

Evaluation of Transfer Student Orientation Fall 2007: Grant Task 1.4.3

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Transfer Student Orientation

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Participants: 195 Transfer Students

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Transfer Student Orientation Activity

The Transfer Student Orientation focuses on assisting transfer students with career and academic advisement, resources and services information, and social activities in an effort to help students adjust to UW-Stout and increase their engagement levels. These factors have been linked with student persistence and graduation.

Logic of the Activity

As with all activities collectively addressing Objective 1, the Transfer Student Orientation was intended to help *increase the retention and graduation rates* of students enrolled at the university. Transfer students' retention and graduation rates are typically lower than students that start at UW-Stout; they are also below the UW-System average rates. In addition, the orientation activity aligns with university goal 7 by helping transfer students select efficient and cost-effective courses, rather than taking more credits than required.

Executive Summary

Of the 243 transfer students registered for the Transfer Student Orientation, 195 (80%) participated. The Transfer Student Orientation was well-received by students, resulting in a generally positive attitude based on their assessment of orientation. Participants were particularly satisfied with the information and communication, registration process, and move-in day. One student expressed, "I'm so glad they decided to do something for us transfer students!..." Participants commonly remarked that they would have liked orientation to take place before the first week of school, had more information earlier, and have had more interactive orientation activities to meet other students. Central findings are summarized as follows.

Strengths of the Activity

- Transfer students reported above average ratings on all components of the transfer student orientation, with career services, the informational meeting, and laptop training receiving the highest ratings.
- Students were satisfied with their transfer experience.
- Transfer students were most satisfied with information and communication, move-in day, and the registration process.
- Students found the transfer student checklist on the Transfer Student Website the most helpful.
- Numerous respondents felt nothing was needed to improve the orientation.

- Numerous respondents felt nothing else was needed to make their transition to Stout easier.

Opportunities to Improve the Activity

- Factor in a no-show rate.
- Align activities more closely with goals of the orientation event.
- Revision of evaluation survey tool:
 - Defines words used in the evaluation survey tool.
 - Have survey questions align more closely with orientation goals.
 - Make the evaluation survey a scheduled activity to improve the response rate.
- Provide more information and orientation activities before the first week of school.
- Have more interactive activities to meet other students.
- Try to have students' advisors on campus the day of orientation.
- Bring more awareness to the Transfer Student Website.

Action Plan to Improve the Activity

- Bring more awareness to the Transfer Student Website.
- Expand to include/target all transfer students

Action Plan to Evaluate Impact/Sustainability of Intervention

- Students tracked for yearly enrollment, major declaration, performance, and graduation rates to determine impact of the intervention and whether it is a good use of available resources.

Post-Orientation Survey Results

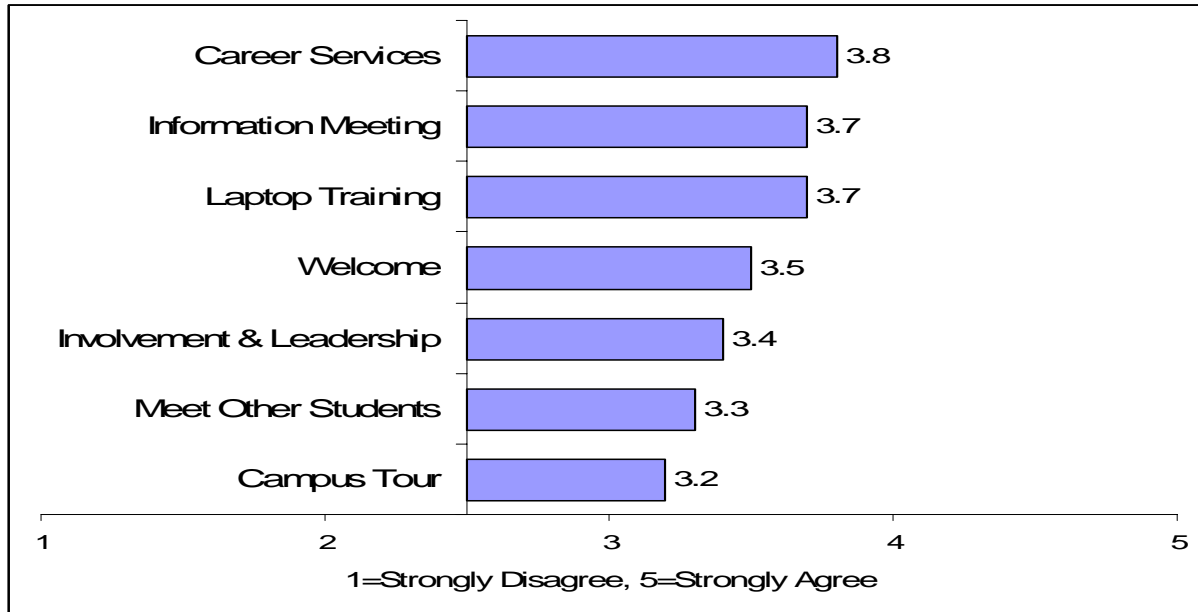
The Transfer Student Orientation involved 195 transfer students, of whom 60 (31%) completed the evaluation surveys. The following report details the findings from the evaluation survey administered to students after the orientation. The survey posed two quantitative questions, one yes or no question, and five qualitative questions.

