

# Redesign of Student Orientation at Northern Virginia Community College



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## NORTHERN VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

### OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVES

The purpose of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives is to conduct analytical studies and provide information in support of institutional planning, policy formulation, and decision making. In addition, the office provides leadership and support in research related activities to members of the NOVA community engaged in planning and evaluating the institution's success in accomplishing its mission.

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4001 Wakefield Chapel Road  
Annandale, VA 22003-3796  
(703) 323-3129  
[www.nvcc.edu/oir](http://www.nvcc.edu/oir)

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# **Redesign of Student Orientation at NOVA**

## **Introduction**

Student orientation is an opportunity to learn about programs and services available to help students succeed. It provides a chance to acclimate and make a more successful transition to college, thereby allowing them to become engaged and productive community members.

Researchers such as Astin (1993)<sup>1</sup>, Pascarella and Terrinzini (1991)<sup>2</sup> and Tinto (1993)<sup>3</sup> reported that as students become more satisfied and involved with the campus and academic community, they are more likely to remain enrolled. Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCSSE)<sup>4</sup> reported higher student satisfaction and campus engagement for students who attended orientation. Orientation and freshman seminars were found to be the most effective student success programs to assist new college students (Fidler & Hunter, 1989)<sup>5</sup>. NOVA reported that students who attended orientation and advising had higher Fall-to-Spring retention rates in each of the cohorts studied from Fall 2014 to Fall 2016.<sup>6</sup>

The purpose of this report is to provide the details of Student Orientation at NOVA. At NOVA, Student Orientation is an essential component of the intake and onboarding processes – serving as a milestone both administratively and developmentally for incoming students. For most students, Student Orientation is their first exposure into NOVA's college culture. In addition to the early advising and registration that takes place, students are also introduced to the multitude of resources, support services, and campus/student life opportunities available to them. Students are able to form connections with orientation staff, student leaders, and academic advisors that last well beyond the conclusion of the program.

Over the years student orientation has taken on a number of formats and names. Prior to the most recent model, new student orientation was a two-part program offered at various times during peak registration period. Part one focused on academic planning and enrollment, and part two focused on student engagement and campus resources. Both programs were coordinated at the campus-level by student services staff with occasional support from academic faculty and student leadership. The College provided funding to the campuses for program supplies and marketing materials. New students were strongly encouraged to participate in both parts – however the optional nature of the programs yielded low numbers of participants.

## **Executive Summary**

This Research Report describes NOVA's Student Orientation Program, the challenges it faces, and possible solutions. Currently, NOVA's college-wide Student Orientation programs targets 17-24 year old, recent high school graduates – including the GPS for Success (GPS) and Pathway to the Baccalaureate (PtB) student populations. Student Orientation programs are planned and facilitated on-campus by GPS advisors and Student Success staff (for GPS) and Pathway advisors and staff (for PtB). Additional, smaller, specifically-targeted orientation programs exist for international students, distance learners, and dual enrollment students. Campuses have also recently begun offering orientation sessions for adult learners.

Increasing demand for orientations combined with recent policy changes have resulted in a dramatic increase in student participation in orientation programs. Since Fall 2011, the number of student completing an orientation program has quadrupled, college-wide (Fig. 2). In response to the increase in demand, NOVA has created and continues to fund dedicated orientation support positions on each campus. These part-time positions support the administrative functions and facilitation of the on-campus Student Orientation programs.

### **Student Orientation Format**

Over the years, NOVA has utilized a variety of formats and intended outcomes for its orientation programming. In the current model, Student Orientation is a one-time, in-person, 3-hour session. Sessions are offered year-round at various days and times with additional sessions scheduled during peak registration periods. Each session can host approximately 40 students. (Capacities vary across campuses and are dependent upon adequate staffing and available room space.) Students are able to sign-up for a Student Orientation sessions online through NOVA's website after they have completed their application for admission and any required placement testing.

