No More Info Dump:

Re-imagining NSO as a Process, Instead of an Event

Martha Wilson
Assistant Director
FYE & Orientation

Marcy Glassford
Director
First-Year Experience & Student Retention

UTAH VALLEY UVU UNIVERSITY
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE & STUDENT RETENTION

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.

(CAS Professional Standards for Higher Education, 8th Edition)

- "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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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)

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  1. User defined tracks
  2. Audience specific content
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- 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

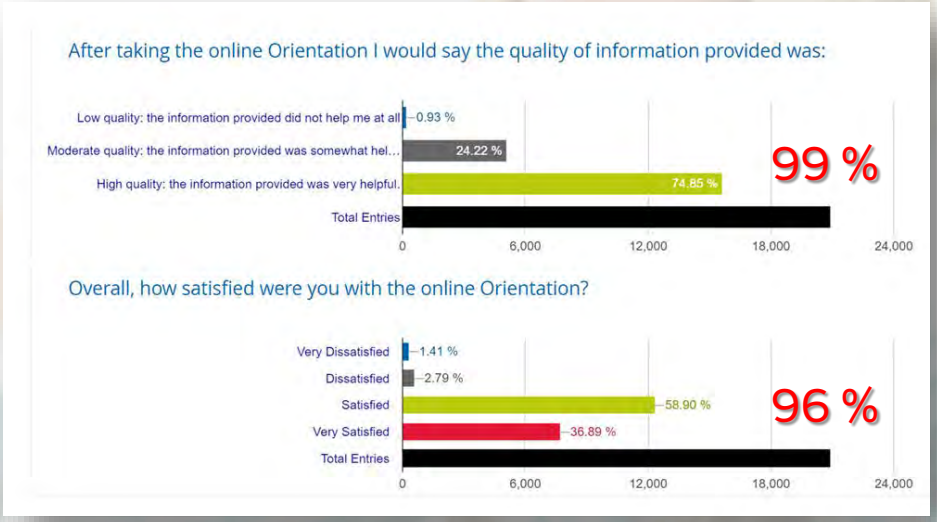
Example:
Explain the value of general education coursework.

Example:
Identify and summarize the value of a post-secondary education.

- Freshmen (21 years & younger)
- Jumpstart

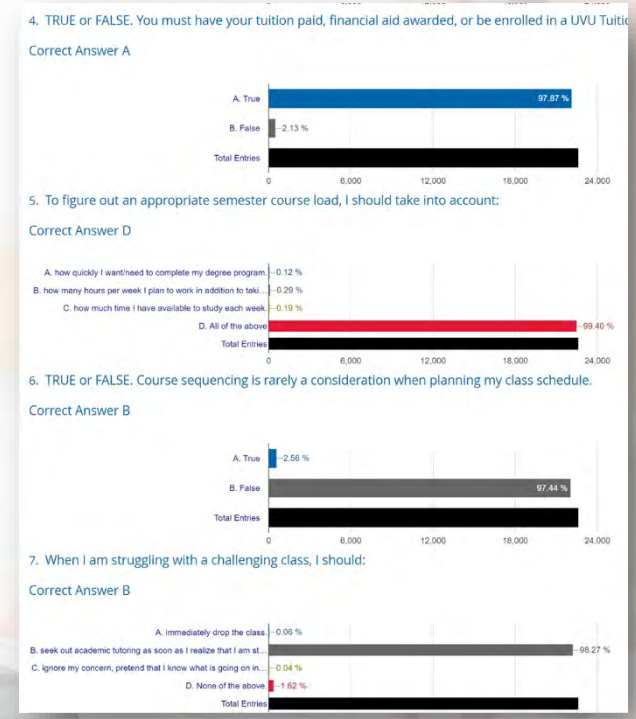
2 Years out…what do we know?

