

Alfred University

Student Affairs

607-871-2132

www.alfred.edu/students

studentaffairs@alfred.edu

StudentVoice Orientation and New Student Programs benchmarking project

StudentVoice, in partnership with the NASPA Assessment and Student Learning Consortium, administered a survey of the orientation experience among college students (N=17,756), and AU was a participant. The assessment was administered in a web format in October to all students who went through the orientation process. Alfred University had 173 respondents. Our outcomes were then compared with national, private, and small college/university samples.

Among our respondents, 79% were white, 81% said they live on campus, 23% intended to play intercollegiate sports (the national average was 8%, and we were higher than private and small colleges also), and 25% were first-generation college students. 11% of respondents identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or queer, more than double that of all our comparison groups. 61% had joined at least one club or organization. 91% expected to get a 3.0 or above during the current semester, compared to 86% of the national sample.

Most aspects of our orientation were rated more positively than the national sample. This year, we also received benchmarking information categorized by small colleges/universities, and private colleges/universities. This provided some interesting new references this year.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE DIFFERENCE FROM COMPARISON GROUPS

I know how to register for classes at this college/university (vs. small colleges, also significantly higher compared to national and private colleges.)	+0.78
I met new people at Orientation that I am still friends with. (vs. national)	+0.67
I know what resources are available if I am looking for employment (vs. small colleges; also significantly higher than national and private schools)	+0.32
At Orientation, I learned about the different clubs and organizations that I could join. (vs. national; also significantly higher than private schools small col/univ)	+0.29
Academically, how would you describe your transition from your previous school/college to this college/university? (vs. national; also significantly higher than private and small col/univ)	+0.28
Since entering this college/university, how successful or unsuccessful have you been at developing friendships with other students? (vs. national)	+0.25
I know at least one person (faculty or staff) at this college/university that I can turn to if I have questions or concerns. (vs. national)	+0.24
Socially, how would you describe your transition from your previous school/college to this college/university? (vs. national; also higher than private colleges)	+0.24

How prepared were you for your first day of classes at this college/university? (vs. small colleges; also sig. higher vs. national.)	+0.20
Orientation gave me useful information on how to find the online schedule of courses (vs. both small and private colleges)	+0.19
Orientation gave me useful information on campus activities and programs (vs. national)	+0.18
Orientation helped me to know what to expect socially at this college/university. (vs. national)	+0.17
Orientation gave me useful information on rules, regulations, and policies at this college/university. (vs. small colleges)	+0.16
Overall, how would you rate the Orientation program? (vs. national; also significantly higher than private and small colleges)	+0.16
How would you rate the orientation registration process? (vs. national; also significantly higher vs. private colleges)	+0.15

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANT NEGATIVE DIFFERENCE FROM COMPARISON GROUPS

I know where all the important buildings are on campus (vs. small colleges and universities.)	-0.23
Orientation gave me useful information on academic requirements (vs. national)	-0.15
Expectation that student will be enrolled at AU next semester (vs. national)	-0.10

TOP TEN RANKED ITEMS OVERALL

Courtesy of orientation staff	4.61
Availability of orientation staff	4.57
Knowledge of orientation staff	4.43
I know at least one person (faculty or staff) at this college/university that I can turn to if I have questions or concerns.	4.33
I have been successful in developing friendships with other students	4.28
I have been successful in understanding what professors expect academically	4.26
I know where all the important buildings are on campus.	4.23
I have a clear understanding of how to register for classes at this college/university	4.20
At orientation, I learned about the different clubs and organizations that I could join.	4.11
At orientation, I learned about the different resources on campus that could help me if I am having academic concerns.	4.11

SUMMARY

Again this year, according to almost every measure, our orientation is quite successful. Only three items were significantly below our peers, and many were above. Compared to last year, there were some gains in areas that were not as strong last year: students indicated knowledge of how to register for classes, felt they were making a successful academic transition, and indicated that they felt they knew what professors expected academically. We also continued our success in helping students become connected to AU, transition socially, and connect with faculty/staff through our orientation.

However, that also provides an interesting conundrum. As stated in the summary, 91% of respondents expected to get a 3.0 or above during the current semester, compared to 86% of the national sample. Our students, even a month into school, are still expecting to succeed academically. If retention figures bear out that we've academically dismissed more first year students than ever, we have an interesting disconnect between what they perceive we expect during orientation, and what we actually expect.

Based on these results, we recommend continued focus on how to connect students with resources that will help them succeed, given that they arrive with the expectation that they have what it takes. We also recommend reviewing the qualitative responses on the next three pages; students shared some good information with us.

ADDENDUM: WRITTEN RESPONSES

Q36. In thinking back on your orientation experience, are there questions that you wish had been answered? (Note: KW removed answers such as “no” and “great job,” etc. Otherwise, answers are unedited.)

