The Freshmen Life Cycle and A
Comprehensive First Year Experience
Program

National Conference on the First-Year Experience
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Denver, Colorado
AGENDA

- Introduction
- The GW Profile & Background
- Colonial Inauguration
- Co-Curricular Programs
- GW Housing Programs
- Freshman Day of Service
- Guide to Personal Success Program
- Dean of Freshmen and Ongoing Activities
- Questions and Answers
GW Profile and Background

- Freshman Class of 2,550 students
- 9,800 Total Undergraduate Population
- 37 acceptance rate
- 1870-2090 average SAT score
- 65 in Top 10% of high school class
- 7,300 students in residence
Colonial Inauguration
New Student Orientation
Program

- Five comprehensive 2.5 day orientation sessions
- Schedule tracts for students (freshmen, transfer, international), parents, and siblings
- Acclimate students and parents to
  - student life
  - academic mission
  - administration, faculty, alumni
  - Campus and city community
Schedule Overview

- Academic Orientation
- Student Life Orientation
- Business Processes Orientation
- Campus/Alumni Community Orientation
- Parent Program
- Siblings Program
Colonial Inauguration Staffing

- **Professional Staff**
  - Director of CI
  - Two graduate assistants

- **Student Staff**
  - 5 student coordinators
  - 40 orientation leaders (Colonial Cabinet)
  - 16 siblings program leaders (CI Staffers)
  - 10 support staff (Blue Shirts)

- **Campus colleagues**
  - Housing
  - Admissions
  - Business Services
  - Office of Parent Services
  - Campus Technology
  - Dean of Freshmen
  - Office of Community Service
  - Office of Greek Life
  - Student Organizations
Transitioning to GW

- Campus culture and community
- University goals, mission and strategic plans
- City life and urban living
- Academic community of scholars
- Residential living
- Mentorship and campus resources
Orientation to Engaged Student

- GW Housing Programs and Residential Life
- Office of Community Service
- Guide to Personal Success
- Academia
- Campus Involvement and Student Life
  - Move In
  - Welcome Week
  - Freshman Convocation and Fresh on the Yard
- Co-Curricular Programs
  - Community Building Community (CBC)
  - Project Exploration (PE)
  - Experience DC (EDC)
  - Emerging Leaders Program (ELP)
Co-Curricular Programs Overview

Encompassing four areas of involvement:
1. Leadership Development
2. Outdoor Adventure Programming
3. Community Service
4. Exploring the City

- Emerging Leaders Program
- Project Exploration
- Community Building Community
- Experience D.C.
Co-Curricular Programs Purpose

- Ease students’ anxiety about transition between high school and college
- Foster the engagement of incoming students in the GW community and encourage involvement in a variety of areas from day one.
- Connect incoming freshmen with upperclassmen guides who mentor them about life at GW
- Connect incoming students with their peers
- Develop the leadership potential in all students involved
- Inform students about the many opportunities that living in Washington, D.C. provides
GW Housing Programs

- **Mission:** Provide a premier residential experience
- **Focused on individual interactions with students**
- **Staff to student ratio in the first year about 1:40**
GW Housing Programs

- House Proctor Role (Student staff)
  - Some typical responsibilities not applicable for staff
    - Enforcement
    - Facilities
    - Other operations
  - Focus on connecting to resources
  - Educational conversations based on first-year needs
GW Housing Programs

- Beginning of the academic year
  - Connect students to resources and integrating into GW culture
    - Welcome Week
    - Other programming
  - Facilitate roommate agreements
  - Introduce students to policies
  - Assist in community development
GW Housing Programs

- Additional responsibilities during the academic year
  - Connection to Faculty resources
  - Integration into the halls and campus
  - Respond to emergency needs and crisis
  - Connect on a one-on-one level
Freshman Day of Service

Serving those who have served us
Importance of a First-Year Service Experience

- Commence the GW freshman service experience and underscore/punctuate the culture of service at the University.
- For those students who may not be inclined to participate in service, the FDoS can spark a desire to get involved in and around the campus and city.
- Initiate new community partnerships, strengthen existing relationships, and encourage students to participate in ongoing service after this initial experience.
- Provides students the opportunity to meet upperclass student-leaders who are involved in community service.
FDoS: An Overview

