



2015 FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY FIRST- GENERATION STUDENT ORIENTATION INVOLVEMENT ASSESSMENT REPORT

This report takes a look at the first-generation student population who were involved as orientation leaders at Florida State University.

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To Our Stakeholders

ASSESSMENT REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

The 2015 Florida State University First-Generation Student Orientation Assessment Report provides context for first-generation college students involved as orientation leaders at the institution. Enclosed in the report, you will find key information about the summer orientation program, an analysis of key assessment data points deemed important to highlight, and a topic that serves as a springboard for future research.

LOOKING AHEAD

The assessment data gathered to form this report can be utilized to further improve the orientation program and transition process for prospective students at Florida State University as well as assist first-generation college students who are interested in determining the level of impact New Student and Family Programs would have on their college experience.

The document provides a few recommendations based on the author's analysis of the data gathered.

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December 7, 2015



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Introduction

First-generation students enrolling in postsecondary institutions have increased in number significantly over the past decade (Strayhorn, 2006). Research has been conducted and focused on different areas of study for first-generation college students.



One area the present researcher has found a gap in knowledge in is how first-generation college students become involved on campus in orientation programs. The author in this report has focused on exploring first-generation college students' engagement with orientation programming and the development, as well as the impact of the experience, on the students' collegiate career. More specifically, the researcher aims to begin to illustrate the differences in campus involvement between first-generation college students who served as orientation leaders and those students who did not. In this report, the author will not provide information regarding first-generation college students who did not serve as orientation leaders. This report will serve as a foundation for future research that will hopefully yield groundbreaking results in how first-generation college students can successfully navigate their collegiate experience, how administrators and faculty can support the journey for first-generation college students, and how specific programs and

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institutions can better understand their role in the development and experience of first-generation college students.



In order to better articulate the purpose of the report, it is important to identify and define what a “first-generation college student” is. Research has indicated the term can be used in a wide variety of manners. Students may come from families in which their parents are

American citizens, or perhaps their parents are permanent residents, or maybe the student grew up in a family that is undocumented. It is important to recognize and understand that the experiences for each population of first-generation college student have the capacity to be very different depending on the fixed inputs and demographic characteristics the student may have upon entering college. For the purpose of this assessment report, the focus will specifically be on first-generation college students who are the first in their family to attend college, regardless of legal or immigration status, unless otherwise noted in the report. Understanding the level of involvement on campus for first-generation college students, especially, is important because it will provide readers the opportunity to uncover the challenges and results of the decisions they make. Many offices in the Division of Student Affairs at Florida State University may provide a positive experience that leads to enhanced development for first-generation college

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students. This report focuses on students involved as orientation leaders in New Student and Family Programs within the Dean of Students Department.

The author finds student involvement to be a valuable and important outcome to spend time and resources to study because data needs to be produced on how first-generation college students develop after engaging in programming related to orientation and the first-year experience, given the students are the first in their family to be attending college. The primary goal in assessing this particular outcome will be to focus on the development of the student with a side effect of understanding how student involvement is impacted by the specific program, in this case New Student and Family Programs.

The purpose of this assessment report is to measure the development for first-generation college students who exhibit a high level of student involvement on campus. More



specifically, the author seeks to explore the relationship between first-generation college students involved in orientation programming on campus and the gains they experienced after their tenure as orientation leaders. The author assessed the involvement, development, and impact of the experiences by creating an assessment tool for first-generation college students who have served as orientation leaders.

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About Florida State University

Florida State University is a large, public, research institution in the Southeast region of the United States with more than 40,000 students and is located in the capital city of Tallahassee, Florida. The institution is predominantly white with a majority female population and contains a significant first-generation college student population. Data from the U.S. Department of Education Institution of Education Sciences and National Center for Education Statistics illustrate a clearer picture of the demographic breakdown at Florida State University. The majority of the students are White, female, and under 25.

