Orientation as a Port for Possibility: Learning from the Liberal Arts

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The humanities teach us to question the world around us in order to better understand our place within it.

- to question the world around us
- to better understand our place within it

SENSE OF BELONGING

SENSE OF POSSIBILITY
SENSE OF BELONGING

A student’s perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected and valued, and important to the group (e.g. College of Humanities) or others on campus (e.g., advisors, faculty, peers).

—Terrell L. Strayhorn (2012)
SENSE OF POSSIBILITY

The academy is not a paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created. The classroom, with all of its limitations, remains a location of possibility.

—bell hooks (1994)
OVERVIEW

Concepts / Theory
  • What informs our approach?

Orientation Outcomes
  • How did students respond?

Orientation Overview
  • How did we change orientation?

Orientation during COVID
  • How did we adjust to virtual programming?

Questions + Discussion
Give Students a Compass

Connect Knowledge with Choices & Actions

Engage the Big Questions

Engagement

Imagination

Alignment

Belonging
What are the humanities…

... and why do they matter?
“It is much easier to itemize the requirements of a curriculum than to describe the qualities of the human beings we would like that curriculum to produce. All the required courses in the world will fail to give us a liberal education if, in the act of requiring them, we forget that their purpose is to nurture human freedom and growth.”

(Cronon, 1998).
ENGAGE THE BIG QUESTIONS

What matters to you?

What’s the purpose of an education?

How will your degree impact you, your family, your community?
What Students Are Saying...

It showed me how flexible a degree within the Humanities can be and how to make the most of it.

After what I've learned today, I believe that the term "humanities" means to find a sense of belonging as a human and to understand the importance of relationships.

Really awesome that you take our ideas about what we enjoy doing and then mold educational pathways around our ideas, not the other way around!

It means a never ending potential in the ever changing study of humans. Whether that be through a study of our history or cultures, interactions, and many other things, it has taught me to focus on the why of life instead of the how.

My excitement for college has been reinvigorated.
Satisfaction with College of Humanities Orientation

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
Confidence in Building Future Class Schedule

- **Very Confident**
- **Somewhat Confident**
- **Somewhat Less Than Confident**

The chart shows the confidence levels over the years 2016 to 2020.
Orientation at the U

2010
There is no “me” in degree
Requirements & registration

2015
Requirements “light”

2016-2019
Incorporated Heart of the Matter and alumni videos
Created holistic general education presentation
Created More Than a Major section

2020
Created online orientation
Created general education video
Created More Than a Major Zoom sessions
HUMANITIES AT THE U

Undergraduate Academic Advising

Decentralized Academic Model
- 12 Academic Advisors
- 7 Department / 5 Programs
- 31 Majors / 36 Minors

Average incoming fall first-year class: 150 – 170
Learning Outcomes

As a result of my active participation in College of Humanities Orientation, I will...

1. Understand what the Humanities are and how the college is structured
2. Identify majors and minors available to me in the College of Humanities
3. Understand general education requirements as they relate to my major
4. Understand the role of academic advising in my educational journey
5. Identify opportunities for engagement and career opportunities
6. Make an online advising appointment with my major advisor
7. Locate and use the Campus Information System to generate a degree audit
8. Understand registration procedures
9. Build and register for an appropriate first semester schedule
Orientation Structure

Introduction
Staffing: 1 Academic Advisor + Student Orientation Leader

More Than a Major
Staffing: 1 Academic Advisor + Student Orientation Leader

General Education
Staffing: 1 Academic Advisor + Student Orientation Leader

Registration Lab
Staffing: 6 Academic Advisors + 2 Student Orientation Leaders

1:15PM – 4:30PM
INTRO [1:15 – 1:45]

• Introduction / Icebreakers
• Heart of the Matter + discussion
• College overview
• Degree possibilities
• Student success team
GEN ED [1:50 – 2:20]

- Purpose of general education
- Framework of a degree
- Questions about previously earned college credits
- Getting started in your first semester
Sample Class Schedule

- MATH ________________  (3-4 credits)
- WRITING ________________  (3 credits)
- LANGUAGE ________________  (4 credits)
- GEN ED (BF, AS/SF, FF) ________________  (3 credits)
- MAJOR CLASS ________________  (3 credits)
- WELL-BEING CLASS ________________  (1-2 credits)
MORE THAN A MAJOR  [2:30 – 3:00]

• Why college?
• What will be your university experience?
• Who do you want to become?
Major
Minor
General Education
Bachelor Degree | BA or BS

Volunteering / Service
Learning Community
Clubs & Involvement
Student Leadership
Part-Time Job
Study Abroad
Internship
Research
Etc.
| What is a skill you want to learn in college? |
| What is one problem you wish you could solve? |
| What’s a community you care about? |
| What is something you want to accomplish? |
| What is a topic you’re intrigued by? |
| What is a class you wish had existed in high school? |
| What’s a dream you have for yourself? |
| What kind of person do you want to be when you graduate? |

**Major:** History + Psychology  
**Minor:** Games  
**General Education:**  
- HIST 1700: American History  
- ART 3065: Bookbinding  
- PSY 1010: General Psychology  
- PHYS 1010: How Things Work  
**Language:** Vietnamese  
**Internship:** Rakutan Marketing  
**Study Abroad:** Film in Nepal  
**Part-Time Job:** Marriott Library
REGISTRATION LAB  [3:00 – 4:30]

Walk through processes: navigating student portal, using the class schedule, registering for classes

Students have laminated lab packets with suggested exploratory classes, sample class schedules, and general education worksheet

Academic advisors and orientation leaders are available for assistance. 1 advisor per 3 – 4 students

Assessment / Checkout process

- Run a degree audit
- Find career coach and academic advisor’s information
- Find deadline to drop a class / withdraw from a class
- Identify a FF/Fine Arts course on the class schedule
- Check Umail and complete orientation survey
AND THEN COVID HAPPENED...
VIRTUAL ORIENTATION

• Synchronous online orientation with same timeframe, held over Zoom

• Prerecorded presentations available on the orientation website

• One-on-one advising appointments available for follow-up

• 98% participation in virtual orientation

• More Than a Major online
WHAT WE LEARNED
Connect With Us

Email Us
• taunya.dressler@utah.edu
• aglenn@advising.utah.edu

Check out shared presentation materials
• Day-of schedule with resources / video links
• Laminated orientation packet pdf

Look over the College of Humanities orientation website
www.humanities.utah.edu/students/student-orientation

Join the Liberal Arts Listserv
• Visit NACADA’s Liberal Arts Advising Community page
• Join the listserv
THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING!

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References


