

STUDENT AFFAIRS & ACADEMIC SUPPORT PARTICIPATION IN ORIENTATION

Maegan Gudridge

Executive Director of Communications and Marketing
Division of Student Affairs and Academic Support

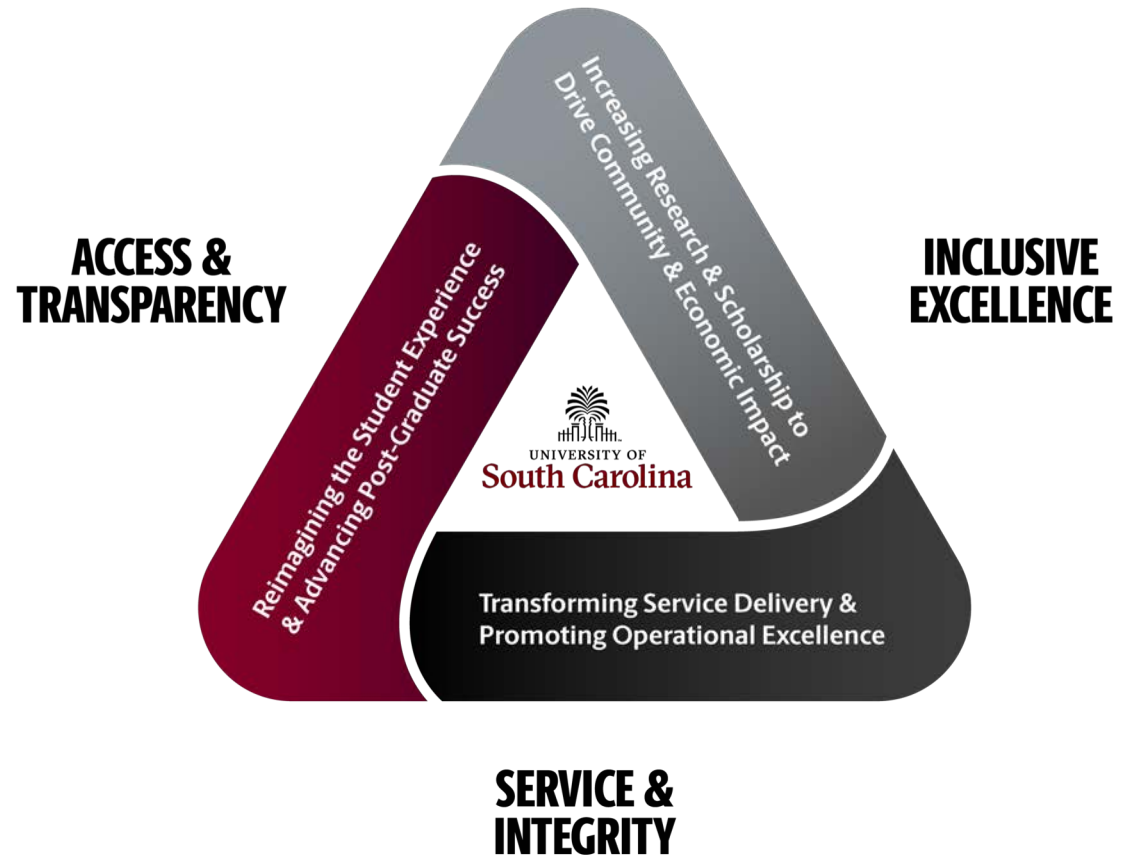
March 19, 2024



UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina

PURPOSE

- Our current approach leaves students and families overwhelmed and under-prepared, and it requires a tremendous amount of staff time.
- Optimizing our approach will address those issues and support division and university strategic priorities (and it just makes sense).



