No More Info Dump: Re-imagining NSO as a Process, Instead of an Event

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Re-trace our journey:

1. Why? (what wasn’t working)
2. How? (process)
3. Is it working now? (assessment)
Utah Valley University:

- Urban, Commuter Campus
- Open Admission
- Public, 4-year (CC role)
- 35,000 students (Utah’s largest)
- 3,900 new freshmen
- 30% freshmen are First-Gen
- 35% are under-prepared for college-level academics
Historical Perspective for this initiative:

- Retention rate of 52% in 2007
- 2007 Title III Grant helped launch UVU’s first FYE efforts
- First NSO program in 2009
  - Optional, limited participation

New university president in 2009 developed a fresh set of institutional core values...
As an institution, we strive to be:

• Inclusive
• Engaged
• Serious
• Focused on Student Success
  (Success = Completion)

As an institution, how do we communicate our values to new students in order to best support their success?
“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 interactions with faculty and staff, and convey the values and traditions of the new institution.”

(Mullendore & Banahan, 2005)
Prior to 2015, NSO was:

- “One-size fits all”
- Siloed within Student Life
- 4-hour “info-dump” format
- Mandatory (as of 2013)
- No articulated learning outcomes

We needed to better utilize the opportunity provided by NSO...but where to start?
The BEGINNING!

- NSO moved from Student Life to First-Year Experience & Student Retention office
- Inter-departmental task force of staff and faculty created
- Fresh review of CAS Standards for Orientation, and review of national NSO best practices
The mission of Orientation Programs must facilitate the transition of new students into the institution; prepare students for the institution’s educational opportunities and student responsibilities; initiate the integration of new students into the intellectual, cultural, and social climate of the institution; and support the parents, partners, guardians, and children of the new student.

“Consistent with the institutional mission, Orientation Programs must identify relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes...”

- Inclusive
- Engaged
- Serious
- Focused on Student Success (Success = Completion)
1. Who are our new students?

2. What do they need to know in order to be successful on our campus?
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3. What common needs do they share?
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2. What do they need to know in order to be successful on our campus?
3. What common needs do they share?
4. How do their needs differ?
5. What are best practices for NSO?
6. What can we reasonably do?
7. How will we assess our effectiveness?
One-size does not fit all:

- How many sizes can we really accommodate?

1. Transfer, 15 or more credits

2. Freshmen, 25 and older (now 22 and older)

3. Freshmen, 24 and younger (now 21 and younger)
No more info-dump:

• Online format (all students)
  1. User defined tracks
  2. Audience specific content
  3. 3rd party host (ADG)
No more info-dump:

- Online format (all students)
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- Campus Events (Freshmen, 21 years and younger)
  1. Jumpstart
No more info-dump:

- Online format (all students)
  1. User defined tracks
  2. Audience specific content
  3. 3rd party host (ADG)

- Campus Events (Freshmen, 21 years and younger)
  1. Jumpstart
  2. Freshman Convocation
First-time Freshman
(transferring 14 credits or less, 21 years or younger)

1. Online Orientation – Freshman Track
2. Jumpstart
3. Summer OL/Peer Connections
4. Freshman Convocation
5. StartSmart Emails
6. Fall OL/Peer Connections
First-time Freshman (transferring 14 credits or less, 22 years or older)

1. Online Orientation – Freshman Track
2. StartSmart Emails
Transfer
(transferring 15 credits or more, regardless of age)

1. Online Orientation – Transfer Track
2. TBD
Learning Outcomes:

• 4 categories
1. Navigating Resources
2. Academic Expectations
3. Campus Connections
4. Motivational Scaffolds
Example: Identify their academic advisor and make an appointment to meet with them.

- All student types
- Online format
Example: Explain the value of general education coursework.

- Freshmen
- Online format
- Jumpstart
Example:
Explain the value of general education coursework.
Example:
Identify and summarize the value of a post-secondary education.

- Freshmen (21 years & younger)
- Jumpstart
2 Years out...what do we know?

- Online Orientation
  1. Students are satisfied

After taking the online Orientation I would say the quality of information provided was:

- Low quality: the information provided did not help me at all: 0.93%
- Moderate quality: the information provided was somewhat helpful: 24.22%
- High quality: the information provided was very helpful: 99%

Overall, how satisfied were you with the online Orientation?

- Very Dissatisfied: 1.41%
- Dissatisfied: 2.79%
- Satisfied: 58.90%
- Very Satisfied: 36.89%

Total Entries: 24,000
2 Years out...what do we know?

• Online Orientation

2. Students are learning

97% +
2 Years out...what do we know?

- **Jumpstart Orientation**
  1. Students are satisfied

![Graph showing satisfaction levels](image)
2 Years out...what do we know?

- Jumpstart Orientation

2. Students are learning 75% +
2 Years out...what do we know?

• Freshman Convocation

1. Keep Improving!

Did attending Freshman Convocation increase your pride in attending UVU?

- Increased significantly: 53.75%
- Increased slightly
- Neither increased or decreased
- Decreased slightly
- Decreased significantly
Moving forward:

• Continue to evaluate & refine
• “Positive restlessness” (Kinzie)

“…a comprehensive, multi-faceted orientation process beginning at the time of admission and continuing throughout the entire first year.”

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