Office of New Student Programs
Eagle View Orientation ◆ First Year Advising ◆ Parent and Family Programs

Eagle View Orientation

Eagle View Orientation (EVO) serves as the gateway to Florida Gulf Coast University for our new students and their families. The program is designed to prepare students and their families for the college experience by incorporating informational presentations and activities that promote student responsibility, learning, and personal growth. In addition, the program provides an excellent leadership opportunity for currently enrolled students who have a desire to serve as peer mentors and role models for new students and their families during Orientation.

In the summer of 2008, FGCU participated (along with 34 other private and public universities throughout the United States) in an Orientation Benchmarking Survey conducted with the assistance of StudentVoice, a comprehensive assessment platform for higher education. This benchmark study provided an opportunity to compare our programmatic assessment data with other orientation programs, while eliciting additional information from participants about how EVO and Welcome Week activities affected their first weeks of college at FGCU.

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By the Numbers
According to the surveys conducted, new students had favorable things to say about key program sessions that were offered during EVO in 2009:
• 97% felt that information on The First Year Experience was helpful
• 96% felt that information on Safety and Civility was helpful
• 94% felt the Faculty panel session was helpful
• 93% felt that the Student Financial Aid and Fee Payment session was helpful

Students also indicated that EVO provided solid preparation for their first year of college:
• 97% felt prepared for their first year of college after attending EVO
• 91% felt they would complete their Bachelor's Degree at FGCU
• 61% noted they had met at least one new acquaintance (faculty, staff, or student) that may be a lasting connection in the future

A Message From:
Dr. Mike Rollo,
Vice President of Student Affairs
The importance of designing, implementing, and assessing transition services for first-year and transfer students and their families has never been greater. The tasks associated with adjusting to college life are challenging for every new student, and can be overwhelming without adequate preparation and support by the university to help them develop an accurate understanding of what it means to be a college student, as well as realistic expectations of what college will be like, both inside and outside of the classroom.

In order to achieve our primary goal of assisting first-year and transfer students in making a successful transition to Florida Gulf Coast University, the Office of New Student Programs utilizes a theoretical orientation that focus specifically on college student development while incorporating best practices and research findings in the fields of orientation, transition, retention, and academic advising.

For comments or suggestions regarding this issue, please contact:
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Connections is available at studentservices.fgcu.edu/publications.html

Connections may be obtained in an alternative format by contacting the Office of Institutional Equity & Compliance at 239-590-7405 or 800-590-3428, or the Office of Adaptive Services at 239-590-7956.
First Year Advising

The First Year Advising (FYA) website offers a broad array of information to help students learn about FGCU and the resources to assist in their transition. In fact, the FYA website is one of the most frequently viewed pages on the FGCU website, with an average of 617 page views per day. The website also offers streaming flash tutorials to help students navigate the course search and registration process.

All First Year Advising professional staff members have their Masters Degrees, either in Counseling Education, College Student Personnel, or Business Administration. To share their expertise, First Year Advisors will be giving two presentations at the Region IV NACADA conference in Atlanta, Georgia. The first focuses on our Academic Retention Program for students in academic difficulty; the second presents the ways the office uses technology to communicate information to incoming students.

Helping students identify a major that best fits them is a priority to First Year Advising. Along with Career Services, First Year Advising will co-host the 8th Annual Majors Fair on October 13, 2010 from 11 am to 3 pm. The Majors Fair is an excellent way for students, particularly those with undeclared majors, to learn about the academic programs available at FGCU.

In addition, this fall, FYA and Career Services staff will conduct outreach to 77 sections of freshmen composition to increase awareness of the campus resources available to assist with their major selection and career exploration process.

Parent and Family Programs

Parent and Family Programs also underwent an assessment and restructuring in 2008 and 2009. Just like EVO, Eagle Family Weekend was reviewed through an extensive survey conducted by StudentVoice to gauge the success of parent and family outreach efforts at FGCU. Overall, assessment results were favorable. However, we have made several enhancements to our program in response to suggestions we received, including:

- Offering a broader spectrum of events during Eagle Family Weekend to more fully reflect university life at FGCU.
- The creation of an online newsletter specifically for parents and families, with e-mail notification on a monthly basis. This newsletter, which we have called Family Business, features reminders of important dates and deadlines, discussion of current events/programs on campus, as well as advice and suggestions to parents to help them support their students as they tackle some of the typical issues that come with adjusting to college life. Check out the latest issue on our website.
- The implementation of an e-mail address (parents@fgcu.edu) designed to provide an easy way for parents and families to contact FGCU with questions about our services, policies, and procedures.

Incoming students had great things to say about their interaction with First Year Advisors at Orientation:
- 97% felt their advisor was approachable
- 97% felt their advisor listened attentively
- 97% felt their advisor communicated effectively
- 93% felt their advisor empowered their decision making

Students also felt that EVO got them off to a great start at FGCU, and that the FYA staff assisted them in this transition:
- 93% felt that their advisor helped them plan their academic-major path
- 91% felt that their advisor helped them to connect with other campus resources

“...we had a great time at Eagle Family Weekend!!!!! It was very organized and every staff person that we encountered was so nice and friendly. Very warm atmosphere, and what a great way for families to connect with their students and the university.”

– Parent Comment - November 2009.