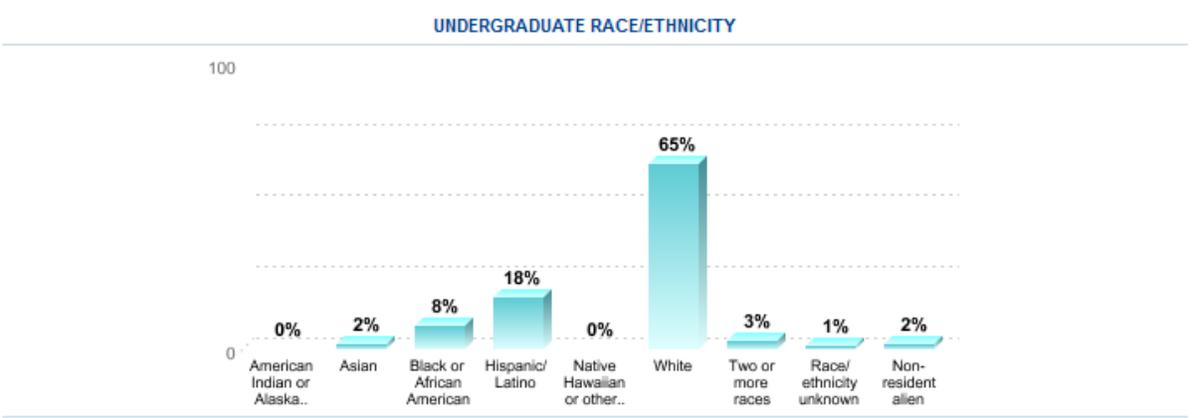


Figure 1 Undergraduate Race/Ethnicity

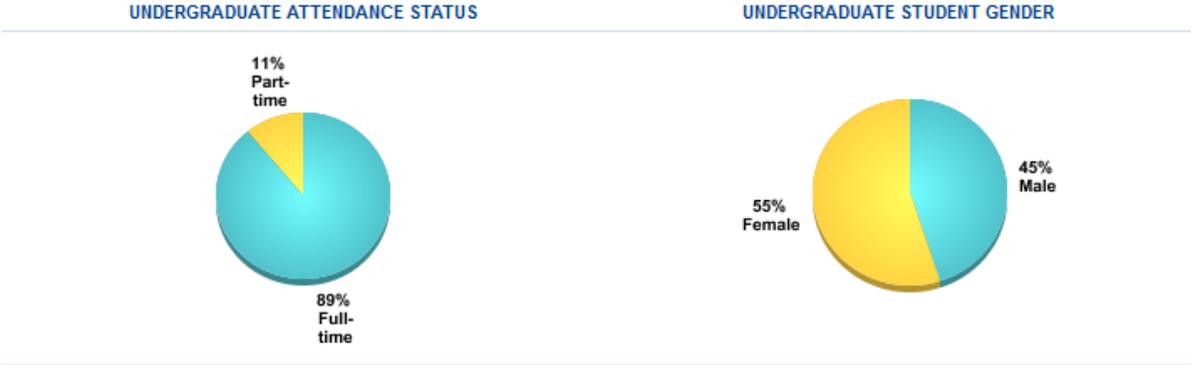


Figure 2 Undergraduate Attendance Status and Student Gender

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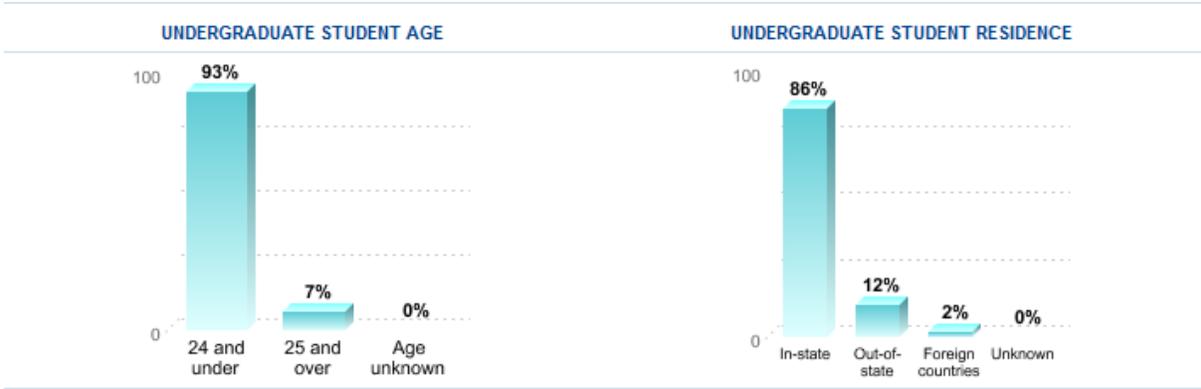


Figure 3 Undergraduate Student Age and Residency

Participants

First-generation students were selected as participants from Florida State University using purposive sampling and the snowballing / referral method. The students consisted of eleven individuals who are or had previously been involved with New Student and Family Programs as orientation leaders. The originally created Qualtrics survey was opened by 11 participants. Out of those, 8 answered half the survey and 4 students completed the survey in full.

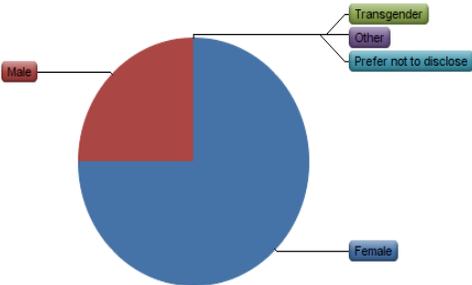


Figure 4. Gender breakdown: 6 females, 2 males

The Qualtrics survey revealed that there were a total of 6 females and 2 males who submitted any responses to the inquiries. We also wanted to have a breakdown of race and ethnicity as data was being collected. Four students self-identified as

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White/Caucasian, 3 participants were Black/African American, 1 Hispanic/Latino(a), and 1 Multiracial/Multiethnic. Another demographic breakdown that was collected via the

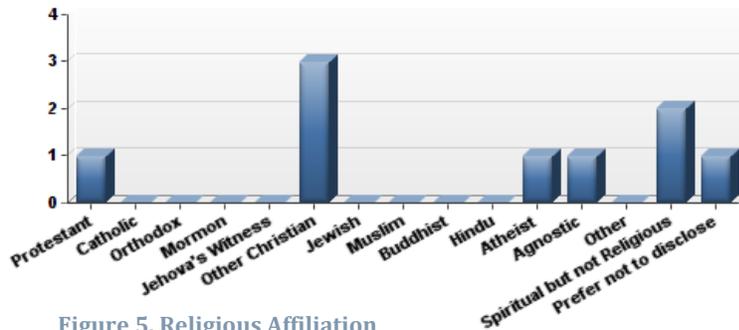


Figure 5. Religious Affiliation

Qualtrics survey is the religious affiliation preference. Out of the 11 participants that responded, we have three that identified as “other Christian,” two that

were “spiritual but not religious,” and one each for “protestant,” “atheist,” “agnostic,” and “prefer not to disclose.” All students that responded to the survey also identified as first-generation college students. We also had seven in-state students and one out-of-state student participant. Finally, the classification breakdown for each of our respondents was as follows: we have 4 second years, 3 third years, and 1 fourth year. Out of these 8 respondents, 1 served as an orientation leader during summer 2014 and 7 were orientation leaders during spring and summer 2015. As you can see, we have a wide array of first-generation college students that are represented in this assessment report. However, it is also important to note that because we have a limited number of participants, the study cannot be generalized, speak to, or be representative of the larger population – especially since the study is missing several key demographics.

Orientation Program Overview

The orientation program at Florida State University is comprised of several sessions that are held only on weekdays during the summer, fall, and spring. Each orientation session is an overlapping two day, one night program where prospective students have an opportunity to get acclimated to campus, connect with fellow peers, and register for academic classes. The prospective students live in the campus Residence Hall for the duration of orientation. Each student is assigned to a small group of other prospective students led by two Orientation Leaders. Throughout orientation, the groups host various meetings to build community, teach the history and traditions of Florida State University, take the students for a campus tour, and ease the transition process for the prospective students. During orientation, students have the opportunity to receive their Florida State student identification card, connect with student activities on ways to become involved on campus, interact with a multitude of campus partners and offices during informational sessions, and meet with academic services to gain insight on expected course load.

Parents and family members are invited to participate in a family orientation program where they have an opportunity to learn more about Florida State University, financing the education, learning about various resources and services offered by the institution including Career Services and Study Abroad, and gain a better understanding of how to support their student(s) in their new role. To learn more about the Family Orientation Program, please follow this link: [Family Orientation 2015](#).

