty, staff, and students to submit their efforts.

Will the journal make a difference? Absolutely! It *will* succeed and we will be able to point to our efforts as the "new NODA" determined to take our rightful place in all areas of higher education, whether student affairs or academic affairs. We can hold our heads high; we have matured to a new level of credibility.

ARTICLE

Student Satisfaction with Orientation: A Program Assessment and Cultural Stratification

Daniel P. Nadler and Michael T. Miller

The Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) provides a valuable benchmark for orientation effectiveness, and this case study was subsequently conducted to develop an understanding of how a relatively traditional four-day orientation program addresses the 20 CAS purposes for an orientation program. Making use of the 1996 entering class at Tulane University, the case study provides an heuristic and useful method for evaluating an orientation program.

The transition to the college campus can be traumatic and terrifying to new students. Whether first time or transfer students, developing a feeling of familiarity and hospitality with the campus environment is a factor which can produce the attitudes and viewpoints which remain a part of students for the remainder of their academic careers (Mullendore, 1993). The response by divisions of student affairs has been an ever-increasing attention to orientation and transitional programs. Gardner and Hansen (1993) noted that these programs produce the much needed feelings of closeness among students while they are acculturated to their new environment, a concept reinforced by Twale (1989) who referred to the process as building an "esprit de corps" among students. Gardner and Hansen also described the importance of orientation programs in conveying the institution's expectations of new students, a foundation necessary for future student success.

In response to the need for efficient and functional orientation programs, the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) (1988) developed a comprehensive set of purpose statement for orientation programs. These Standards for New Student Orientation programs, developed by senior student affairs officers and leading members of student affairs professional associations, contains 20 statements related to the goals and functions of an orientation program. Miller and Nadler (1995) found that senior student affairs officer generally support the intent of these standards, and agree that they should be representative benchmarks for developing transitional programs. As a result of the importance of these standards, they were employed as the guiding framework for the current study.

Defining the College Student Population

College students comprise a diverse, occasionally disparate group of individuals who have matriculated through lower levels of formal schooling to enroll in some form

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of higher education. The college experience is not limited to the ivy-covered towers that were historically used to describe the higher education environment. The collegiate experience takes place in proprietary schools where students learn trades, short-cycle higher education institutions such as community and technical colleges, distributed learning programs, and of course, the traditional bachelor's degree granting institutions. With such a broad spectrum of institutional missions, the "typical" college student may prove difficult to define.

Despite institutional differences, the college student has been described as increasingly conservative and pragmatic in approaching academic course-work (Williamson, 1984). Students, in general, report viewing themselves as fundamentally different from the faculty who teach them (Parish & Necessary, 1995). Bloom (1987) reported the growth in feelings of relativism among students, a concept reinforced by Garrison (1995) who found frameworks for decision-making as being individualistic and relativistic among students. Rather obviously, the perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and characteristics of students have been studied and reported extensively.

Difficulties in generalizing or applying existing research on college students from a cultural or holistic perspective are pervasive, particularly as they result to aiding in program development. Perhaps one of the clearest and most resolute interpretations of the college culture was that advanced by Clark and Trow (1966). The classification they offered was based on the students' life experiences and development. The classification has been used to examine many different aspects of the college experience, including activities, involvement, and academic achievement (Maw, 1981; Reichel, Neumann, & Pizam, 1981). Clark and Trow (1966) proposed that undergraduate college students tend to hold preferences toward a dominant student subculture (i.e., academic, collegiate, vocational, and nonconformist groups.)

Academic students attach greater importance to ideas, pursuit of knowledge, and cultivation of the intellect; they often spend leisure time reading books not required for course work and participating in intellectual discussions.

Collegiate students are highly involved in social and other extracurricular activities; they consider learning from social relationships part of the college experience.

Vocational students are in college primarily to prepare for a career; they view practical work experience as more important than intellectual discussions or extracurricular activities.