### **Start Strong Initiatives**

With the adoption of NOVA's Start Strong mandates for student success, the intended outcomes for Student Orientation were refined to ensure students are in compliance before leaving the orientation session. Accordingly, the following outcomes were established and integrated across the College.

1. Students will have their placement test scores evaluated.
2. Students will complete intake assessment/set academic goal.
3. Students will verify program placement/major with an advisor.
4. Students will receive early academic advising (including course selection and use of Student Success Planner/iPass tool).
5. Students will enroll in any mandated courses (SDV, ENF and/or MTT).
6. Students will receive information on campus/College resources.
7. Students will receive campus tour.
8. Upon verification of compliance with mandates, students will have registration holds lifted and will register for courses.

Overall, students are highly satisfied with Student Orientation based upon NOVA's Student Orientation Post Session Survey. The College is currently assessing the impact of Student Orientation on success metrics that are directly linked to Student Orientation participation. These include success rates, retention, and graduation rates.

### **Moving Forward**

As the demand for Student Orientation sessions continues to grow, the College is identifying challenges and exploring solutions related to our ability to scale Student Orientation to the larger student population. One of the biggest challenges for campuses is a lack of adequate classroom and computer lab space to facilitate sessions. When scheduling orientation sessions, campuses must compete with an expanding number of course sections and an evolving summer session schedule – both of which dramatically limit the ability to schedule orientation sessions.

In 2016, NOVA contracted with Advantage Design Group (ADG) to develop and host a web-based student orientation platform. The platform is an interactive, modular tool that provides students with a unique student orientation experience that can be customized based upon their student type, classification, and interests. NOVA will possess the administrative access to update, modify, and create new orientation content as the College grows and evolves. NOVA is also able to track student progress and extract data based upon student interaction with the platform. Having this online platform provides NOVA with a viable means scaling orientation programming to the full student population and maintaining the program as it evolves over time. The platform is scheduled to go live in May 2017.

## **Onboarding at NOVA**

At NOVA, the onboarding process for recent high school students begins prior to high school graduation and concludes once a student has successfully registered for their second semester's courses.

In between, there are a series of milestones, engagement activities and opportunities to interact with advisors intended to help students get and stay on track towards their academic goals. Student Orientation is an essential component to NOVA's onboarding process. (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Onboarding Process for GPS for Success Students at NOVA**



## **Impacts of the Start Strong Initiatives**

In 2014, NOVA implemented the Start Strong policies for student success. These policy changes were based upon recommendations made to the College by Achieving the Dream and were designed to improve student success outcomes.

### **A. Start Strong Policy Changes**

Effective the Fall 2014 semester, all first-time-to-college students ages 17-24 must follow these five policies:

1. Take placement tests before registration.
2. Attend Student Orientation before registration.
3. Meet with their advisor before registration.
4. Enroll in developmental courses (ENF and/or MTT) during the first semester, if placed.
5. Complete a Student Development (SDV) course within the first year.

All NOVA students must follow the sixth policy:

6. Register before 11:59 p.m. the day before the session begins to meet the On-Time Registration requirement.

The College identified Student Orientation as a critical touch-point for ensuring student compliance with these intake policies. Accordingly, the College formed the Policy Change Implementation Committee (PCI) made-up of faculty, staff, and administrators from across the College. The PCI was charged with vetting each mandate to identify impacts, opportunities, and resource needs for each policy change prior to implementation.

A subcommittee of PCI was formed to specifically focus on the policies tied to on boarding and the implications on new student orientation. In developing their proposal, this subcommittee took three primary steps:

- Reviewed current research on best practices for new student orientation.
- Analyzed current institutional practices to determine what was/was not working and what would be needed to implement to scale.
- Determined resources, staffing, potential alternative formats for new student orientation in order.

