

MEMORANDUM

VICE CHANCELLOR FOR
PLANNING AND
INSTITUTIONAL
IMPROVEMENT



TO: Andrea Engler

FROM: Trudy Banta

DATE: May 21, 2004

I am very pleased that the team reviewing Orientation Services in April completed its report so promptly. We hope the recommendations the report contains will be helpful.

Please take 4-6 months to consider the team's recommendations with your colleagues, then prepare a written response to share with Dean Evenbeck, Dean Plater, and me. Following our receipt of your response, we ask that you schedule a follow-up meeting that will include yourself and any colleagues you would like to be present, Scott, Bill, and me, and the two internal team members Kathy Johnson and Linda Haas. At that time we will discuss how we can all support the Orientation Services program in any responsive actions you would like to take.

Best wishes.

TWB:mt

cc: Charles Bantz (w/reviewers' report)
Bill Plater (w/reviewers' report)
Scott Evenbeck (w/reviewers' report)

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IUPUI Orientation Program Review Team Final Report

On Thursday, April 15, and Friday, April 16, the orientation program review team met with a large number of staff, faculty and students on the IUPUI campus. As a group, we were honored to be asked to participate in this review process. In advance of our visit, we were given lots of good information about IUPUI and the orientation program, and copies of the completed self-study. Now that we have been on the campus and met with a variety of stakeholders, we have concluded that the self-study report accurately reflects the current state of the orientation program. Although, the meeting schedule was quite ambitious, it allowed the review team to meet with representatives from virtually every group of stakeholders and we genuinely appreciate the candor and preparedness of those with whom we met. We offer a special thank you to Andrea Engler and Susan Walker for their wonderful hospitality and their honesty and openness throughout the process.

The balance of this report is devoted to review team observations and recommendations. A brief rationale for each recommendation has been provided. Because some of the following issues were discussed in multiple contexts, the reader will note some overlap in the report.

OBSERVATIONS

1. The orientation staff is highly respected for their work ethic, responsiveness to stakeholders, and ability to change based upon program assessment. A common comment was that orientation is better now than it has ever been.
2. The orientation leaders have a great reputation for their energy, knowledge, attitude and helpfulness.
3. Staff, faculty and students all seem to be truly committed to the mission, goals and direction of IUPUI.
4. Perhaps due to the decentralized structure of IUPUI and the diverse student population served, the expectations of the orientation staff vary considerably among stakeholders.
5. The first year seminars are invaluable! They help make orientation part of a process rather than an event for those served.
6. Although orientation is widely perceived as effective, it is also perceived as being designed primarily for the traditional freshman.
7. Successfully meeting the needs of all the various student constituencies in a meaningful manner is a daunting task for the orientation staff.
8. There appears to be a common perception that increased effort is needed to meet the needs of transfer students. (Most of those interviewed, however, seemed unaware of the many changes being implemented for the 2004 program.)
9. The review team is concerned about the level of staffing and the financial resources available to the orientation program. It appears to the team that responsibility centered management creates or allows for a "silo mentality".
10. Several changes have been made for the 2004 program that should reduce the concern regarding student and parent waiting time for those in the University College.

11. There appears to be a desire among stakeholders to increase the program content for parents/family members.
12. The review team is concerned that a significant percentage of students manage to avoid attending an orientation program.
13. The review team spent a considerable amount of time discussing the issue of placement testing. (Is it necessary? If so, why not offer on-line? Why do students have to come to campus twice?)
14. There appears to be a comfort level among all stakeholders that the current locus of control of orientation is appropriate.
15. The review team is concerned about the consistency of communication to a wide variety of subgroups (summer bridge, 1st generation, low income, international students, scholars, honors students, etc.).
16. The current practice of decentralization of technology and policies may be impeding opportunities for collaboration among stakeholders.
17. The mission and goals of the orientation program are clear, appropriate, and consistent with national standards (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education).
18. The recent assessment of IUPUI's orientation program provides an excellent model for other institutions to emulate.
19. The review team believes that the lack of some form of closure at the end of each orientation program presents a concern worth examining.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The IUPUI central administration should clearly articulate the value of the orientation process to all campus stakeholders.
2. The current level of orientation staffing should be examined to determine if the expectations of the program staff are realistic.
3. More direct involvement of faculty in the orientation program should be encouraged and the faculty reward structure should be modified as appropriate to ensure this involvement.
4. Many current and planned orientation processes should be systematically web-enabled to carefully guide students from the time of admission to the beginning of the orientation program.
5. The University Leadership Scholarship is an excellent and creative reward system that should be publicly acknowledged as a valuable service to IUPUI.
6. IUPUI should continue to focus on the needs of parents and family members in the design and implementation of orientation programs.
7. The needs and delivery of services to IUPUI's many transfer students should be carefully studied.
8. The current locus of control of the orientation program is appropriate.
9. There should be central administration leadership to facilitate collaboration among all schools and special program offices in the implementation of orientation programming.
10. If traditional freshman enrollment continues to increase, IUPUI should consider

