

Student Affairs and University Planning Program Review Summary

Program Name	Orientation
Date of Review	December 2010
Major Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of clear goals and objectives for 1787 program • Orientation office lacks ability to make programming changes/flexibility of schedule to 1787 program • Student and professional staff burnt out during 1787 and after 1787 • Preface program is viewed as not effective, with little support from faculty, and starts student's perception of academic rigor off negatively. • Madison Transfer inefficient use of staff and resources • Lack of expertise with technology to manage departmental website and One Book publication development
Contact Person	Tisha McCoy-Ntiamoah
Location of Report -Hardcopy	Office of Orientation
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop agreed upon goals, objectives and assessment plan for 1787 program 2. Eliminate Madison Transfer, instead maximize resources across campus to assist and support transfer students in their transition to JMU. 3. Fully transition Preface to Academic Affairs and/or JMU Libraries so it can be incorporated into the curriculum and have greater longevity. The program should be shifted from 1787 August Orientation, and positioned as a common experience for the first semester. This would provide greater support for the program and a longer-lasting impact.

	<p>4. Increase departmental staffing to better support the programs, maintain/enhance the quality of the services and programs to assist students in the matriculation process.</p>
<p>Action Plans</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop agreed upon goals, objectives and assessment plan for 1787 program <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify a committee of stakeholders create goals and objectives that can be empirically measured to show a positive (i.e., growth, attainment of knowledge, etc.) impact on students' transition to JMU. b. Partner with CARS to develop a 1787 August Orientation Assessment Plan based on goals and objectives. c. Use assessment plan to identify key programs that are necessary to transition students to JMU. Make changes, improvements and/or eliminate programs based on effectiveness of meeting the program goals and objectives. d. Explore the opportunity to shorten the length of program(s). The current program structure is overwhelming to incoming students, requires a lot of faculty, and strains the student and departmental staff. 2. Eliminate Madison Transfer, instead maximize resources across campus to assist and support transfer students in their transition to JMU. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Madison Transfer was created during a time when very few resources existed to support the transfer student population on campus. Since then, many resources have been created in Academic Affairs to support students in their academic adjustment, which is the area in which most students need support after matriculating to JMU. Madison Transfer served a great purpose when it was originally created, but other departments that can provide academic support are better positioned to assist transfer students once on campus. b. Despite our best marketing efforts, attendance at Madison Transfer programs is minimal for the amount of effort and staffing resources that are allocated to them. c. Madison Transfer no longer maintains a physical location with a clear identity. The location is now embedded within Wilson 113, thus when students arrive there's no clear distinction of whether they are receiving assistance from Madison Transfer or the Orientation Office.

3. Preface is a program designed to create a “common” learning experience for incoming first-year students. However, the program continues to be challenged in its effectiveness and implementation.
 - a. The department’s recommendation would be to fully transition the program to Academic Affairs so it can be incorporated into the curriculum and have greater longevity. The program should be shifted from 1787 August Orientation, and positioned as a common experience for the first semester. This would provide greater support for the program and a longer-lasting impact.
 - b. Reevaluate the effectiveness of Preface based on agreed upon goals and objectives
 - c. Orientation continues to bear majority of the expenses and logistics for implementing the program, and often times the external influences on the program require extraneous efforts from departmental staff.
 - d. In 2009, the department surveyed more than 1,000 new first-year students (one-fourth of the incoming class), more than half “did not read any” or “read some, but not all” of the assigned DNA Age articles; 51% did not believe “it was essential that I read the articles” to be able to actively contribute to the discussion; and 64% said they would not attend on-campus events related to the topics covered in *The DNA Age*.
 - e. In 2010, the program was restructured to consolidate two former programs (First Year Reading and Conversations with Professors). As a result, recruitment became a challenge because faculty that were committed to one or the other former programs were reluctant to commit to the new format. Despite exceptional recruiting efforts, faculty did not fully commit to the program. We were short 20 facilitators in 2010.
 - f. Currently, there are no tangible consequences if students choose not to read the required text.
 - g. The department spends an exceptional amount of money on a program that has a one-time impact. For many reasons, faculty tend not to adopt the Preface text into their course curriculum. Therefore, once 1787 August Orientation concludes, there are no additional opportunities to realize a greater return on the amount of resources that have been invested in the program.
4. Increase departmental staffing to better support the programs, maintain/enhance the quality of the services and programs to assist students in the matriculation process.

- a. The departmental SWOT analysis revealed the need for a dedicated staff person to work on web and publication tasks. Our printed publications and web presence, specifically the *One Book Websites*, are integral to the matriculation process. These responsibilities are currently filled by a 20-hour/wk graduate assistant. This is a dedicated CSPA graduate assistantship, however we are not always guaranteed a student placement. To ensure and maintain the quality of our publications and websites, it would be more appropriate to hire a full-time staff person to manage these responsibilities.

5. Action steps already taken

- a. Fall 2010
 - i. Revised mission statement to reflect that the orientation process is integral to the academic experience
 - ii. Revised departmental objectives in Planning DB to be more aligned with SACS reporting needs
 - iii. Restructured departmental staff to create greater equity in positions, to more appropriately align programs and supervision responsibilities, and to attempt to achieve better work-life balance for professional staff
- b. Fall 2009
 - i. Transitions leadership of Preface program to JMU libraries
 - ii. Assessment - Created assessment template for Transfer Summer Springboard; revised assessment template for First Year Summer Springboard to align with new programming structure; invited key stakeholders (CAP, University Studies, and the Registrar's Office) to the process of creating objectives and defining outcomes.