PROJECT GOALS

- Improve the development of coordinated, high quality, audience-centered orientation efforts
- Reduce staff time dedicated to orientation
- Improve students' creation of appropriate expectations for the beginning of the semester
- Increase students' completion of tasks required before the first day of class



PEOPLE INVOLVED

- Project Team – 9 staff members
- Subject Matter Experts
- End Users
 - Students
 - Parents and family members
 - Presenters/other participants
 - Directors



PROJECT PATH

SESSION 1 Kickoff and Discovery

- Discuss purpose and goals
- Review roadmap
- Review graphical schedule and available metrics
- Give input

FEEDBACK SESSIONS Discovery

- Directors
- Presenters/
Participants
- Parents
- Students

SESSION 2 Discovery and Possibility

- Subgroups report on feedback sessions
- Review and discuss feedback

SESSION 3 Possibility

- Highlight key findings
- Generate potential actions
- Identify highest-impact actions

SESSION 4 Planning

- Review, refine and ensure consensus
- Build presentation



CURRENT STATE

- Yellow sessions include or are led by Student Affairs and Academic Support
- 2/3 of breakout sessions are led by the division

NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION SUMMER 2023

STUDENTS - DAY ONE

8-9:30 a.m.	Check-in and Breakfast									
10-11:30 a.m.	Welcome Home [incl. AVP welcome, Housing]									
11:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	Carolina Conversations I (Orientation Leaders) and Lunch									
12:45-2 p.m.	Academic College Visits									
2:30-3 p.m.	Thriving>Surviving [Student Success Center]	Live Your Best Student Life! [Student Life]	Ballin' on a Budget [Student Success Center]	The World: See It for Yourself! Education Abroad	Get Ready to Ride! Parking & Transportation	Beyond Campus Borders: Welcome to Columbia Experience Columbia	Student Health Services [Student Health and Well-Being]	Building Community: Diversity @ USC [Office of Multicultural Student Affairs]	The Path to Employability [Career Center]	A Guide to Fraternity and Sorority Life [Fraternity and Sorority Life]
3:10-3:40 p.m.	Thriving>Surviving [Student Success Center]	Live Your Best Student Life! [Student Life]	Ballin' on a Budget [Student Success Center]	The World: See It for Yourself! Education Abroad	Get Ready to Ride! Parking & Transportation	Beyond Campus Borders: Welcome to Columbia Experience Columbia	Veterans and Military Affairs Veterans and Military Affairs	Building Community: Diversity @ USC [Office of Multicultural Student Affairs]	The Path to Employability [Career Center]	A Guide to Fraternity and Sorority Life [Fraternity and Sorority Life]
3:50-4:20 p.m.	Thriving>Surviving [Student Success Center]	Live Your Best Student Life! [Student Life]	Ballin' on a Budget [Student Success Center]	The World: See It for Yourself! Education Abroad	Get Ready to Ride! Parking & Transportation	Beyond Campus Borders: Welcome to Columbia Experience Columbia	n/a	n/a	The Path to Employability [Career Center]	A Guide to Fraternity and Sorority Life [Fraternity and Sorority Life]
4:30-5:30 p.m.	Carolina Conversations II (Orientation Leaders)									
5:30-6:30 p.m.	Dinner									
6:45-7:45 p.m.	Right Where You Belong (Skits)									
7:45-8:05 p.m.	Carolina Conversations III (Orientation Leaders)									
8:10-8:30 p.m.	Carolina Connections: Students of Color			Carolina Connections: First-Generation College Students	Carolina Connections: LGBTQIA+ Students	Carolina Connections: Interfaith Space	Carolina Connections: In-State Students	Carolina Connections: Out-of-State Students		
8:30-10:30 p.m.	Gamecocks After Dark (games and activities)									

STUDENTS - DAY TWO

7:45-8:15 a.m.	Breakfast									
8:15-8:45 a.m.	Carolina Conversations IV (Orientation Leaders)									
9-10:30 a.m.	Creating Your Campus Road Map [incl. University 101]									
11 a.m.-12:40 p.m.	Resource Fair and Lunch									
12:40-5 p.m.	Academic Advising and Registration									
2-5 p.m.	n/a									
2:30-5 p.m.	Campus Business Checklist [incl. Preston College Open House]							Closing and Evaluations		

CURRENT STATE



FEEDBACK

STUDENT AFFAIRS PARTICIPATION IN NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT FEEDBACK SESSION – DIRECTORS | JAN. 3, 2024

KEY INSIGHTS

Based on your participation in orientation, what works well?

- Students delivering information/presentation when appropriate
- Focusing on holistic student experience, not on list of what office does
- Explaining next steps
- Reducing anxiety by answering questions, reminding participants of what to expect

What's difficult or needs improvement?

