



RESEARCH BRIEF

OIR

Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives

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Mandatory Student Orientation – Student Survey Results: Fall 2014

This Research Brief presents an overview of the results of the student survey on mandatory student orientation. In Fall 2014, NOVA implemented a policy stating that all first-time in college (FTIC) students must attend student orientation before registering for classes.¹

NOVA’s student orientation is a three-hour introductory session designed to provide FTIC students with the knowledge, insight, and tools needed to register for courses and a basic introduction to NOVA’s policies and resources. Student orientation sessions are led by first-year advisors, college teaching faculty, and student orientation leaders. At student orientation, students take part in interpreting placement test scores, developing academic goals, meeting with a first-year advisor, creating a class schedule and registering for courses, and learning about payment options and financial aid.

NOVA emailed this survey to 1,078 FTIC students and 94 responded, resulting in a 9 percent response rate. The number of respondents varies by question as not all participants answered every question in the survey. For several items, respondents were given the opportunity to provide multiple responses. The total number of responses is divided by the number of respondents to calculate the percentage of respondents. Therefore, percentages do not always add up to 100 percent.

Table 1 presents results from the questions, “Are you aware that FTIC students are required to attend student orientation?” and “Do you agree that student orientation should be required for all FTIC students?” The majority of respondents (91 respondents, 97 percent) were aware of the mandatory policy and more than 90 percent of respondents (78 respondents) stated that orientation should be required.

Table 1. Awareness of and Agreement with Student Orientation Policy

Responses	Aware of Student Orientation Policy?		Should Orientation be Required?	
	#	%	#	%
Yes	91	96.8	78	90.7
No	3	3.2	8	9.3
Total Respondents	94	100.0	86	100.0

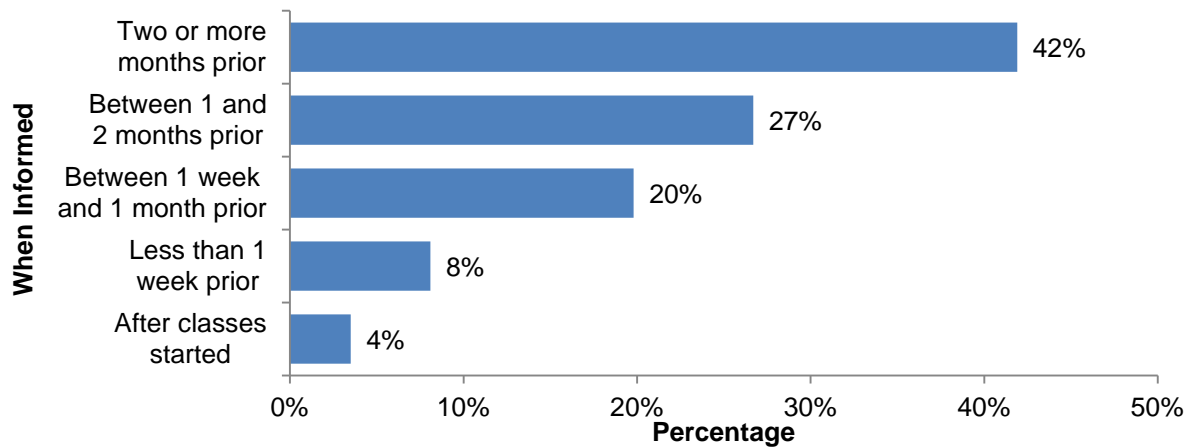
¹ All first-time to college students, namely recent high school graduates or GED recipients, between the ages of 17 and 24 who have never previously attended college (not counting dual enrollment during high school).

Respondents were asked to indicate when they had been informed of the policy (Table 2 and Figure 1). Forty-two percent of respondents (36 respondents) reported being informed of the policy at least two months prior to the start of classes. Twenty-seven percent of respondents (23 respondents) reported being informed between one and two months before classes started and 20 percent (17 respondents) between one week and one month prior to classes.

Table 2. When Were You Informed of This Policy?

When Informed of Student Orientation Policy	Responses	
	#	%
Two or more months before the start of classes	36	41.9
Between one and two months before the start of classes	23	26.7
Between one week to one month before the start of classes	17	19.8
Less than a week before the start of classes	7	8.1
After classes started	3	3.5
Total Respondents	86	100.0

Figure 1. When Were You Informed of This Policy?