Literature Review

As was mentioned by Strayhorn (2006) we have seen a steady increase in the number of first-generation college students attending institutions of higher education in the United States. From data collected in 2008, almost 5 million low-income and first-generation students enrolled in colleges across the United States, and that number is anticipated to increase in the years to come (Engle & Tinto, 2008). In the introduction, the author determined we would identify first-generation college students as those being the first in their family to attend college, regardless of immigration standing or status in the United States. To delve deeper a bit deeper, what are traditional characteristics of first-generation college students? In study done by Swail, Redd, & Perna (2003), it was found that “first-generation students were more likely to come from low-income families, to be Hispanic, to have weaker cognitive skills,...to have lower degree aspirations, and to have been less involved with peers and teachers while in college” (p. 156). Breaking that statement apart, we see there is a lot to consider and think about when facing a first-generation college student. The students come with a lot of baggage and may have faced tremendous adversity to get to college in the first place. Another element is the lack of resources and lack of perceived support. When these students attend college, they may not understand how to become involved on campus or reach out and connect with faculty or staff members. As higher education administrators and faculty, we hear a lot about the experience or journey of first-generation college students: who they are, where they come

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from, the obstacles they have overcome, and the struggles they face as they transition and attempt to persist to graduation. Therefore, it is important to know how to support them.

An additional reason why researching first-generation college students are critical is illustrated by Kuh et al. (2007) when they discuss how these students typically “may be at risk of premature departure or underperformance” (p. 5). By having a greater understanding of the student population, administrators and faculty alike will be able to better assist in supporting the first-generation college students as they continue their education. Faculty and staff will have a greater likelihood of intervening when yellow flags are raised by their students, or they can act as support systems early in order to serve as a support system for these fragile students, knowing that they may not reach out for help until it is too late. In Kuh et al. (2007), the conversation continued by further emphasizing that almost 60% of college students who enroll at a two or four year institution fail to complete their degree within six years, with that number likely to be higher for students who identify as first-generation due to the lack of support they have in place from their nuclear families or externally. On the other hand, students who had a parent receive a college education were more likely to persist to graduation (p. 52). Students may decide to leave college for various reasons – be they family-related, financially-driven, academic rigor, lack of social or community support, or a medical withdrawal. Vincent Tinto (1993) discusses his reasons for student departure by expanding on his 1975 theory. In *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition*, Tinto introduces the concepts

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of academic and social integration for students attending college. He contends that “[s]ome degree of social and intellectual integration and therefore membership in academic and social communities must exist as a condition for continued persistence” (p. 120). Again, this highlights the human need for a social or community feeling. For first-generation students, especially, this is a critical juncture for success and persistence in college. Creating a space and providing first-generation college students the academic, social, and institutional support will empower these students to feel the investment from the institution and allow them to feel connected to people, which is crucial. Take away the support system and sense of belonging from the community, and you risk losing the first-generation college student due to feelings of disconnection or detachment.

Further research from the National Survey of Student Engagement’s Annual Report (2007) revealed that first-generation college students were found to be significantly “less likely than other students to participate in a high-impact activity such as a learning community, a research project with a faculty member, study abroad, or culminating senior experience” (p. 13). The high-impact activities, or practices, are highlighted by George Kuh in the 2007 NSSE Annual Report. These practices are meant to provide students meaningful interaction and engagement while attending a college or university. Kuh noted that the ideal student would need to “participate in at least two high impact activities during their undergraduate program, one in the first year, and one later” in order for the student to successfully navigate their college experience (p. 8). Other high-impact

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practices include: learning communities, community-based project, studying abroad, researching with faculty, internship, and a culminating senior project (p. 1). Taking the information from Kuh and NSSE, it is evident that there is a disconnect between how first-generation college students navigate their college experience. Understanding the research will better inform faculty and administrators on how to better support the first-generation college student population on campus. It is also important to look at the precollege experiences for each first-generation college student. In fact, Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini (2004) found that these students do not receive adequate family or community support, have received constant messages about how they will not succeed, face immense personal and family-related hardship and pressure, and do not enter college with the same degree of academic preparedness or access to resources. Therefore, it is imperative for faculty and staff to serve as role models and support systems for these students. While there have been informal instances in determining the impact of how first-generation college students are impacted by serving as orientation leaders for their college or university, there is virtually no literature discussing this relationship. It is the author's hope that this study and assessment report can serve as a foundational piece and building block for future research on the relationship between further involvements on campus after first-generation students have served as orientation leaders.

Methods

When the author was asked to construct an outcomes project for class in a previous semester, he was informed this project would be a building block for the subsequent class in the course sequence. The author had to think about a population that he was interested and passionate about, ultimately leading him to reflect on his own experiences. It was determined that the author would spend his time researching first-generation college students. More specifically, the author would research first-generation college students who were involved as orientation leaders and sought to determine the relationship between their involvement as orientation leaders and future involvement levels on campus. In a previous iteration of the project, the researcher would orchestrate two focus groups of five individuals: one containing first-generation college students involved as orientation leaders and the other first-generation college students not involved as orientation leaders. The idea behind this would be to have a group comparing the college experience of first-generation college students involved in orientation versus those who were not. Ultimately, this form of the research never transpired and the author decided it would be much more plausible to do a qualitative study using online assessment tools.

The author of this study and assessment report decided it would be best to use a qualitative methods approach. The methodology used purposive and snowball sampling, focusing specifically on first-generation college students who were involved as orientation leaders within New Student and Family Programs at Florida State University. The purpose

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of the assessment was to determine the impact of student engagement within this particular programmatic office. Now that the target population was identified and there was an idea brewing about the vision of the research study, the next logical step was to figure out how to conduct the study and what tools to use. As previously mentioned, the author decided to forgo an earlier version of creating and interviewing two focus groups containing first-generation students and instead spend his time creating an online assessment tool. The rationale behind choosing this method for mining data is because the researcher wanted to try to cast a wide net in hopes to have many first-generation college students who served as orientation leaders respond to the survey. The author conducted this study utilizing an online survey originally created in Qualtrics in order to better understand the experiences and narratives of individuals who served as orientation leaders. Using knowledge and skills learned in the classroom, the researcher created an all-encompassing survey that included a total of 28 questions. From these questions, the researcher was able to identify key demographic characteristics of the student respondents including their sex, race/ethnicity, religious affiliation, in-state versus out-of-state status, classification, and what year they served as an orientation leader. Additionally, the survey honed in on specific questions about the orientation leader experience and the students' self-reported gains in a variety of areas. This section included questions that asked if orientation provided them the tools and information necessary to be successful on campus, if students understood college life better after

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serving as an orientation leader, if serving as an orientation leader provided them useful information on how to get involved on campus, whether the orientation program provided the orientation leaders information regarding student services and campus resources, if students felt more comfortable on campus after serving as an orientation leader, whether the orientation program exposed the students to other students who were different from them, if they felt a strong connection to Florida State University after their service as orientation leaders, how serving as an orientation leader impacted their academics, and how the number of hours involved in extracurricular activities changed or did not change after serving as an orientation leader. These aforementioned questions were asked on a scale of 0-10, with 0 being least comfortable/confident/not at all and 10 being most comfortable/confident/highly likely depending on each specific question. The final portion of the Qualtrics assessment tool was open-ended questions available for student respondents to really share their experience and narrative with the researcher. These questions included: what does being a first-generation college student mean to you? Why did you get involved with orientation on campus? How did your background influence your participation in orientation? Can you tell me about your experience with orientation at your university? How was your involvement with orientation significant? In what ways has serving as an orientation leader impacted your transition in college? How did orientation influence your involvement with other organizations on or off campus? What else are you involved with outside of orientation? And finally, one final question that

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allowed student participants to provide any additional thoughts or reflections they wished to share. As you can see, the Qualtrics survey was very comprehensive and lengthy and it asked the first-generation college students a lot of information regarding their experience and their interactions with the orientation program.

