

**NATIONAL ORIENTATION DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION
ANNOUNCES**

37th Annual Conference

DATE: October 12-16, 1984

LOCATION: Marriott Pavilion
Hotel, St. Louis, MO

THEME

"Orientation: Gateway to . . ."

PROGRAM FEATURES

Variety of Professional Presentation
Orientation Publications Contest
Campus Program Idea Exchange
Keynote Address
Sharing of Common Concerns
New Developments in Orientation Programming

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

Easily accessible by air
(International airport),
train, bus and automobile
Sightseeing Excursions
Professional Development
Opportunity
Site of 1904 World's Fair

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John J. Pierog

A Collaborative Model Orientation Program

An important challenge Student Personnel Administrators must meet deals with what L. Lee Kniefelkamp (1980) terms, "The rediscovery of generativity," in our educational communities. For many student personnel and academic administrators this means developing a new perspective through trading territorial functions for shared responsibility. The benefits include creating a greater sense of community, an expected increase in program credibility (through opening an additional, important and direct link to students), and the opportunity for all members of an academic community to grow from an increased exposure to one another. Additionally, Student Personnel Administrators may find their role to be better understood and more actively supported and appreciated.

Student personnel professionals can make a meaningful contribution to their campus by assuming a leadership role in developing collaborative programs. This proactive posture is, and should be, interpreted as an important responsibility directly related to administrative functioning, and not as an additional administrative burden.

The following model relates the successful attempt of one group of student personnel administrators and faculty who began to rediscover their "sense of mutuality" (Kniefelkamp, 1980) through collaborating on a new approach to student orientation. The "Mini Series Orientation Program" which is presented here, has been modified each year since its inception three years ago based on program evaluations and changing faculty and student needs and interests.

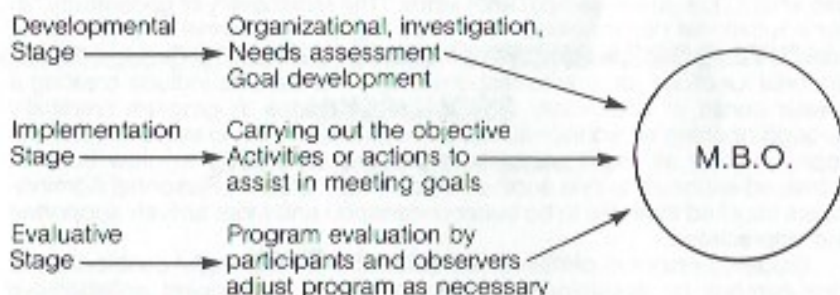
After many years of participating in a standard "large group" orientation meeting, common to most community colleges, the student affairs staff at a Central Georgia Community College decided that the program was not meeting the needs of the increasingly heterogeneous student body. A staff meeting was called specifically to discuss concerns regarding this program and possible avenues of action to deal with these concerns. The two major issues which surfaced were the involvement of faculty and students in a more direct way and the design of a program which was more personal in its delivery. A committee of four staff members was appointed by the dean to investigate and study these issues and recommend a design to the division that would address these concerns.

After a perusal of pertinent literature, it became quite evident to the committee that the increasing pressure on Student Affairs to articulate its worth when competing for shrinking budget dollars has made it necessary to examine management systems and program designs. Meabon, Sims and Alley (1978), indicated a proliferation of discussions, information and articles related to management systems employed in student personnel offices.

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A modified Management by Objectives (MBO) design was selected. According to Harvey (1976), MBO has been adopted from the business world by educational administrators so that they can experience more accountability over their administrative responsibilities. Notwithstanding its structure, it is flexible enough in principle to adapt to virtually any educational setting or program. Harvey also communicated its versatility in adapting to both the "affective" and "non-affective" areas. Our findings have verified this flexibility and versatility.

Through the continued examination of the literature we designed a three stage plan to develop our program. These stages and their characteristic functions appear below:



The Developmental Stage

The developmental stage began with the structural organization of the design. The structural organization selected called for the committee to investigate needs related to Student Orientation from faculty, students and fellow administrators, and to examine institutional documents relating to the educational mission of the college and the role student affairs should play in meeting that mission. One document the committee reviewed was the institutional self-study completed by an all campus committee prior to our last accreditation visit. In that document six goal statements specifically designed to address the student orientation program were found. After examining these statements and their continued relevancy, the committee decided to adopt these statements to present to the division for approval. The statements were specific enough to provide direction, yet general enough to be facilitated through each function in the division. An example of such a statement was: To communicate institutional policy and regulations to new students. This allowed for an academic representative to discuss scholarship standards, the director of financial aid to explain how "change of status" will effect the award of funds and the director of activities to explain campus social policies.

