Orientation instructors and undecided students' perceptions of course objectives

Angela DeAngelo

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A Thesis

Entitled

Orientation Instructors and Undecided Students' Perceptions of Course Objectives

by

Angela DeAngelo

Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Master of Education degree in Higher Education

Advisor Dr. Richard R. Perry

Dr. David Meabon

William M. Hay

College of Education

Graduate School

The University of Toledo

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A general assumption in higher education is that students who do not make a successful transition to college life are more likely not to be retained for the second year. Historically, colleges and universities have implemented programs and courses that assist first-year students in developing academic and social skills. Developing these types of skills allow first-year students the opportunity to make a transition to college life. Undecided students are at-risk students, and it is important for a college to provide a support system to these students through effective advising, and courses that are concentrated on first-year success. Orientation courses have been a part of the overall first-year experience for students in large numbers of colleges and universities.

This quantitative study investigated the perceptions of 322 first-year undecided QUEST students, enrolled in an eight-week orientation course at the
University of Toledo (UT). The orientation instructors’ perceptions were also investigated in considering the effectiveness of the course in achieving first-year objectives. Students and instructors recorded their agreement or disagreement with the statements on the opinionnaire. The statements concentrated on the objectives that would allow first-year students to make a transition to college life. Opinionnaire statements were constructed using the QUEST orientation course syllabus, an informational flyer provided to students during the Fall 2003 registration, and other QUEST FYE documented objectives. The data from the opinionnaire responses recorded on a Likert scale were machine scored, and summed using the numerical values assigned by the students and the instructors to each opinionnaire item. The sum of the numerical values established a rating hierarchy of agreement or disagreement for each objective and the objectives were ranked. Course objectives that were ranked high included the first-year objectives of **academic advising, balancing campus life, resource discovery and utilization, and having a learning community present in every class meeting.** The orientation course currently being implemented provides first-year students transitional guidance. The findings revealed that seventy percent of the course sections resulted in significant differences when comparing the students from one section with their instructor from the same section to the extent to which course objectives were perceived as being achieved.
Dedication

This academic work is dedicated to my family. My grandparents, Ester and Ervin Doman, are the individuals who influenced my study habits at an early age.

I would like to also thank my mother and father, Yvonne and Joseph DeAngelo, for supporting me financially and emotionally throughout my undergraduate years.

To my brother and sister, Ann and Dan, I encourage you to pursue excellence in college, and even go further than I.

Last but definitely not least I dedicate this work to Joel my husband for the never ending encouragement to complete my thesis.
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My students from last year and this year, who taught me life is more meaningful when you help others find the potential in themselves.

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Chapter One

Introduction

A goal of postsecondary institutions is to provide services that promote career and talent development (Astin, 1985). Students need to realize that going to college is a career commitment. Helping students to realize this commitment includes an effective freshman-year experience. When students develop a sense of commitment they tend to persist toward achieving developmental goals. Student persistence can be cultivated through “helping students understand the meaning of higher education as it relates to them personally” (Gordon, 1989, p. 191). A number of attributes can influence student persistence. These attributes include the academic and social programs of the campus environment (Tinto, 1988). The University of Toledo should be able to help freshmen develop a sense of commitment by implementing a student-centered model. A model that synchronizes academic and social programs that assists students in making a successful transition from high school to college.

A student’s first-year experience needs to be “student-centered.” Levitz and Noel have said that “when institutions help students have a positive, substantive growth experience in the first year of college, their success and
persistence are enhanced” (Levitz & Noel, 1989, p. 66). This growth can be a combination of self and campus discovery.

A student’s freshman year success may be enhanced when an effective orientation course is offered. An effective orientation course can provide students with an opportunity to make a transition from high school to college. A successful transition takes place when students are able to academically and socially identify with the campus culture. Researchers have suggested that student involvement with the institution and regular adviser-student interactions increase academic success (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991).

A successful orientation course can benefit both the student and the institution. High retention rates result “when students interact with multiple dimensions of an institution” (Sagaria & Johnsrud, 1989, p. 366).

Many students are at-risk of not having a successful first year. Those who are at the greatest risk are those who are undecided about the major in which they are to enroll. Many institutions have large numbers of in-coming students who are undecided about a major. Undecided students are at-risk students, and these students may not feel a sense of belonging if they are not enrolled in a major.

The University of Toledo’s QUEST (The QUEST for Success) program was established in 1999 to help undecided students declare a major or college before their third semester. The University of Toledo established the QUEST program to improve the advising of undecided students, the
instruction of the orientation course and in addition to provide a career exploration and self-evaluation course. This career exploration course is made available to the students their second semester. QUEST advisers encourage students to enroll in a career exploration course after they have completed the orientation course in their first semester. The career exploration course is taken in the students’ second semester. Students who enroll in Spring Semester as their first semester can opt to take both courses in Orientation and Career Exploration. The reason for establishing the QUEST program is to help The University of Toledo retain at-risk students and assist undecided students to achieve academic success, by having them explore major and career opportunities.

One way to assist students in making a transition from high school to college is through an informative orientation course. The University of Toledo’s QUEST orientation course currently introduces QUEST students to information and activities, which will improve their study strategies, and develop successful habits that in turn will help students balance academic, social, and extracurricular activities.

Many undecided students may have a difficult time making the transition from high school to college. It is important for a college to provide a valuable and effective orientation course for undecided students. The orientation course should help QUEST students make a successful transition from high school to college with the assistance of academic advisers, university staff, and graduate student instructors. Students
should have “the sense that someone at the institution knows them personally and cares about their academic and personal well-being” (Levitz & Noel, 1989, p. 72). Academic advisers or orientation instructors can perform this role as a connection to the campus. Students are more likely to persist to the next semester when there is an institutional match between the needs of the students and the programs and services offered by the college (Tinto, 1988). Students may accomplish this institutional match of their interests with the college when the college offers an orientation course. Orientation courses could “attempt to create a positive attitude toward higher education in general and a specific institution in particular” (Gordon, 1989, p. 197). Orientation topics that include institutional information on facilities for study and student services and programs will help “breed familiarity with resources so that they are used more frequently and effectively” (Gordon, 1989, p. 197). An orientation course that provides students with opportunities to learn about campus services, and engages the students to actively participate in campus-sponsored events should greatly assist the success of the student.

The QUEST first-year program has been through changes. There has been no consistent course structure for the orientation course. Instructors for the course, until this year, have not received formal instructions in methods of teaching and characteristics of the undecided student. The orientation course in the Fall Semester of 2003 is the first time QUEST
instructors were required to complete a graduate level course in teaching and learning. This was done in the Summer of 2003.

The outcomes for the QUEST orientation course for the Fall Semester of 2003 were created and documented during the academic year of 2002 in order to provide for an effective orientation course. The orientation course content and assignments were designed to have students achieve the course objectives. An orientation course serving as a resource for an effective first-year experience must have objectives that are student-centered. Student centered objectives are based on the idea that once the orientation course is completed students may have successfully made a transition from high school to college. Course completion requires the students to have actively participated in course assignments, class meetings, and mandatory campus events.

The design of QUEST’s orientation course is such that documented objectives are identified to be achieved. The expectation is that the achievement of these objectives by undecided students will help them to be successful at The University of Toledo, and specifically improve the university’s retention rate of these students for the second year of enrollment.

The University of Toledo has never evaluated the QUEST’s orientation course objectives to determine the extent to which course objectives are being achieved. A useful step in producing an effective first-year experience program for undecided students is to study whether the
objectives of the orientation course are being achieved. It is interesting to note that “being able to show positive outcomes of a program can often ensure its continuance” (Gordon, 1995, p. 120). The continuance of an effective orientation course may provide substantial support for first-year students.
Orientation courses across The United States have similar course objectives. The overall goal of these courses is to help first-year students make a successful transition. The transition process includes resource and student service discovery, opportunities to participate socially and academically in the college campus, and self-evaluation. The orientation courses are important for first-year students because they provide a support system, and “in college, the support systems that freshmen have built for themselves from previous environments may be gone, or no longer supportive” (Levitz & Noel, 1989, p. 69). It has been reported that in 1962 forty percent of United States’ colleges offered orientation courses, compared to 1994 when seventy percent of United States’ colleges offered these courses to first-year students (Sharer & Strumpf, 1993, p. 30). The interest in the freshman year experience continues to grow.

*Historical Overview of Orientation Courses*

The word freshman appeared first in the English language about 1550, and was “used to describe a newcomer or a novice in any field of endeavor”
The term freshman was appropriately used in the 1590s to refer to first-year students enrolled in an English university (Dwyer, 1989). First-year students who studied at The University of Bologna in the twelfth century “elected their professors, set their teachers’ contracts, and regulated both lectures and examinations” (Dwyer, 1989, p. 26). This is not done in contemporary universities in The United States. Orientation courses can be dated back to as early as 1888 (Fitts & Swift, 1928). The term “Orientation can be defined as the art or science of finding one’s self, of getting one’s bearings, of learning one’s relationship to the society in which he lives and works” (Fitts and Swift, 1928, p. 150).

Harvard enrolled the first “American freshman” in 1638 (Dwyer, 1989). Tutors were assigned so that young freshmen would have academic and social transition support. Harvard “inaugurated the first system of freshman counselors to ease the young man’s transition from home to college” (Dwyer, 1989, p. 30) about 1640, during the tenure of President Henry Dunster. During the colonial period Harvard created a cohort of students that would come together for academic and social events. The term “class” originated from this type of togetherness, with which the students were experiencing as freshmen. This freshmen bond would continue throughout the students’ four years of college that involved “living, working, and playing together and learning the same subjects from the same tutor” (Dwyer, 1989, p. 30). The Board of Freshman Advisors at Harvard University was created in 1889 and was responsible for allowing freshmen to receive “better
orientation, advice, counsel, and social events” (Dwyer, 1989, p. 30).

Orientation courses may have taken new course names throughout the history of higher education. The orientation courses are much the same:

throughout the history of higher education, orientation courses and freshman seminars have served an important function in the lives of new students and the institutions they are entering.