Again, the population studied for the research study was first-generation college students at Florida State. As the study was being formulated, the author reached out to New Student and Family Programs office to discuss a potential relationship in gaining access to their student orientation leaders. As a researcher, it was important to ensure there was permission granted and no ethical boundaries were being crossed or questioned. Once New Student and Family Programs stated it was okay to conduct this research study, it was time to recruit participants. The only criterion for participants was that they are first-generation college students who currently serve or have served as orientation leaders. The author used purposive and snowball sampling in order to recruit participants, utilizing the relationship with students who work within Student Government Association and graduate assistants who work in New Student and Family Programs in the 2016 cohort. Admittedly, it was difficult to garner a lot of participation early, resulting in only 1 active participant. New Student and Family Programs agreed to send an email on the researcher's behalf to 2014 and 2015 orientation leaders who identified as first-generation college students. From this email, a total of 11 participants opened the survey, 8 completed a portion of the survey, and 4 completed the assessment in full.

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Findings and Discussion

The Qualtrics survey resulted in 11 first-generation college students opening the survey, 8 respondents answered some questions, and 4 respondents fully completing the survey. Of the 28 questions and 4 complete respondents, the author was able to salvage some meaningful data to be able to paint a better picture and address the research question at

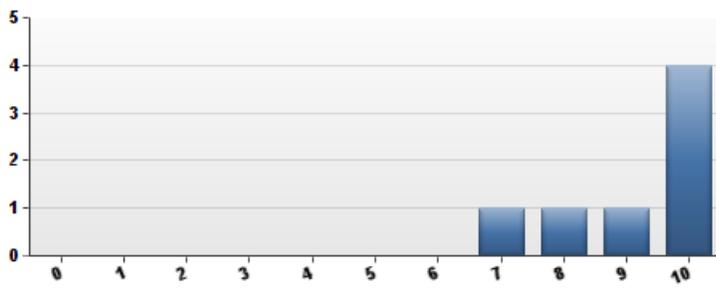


Figure 6. Knowledge on how to get involved on campus after orientation

hand: do first-generation college students who serve as orientation leaders increase their level of involvement on campus afterward? It is also important to note that the

author analyzed data strictly through Qualtrics and ran a virtual simulated report to garner the graphs and tables and pull the free response answers. Since there were a limited number of responses – ranging from four to eight – the author did not run any data in SPSS or any similar tool. For the free responses, the author identified emerging themes during the coding process by reading and re-reading the responses.

Because of the number of respondents, it would be difficult and careless to say definitively that first-generation students who are engaged as orientation leaders go on to have a more complete and higher level involvement on campus than first-generation students that never serve as orientation leaders. However, given the data that was cultivated and

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mined from the Qualtrics survey, the author notes that there was a slight increase in involvement on campus. Out of

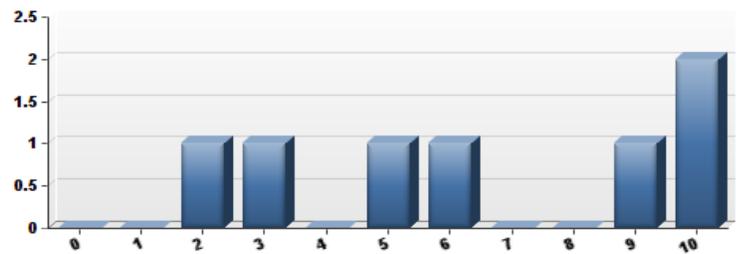


Figure 7 Involvement hours post-orientation

the seven respondents who completed the 0-10 scaled questions, four participants scored a 10 and claimed that after being an orientation leader they knew how to get more involved on campus (Figure 6). On the other hand, when asked about whether the number of hours in extracurricular activities increased after serving as an orientation leader, the results were less clear. Only three students responded with a 9 or 10 while another three students responded with a number 5 or less (Figure 7).

Now, for the fun part: the free responses. When sifting through the 10 free response questions asked to the respondents, it was fairly easy to see common themes emerge since only four students participated in the open ended question portion of the assessment. When asked about how their background influenced their participation in orientation, one respondent answered by saying, *“I wanted to serve as a resource for other students like me. That is, students who were not comfortable coming into the university [as a] first generation...to show them that it is possible to be successful and a leader regardless of what society tells you”* (Student 3). This narrative hits on a point that was covered in the introduction and literature review: the fact that society does not expect for first-generation college students to succeed.

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Another question asked the respondents to share their experience as orientation leaders on campus. Student 4 had this to say, *“It was the most amazing and educational experience I’ve ever had. It was so incredibly empowering and taught me that I want to help people for the rest of my [life].”* This is a powerful sentiment that was echoed by the other three respondents as well – showcasing the influence of what serving as an orientation leader can have on a student’s college experience. This, more than anything, illustrates that first-generation college students would more than likely feel a greater sense of community and understanding at college if they serve as orientation leaders. On the same thread of community, another student responded to the question of how their involvement with orientation was significant by claiming that they were *“able to reach out to new students and give them a sense of comfort as they were entering campus...my OL gave me that same sense, so I knew I wanted to pass that forward”* (Student 4).

One response that stands out is when a student talked about how serving as an orientation leader impacted their transition in college:

I’ve been able to better connect with people and organizations on my campus which has made getting involved tremendously easier. I’ve also gained the confidence to apply for things that I would have been wary about before my orientation leader experience. Another way it has impacted me was providing me with a group of people who will be there for me and support me through everything I do in college and beyond. My orientation team became my family

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on campus and that's definitely something every student needs whether they are first-generation or not (Student 2).

