A History of the Office of Orientation and First Year Experience

“Continuing Dr. Shepard’s Legacy…one student at a time.”

The Office of Orientation and First Year Experience was created within the Division of Student Affairs June 2004 by Ms. Jocelyn L. Foy, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Services/Director of Undergraduate Admissions, with support from Mr. Roland Gaines, former Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs. New student orientation was known as SOARt prior to the office’s existence, and has been renamed twice. It was named Eagle Orientation Program (EOP) in June 2004, and renamed the Eagle Institute in January 2007.

Principal programs in the unit are Eagle Institute which is held every January, June, July, and August; a Week of Welcome, which is held every August, four days prior to the beginning of classes; “First Steps,” a Freshman Academic Achievement Ceremony which is held in February; and “Second Steps,” a Freshman Achievement Ceremony which is held every September/October.

Leaders in the Program have been Ms. Erica E. Estep: June 1, 2004-September 30, 2005; Ms. Jocelyn L. Foy: October 1, 2005-April 16, 2006 (interim); and Ms. Janelle G. Simmons: April 17, 2006 to the present.

The Program has always been housed in the Student Services Building.

The Office of Orientation and First Year Experience enhances the mission of North Carolina Central University by providing comprehensive services to aid in the transition of newly admitted undergraduate and transfer students. We seek to introduce and to integrate all new students and their families into the intellectual, cultural and social fabric of the institution.

Our office envisions a successful first year experience for all new undergraduate students, a year which will further stimulate intellectual growth, social responsibility, personal wellness, and career development. Our goals have been to design a comprehensive first-year experience program that supports the mission of NCCU and the Division of Student Affairs; to develop an Assessment Plan for New Student Orientation and First-Year Experience; to provide leadership in the orientation and retention of first-year students; to serve as a resource and be accessible to the university community; and to establish a highly qualified and skilled program team.

Outstanding achievements of the Office and its leaders include the establishment of the NCCU Parents/Family Association; and together with the Office of Student Leadership, Training, and Development, the coordination of the NCCU Community Dinners Program, in which first-year students had dinner with a member of NCCU’s faculty and staff.

The Office created the “First Steps” and “Second Steps” Academic Achievement Ceremony to recognize freshmen who earned a GPA of 3.0 or higher during the academic year.

With the assistance of the Enrollment Services Committee, the Office created Making the Transition to North Carolina Central University: A Guide for First Year Students and Family Members, which is distributed during new student orientation.

The mission of Orientation and First Year Experience has not changed; however, goals have been expanded. Currently, six goals are:

- To design a comprehensive first-year experience program that supports the strategic plan of NCCU and the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management;
- To design a successful orientation program that supports the strategic plan of NCCU and the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management;
- To design an effective parent/family relations program;
- To collaborate, more effectively, with other University entities (Academic Affairs, Financial Affairs, and Institutional Advancement) to ensure that students successfully navigate through their first year of enrollment;
- To provide more learning opportunities for student leaders who work with transition programming; and
• To ensure that the Office of Orientation and First Year Experience is on the “cutting edge” of transition programming.

Prepared by Ms. Janelle Simmons
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