- implementation of a pilot two-day overnight orientation program.
11. Despite limited resources, continued in-depth assessment of orientation programs is important.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1:

The IUPUI central administration should clearly articulate the value of the orientation process to all campus stakeholders.

Orientation is the college's best opportunity to introduce a strong learning environment, build the foundations for academic success, welcome students and families to the campus community, promote student/faculty/staff interactions, and convey the values and traditions of the new institution.

The person responsible for orientation must know and be able to work comfortably with virtually every institutional component and constituency in order to provide effective orientation programs. These critical relationships are easier to develop and maintain if the message from the central administration is that orientation is a valuable "all hands on deck" opportunity to showcase the institution and to enable new students to begin the academic and social integration processes necessary to their success. Visibility of upper level administrators during orientation programs can strongly reinforce the message that orientation at IUPUI is a critical function.

Recommendation # 2

The current level of orientation staffing should be examined to determine if the expectations of the program staff are realistic.

The staff (Andrea and Susan) that currently exists is extremely competent and very professional. At the same time, they are stretched too thin dealing with the overall planning, collaborative efforts, implementation and evaluation of the programs that are offered at IUPUI. The review team noted that the IUPUI orientation program has grown considerably over the past few years and believes they saw a desire for the programs and services to continue to grow; specifically in the areas of transfer, adult and family/parent programs as well as in the existing orientation programs. If this assessment is true, the staffing patterns need to be evaluated to consider the hiring of an additional staff person. At this time Andrea and Susan have a great deal of work to do leaving them little time for planning and program creation, implementation, evaluation and assessment not to mention the creation and implementation of innovative ideas.

We suggest the addition of an additional staff member to lead the efforts of the transfer programs as well as to assist with the general orientation programs. The addition of a new staff person would free some of Andrea and Susan's time to develop additional family/parent programs, to develop and implement a consistent assessment plan and better enable Andrea

to lead all of the programs.

Additionally, the staff struggles with attempting to centralize the orientation program in a very decentralized and unique environment. The addition of the Orientation Advisory Council should assist with increasing the communication about orientation issues; however, it seems that the Council is new and has not yet established a solid pattern of operation and set parameters at this time. The other challenge with this Council is that Andrea needs to be seen as the expert on orientation within the University (the Review team believes she is seen this way) but at the same time she does not possess the positional clout to mandate colleges and other institutional offices and programs to attend meetings to discuss orientation issues and to be required to change current inconsistent practices.

The review team believes there needs to be involvement of higher level administrators/faculty to work with the colleges and various campus areas to encourage the Orientation Advisory Council to standardize operating procedures for orientation in order to offer better and more consistent services to the incoming students and their families. In addition, these administrators/faculty members should have the authority to mandate that the University colleges and offices, and programs consistently follow those procedures.

Recommendation #3

More direct involvement of faculty in the orientation program should be encouraged and the faculty reward structure should be modified as appropriate to encourage this involvement.

One of the new goals for orientation is that "Students will have the opportunity to begin building relationships with faculty..." as a strategy for enhancing academic integration. Another reason for giving students an opportunity to build relationships with faculty as soon as orientation is because orientation already is criticized for trying to cover too much information. If students left orientation with the names of contact faculty, this might help them with the transition to college. Faculty involvement in orientation would appear to be easier to do at IUPUI than at other places, because of the academic focus the orientations have (vs. a student life focus).