(Gordon, 1989, p. 197)

One of the prime goals of an orientation course is to allow first-year students the opportunity to adjust to college life. This adjustment requires an individual to progress through different stages of passage in a new society (Tinto, 1988). An example of a stage of passage for a first-year student is when an individual is separated from their everyday norms and community comfort, and is placed on a campus to interact with a new culture. When students go away to college they leave the comfort of their “normal lives” and must learn to interact with different individuals and other members of the new community. The different individuals of this new community can represent the whole campus culture at a university or college. First-year students need a way to help them make the transition from one community to the membership of a different community (Tinto, 1988). Orientation courses, past and present, have tried to help freshmen make a healthy and successful academic and social transition to college life.
Orientation courses have provided first-year students with opportunities to interact with other first-year students who may be experiencing the same feelings of overwhelming excitement, and apprehension about college life (Gordon, 1995). Orientation programs are “most effective when they stress forms of contact and mentorship that enable new students to become competent members of academic and social communities” (Tinto, 1988, p. 452).

The University of South Carolina’s website states that the first freshman seminar was at Lee College of Kentucky in 1882. Boston University created a course in 1888 with “the specific purpose of orientating its new students” (Mueller, 1961, p. 225). Historically, orientation courses were intended to cover such subjects as choosing a curriculum, achieving efficient study habits, planning for better use of time, making social adjustments, maintaining good health, making and living on a budget, developing personality, and looking one’s best.

(Mueller, 1961, p. 226)

Today the term orientation may still be used, but often when discussing first-year students universities and colleges use the term “First Year Experience” to represent the students’ complete first year at college. College life for freshmen was improving in the nineteenth century, and most importantly faculty involvement was occurring. Mentoring was the
responsibility of faculty in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. A student would seek out a master or mentor who would provide advice and counsel on curriculum selection. Masters or mentors “were able to share information formally and informally about a career field” (Habley, 1995, p. 17). The master or mentor would have “continual, often very close, contact with individual students and a most natural opportunity to become acquainted with their intellectual and personal qualities” (Mueller, 1961, p. 208). A mentor can be very valuable for first-year students, and often will help the student to identify relevant learning opportunities. Today’s first-year mentors for undecided students may be academic advisers, peer leaders, or orientation instructors.

Scholars in the late 1920s and 1930s wrote that many freshmen were facing problems of adjusting to college life. These problems were identified “as curriculum adjustment, influence of older students, budgeting of time and money, student activities, and the difficulties of transition from home to school” (Dwyer, 1989, p. 36). The “solutions to these problems were sought in two areas: careful counseling and structured orientation courses” (Dwyer, 1989, p. 36). It was estimated that in “1930 as many as a third of the colleges and universities were offering such courses, and by 1938 nine out of ten freshmen in these colleges were required to take them” (Mueller, 1961, p. 225).

Historical information on The University of South Carolina’s website suggests that the orientation course disappeared in the 1960’s and later
was “reborn” in the 1970’s. The University of South Carolina created an orientation course with the sole purpose to open the lines of communication between the students and faculty. Many students were facing more then just college adjustment issues. Riots were common during the Vietnam War.

Colleges and universities will often have one or two-day orientation programs prior to the students coming on campus for the first year. These programs are generally for family and students. They are introduced briefly to campus services and course registration. Summer orientation programs provide opportunities for initial contacts with university or college representatives, specifically, academic advisers and possible first-year mentors. However, this introduction to the campus is not enough and “colleges should be as committed and creative in helping students adjust to college life as they are in getting them to the campus in the first place” (Boyer, 1987, p. 46).

A student cannot make a successful transition in one or two days. Transition is defined as, “a period during which the person begins to interact in new ways with members of the new groups into which membership is sought” (Tinto, 1988, p. 441). One or two day orientation programs are only the beginning of this period. The real transition takes place when the students come to campus as individuals, and start to take on the responsibility for self-discovery and self-direction. Gordon and Grites (1984) have stated, “that one of the most successful vehicles for helping students
in this transition was the freshman seminar course” (Upcraft, 1993, p. 30).

*The Importance of Orientation Courses*

New environments can be overwhelming, and first-year students need support in making the connection to the campus environment. Faculty members, academic advisers, Student Affairs administrators, or graduate students teach orientation courses at different colleges and universities. There is a need for special individuals who want to teach orientation courses, and to help the students make a successful transition. Effective orientation course instructors should be individuals who “derive intrinsic enjoyment from seeing their freshmen grow” (Levitz & Noel, 1989, p. 79).

Colleges and universities need to provide support systems with advisers who enhance student success by “playing roles in helping new students succeed in the academic community” (Frost, 1991, p. 42). Advisers have the natural opportunity to have continuous interactions with students. The initial contact starts during the Summer orientation program at the time of Fall registration, and continues throughout the eight weeks of the semester up into the time of Spring Semester registration. Advisers can play effective roles in helping undecided students to take on the challenge of the career or major decision-making process.

An obstacle that first-year students may face while making the transition to college is the challenge of deciding on a major. Undecided students are at-risk students, and “many undecided students are not ready
developmentally to make important career and life decisions at eighteen years of age” (Gordon, 1984, p. 66). This would suggest that first-year students need to make a transition to the college environment before taking on the challenge of deciding a major. Helping students to make better decisions requires putting “freshmen in direct contact with institutional resources that are most effective in promoting personal, social, and academic adjustments” (Levitz & Noel, 1989, p. 79). Institutional resources and services need to be discovered before students can assimilate new knowledge, which will help them with new challenges. It is the institution’s responsibility to provide students with opportunities to discover all aspects of the college life, both socially and academically. Orientation courses are one method for helping students make a transition to the campus; “research makes it clear that the greater a student’s social and academic integration, the more intense his or her commitment is to the college” (Boyer, 1987, p. 47).

The first-year of college can be difficult enough with adjusting to the new environment, being pressured to select a major should not be a priority over making a successful transition. Most universities have core requirements that students must complete before graduation. Students can work toward these core graduation requirements in their first year, and at the same time focus on making a successful transition with the help of academic advisers and orientation instructors.
Orientation Course Design

Designing an orientation course requires integrating social and academic components in the curriculum. Today’s orientation courses have moved away from only focusing on social components. The courses are no longer about “fun and games,” but rather more about helping first-year students “develop realistic academic and personal goals and locate student support services” (Smith & Brackin, 1993, p. 37).

A 1990-1991 National Orientation Directors Association (NODA) Data Bank reported the following orientation topics most frequently addressed in The United States’ colleges and universities that have more than 15,000 students:

- Academic Structure
- Campus activities/clubs/events
- Class scheduling

Orientation courses should be more student-centered, and instead of telling students, instructors should listen to what topics are important to first-year students (Smith & Brackin, 1993, p. 42). A course evaluation could assess what students need from an orientation course, by basing the evaluation on a method of seeking the perceptions of students and staff covering objectives of the course. This could help create a student-centered course (Upcraft & Shrun, 2001). In a 1981 Higginson, Moore, and White surveyed 2,566 freshmen to help answer the question, “What topics are important to first-year students?” Students were asked to rank their
perceptions of topics they felt are important for first-year students. The
general topics included academic, personal, and social concerns.

*Orientation Courses From Other Large Four-Year Universities*

The following University information has been obtained from The
Monograph Series of The Freshman Year Experience. Volume I of The
Monograph Series focuses on evidence of the first-year experience on
college campuses across The United States. The information presented in
this Monograph Series has been reported voluntarily by participating
colleges. Colleges and universities were invited to share their course
evaluations, and research outcomes pertaining to the first-year experience
courses currently being implemented on their campuses.

The syllabi information referenced in the following sections has been
accessed through the individual colleges and universities’ websites. All
syllabi discussed here are samples of courses that are intended to serve as
orientation course. These samples were accessed off the Internet on

A form of assessment of a program or course is to compare it with other
universities’ courses or programs that measure up to “variety, quality, and
impact of services, and programs targeted to first-year students” (Upcraft &
Schuh, 2001, p. 8). The institutions being compared need to have evidence
“which confirms the efficacy of their program and services” (Upcraft &
Schuh, 2001, p. 8). Four universities were used to evaluate the type of
orientation course being implemented. Different first-year objectives and the universities’ outcomes or evidence on the effectiveness of their orientation courses were reviewed and documented in the following sections.

**North Carolina State University**

North Carolina State University offers first-year students a program titled The First Year College (FYC). The purpose of this program is to assist students, “who seek a first year experience with immersion into the academic, social, and cultural life of the university” (North Carolina State University's First Year College Assessment Report, 1996). This program is suited for students who are interested in receiving additional information and guidance in the first year before declaring a major. The First Year College program offers students an orientation course. This course is offered in the Fall Semester and is titled: *Introduction to University Education*. This course is generally taught by university staff and faculty who take a “special interest in and concern for freshmen” (Barefoot, 1993, p. 69). Individuals who are student-centered are those instructors who help first-year students “feel motivated and involved in their own future success” (Levitz & Noel, 1989, p. 79). These instructors contribute to the university’s “obligation to help first-year students maximize their chances for succeeding in college” (Upcraft, 1989, p. 83). The course is specifically designed to help first-year
students make a successful transition to college life, while integrating academic and social components.

The North Carolina State University’s First Year College Experience Program includes an orientation course that is offered in the first semester. The program continues with a second course in the Spring Semester. The mission of the First Year College is parallel to The University of Toledo’s QUEST First Year Experience Program: “to guide students through a structured process for transition to the university and selection of a major” (North Carolina State University’s FYC mission statement). Both universities have first-year students complete an orientation course the first semester, and then allow the students to concentrate on selecting a major in the second semester.

The following course goals were taken from the North Carolina State University’s first semester course syllabus titled Introduction to University Education:

- To provide a smooth transition from high school to college through participation in small group sessions, interaction with an adviser, and engagement with campus resources, policies, and procedures
- To help students develop strategies to achieve academic success through collaborative learning
- To promote self-discovery in assignments, class activities, and advising sessions
- To help students explore majors and careers through such activities as college open houses, information sessions provided by various colleges and departments, and FYC majors fair with NC State college representatives, instruction on a career development theory, and several inventories which give extensive reports on personality and interests (Introduction to University Education Fall 2003 syllabus)
The assessment tools used in the orientation course consist of the Myer-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), and the Strong Interest Inventory. Both of these inventories are assignments that the first-year students take in the first semester in the orientation course. Students are required to keep all first semester course assignments, because these assignments and inventories are used in the Spring Semester course. The University of Toledo’s QUEST orientation course does not have students take the MBTI or the Strong Inventory, however these assessment tools are part of the overall first-year experience program in QUEST. QUEST students who have not declared a major after completing the orientation course in the first semester are advised to take a Career Exploration course in the Spring Semester. QUEST students take both the MBTI and the Strong Inventory the second semester in the Career Exploration course.