- Online Orientation
  1. Students are satisfied



2 Years out…what do we know?

- Online Orientation
  2. Students are learning



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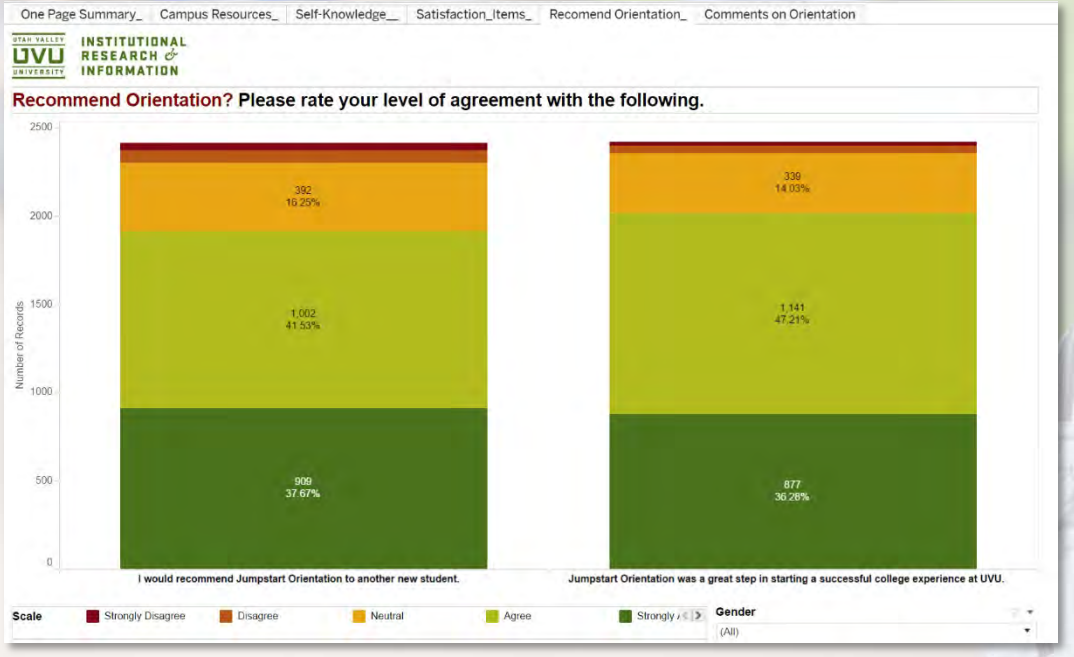

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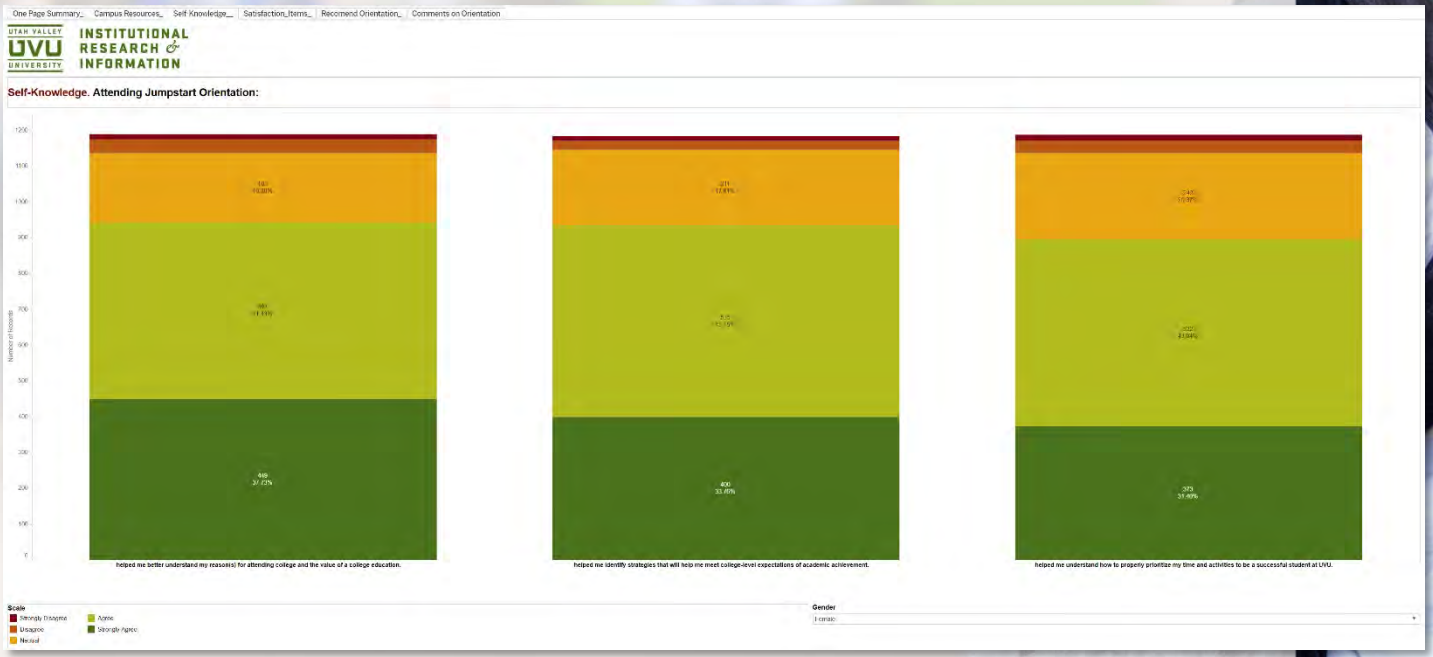

