Fall 2011 Start of Semester Summary

PRE-DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL

RECOMMENDATIONS

Student Handbook/Pre-Departure Communication
- Create a comprehensive book that covers everything from pre-departure info to info about Loyola and New Orleans (students will receive with their I-20 or DS-2019).

Housing Placements
- Ask when they need lists of international students for matching purposes so that they can be paired with roommates who want to live with an international student
- Make sure that international students (especially exchange) aren’t placed together (especially if they’re from the same country or speak the same language)
- Meet with Craig this year about housing placements

Airport Pickup
- Continue to have peer advisor or inbus coordinator arrange pickups in August. He or she will:
  o Get list of people who have volunteered and list of students and arrival times from me
  o Work to pair them up and email everyone
  o Manage the vans and coordination during the week of pickups
- Send out notice to inBUS and ISA members about getting certified to drive starting in the fall semester.
- Guarantee pickup on certain days between certain times to encourage them to arrive on those two days and have a shuttle that goes back and forth (the day before the F-1 orientation starts and the day before the J-1 orientation starts).
- Pay a student to run back and forth on those two days every 2 hours or so.
- If possible, arrange for pickups that fall outside of that time frame.
- Work with any special groups that require additional assistance (i.e. LIEP students)

Communication with International students’ roommates
- Continue to send “Congratulations…you have an international roommate email along with a culture gram
- If a LIEP student, include paragraph that mentions initial problems with English and advice on how to communicate with them.

Student IDs
Exchange students’ info was not downloaded properly onto the student IDs (meal plans and residence hall access).
- Work with Rachel in Parking and Res Life to make sure that things go more smoothly next time.

ORIENTATION

EVALUATIONS
Overall, the orientation received positive reviews with almost all of the categories getting a score between 3 and 4 (highest possible score).

F-1 Evaluations (24 evaluations)
Sessions (average = 3.64)
Immigration Info plus cell phones, banks, etc. (3.76), Getting Started at Loyola: email, blackboard, etc. (3.54), Life in the U.S. (3.71), Sandy Hinderlie (3.70), Loyola & New Orleans (3.63), Student Panel (3.59), Q&A (3.58)

Activities (average = 3.39)
Circle Game (3.70), Campus Tour (3.45), Jeopardy Game (3.33 – one student knew all the answers cause he was a transfer and regardless some students said they felt disengaged because they didn’t know the answers), Mingle, Mingle (3.30 - not properly facilitated by me), Scavenger Hunt (3.19 - hot, unfair judging since everyone had different tasks and redundant with campus tour, but it was also listed as a favorite for some)

**Materials** *(average = 3.62)*
Orientation Packet (3.87), International Student Handbook (3.83), Admit Packet (3.55), Pre-Departure Emails (3.23 – I’m not sure why the pre-departure emails got such a low score except for two comments below under the first question)

**Comments from students on evaluations**
*If you marked something as unsatisfactory, tell us why, and what we can do to improve it.*

- I didn’t like the food given that much
- I didn’t get any of the emails
- Pre-departure letter created confusion - conflicting letters
- All of the questions should have been answered in the Q&A session
- Mingle, Mingle was boring and didn’t help to meet people
- Scavenger hunt - was at 2:00 pm, so it was really, really hot. Plus, the way of judging the winners wasn’t fair, because every group had something different and they just judged who came first.

**Is there anything that you think we should add to the orientation?**
- Maybe an opportunity to explore the area around campus. Like an afternoon to get to know St. Charles and Downtown
- More activities
- More interactive games
- If an extra day was added it would be nice to have a small tour of New Orleans.
- Nothing. It was awesome. Or more games.
- Common Q&A (collected from previous years) for questions that we did not think of/were too shy to ask
- How to change your major
- I missed a few things but what I attended was very nice.
- Nothing more
- More interaction, better breakfast.
- Some time to explore the surrounding area buy ourself/in a group

**Is there anything that you think we should take out of the orientation?**
- Every activity and presentation was useful.
- No (5)
- I think everything was great
- Scavenger hunt
- Longer, more relaxed tour would be better (we were rushed)
- Everything is fine
- Scavenger hunt, because we already had the campus tour
- Some of the games, they take too much time

**What was your favorite part of orientation?**
- Scavenger hunt (2)
- Dr. Sanford (5)
- The circle game (5)
- The student panel answered all our questions
- The games were interesting and helped to get to know each other.
- Mingle, mingle
- The games and the life of loyalty, food, music, etc.
- Jeopardy
- Games and the music and events part.
- Meeting other international students
- The games
The games make us understand things better
Adjusting to life in the US (5) - I really like the adjusting part. I wish someone told me when I first came to the US. It's great to know people here understand how international students feel and how hard it is to get over challenges.
Everything was good and well explained
Activities