The North Carolina State University’s orientation syllabus emphasizes the importance of learning that takes place outside as well as inside of the classroom. Outside learning for this course requires that the students participate in the following campus sponsored events: 1) FYC Majors Fair, and 2) FYC Forum Series. The QUEST’s orientation course students in a similar fashion are required to participate in The University of Toledo’s Majors Fair, which is sponsored by Career Services and the QUEST program. This type of campus-sponsored event provides both North Carolina State University and The University of Toledo students the opportunity to explore different majors and speak with college
representatives. Some students “may be searching for the right major and unable to compare and contrast a variety of academic fields, and this may lead to frustration and discouragement” (Gordon, 1984, p. 68). Orientation course assignments that require students to attend a Majors Fair may alleviate some of this frustration and discouragement. These types of assignments provide an out-of-class experience that integrates social and academic components. These contribute to the transition process.

The North Carolina State University’s orientation course requires students to attend three forum events: one cultural, one educational or vocational, and one other event chosen by the students.

Students enrolled in the North Carolina State University’s orientation course are required to take a final exam, which allows students the opportunity to share what they have learned by participating in course assignments, campus events, and course readings. This sharing allows students the opportunity to hear what other first-year students have experienced, and provides a learning community in the classroom. The First Year College Experience Program has students participate in a first-year evaluation of the program. Evaluations can contribute to the improvement of first-year programs, and allows students the opportunity to voice their opinions on the course (Gordon, 1995). Refer to Appendix A for a complete representation of the North Carolina State University’s Introduction to University Education’s course syllabus.
Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Indiana University of Pennsylvania’s Retention Committee observed that the university had low retention rates (Barefoot, 1993). The University Retention Committee recognized the importance in putting students’ needs first, and recommended that an orientation course be implemented for students.

This orientation course was offered to ninety high-risk freshmen. The course was titled *The Student’s Role in the University: Freshman Seminar* (Barefoot, 1993). The course concentrated on three components:

- learning skills;
- college, personal, and social adjustment; and
- career exploration

The courses were taught by two Student Affairs faculty members. Three graduate students provided assistance. The role of the graduate assistants was to help facilitate small group applications and discussion (Barefoot, 1993). It may be important to note that “graduate students and upper division students also may be effective as aides, especially in advising freshmen” (Boyer, 1987, p. 57). Research on first-year objectives showed a possible relationship with seminar completion and increased retention (Barefoot, 1993).

The Indiana University of Pennsylvania course entitled: *Introduction to Higher Education* is offered campus wide to first-year students. A recent 2003 syllabus (Appendix B) for this course suggests that this course is offered as an orientation course for first-year students. The course
overview taken from the syllabus refers to Liberal Studies as being part of the university’s core curriculum that all students must complete. Required material for this course includes three textbooks on succeeding in college, the undergraduate catalog, and the New Student Orientation Guide. The course covers the following topics:

- Academic/Social/Personal Adjustments Issues
- Campus Resources
- Curriculum Overview and Course of Studies
- Model of Active Involvement and Decision-Making
- Policies and Procedures
- Problem Solving and Goal Setting Strategies
- Study Strategies
- Time Management

The syllabus provides students with a course overview and the expectation of the students’ role in participating in the course. However, the course syllabus does not mention that students are required to attend mandatory campus events or a Majors Fair. North Carolina State University’s orientation course requires students to participate in a Majors Fair. According to the syllabus it could be inferred that the assignments for this course are completed though written application. Refer to Appendix B for a representation of the Indiana University of Pennsylvania’s Introduction to Higher Education syllabus.
Oregon State University

Oregon State University offers first-year students an orientation seminar taught by upper-level students. A study conducted by Oregon State University, consisting of an 150-item survey, was given to students in two different first semester seminars. One group of students completed an orientation seminar, and the other group of students participated in an academic seminar taught by faculty. The students from both seminars were asked to "assess some aspect of the college experience and to indicate the degree to which this event typified their experience" (Barefoot, 1993, p. 71).

The reactions of the two groups of students differed. Students who participated in the academic seminar with faculty instruction indicated that there was an opportunity to have informal interactions with faculty about issues not related to class and more likely to receive help from faculty with course-related problems. However, these same students expressed a greater level of dissatisfaction with the general quality of freshman instruction at the institution. (Barefoot, 1993, p. 72)

Faculty members can be effective mentors for major-declared, first-year students because "they are able to share information formally and informally about career fields in which they are employed" (Habley, 1995, p. 17). The
reactions from the students who participated in the orientation seminar included:

- satisfaction with the course,
- the ability to acquire institutional information on resources, and services, and
- “that they were becoming academically integrated into the institution.” (Barefoot, 1993, p. 72)

Oregon State University offers prospective students a first-year experience website that outlines what a student should expect when enrolling in the OSU orientation course (OSU Odyssey). The website states the purpose and desired learner outcomes that will be achieved once students complete the orientation course. The following learner outcomes were taken from the First Year Experience website:

- Understand the purpose, value and expectations of higher education.
- Know what it means to belong to the OSU community of scholars and the larger community around us.
- Understand how students learn and develop skills necessary to achieve academic success.
- Explore social, emotional, physical and spiritual elements of personal development and how they contribute to student success.
- Connect the present academic experience to future personal and career goals. (OSU Odyssey website)

The following has been taken from a ten-week orientation course offered by Oregon State University. The overall purpose of the course is to help students make a transition to college life. First-year students in this course
work with 25 other students. The course is facilitated by a faculty member and a student peer leader. The OSU Odyssey syllabus clearly provides a necessary goal for all first-year students who are making a transition from high school to college life. The following statement was taken from the course syllabus:

The overall goal of this course is to help you make a successful transition from high school to Oregon State University and the world beyond the University. To achieve this, we ask your active involvement (Appendix C).

The course covers the topics of time management, test taking, resource discovery, goals setting, campus issues, and student involvement in campus life. The course also requires students to complete assignments in Internet resources, utilization of the OSU student email accounts, goals setting, and campus organizations opportunities. Refer to Appendix C for a representation of the Oregon State University’s Odyssey course syllabus.

University of South Carolina

The University of South Carolina is known for its National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience. This university has published two volumes that report first-year curriculum outcomes from colleges and universities across The United States. The University of South Carolina has offered the course titled University 101 since 1972. University 101 courses
are taught by faculty, Student Affairs and academic administrators, and peer leaders who are upper-class students. It was reported from a seven year longitudinal study that “University 101 participants graduated at higher rates than non-participants” (Barefoot, 1993, p. 76).

The University of South Carolina provides information to prospective students on its website. When students participate in University 101 they receive tools for the several first-year transition objectives: academic success, personal development, latest technology, campus involvement, campus resources, and their future. Schilling (2001) states that during the first year “students are expected to develop college-level skills in reasoning, communication, and technology that build a strong foundation for course work” (p. 17). Students need to develop these skills early in their college careers. The orientation course can serve as the preparation course.

Summary

Universities and colleges have created a variety of first-year experience programs that include first semester orientation courses. These courses are implemented in order to help first-year students make the transition from high school to the college environment. Students need to realize the importance of making a successful transition, and that this process requires the students to “learn to understand and meet the expectations in their new environment, particularly with study skills, independent living, and time managements” (Levitz & Noel, 1989, p. 71). Student success is a result of
both student active participation, and the college’s assistance in helping the
students to make the connections.

The Review of the Literature did not reveal a study of orientation course
objectives having been evaluated in terms of perceptions as to what extent
the objectives of the orientation course had been achieved.
Chapter Three
Research Methods

Statement of the Problem

The University of Toledo’s QUEST orientation course objectives have never been evaluated to determine whether the objectives have been achieved as a result of the course instruction. Students’ and instructors’ opinions concerning the achievement of course objectives could be useful considerations in evaluating the effectiveness of The University of Toledo’s QUEST orientation course.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which students and instructors perceive that the course objectives of the QUEST orientation courses taught in the Fall Semester of 2003 were achieved.

Significance of the Study

Results of this study may present findings that can help curriculum developers determine the extent to which the orientation course objectives are being achieved by the students and the instructors. This information
may assist in the revision of the course to make the orientation course more effective. Course objectives that are being met by the students may lead to "better academic achievement and higher retention" (Upcraft, 1989, p. 94).

Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference in the ratings of students in the separate orientation sections as to the extent to which course objectives were achieved.

2. There is no significant difference in the ratings of the students compared to those of the instructors in the several sections of the orientation course as to the extent to which course objectives were achieved.

3. There is no significant difference in the ratings of the students of a section of the orientation course as to the extent to which the course objectives were achieved and those of students of all sections.

4. There is no significant difference in the ratings of an instructor of a section of the orientation course as to the extent to which the course objectives were achieved and those of instructors of all sections.

The level of significance has been set at .05. The value for $\rho$ must be equal to or smaller than .05 in order to accept the hypotheses (Underwood, 1954).

Definition of Terms

*Orientation course* – A course focused on assisting students with their transition from high school to college. The curriculum topics include among
others orientation to campus services, campus-sponsored events, and the campus community.

*QUEST instructor* – An individual who has completed a graduate level course in Teaching and Learning, and is teaching a QUEST orientation course in the Fall of 2003.

*QUEST Program* - The University of Toledo’s QUEST program assists undecided students with an orientation course and career exploration course, which helps the students explore different majors and career opportunities during their first year.

*Undecided student* – Undecided students are those enrolled in 12 or more credit hours at The University of Toledo, and who have not chosen a major or college. They will be referred to as QUEST students.

*Population*

Twenty QUEST orientation sections were taught in the Fall Semester of 2003. The population of volunteers consisted of 322 undecided first-year students, and 15 QUEST orientation instructors. Sixty-one percent of the student population resides in the residence halls, 11% of the students live in campus-arranged housing, about 5% live off campus with friends, and students who live with their parents/family at home made up 22% of the student population.
Instrumentation

A survey opinionnaire using a Likert scale response area was given to the students in their final orientation class meeting of the Fall Semester of 2003 (see Appendix D). The 20 statements of the objectives of the course were taken from the orientation course syllabus, an information flyer, which was supplied to the students during the Rocket Launch Summer Orientation program, and other QUEST’s FYE program documented objectives.