Following formal adoption of the goal statements the committee decided that the unit supervisors would work together to develop office objectives (activities) respective of their different functions, related to each goal statement; a time schedule for implementation of the objectives; and evaluative criteria to assess the degree of progress. The process of these supervisors working together provided a cohesive and consistent design (form). This activity further demonstrated supervisory commitment to the process, and sharing this work with the staff proved to be an important learning tool as they repeated the same function for their respective offices. Cooperation and shared responsibility were essential, and where more than one individual was responsible for the function of an office they all had equal input in developing the objectives.

Following the receipt of objectives from each office in the division, the

committee examined their relevancy. Re-examination of the goal statements reinforced the general purpose of the program — to orient new students to the entire college, and not simply the student affairs division. Here is where the incorporation and/or reincorporation of faculty is essential. The committee met with students and faculty to incorporate their concerns (academic and non-academic) with the program. This effort established a new line of cooperation and collaboration between Student Affairs, faculty and students. Stockham and Nichols (1979), indicate that the active involvement of faculty and academic interest in an orientation program can help to communicate that faculty and student affairs professionals hold many more goals in common for students than they may recognize. When all the solicited input had been received, the committee began to develop the program. It was to be personal in delivery, and based on goal statements developed through the concerns of faculty, staff and students. The program could also be modified based on evaluations and changing institutional needs.

The Implementation Stage

The committee recommended a program to the division which would run during the months of August and September. A group of 25-30 new students would be invited to attend the "mini series" orientation program each day for as many days as necessary to accommodate all new students. The program was to be voluntary, beginning at 9:00 a.m. and lasting until 2:30 p.m. All division staff would be responsible for various segments of it thereby involving everyone in some part of it. A complimentary lunch was served and staff were encouraged to participate to further facilitate the "personalization" effort. The five and one-half hour program was to address all of the collegial concerns including placement testing for the Math and English departments. At the end of each program, participants were asked to complete a program evaluation form, and were told to expect to receive a more formal evaluation at mid-term of the fall quarter.

The Evaluation Stage

When developing the program presentation, the committee considered information needed for evaluation. It was necessary to utilize evaluative criteria from some of the office objectives while developing the program evaluation form. However, all questions and statements on the evaluation related directly to the established goal statements for the orientation program. The committee also established a reasonable standard to evaluate success. The program evaluation form was completed by all participants, students, faculty, administrators and presentors.

A five-point Likert-type scale was devised and an open ended comment section was included on the evaluation.

Over the past three years, the program has been modified significantly based on evaluations of faculty, staff and student needs. Length of the program and staff turnout were two issues addressed and modified. Using the original design it was possible to address these concerns without changing the entire program. On the evaluation, students were asked to indicate their perceived degree of importance for various segments of the program. Those segments which were consistently rated as "little or no importance" were eliminated. This shortened our program by two and one-half hours. In order to deal more effectively with staff "burn-out" it was decided to accommodate three groups of students simultaneously each day from 9:30 - 12:30 using modular scheduling. This shortened the overall period of time for the program, and the number of days the program was presented.

Summary

Since the "mini series" began, several other changes have occurred and the Student Affairs staff has taken every opportunity to further involve faculty and students in the program. All students majoring in Data Processing and Computer Science are invited to attend sessions designed with a special segment involving departmental faculty who discuss course sequence and curriculum. A special session for women over twenty-five years of age entering college for the first time has been instituted. These "new students" had an opportunity to share concerns with members of the women's support group and faculty who are particularly sensitive to their unique needs.

As a result of these efforts much has also been accomplished in the more "affective" areas of the institution. Supervisory staff have met their responsibilities as educational leaders; and though employing effective management techniques have enhanced faculty and staff collaboration and harmony. More than an exercise in leadership, it has re-established the importance of teamwork and common values and concerns in a community where many functions have become overspecialized. Through working on this project, student affairs staff members have become more cognizant of each other's responsibilities. Through collaboration with the faculty, our image has improved.

Involving students has increased the level of participation in campus clubs and organizations. With the successful development of a workable program design, implemented through direct faculty, staff and student collaboration, it seems reasonable to expect that additional programs will be developed using a similar model. The benefits have been positive.

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NODA REGIONAL CONFERENCES

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| REGION I | Joint Conference with NWCPA October 15-18, 1984,
Tacoma, Washington
Theme: "Energize Me . . . For Life" |
| REGION II | Spring Conference March 4-6, 1984,
San Diego, California |
| REGION VI | Spring Conference April 19-21, 1984, Atlanta Falcon
Center, Suwanee, Georgia |

The Regional Conference concept was developed in an attempt to promote the purpose and goals of NODA through the increased emphasis on programming, information sharing, communication, coordination and student participation at the regional level. During this period of economic stress, regional conferences can provide low cost services relating to orientation for professionals, institutions and students.