This response, again, hits on the key points that have been discussed in this assessment report. The author notes that it is significant for first-generation college students to have that academic and social support, as well as be engaged in high-impact practices, as noted by Tinto (1993) and Kuh et al. (2007). Furthermore, it shows that this particular first-generation college student felt so moved and gained so much from being an orientation leader that they were empowered to seek involvement in other student organizations and build relationships with people who are orientation leaders as well as others in the campus community. The final question the author would like to highlight is a free response question asking how orientation influenced their involvement with other organizations on or off campus. One participant responded by saying they were not sure yet and the other three exclaimed how it has made them feel more confident and empowered them to expand their comfort zone. These two responses in particular highlight the need for why additional research should be done to determine how serving as orientation leaders can influence a first-generation college student's college experience:

It made me want to get more involved and help others. My lifestyle has changed for the better, in that I am now incredibly involved AND I work more diligently to make new friends and always go out of my comfort zone (Student 4).

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Orientation has encouraged me to diversify my involvements and apply for things that may have seemed out of my reach before. It's given me the connections and references I need to be successful through the rest of my college career. In terms of my lifestyle, I've definitely gotten healthier. I started eating better, drinking more water, managing my time better and learning to cope with stress more efficiently (Student 2).

Again, this shows a positive relationship between first-generation college students who were involved as orientation leaders and how that experience influenced their future involvement and collegiate experience. Understandably, and as previously noted, since there are very few responses and this is a case study at a single institution, it would be careless to make a sweeping generalization that all first-generation colleges students who serve as orientation leaders will be more likely to become involved on campus, feel a sense of community, expand their comfort zones, and have an overall life-changing college experience. However, the short anecdotes and sharing the story of these particular individuals does scratch the surface and provide insight on how their college experience has been shaped by their involvement as orientation leaders.

The present assessment report serves as a key foundational piece for future research to be done on first-generation college students involved as orientation leaders. As a researcher, the author has contributed to an area that is under-studied and shows glimpses of a relationship that may exist between one particular program and the success of students.

Limitations

The first major limitation is how the original research methodology shifted from one of focus groups and in-person interviews to a strictly online survey assessment via Qualtrics. There are both benefits and downsides to using only Qualtrics. However, because it was a lengthy online survey, very few first-generation college students who served as orientation leaders participated. If you recall, 11 students opened the survey, 8 partially filled out the survey, and only 4 fully completed the assessment. The concept of survey fatigue may very well ring true here, as students probably did not feel it was in their best interest to fill out a lengthy 28-question survey with no compensation or consequence. In the future, it would be important for future researchers to consider shortening the online survey and utilizing in-person interactions to gain a more meaningful narrative and depiction of a student's experience as an orientation leader. Another major limitation is that this assessment report only focuses on first-generation college students who served as orientation leaders. There is no control group that can provide additional insight on other first-generation college students who were not involved as orientation leaders as well as non-first-generation colleges students who were involved as orientation leaders. Instead, the present form of the research study illustrates the experiences of a handful of current first-generation college students who were involved as orientation leaders at Florida State University. In the future, the author hopes researchers will look at having multiple groups to determine whether a strong relationship truly exists.

Audience and Implications

The findings and results of the present assessment report may be valuable information for many potential audiences, whether intended or not. The audience below will serve as a good starting point for future research and studies to be done. By no means is the list comprehensive or final. The author focuses the purpose of this study and report for the following audiences: (1) New Student and Family Programs, (2) First-generation college students, (3) Florida State University Division of Student Affairs, and (4) Faculty.

NEW STUDENT AND FAMILY PROGRAMS

New Student and Family Programs houses the orientation program that serves to assist in the welcoming and transitioning of all incoming first-year students and their family members to Florida State University. The present study may be valuable for the staff members in this particular office because of the focus on the orientation leader program and level of student engagement after a first-generation college student has served in such a capacity. The findings of this study will provide information to the New Student and Family Programs staff on how their orientation program influences and impacts the college experience and level of involvement for first-generation college students. Furthermore, the office will be able to utilize the present study in order to make potential adjustments to the structure, content, and execution of the orientation program. An

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additional consequence to the study may result in further enhancement of the program and recruitment of new first-generation college students to serve as orientation leaders.

FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

First-generation college students in particular will be able to better understand and reflect on their experiences while attending and continuing their education at Florida State University. The students may find the research study important in determining how to gain the most fulfilling and supportive experiences at Florida State University, read about the experiences of first-generation college students who became involved with New Student and Family Programs, read the experiences of first-generation college students who were involved in areas outside of the orientation program, and identify ways to further enhance their experience moving forward. Additionally, first-generation college students may feel empowered to articulate and reflect on their journey within Florida State University, before and after. The present study may especially be useful for rising seniors in high school who are looking to attend an institution of higher learning similar to Florida State University. The findings may assist high school students in becoming aware of resources and services that are available to them before ever stepping foot on campus. The researcher believes the level of support and potential for fostering community will increase significantly if the present study – and those similar – are shared with and disseminated to first-generation college students or soon-to-be college students.

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The students may be able to choose the best avenue for their experience in college and determine whether the orientation program will provide an avenue for accelerated personal and professional development and growth, foster a sense of community and belonging, and propel students to increase their level of involvement on campus.

FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

The Division of Student Affairs at Florida State University could potentially utilize the information garnered from the present study in order to better understand what New Student and Family Programs is doing to enhance the experience, development, and engagement of first-generation college students. As previous research has indicated, commitment from student affairs professionals is key to the successes of students, particularly first-generation college students. The Division of Student Affairs may also find the study valuable in determining how the development of first-generation college students who are involved with orientation compare with those who are not. This information could result in discovering areas and practices that prove highly impactful and successful for the betterment of first-generation college students. Finally, the narratives and information gained from the present study may provide valuable insight to student affairs professionals on how to best support and engage with first-generation college students. As a result, a potential consequence may be a



DIVISION OF
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at Florida State University

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shift in focus on how professionals, offices, and programs engage and interact with first-generation college students on the Division level.

FACULTY

The faculty at Florida State University and beyond may be able to utilize this information for future research and implications to the field of student affairs. The population of first-generation college students has been researched and studied substantially; the present study may offer a narrowed scope on how different first-generation college students engage on campus and what that particular involvement means for future engagement on campus. As discussed in the introduction and literature review, it is important for first-generation college students to feel like they have a support system while attending college. Many of these students have precollege characteristics and backgrounds that may result in an extremely difficult transition from high school to college. Investment from faculty and commitment to understand the first-generation college student population will do wonders for the academic support these students need.