Limitations

This study was restricted to the population of volunteers of direct from high school students enrolled in the QUEST program for undecided students at The University of Toledo in the Fall Semester of 2003. Some possible limitations to this study could include incomplete scantrons, and the failure on the part of the participants to read the directions before completing the opinionnaire.

Data Collection

Anonymity of the students and instructors was guaranteed. Instructors were provided with a script of instructions, and a brief statement of the purpose of the study that included the reason why the students and the instructors were completing the opinionnaire. The instructions informed students to write the orientation course section number on the machine
scan sheet in the space provided. Students recorded their agreement or disagreement with the statements on the opinionnaire. Students were required to read the directions on the opinionnaire, and not to write on the opinionnaire. Students turned in both the machine scan sheet and the opinionnaire to their instructors upon completing the opinionnaire, and with the appropriate course section number. Instructors were responsible for completing the same opinionnaire with modified instructions for the QUEST instructors (see Appendix E).

Instructors received one survey packet for each orientation course section they were teaching, and an instructor’s script to read to the students before the students began the opinionnaire. The instructor’s identification code, the number of machine scan sheets enclosed for that section, and the attached script were on the outside of each packet. Instructors received 30 copies of the opinionnaire with each of their packet(s).

Once both the instructor and the students completed the opinionnaire the instructor placed the machine scan sheets with the responses to the opinionnaire in the provided envelope and returned them to the Student Success Center located in Rocket Hall. The students’ and instructors’ opinionnaires were to be completed and turned in to the Student Success Center front desk before December 19, 2003.
Data Analysis

Students recorded their responses on a machine scan sheet using a Likert scale. The responses were analyzed using a SPSS computer program after they were machine scored, recorded, and summed using the numerical values assigned by the students and the instructors to each opinionnaire statement. The numerical value derived from the sum for each statement was used to establish a rating hierarchy of agreement or disagreement for each statement in each course section by the students and the instructors, as well as for all sections by the students and the instructors. These agreement totals established a rank order of the extent to which the course objectives were rated as being achieved. Results of this analysis responded to the hypotheses set for the study.

The rank order established for each course section was tested for its significance of difference between it and each other course section, as well as with the combined rank order of all course sections and similarly each course section with each course instructor and with all course instructors. This was done using a SPSS computer program for rank order correlation.

Human Subjects Committee Approval

The study was submitted to and approved by the University of Toledo Human Subject Research Committee.
Chapter Four

Results

The findings, which result from the analysis of the data according to the methods and procedures explained in Chapter Three are that if the level of significant difference exceeded .05 then the hypothesis was rejected, and if it did not exceed .05 then the hypothesis was supported. The level of significance was set to .05, and the procedure for testing each hypothesis was to assume no significant difference in the ratings of the two variables being tested, therefore the null hypothesis was tested (Underwood, 1954). The statistical software, SPPS, was used in this study to test for a two-tailed significance. Students and instructors’ ratings were translated into rankings. Tie ranks were computed before finding the correlation. Ranks were entered into SPSS to find the Spearman’s Rho and Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The Correlation Coefficients were computed by SPSS needed to have a value greater than the critical value statistically set at .447 for a sample of 20 course objectives (Underwood, 1954).

Four hypotheses were tested to see if there were no significant differences in the two variables. The testing for Hypothesis 1 resulted in a
total of 190 comparisons, with each course section being compared to the other 19 sections. The testing for Hypothesis 2 compared each of the 20 sections of students with their instructor to see if there were any significant differences in the rankings as to the extent to which course objectives were achieved. The testing for Hypothesis 3 was the only hypothesis that when comparing the responses of one section to the responses of all resulted in support for the Hypothesis. The final hypothesis of the four compared each of the 20 course sections of the instructor’s ratings to the total responses of all the instructors.

**Hypothesis 1**

The testing for Hypothesis 1 required that each course section be compared to the other sections of students’ responses as to the extent to which course objectives were perceived as being achieved. There were course sections that when compared resulted in significant differences. The number of significant differences varied by sections when comparing two different sections out of the 190 comparisons. Seventy-two percent of the 190 comparisons supported Hypothesis 1, and 28% resulted in the rejection of the Hypothesis 1. Table 1 reports which sections when compared to one of the other 19 sections supported or rejected Hypothesis 1. Section numbers are presented on the table horizontally and vertically. Information from this table also reports the significant numerical value of two sections compared.
### Table 1. Hypothesis 1 Overall Results
Students’ Course Section vs. Other Course Sections

|    | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  | 19  | 20  | 21  | 22  | 23  | 24  | 25  | 26  | 27  | 28  |
|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 8  | *   | R   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | R   | S   | R   | S   | R   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | R   |
| 9  | .123 | *   | S   | R   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | R   | S   | S   | R   | R   | S   | R   | S   | R   | S   | R   | S   | R   |
| 10 | .001 | .002 | *   | S   | R   | S   | S   | S   | S   | R   | R   | R   | R   | S   | S   | R   | S   | S   | R   | S   | S   | R   | S   |
| 11 | .002 | .002 | .005 | *   | S   | S   | R   | S   | S   | S   | R   | S   | S   | S   | S   | R   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | R   |
| 12 | .028 | .072 | .118 | .001 | *   | S   | R   | S   | S   | R   | S   | S   | R   | S   | S   | R   | S   | S   | R   | S   | S   | R   | S   |
| 13 | .036 | .030 | .107 | .001 | .000 | *   | R   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | R   | S   | S   |
| 14 | .005 | .007 | .006 | .110 | .276 | .288 | *   | R   | R   | R   | S   | R   | S   | S   | R   | R   | S   | R   | S   | R   | S   | R   |
| 15 | .005 | .046 | .023 | .012 | .000 | .002 | .019 | *   | S   | S   | R   | S   | R   | S   | R   | S   | S   | R   | S   | S   | R   | S   |
| 17 | .002 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .001 | .073 | .009 | *   | S   | S   | R   | S   | S   | R   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   |
| 18 | .000 | .043 | .000 | .001 | .061 | .036 | .112 | .026 | .000 | *   | R   | S   | R   | S   | S   | S   | S   | R   | S   | S   |
| 19 | .105 | .010 | .095 | .007 | .017 | .031 | .269 | .131 | .001 | .087 | *   | S   | R   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | R   | S   |
| 20 | .014 | .019 | .093 | .001 | .000 | .000 | .041 | .001 | .002 | .045 | .004 | *   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   |
| 21 | .237 | .193 | .214 | .100 | .163 | .012 | .243 | .139 | .265 | .266 | .451 | .014 | *   | R   | S   | S   | R   | R   | R   | R   | R   | S   |
| 22 | .000 | .031 | .015 | .003 | .000 | .017 | .007 | .004 | .002 | .006 | .012 | .000 | .257 | *   | S   | S   | S   | S   | R   | S   |
| 23 | .001 | .002 | .002 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .046 | .001 | .000 | .001 | .002 | .000 | .023 | .00 | *   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   |
| 24 | .001 | .003 | .000 | .001 | .059 | .031 | .086 | .013 | .000 | .000 | .003 | .017 | .025 | .007 | .00 | *   | S   | S   | S   | S   | S   | R   |
| 25 | .000 | .068 | .144 | .005 | .007 | .047 | .156 | .070 | .003 | .008 | .002 | .008 | .932 | .000 | .00 | 3   | .00 | 2   | S   | R   | S   |
| 26 | .002 | .269 | .004 | .008 | .004 | .096 | .064 | .005 | .027 | .054 | .217 | .022 | .191 | .000 | .00 | 8   | .02 | 6   | .04 | 9   | *   | R   |
| 27 | .002 | .001 | .000 | .000 | .053 | .041 | .002 | .006 | .000 | .001 | .097 | .040 | .403 | .052 | .00 | 1   | .00 | 2   | .13 | 4   | .10 | 4   | *   | R   |
| 28 | .071 | .186 | .049 | .040 | .000 | .005 | .404 | .011 | .010 | .128 | .082 | .018 | .442 | .001 | .00 | 8   | .00 | 4   | .00 | 1   | .2   | 93  | *   |

*(n = 20, p < .05, two-tailed)  
S = Supported Hypothesis 1  
R = Rejected Hypothesis 1
Table 2 reports each section number and which other section number when compared either supported or rejected Hypothesis 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sections</th>
<th>Supported</th>
<th>Rejected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>12, 21, 25, 26, 28</td>
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<td>12, 13, 19, 20, 21, 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28</td>
<td>14, 21</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Hypothesis 2**

The testing of Hypothesis 2 reports the ratings of the individual course sections of students and their instructors. There were no significant differences in the ratings of the individual course section of students compared to those of the instructors as to the extent to which course objectives were perceived as being achieved in six out of the 20 course sections. This resulted in 30% of the course sections supporting Hypothesis 2. Table 3 reports the results for Hypothesis 2. Table 3 reports information on significance, correlation coefficients, and positive and negative correlations. Table 4 reports which course sections support Hypothesis 2. Fourteen of the total 20 course sections had significant differences in the students’ ratings compared to those of their instructors as to the extent to which course objectives were perceived as being achieved. Hypothesis 2 was rejected by 70% of the course sections. Table 5 reports, which course sections, had a positive correlation with significant differences in the ratings between the students of one section and their instructor in the same section. It is interesting to note that out of the 20 course sections 15% had significant negative correlations between the instructors of one section with the students of the same section as reported in Table 6.
Table 3. Hypothesis 2: Overall Results
Course Section Instructors vs. Students in Same Section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Support No Significant Difference</th>
<th>Reject Significant Difference</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significance ρ =</td>
<td>Significance ρ =</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<td>.108</td>
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</table>

(n = 20, p < .05, two-tailed)
Table 4 Hypothesis 2 Supported
Course Section Instructors vs. Students in same Course Section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>23</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
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<td>.539</td>
<td>.593</td>
<td>.474</td>
<td>.468</td>
<td>.609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance $\rho =$</td>
<td>.023</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(n = 20, $\rho < .05$, two-tailed)

Table 5 Hypothesis 2 Rejected
Course Section Instructors vs. Students in same Course Section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>19</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>22</th>
<th>24</th>
<th>26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>.260</td>
<td>.281</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>.264</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>.331</td>
<td>.368</td>
<td>.262</td>
<td>.408</td>
<td>.221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance $\rho =$</td>
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<td>.230</td>
<td>.702</td>
<td>.261</td>
<td>.726</td>
<td>.154</td>
<td>.110</td>
<td>.265</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>.349</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(n = 20, $\rho < .05$, two-tailed)

Table 6 Hypothesis 2 Rejected with Negative Correlation
Course Section Instructors vs. Students in same Course Section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
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<td>-.177</td>
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<td>Significance $\rho =$</td>
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<td>.376</td>
<td>.456</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
(n = 20, $\rho < .05$, two-tailed)

Hypothesis 3

All 20 course sections when compared to the total ratings of all students resulted in no significant differences. There was a 100% support for Hypothesis 3. Table 7 reports information on significance, and correlation coefficients.
Hypothesis 4

The testing for Hypothesis 4 reports the ratings of an instructor of a section as to the extent to which the course objectives were achieved, and those of all the instructors of all sections. There were significant differences in the ratings of an instructor of a section compared to those of the instructors of all sections. Section 11 was the only section when compared with the total responses from all instructors, which resulted in a significant negative correlation.
Table 8 reports which course sections of instructors’ ratings support Hypothesis 4 when comparing one section of an instructor’s ratings to the total ratings of all instructors.