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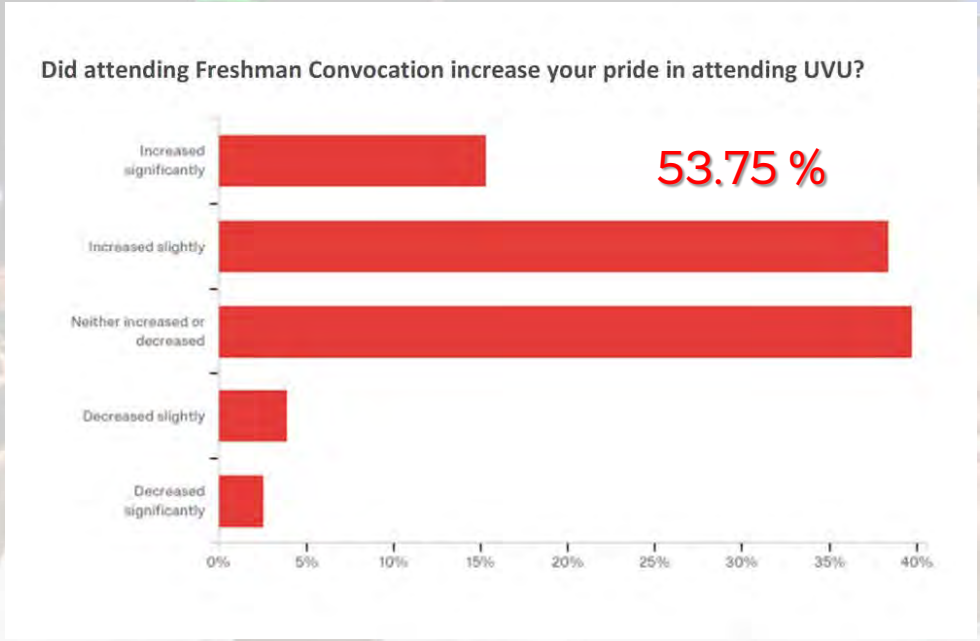
2 Years out…what do we know?

- Freshman Convocation
  1. Keep Improving!



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."

Mullendore, R.H., & Banahan, L.A. (2005). Designing Orientation Programs. In M.L. Upcraft, J.N. Gardner, & B.O. Barefoot (Eds.), Challenging and supporting the first-year student: A handbook for improving the first year of college (p. 391). San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Contact:

Martha Wilson
Assistant Director
FYE & Orientation
marthaw@uvu.edu

Marcy Glassford
Director
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Student Retention
MarcyG@uvu.edu