2021
Orientation Survey Report
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I. Introduction

All incoming full-time undergraduate students to Queen’s University are provided the opportunity to participate in Fall Orientation activities. The goals of Queen’s Fall Orientation are:

- to make all new students feel welcome
- to facilitate a smooth transition to university
- to build a strong and inclusive community of students
- to make new students comfortable in their academic, social, and environmental contexts
- to provide a solid foundation for a successful university experience

Fall Orientation 2021 consisted of a mix of online and in-person activities. Online orientation occurred from August 30 to September 4, 2021. Each Orientation program delivered both asynchronous and synchronous content hosted on Rafr, Zoom, OnQ or other platforms specific to a faculty. In-person activities took place over weekends in September. The in-person activities included the Student Experience Office campus tours and each faculty group hosted two events.

This report provides overall results for all Overall survey respondents, and where possible, separate analyses of designated groups in Overall. The demographic questions within the survey were updated with input from the Human Rights & Equity Office.

Survey Methodology

The Student Experience Office (SEO) administered the survey using the Queen’s University enterprise tool, Qualtrics. Institutional Research and Planning reported on findings and is developing an Orientation Survey dashboard using Tableau.

To maintain a consistent cohort of respondents for analysis, students who completed at least 50% of the Orientation Survey comprise the respondent pool. Using these criteria, 656 of the 5721 eligible students responded, resulting in a 11.5 % response rate. (A summary of overall respondent characteristics can be found in Appendix A.)

Institutional Research and Planning also conducted statistical testing of response difference between student identity characteristics. For each question type where it was supported, SAS was used to run a Chi-Square analysis to determine if the association between groups of respondents is statistically significant (in other words, the found correlation very likely exists in the population, and to what confidence that can be stated). For these tests, responses were bucketed into two groups based on the side of neutral they fell; for example, ‘Agreement’ (Strongly agree + Agree); and ‘Disagreement’ (Strongly disagree + Disagree). Where statistical significance is found, a reasonable strength in the correlation of the relationship was used as a secondary step to the test.
Based on available Queen’s administrative data, the representation of females in the overall survey responses is higher than the population by approximately 10%, and males are lower by approximately 15%. International students are underrepresented, and first-generation and Indigenous student representation is similar to the student population.

II. Survey Findings

Orientation Attendance

Fall Orientation offers a variety of activities for students to attend. The table below examines the top reasons why Overall students did not attend ‘all’ offered activities. In years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, "Too tired; needed rest" had been the dominate response; the three top answers this year are all related to prior engagements or lack of time, consistent with 2020 findings.

Figure 1 Reasons for not attending Orientation Activities - Overall

Statistically significant differences by respondent identity are:

- 35% who identified as racialized chose the response ‘did not think it would be worthwhile’ while only 25% of those who identified as non-racialized selected this as a reason to not attend some or all activities.

- 29% of domestic students chose the response ‘did not think it would be worthwhile’ while only 13% of international students selected this as a reason to not attend some or all activities.

- 41% of domestic students chose the response ‘did not have time’ while only 1% of international students selected this as a reason to not attend some or all activities.
Orientation Goals

To assess the effectiveness in achieving the Fall Orientation goals, students were asked to indicate their agreement with seven statements.

The achievement of Orientation goals is explored with the level of agreement with each goal from Overall respondents.

Figure 2 Agreement levels with Orientation Goals - (“Orientation helped me...”) - Overall

Disagreement is statistically higher for those identifying as non-binary for comfort in their new social environment.
More statistically significant disagreement was reported on five of the seven goals from those identifying as non-heterosexual. For each of the Orientation goals, those identifying as non-heterosexual express higher levels of disagreement with the goals. The exception to this pattern are the goals of Orientation helping to feel welcome at Queen’s, and to facilitate a smooth transition to university, where no significant difference was found.

**Students’ experiences with positive activities during Orientation**

Looking at the activities that contribute to the attainment of the Orientation goals, the majority of Overall students reported positive experiences.
There was a statistically significant difference reported by sexual orientation for the opportunities to chat with a group leader, with those identifying as heterosexual reporting more occurrences.

**Figure 3a Differences with group leader chat responses by sexual orientation**

- Non-Hetero/Straight: 21% Not at all, 26% Somewhat, 53% Often
- Hetero/Straight: 11% Not at all, 30% Somewhat, 60% Often

The same question also had a statistically significant difference reported by those with trans experience, with less opportunities noted.

**Figure 3b Differences with group leader chat responses by trans experience**

- Trans Experience: 40% Not at all, 30% Somewhat, 30% Often
- No Trans Experience: 12% Not at all, 30% Somewhat, 58% Often

**Students’ experiences with negative activities during Orientation**

Along with the positive activities enjoyed during Fall Orientation, attendees also reported some negative experiences. Overall students reported having to partake in embarrassing activities with 53% of respondents indicating ‘somewhat’ or ‘often’. Students did not offer additional information regarding what they identified as embarrassing activities in the comment sections of the survey. 5% of students report being required or forced to drink alcohol at an Orientation event, while 8% reported feeling required to outside of Orientation events. The final statement ‘I was harassed online’ was added last year to capture the virtual experience of Orientation since 2020.
Overall In-Person Activities

To complement online Orientation activities, campus tours were offered as an in-person element. Respondents were asked for their level of agreement to four statements with respect to these activities. Highest levels of disagreement in Overall were indicated for how confident they feel navigating campus, and for meeting other students in their tour group.

