



The Usual Place, March 29th, 2016.

The topic of tonight's discussion was "Cal Student Orientation/CalSo."

The Cal Student Orientation program is going to be revamped for the 2017-2018 school year. During this conversation, Fellows devoted the discussion to brainstorming ways to improve the orientation program. After a few contextualizing remarks, Fellows offered suggestions. Because of the extraordinary structure of this conversation, these notes will reflect the structure of the conversation. First, these notes will cover the background information. Second, these notes will list all of the changes proposed during the meeting.

One Fellow opened the discussion by providing pertinent information about the new changes to CalSo. This Fellow stated that in 2017, CalSo will be renamed "Golden Bear Orientation." The program will become a weeklong orientation program. This is because CalSo alumni reported that it is too expensive to come to the Bay Area to come for a weekend during the summer. CalSo alumni also reported that they did not have a sense of the larger community after participating in the program; they wanted to feel like they were a part of something bigger. Because of this, CalSo organizers decided to make sure that the Class of 2017 goes through the trainings together. Every incoming student will also meet with their counselor before classes begin. There were also talks of hosting on a new student concert.

This Fellow also discussed the orientation's staffing and programming logistics. They stated that six student coordinators would select the program's activities. About sixty "leaders" are slated to supervise the activities under the guidance of the six coordinators. Finally, the organizing committee will also rely on about 1,000 or so student volunteers to help usher students into their respective places. The first day of the program is slated to start on "move-in day." The program is slated to end the day before classes begin.

The rest of the discussion was devoted to improvements on the old program. There was some debate over some of the proposed improvements, but they are still worth noting. Here are recommendations from the Fellows of the Order:

1. Make sure that students are introduced to philanthropy. We should begin to instill a culture of giving during orientation. The idea is to encourage students to pay something forward, be it time or future monetary donations.
2. Place more emphasis on school spirit than philanthropy.
3. Introduce new students to the concept of community and make sure that they feel included in the larger campus community.
4. Find ways to expose students to the myriad of student groups on campus. Perhaps the CalSo committee could partner with the Daily Cal to write an article entitled, “100 Things Every Freshman Should Know.” The planning committee could also look into creating an app for students to help them find organizations that suit their interests—kind of like a modern dating app.
5. Teach students about the larger Berkeley, Oakland, and Bay Area communities.
6. Emphasize the importance of the AC requirement during the orientation program.
7. Include alumni in the orientation programming.
8. Include graduate students. Graduate students are not exposed to the larger campus community. It would be nice to include them.
9. Incentivize students to volunteer to help during orientation by offering priority registration on Cal Central in the spring.
10. Make sure that presentations are interactive. Students should not be seated in Zellerbach for the duration of the orientation. It just sounds painful.
11. Offer smaller group settings for mandatory education requirements such as alcohol education and sexual harassment/assault trainings.
12. Introduce diverse “mods” and cohorts to the program. They are a great way to tie students together in a lasting way. At the end of orientation, students could create small mod Facebook groups to stay in touch. This could help to prevent students from getting lost and give them a source of community they can tap into throughout their undergraduate careers.
13. Have the smaller groups meet again about a month after school starts so that they can tap into their support network.
14. Have some risk management planning to make sure that students have safe entertainment options (other than drinking at fraternity parties) each night.
15. Ensure that the fraternity rush does not take place during the orientation week.
16. Have the chancellor and senior administrators sit at a booth and “table” on Sproul Plaza during orientation.
17. Give attendees a box with important information about the campus including a short history, a book of student activities, a CD from Cal Band with the university’s traditional music, a guide to navigating the ASUC, a guide to DeCals, and a flyer advertising Rally Committee events.
18. Have a sort of Boy/Girl Scout badge program where students earn a Golden Bear Medal after completing the specified number of activities during orientation.
19. Provide some academic planning information to students prior to CalSo so that they are able to maximize their time with advisors.
20. Have academic departments host networking events during orientation. This could reduce the burden on advisers and give students a chance to meet other students in their majors.

21. Offer workshops on strategies for academic success. Include the Student Learning Center in the planning of those activities. This could expose students to free tutoring resources as well.
22. Organize a community service project. This will encourage bonding and further instill a culture of philanthropy.