### Table 8 Hypothesis 4 Supported

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Section</th>
<th>Instructor vs. Total Instructors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>.728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance ( \rho ) =</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(n = 20, \( \rho < .05 \), two-tailed)

Table 9 reports which instructors for each course section when compared with the rating of all instructors did not support the Hypothesis 4.

### Table 9 Hypothesis 4 Rejected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Section</th>
<th>Instructor vs. Total Instructors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>-.297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance ( \rho ) =</td>
<td>.203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(n = 20, \( \rho < .05 \), two-tailed)

Table 10 represents an overall review in percentages of which hypotheses were supported and rejected for this study.
Table 10 Overall Hypothesis Results in Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Supported</th>
<th>Rejected</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 1</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students in Separate Sections vs. Different Sections</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 2</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students vs. Instructor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 3</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students of One Section vs. Total Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesis 4</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor of One Section vs. Total Instructors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Highest Rankings

The five course objectives that were rated highest for being perceived by students as having been achieved were

- learning how to balance academic, work, and extracurricular activities. (Statement 9); balancing campus life
- advising and scheduling (Statement 17),
- campus and services discovery (Statement 12),
- the opportunity to work with other students (Statement 2), and
- a rank tie between utilization of campus services (Statement 11), and an existence of a learning community (Statement 1).

The five course objectives that were rated highest for being perceived by instructors as having been achieved were

- the opportunity to work with other students (Statement 2),
- campus and services discovery (Statement 12),
- advising and scheduling (Statement 17),
- the opportunity to make new friends (Statement 3), and
• major and career exploration (Statement 16).

A difference in the ratings of instructors and students was that instructors did not rate the following course objectives in the five highest rankings, as did the students:

• learning how to balance academic, work, and extracurricular activities. (Statement 9); balancing campus life
• an existence of a learning community (Statement 1), and
• utilization of campus services (Statement 11),

Interestingly, the students’ ratings of the following course objectives were rated highly by instructors:

• an existence of a learning community (Statement 1), and
• utilization of campus services (Statement 11).

The number one ranking perceived as being achieved among students’ rating was the objective of balancing campus life (Statement 9). It may be important to note that the instructors rated this objective, balancing campus life (Statement 9), as one of the lower ranked course objectives.

Refer to Table 11 for a complete table of the five highest rankings perceived as being achieved by the ratings of students and instructors.
Lowest Rankings

The course objectives which received the lowest rankings based on the ratings by the instructors are as follow:

- learning how to balance academic, work, and extracurricular activities. (Statement 9), and orientation skills application to other courses (Statement 15),
- the opportunity to discuss a common reading experience (Statement 18),
- a provided mentor during the semester (Statement 5),
- assistance in becoming an active learner (Statement 14), and
- ranked last based on the ratings of the instructors was the opportunity to increase the comfort level in working with University Representatives (Statement 6).

The course objectives that received the lowest rankings based on the ratings by the students are as follow:

- assistance in developing a sense of belonging at the University (Statement 7),
- the opportunity to learn, improve, expand, and integrate study strategies and critical thinking skills (Statement 20),
- assistance in becoming an active learner (Statement 14),
- the opportunity to discuss a common reading experience (Statement 18), and
- ranked last based on the ratings of students was the course objective of enhanced academic success (Statement 19).

Instructors and students rated the opportunity to discuss a common reading experience (Statement 18), and the assistance in becoming an
active learner (Statement 14) as the five lowest course objectives. Refer to Table 12 for a complete table of the five lowest rankings perceived as being achieved by the ratings of students and instructors.

A complete list of course objective descriptions, ranking, and rank total scores for students can be found on Table 13. The students’ rating of the course objective, the opportunity to meet with a mentor on a regular basis during the semester (Statement 5), was ranked in the lower level of achievement, being ranked 14th. Instructors rated Statement 5 in the five lowest rankings. This could suggest that there is an agreement between students and instructors that being provided with a mentor who would meet with the students on a regular basis during the semester was most likely not achieved compared to the other course objectives. Refer to Table 14 for a complete list of course objective descriptions, ranking, and rank total for instructors.

Tie Rankings Rated by Instructors

Instructors’ rating of the following course objectives resulted in a tie for 2nd:

- helped students to learn about academic advising, planning, scheduling, and programs at The University of Toledo, (Statement 17)
- helped students to learn more about The University of Toledo campus and the student services offered, (Statement 12)
Instructors’ rating of the following course objectives resulted in a tie for 7th:

- increased students’ participation in campus-sponsored events, (Statement 13)
- helped students to learn and produce the skills of time management, (Statement 10)
- provided a learning community in each class meeting, (Statement 1)

Instructors’ rating of the following course objectives resulted in a tie for 15th:

- helped students apply the skills learned to other courses, (Statement 15)
- assisted students in learning how to balance academic, work, and extracurricular activities, (Statement 9)

*Tie Rankings Rated by Students*

Students’ rating of the following course objectives resulted in a tie for 5th:

- provided me with the opportunity to use campus services, (Statement 11)
- provided a learning community in each class meeting, (Statement 1)

Students’ rating of the following course objectives resulted in a tie for 10th:

- helped me to learn and produce the skills of time management, (Statement 10)
- increased my comfort and confidence level in working with University representatives, (Statement 6)
Summary

There was no significant difference in the ratings of all the students and of all the instructors as to the extent to which course objectives were achieved. Table 15 reports each course objective and the average rating given by the students and instructors. The overall rating for the Orientation course was rated at a 3.596 by the students and a 4.015 by the instructors.

An additional statement that was not a course objective required students to rate their level of agreement. The statement was: “I would recommend this course to other first-year students.” A tabulation of the responses to strongly agree and agree response areas on the Likert scale resulted in 54% of the students agreeing and/or strongly agreeing that they would recommend the course to first-year students. Sixteen percent responded with no opinion that they would recommend this course to other first-year students, and about 30% responded with strongly disagree and/or disagree. Refer to Table 16 for percentages of the total response to the statement asking students to rate their level of agreement on recommending this course to other first-year students.
Table 11. Highest Ranked Course Items by Students and Instructors’ Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question #</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1, 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation Objective</td>
<td>Balancing College Life</td>
<td>Advising</td>
<td>Campus and Services</td>
<td>Work with Other Students</td>
<td>Learning Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Utilization of Campus Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2.5</th>
<th>2.5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question #</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation Objective</td>
<td>Work with Other Students</td>
<td>Campus and Services</td>
<td>Advising</td>
<td>Make Friends</td>
<td>Major and Career Exploration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12. Lowest Ranked Course Items by Students and Instructors’ Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Question #</th>
<th>Orientation Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lowest Ranked Course Items by Students’ Ratings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Question #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Orientation Objective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Question #</th>
<th>Orientation Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lowest Ranked Course Items by Instructors’ Ratings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Question #</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Orientation Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Skills Application to Other Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question Number</td>
<td>Rank Total</td>
<td>Ranking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1370</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1260</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1256</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>5.5</td>
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<td>1208</td>
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<td>1147</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1140</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1140</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1117</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>1094</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>1085</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1058</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1047</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1028</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14. Instructors Rankings with Course Item Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Number</th>
<th>Rank Total</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Provided students the opportunity to work with other students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Helped students to learn about academic advising, planning, scheduling, and programs at The University of Toledo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Helped students to learn more about The University of Toledo campus and the student services offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Afforded students the opportunity to make friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Presented opportunities for students to explore majors at the University and related careers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Provided students with opportunities to use campus services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Increased students’ participation in campus-sponsored events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Helped students to learn and produce the skills of time management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Provided a learning community in each class meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Helped students to identify other students with common interests regular basis during the semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Helped students to learn improve, expand, and integrate study strategies and critical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Helped students to make a transition from high school to college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Enhanced students’ academic success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Helped students to develop a sense of belonging at the University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>Helped students to apply the skills learned to other courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>Assisted students in learning how to balance academic, work, and extracurricular activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Provided students with a common reading experience and opportunities to discuss this reading in class and with mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Provided students with a mentor who will meet with the students on a during the semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Helped students to become an active learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Increased students’ comfort and confidence level in working with University representatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15. Average Agreement Rating per Statement

Students and Instructors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Instructors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Provided a learning community in each class meeting.</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provided the opportunity to work with other students.</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Afforded the opportunity to make friends.</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>4.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Helped to identify other students with common interests.</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Provided a mentor who will meet with me on a regular basis during the semester.</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Increased comfort and confidence level in working with University representatives.</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Helped to develop a sense of belonging at the University.</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Helped to make a transition from high school to college.</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Assisted in learning how to balance academic, work, and extracurricular activities.</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Helped to learn and produce the skills of time management.</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Provided opportunities to use campus services.</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>4.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Helped to learn more about The University of Toledo campus and the student services offered.</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Increased participation in campus-sponsored events.</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Helped to become an active learner.</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>3.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Helped to apply the skills I have learned to other courses.</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Presented opportunities to explore majors at the University and related careers.</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Helped to learn about academic advising, planning, scheduling, and programs at The University of Toledo.</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Provided a common reading experience and opportunities to discuss this reading in class and with mentors.</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Enhanced academic success.</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Helped to learn improve, expand, and integrate study strategies and critical thinking.</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 - Strongly Disagree   2 – Disagree   3 – No Opinion   4 - Agree   5 - Strongly Agree
Table 16  Student Course Recommendations
Agreement and Disagreement Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Five

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

A goal of an orientation course is to introduce college life to in-coming students, and make them feel as if they are part of the campus culture. A valuable orientation course should be provided to first-year students. This course should encompass social and academic realms that assist students to make a connection to the campus.