It must be noted that faculty are already involved with orientation in two important ways. First, some faculty members are involved during orientation if they are lead advisers in their departments or schools. Faculty from schools give an overview of their school during the special school portion of orientation. One of those interviewed does this for SLA and seems to have a good relationship with UC. Her input: "Students are overwhelmed with information at this time." She reported that one of the most useful things she does is to distribute her business card so people can contact her later, which they often do. However, the committee learned that only 17% of incoming students are direct (dual-) admits into degree-granting schools. Consequently, most of them are served foremost by University College, so increased involvement of faculty in UC orientation activities is needed.

Another way faculty are involved in orientation is through their participation as faculty

mentors in first-year seminars. First-year seminars at IUPUI were originally conceived as a form of "extended orientation" to college life, although they are also driven by the need to introduce IUPUI students to the equivalent of general education at IUPUI, the Principles of Undergraduate Learning. First year seminars were not the subject for this review, although the review team wants to acknowledge the important role they play in orienting students to college and IUPUI. The review team believes that extended orientation in learning communities is what is likely to have the most success for students, and this is where faculty can be heavily involved. Because developing relationships with faculty is important, the review team recommends that IUPUI continue to recruit and retain qualified faculty mentors for these seminars.

To enhance faculty involvement in orientation, the review team recommends that attention be paid to educating faculty about the academic goals of orientation. Currently, IUPUI orientation has three goals, based on the Tinto model, which features the importance of academic integration, social integration, and self-efficacy for student success. Many faculty may not be acquainted this model, or that this model is the basis for orientation, and disseminating information about this through University College faculty seems to be a good place to start. One administrator interviewed said, "We want to connect the students to IUPUI through academics." Faculty seem likely to be particularly suited to advise on this. Two professors who were interviewed about orientation suggested separately that it would be a good idea to have faculty assign summer reading to incoming students, to raise the level of academic expectations in the first-year seminars, and to introduce them to the idea that work expectations exist outside class (even if they do not assign the reading).

The review team was told that the orientation administrators tended not to work directly with faculty; they are in direct contact with school administrators instead. The Orientation Advisory Council is supposed to be comprised of people who are likely to be in more direct contact with faculty. Furthermore, UC has a subcommittee, chaired by Michele Hansen (under the Curriculum Committee), that is supposed to get faculty input. These mechanisms for faculty involvement seem rather indirect. One group that doesn't seem to be directly involved in this process but could be to a greater degree would be the regular and adjunct members of the UC faculty, themselves well-situated in schools. It is acknowledged that several of them already participate in orientation in one role or another, but we do not know the extent to which the group in general is knowledgeable about orientation or feels that it has any direct responsibility for its success.

When and how could faculty be more involved in orientation? As discussed above, faculty can be continually apprised of the goals of orientation and encouraged to be involved in any type of policymaking for new directions. At the practical level, while the day seems heavily scheduled, and it was noted repeatedly that students are overwhelmed with information, some opportunities seem to exist for more faculty input: during casual encounters during any "down time" waiting for advising, identification cards or lunch (e.g., sitting at the lunch table?); as presenters in a more expanded program for parents and other family members (e.g., partners and children); as important symbolic figures during the closure at the end of the day, when students complete a short evaluation, have opportunities for any last questions, or participate in some type of "closure" event that signifies that "a new Jaguar" is ready for

IUPUI; as individuals who agree to follow up directly with maybe 10 students via e-mail after the day is over to see if they have further questions. (They could instead be asked if they would be willing to be included on a short list of faculty that students can contact after orientation.) What could be explored further is the overlap between faculty who mentor in the first-year seminars and those that participate in orientation. Some individuals are obviously involved in both roles. Do students leave orientation knowing who their faculty mentor will be in the fall? That could help link orientation and the first-year seminar, and tie orientation into academics.

In terms of faculty rewards for this type of work, it appears that most faculty who are now involved are in one way or another 12-month employees of the institution, who are thus available and obligated to participate in university service during the summers, when most orientation programs take place. Starting 2005, faculty compensation for summer teaching will be greatly reduced. If funds could be secured, University College should be able to recruit more faculty to be "Orientation Faculty Fellows," participating actively in orientation and in any other orientation type activities through the fall (including the parent connections follow-up). To do this, UC should expect to award a substantial faculty development stipend (that can be used for computer upgrades, conference travel, and research expenses) and/or a salary figure that competes favorably with the reduced amount given for summer teaching. This type of work can place faculty outside their comfort zones, so some incentives should be given, beyond an opportunity for university service.