The subcommittee considered the National Orientation Director's Association (NODA) definition of orientation when reviewing the content and structure of the program. NODA defined orientation as deliberate programming and service events designed to:

- Facilitate the transition of new students to an institution;
- Prepare students for the institutions educational opportunities and student responsibilities;
- Initiate the integration of new students into the intellectual, cultural, and social climate of the institution; and



- Support the parents, partners, guardians, and children of the new student (CASHE, 2015)<sup>8</sup>

In its review, the subcommittee considered the best practices identified by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) and reviewed the orientation programs of similar institutions – including Montgomery College, Valencia College and Miami-Dade College. (See Appendix A)

Based upon this review of best practices, the subcommittee developed the following recommendations for redesigning and strengthening NOVA’s orientation programming:

- Require orientation for recent high school graduates
- Improve access to orientation sessions
- Connect students with advisors
- Strengthen the early advising & registration component
- Engage students with tools and technologies (PeopleSoft/Student Success Planner/iPass)
- Strengthen introduction of resources tied to student success
- Refine data collection measures to target student comprehension and interest

In addition to a reviewing content and format, the subcommittee analyzed the impact of scaling Student Orientation to meet the demands of the mandates. Accordingly, a series of new positions were created and approved by the Administrative Council to provide additional support to the campuses. (Table 1).

**Table 1. ATD Policy Changes Resource Needs: Orientation Positions**

Category	Description	Number of Positions
Policies 2 and 3 (P-14 & Student Hires)	A. <u>Orientation Facilitators</u> : Facilitate orientation sessions; hire, train, and supervise Student Orientation Assistants (paraprofessional staff who will take the load off of the Student Success Coordinators).	10
	B. <u>Orientation Staff</u> : Facilitate orientation flow, answer questions, and assist with tours and other orientation related activities (Student staff/administrative help to organize the office flow and free up the Advising Specialists to perform more professional tasks in orientation sessions and maximize time for early advising opportunities).	41
	C. <u>Administrative Staff</u> : Assist with administrative office work (to supplement the advising specialists) and make campus specific welcome packets (Assist the office support with stuffing packets/envelopes, fielding phone calls, scheduling appointments, facilitating communication of new policy mandates and the steps required to attain class readiness).	5
Auxiliary Funds	Funds will be distributed to the campuses.	-
<b>Total</b>		<b>56</b>

Note: Positions are hired in the range of \$12 to \$15 for 20 to 29 hours per week.

## **Start Strong Model for Student Orientation**

As a result of the policy changes, Student Orientation at NOVA became a one-time, in-person, 3-hour session. Sessions are now offered year-round at various times and days with additional sessions scheduled during peak registration periods. Each session can host approximately 40 students. Students are able to sign-up for a Student Orientation session online through NOVA's website after they have completed their application for admission and any required placement testing.

As per the Start Strong mandate, all first-time-to-college students ages 17-24 are required to attend a session. Attendance remains optional for all other students. Students who are required to complete Student Orientation have a registration hold placed on their student record that prohibits them from registering for courses until they attend Orientation. Registration holds are only removed once a First Year Advisor verifies that a student has complied with mandates during the registration lab portion of the orientation session.

### **A. Expected Outcomes for Orientation Attendees**

The new model is designed around eight outcomes for each attendee:

- 1. Students will have their placement test scores evaluated**
  - a. Prior to signing up for Student Orientation, students are required to complete all required placement testing or demonstrate satisfactory compliance through advanced standing credit.
  - b. A first year advisor will review the student's placement test scores and identify any developmental coursework that a student would need to complete prior to enrolling in college-level courses for their major/program. If no developmental coursework is required, advisors will recommend the appropriate college-level courses.
- 2. Complete intake assessment and set academic goal**
  - a. Students will complete an online intake assessment and establish an academic goal for themselves. Advisors will provide guidance and support in helping student set achievable goals and identifying their appropriate academic pathway.
  - b. Intake assessment and academic goals will be recorded in the Hobsons program, which is NOVA's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool, as part of the student's advising file.
- 3. Verify program placement/major**
  - a. Advisors will assist students in ensuring that their academic plan/major is in sync with their academic goal(s) and accurately recorded in the Student Information System (SIS) and CRM.
- 4. Receive early academic advising (course selection and Student Success Plan (SSP))**