- Resource fair is hard for everyone because of number of people in line
- Spend a lot of money on giveaways that will likely be thrown away
- Summer is long and exhausting for staff, who want to give every student a great experience
- When information is presented in optional sessions, many people don't attend
- Information overload – how can we share incrementally and at the right time?

How would you make changes?

- Set priorities and sequence – scaffold information and deliver it at the right time
- Better tailor messages – some info is appropriate for students, some for parents
- Share information throughout summer
- Co-/cross-train students and staff to present one set of consistent messages

Must-knows

- Community education deadline
- Health insurance waiver deadline
- How to select room, roommate
- Select a move-in time, how to move in (do and don't bring, especially for parents)
- Class registration
- Math placement test
- Support is available, you just have to ask for it, and you should seek it
- FSL recruitment
- Carolina Welcome
- It's on you to create your experience

Concerns

- Student delivery of info is important, but there's a need for staff, and for some offices, this is the only time they have access to all incoming students
- For some offices, this is the only time they have access to all incoming students to see them at orientation, then how do they reach them?

Orientation Focus Group 1 (Parents)

What do you remember most from your orientation visit?

Perceived Length and Exhaustion: Multiple participants mentioned the orientation process being long and leading to exhaustion, with concerns about maintaining engagement throughout the sessions.

Benefit of Breakout Sessions: Breakout sessions were consistently highlighted as the most beneficial part of the orientation experience. Participants appreciated the opportunity to choose smaller, more focused sessions over mandatory ones.

Mixed Feelings about Mandatory Sessions: Some participants expressed concerns about mandatory sessions, while others appreciated the structure and the opportunity to learn more about the university.

Parking Stress and Relevance of Information: Concerns were raised about stress related to parking, especially for students without cars. Suggestions were made to cut down on information deemed less relevant, potentially addressing the feeling of a long day.

Positive Feedback on Specific Sessions: Specific sessions, such as those related to Greek life, received positive feedback for providing valuable information and addressing concerns.

Suggested Breakout Sections for Financial Aid: There was a suggestion to have breakout sections for financial aid, catering to those who specifically need that information. This reflects a desire for a more tailored and efficient use of time during the orientation process, catering to the diverse needs of attendees.

What did you expect to get out of the experience? Did you get it?

Expectations Met in Academic Guidance: One participant expressed that their expectations for academic guidance were met, particularly in terms of understanding the importance of the Business School and the importance of taking specific classes as a sophomore.

Positive Experience with Independence: Highlighted the positive experience of separating from her son during the orientation, emphasizing the importance of fostering independence during the orientation process as a parent.

Division of Student Affairs Staff Orientation Presenters Focus Group January 11, 2024

Individuals present:

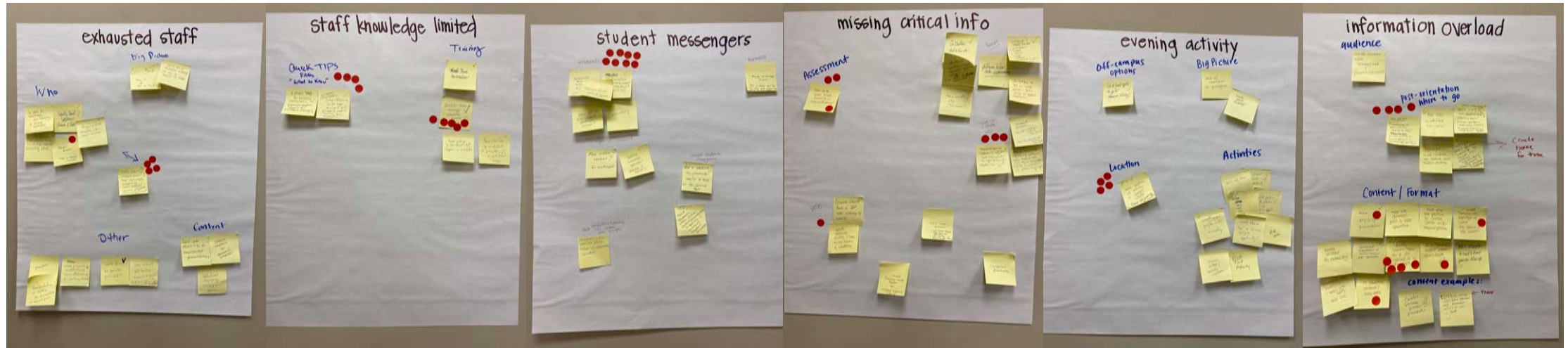
- Andrea Williams (Career Services)
- Emmie Thompson (Student Government)
- Davon Beaton (Fraternity & Sorority Life)
- Britton Reynolds (Campus Rec)
- Lauren Brown (moderator)
- Courtney Buzan (moderator)