Recommendation #4

Many current and planned orientation processes should be systematically web-enabled to carefully guide students from the time of admission to the beginning of the orientation program.

IUPUI's strengths in information technology services are not fully realized with regard to orientation processes. It is understandable that immediate challenges posed by the implementation of Student Information Systems (Peoplesoft) make it difficult to coordinate communications from various offices (Admissions/Enrollment, Special Programs, Schools, Orientation Services). However, we recommend that once this period of transition has ended that steps be taken to web-enable, 1) the scheduling of placement tests, 2) the scheduling of orientation, 3) the processing of New Student Enrollment fees, and 4) the processing of new student identification cards and user identifications for computer/email services. Such processes could be embedded within the suggested website that integrates resources aimed toward new first-year and transfer students. In addition, O-Team members who receive telephone calls directly from new students could access this website to schedule students who may not have convenient access to the internet. An added benefit of web-enabled services is that reminders can be emailed directly to students to hopefully increase participation in placement testing and orientation programming.

Recommendation #5

The University Leadership Scholarship is an excellent and creative reward system that should be publicly acknowledged as a valuable service to IUPUI.

Attracting new students who achieve at a high academic level is a key institutional goal. Campus curricular and co-curricular opportunities encourage leadership development by allowing a larger number of top quality students to become stakeholders in the success of the university. High performing students possess equally high expectations of campus-sponsored programs that enhance the image of the institution. Students often perceive that their investment to participate in admissions and orientation programs is a direct reflection on the value-added experience of a college education. Recipients of the University Leadership Scholarship must be offered the same recognition as recipients of other top awards given by the university. IUPUI is the primary beneficiary of the University Leadership Scholarship affiliation and nets the largest return on the investment participating students make to the institution.

IUPUI may want to consider the following options for enhancing the profile of the University Leadership Scholarship:

- Research similar scholarship programs to obtain additional ideas for recognizing student leaders
- Promote the ULS program to new students during orientation to begin building awareness of this leadership opportunity and to heighten the profile
- Add a flyer on the ULS program to the packet of orientation materials
- Develop an action plan to recruit new students to the ULS program through brainstorming with current student leaders who are ULS recipients
- Raise ULS awareness by placing a display ad in the student newspaper expressing appreciation for ULS student effort
- List the ULS as one of the competitive awards available
- End of the year luncheon to celebrate the accomplishments of the program and to recognize individual student efforts
- Offer students plaques or certificates for specific talents contributed

Recommendation #6:

IUPUI should continue to focus on the needs of parents and family members in the design and implementation of orientation programs.

There is substantial evidence that family support is critical to student success. For traditional aged students, that means support from parents; for adult learners, that means support from significant others, including spouses, children, other relatives, and friends. Families enter the orientation process with a lot of questions about how their son, daughter, wife, husband, sister, will succeed in college, and how they might help.

The parents of today's traditional aged student desire to be an active part of their student's college experience. The orientation program is key to helping parents re-define their role within the life of their student. The families and friends of adult learners and transfer students face somewhat different challenges and also need help in adjusting to the new realities of their lives and learning how to be supportive of their student's educational ambitions.

In developing/refining a program for parents and other family members, it is important to be sensitive to their time schedule as well as their anxieties and concerns. It may be helpful to think in terms of Maslow's "hierarchy of needs" and begin with the basics. Early in the program, speakers and panels can address issues such as housing, food services, transportation, billing procedures, child care and financial aid. These topics can be followed by speakers on campus safety, health services and wellness issues. Other important topics include academic advising, academic support services, career services, counseling services, student unions, adult learner services, recreational facilities, and opportunities for student involvement and leadership in clubs and organizations. At some point in the program, a speaker should address the issues of student and parent/family transitions.

There is considerable merit to separating parents/family members from their students for most of the program. The needs are different and the methods of delivery of information may be different as well.