Participants' Quantitative Results

The first quantitative question asked students to rate, on a 5-point Likert scale, various components of the orientation. The second quantitative question asked students to rate their satisfaction with various components of their transfer experience. In addition, a yes or no question regarding the Transfer Student Website was included.

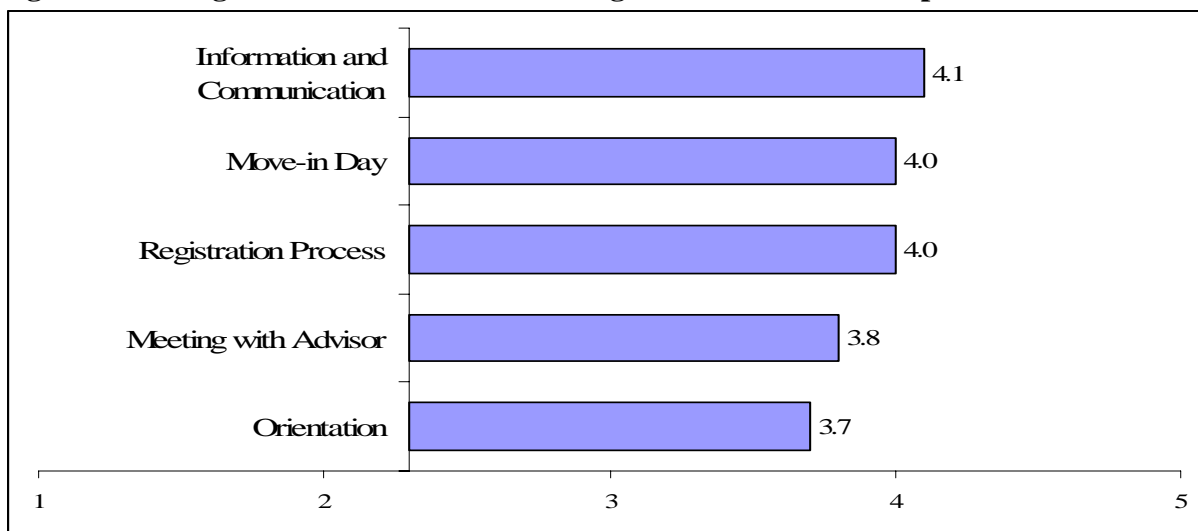
The first question asked participants to “Please rate the following components of the Transfer Student Orientation.” Participants rated the Career Services Component as most useful (3.8 average rating), followed by the Information Meeting and Laptop Training (3.7), Welcome (3.5), Involvement and Leadership (3.4), Meet Other Students (3.3), and lastly the Campus Tour (3.2). See Figure 1 for graphical displays of average student ratings for all workshop components.

