Fall 2007 Orientation Review

**Review & Recommendations** (based on student evaluations, student assistant input, and meeting with Debbie and Kristy on 9/6/07)

**Student Evaluations**

Overall, the orientation received very positive reviews with almost all of the categories getting a score between 4 and 5. The two exceptions were for “Immigration” and “Academic Preparedness”, which received scores of 3.79 and 3.93 respectively. The students mentioned the opportunity to meet other international students as their favorite part of orientation and the Q&A session was also quite popular. While there was some disagreement, most students also mentioned People Bingo and the Scavenger Hunt as two of their favorite activities. The requested additions to orientation included a Campus Tour and a City Tour. We may consider doing a campus tour in addition to the Scavenger Hunt and also doing a City Tour.

The survey showed that the students seemed to enjoy orientation, but there wasn’t a lot of variation in the answers. Perhaps the survey needs to be redesigned or administered at a different time to ensure that students give more input.

**Sessions/Presentations**

**SEVIS and Immigration**

The powerpoint created by Debbie for this session is comprehensive and helpful for the students given the complex nature of the regulations. We missed a couple of outdated pieces of information, which should be corrected for next year. Now that Kristy has seen the presentation given once, she will most likely do the presentation next year.

**Q&A Session**

The students seemed to enjoy the opportunity to ask all of their questions.

**Academic Preparedness**

Dr. Lorenz did a good job at giving an overview to Loyola’s academic environment and answering questions related to GPA, etc.

**Freshman “Pitfalls” Session**

I felt that the students were not very engaged in this session. Perhaps different questions would help or maybe a different type of session or format would be better next year. Perhaps separate 30 minute presentations from each panelist would be better? We will meet with the presenters to see if they can make their presentations more interactive by doing quizzes, activities, etc to get the students involved.

**Adjusting to Life in the U.S.**

Students were clearly quite interested in this session. The Visual Speaks activity was too long and perhaps too superficial given its intended purpose. Debbie and I will review possible activities to use in replacement, such as using a postcard to introduce themselves. Regardless of which activity is chosen next year, it may be better to have students break into smaller groups. We want to focus on integrating more activities, such as the body language quiz, into the session and to make it more interactive. The flow of the session did not seem to work when it was switched over from Debbie to myself. We may try to split the session with a break in the middle.

**The Inside Scoop**

According to verbal feedback and the student evaluations, the Inside Scoop student panel was very popular.

**Activities**

**Introduce Your Partner**

Students seemed to enjoy this activity and it was a good way to break the ice initially.

**People BINGO**

The students continued with this activity for quite a while and seemed to enjoy the chance to talk with each other.
Scavenger Hunt
Most of students said they enjoyed the competition aspect of this activity. Some students got lost, so perhaps an overview of the campus map would be helpful before beginning this activity. As well, we need to pick the prizes further in advance of the Scavenger Hunt next year.

Other Recommendations

Organization
We will create envelopes for all of the students expected to attend in order to facilitate the processing of their immigration documents. Pens, pencils and paper pads will be made available to the students.

Separate Exchange and Degree-Seeking students
Debbie and I both agree that the exchange student orientation should be held on Friday of orientation week given the growing number of exchange students and given the different needs of exchange students vs. degree-seeking students. This will also hopefully allow more exchange students to arrive in time for orientation.

Advance Information
Many of the students had questions about their academic advisors, schedules, email addresses, LORA log-in information, and meal plans. I would recommend sending out information regarding these matters in advance, especially to the exchange students. If nothing else, we can gather information related to these questions for each student so that we can give it to them at the beginning of orientation. We will also send an email to all of the students who will be attending orientation a couple of days before orientation to remind them to bring all of their immigration documents.

Activities the week of orientation through Labor Day
The dinner for international students on Tuesday was only attended by 3 students. I would recommend eliminating the dinner on Tuesday. However, I would recommend some sort of dinner on Friday for the exchange students. A City Tour/Shopping Trip, which would be nice especially for those students who do not arrive with their parents. New Student Orientation did not hold shopping trips until September, which is very inconvenient for students. As well, no activities were held the weekend of Labor Day. If this is the case next year, CIE or inBUS should consider holding some type of event that weekend. We will look into renting a van for some of these activities next year.

Food
Ana Paiz and a few other students mentioned that they were quite tired of pizza since other departments also have pizza that first week. This doesn't mean that we should necessarily change the menu, but just something to keep in mind. Le Boulangerie was quite popular with the students. Estimating 2 mini-pastries per student and 3-4 people per pizza seemed to be fairly accurate estimates.

Materials
I would recommend having Welcome/Orientation packets available year-round for any new students or scholars. As well, we should create a "check-in" sheet that includes address, email address(es), home phone, cell phone fields, etc. The contents of the orientation packets should be reviewed to ensure that we are including all pertinent and helpful information. As well, Debbie or myself will go over all the contents of the packets in detail with the students, including a map of the city, the handbook, etc. We also discussed perhaps sending the handbooks to the students in advance rather than waiting to give them to the students during orientation.

Transportation from Airport
Craig Beebe from Residential Life has expressed interest in providing shuttle transportation for students arriving at the airport. I would recommend contacting him regarding the transportation this semester so that we can include information about it in our materials and letters to students.