The intent of this study was to provide information on The University of Toledo’s QUEST orientation course offered to first-year undecided students. The purpose of the orientation course is to provide these students with academic and social opportunities, which will contribute to making a successful transition to college. Current orientation courses offered at other four-year large institutions have similar first-year objectives that are to be achieved while completing the course. Orientation syllabi and First Year Experience websites were examined to see what constitutes as effective orientation topics across four-year large universities. Students and instructors were asked to rate their level of agreement as to the extent to which they perceived The University of Toledo’s QUEST orientation course contributed to the achievement of first-year orientation course objectives. The ratings from the students and instructors resulted in course objectives.
being ranked. Course objectives were ranked five highest and lowest by the students’ and instructors’ ratings. Further intent of this study was to provide statistical analysis of the students and instructors comparisons to the extent to which courses objectives were perceived as being achieved.

Methods Review

Instructors and students were given an opinionnaire, and were asked to rate their agreement to 20 statements on the achievement of orientation course objectives. Instructors and students used a Likert scale response rating for each course objective statement. The opinionnaire had a total of 20 course objectives to be rated by instructors and students. The 20 course objectives were taken from the course syllabus, informational flyers made available during the Summer Orientation Program, and the QUEST’s FYE documented objectives. A total of 354 students were enrolled in the Fall 2003 orientation courses, and 322 students, constituting a population of volunteers, completed the opinionnaire resulting in a 90% response rate. It would be interesting to compare the retention rates of these students for the second semester to the opinionnaire response rate. Instructors were given a similar opinionnaire to complete during the final instructors’ meeting of the Fall 2003 Semester. There was a 100% response rate for instructors.

The Likert scale on the opinionnaire started with strongly disagree and ended with strongly agree. This format was set up specifically to fit the Likert scale to the scantron requirements. Most course evaluations at the University begin the choice selections with a positive response, and both
students and instructors could have not read the instructions, and completed the survey with the intent to agree. Instructors were given a script to read to the students before completing the opinionnaire, and explained specific directions for completing the opinionnaire.

Suggestions on improving the opinionnaire would be to have fewer course objectives, and more statements focused on one specific objective. Some opinionnaire statements combined a series of course objectives into one statement. This may have affected how the students rated the statements.

**Findings**

Students and instructors rated the course objectives. The ratings resulted in each course objective being ranked. This study identified the five objectives which received higher ranks as having been achieved in the orientation course. These objectives can be considered as most effective in helping first-year students make a successful transition to The University of Toledo. Some of the course objectives were rated low by students. The course objectives that were ranked low by students are not necessarily first-year objectives that can be measured after only the first semester. The following course objectives could be objectives that are still in the process of being achieved throughout the first-year as students:

- helped to become an active learner (Statement 14),
- enhanced academic success (Statement 19),
• helped develop a sense of belonging (Statement 7), and
• helped to improve, expand, and integrate study strategies and critical thinking (Statement 20)

The intent of this study was to evaluate the orientation course. The orientation course is only part of the first-year experience program offered by QUEST. Some of the objectives used to construct the opinionnaire included QUEST First Year Experience program outcomes (Appendix F).

The first orientation course objective of the five highest course objectives rated highly by students was the objective of *assisted in learning how to balance academic, work, and extracurricular activities* (Statement 9). This suggests that the orientation course contributed to social and academic integration, and assisted students in time management. The orientation course objective ranked in second place by students’ ratings was the course objective *helped to learn about academic advising, planning, scheduling, and programs at The University of Toledo* (Statement 17). This course objective being ranked second contradicts the course objective ranked last by students’ rating of *enhanced academic success* (Statement 19). Academic advising is part of enhancing success, and students rated the objective of advising highly. The definition of academic success can be interpreted differently depending on the individual (first-year students) completing the opinionnaire. Changes to the study to improve the understanding of the term *academic success* would be to provide a specific definition of the term.
It is still important to point out that the course objective of academic advising was rated highly by students, and ranked second. Academic advising is one of the most important first-year experiences. The findings from this study suggest that the course provided this experience to students. The academic advising objective represents the importance of understanding college academics. The course objective of academic advising seems to have been achieved. Students who have not enrolled in a major may feel as if they are not academically connected to the institution, and this may suggest why students rated the course objective of **helped to develop a sense of belonging at the university (Statement 7)** as a lower ranked course objective being achieved.

Students also rated the following course objectives highly:

- helped to learn about The University of Toledo campus and the student services offered (Statement 12),
- provided the opportunity to work with other students, provided opportunities to use campus resources (Statement 2), and
- provided a learning community in each class meeting (Statement 1).

All these objectives are part of providing students with opportunities to make a transition to the college campus, and the new social environment.

Instructors rated the following course objectives as highly ranked course objectives being achieved:

- provided the opportunity to work with other students (Statement 2),
• helped to learn about academic advising, planning, scheduling, and programs at The University of Toledo (Statement 17), and
• helped students to learn more about The University of Toledo campus and the student services (Statement 12).

Instructors also rated the course objective, **afforded students the opportunity to make friends (Statement 3)** highly. Although Hypothesis 2 had a high rejection rate when comparing the perceptions of students’ ratings and their instructors in the same section course there is still no significant differences among all students and all instructors. Significant differences in the rankings between students and instructors in the same orientation course could suggest that there were considerable differences of opinion between the students and instructors. Both instructors and students rated the course objective **provided a common reading experience and opportunities to discuss this reading in class and with mentors (Statement 5)** as a lower ranking.

**Conclusions**

Compared to other successful institutions that are implementing orientation courses the results of this study on the 20 course objectives rated by students would suggest first-year objectives were perceived as being achieved by 54%, while of the students’ responses 30% disagreed that the objectives were achieved through active participation in the orientation course. There is evidence in this study that the students rated both social and academic course objectives have being achieved. This
study provides initial information on this subject. As one scholar has said, “it is important to begin thinking of research as an on-going project, not a series of one-shot studies” (Ewell, 1993, p. 4).

The need to study the issue of the first-year experience should continue as new students enroll in the QUEST’s First Year Experience program. A follow-up study would include working with The University of Toledo’s Institutional Research Office to see if undecided students in the QUEST program are retained, and if these students have declared a major after their first year at The University of Toledo. Continuous studies can help create a database of first-year program results, and eventually be used to improve the university experience for students.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings of this study:

- Re-examine the data from those sections in which there were significant differences in the rankings as to the extent to which course objectives were achieved as being perceived by the students and the instructors.

- Administer similar questionnaires or opinionnaires to students at the end of the eight weeks, in the beginning of the second semester, and at the end of the first-year in order to obtain data which can be used for reliability studies.

- Conduct a qualitative inquiry study of the students’ from the sections reporting significant differences also with the instructors of the same section and gather opinions as to why there may have been different perceptions.

- Conduct a qualitative study with students concerning the results of the statement on whether they would recommend
the course to future first-year students to specifically find out why they would or would not recommend the course.

Instructors must be a part of the students’ learning experiences for the orientation course to be effective. Instructors need to interact with students often out of the classroom as well as in the classroom.

Undecided students may be at a greater risk of being retained. A student’s major may be considered the student’s connection with the university when they are enrolled. If an undecided student is asked “What is your major,” the student may have some feelings of mismatch with the university because the student has not declared a major. The advising career objective is to “enhance and support teaching and learning” (Mueller, 1961, p. 222). Advisers can be effective first-year mentors, because they have the natural opportunity to have continuous contact with students. The following recommendation is based on the knowledge gained from the Literature Review:

- Encourage and assist QUEST advisers in teaching orientation courses that will provide support system with continuous interaction

The QUEST orientation course requires students to complete assignments involving campus participation and social interaction. The common reading experience for this course, Tuesday’s with Morrie, is a good piece of literature that ties into the mentoring course objective. Since this course objective was rated low this may suggest that both students and
instructors perceived that this particular course objective was not effective, and the course objective was not focused on reading. The following recommendation is made for the QUEST orientation course:

- Allow an alternative common reading assignment that could introduce current affairs into the class meetings.

Some students may find it more interesting to discuss current affairs, and this would allow students to actively participate in class discussions. Another possibility to integrate the common reading experience into the course is to have the second eight-weeks focus on discussing the reading and how it relates to establishing college connections. The current focus of this course seems to be student-centered.

Based on the Literature Review and findings of this study the following recommendation is to

- Conduct on-going evaluations throughout every first-year that includes the perceptions of advisers, students, instructors, and supporting staff.

- Staff the orientation courses with the best student-centered instructors.

Orientation courses should be student-centered and include an effective academic advising system associated with the course. Orientation course assignments should require students to utilize campus services, resources, and technology. Students need to take an active part in making the social and academic transition. Social integration can include course
assignments, which specifically require the students to actively participate in campus life. Orientation instructors can be part of the support system first-year students need in the first critical weeks of transition.


Fitts, C. T., & Swift, F. H. The construction of orientation courses for college freshmen (pp.145-250). In University of California Publications in Education, 1897-1929, 1928, 2(3),


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The University of North Carolina. Introduction to University Education
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First Year College
Course Description for Fall 2003
MDS 101A: Introduction to University Education

In their first year at NC State University, all FYC students must take a one-hour, letter-graded course, "Introduction to University Education," MDS 101A (fall semester) and MDS 102A (spring semester). Your instructor for this course is your academic adviser, which gives you weekly contact with him or her. You will also meet individually with your adviser several times each semester.

FYC advisers and instructors are committed to being prepared for class, to grading fairly, and to being available to help students with their questions and concerns about MDS 101A and MDS 102A and about advising issues.

As members of the NC State University community, all FYC students are expected to abide by the honor code of the university and to follow the University's policy on academic integrity. FYC instructors expect your work for this class to be your own—that you have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on it. Your instructor may also ask that you sign the Honor Pledge on certain assignments and tests. You should put your best effort into your work for this class, both in your out-of-class assignments and in class discussions and activities. You will find the Code of Student Conduct at:

www2.ncsu.edu/prr/student_services/student_conduct/POL445.00.1.htm

FYC instructors and staff abide by the University’s policy regarding equal access for students with disabilities. You will find a detailed explanation of the rights and responsibilities of disabled students, and the related rights and responsibilities of NC State University at:

www.ncsu.edu/provost/offices/affirm_action/dss/rr.html

All members of FYC--students, advisers, and staff--pledge to treat all members of the University community with fairness and respect.