Questions for discussion:

- Based on your participation in orientation, what works well?
 - (Student) Resource fairs are a great way for students to casually ask questions; more approachable with the staff/students present for questions; 1:1 engagement.
 - (Staff) Opportunity to share the student experience.
 - (Staff) Students appreciate the "unstructured" resource fair; casual, gives flexibility, representation telling the student story.
- What's difficult or needs improvement?
 - (Staff) the career center tries so hard to get "a lot" of information to the students to communicate to students without bombarding them.
 - (Staff) giving great information but it is given at the right time?
 - (Student) not enough information about parking in advance
 - (Staff) taking care of the next steps – things required to be enrolled – IE immunizations, Alcohol Edu, create opportunities during orientation to complete these milestones.
 - (Student) FSL sessions were big and there was not enough space to get the information; having to skip other sessions to attend priority sessions.
 - (Staff) defining the purpose of Orientation; and making sure everyone is on the same page.
 - (Staff) when you focus on what they "have to have completed for the first day of class" it doesn't leave a lot of capacity for everyone else; urgency vs importance; departments vs colleges – some information is critical for now, and other information is necessary later.
 - (Staff) Wellness Center evening event: at the end of Day 1; the last thing students want to be doing after such a robust day; student are exhausted; they get to the gym and given "forced fun"; event has stigma that it's "Strom Jail" – even from OUs; students didn't remember attending the event the next day; no impact made; at least 50% are not engaged during the event, and the minute the first bus arrives the line forms for the rest to depart.
 - (Student) Not certain that students were going out to get in trouble that night anyways – or those that wanted to go found a way to do it later anyways.
 - (Staff) Are two days truly needed? Then let's make sure it's an impactful.

Feedback/Supporter	Which presentation are you evaluating?	How would you rate this presentation?	What did you like about this presentation?	How could it be improved?	Is there anything else you would like our staff to know?
Excellent	New Student Life!	Excellent	Everything Short and to the point	Maybe a little more insight	No
Excellent		Excellent	Talking louder, clearer, slower, allowing more time to take pics of slides	Presenters could read less off of the board	No
Excellent		Excellent	Very informative, well spoken, answered questions well	It can't be perfect	No
Excellent		Excellent	Went over all of the information needed	More involvement with attendees	No
Excellent		Excellent	The enthusiasm of the presenters	More involvement with attendees	Yes have taught me to use yell
Excellent		Excellent	Visuals	None	No
Excellent		Excellent	I liked the amount of information they gave and they made it very interesting	I think it was very good nothing to improve on!	No!
Excellent		Excellent	comprehensive, conversational, very very helpful, answered all the questions I had. It gave a lot of information on dates and examples of events that go on	Maybe giving the presentation will smooth out as they give it more, they seemed a tad lost one or two times, though it didn't interrupt or interfere with the presentation	hope :)
Excellent		Excellent	The presenters, they were so cute and sweet	Nothing	Nope
Excellent		Excellent	They were good speakers	I don't know	No
Excellent		Excellent	How excited they were	Nothing	No
Excellent		Excellent	Club Sports	It's already really good.	offer, we loved it!!
Excellent		Excellent	Friendly, Outgoing!	N/A	NA
Excellent		Excellent	All of it	Nothing	NA
Excellent		Excellent	In depth explanations of each organization	None	NA
Excellent		Excellent	Very descriptive	Give more insight about greek	They did good
Excellent		Excellent	Learning about all the different events	I thought it was good	N/A
Excellent		Excellent	Everything was super helpful to know!	N/A	NA
Excellent		Excellent	Super interesting and dynamic	-	-
Excellent		Excellent	Pertinent info	More on religious opportunities	No
Excellent		Excellent	Lots of info	Great	No
Excellent		Excellent	Pertinent	n/a	No
Excellent		Excellent	The Carolina Card/The Cockpit App	More description on what kind of clubs list of clubs that are available	N/A
Excellent		Excellent	The speakers were enthusiastic to a point where I could get a good understanding of what to do for the university.	Did awesome! No need for improvement	No
Excellent		Excellent	It did a good job of doing into how much there is to do here.	Maybe list more.	No
Good		Good	well explained	a lot of info in such little time	no
Excellent		Excellent	Very fun!	A little too much information packed together	No
Excellent		Excellent	All the information	Nothing	It was great!
Good		Good	informative	n/a	No
Excellent		Excellent	Very enthusiastic and engaging.	A lot of examples, but they do help sometimes.	N/A
Excellent		Excellent	They were very energetic and kept my attention	Seamless transitions	You guys did great!

