

## **BREWTON-PARKER COLLEGE**

### **ORIENTATION PROGRAM SIX-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2002-03 THROUGH 2007-08**

#### **DEPARTMENT PURPOSE**

The Orientation Program assists the Division of Enrollment Services in its mission of nurturing and developing the whole student in a caring, Christian environment by supporting enrollment management and retention efforts.

#### **OBJECTIVE**

The Orientation Program will assist the College in its goal of improving enrollment by implementing a program of academic and social integration that supports student retention processes.

#### **ACTION PLAN**

The Orientation Program will:

- Increase the percentage of freshman participants
- Integrate student leadership and planning with a student Orientation Team
- Provide opportunities for students to become familiar with and integrated into support, social, and academic services that are available

#### **ASSESSMENT**

The numbers and percentages of students participating in Orientation will be logged, and annual student evaluation surveys will assess needs for changes and improvements.

#### **RESPONSIBILITY**

Director of Retention, Vice President for Enrollment Services, and Orientation Task Force

#### **TIME**

Annually

#### **RESOURCES**

Time and annually budgeted funds

#### **RELATED TO**

Institutional Goal No. 3

## BREWTON-PARKER COLLEGE

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#### RESULTS & RESPONSES—2002-03

#### OBJECTIVE

The Orientation Program will assist the College in its goal of improving enrollment by implementing a program of academic and social integration that supports student retention processes.

#### RESULTS

Orientation was held Friday, August 16, 2002 – Monday, August 19, 2002 for 171 incoming students. Based on attendance records and evaluations, average daily participation and the highest and lowest attended events for each day of the Orientation program are as follows:

Day	Average Attendance	Highest Attended Event	Lowest Attended Event
Friday, Aug. 16	53	Eat with Your Group, 53	President's Reception, 37
Saturday, Aug. 17	59	Conduct Code, 67	Play-time, 46
Sunday, Aug. 18	42	Worship and brunch, 53	Organizational Fair, 38
Monday, Aug. 19	57	Talent Show, 58	Block Party, 56

Overall, participant evaluations indicated an average satisfaction score of 4.01 of a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest rating. Highest and lowest ranked activities for each day included:

Friday, August 16:

Highest: outdoor movie, 4.71; lowest: Music on the Lawn, 3.53

Saturday, August 17:

Highest: group games, 4.42; lowest: Financial Aid Information session, 3.21

Sunday, August 18:

Highest: worship and brunch, 4.49; lowest: Question and Answer with Orientation Leaders, 3.63

Monday, August, 19:

Highest: Talent show, 4.57; lowest: Block Party, 3.98

The Orientation Task Force held a post-Orientation evaluation meeting on August 22, 2002. Participants included the Director of Counseling, the Career Counselor, the Director of Enrollment Support Services, and the Vice President for Enrollment Services. Suggestions focused on the need for the following:

- Better coordination with Music Week Activities
- Scheduling the College Student Inventory earlier with more incentive to attend
- Planning needs to begin earlier to maximize student involvement in planning
- Interview for Orientation Leader positions
- Have a work-study position for Orientation
- Tighten the schedule up

Need to reevaluate planning retreat site Integrating more of the Orientation tasks into Advisement and Registration sessions The Orientation Program assists the Division of Enrollment Services

## **RESPONSE**

In order to increase participation and improve student satisfaction with the Orientation program, the Orientation Task Force is studying several options, including eliminating some low-ranked programs, adding some new program sessions, and scheduling some events at different times to encourage participation.

An “opening activities” work group was established by the Provost to assure greater coordination between opening activities such as Orientation and Music Week. In order to raise the level of participants, the College Student Inventory has been scheduled after a major program, with Orientation Leaders taking their respective groups to the event.

In response to issues raised during the post-evaluation meeting, the following changes were planned or implemented:

- Orientation planning began in January, two months earlier than previous years.
- Orientation Leader interviews were held in March, so that Orientation Leaders had an opportunity to provide planning input before the end of the Spring 2003 semester.
- In an effort to reduce expenses and better utilize training time, the Orientation Leader retreat site has been moved to a closer and less costly location.

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#### **RESULTS & RESPONSES—2003-04**

##### **OBJECTIVE**

The Orientation Program will assist the College in its goal of improving enrollment by implementing a program of academic and social integration that supports student retention processes.

##### **RESULTS**

Fall 2003 Orientation was held on August 15-18, 2003 for 218 new students. The orientation schedule was modified based on fall 2002 participant evaluation information. Because of several staff changes, participate evaluation data was lost this past year. New data will be collected during the fall 2004 Orientation program.

##### **RESPONSE**

Because of several staff and faculty changes, the hiring of a new Dean of Enrollment Management, and not meeting previously prescribed goals a new action plan for retention will be created this year. The new plan will include reviewing potential modifications to promote *Student Success* through Orientation, the Freshman Year Experience Program, Learning Assistant Courses, Tutoring Programs, New Student Recruitment Practices, Freshman Advising, Residential Life, and Recruitback.