- Freshman Day of Service is an opportunity to enhance students’ education through civic engagement.
- The event focused on serving those who have served us, the many veterans who reside in the DC area, as well as those who are currently serving overseas.
- FDoS also provides the students a chance to see and experience the city which will become their home for the next four years.
Serving those who have served us

- Some of the service sites include, the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), United Service Organization (USO), the Armed Forces Retirement Home, Capitol Area Foodbank, Anacostia Watershed Society, Washington Parks and People, So Others Might Eat (SOME) and We Are Family.
- 1,200 First Year Participants
- 70 Sophomore, Junior and Senior Leaders
Continuing the GW tradition of Community Service

I plan to get involved with other community service events and opportunities this year.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

I would recommend Freshman Day of Service to incoming freshmen next year.

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

183 students participated in survey
FDoS: The Catalyst for Future Service

- Providing students opportunities to get involved in ongoing community service via the Community Service Fair following service engagement

- Giving students the opportunity to reflect on their service and the meaning of September 11\textsuperscript{th} during the annual 9/11 Candle Light Vigil

- Freshman Day of Service is a university-wide initiative, showing students that service is a cornerstone of life at GW
Freshman Day of Service Media

Attention

BROADCAST:
- Coverage from ABC World News Tonight with Charles Gibson
- CNN Situation Room
- WTTG-TV Fox 5

PRINT:
- Mrs. Obama challenges GWU to community service, 9/11 http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5juP8mDhGrGbIMPSnnxqBusp3pjkgD9AL72B01

Blogs and Online:
- People.com Michelle Obama Makes a Bet with College Kids. 9/11 http://www.people.com/people/article/0,,20303981,00.html
Guide to Personal Success Program

- Incoming Class of 2013’s 2,550+ members were assigned to a University Guide at the beginning of the academic year.
- 600 Guides from across the University were paired up with freshmen in an approximate 1:5 ratio.
- Guides focus on social, personal, and experiential aspect of the student experience, thereby supporting the academic mission of the University.
Guide to Personal Success

Program

- All 2,550 incoming freshmen have been assigned a University Guide
- 600 Participating Guides:
  - Office of the President
  - Student and Academic Support Services
  - EVP&T
  - Government, International, and Community Relations
  - Human Resources
  - General Counsel
  - Communications
  - Alumni and Advancement
  - Academic Affairs
  - Young Alumni
  - Student Leaders
    *all students have a 3.0 cumulative GPA and are in excellent standing with the University, including judicially.
- Extensive training of Guides that spanned 3 days (*videotaped for future Guides)
- Thousands of contacts in opening month of September via email and individual meetings
Guide to Personal Success Program

- Combination of prescribed meetings for ‘touchpoints’ and informal gatherings and communications.
- 1st meeting takes place within the first week of school to begin relationship, get acquainted, touch base on any first week difficulties, etc.
- Lunch in October paid for by University: Guides take out students individually as well as in groups to facilitate social interaction among new peers ($25 per student).
Guide to Personal Success Program

- Third and final ‘prescribed’ meeting takes place after Thanksgiving break right before final exams to check in with student, see how they are doing, provide resources before finals if needed, etc.

- 2 meetings during Spring semester expected, one when students return from Winter Break (discuss transition back, goals for 2nd semester, etc) and one after Spring Break and before final exams begin.
Dean of Freshmen

- Dual report to both Academic Affairs and Student Academic Support Services
- Advisor
- Advocate
- Counselor
  - Transition issues and concerns about classes, academics, and financial aid
Office of the Dean of Freshmen

- **Academic Programs**
  - Partner with faculty

- **Class Affinity Programs**
  - Summer Send-Offs
  - Freshman Reading Program; *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*
    - Over 300 students submitted responses
  - House Tour
    - Met 1,200 students
  - Freshman Families Reception
  - Freshman Feasts

- **Communication**
  - Emails once a week
  - Quarterly letters
General Discussion / Questions & Answers

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