Course goals
1. To provide a smooth transition from high school to college through participation in small-group sessions, interaction with an adviser, and engagement with campus resources, policies and procedures.
2. To help students develop strategies to achieve academic success through collaborative learning;
3. To promote self-discovery in assignments, class activities, and advising sessions;
4. To help students explore majors and careers through such activities as college open houses, information sessions provided by various colleges and

http://www.ncsu.edu/fyc/current/curriculum/mds101a/
Appendix A

departments, an FYC majors fair with NC State college representatives, instruction on a career development theory, and several inventories (questionnaires) which give extensive reports on personality and interests.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Fall 2003, MDS 101A

You will earn a letter grade (A, B, C, D, or F with plus/minus grading) in MDS 101A, a one-hour course. Grading will be based on a point system. Neither MDS 101A nor MDS 102A may be taken pass/fail; you must take the course for a letter grade.

1. Attendance

Regular class attendance in any college course is essential for success, and MDS 101A is no exception. The basic attendance policy for MDS 101A follows the University regulation for attendance. Attendance expectations for this course are as follows:

If a student misses more than two classes, the final course grade will be lowered one letter grade for each additional absence. For example, if you have an “A” in the course but have three absences, then your semester letter grade will be reduced to a “B;” for four absences, the final grade will become a “C;” for five absences a “D,” etc. If absent from a class session, it is the student's responsibility to obtain information on any class assignments to avoid losing points on incomplete assignments.

The University policy on excused absences is described at the following URL. Please note that it is up to you to let your instructor know about these absences, and it is up to you to arrange to make up any missed work.

http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/pols_regs/REG205.00.4.php

2. Course Workbook and Assignments

Textbook
The textbook for both MDS 101A and MDS 102A is THE (Transition to Higher Education) Workbook (2003 edition, at the University Bookstore). The price of the book includes $27 to cover the cost of testing and personalized reports for the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Strong Interest Inventory and the cost of a Franklin-Covey Planner. You will need to purchase a 3-ring binder for THE Workbook. We suggest that you put your assignments and notes for this course into this binder as well, because many of the assignments from the fall semester will be used to create a final project during the spring semester.

Assignments

http://www.ncsu.edu/fyc/current/curriculum/mds101a/
Your instructor will provide you a detailed list of assignments with their due dates and point values. Some of your assignments are in the Workbook, but most will be given to you by your instructor. However, due to the high cost of photocopying, your instructor may not be able to give you paper copies of your assignments. Your instructor will explain how you can locate your assignments and will provide them in enough time for students to complete them. As with any class, students have the responsibility to know how to find their assignments, to retrieve them, and to ask their instructor about any concerns or questions regarding an assignment.

Late assignments
Your instructor will inform you of his or her policy regarding late work.

3. The FYC Co-Curricular Events
Learning within the University is not limited to attending class and completing assignments. Endless opportunities for learning and discovery occur outside of class. This extended learning is called "co-curricular" learning. You are required to attend the following co-curricular events:

A. FYC Majors Fair
All FYC students are required to attend the FYC Majors Fair on Thursday, October 2, in Talley Student Center, times to be announced. The Majors Fair gives you the opportunity to speak personally with representatives from all NC State colleges and to obtain materials, curricula sheets, transfer information, and career-related information (25 points).

B. FYC Forum Series
Students in MDS101A will attend three forum events: one cultural, one educational or vocational, and one event from any category (the "student choice" event). You must attend at least one event in each time block (see next page for time blocks). Choose the events from the calendar on the FYC Forum webpage:

www.ncsu.edu/fyc/forum_new/

If you wish to attend an event that is not on the calendar, you must get approval from your instructor in advance. To receive full credit for attending a Forum Event, you must submit a Forum Report via the forum webpage within one week of attending the event. A Forum Report must be a thoughtful reflection on the event and answer all the questions asked about the event. If you are attending events for the University Scholars program, you may count these events for your Forum Series requirement; be sure to submit reports on the events you attend. Please ask your instructor if you have any questions. (10 points for each event; 30 points total)

Cultural Enrichment Forum Events
Events in this category will help you explore campus and community arts and
multicultural events, such as concerts, plays, gallery walks, international festivals, and so on. Some of these events require you to purchase a ticket in advance; it is your responsibility to do so.

**Educational Enrichment Forum Events**
These events give you the opportunity to expand your academic skills and educational horizons. Typical events are academic skills workshops, selected campus club or organizational meetings (check with your instructor to see which ones qualify), faculty lectures, talks given by outside speakers, etc.

**Vocational Forum Events**
These events assist in a student's major or career decision-making process (e.g., College open houses, job fairs, individual appointment with University Career Center Counselor, etc.).

**Wellness Forum Events**
This category includes experiences designed to educate and enable student wellness in the physical, spiritual, emotional, and relational dimensions; includes hands-on service to the community (e.g., yoga classes, Habitat for Humanity, Health Center presentations on alcohol and drug use or on healthy eating, etc.).

*Superforum Events* (15 points)
Each semester FYC may sponsor a "Superforum Event," which focuses on an issue that is significant to the NC State community, or to the larger community outside the University. In 2001-2002, the Superforum Events were a panel and discussion on the causes and consequences of 9-11, and an interactive workshop on diversity. A Superforum Event can fulfill one of your three required forum events. Because the topics are so significant, you can earn additional credit (15 points instead of 10 points) for attending the event and submitting a thoughtful report.

**Time Blocks for FYC Forum Events**
Find the name of your MDS 101A instructor below. Follow the forum time block schedule for your instructor—complete at least one forum event in each time block.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If your instructor is named:</th>
<th>If your instructor is named:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artis</td>
<td>Hawkins-Morton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atkin</td>
<td>Hunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chafin</td>
<td>McLean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher</td>
<td>Outing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gainey</td>
<td>Powell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://www.ncsu.edu/fyc/current/curriculum/mds101a/
4. Final Exam

During the final exam period, students will have opportunity to demonstrate knowledge of the MDS 101A course content and to take part in an assessment of the First Year College experience. (30 points).

5. First-Year Capstone Project

The capstone project for “Introduction to University Education” is due at the end of spring semester. In it you will bring together your work for both MDS 101A and MDS 102A and reflect on your decision-making about majors and careers; you will also be able to discuss other issues about your first year at NCSU. Your instructor will give you instructions for the capstone project in the spring semester. **The Capstone Project includes your work from both fall and spring semesters. Keep all of your work for MDS 101A and MDS 102A—do NOT throw it away!**

**MDS 101A: Grade Charts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADES FOR ASSIGNMENTS AND ACTIVITIES</th>
<th>Maximum Points Each</th>
<th>Total Points Possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignments and class activities</td>
<td>variable</td>
<td>205</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-curricular Assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Enrichment Forum Event</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational OR Vocational Forum Event</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Choice Forum Event</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FYC Majors Fair</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL POINTS:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>290</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A

The co-curricular events and final exam have a set point value for all sections of MDS 101A. For all other assignments and activities for the course, your instructor will determine the point value. You may not do exactly the same assignments as students in another section of MDS 101A, and similar assignments may have different point values in different sections of the course. However, all assignments and activities are designed to help you make a smooth transition from high school to college, learn how to succeed academically, learn about yourself, and explore majors and careers.

### MDS 101A COURSE GRADE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Ranges</th>
<th>B Ranges</th>
<th>C Ranges</th>
<th>D Ranges</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+ = exceptional work</td>
<td>B+ = 269 - 260</td>
<td>C+ = 239 - 230</td>
<td>D+ = 209 - 200</td>
<td>F = &lt; 179</td>
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<tr>
<td>A = 290 - 280</td>
<td>B = 259 - 250</td>
<td>C = 229 - 220</td>
<td>D = 199 - 190</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A- = 279 - 270</td>
<td>B- = 249 - 240</td>
<td>C- = 219 - 210</td>
<td>D- = 189 - 180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your instructor will inform you on your syllabus what constitutes “exceptional work.”

Questions or comments about the First Year College curriculum? Please contact Dr. Andrea M. Atkin, Curriculum Coordinator, at andrea_atkin@ncsu.edu
Course Syllabus

LRNC 150: Introduction to Higher Education (1 graduating credit)
Indiana University of PA

Required Materials:

- **College Success: A Focus on the First Year** [ISBN 0-7872-6855-0] & accompanying

- **Listen to What Students Say, A College Success Guide** by Carranza, C. 2000. Dubuque,

- Undergraduate Catalog
- New Student Orientation Guide

Course Overview:

Introduces students to the system of higher education and to skills that promote effective
educational planning and academic success. Oriented students to the systems, resources, policies,
and procedures of IUP and to the Liberal Studies curriculum. Emphasizes goal setting, decision
making, self monitoring, and time-management skills. Upon successful completion of the course,
students will demonstrate both an understanding and application of the topics covered:

- Higher education as a developmental process, including academic, social, and personal
  adjustment issues of first-year students.
- Decision-making issues, including a model of active involvement, time management
  techniques, reading and note taking strategies, and goal setting.
- Selected issues in college student adjustment, including problem solving strategies, academic
  policies/procedures, students’ rights/responsibilities, behavioral/disciplinary policies.
- Curriculum overview, including liberal studies or core curriculum requirements, major/minor
  requirements, placement test results, and an individual plan of study.
- Academic and personal assessment and planning.