Figure 1. The following components of the Transfer Student Orientation were useful



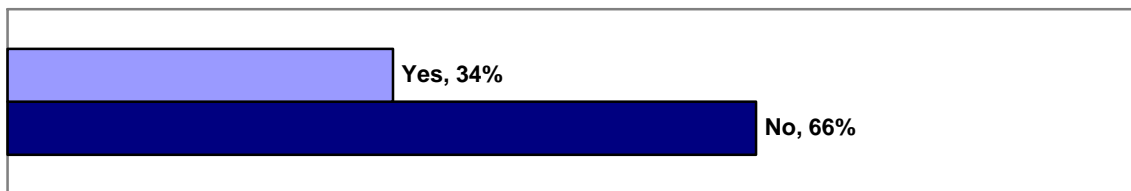
Participants were also asked, “Overall, how satisfied have you been with your Transfer Experience?” Participants were most satisfied with the Information and Communication (4.1 average rating), followed by Move-in Day and the Registration Process (4.0), Meeting with Advisor (3.8), and lastly Orientation (3.7). See Figure 2 for graphical displays of average student ratings for all workshop components.

Figure 2. Average Student Satisfaction Ratings of their Transfer Experience



Participants were asked “*Have you used the Transfer Student Website to access information?*” As seen in Figure 3, 34% of participants used the Transfer Student Website; however, the majority of participants, 66%, did not.

Figure 3. Have you used the Transfer Student Website to access information?



Participants' Qualitative Results

The orientation evaluation survey consisted of five qualitative questions. A complete list of comments from the five questions can be found in Table 2.

Participants were asked, “*What could we do to improve the Transfer Orientation Program?*” Of the 60 survey respondents, 35 participants completed this question. Analysis of the comments revealed seven themes. The most frequent comment was everything was good, followed by more interactive activities to meet people, hold more than one orientation with smaller groups, and more information. Thematic categories and number of occurrences per category are listed in Table 1.

Participants were also asked if they had any “*Additional Comments*” on their transfer experience. Sixteen of the 60 survey respondents had additional comments. Analysis of the comments revealed three themes. The two most frequent comments were comments on move-in day and problems/not happy with advisor, followed by happy with advisor. Thematic categories and number of occurrences per category are listed in Table 1.

Participants were asked, if you used the Transfer Student Website “*what was most helpful?*” Of the 20 students that answered yes, 13 provided comments. Analysis of the comments revealed three themes. The most frequent comment was the transfer student checklist, followed by general information and the credit transfer guide. Thematic categories and number of occurrences per category are listed in Table 1.

Lastly, participants were asked, “*What could we have done to make your transition to UW-Stout easier?*” Thirty of the 60 respondents answered. Analysis of the comments revealed five themes. The two most frequent comments were nothing else was needed and provide more information and orientation activities earlier, followed by place transfer students together in dorm rooms, problems with advising, and have more activities on campus for transfer students. Thematic categories and number of occurrences per category are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Themes for Open-ended question responses

What could we do to improve the Transfer Orientation Program?
Everything was good (7)
More interactive activities to meet people (7)
Hold more than one orientation with smaller groups (4)
More information (4)
Not as long (3)
More laptop training (2)
Hold orientation during summer (2)
Other (1 response each): Cater some activities on campus specifically to transfer students, beyond just the orientation - Take you to get your books - Make the transfer information more apparent on the Stout home page - Telling us about Menomonie - More interesting - Hold a little earlier in the day - More organized - Spend more time walking around campus and less time in a building.
Additional Comments on your Transfer Experience.
Comments on move-in day (6)
Problems/not happy with advisor (5)
Happy with Advisor (3)
Other (1 response each): Better financial aid office help - My transfer experience has been pretty bad so far. Hard to meet people and in a dorm and area where there are no other transfer students and freshman. - I thought you could be a non-laptop student until a few days before school. I also wasn't informed that you HAD to live in the dorms for two years and almost signed a lease! - The entire experience here with the exception of orientation has been better than expected. - Glad they decided to do something for us transfer students!
If you used the Transfer Student Website, what was the most helpful?
Transfer student checklist (5)
General information (3)
Credit transfer guide (2)
The requirements page (1)
There was no supportive info telling me that the tool was out there (1)
What could we have done to make your transition to UW-Stout easier?
Nothing else was needed (10)
Provide more information and orientation activities earlier (8)
Place transfer students together in dorm rooms (3)
Problems with advising (3)
Have more activities on campus for transfer students (2)
Other (1 response each): Meal plan information - would have been nice to know class status - have my credits transfer a little easier - laptop training issue - I had no idea where I was suppose to go to eat - more organized - make Stout people accountable for their jobs - taken more classes at a tech school that were required for my degree - Would it be possible to keep students in one central location, that way people are not lost in the transition process?

