Fostering Social Presence From the Acceptance Letter:

Utilizing an Online Orientation to Help Create Social Presence in Online Degree Programs

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Old school or new school we want to hear from you!

Use a post-it note or your phone to give insight, rank activities, and tell us what really works in orientations!
The Problem: Isolation Between Admission and Enrollment in Online Programs

Months between admission and enrollment, and a self-paced orientation that was not reflective of our dynamic and interactive online courses.

The Proposal: Fostering Social Presence from the Acceptance Letter

A dynamic and collaborative online orientation that connects and informs.
The Purpose:

To introduce new online student to the University of Illinois Springfield (UIS)

To orient new online students to online learning at UIS.

To connect new online students with the campus community and their fellow online students at UIS.
The Orientation Framework

Four Modules

Welcome & Introductions
Getting Started: Advising, Your Curriculum & Registering for Classes
Navigating the Campus: Offices and Services
Being a Successful Online Learner

Following a Weekly Format

Module Welcome / Overview
Learning Materials
Engagement Activities
Assessment & Incentives
Activities for Fostering Social Presence

**Applied and Authentic Learning Opportunities (Take Action)**
Activities focused around students implementing their learning. These activities focus on utilizing UIS institutional systems and familiarizing students with common Blackboard tools discussed in the modules.

**Discussion Boards (Let’s Talk)**
The Let’s Talk activities utilize the discussion board component of the online course, that gives students an opportunity to share their knowledge and to learn from their instructor and their fellow students.

**Synchronous Live Meetings (Ask the Expert)**
Synchronous live meetings where experts from around campus deliver important information about campus policies and processes. Students will have the opportunity to submit questions both prior and during the meeting.

**Reflective Journaling (Reflect)**
This is a private journal where students are asked to reflect on their learning experience. A place to consider how their prior knowledge and experience relate to what they have learned and the direction they are headed in.
TAKE ACTION
implement your learning

Module 1: Welcome & Introductions
Online Learning Readiness Quiz

A quiz to help students assess their readiness for online learning. Allows students the opportunity to practice using a quiz and viewing a grade through the LMS.

Module 2: Getting Started:
Advising, Your Curriculum, & Registering for Classes
Establishing Your Plan for Graduation

1. Review Degree Audit Report
2. Review curriculum requirements and develop a draft degree plan.
3. Email advisor for initial advising meeting.

Module 3: Navigating the Campus: Offices and Services
Learning Online Doesn't Mean Working Alone - Learning to Work in Groups Online

Campus Offices/Services are divided between the assigned groups, and each group is responsible for creating a blog detailing the online student services their assigned campus offices provide.

Module 4: Being a Successful Online Learner
Successfully Learning Online: What's Your Plan

A Turnitin assignment. A one page paper detailing how the student plans to be a successful online learner throughout their program.
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Learning Online Doesn’t Mean Working Alone - Learning to Work in Groups Online

Campus Offices/Services are divided between the assigned groups, and each group is responsible for creating a blog detailing the online student services their assigned campus offices provide.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 1: Welcome &amp; Introductions</th>
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<td>Let's Talk and Get Acquainted (Introductions)</td>
<td>Let's Talk About Earning Your Degree Online</td>
<td>Let's Talk About Getting the Support You Need to Succeed</td>
<td>Let's Talk About How You Plan to Succeed in Your Online Program</td>
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Students will be asked to introduce themselves to the class via the discussion board. Students will have the opportunity to do their introduction via text and a picture or through a video. (Instructor's post will exhibit best practices.)

Students will answer questions regarding their concerns about learning online and respond to students who share similar concerns.

Students asked to answer questions about their potential use of campus services and to post follow-up responses to help fellow students either providing information or sharing about their past experience using a similar service.

Students asked to answer how they plan to succeed in their online program, and to post follow-up responses on ideas of how the online UIS community can help them in the execution of their plan.
Module 1: Welcome & Introductions
Let’s Talk and Get Acquainted (Introductions)

Students will be asked to introduce themselves to the class via the discussion board. Students will have the opportunity to do their introduction via text and a picture or through a video. (Instructor’s post will exhibit best practices.)
Ask the Expert

Synchronous Meetings

Module 1: Welcome & Introductions
Ask the Expert: Starting an Online Program

An introduction to online learning at UIS from the college online coordinators and a current online student.

Module 2: Getting Started: Advising, Your Curriculum, & Registering for Classes
Ask the Expert: Navigating Registration and UIS Self-Service

A walk through of the dynamic course schedule, UIS Self-Service (includes student information, registration eligibility notification, and registering for classes), and DARS. Also, includes an overview of common registration errors and departmental registration practices. Led by the instructor and guests from the UIS Records Office and Department Support Staff (who enter registration permissions).

Module 3: Navigating the Campus: Offices and Services
Ask the Expert: Experts from Around Campus

Experts from three of the following campus offices will talk about the services they provide to online learners, answer questions, and offer giveaways. (Library, Center for Academic Success, Career Services, Counseling Services, Disability Services, Financial Assistance, Athletics, UIS Bookstore, and ITS)

Module 4: Being a Successful Online Learner
Ask the Expert: Instructional Designers, Experienced Online Instructors, and Alumni

A panel of experts on what it takes to succeed in learning online at UIS. (Answering a ready-made set of questions along with audience questions from the students.)
Module 4: Being a Successful Online Learner
Ask the Expert: Instructional Designers, Experienced Online Instructors, and Alumni

A panel of experts on what it takes to succeed in learning online at UIS. (Answering a ready-made set of questions along with audience questions from the students.)
Modules 1 - 4
Reflective Journaling

This is a private journal where students can reflect on their own learning experience. A place to consider how their prior knowledge and experience relate to what they have learned in each module, and where to go from here.
Additional Techniques to Foster Social Presence

Module Introduction and Recap Videos
Mid-Course Instructor Check-In Email
Optional Individual Student/Instructor Skype Sessions
Session Evaluations & Drawing

• Download and open OLC Conferences mobile app
• Navigate to specific session to evaluate
• Select “Evaluate Session” on session details screen (located under session type and track)
• Complete session evaluation*

*Each session evaluation completed (limited to one per session) = one contest entry

Five (5) $25 gift cards will be awarded to five (5) individuals
Must submit evals using the OLC Conferences mobile app or website