Expectations of Students Enrolled in the Course:

1. Mandatory classroom attendance.
2. Active participation and preparation for class, including thoughtful completion of all
   reading and writing assignments.
3. Demonstrated understanding and application of the concepts covered through in-class and
   out-of-class activities and assignments.
### Course Outline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Text Reading</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic/Social/Personal Adjustment Issues</td>
<td>Chap. 1</td>
<td>- <em>Discovery Paper</em> (Application p. 7-8)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model of Active Involvement &amp; Decision-Making</td>
<td>Chap. 2</td>
<td>- e-mail: <em>Four Key Decisions</em> (p. 13)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>Observing Active vs. Passive Behaviors</em> (p. 16-17)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>You – as a Learner!</em> (Application p. 19)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Management</td>
<td>Chap. 3</td>
<td>- <em>Develop, use, &amp; evaluate schedule</em> (Application p. 25)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Overview &amp; Course of Studies</td>
<td>Chap. 4</td>
<td>- <em>Find major depart., advisor, &amp; curriculum materials</em> (p. 31, 34-35)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>Open Book Quiz</em> (p. 33)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Strategies</td>
<td>Chap. 5</td>
<td>- <em>Study Guide: Reading</em> (Application p. 41-45)</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- <em>Study Guide: Lecture Notes</em> (Application p. 47)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus Resources</td>
<td>Chap. 6</td>
<td>- <em>Types of Campus Organizations</em> (p. 52-53)</td>
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<td>- <em>Library Assignment</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Policies and Procedures</td>
<td>Chap. 7</td>
<td>- <em>Focus Questions</em> (p. 58-65)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving &amp; Goal Setting Strategies</td>
<td>Chap. 8</td>
<td>- <em>Develop and Evaluate Goals</em> (p. 77)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic/Personal Assessing and Planning</td>
<td>Chap. 9</td>
<td>- <em>Principles for College Success</em> (p. 80)</td>
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### Evaluation:

<table>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>170</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>152</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>118</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Indiana University of PA, 2003.
http://www.iup.edu/lec/Syllabus of Record.LRNC150.rev.2002.doc
Appendix C

ALS 111 OSU Odyssey

\{Section No. - Location - Day & Time\}

Fall 1997

INSTRUCTORS

Name: Name:

Office Hours: Office Hours:

Office Number: Office Number:

Office Phone: Office Phone:

E-mail Address: E-mail Address:

PEER LEADER

Name:

Office Hours:

Phone:

E-Mail address:

TEXT

\{Name of text book\}

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The overall goal of this course is to help you make a successful transition from high school to Oregon State University and the world beyond the University. To achieve this, we ask for your active involvement in topics such as: the facilities and opportunities at OSU, time management, skills needed for successful test-taking, the concept of continual change in your life, personal values that lead to success, etc.

For this course to be of value to you, you must take an active role in class discussions and activities, since much of the learning will take place in class. Except for outside reading, there will be little written homework asked of you beyond what we do in class. This is your class; we want you to feel free to alter the agenda we have outlined below to meet your needs. Remember, the idea
behind this course is to help you make the transition to OSU. In other words, tell us how we can help you.

**ATTENDANCE**

The key to the success of this course is your active participation in class discussions. Because of that, it is most important that you attend class. We can tolerate **TWO** class absences. If you miss more than twice, you risk failing the course.

**Week 1 - Date**

Introduction routine and discussion of the course.

**Week 2 - Date**

Welcoming change; the differences between high school and college. See Chapter 1 of the text.

**Week 3 - Date**

Time management skills, including some test-taking strategies. Chapter 4.

**Week 4 - Date**

Knowing the OSU campus. A walking tour of campus that will include the Math Center, the Writing Center, and other areas on Campus. Chapter 5, Learning Styles.

**Week 5 - Date**

The structure of Oregon State University. Chapter 2.

**Week 6 - Date**

Constant change and the need for goals. Chapter 13.

**Week 7 - Date**

Campus reality: alcohol, drugs, and sexual harassment.

**Week 8 - Date**

Chapter 12

http://oregonstate.edu/fye/resources/notebook/section2b1.htm
Week 9 - Date

Student involvement in campus life: MU East.

Week 10 - Date

Wrap up. Personal values that lead to success.

Odyssey OSU: Day by Day Schedule

Week 1, Date

Introduction

Meeting each other and then going to the computer lab to activate e-mail accounts.

Assignment: With your new e-mail accounts, e-mail (name of instructor) and (name of peer leader &/or co-instructor) using the "carbon copy" e-mail function, so that you are writing only one message but sending it to both people. In the e-mail, we would like to know your hobbies, interests, and a couple of interesting facts about you (i.e. activities, recognition in high school, sports, etc.).

Week 2, Date

Making Goals

We will be discussing the importance of making goals, both long and short term. Written goals will be put into sealed envelopes to be opened and evaluated by you at the end of the term. We will also be discussing how college is different from high school and what to expect from the University. See chapters 1 and 2.

Week 3, Date

What does OSU have to offer?

We will be taking a campus-wide tour of what we consider the most important resources for you to be aware of. Expect to spend the majority of class walking across campus.

Prep: To be turned in next week, we want a full weekly schedule filled out with all your meetings, classes, study times, etc.

Week 4, Date
Appendix C

Time Management

We will discuss the importance of prioritizing and what to prioritize in regards to studying, midterms, personal and social time. See chapter 8.

Prep: Take-home midterm evaluation to be turned in the following class period.

Week 5, Date

Coping With College Life

We will talk about stress, studying, problems with classes or professors, and what to do about the troubles you may face. See chapters 5, 6, and 9.

Turn in midterm.

Week 6, Date

Open period for whatever we see that you need help in.

Prep: T.B.A.

Week 7, Date

Learning From The Internet

In this class our goal is to enhance the students' knowledge of the Internet. The details on this are T.B.A.

Week 8, Date

Diversity

How is OSU different than your home town? What differences in equality and acknowledgment do you see among all the students here and where you grew up? Prep: Come to the next class with 2-3 OSU organizations or services you would like to know more about.

Week 9, Date

Student Involvement

http://oregonstate.edu/fye/resources/notebook/section2b1.htm
We will be spending the majority of the class time touring and discussing the clubs, organizations, and volunteer opportunities OSU has to offer.

**Week 10, Date**

*Evaluate and Look Onward*

This is the general wrap-up, overview, and discussion of the class and the term. The students are encouraged to talk more than the instructors in this class. See chapters 10-12.

**NOTE:** This is the schedule as we see it now. Please realize that this is just a rough outline of what we plan to cover this term. We will be informing you of the updates to this syllabus as they arise.
SKLS 1000 Course Evaluation Form
QUEST Program

Complete this survey regarding the first eight weeks of the Orientation course (SKLS 1000). Your answers will help the QUEST program make improvements and adjustments to the current Orientation course.

This evaluation for a Masters thesis has been approved by the University of Toledo Human Subjects Research and Review Committee. No person under the age of 18 may participate without the permission of their parents.

Directions: Use the green scan sheet to record your answers to the following statements. Write your course “Identification Number” given to you by your instructor in the space provided on the scan sheet. Do NOT write on this statement sheet.

Please express your level of agreement or disagreement to the following scale with each of the statements:

A - Strongly Disagree    B - Disagree   C –No Opinion    D -Agree    E - Strongly Agree

This course:

1. Provided a learning community in each class meeting.
2. Provided the opportunity for me to work with other students.
3. Afforded the opportunity for me to make friends.
4. Helped me to identify other students with common interests.
5. Provided me with a mentor who will meet with me on a regular basis during the semester.
6. Increased my comfort and confidence level in working with University representatives.
7. Helped me to develop a sense of belonging at the University.
8. Helped me to make a transition from high school to college.
9. Assisted me in learning how to balance academic, work, and extracurricular activities.
10. Helped me to learn and produce the skills of time management.
11. Provided me with opportunities to use campus services.

12. Helped me to learn more about The University of Toledo campus and the student services offered.

13. Increased my participation in campus-sponsored events.

14. Helped me to become an active learner.

15. Helped me to apply the skills I have learned to other courses.

16. Presented opportunities for me to explore majors at the University and related careers.

17. Helped me to learn about academic advising, planning, scheduling, and programs at The University of Toledo.

18. Provided me with a common reading experience and opportunities to discuss this reading in class and with mentors.


20. Helped me to learn improve, expand, and integrate study strategies and critical thinking.

21. I would recommend this course to other first-year students

22. My gender is
   a) male  b) female

23. Currently I live
   a) in a residence hall
   b) in a campus arranged apartment
   c) off campus with friends
   d) at home with my family
Reflect on the first eight weeks of the Orientation course (SKLS 1000), and complete the survey by rating your opinion to the statements below. Your participation will help the QUEST program make improvements and adjustments to the current Orientation course.

This evaluation for a Masters thesis has been approved by the University of Toledo Human Subjects Research and Review Committee. No person under the age of 18 may participate without the permission of their parents.

Directions: Use the green scan sheet to record your answers to the following statements.

Please express your level of agreement or disagreement to the following scale with each of the statements:

A - Strongly Disagree    B - Disagree   C –No Opinion    D -Agree    E - Strongly Agree

This course:

1. Provided a learning community in each class meeting.

2. Provided students the opportunity to work with other students.

3. Afforded students the opportunity to make friends.

4. Helped students to identify other students with common interests.

5. Provided students with a mentor who will meet with the students on a regular basis during the semester.

6. Increased students’ comfort and confidence level in working with University representatives.

7. Helped students to develop a sense of belonging at the University.

8. Helped students to make a transition from high school to college.

9. Assisted students in learning how to balance academic, work, and extracurricular activities.

10. Helped students to learn and produce the skills of time management.
11. Provided students with opportunities to use campus services.

12. Helped students to learn more about The University of Toledo campus and the student services offered.

13. Increased students’ participation in campus-sponsored events.

14. Helped students to become an active learner.

15. Helped students to apply the skills learned to other courses.

16. Presented opportunities for students to explore majors at the University and related careers.

17. Helped students to learn about academic advising, planning, scheduling, and programs at The University of Toledo.

18. Provided students with a common reading experience and opportunities to discuss this reading in class and with mentors.


20. Helped students to learn improve, expand, and integrate study strategies and critical thinking.
Objectives for QUEST FYE (from proposal for FYE Plus Funding)

In creating and developing this proposal, we have examined and identified what first-year QUEST students need to know to be successful at The University of Toledo:

- Connection to the UT community.
- Information on the undergraduate colleges and programs.
- Information on how careers are related to various majors.
- Involvement in campus activities.
- Ability to navigate the University’s library and computer systems.
- Awareness of campus resources.
- Knowledge about grading polices, academic advisement, scheduling and registration.
- Skills enabling a successful transition from high school to college.

Course Objectives and Outcomes (For SKLS 1000/QUEST)

Through active participation in SKLS 1000 students will

- Afford students the opportunity to make friends.
- Foster within each student a sense of belonging at the University.
- Assist students in learning how to balance academics, work, and extracurricular activities.
- Provide opportunities for students to learn about and use campus services.
- Afford opportunities to explore majors at the University and related careers.
- Explore wellness issues for college students.
- Learn about academic advising, planning, scheduling and programs offered at UT.
- Encourage students to become involved in campus activities.
- Assist students in connecting with faculty members.
- Help students understand and use the University’s information literacy resources.