What was your least favorite part of orientation?
The first couple of sessions were tedious but it makes sense because it's all the paperwork and issues
Campus tour (2) - held at noon
Scavenger hunt (4) - weather conditions - too hot!
When the presentations got too long
Mingle, mingle (2)
Music lecture was boring because I'm not into music/music history
Games

J-1 Evaluations (24 evaluations)
Sessions (average = 3.54)
Sandy Hinderlie (3.92), Loyola & New Orleans, student orgs, transportation, etc. (3.75), Life in the U.S. (3.63), Student Panel (3.63), Immigration Info plus cell phones, banks, etc. (3.54), Q&A (3.39), Getting Started at Loyola: email, blackboard, etc. (3.33), Leslie Parr (3.04)

Activities (average = 3.33)
Circle Game (3.75), Scavenger Hunt (3.46), Wheel of Greetings (3.33), Campus Tour (3.29), New Orleans Jeopardy (2.83 – game was malfunctioning and students felt disengaged because they didn’t know a lot of the answers)

Materials (average = 3.64)
Pre-Departure info, emails, etc. (3.71), Orientation packet (3.79), Student Handbook (3.63)

Comments from students on evaluations
If you marked something as unsatisfactory, tell us why, and what we can do to improve it.

- Too much information about food
- Admit packet: barely opened it. Would have been enough with email!
- Jeopardy - I didn't know the answers to the questions which made the game a bit boring. This game would be better a month after arrival.
- Dr. Leslie Parr’s talk was interesting, but her voice made you sleepy, especially after lunch.
- Campus Tour - I got lost, and sometimes people didn't pay attention to the person who was giving the tour.
- The jeopardy game wasn't working properly and it was slow.
- Everything was ok
- The technical problems made the game lose momentum and so I lost interest
- Jeopardy - the rules were a bit unclear and as new students we don't know much about New Orleans yet
- Long, hot and a bit embarrassing (not sure which activity this relates to but maybe scavenger hunt?)
- Wheel of greetings - just a personal thing. I'm not good at small talk
- Jeopardy - I didn't enjoy it
- I think the campus tour should be longer
- Some people had stuff missing in the orientation packet

Is there anything that you think we should add to the orientation?
- More information about meal plans
- I think it's great like this
- Where to go if anything doesn't work. I still don't know everyone's name
- Make the campus tour longer
- Arts performance by students
Is there anything that you think we should take out of the orientation?

- Q&A
- Some lectures were a bit slow and lasting long
- Center for the Study of New Orleans
- Maybe it's better to hold the scavenger hunt in the morning to the midday. It's just too hot!
- Some info was repeated. Also, wheel of greetings got a little bit repetitive.
- Everything was on point, maybe less presentation slides

What was your favorite part of orientation?

- Sandy Hinderlie (8)
- Adjusting to life in the US (2)
- Scavenger hunt (2)
- The food and the games
- Wheel of Greetings
- Getting to know the other students
- Campus tour (3)
- All the information we’ve got was very good. I liked all the activities.
- Meeting everyone
- Shopping trip
- Food

What was your least favorite part of orientation?

- Leslie Parr (2)
- Jeopardy (4)
- I liked everything
- The immigration info
- The New Orleans talk
- Don't know
- Wheel of greetings (2)
- Scavenger hunt (3)

ORIENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on student evaluations, student assistant input and CIE staff input (if not mentioned then can remain the same).

Attendance & Check-in

Attendance was very good for both the F-1 (about 40) and the J-1 (34) orientations.
- Continue to invite students from Puerto Rico and U.S. citizens coming from abroad because a lot of those students were interested in attending and seemed to get a lot out of it.
- Create online registration form for F-1 students so that we know that everyone who is planning on coming is signed up and whether they will be with their parents (for planning purposes).
- Make folders personalized and have three lines to make check-in faster (international, U.S. citizens, documents)
- Double-check name tags and put them in the personalized folders

Presentation of Information

The activities consistently get listed as students’ favorite part of orientation and students often say that they are overwhelmed by the amount of information.
- Make the sessions more interactive
- Make sure sessions are not redundant with each other (i.e. Leslie’s info was similar to what’s in the New Orleans session and some students said that the campus tour was redundant to the scavenger hunt)
- Almost all of the sessions involved powerpoint. I noticed this during the orientation and students mentioned it in the surveys. Try to vary how information is presented (i.e. presenting about New Orleans on the streetcar on the way to the quarter instead of in the classroom)
- Some things don’t need to be covered in the session, but rather we can refer students to the information in the comprehensive book that we will create (i.e. transportation, etc.)
**F-1 and J-1 Students Have Different Needs**
During the orientation and in the orientation surveys it became clear that F-1 degree-seeking students who are younger and will be here longer have different needs than J-1 exchange students who are older and will be here a shorter time.

