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## SUMMER INTERNSHIPS

More and more students are finding it valuable to acquire as much practical experience as possible while they are completing a Masters in College Student Personnel. A year ago in the IUSPA Journal an opportunity was given for persons to volunteer their campuses as off-campus internship sites. This summer, thanks to some of the Alumni, we had five off-campus sites. Students served as Assistant to the President, on the Dean's staff, working with Summer Orientation, and in working with total housing programs.

If you can provide an hourly wage, can provide a room, (a residence hall room is usually free in the summer!) and are willing to have an observer at staff meetings, Indiana can provide you with an Intern for the summer. You will be given basic references of those indicating an interest in your campus, every attempt will be made to provide an opportunity for interviews, and you make the final selection of an Intern. It can and should mean some excellent staff assistance for six, eight or ten weeks. Check your budgets and contact Dr. Elizabeth Greenleaf if you are able to consider a Summer Intern or if you have further questions.

## ORIENTATION--IT CAN HAVE AN IMPACT ON STUDENTS

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What would happen if college students moved into the residence halls on Sunday night and started classes Monday morning? Without any prior warning or preparation, would they be prepared for the culture shock of college life? Would a week of dances and movies give them a realistic preview of college, or does an institution of higher education have the responsibility to the student for providing a better transition between living at home and living on his own? It is the contention of these authors that each student does, in fact, need a period of transition, and it is the obligation of the institution to provide such a transition period.

"Orientation" is the vehicle most frequently utilized to provide this transition for the student, but at many institutions the programs labeled "orientation" do little to orient the student to college. Because orientation is, in many cases, the first contact the student has with higher education, it is important that that contact is indicative of college life. It would seem, then, that orientation is important enough to warrant a solid commitment from the institution. It is the intent of this paper to discuss methods of making orientation a fruitful learning experience, representative of college life.

It seems necessary, at this point, to define orientation, as it is viewed by the authors. Orientation is any effort made by the institution to acclimate the student to college living, other than the registration process. This definition has several implications. First, orientation needs to acclimate the student to college living throughout his entire four years. Second, it needs to provide programs for all students, not just for freshmen. Third, orientation needs to provide insight into all facets of college life, not just the social aspects.

In the authors' work with orientation at Indiana University, it was discovered that there are some major problems facing orientation, and these problems need to be recognized before orientation can be realized to its fullest potential at Indiana and probably at other institutions. (1) There seems to be a lack of definition of orientation. That is, administrators, faculty, and students have not taken the time to decide exactly what they want to accomplish with orientation. For example, at Indiana University, one office views orientation as a registration process for freshmen, while another views it as a social and student development process. (2) It is not clear whether orientation should be directed by students or by staff. The authors' experience indicates that it has not been determined if orientation should be left predominantly to the students or if staff should take an active leadership role. (3) Orientation presently is not centralized within one office. Problems exist at Indiana because two major campus agencies share orientation responsibilities. Such a structure brings about problems of accountability, communication, and coordination. (4) Faculty is a valuable resource which has not been utilized fully in the planning and implementation of orientation. Little effort has been made to include them on planning committees or as orientation speakers. (5) An adequate budget has not been allocated to those persons who are responsible for orientation; therefore, innovative programming becomes difficult to institute. (6) Too frequently,

orientation is limited to one week at the beginning of the school year. After that week, the student suddenly is left on his own. (7) As with most programs, evaluation is essential for determining whether or not goals have been achieved and whether change is indicated. As yet, no systematic evaluation of orientation has been utilized. (8) Getting people to accept change is difficult. The most innovative, well-prepared orientation program is no good at all if the persons involved in carrying it out are not convinced of its worth.