KEY IMPROVEMENTS



- Coordinate session topics and messages as a division
- Offer supplementary information in other ways
- Expand the student ambassador program division-wide
- Develop a team of cross-trained employees to staff orientation touchpoints
- Work with the orientation office to reimagine the evening activity
- Explore other assessment methods to better gauge effectiveness
- Share knowledge across the division



RESULTS

- Lifting out priority info for Day 1 general session (all audiences)
- Combining two breakout sessions with complementary content
- Expanding student ambassador program to represent entire division and presentation to show broader student experience
- Working with Orientation to redesign Day 1 evening activity



PROJECT GOALS

- ✓ • Improve the development of coordinated, high quality, audience-centered orientation efforts
- ✗ • Reduce staff time dedicated to orientation
- ✓ • Improve students' creation of appropriate expectations for the beginning of the semester
- ✓ • Increase students' completion of tasks required before the first day of class



PROJECT GOALS

- ✓• Improve the development of coordinated, high audience-centered orientation efforts
- ~~x• Reduce staff time dedicated to orientation~~
- ✓• Improve students' creation of appropriate exp beginning of the semester
- ✓• Increase students' completion of tasks require day of class

**Make better use
of staff time
dedicated
to orientation**



NEXT STEPS

In progress

- Coordinate as division
 - Basics presentation
 - Combine two breakout sessions
- Expand student ambassador program
- Revise evening activity

Student Affairs Participation in Orientation – 2024 Action Plan

Action	Possible Point Person or Team Members	Tentative Timeline
Coordinate topics and messages as a division		
• Continue work as an advisory group	Advisory Group	Ongoing
• Identify essential content and map across sessions	Erin, Leena, Lauren, Matt, Alison	Feb. – March 2024
• Combine related information for the audience	Erin, Leena, Lauren, Matt, Alison	Feb. – March 2024
• Develop a "basics" presentation for all participants (full audience)	Erin, Matt, Courtney, Allison	Feb – March 2024
Offer supplementary information in other ways		
• Develop a checklist of "must dos"	Advisory Group	April 2024
• Create timeline of information to be shared	Advisory Group	April 2024
• Use the Gamecock Family Hub as a primary channel	Erin, Leena	April – Aug. 2024
Develop a team of cross-trained employees to staff orientation touchpoints		
• Identify engaging presenters, deliver training and design shared schedule	Matt, Courtney, Erin	April – May 2024
Expand the student ambassador program division-wide		
• Work with Student Affairs and Academic Support Human Resources and in alignment with the student employment initiative	Matt, Erin	March – May 2024
• Involve ambassadors as presenters, co-presenters and resource fair staff as appropriate	Advisory Group	March – May 2024
• Involve students in developing/reviewing materials	Advisory Group	March – May 2024
Work with Orientation to reimagine the evening activity		



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student email every Sunday @ 7 p.m.



REFLECTIONS

Tuesday, January 23

 1/23 4:59 PM



I feel so inspired after today's meeting! I feel like the work we're doing really matters, and it feels like such a privilege to be part of this committee! Thank you!



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THANKS!

Maegan Gudridge

Executive Director of Communications and Marketing

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maegan@sc.edu



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