Conclusion

First-generation college students continue to enroll at institutions of higher education at a high rate. It is important for college administrators and faculty to understand the background and characteristics for these students and how to best provide them the necessary resources and support. This assessment report and previously administered research study highlighted the importance of continued research on first-generation college students. More specifically, this assessment report looked at identifying first-generation college students who served as orientation leaders and sought to determine whether their involvement on campus increased afterward. Using a qualitative methods approach and soliciting first-generation college students as participants through purposive and snowball sampling, the author was able to determine some key findings. First and foremost, there were not enough responses to sufficiently and definitively claim that the results from this assessment report can prove a direct connection or relationship between first-generation college students and an increased level of involvement on campus. A total of 11 first-generation college students who served as orientation leaders opened the Qualtrics survey, 8 filled out a portion of the survey, and 4 completed the assessment in full. Second, out of the 4 respondents, there was a lot of positive indication that their involvement as orientation leaders enhanced their collegiate experience and empowered them to expand their comfort zone, become more involved in other organizations, and feel a sense of belonging and connection to Florida State University.

FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

Third, much more research needs to be done to determine how serving as an orientation leader impacts a first-generation college student's future involvement and collegiate experience on campus. The author urges readers and fellow scholars to use this assessment report and research study as a foundation for future research.



FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

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[Florida State University New Student and Family Programs](#)



FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

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FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

Appendix A

2015 First-Generation Orientation Leader Qualtrics Assessment

My Report

Last Modified: 12/07/2015

1. Full name:

Text Response

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	8

2. University:

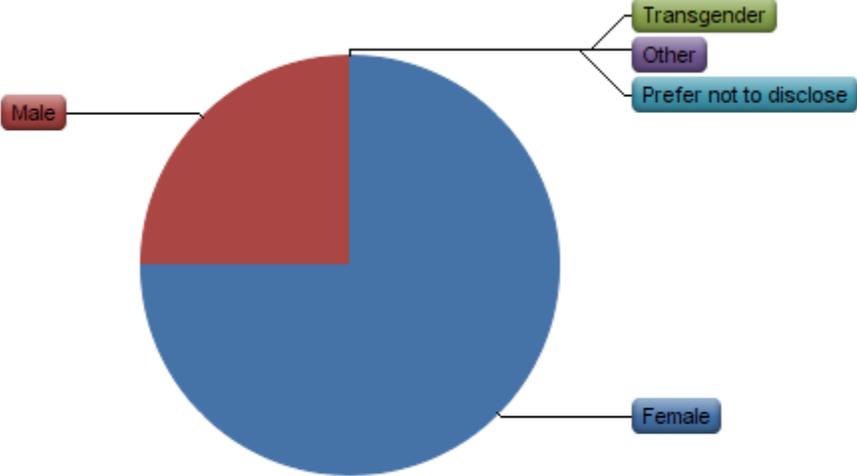
Text Response

Florida State University
Florida State University
Florida State University
Florida State
Florida State University
Florida State University
Florida State University
FSU

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	8

FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

3. My sex is:



#	Answer	Response	%
1	Female	6	75%
2	Male	2	25%
3	Transgender	0	0%
4	Other	0	0%
5	Prefer not to disclose	0	0%
Total		8	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.25
Variance	0.21
Standard Deviation	0.46
Total Responses	8

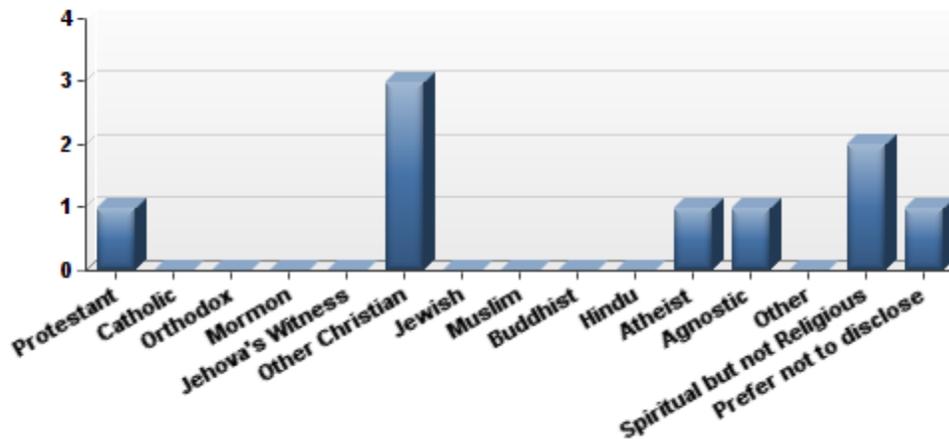
FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

4. Race/Ethnicity:

#	Answer	Response	%
1	American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian	0	0%
2	Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander	0	0%
3	Black/African American	3	38%
4	Hispanic/Latino(a)	1	13%
5	Multiracial/Multiethnic	1	13%
6	White/Caucasian	4	50%
7	Other	0	0%
8	Prefer not to disclose	0	0%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	3
Max Value	6
Total Responses	8

5. Religious Affiliation Preference:



FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Protestant	1	13%
2	Catholic	0	0%
3	Orthodox	0	0%
4	Mormon	0	0%
5	Jehova's Witness	0	0%
6	Other Christian	3	38%
7	Jewish	0	0%
8	Muslim	0	0%
9	Buddhist	0	0%
10	Hindu	0	0%
11	Atheist	1	13%
12	Agnostic	1	13%
13	Other	0	0%
14	Spiritual but not Religious	2	25%
15	Prefer not to disclose	1	13%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	15
Total Responses	8

6. Are you an in-state or out-of-state student?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	In-state	7	88%
2	Out-of-state	1	13%
3	International	0	0%
	Total	8	100%

FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.13
Variance	0.13
Standard Deviation	0.35
Total Responses	8

7. Are you a first generation college student?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Yes	8	100%
2	No	0	0%
	Total	8	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	1
Mean	1.00
Variance	0.00
Standard Deviation	0.00
Total Responses	8

8. Classification:

#	Answer	Response	%
1	1st Year	0	0%
2	2nd Year	4	50%
3	3rd Year	3	38%
4	4th Year	1	13%
5	5th Year	0	0%
6	Grad student	0	0%
7	Graduated	0	0%
8	Other	0	0%
	Total	8	100%

FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	4
Mean	2.63
Variance	0.55
Standard Deviation	0.74
Total Responses	8

9. When did you serve as an orientation leader?

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Summer 2011	0	0%
2	Summer 2012	0	0%
3	Summer 2013	0	0%
4	Summer 2014	1	13%
5	Summer 2015	7	88%
6	Other	0	0%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	4
Max Value	5
Total Responses	8

FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

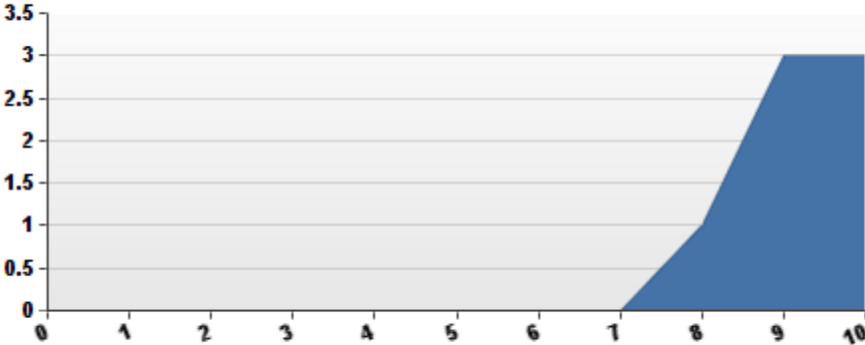
10. Orientation provided me the tools and information necessary to be successful on campus.