- F-1 orientation should remain a day and a half because they need more information and guidance.
- J-1 orientation should be a day of orientation at Loyola and then half a day on the streetcar and in the quarter because they don’t need as much information/guidance since they’re older and can figure some things out. Also they don’t need to be here for the scheduled activities, but the F-1 students do.

**Information Sheet**
It is too time-consuming to create sheets for everyone at orientation. F-1 students get the information on the info sheet from other offices in addition to from us and they will meet with advisors to go over their classes so we don’t need to create info sheets for them.

- Create J info sheets including schedules, but note that the schedule may have changed since the sheet was printed.
- Create LIEP info sheets without class schedules since they will be tested on the first day to determine which classes they will be taking.

**Schedule**
- Continue to have F-1 students on Monday all day and Tuesday morning since they will have New Student Orientation starting Tuesday afternoon.
- Schedule J orientation for Thursday all day and Friday morning.
- Alternate fun activities with sessions to keep the energy up and keep them engaged (I thought I had done so this year, but I think it needs to be even more varied)
- Schedule outside activities in the morning so that it’s not as hot
- Don’t give long breaks because people leave
- Tell people giving campus tour to make sure to bring students back (and tell students to pay attention to tour guide)

**Layout**
Space was a big issue for the F-1 orientation.

- Group students at tables and parents in the back in chairs without tables
- Assigned seating? (I don’t remember what we said about this)

**Food & Supplies**
- Buy non-perishables over the summer
  - Index cards
  - Bright pink paper
  - Name tags
  - Brown/manila envelopes for the return of immigration documents
  - Tin foil and large Ziploc bags
- Food consumed during orientation week
  - 1 ½ gallons of milk, 4 gallons orange juice, 23 bottles soda, 12 gallons water
  - 3 large bags of pretzels, 2 large bags of popcorn, 1 bag carrots, 1 bunch celery
  - 2 cantaloupes, 2 pints of strawberries, 1 watermelon (purchase 2 next year), 2 bags grapes, 2 bunches of bananas
  - 3 big boxes of cookies
  - 1 bag of lifesavers (not essential…still a lot left)
- F-1 Monday
  - Purchased 50 mini pastries, but 20 leftover at end of day
  - Purchased 4 trays from Roly Poly, but could have done with three
  - 2 salads completely consumed
  - 1 pot of coffee for F-1
- F-1 Tuesday
  - 30 bagels from Stein’s (21 leftover) with 3 pints cream cheese (2 would be better)
  - 10 pizzas from Roman’s (one left over)
- J-1 Thursday
o Left over mini pastries and bagels (purchase more pastries or bagels next time)
o Whole watermelon
o 2 bags grapes
o bunch of bananas
o 2 pots coffee
o Roly Poly – 6 trays & 2 salads (could have ordered 4 trays and 1 salad because they eat breakfast at 10)
  - J-1 Friday
    o 2 trays of mini pastries form Whole Foods
    o 2 cantaloupes and 2 pints of strawberries
    o 9 pizzas from Romans

**Orientation Leaders**
- Continue to have orientation leaders facilitate some of the activities, but stress to them the importance of double-checking their work to avoid problems (like the jeopardy game not working).
- During interviews make sure students can work the Friday before orientation.

**SESSIONS**

**Immigration Info plus SSN, cell phones, banks, etc.**
- I wanted to include everything at once for the F-1 so that the students not on visas would only need to skip one session, but I this session is too long. Break into two sessions.

**Getting Started at Loyola**
- Add info from “Loyola and New Orleans” session
- Add where can use meal plans and wolfbucks, hours, etc.
- Have Debbie come talk about meal plan for J-1 students

**Life in the U.S.**
- This session received high marks for both groups and some listed as their favorite activity. Continue to include in orientation and have Debbie and Mariette present.

**Loyola & New Orleans**
- Put Loyola info in with “Getting Started at Loyola.”
- Take out info that will be in Sandy’s session
- Add Athletics info
- Add Volunteer info

**Sandy Hinderlie**
- His session received really high marks from both groups. Continue to have him present.

**Q&A Session**
- Hold this session at the end and only answer questions that haven’t already been answered.
- Continue to have students and myself present, but don’t have Debbie present anymore.