Nonconformist students emphasize individual interests and styles; they are concerned about personal identity and are generally critical of and detached from the college, faculty, and administration. (Sedlacek, Walters, & Valente, 1985 p. 319)

For the purposes of developing an understanding of transitional programming needs, the Clark and Trow model serves as a reliable and accepted template for examining the undergraduate experience.

Research Procedures

The Institution

Tulane University, located in New Orleans, Louisiana, is representative of many highly-selective urban universities. This Carnegie Classified Research University enrolls approximately 11,000 students, half of whom are classified as pursuing graduate programs of study. Offering a full range of undergraduate programs, the institution typically admits students into one of two gender-based undergraduate liberal arts colleges.

The Tulane New Wave (Fall) Orientation program is a four-day event which immediately precedes the beginning of the fall semester. Following the Freshman Convocation on the first day, three days of interactive programs are offered to new students ranging from meetings with faculty and administrators on study skills, test taking, and time management, to relationship building, informal activities such as a river boat excursion, dance parties, and city tours. The parents' orientation segment of the program is offered concurrently with the first half of the student orientation. The entering class size at Tulane during the fall semester was 1,223.

Results

A total of 903 undergraduate students completed the survey instruments during the final day of the orientation program. Of the 903 participants, 874 (97%) were between the ages of 17 and 19, 463 (51%) were female, 864 (96%) classified themselves as first-year students, and 29 (3%) classified themselves as transfer students. Academic major classifications varied widely, from 5% (n=45) in Architecture to 43% (n=393) in the women's liberal arts college and 34% (n=322) in the men's liberal arts college, both of which serve as unclassified liberal arts/core curriculum units of the university. The majority of the respondents were Caucasian (83%), with some representation from Asians (6%), African American (4%), and Hispanics (3%).

In reference to the Clark and Trow student subculture stratification, the majority of respondents considered themselves to be "Collegiate" (n=362; 40%). A large number of students also considered themselves to be "Academic" (n=240; 27%), followed by "Vocational" (n=99; 13%), and "Nonconformist" (n=59; 6%).

Using the standards developed by senior student affairs officers and endorsed by the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS), the CAS standards for Orientation Programs were included on the survey as the primary goals for the orientation program. These 20 goals were evaluated on a modified 1-to-5 Likert-type scale, where each item was rated with regard to how well the orientation program achieved each of the goals (1=Strongly Disagree, 3=Unsure, and 5=Strongly Agree).

As shown in Table 1, participants indicated that high levels of agreement that the goals of developing positive relationships with other new students (mean 4.14), providing information concerning academic policies, procedures, requirements, and programs (mean 4.07), and providing appropriate information on personal safety and security (mean 4.07) were achieved. Conversely, participants indicated lower levels of agreement on providing information about opportunities for self-assessment (mean 3.44) and

developing positive relationships with Tulane faculty (mean 3.41).

Each of the four sets of college students, based on primary subculture identification, agreed most that the orientation program assisted in achieving the same three goals (positive relationships with new students, information on academic policies, etc., and information on personal safety). Making use of the one-way analysis of variance procedure, significant differences were noted in the mean ratings of five of the goals included on the assessment. As displayed in Table 1, three of the given differences were noted in the ratings of goals by collegiate students as compared to non-conformist students (including positive relationships with other students, the purpose of Tulane, and positive relationships with staff), where the collegiate ratings were significantly higher. Collegiate students also rated significantly higher the goals of determining the purpose for attending Tulane as compared to academic students. The fifty significant difference was noted in the mean ratings of vocational students as compared to non-conformist students in regard to developing relationships with Tulane faculty.