Table 2: Complete list of responses to open-ended questions

What could we do to improve the Transfer Orientation Program?
I have children who started school in eau Claire that same day but I didn't get home until 8:00 I was already on info overload and the had to listen to how their first day went I would suggest doing this a week before school starts and a little earlier in the day. I was exhausted when I got home and still had to be ready for a full day of classes on Wed. starting at 8:00am
Not as long as it was.
length and cost
More organized!
I would make the transfer information more apparent on the Stout home page. I took some knowledge of the site to find it... it was not easy. Continue to improve it, you clearly have "upped the level" of what was being offered. Let me intern with your department to help with your effort. Thanks
make the career services more interesting. I got really really bored! Do more of an interactive "meet other people" type of activity. I just talked to the girls at my table.
Maybe have the o-crew, do things with them, so then we can meet more people.
Have certain topics optional to attend, more times to attend rather than one time
nothing
I thought orientation was good.
Telling us about Menomonie and helping us meet people.
Personally I was looking for more where to go, where to find information. The Transfer Student Orientation was a very good idea, and you are correct that Transfer Students have different needs. However, I think that some of those needs were not addressed.
We are coming from different back grounds different familiarities of network systems, information to cover such as D2L or Learn @ Stout, Library services, more in-depth information on ASK 5000, and Access Stout would have been helpful.
The Icebreaker was somewhat of a flop because Students had already met the people at their tables. More interactive Icebreakers would have been better.
Spend more time walking around campus and less time in a building. I didn't get too much time to figure out where my classes were.
Take more time to explain how the Mac's work.
As Transfer Students it seems harder to meet people. The time that was given was more than enough but no one really talked to other tables. Maybe some more interaction activities would be helpful in the future.
I think it would've been more helpful to me to have more laptop training. The instructors assumed that since we were all transfer students we all knew how to use them. I have not been to school in six years and didn't know anything on how to use them.
I feel that the information from the folks that talked about the leadership and involvement could have talked a bit more about what clubs and organizations they are part of as well as elaborate a bit more.
not much you can change, you need to get information across and what you did was all you could do.
make other students actually move around when it is time to meet others
I always felt lost...maybe have it earlier in the summer
Everything was great Thanks a lot!!!!!!!
take you to get your books
I thought that everything went great! Thanks for the great help and welcome.
I think that you could cater some activities on campus specifically to transfer students. Beyond just the orientation. I think that you could have activities that are mixers for transfers only, that would be a helpful way to get to know people.
I thought the program was very informative. I can't think of anything that would have improved it.
Tell students in advance to sit with other students, not with people they already know.
Everything was good for me.
talk about dining services
Have smaller groups where is would be easier to get to know each other.
Set it up for smaller groups, at different times.

It was kind of long, maybe just hit the key points.
It could have been made more interesting. The information meeting basically put my whole table to sleep the best part of the orientation was the ice breaker.
No suggestions, I think it was very helpful overall and gave me all the information I needed.
Not require students to attend the entire program, but rather let them skip parts they feel they know. Maybe do shorter computer training (had a laptop already so know how to use one). Maybe set us up with a buddy program with someone in our major program instead of just general orientation!
I felt that a lot of the information about transfer credits and everything would have been more useful if I had received the information earlier.
Additional Comments on your Transfer Experience
no move-in day....better financial aid office help would be nice
After attending the summer term and now the fall, my advisor has yet to respond to my requests for an appointment.
I'm so glad they decided to do something for us transfer students! It seemed like the Freshman got all the attention and introduction and help while we were getting skipped and almost as confused and uninformed about things as they were.
Move-in Day was Great. What a great set up you have!! :D
Move-in day needs to be better organized for students who are on campus early for example students in sports.
My transfer experience has been pretty bad so far. Very hard to meet people. I am in a dorm and area where there are no other transfer students and freshman.
There is a website online that has two different fees... one for laptop students and one for non-laptop students. I thought you could be a non-laptop student until a few days before school. I also wasn't informed that you HAD to live in the dorms for two years and almost signed a lease!!! Put the information out there and make it clear! Also, make it optional for transfer students to get a laptop. almost all of us have newer laptops now.
I'm not living in the dorms so I just clicked the 5. The information that was given on e-mail and the web site was good, more would have been better.
The time that I had with my advisor was choosing/registering for classes. I don't think that he really cared in general. I don't think that I will be seeing him for advice on next semester. I'll probably ask another professor in the field.
My advisor was gone the day of my May orientation. I met her assistant and she explained the items to me, but it would have been nice to have the actual advisor there.
I don't live in the dorms so moving was good
I have yet to find out who my advisor is.
meeting with my advisor was great. it helped me a lot.
I only talked to my advisor over the phone, but she was very helpful.
The entire experience here with the exception of orientation has been better than expected. My advisor works with me well and gets back to me quickly when I have a problem. Registration went well and move-in day was great. I especially like how this college has people to help carry things to your room that was awesome.
I have not met with my advisor nor do I know who they are. I didn't like that I didn't meet with my real advisor when I first registered because the Art Department Director, no offense since he is not an advisor, was not much help to me when I first registered. Most of orientation was a waste for me and very repetitious since I am coming in as a junior. I live off-campus so there was no "move-in Day" for me.
If you used the Transfer Student Website, what was the most helpful?
Just the general info. needed
Could not find it and there was no supportive info telling me that tool was out there for me to use....
The checklist for us transfer students is very nice to have! Along with all the resources to check things out, answer questions and talk to people.
what is needed to transfer
The requirements page
I don't believe I was informed about this page. I did use Transfer Information System (TIS).
The Transfer Information System is extremely useful.