- a. Students will receive academic advising from a First Year Advisor. The advisor will show the student how to access specific academic plan/major information from the NOVA Catalog as well as how to access and utilize additional planning tools, such as transfer guides and NOVA's student support services.
  - b. Advisors and Orientation support staff will assist student is selecting their courses for their first semester using the SSP found on NOVA's website. Students will learn how to plan their schedule and how to request an appointment with their First Year Advisor.
- 5. Enroll in any mandated courses (SDV, ENF, and/or MTT)**
- a. Advisors will ensure that student enroll in any required developmental coursework as well as the Student Development (SDV) College Success Skills course.
- 6. Receive information on campus/College resources**
- a. Students will receive information on relevant campus and College resources available to them to aid in their acclimation to NOVA and overall success. Provided resources must include standardized presentations from the Office of Financial Aid and NOVA Police.
- 7. Receive campus tour**
- a. Students will receive a campus tour led by orientation leaders and/or staff that highlights important offices and services such as the campus library, student services centers, academic departments, etc.
  - b. Student will be given a basic understanding of where classroom buildings are located and tips on how to navigate the campus.
- 8. Upon verification, registration holds are lifted**
- a. Once an advisor has verified that a student has satisfied all Start Strong mandates, the registration hold(s) will be lifted and the students will be able to register for courses in the registration lab.

## **B. Student Orientation Format**

Student Orientation sessions are facilitated by Orientation staff (students) and First Year Advisors. Student services staff and academic faculty, depending on availability, can provide additional support. Upon checking-in for the session, students are provided with a folder of information including a session agenda, campus map, academic planning tools, and information on additional student support services. The Student Orientation session is divided into three parts:

### **1. Part I. Introduction/Overview of NOVA (45-50 minutes)**

Students are seated in an auditorium or large classroom. After a brief welcome from a campus or College administrator, Orientation Staff use a PowerPoint presentation to introduce a series of topics including: a NOVA profile, academic expectations, College Catalog & Schedule of Classes, code of conduct, success tips from current students, College bookstore, parking, payments, and student e-mail accounts. The NOVA Police

provide an overview of available services and safety tips. The Financial Aid Office presents a standardized, 15-minute presentation covering financial aid basics, FAFSA completion, and next steps. Time is given at the end of the presentation to answer any questions students may have.

## **2. Part II: Campus Tour (45-50 minutes)**

After the overview session is complete, students are taken on a tour of the campus. The walking tour is led by an Orientation Staff member and includes an overview of the campus, highlighting academic/classroom buildings, student services, campus library and study areas, student life, and campus safety features.

## **3. Part III: Registration Lab (60 minutes)**

The final hour of the session is devoted to academic planning and course registration. Students are taken to a campus computer lab where they work with First Year Advisors to review their placement test scores, complete an intake assessment and set an academic goal, verify their major/program of study and develop a list of courses for their first semester. Advisors will ensure that students understand and comply with the College Success Skills course and developmental course requirements. Students will be introduced to the Student Information System (SIS) as well as the Student Success Planner (SSP) tools to aid in their planning and course registration. Academic holds are removed to allow for the students to register for courses. At the end of the hour, a student satisfaction survey is completed and advisors verify that the students schedule complies with any policy mandates before the students are dismissed and the Student Orientation session formally concluded.

### **C. Student Orientation Models of Other NOVA Student Populations**

By design, the Start Strong model for Student Orientation is catered to NOVA's GPS for Success student population. The model is also used for orientation program from several other student populations, as well. These include:

#### **1. Pathway to the Baccalaureate (PtB)**

NOVA's Pathway to the Baccalaureate program offers an alternative version of the Student Orientation program specifically designed for their students. PtB Orientation sessions can take place on campus but are also offered in local high schools where the PtB program is offered. Students in the PtB program must register for a PtB session and are prohibited from attending a standard session. The PtB version utilizes the same outcomes as the standard version with additional content incorporated specifically related to PtB policies and procedures.