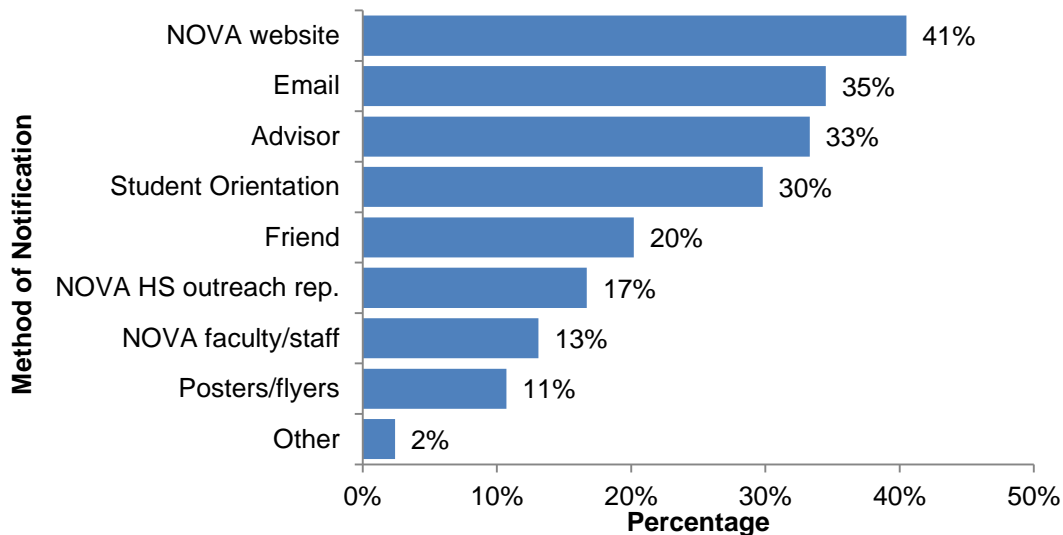
Students were asked how they learned about the policy. Table 3 and Figure 2 (both next page) show the sources from which respondents indicated receiving student orientation policy information. Students were able to choose more than one information source. The NOVA website was most often cited as a source of student orientation policy information (34 respondents, 41 percent), followed by email (29 respondents, 35 percent), and advisors (28 respondents, 34 percent).

Table 3. How Did You Learn About This Policy? Select All That Apply.

Method of Notification	Responses	
	#	%
NOVA website	34	40.5
Email	29	34.5
Advisor	28	33.3
Student Orientation	25	29.8
Friend	17	20.2
NOVA high school outreach representative	14	16.7
NOVA faculty/staff	11	13.1
Posters/flyers	9	10.7
Other	2	2.4
Total Respondents	84	

Note: As respondents could choose more than one option, totals will not equal 100 percent.

Figure 2. How Did You Learn About This Policy? Select All That Apply.

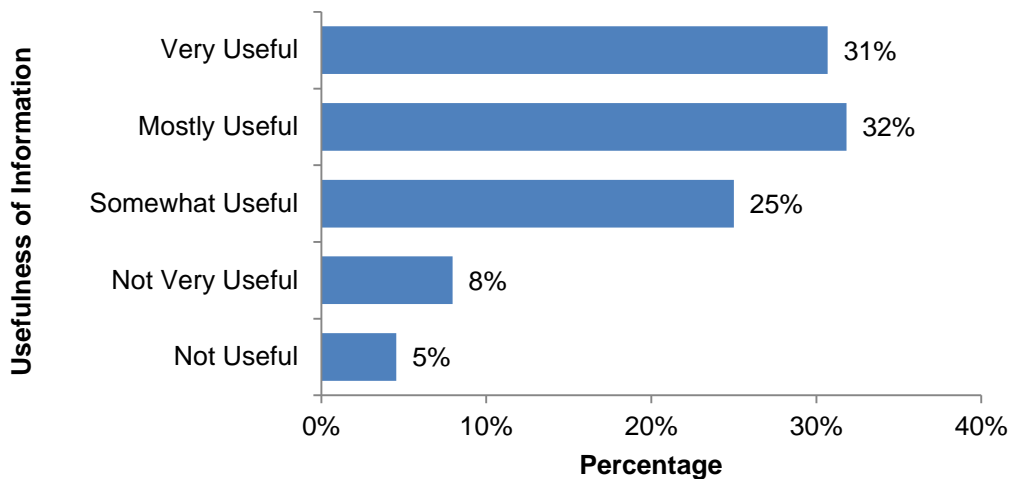


If respondents attended a student orientation session, they were asked to provide their opinion on the usefulness of the information provided at the session in terms of helping them be successful in college. These results are shown in Table 4 and Figure 3 (both next page). Approximately 88 percent of respondents felt the information presented was useful. Among them, thirty-one percent (27 respondents) reported that the information was very useful, 32 percent (28 respondents) reported that the information was mostly useful, and 25 percent (22 respondents) felt that the information was somewhat useful. Eleven respondents (13 percent) did not feel that the information was useful or very useful.

Table 4. How Useful Was the Information Provided at the Student Orientation Session You Attended in Terms of Helping You Be Successful in College?

Usefulness of Information	Responses	
	#	%
Very useful	27	30.7
Mostly useful	28	31.8
Somewhat useful	22	25.0
Not very useful	7	8.0
Not useful	4	4.5
Total Respondents	88	100.0

Figure 3. How Useful Was the Information Provided at the Student Orientation Session You Attended in Terms of Helping You Be Successful in College?



As shown in Table 5, a large majority of respondents found it was helpful to register for classes at student orientation (86 percent). Among those respondents, 39 percent (34 respondents) reported that it was very helpful to do so, 38 percent (33 respondents) stated that it was helpful, and 10 percent (9 respondents) felt that registering during orientation was somewhat helpful. A total of 14 percent of all respondents (12 respondents) did not find registering for classes at student orientation helpful or very helpful.

Table 5. How Helpful Did You Find It to Be Able to Register for Classes at Student Orientation?

Helpfulness of Class Registration During Orientation	Responses	
	#	%
Very helpful	34	38.6
Helpful	33	37.5
Somewhat helpful	9	10.2
Not Very helpful	6	6.8
Not helpful	6	6.8
Total Respondents	88	100.0