Recommendation # 7

The needs and delivery of services to IUPUI's many transfer students should be carefully considered.

Transfer students present colleges and universities with unique challenges as the faculty, staff, and administration attempt to serve their needs. Rich (1979) suggests that many transfer students harbor preconceived opinions about their new institution and believe that changing their college or university environment will take care of their prior academic issues. With that said, designing an effective orientation program is a great challenge. The review team discovered that significant changes had been made for this upcoming year's program but those they met with stated that little had been communicated with them about the changes. The review team perused the schedule and questioned as to how the changes were made in the program schedule. It was reported that the changes were based on the desire of the campus faculty, staff, and students to change the program and with information secured at a conference.

In the literature on transfer student orientation, Goldesberry, McKenzie, Miller (2000) and Daniel (1998) highlight the need to formally assess the incoming student population and environment, market the program appropriately, train staff, and evaluate the overall program. It is the suggestion of the review team that in order to better serve the needs of the students there should be a thorough assessment of the transfer population completed in order to better discover who the transfer population currently is and what their needs are at this time. With this thorough assessment the staff can use the findings and their expertise to

create a well-integrated program that includes what Upcraft and Farnsworth (1984) state are four areas that orientation programs should address: 1) adjustment to the academic environment; 2) personal adjustment to social environment; 3) provide the parents and family members with increased awareness of transition; and 4) provide the institution with an understanding of entering students. The elements of these highlight areas should include a formal welcome; time for completing or confirming credit evaluations and course registration; academic advising and/or college meetings; assisting the students with the understanding of their expectations for enrollment at IUPUI as well as what they can expect from the institution; and outlining the programs, services, and activities of the campus. In addition, the review team found that the transfer population varied a great deal on campus and suggests that the transfer programs be divided into small populations to include adult or non-traditional, traditional-aged and other appropriate groupings depending on the outcomes of the assessment.

As Rich (1979) suggests, transfer students enter college with preconceived notions of their institution. During the review team's visit it was stated repeatedly that many of the transfer students cannot attend orientation due to their work or family schedule. Although this is noteworthy, the review team suggests that programs be offered at alternative times in order to meet these timing issues. In the end, if the orientation policies and procedures are not consistent and do not encourage the students to attend the program the transfer students may not see the program as being effective, helpful or worth their time. In addition, the review team suggests that during the application and pre-enrollment process, the importance of the transfer orientation program be marketed including statistics as to how attending orientation is one of the factors that assists with retention and graduation rates. Lastly, the review team suggests that there needs to be a significant component of Orientation Leader training dedicated to the understanding of transfer student needs, especially if the programs grow as the review team suggests.

Recommendation #8

The current locus of control of the orientation program is appropriate.

While it is true that most orientation programs report through the division of student affairs, a strong case can be made for housing the program in a variety of areas depending on the organizational history of the institution, existing relationships, and program priorities. At IUPUI, the current structure is a good one and the review team sees no reason to recommend a different model.

Recommendation #9

There should be central administration leadership to facilitate collaboration among all schools and special program offices in the implementation of orientation programming.

Collaboration needs to be strengthened in five main areas - (a) dealing with the orientation needs of "special student populations," (b) dealing with the needs of transfer students, (c) working together with Campus and Community Life to meet goals of community building,

(d) dealing with the details involved in offering student orientation leaders scholarships (vs. pay), and (e) responding to student needs for more financial advising, math and writing assistance.

a) While University College takes on primary responsibility for providing new student orientation, some undergraduate schools and several special programs for students are also involved in providing required or optional orientation to students, sometimes in separate orientation programs. Groups engaged in offering separate orientations include the Kelley School of Business, International Affairs, Student Support Services (for first-generation students), the honors program, the summer bridge program, the athletic department and African American staff and faculty. From the perspective of new students and their families, it can be confusing to receive information from different units on campus, especially when they receive notice of multiple orientations. The review team felt that some centralization of orientation information and invitations appears to be needed. One idea would be to have a staff person in charge of "special populations' orientations," who would streamline communication between IUPUI and new students, and make sure that all staff involved in serving these special populations feels their voice is heard in decision making on orientation.