I really like the transfer student checklist and the credit transfer guides.
General information on who to contact for what reason.
transfer student checklist: this really helped me to keep on track and measure where I needed to be during the transfer process. It followed everything that needed to be done, and even though some of the materials were a little later than planned, I would have been lost without this checklist. It made the whole process fairly easy.
All the general information listed there.
the transfer enrollment checklist
What could we have done to make your transition to UW-Stout easier?
be clearer on parking sooner and getting the parking permits sooner and books a little sooner so not everything is crammed into a week and a half.
?
been more organized, thanks
Try to make Stout people accountable for their jobs. It is hard too sell a quality education when there is little supportive staff to support this vision.
If you didn't have a transfer orientation time I would put that, but you did and it helped! Thank you!
It is really hard to meet people so it would be nice to have more things for transfer students like you have with the Freshmen..But it's been ok!
taken more classes at a tech school that were required for my degree
Nothing
nothing, the transition was good.
Put me in a room with another transfer student.
Would it be possible to keep students in one central location, that way people are not lost in the transition process? Earlier the information the better.
I think we needed more time on campus just doing random things. It would have been nice to have a bunch of activities on campus during the month of August, just to get us ready for school.
When signing up for a meal plan, make it clear to transfer students that a certain amount of the money is only going to "run" the kitchen and the remaining amount is for the actual food the student can buy.
nothing you did a good job
The only issues I've had is the laptop training and not knowing who my advisor is.
Rooming with another transfer student would have been nice. It has been a bit harder to meet people since my roommate has already attended stout for 2 years.
Earlier orientation and laptop dispersal that 1 day before the first day of class
so far so good!
I had no idea where I was suppose to go to eat. I had to ask about everything. I feel that we should have been informed of where we eat etc.
having more information earlier and feeling like a person not a number!
Let me register earlier than the 1st orientation day like I wanted to. There were little to no classes available when I registered, and it was a horrible hassle trying to "convince" instructors to let me in their classes when there really wasn't room.
Nothing, every thing was very helpful.
put other transfer students all together in the dorm halls
Everything you have done for my transition has been very helpful. Thanks!
Have more mixers for transfer students
It would have been nice to have my credits transfer a little easier. I realize how difficult of a process this must be to, but I now have about 20 elective credits that are completely useless to me. For example I took two computer classes at my old school, and yet I still need two credits in technology to fulfill my general education credits.
It was all good and went very smooth. Thank You
Make sure advisor is there on the day of registration. It was very frustrating that my advisor was not there for my registration appointment that was scheduled for me at orientation.
I did not know what status (sophomore, junior, senior?) I was until I found out from one of my class instructors after classes began. It would have been nice to know before I started.

Nothing it was great!

It was very easy and hassle free, thank you.

Have my advisor contact me ahead of time, when I got accepted to Stout, and worked with me from then on. They could have scheduled a "buddy" instead of most of the orientation that would have been more helpful for me.