Several suggestions have been considered as solutions to these problems. While these suggestions have not been proven, it seems that they do deserve consideration. In defining orientation, four areas need to be addressed; *social*--providing entertainment; *student development*--focusing on the student as he learns about himself and his peers and facilitation of that process; *educational*--designing programs to arouse the intellectual interest of the student; and *academic*--advising students about curriculum. All of these areas need to be dealt with during orientation, but it is at the discretion of the institution to determine the amount of emphasis on each area. By operationally defining the goals in terms of type, number, and frequency of programs needed in each area, the institution will be able to see if it has covered each area as was originally intended.

Another important decision that needs to be made by the institution is whether orientation should be staff-directed or student-directed. There are advantages to each. A student-directed orientation provides a valuable learning experience for those students involved and generally elicits more commitment from students. However, if the students are to direct orientation, it is the institution's responsibility to motivate, train, and reward them. A problem of having a student-directed orientation is that the student leaders graduate, and there is little carry-over of expertise and planning. A staff-directed orientation provides this necessary carry-over. A staff-directed orientation also insures a good program for new students who may need it very much. Staff tend to have more authority and more expertise for accomplishing things. If staff is to direct orientation, however, it is essential that they assess student needs and seek student support for their programs. Problems arise when students feel that they are not having a part of the programming operation. Regardless of which group is given the responsibility for orientation, there should be one administrative person accountable for orientation planning and implementation. Working with him should be a committee of students, staff, and faculty, the latter being equally important to the planning process because of the expertise they could offer in educational and academic programming. If orientation is to be student-directed, then a student should chair the committee. Likewise, if it is to be staff-directed, then a staff person should chair the committee. In either case, the committee should be accountable to the administrator in charge of orientation.

This orientation committee, by the nature of its composition, could greatly facilitate communication throughout the campus. Since administrators, students, and faculty would be represented, they would be responsible for keeping their respective groups informed and for obtaining input of ideas from those groups. It would also be important for this committee to meet consistently throughout the year so that orientation would be an on-going process. Besides providing a concentrated program initially, it could be beneficial for orientation to offer occasional sessions during the school year, recognizing the continual change in the growth of the student. For example, programs at midterm on how to take tests or how to prepare for tests might aid the test-anxious student. Another example might be a program in the late spring designed to make students aware of summer employment opportunities.

It is essential to allocate funds specifically for orientation. This money could be used to research trends and achievements in orientation, to train orientation

personnel, and to provide centralized coordinated programming. Even on campuses where orientation programming is decentralized, some centralized programming is needed to meet the special interests of students.

If orientation is operationally defined, evaluation would become more easily systematized. That is, it readily can be determined if all the goals were achieved. In addition, student feedback would be essential in assessing quality. Evaluations should be conducted during and after the initial orientation program and occasionally throughout the school year. The information obtained from the evaluation should be analyzed and used as a justification for change; however, although the evaluation may be the basis for change, it is still essential that the chief student personnel administrator on the campus set the tone and provide the impetus for this change.

Some specific programs with which the authors experienced varying degrees of success should demonstrate the types of programs that may be created during orientation. In order to meet the needs of all students, programs should be aimed at all stages of development. For example, career planning might be of interest to seniors. Interest group programming should cater to specific groups such as women, minority groups, foreign students, handicapped students and veterans. Programs, such as slide presentations, should be planned to introduce students to the institution and to help instill pride in it. A summer mailing should be used to acquaint students with orientation and give them an idea of what to expect. Finally, a handbook from a student's point of view could express some unique thoughts of students. These programs suggest areas which other institutions should explore and elaborate upon.

Orientation can and should be a rewarding experience for all students throughout their college careers. However, it does require strong commitment, an openness to change, and careful planning. If administrators, faculty, and students take time to define orientation and provide some conscientious leadership, they can make orientation a process that will have impact on the student for many years.

#### CONVENTION BREAKFAST

Make plans to attend the I.U. Breakfast during A.C.P.A., N.A.W.D.A.C. and A.A.S.P.A. in Chicago on Tuesday morning, April 16, 1974. A social hour is in the planning for Monday afternoon.