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#### **RESULTS & RESPONSES—2004-05**

##### **OBJECTIVE**

The Orientation Program will assist the College in its goal of improving enrollment by implementing a program of academic and social integration that supports student retention processes.

##### **RESULTS**

Fall 2004 Orientation was held August 13-16, 2004, with an emphasis on increasing retention. We made several changes to the schedule based on responses from the previous year's evaluations. We also used a larger Orientation Team so that we could have smaller groups and more personal attention given to each new student. The Orientation Leaders were required to meet with the new students in their group at least twice each semester after orientation to provide both mentoring and intervention if new students were having academic or social troubles. We further started the orientation events after lunch each day so that fall season athletics could have their practices in the morning and allow new student athletes to attend orientation activities. Despite the changes, attendance and participation were very poor to all events. The Orientation Committee had difficulty motivating not only the new students, but also the Orientation Team to attend events.

The Retention Plan that was suggested last year was created and is part of the Retention portion of the Strategic Plan.

##### **RESPONSES**

We devised detailed evaluations for both new students and the Orientation Team to generate ideas to improve next year's orientation. Response from new students was very poor (N = 5), but we received valuable information from the Orientation Team. We will have a smaller, more focused Orientation Team next year (single group leaders, rather than co-leaders, and fewer groups). We will have fewer events on the first day, and the events will end around 10pm, rather than going until curfew. We will also make orientation mandatory for all new students and the Orientation Team. The Orientation Team will be responsible for devising some of the activities for their group, so the activity can be better suited for their small group and therefore less "camp-like" and "juvenile" (i.e., if most of group is athletic, choose an athletic activity; if group is more social, go to Dairy Queen). Finally, due to the hassle of trying to coordinate so many people's schedules to form an orientation committee, we will use a smaller orientation planning committee that will meet more frequently and start planning much earlier, and then bring the plans to a larger and more representative orientation committee for final approval.

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### **ORIENTATION PROGRAM SIX-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2002-03 THROUGH 2007-08**

#### **RESULTS & RESPONSES—2005-06**

##### **OBJECTIVE**

The Orientation Program will assist the College in its goal of improving enrollment by implementing a program of academic and social integration that supports student retention processes.

##### **RESULTS**

Fall 2005 Orientation was held August 24-28, 2005, with an emphasis on increasing retention. We made several changes to the orientation process this year:

- We emphasized that orientation was mandatory for all new students and for the orientation leaders. We attempted to enforce this by distributing meal tickets only to those who attended events. This attempt, however, was met with limited support from administration and resulted in angry students who felt degraded. We had 152 out of 240 new students attend the orientation kick-off event, and, as expected, attendance dwindled throughout the remainder of orientation, despite numerous reminders that the events were mandatory. Some of the attendance problems were due to conflicts between athletic practices/games and orientation events. While attendance was better than last year, we obviously still need to devise plans to improve attendance.
- We reduced our Orientation Team to have single leaders, rather than co-leaders, so we could be more selective. We also created several slots during the schedule for small group activities to be planned and executed by the leaders, thereby giving leaders more ownership in orientation and allowing the leaders to tailor the activities to their small group. Because of these changes, the leaders were more committed, more involved, and more enthusiastic. We had 100% attendance from the leaders throughout orientation.
- Regarding the overwhelmingly busy and long days last year, we started orientation events after dinner on the first day to give students more time to move in and say goodbye to parents. We also started all events after lunch, and ended the days around 10 pm, rather than going until curfew.
- We worked with a smaller orientation committee this year, comprised of both student and staff representatives. We started planning much earlier, which resulted in a better planned and better organized orientation, based on reports from students, orientation leaders, faculty, and staff.
- We added an “at risk” orientation group, with our Campus Minister serving as the group leader. Group members included those with lower SAT scores, those who were the first in their family to attend college, and those who required more assistance to complete the admissions process. The retention rate for this group

from fall to spring was 92%, compared to an overall new student retention rate of 63% from fall to spring.

- Evaluations from both leaders and students indicated a positive experience overall, scoring a 4.3 out of 5. Most individual activities scored high, as well as scores for orientation leaders.

## **RESPONSES**

- Orientation will continue to be mandatory for all new students, although we will need to examine how beneficial orientation is to adult students and perhaps limit the student pool required to attend orientation. Rather than using meal tickets to entice students to attend orientation events, we will try some type of reward system next year.
- Because of success rates last year, we will continue with single orientation leaders, and keep most of the activities we had last year. Those activities which scored slightly lower last year will be either removed or revised. We will also keep the same schedule as far as starting orientation after dinner on move-in day and keeping all activities between noon and 10pm.
- We will try to work closely with coaches to ensure that new students are encouraged to attend orientation events by their coaches and are excused from practices and/or games that conflict with orientation.