- How do I register for classes online.
- How to check how many meals and dining dollars you have left.
- How to use the Library. Where ITS is
- I dont really know any important buildings on campus, i just know my classes, the wellness center and the writing center
- I feel that there should be some type of handout to explain the education requirements for CLAS. I would like a detailed list of what the Gen. Ed. requirements are and what exactly I need to have in a material form, not online. I also think that we should have been informed about the Directory before classes started, to minimize the stress of contacting professors and other staff members.
- I wish I got better insight on what was going to happen when I got to class on Monday. The seminars really just consumed time I would have rather spent making friends.
- i wish that they had gone over more about academic requirements and the different class options you can take.
- I wish we had been informed of simple things like the fact that there are two dining halls. It would also be nice to have known more about the structure of the Foundations course.
- I would have had heard more about the other academic schools inside of Alfred University.
- I'm housing off campus so it would have been nice to have someone explain campus rules, etc. to me. I never heard them because meetings were attended with people leaving by residence hall to attend, and I wasn't in a hall so I didn't go or know what to do, really. I did miss out on some information but nothing too crucial.
- It would have been nice to tour all of the buildings and say what was in each of them so I had a general idea where my classes would be.
- No, but putting a bunch of kids in a hot sweaty gym after most of them have just inured a long car ride is NOT the best time to take a picture for their school I.D. that will be carried around with them until they graduate.
- time management
- where the security center was?
- What hours things are available at
- What requirements we have to take in order to graduate.
- What were the individual requirements for each major?
- Wish orientation would provide more info on transferring credit courses from one college to another, how the study abroad program works, where everything is for specific academic concerns, and, in general, didn't treat transfer students the same way freshmen were treated during ceremonies or welcoming sessions.
- Yes. Like a full campus tour of EVERY building

Q37. What were the most useful parts of orientation? (Note: KW removed answers such as “everything,” “don't remember,” etc. Otherwise, answers are unedited.)

- Activities fair
- Activities that mingled all the students together so we could meet new people.
- Advising session
- BBQ

- Club information, and the group activities about studying abroad, how to study, etc.
- Club meetings
- Everyone was very helpful and caring.
- Free time to mingle with friends that were met by ourselves and not forced to hang out with by OGs or RAs.
- Free, unstructured time to hang around with other new people. Meals in the dining hall are awesome before the returning students get here.
- getting familiar with the campus areas and buildings and knowing the places of important offices.
- Getting to know people/Meeting new people (mentioned several times, not including other responses in this summary)
- Getting to know the orientation guides
- Hall Meetings
- Having all of the meetings, that allowed us to meet new people and gave all of us a better incentive of what kind of lifestyle that we are going to have to adjust to for next 4 years of our life.
- I enjoyed the day when we were allowed to pick three "classes" about different things on campus, I also liked the chance to talk to fellow classmates and make some new friends.
- I liked meeting people and getting a more first-hand view of the campus
- In the gym getting everything finally done like the mail room key, dorm key, work study, insurance, health center, etc.
- Keeping the students busy with activities in the beginning made it easier to part with whoever dropped us off and to keep from getting too overwhelmed. I found that I actually met more people during the free time than during activities so it was good that fewer things were mandatory as time went on. The night when all the clubs performed in the street really gave me a great sense of what the people here are like.
- Learning about leadership opportunities, and being given chances to meet other students.
- Learning how to use the AU website.
- Meeting my advisor
- meeting new people and finding your way around campus
- Meeting new people, and exploring the campus
- Meeting new people, tours of the campus
- meeting other students and staff and faculty.
- Meeting people at Playfair
- meeting people here feeling welcomed
- meeting staff and others in charge who i can turn to if i had any questions
- meeting the transfer professor
- Meeting with Professors and Advisors
- meeting different people all the time, everyone is always so friendly and thats what really made me come to this campus. in addition to that orientation made me feel like i was part of the school.
- Organizing room, meeting roommate and friends and floor
- Orientation allowed me to gain a basic understanding of the campus and the layout of the buildings. So on that first day I knew exactly where I needed to go for all of my classes and that was a huge relief.
- play fair
- Play fair- for meeting people
- play fair was a good experience and meeting with our advisors.
- Playfair, block party
- registration fair
- Registration, the beginning. Move in.

- splitting up within our majors and staying with that group throughout orientation
- The academic advising session, it was really great to talk to my advisor and get to know him and where to find him before the semester started.
- The activities to bring the students together and the informative conferences about different aspects of Alfred.
- The advisor meetings
- The block party where we learned about all of the different clubs and the playfair (I met lots of people there!)
- the block party, the meeting in olin and scholes that we individually picked, meeting the core faculty for the art school
- The club fair.
- The club fair/block party I think they called it?
- The fair in the gym
- the friendliness of the guides made me feel welcomed.
- The hour slots where we got to choose what we wanted to learn about.
- The Meeting where all the transfer students got together and disscussed stuff
- The meetings that were held talking about the school rules and regulations.
- The most useful part of orientation was having the campus almost completely full of only first year students so we could meet each other.
- The most useful part was getting to know the campus and becoming comfortable around the new environment. Getting to know other students ahead of time was also useful in the transition.
- The most useful parts of orientation was the interaction lessons.
- The picnics and the 'dance' where we met a bunch of people. I met so many of my friends at orientation. it was a great experience and I hope it continues!
- the R.A.s and others who helped people get to know each other
- The seminars about time management and partying 101. Playfair was fun too; it helped to meet new people.
- The tours.
- The transfer dinners, I heard someone say they were in the same major and concentrarion as me when we were all introducing ourselves, so I apporached him later in the weekend and he is now a good friend of mine.
- The various activities, both informational and social
- The walks to the different buildings on campus
- the workshops
- Things directly related to me as a student.