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Orientation programs assist students, parents

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

As excited as first-year students are about beginning their collegiate careers, some also feel apprehensive about making the transition from high school to college. Many parents also have concerns, particularly if their son or daughter will be living away from home for the first time. To address these issues and pass on information that will help first-year students be successful academically and socially, Oakland University's **Office of New Student Programs** offers orientation programs for first-year students and their parents.

All students who are new to Oakland University must attend an orientation session before registering for their first semester of classes. OU offers two orientation programs for first-year students: an overnight program where students stay in one of the residence halls and a one-day program.

The program dates for students admitted for fall 2004 are:

Overnight Orientation Dates

- Thursday-Friday, June 24-25
- Wednesday-Thursday, June 30-July 1
- Thursday-Friday, July 8-9
- Tuesday-Wednesday, July 13-14

One-Day Orientation Dates

- Monday, June 28
- Tuesday, June 29
- Tuesday, July 6
- Wednesday, July 7
- Monday, July 12
- Thursday, July 15
- Wednesday, July 21

During orientation, students will:

- meet with an academic adviser;
- register for fall semester classes;
- take placement tests (if necessary);
- become acquainted with university policies and resources;
- receive their student ID (SpiritCard);
- receive their Oakland e-mail account;
- have fun.

The one-day program includes all the components of the overnight program with the exception of the second advising session, evening social activities and a stay in the residence halls.

"Many first-year students are worried about completing their class schedules and meeting other people, but once students meet their orientation group leader, they're very surprised at how easy it is to open up, make friends and get the resources they need to begin their first year," said Dawn Aubry, director of New Student Programs. "During orientation, the students are definitely going to make a connection with their peers, faculty and staff."

To attend orientation, students must make a reservation. New Student Orientation brochures are mailed out on an ongoing basis and the **reservation form**, which also is available online, should be filled out and returned as soon as possible. Orientation dates are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis, and the early dates fill quickly. Students will be assigned an orientation date and sent a confirmation postcard once the reservation form is received.

Upon receiving the confirmation postcard, students should read the First-Year Orientation Guide. There are separate guides for **one-day** and **overnight** orientation programs. The guide has information on placement testing, helpful tips, important contact information and deadlines. Students also are encouraged to share the guide with parents and family members.

All first-year students are charged an orientation and advising fee of \$100. This fee covers the cost of placement testing, advising, staffing, orientation materials, publications and student ID cards. This is a non-refundable fee included in the student's first tuition bill. No payment is due at the time of orientation. Please do not send payment in advance.

The parent orientation, which is a four and a half-hour program, acquaints parents with the many resources and support services available to their son or daughter – and family – during this important and exciting time.

The parent-orientation program dates are:

- Saturday, June 12
- Monday, June 21
- Saturday, July 10
- Friday, July 16

The first two parent orientation sessions precede the student orientation for parents who prefer to gather information before their son or daughter attend orientation. Parents will receive materials designed to assist them after orientation and throughout their son or daughter's first year at OU. Some of the topics covered during parent orientation are:

- academic programs;
- academic advising;
- academic support services;
- campus housing;
- campus safety and security;
- career services;
- commuter services;
- financial and payment issues;
- first-year student success programs;
- health and wellness issues;
- library and computer resources;
- new student orientation;
- OU policies and procedures;
- OU technology;
- student organizations.

"Parents will definitely be better prepared to assist their son or daughter after parent orientation with any issues that may arise," Aubry said. "We believe parents are partners in the students' educational experience at OU, and we welcome them to attend an orientation to learn more about our resources. There is a correlation between parent involvement and student success, and by being involved, parents also reinforce their commitment to their child's education."

To attend an orientation, parents must complete a **Parent Orientation Reservation Form**, which is available online, and return it along with the \$25 per-person fee. Refunds will not be made for cancellations less than five days prior to the scheduled orientation date.

Visit the **Office of New Student Programs** Web site, where you'll find more information on orientation programs, welcome events, placement testing, leadership opportunities, parent and family services, and much more. You also can contact the office at (248) 370-3260 or nsp@oakland.edu.

SUMMARY

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