#### **2. Extended Learning Institute (ELI)**

The Extended Learning Institute – NOVA's online learning program – provides its own unique orientation for online learners. In addition to the online program, students who are mandated to complete a standard orientation are also provided a modified Student Orientation that incorporates the same learning outcomes without the campus tour.

### 3. Adult/Returning Students

Some campuses have begun hosting student orientation sessions for adult and/or returning students. These sessions are offered in limited numbers and typically occur during peak registration periods. The content of these sessions is similar to what is covered during the Introduction/Overview and campus tour portions of the standard/GPS Student Orientation with an additional overview of how to select and register for courses using PeopleSoft.

### D. Student Assessment of Student Orientation

Following each student orientation session, a survey is administered that asks the students to rate their experience as well as knowledge of the various topics covered during the session. This data is used to identify potential gaps, needs and enhance the presentation. (see example in Appendix B)

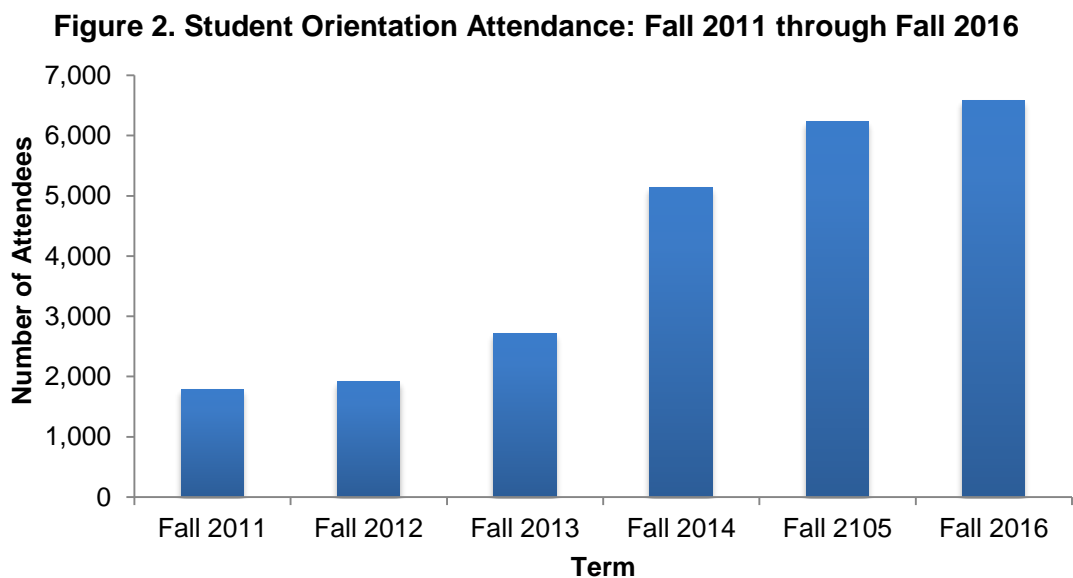
The College is currently exploring a revised set of metrics for gauging the impact of orientation on student credit load, retention, time to degree and utilization of advising and student services.

### E. Challenges and Possible Solutions for Scaling Student Orientation

As NOVA's Student Orientation program continues to grow and develop, there are a number of key issues and considerations the College is faced with as it seeks to refine its programming and take student orientation to scale across the College.

#### 1. Capacity & Campus Spaces

From 2011-2013, NOVA experienced a steady growth in the demand for student orientation programming. The implementation of the Start Strong mandates resulted in a dramatic increase in student participation in Student Orientation. Since Fall 2013, the number of participants has nearly tripled across the College.