b) Collaboration between UC and other academic schools is important because many new students are transfers, who are often directly admitted into schools. Schools provide important academic advising to transfer students, but they are not always in a position to provide the other types of assistance students new to IUPUI need. These students have some of the same needs as first-time freshmen, for academic integration, social integration and information that will promote self-efficacy and problem-solving. Consequently, UC and academic schools need to work together to promote the well-being of transfer students, an important constituency that is receiving more campus attention lately. Since some transfer students are "inter campus" and come in under the Enrollment Center, strong linkages with the Enrollment Center are also needed.

c) While orientation is considered to be an academic program, there is heavy involvement of staff from Campus Life and Diversity. CCL staff members reported that they are happy with their involvement, but would like to emphasize community building and respect for diversity still more, taking advantage of some down time during orientation.

d) Collaboration between UC and offices connected to awarding scholarships needs to be strengthened. Student orientation leaders are on scholarships, but some university offices are not satisfied with this, including the bursar, financial aid, and scholarships. Their cooperation is essential for maintain strong student leadership in these positions.

e) Since everyone agrees that students are overwhelmed with information already, and since orientation can't do everything, it needs to teach students where to go, for some important needs identified by the self-study - how to pay for college and how to improve math and writing skills. UC needs to work collaboratively with the staffs from financial aid, the writing center and the math assistance center to find the best way to connect new students to these important services.

The collaboration partners here include the financial aid staff and the staffs of the math and writing centers.

Recommendation #10

If traditional freshman enrollment continues to increase, IUPUI should consider implementation of a pilot two-day overnight orientation program.

An ever-growing number of traditional-aged freshmen are weighing the option of attending IUPUI along side residential college and university options. As traditional freshmen weigh the value of the IUPUI experience, more orientation programming content should be devoted to illuminating the opportunities that exist for residential life and campus-based activities and leadership. More than ever before, students attending IUPUI orientation are coming to campus for a final look prior to making their college selection. The additional option of two-day of orientation allows students to more fully grasp the multitude of options that exist. These opportunities may not have been available when older siblings or parents attended IUPUI. The economic value of IUPUI as a sound educational investment is clearly evident to prospective students. A well-rounded campus life at IUPUI is not as well known to most admitted students or to their families. Promoting the option of "limited" space for two-day orientation will immediately raise the awareness of IUPUI's efforts to appeal to a broader range of incoming students.

Promotion of the two day orientation option will appeal to those who desire: to live on campus, to play an active role on campus both in and out of the classroom, to spend a smaller portion of one day driving to/from campus, to have more contact with current students, and to enjoy more informal interaction with current faculty members in various programs/departments.

The benefits of a two-day program will:

- Illustrate the institution's effort to be more personal to incoming students
- Showcase residence hall options
- Shatter old stereotypes of limited campus life activities
- Attract more top-notch academic students who are still shopping for a college home

Recommendation #11

Despite limited resources, continued in-depth assessment of orientation programs is important.

As stipulated above, the review team believes that the self-assessments engaged in thus far by the IUPUI orientation program are commendable and serve as a model for other institutions. While such assessments are costly in terms of both time and financial resources, the review team urges the orientation staff to continue to monitor and assess student learning and satisfaction associated with the orientation program, particularly at 3-month follow up. These assessments have the potential to enable the orientation program to continue to evolve

in a positive direction, particularly given the dynamics of rapid growth and change that characterize the campus. Assessment is particularly critical for those aspects of the orientation program that will change most dramatically in 2004-2005 (e.g., workshop advising and programming directed at transfer students).

Final Comments

Orientation Advisory Council. The creation of an Orientation Advisory Council is a timely and effective solution to some of the issues the review team found on campus during our visit. At the same time, a great deal of attention needs to be given to the selection of members, terms of appointment, agenda development, and implementation of ideas. During the meetings, the members of the review team discovered a great deal of confusion about these topics as well as little knowledge of the existence of the Council. The review team suggests that this group should be carefully constructed and managed, as it could be very effective (coupled with Andrea and Susan's expertise) in assisting with the change management of future issues and policies.

Although the review team provided several observations and recommendations, the consensus of our group was that Andrea and Susan (and many others) do a great job for new IUPUI students. We appreciate being given the opportunity to review the orientation program.

Richard Mullendore, Chair
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