**Health & Safety**
- Continue to have Student Health Services and University Police speak.
- Add info on Scholastic Emergency Services (SES)

**Activities**
Activities always get strong reviews (positive and negative) because they require more from the students. This year I incorporated new icebreakers since the ones I’ve been using for the last few years weren’t popular.
- Mingle, Mingle could have been a good activity, but I didn’t facilitate it properly. Either replace or work on facilitation.
- The Wheel of Greetings was too repetitive and took too long. Use mingle, mingle or another activity next year.
- The Circle Game was really popular for both groups. Continue to use.
New Orleans Jeopardy got higher marks from the F-1 students, but neither group rated it very high. Part of this for the J-1s was that the game wasn’t working properly, but they also felt disengaged because they didn’t know the answers.
  - We could make the questions quiz-like with multiple choice answers so that it’s easier.
  - We could also make the questions easier (if that’s possible).

**Introduction to Loyola Faculty/Staff**
Al Alcazar and Ricardo Marquez both asked if there was a way to meet the new students in order to connect with them to help serve as mentors or talk about services for students. We don’t currently have a session about services for the students.
- This may be worth developing especially if it just served the purpose of a very brief introduction.
- Thoughts? Ideas about who to invite?

**OTHER ACTIVITIES**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Multicultural Orientation**
- Work with Co-Curricular to ensure a better turnout for this great workshop.
- Promote in pre-departure info to international students.

**Welcome Reception**
- Based on how many name tags were leftover attendance was roughly 100 faculty, students and staff (maybe slightly higher since not everyone wore a name tag).
- Food & Supplies:
  - Borrow two punch bowls from Dining Services again next year if possible
  - 5 bags of chips & 5 jars of salsa (2 bags and 2 containers leftover)
  - 4 containers of cookies – total of 80 (1 container leftover)
  - 2 pints of sour cream, 2 packs dips (Liptons & Knorr’s) – one container leftover
  - 6 pints of hummus (2 leftover), 4 pints baba ganouj (1 leftover)
  - 10 dozen falafel
  - 15 frozen juices for punch
  - 2.5 bags kettle corn from orientation (1 bag leftover)
  - 2 bags pretzels from orientation (1 bag leftover)
  - Purchase similar amounts next year because we don’t know how many people will come
- Continue to promote via word of mouth, facebook, emails to all staff/faculty
- Print flyers at Print Services (better for such a large number of flyers) for mailing to a select list of faculty/staff
- Don’t schedule on the same day as Saints game if possible!

**RA Training**
- The RA Training was facilitated as follows:
  - Why are we doing this training (Kristy)
  - First we want to know something about you (Mariette)
  - Non-dominant hand (Mariette)
  - Culture (Debbie)
  - Stages of cultural adjustment (Kristy)
  - Strategies for helping international students (Kristy)
  - Who are the international students (Kristy)
- Change order as follows:
  - Why are we doing this training
  - Who are the international students
  - Culture
  - Non-dominant hand
  - Stages of cultural adjustment
  - Strategies for helping international students
- Ideas for debriefing the non-dominant hand activity better:
  - In the debrief, ask the question of the RAs, "How does this relate to the work you do with
your residents?" Ideally, the exercise helps RAs understand what some of their residents are experiencing when entering a new culture, how their residents are being judged and judging each other based on their own cultural values, etc. I could also ask, "If you were in my position (giving directions), how would you change things in a way that would allow everyone to do their best?" (or something similar); i.e. How do we communicate effectively with culturally different others? How do we help the roommates of international students understand these same ideas (transition, effective communication, etc)?

- Consider alternating the non-dominant hand activity with another, just in case there are repeat RAs next year.
- If we have more than 45 minutes use some critical incidents to making the information relevant to them as RAs.
- Try to touch base with Al and Ted as soon as they know what they’ll be doing so that we don’t do anything redundant. This could be a challenge because they often don’t decide until a few days before.
- Frame the international students being at Loyola as a positive experience for RAs:
  - Remind them of what a great opportunity this is to work with and learn about other cultures
  - How these skills will relate to their future work environments, etc.
- Describe in more detail who the international students are:
  - Degree, exchange, LIEP
  - Bring list of countries represented by new and continuing international students.
- Work with Res Life to let RAs know who their international residents will be during the summer in case they want to do anything special on their floor related to those students (i.e. passive programming).
- Get feedback from Amy and RAs about our session (and remember to bring a short survey next year to get feedback from them at the session).