The size and availability of Student Orientation sessions is heavily influenced by the availability of adequate spaces on the campuses. Coordinators continue to work closely with campus operations staff to secure computer labs, classrooms, and presentation spaces for each program. With the growing number of seats required, the burden placed upon the spacing requirements grows. Some campuses have been able to provide dedicated spaces for Student Orientation programs while other work to fit as many sessions in as possible around the academic schedule.

## **2. Course Sections Specifically for Student Orientation Participants**

A common practice for many schools is to hold seats in certain high demand courses/sections for orientation participants. In order to access these sections, student must be in or have participated in an orientation session. This further solidifies the importance of attending Student Orientation and incentivizes students to register early. This could also alleviate the burden that most campuses face during peak registration in late July/early August when a majority of the high demand sections of courses are full and staff must spend extra time helping students locate seats in alternate courses – often at undesirable times and/or on other campuses.

## **3. Off-site Orientations/Pre-orientation**

The burden placed upon campus resources could be offset by an increased utilization of off-site orientation programming offered in local high schools. Orientation staff and high school outreach personnel can utilize mobile and web-based tools to present material and enroll students in classes.

## **4. Online Orientation**

NOVA has contracted with Advantage Design Group (ADG) to develop a web-based student orientation system for the college. As an industry leader in online student orientation, ADG has an extensive background in working with colleges and universities to create customized student orientation experiences that are both dynamic and cost-effective. Web-based orientation programs have become a standard component of onboarding programs throughout higher education. As NOVA seeks to refine its orientation program and take Student Orientation to scale – the web-based system provides NOVA with the means to reach our goals sooner without placing additional burdens to resources and staff.

The web-based student orientation is a progressive, modular program. Students use their NOVA log-in credentials to access the system through a web portal. Orientation content is organized and presented in a series of screens (group together as individual modules) that students must complete. Each screen contains text, images, and/or videos that are produced and controlled by NOVA. For the initial build of the system, NOVA's standard modules include: Welcome to NOVA, Academics, Student Services, College Policies, Student Life, Health & Safety, and Next Steps.

A feature called profile-directed user tracks allows NOVA to generate unique content for certain student groups based upon indicators in PeopleSoft files. For the initial build, specialized content is being created for students in the GPS for Success and Pathway to the Baccalaureate programs, as well as F-1 (International) and Dual Enrollment students. The system also allows for student-directed content – giving students control of supplementary content they can access in addition to NOVA’s standardized content. This feature provides students with additional information on student services, academic programs/paths, or other services. Student-directed content is being created for Veterans & Active Duty Military students as well as student taking courses through the Extended Learning Institute. Students are also able to identify content they’d like additional information on as they progress through the orientation using a “more information” button on each page. At the conclusion, students are provided a list of resources and/or a checklist of to-do items customized for them and their indicated interests.

The system can serve as a stand-alone orientation program or can be incorporated into a two-part or on-going orientation program. At the conclusion of the web-based program, the “Next Steps” content can be customized to provide students with appropriate direction based upon their type/need. Students who are required to meet with an advisor and/or attend a registration lab prior to enrollment can be directed to do so as part of the “Next Steps” module.

Some of the benefits the web-based orientation provides NOVA include:

- a. Using time & resources more efficiently: New students cover the basics online before arriving on campus. In-person orientation time can focus more on the educational planning and advising component of the student’s experience.
- b. Delivering a consistent message: Engaging scripts, video presentations, and text online ensure that each student hears the same message all the time.
- c. Automated Integration with PeopleSoft: Batch-integration with the SIS personalizes each student’s experience. Profile-directed User Tracks provide unique content for different student groups (e.g., GPS, PtB, ELI, etc.).
- d. Tracking Student Use: Administrative features allow NOVA to track student interests, comprehension and attendance in real time. Real-time reporting means NOVA can verify a student’s interactions with the platform and verify completion, instantly.
- e. Accessibility: The online orientation system is live and accessible to NOVA throughout the year.
- f. Adaptability: As NOVA grows and policies and processes evolve, we have the ability to easily update our online presentation with the appropriate information using the web content management system.