TABLE 1

Levels of Agreement for Orientation Goals

Goal	Acad Mean (SD) n=240	Colleg Mean (SD) n=362	Vocat Mean (SD) n=99	Nonconf Mean (SD) n=59	Overall Mean (SD) n=903	F Prob.
Assisted me in...						
...developing positive relationships with other new students.	4.14 (.841)	4.25* (.844)	3.96* (.838)	3.89* (.985)	4.14 (.853)	.0017**
...in developing familiarity with the physical surroundings.	3.87 (.903)	3.91 (.816)	3.85 (.865)	3.68 (.862)	3.87 (.855)	.2901
...understanding Tulane's expectations of me.	3.84 (.905)	3.84 (.752)	3.82 (.821)	3.68 (.842)	3.83 (.819)	.5826
...understanding the purpose of Tulane.	3.72 (.855)	3.86* (.863)	3.84 (.848)	3.53* (.862)	3.79 (.791)	.0103**
...developing positive relationships with Tulane staff.	3.64 (.890)	3.72* (.879)	3.68 (.921)	3.37* (1.04)	3.66 (.904)	.0266**
...understanding the mission of Tulane.	3.60 (.869)	3.68 (.814)	3.57 (.870)	3.53 (.706)	3.63 (.832)	.4231
...developing positive relationships with individuals from my community.	3.56 (1.02)	3.62 (1.05)	3.53 (.918)	3.27 (.854)	3.56 (1.01)	.1010

Levels of Agreement for Orientation Goals, continued

Goal	Acad Mean (SD)	Colleg Mean (SD)	Vocat Mean (SD)	Nonconf Mean (SD)	Overall Mean (SD)	F Prob.
Assisted me in...						
...determining my purpose in attending Tulane.	3.41* (.987)	3.62* (.841)	3.55 (.939)	3.60 (.857)	3.54 (.906)	.0590**
...identifying costs of attending Tulane, both in terms of dollars and personal commitment.	3.43 (1.05)	3.46 (.996)	3.38 (.959)	3.56 (.900)	3.45 (1.00)	.7217
...developing positive relationships with Tulane faculty.	3.35 (1.04)	3.44 (1.02)	3.61* (.965)	3.17* (1.07)	3.41 (1.03)	.0452**
Provided information concerning academic policies, procedures, requirements, and programs.	4.09 (.669)	4.12 (.711)	3.94 (.632)	3.89 (.892)	4.07 (.707)	.0943
Provided appropriate information on personal safety and security.	4.06 (.825)	4.09 (.768)	4.09 (.643)	4.00 (.878)	4.07 (.780)	.8368
Promoted an awareness of nonclassroom opportunities.	3.97 (.788)	4.08 (.732)	3.92 (.776)	3.82 (.819)	4.00 (.768)	.0842
Created an atmosphere that minimized anxiety, promoted positive attitudes, and stimulated an excitement for learning.	3.76 (.946)	3.88 (.853)	3.78 (.802)	3.62 (1.07)	3.81 (.897)	.1250
Explained the process for class scheduling and registration.	3.88 (.895)	3.76 (.376)	3.71 (.861)	3.64 (.790)	3.78 (.900)	.1836
Provided information and exposure to available institutional services.	3.82 (.828)	3.82 (.774)	3.61 (.809)	3.72 (.720)	3.78 (.794)	.1168

Levels of Agreement for Orientation Goals, continued

Goal	Acad Mean (SD)	Colleg Mean (SD)	Vocat Mean (SD)	Nonconf Mean (SD)	Overall Mean (SD)	F Prob.
Assisted me in...						
Provided an atmosphere and sufficient information that enabled me to make reasoned and well-informed decisions.	3.73 (.818)	3.79 (.794)	3.68 (.726)	3.55 (.901)	3.74 (.803)	.1405
Provided opportunities to discuss expectations and perceptions with continuing students.	3.54 (.977)	3.70 (.883)	3.52 (1.01)	3.51 (.995)	3.61 (.941)	.1089
Provided referrals to qualified advisors and counselors.	3.51 (.934)	3.58 (.936)	3.57 (.952)	3.52 (1.07)	3.55 (.947)	.8327
Provided information about opportunities for self-assessment.	3.40 (.966)	3.52 (.803)	3.40 (.847)	3.22 (.879)	3.44 (.871)	.0637

**Indicates significant difference at an alpha level of .05; *Indicates significant difference identified through the use of a Tukey-Honestly Significant Difference post hoc test.