Figure 5 Campus tours - Overall
There was a significant difference in the level of agreement with meeting other students in the tour group between students of different sexual orientation, with non-heterosexual having a higher level of disagreement.

Figure 5a Campus tours disagreement levels for meeting other students by sexual orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual Orientation</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hetero/Straight</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hetero/Straight</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Feelings of Discomfort and Discrimination

Students who reported experiencing discomfort during orientation were asked when these feelings occurred. To provide additional context, students can share additional information about the incidents. In the comments, themes emerged concerning feeling left out or feelings of being othered based on their identity.

Figure 6 Where students felt uncomfortable during Orientation - Overall

To further understand discomfort and discrimination, students were also asked to indicate their discomfort level across a number of aspects of their identity.
Students were also given the opportunity to expand on their feelings of discomfort. Comments were generally related to inappropriate behaviour and bias based on students’ ethnicity, and gender identity. For example, students overheard homophobic and transphobic comments, or jokes related to race/ethnicity stereotypes.

**Alcohol Consumption**

While Fall Orientation is intended to be alcohol-free, 26% of Overall students reported they perceived drinking to be ‘extremely’ (8%) or ‘very much’ (18%) part of the culture of expectation. Yet, when asked about their alcohol consumption, approximately 75% of Overall respondents indicated they did not consume alcohol during Fall Orientation.

In order to understand if students are facing pressure to drink, they were asked to identify the group and/or individuals from whom they felt pressure, by the level of pressure felt.
Overall, Fall Orientation participants felt they received the most pressure to drink from fellow first-year students (3% felt ‘Extremely’, 5% felt ‘Very much’).

Figure 9 Pressure to drink from groups or individuals - Overall

There was a significant difference in how this question was responded to based on sexual orientation. Those identifying as heterosexual reported less intense levels of pressure from fellow first-year students than non-heterosexual respondents.

Figure 9a Difference in pressure to drink from fellow first-year students by sexual orientation

Hazing

Hazing, defined as “any activity expected of someone joining a group (or to maintain full status in a group) that humiliates, degrades, or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person’s willingness to participate” can be experienced (intentional or not) by students with different levels of severity. Overall, 90% of responses were of
experiencing no hazing, 9% were of subtle hazing, 0.2% were of harassment hazing, and 0.2% were of violent hazing. Amongst these findings there were no statistically significant differences found amongst designated groups.

**Figure 10 Responses related to hazing activities - Overall**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No hazing</td>
<td>90.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtle hazing (i.e. behaviors that emphasize a power imbalance between new members and other members of the group)</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment hazing (i.e. behaviors that cause emotional or physical discomfort in order to feel like part of the group)</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent hazing (i.e. behaviors that have the potential to cause physical, emotional, and/or psychological harm)</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Length and Engagement**

The length of Fall Orientation is important to consider. Queen's must achieve the right balance of activities to promote bonding and feeling like part of the university and allowing time for students to settle into their new surroundings without feeling overwhelmed. Based on last year’s report, Virtual Orientation was reduced from 14 days to 6, but with the introduction of in-person activities back into the schedule, Orientation was extended to include weekends in September.

Overall, 53% of respondents indicated that the length of Virtual Orientation was ‘just right’.

**Figure 11 Students’ perceived length of Virtual Orientation - Overall**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Length</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The length of virtual Orientation, from August 30th to Sept. 4th (6 days) was:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too short</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too long</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just right</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were asked about the time commitment per day. This question was added in 2020 to help identify students not attending based on being too tired/need to rest in previous years. With the move to online orientation, it was a frequent discussion of how to reach the right balance of opportunities for incoming students, and over programming. As some students would be eligible for up to 3 virtual programs (Faculty, University Orientation and FYNIRS) there were time restrictions introduced in 2021 to manage the commitment per day. Overall, 62% indicated that their perceived commitment of time per day was ‘too much’.
It was important to ask students how engaging they perceived the online aspects of Orientation to be. In Overall, 20% of survey respondents found Orientation to be very or extremely engaging, and 58% felt it was somewhat engaging.

While considering engagement, it was also a priority to ensure that students were not spending too much or too little time on the computer per day. Although 32% felt it was just right, 66% thought it was too much.

Comments from Students

Students were asked to provide feedback on their most positive parts of Orientation. Common themes include:

- Interacting and bonding with peers
- Meeting new people
- Overall painting
Event specific enjoyment

Many of the comments about the least enjoyable parts of Orientation were offered with understanding of the limits due to COVID-19 measures, and included themes such as:

- Online engagement was difficult
- Feelings of exclusion and being left out
- Scheduling issues