- g. Quizzes, Tests, and Surveys: NOVA is able to develop and integrate quizzes, tests, and surveys to gauge student comprehension and/or interests. This data is accessible in real time through the management portal.

NOVA is currently in the process of developing our web-based system with ADG. We are scheduled to go live in May 2017 following an on-site training for program administrators. Once the system is live, NOVA will have unlimited access to the content management system and will be able to update content, add additional screens/modules, and customize tracks in real-time.

## **Conclusion**

Student Orientation at NOVA must continue to grow and evolve with the College and with our student population. NOVA must continue to invest in its orientation and on-boarding programming in order to not only keep up with growing student demand, but ensure that all students are provided with the earliest opportunity to connect, engage, and succeed at the College. Robust orientation programming has long-been established as a standard milestone for new students across higher education. The newly acquired web-based orientation platform provides NOVA with an opportunity to explore scaling-up offerings to the larger student body for the first time. Though it may be tempting to lean on technology to serve as the singular means for achieving our outcomes, we must continue to acknowledge the value of face-to-face engagement and advising as an essential component of our on-boarding processes and use technology to enhance the human interaction between NOVA's faculty and staff and our students.



## **Appendix A: Best Practice Institutional Examples**

### ***Best Practice: Student Orientation at Montgomery (MD) College***

New Student Orientation at Montgomery College is available in an in-person format and an interactive online format. New Student Orientation (NSO) is mandatory for all new degree-seeking students. Students must complete NSO before they can register for classes. In-person NSO programs last about 3 hours. During the NSO, students participate in campus tours, interact with Orientation Leaders, attend information sessions and connect you to campus resources. The interactive, Online New Student Orientation offers students a different option to learn the information presented during the In-Person Orientation Sessions. To participate in the Online Student Orientation, students must register using their college-issued log-in credentials. Students may complete the Online NSO in one sitting or break it up into smaller segments. Students are responsible for knowing the material covered in the Online Orientation Program.

### ***Best Practice: Student Orientation at Valencia College***

All degree-seeking students are required to complete a two-part student orientation offered throughout the year. Valencia provides newly admitted students with a checklist of items they must complete/provide prior to attending orientation. Part one is an online (web-based) orientation covering a variety of topics related to the College, it's policies, procedures and resources. Part two is an on-campus component that introduces students to the campus, fellow students, additional resources and gives them an opportunity for meet with an academic advisor, learn about their major and register for classes. Guests are typically not permitted to attend however Valencia does offer Parent Information Sessions.

### ***Best Practice: Student Orientation at Miami-Dade College***

Miami-Dade offers pre-admission counseling and new student orientation services through its New Student Center. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with a pre-admissions advisor to review degree and vocational program options, receive information on admissions requirements for degree and vocational programs, receive assistance with the admissions process and review the next steps a student will take from admissions to the college through course registration. Once a student has applied, they attend student orientation. All new degree-seeking students are required to participate in an orientation program. The objective of the new student orientation sessions is to provide practical information to assist new students in transitioning to college life. Students receive a web-based Orientation Handbook that covers a variety of topics including:

- Navigating the system – Steps for New Students
- Student Services and Academic Support (e.g., labs)
- Types of financial aid (e.g., grants, scholarships and loans)
- Terminology (e.g., semester, credits)
- Important deadlines (e.g., 100% refund, withdrawal)
- How to get around the campus
- Student life (e.g., Student Government, organizations)
- Selecting a major and obtaining assistance with career services
- Importance of Academic Advisement and the development of an academic plan
- Exposure to the MDC web page features (e.g., registration)

Miami-Dade now provides its students with a web-based orientation component in addition to its on-campus offerings. Students are required to complete certain modules in order to satisfy orientation mandates.