#	Answer	Response	%
0	0	0	0%
1	1	0	0%
2	2	0	0%
3	3	0	0%
4	4	0	0%
5	5	0	0%
6	6	0	0%
7	7	0	0%
8	8	1	14%
9	9	1	14%
10	10	5	71%
	Total	7	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	8
Max Value	10
Mean	9.57
Variance	0.62
Standard Deviation	0.79
Total Responses	7

FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

11. I had a better understanding of college life after serving as an orientation leader.

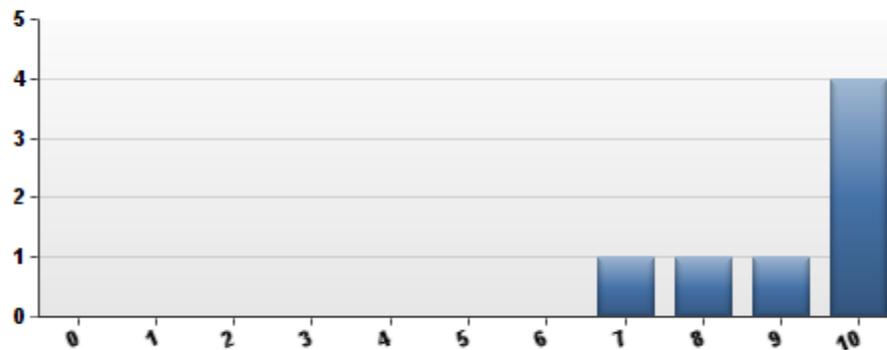


#	Answer	Response	%
0	0	0	0%
1	1	0	0%
2	2	0	0%
3	3	0	0%
4	4	0	0%
5	5	0	0%
6	6	0	0%
7	7	0	0%
8	8	1	14%
9	9	3	43%
10	10	3	43%
	Total	7	100%

FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

Statistic	Value
Min Value	8
Max Value	10
Mean	9.29
Variance	0.57
Standard Deviation	0.76
Total Responses	7

12. Being an orientation leader provided me useful information on how to get involved on campus.



FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

#	Answer	Response	%
0	0	0	0%
1	1	0	0%
2	2	0	0%
3	3	0	0%
4	4	0	0%
5	5	0	0%
6	6	0	0%
7	7	1	14%
8	8	1	14%
9	9	1	14%
10	10	4	57%
	Total	7	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	7
Max Value	10
Mean	9.14
Variance	1.48
Standard Deviation	1.21
Total Responses	7

13. The orientation program provided opportunities for me with information about student services and programs that are relevant to me.

#	Answer	Response	%
0	0	0	0%
1	1	0	0%
2	2	0	0%
3	3	0	0%
4	4	0	0%
5	5	0	0%
6	6	0	0%
7	7	0	0%
8	8	1	14%
9	9	0	0%
10	10	6	86%
	Total	7	100%

FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

Statistic	Value
Min Value	8
Max Value	10
Mean	9.71
Variance	0.57
Standard Deviation	0.76
Total Responses	7

14. I felt more comfortable on campus after serving as an orientation leader.

#	Answer	Response	%
0	0	0	0%
1	1	0	0%
2	2	0	0%
3	3	0	0%
4	4	0	0%
5	5	0	0%
6	6	0	0%
7	7	0	0%
8	8	0	0%
9	9	2	29%
10	10	5	71%
	Total	7	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	9
Max Value	10
Mean	9.71
Variance	0.24
Standard Deviation	0.49
Total Responses	7

FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

15. Orientation provided me opportunities to interact with others who are different from me.

#	Answer	Response	%
0	0	0	0%
1	1	0	0%
2	2	0	0%
3	3	0	0%
4	4	0	0%
5	5	0	0%
6	6	0	0%
7	7	0	0%
8	8	0	0%
9	9	1	14%
10	10	6	86%
	Total	7	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	9
Max Value	10
Mean	9.86
Variance	0.14
Standard Deviation	0.38
Total Responses	7

FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

16. I felt a strong connection to the university after my time as an orientation leader.

#	Answer	Response	%
0	0	0	0%
1	1	0	0%
2	2	0	0%
3	3	0	0%
4	4	0	0%
5	5	0	0%
6	6	0	0%
7	7	0	0%
8	8	0	0%
9	9	2	29%
10	10	5	71%
	Total	7	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	9
Max Value	10
Mean	9.71
Variance	0.24
Standard Deviation	0.49
Total Responses	7

FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

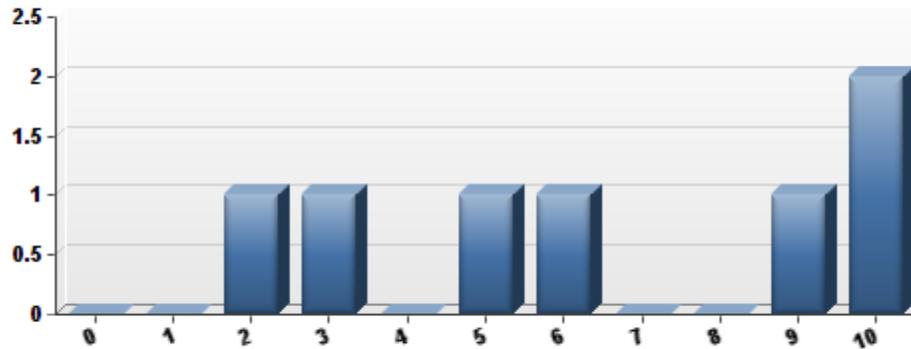
17. How has serving as an orientation leader impacted your academics?