Conclusions and Discussion

The CAS Standards were originally developed as a guide or general template for orientation programs, and have recently been updated to meet the changing needs of incoming college students. Although broad in interpretation, these standards provide a valuable mechanism for examining the effectiveness of orientation and transitional programs, and the use of the CAS Standards with the Tulane Green Wave Orientation prove useful for several reasons.

First, the goals for orientation were rated primarily in the "neutral" to "agree" range. These neither consistently high nor low rating suggests neutral feelings toward orientation, perhaps suggesting some indecision on the part of students about what to expect from orientation activities. Often presented as a vast series of somewhat interrelated events, students may not know what they expect from the experience, and may decide for themselves the value of the program only after they are well into various sessions.

Second, as indicated by Twale (1989) and Gardner and Hansen (1993), the orientation experience was effective in building social relationships among incoming students. Participants rated the Tulane programs strongly in its effectiveness for creating a feeling of comfort, and enabling them, through structured and unstructured activities, to develop friendships and a camaraderie which can help ease the transition to college. Additionally, the intensive four-day program structure of the Tulane program may have implications for the structure of transitional programs at other institutions. This, in particular, is an area for further study, perhaps to compare and contrast the effectiveness of summer-based orientation with pre-fall semester intensive programs.

The subculture stratification of date indicates what the literature has suggested: There are a variety of student expectations and attitudes concerning the collegiate experience. Survey respondents, while generally having the same satisfaction with certain orientation goals, varied in their perceptions of what was important during orientation. These variations in expectations and perceptions may prove especially difficult for those coordinating orientation programming, but remain important factors to be considered in developing effective programs.

The Tulane new student data provides a solid, multidimensional framework for the continued examination of the roles, expectations, and functions of orientation programs. The CAS standards provide a meaningful way in which programs may evaluate their effectiveness with student data, a component often overlooked in evaluating transitional programs. Further research, whether or not involving the CAS Standards, should and must be conducted to truly get a sense of function and value of orientation activities. Only through research such as this can programs become effective vehicles for aiding students in their adjustment to the college experience.

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ARTICLE

Benchmarking Your Orientation Program

Frank P. Ardaiole

Benchmarking is an ongoing means for systematically measuring and comparing the work processes of one institution to another by bringing an external focus on internal activities, functions, or operations. Its purpose is to give managers an external standard for evaluating the quality and cost of their institution's internal activities and processes. The author presents a description and example of the application of Performance Indicator Process Benchmarking to orientation programs.

As the bustle of summer orientation ends, the annual review of the evaluations of the year's orientation program usually begins. Typically, an instrument is administered to the freshman participants, and these results are often compared with past years' evaluations. Assuming the results are mostly favorable, most orientation committees will simply fine-tune the programs as they plan for the next year. Incremental changes for improvement are thus accomplished. However, benchmarking, a relatively new method of evaluation, has the capability to provide richer results than the typical evaluative surveys. There are ongoing efforts to adopt benchmarking to various institution-wide functional areas (Ardaiole, 1996a; 1996b), and this article will focus on benchmarking methods for orientation. An exhaustive search indicates this is the first attempt to move benchmarking from theory to practice in a specific student affairs arena.

Benchmarking Defined

In recent years, benchmarking, which has its roots in industry, has moved into the higher education arena. Benchmarking is an ongoing means for systematically measuring and comparing the work processes of one institution to another by bringing an external focus on internal activities, functions, or operations. Its purpose is to give managers an external standard for evaluating the quality and cost of their institution's internal activities and processes. Benchmarks are performance measures, while benchmarking is the process that moves beyond the measures toward improving institutional-based functions. Defined by Spendolini (1992), benchmarking is a "continuous systematic process for evaluating the products, services, and work processes of organizations that are recognized as representing 'best practices' for the purpose of organizational improvement" (p.9). It can give orientation directors an external touchstone for evaluating the quality and cost of their activities and processes.

"Benchmarking in and of itself is not a means by which an institution can improve

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