### Appendix B: Post-Orientation Student Assessment – Fall 2014

#	Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A	Total Responses	Mean
1	The academic goal I have set for myself will help motivate me to be successful at NOVA.	4,891	4,271	630	11	17	24	9,844	4.42
2	I understand which program of study (major) will help me to reach my academic goal.	4,065	4,178	1,364	143	32	34	9,816	4.22
3	I understand what my placement test scores mean and which English and/or mathematics courses I should enroll in.	4,703	3,985	915	143	39	36	9,821	4.33
4	I understand the importance of enrolling in developmental coursework, if necessary.	4,549	4,170	848	86	26	119	9,798	4.30
5	I know how to contact my academic advisor if I have questions or need future academic advising at NOVA.	4,886	3,875	872	127	35	15	9,810	4.37
6	I feel comfortable using myNOVA to search and register for classes at NOVA.	4,740	3,856	1,026	118	33	16	9,789	4.34
7	I understand the payment deadlines and options including Financial Aid and the Payment Plan.	4,249	4,038	1,232	213	56	18	9,806	4.24
8	I feel comfortable navigating the campus, locating my classes, important offices and resource centers.	3,246	3,550	2,325	518	118	41	9,798	3.94
9	I am aware of NOVA's On-Time Registration Policy and how it impacts my ability to register for a class.	4,597	4,228	827	108	33	14	9,807	4.35
10	I am aware of co-curricular and student life opportunities (clubs, organizations, activities, events, service learning) available at my campus.	4,078	4,227	1,234	198	49	24	9,810	4.22
11	I was able to have all of my questions answered and/or was referred to an appropriate campus or College resource.	4,840	3,997	829	80	38	23	9,807	4.37
12	Overall, I was pleased with my experience at Student Orientation.	5,448	3,590	658	42	39	24	9,801	4.46

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- <sup>6</sup> Northern Virginia Community College (2017). *Start Strong Policy Evaluation Series – Policies 2 & 3: Student Orientation and Advising: Fall 2013 through Fall 2016*. Report number 03-17.
- <sup>7</sup> National Orientation Directors Association: [www.nodaweb.org](http://www.nodaweb.org)
- <sup>8</sup> Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (2015). *CAS professional standards for higher education* (9th ed). Washington, DC

## ***NOVA Mission and Strategic Goals***

### **Mission**

With commitment to the values of access, opportunity, student success, and excellence, the mission of Northern Virginia Community College is to deliver world-class in-person and online post-secondary teaching, learning, and workforce development to ensure our region and the Commonwealth of Virginia have an educated population and globally competitive workforce.

### **Strategic Goals**

- I. **STUDENT SUCCESS** – Northern Virginia Community College will move into the top tier of community colleges with respect to the college readiness, developmental course completion, retention, graduation, transfer, and career placement of its students.
- II. **ACCESS** – Northern Virginia Community College will increase the number and diversity of students being served to mirror the population growth of the region.
- III. **TEACHING AND LEARNING** – Northern Virginia Community College will focus on student success by creating an environment of world-class teaching and learning.
- IV. **EXCELLENCE** – Northern Virginia Community College will develop ten focal points of excellence in its educational programs and services that will be benchmarked to the best in the nation and strategic to building the College's overall reputation for quality.
- V. **LEADERSHIP** – Northern Virginia Community College will serve as a catalyst and a leader in developing educational and economic opportunities for all Northern Virginians and in maintaining the quality of life and economic competitiveness of the region.
- VI. **PARTNERSHIPS** – Northern Virginia Community College will develop strategic partnerships to create gateways of opportunity and an integrated educational system for Northern Virginians who are pursuing the American Dream.
- VII. **RESOURCES** – Northern Virginia Community College will increase its annual funding by \$100 million and expand its physical facilities by more than one million square feet in new and renovated space. This includes the establishment of two additional campuses at epicenters of the region's population growth, as well as additional education and training facilities in or near established population centers.
- VIII. **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS** – Northern Virginia Community College will be recognized as a leader among institutions of higher education in Virginia for its development and testing of emergency response and continuity of operation plans.

# NOVA

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**Northern Virginia  
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