#	Answer	Response	%
0	0	0	0%
1	1	0	0%
2	2	0	0%
3	3	0	0%
4	4	0	0%
5	5	2	29%
6	6	0	0%
7	7	0	0%
8	8	2	29%
9	9	2	29%
10	10	1	14%
	Total	7	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	5
Max Value	10
Mean	7.71
Variance	3.90
Standard Deviation	1.98
Total Responses	7

FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

18. After serving as an orientation leader, the number of hours I was involved in extracurricular activities increased.



#	Answer	Response	%
0	0	0	0%
1	1	0	0%
2	2	1	14%
3	3	1	14%
4	4	0	0%
5	5	1	14%
6	6	1	14%
7	7	0	0%
8	8	0	0%
9	9	1	14%
10	10	2	29%
	Total	7	100%

FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

Statistic	Value
Min Value	2
Max Value	10
Mean	6.43
Variance	10.95
Standard Deviation	3.31
Total Responses	7

19. What does being a first-generation college student mean to you?

Text Response

Being first gen to me is something that I see as a opportunity to help my family

Being a first-generation college student means that I can pioneer this experience and gather my own opinions and views on what it should be for a young adult. Coming into college, I had no idea what exactly to expect and that might've been one of the greatest things for me because I had no previous notions of what things should look like. It allowed me to have the ambition and confidence to be involved in things my parents never would have dreamed of.

Having to seek out resources to understand and make sense of college life where others have those resources readily available

It means I have more of a responsibility to be all that I can be and to prove that just because I am a first generation college student does not mean I have less of an ability to get an education and be successful.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	4

FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

20. How and why did you get involved with orientation on campus?

Text Response

I had such a good time at my orientation that I saw it as something I would like to do in the future I applied got the position and it was the best decision of my life

I got involved with orientation because my parents encouraged me to apply. I hadn't really considered it before then but I started to think about it and realized how much of an amazing experience it would be for me. I applied, got the position and have changed for the better ever since.

Other extracurricular activities allowed me to feel validated as a leader. My peers were interested.

A good friend of mine was an orientation leader, and watching him during his year made it an absolute goal to become one before I left Florida State. I also wanted to learn more about this university and have an impact on the students entering the university.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	4

21. How did your background influence your participation in orientation?

Text Response

My background help move dialog forward in small group dicussion. Sometimes I had students that had opposite backgrounds than my self and saw orientation as insignificant but due to my back ground I was able to show students all the doors orientation could offer

My background allowed me to be more relatable for my students. I was able to engage with them on a more personal level because a lot of them have had very similar experiences as myself. It also humbled me and motivated me because I knew I had a chance to be someone for these students to look up to throughout their collegiate experience as I didn't really have one before becoming an Orientation Leader.

I wanted to serve as a resource for other students like me. That is, students who were not comfortable coming into the university, first generation, and queer students to show them that it is possible to be successful and a leader regardless of what society tells you

It made me want to pursue it with more passion, because I wanted to prove that being a first generation college student doesn't have to be an impairment or a set back.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	4

FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

22. Can you tell me about your experience with orientation at your university?

Text Response

I have had a positive orientation experience here at FSU it has allowed to not only grow as a student but as a leader on this campus.

I absolutely loved orientation at my university. I got the chance to self-reflect and gain insight on personality types as well as make my personality more wholesome. I was also able to understand and experience diversity at its best, first-hand. Being around such a unique group of people gave me the chance to realize that working on a team is working for something bigger than yourself. Lastly, I was able to develop my social and professional skills by participating in and completing all of the tasks and activities that were required of me.

It was life changing in terms of the skills it gave me. Very positive, very demanding.

It was the most amazing and educational experience I've ever had. It was so incredibly empowering and taught me that I want to help people for the rest of my lives.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	4

23. Would you describe your involvement with orientation as being significant? Why or why not?

Text Response

Yes because the personal growth it has allowed me to gain

I would definitely describe my orientation involvement as significant because I got to work with so many students and families and to know that I made a difference to at least some of them is incredibly humbling. As I said in one of the questions above, I've changed for the better ever since I accepted my position.

Definitely. It taught me many skills ranging from time management to professional socialization skills and allowed me to see how a program could run with a lot of stress but still adhere to personal wellbeing

Most definitely because I feel as though I was able to reach out to new students and give them a sense of comfort as they were entering on campus. I know when I went through orientation, my OL gave me that same sense, so I knew I wanted to pass that forward.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	4

FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

24. In what ways has serving as an orientation leader impacted your transition in college?

Text Response

It has allowed me to feel as a vested member of the university community
I've been able to better connect with people and organizations on my campus which has made getting involved tremendously easier. I've also gained the confidence to apply for things that I would have been weary about before my orientation leader experience. Another way it has impacted me was providing me with a group of people who will be there for me and support me through everything I do in college and beyond. My orientation team became my family on campus and that's definitely something every student needs whether they are first-generation or not.

Gave me skills that I would not otherwise have gotten

It has in every way made it so much easier and smoother. It has given me the necessary tools I need to be successful here.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	4

25. How did orientation influence your involvement with other organizations on/off-campus? How about your lifestyle?

Text Response

Not sure yet I still have 2 years left to find that out

Orientation has encouraged me to diversify my involvements and apply for things that may have seemed out of my reach before. It's given me the connections and references I need to be successful through the rest of my college career. In terms of my lifestyle, I've definitely gotten healthier. I started eating better, drinking more water, managing my time better and learning to cope with stress more efficiently.

Made me feel more confident in my abilities and greater networking range.

It made me want to get more involved and help others. My lifestyle has changed for the better, in that I am now incredibly involved AND I work more diligently to make new friends and always go out of my comfort zone.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	4

FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

26. What else are you involved with outside of orientation?

Text Response

SGA Student alumni association

Outside of orientation, I'm involved in the Marching Chiefs Color Guard, the Black Student Union, Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society, The National Society of Leadership and Success and the "Award Winning" Theta Eta Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Incorporated's Miss Achievement Gala.

The Center for Leadership and Social Change, University Housing

I am an intern with the Center for Leadership and Social Change, working specifically with Project Conversation and Conversation Couch.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	4

27. How has your involvement on or off-campus changed since serving as an orientation leader?

Text Response

N/a

My involvement has become more diverse because I've gained the confidence and connections to hold true to myself and get more involved in the "black" community on campus. This is a culture I've always been drawn to and I've finally found ways to begin participating in a lot of their events and organizations.

It has not

I have gotten more involved and passionate about such.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	4

28. Please use this space to provide any additional thoughts or reflections you have.

Text Response

Orientation more than anything else changed my life for the better.

FIRST-GENERATION ORIENTATION ASSESSMENT REPORT

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	1