

**New Student Orientation
Summer 2012 Analysis**

**March 7, 2013
Office of Planning and Institutional Research**



Executive Summary

A series of statistical tests were conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of TCC's Summer 2012 New Student Orientation. In particular, analyses examined whether students who completed the orientation reported increases over their pre-orientation scores on knowledge about TCC services, comfort level with college, and understanding about success in college. Although the New Student Orientation is open to all students, one of the target populations is TCC's Achieving the Dream (ATD) cohort, defined as first-time degree- or certificate-seeking students who enrolled in the fall and who first entered TCC in the summer or fall of the cohort year. Thus, additional analyses were performed to explore the effectiveness of the orientation for TCC's Fall 2012 ATD cohort. Specifically, the pre/post survey comparison was examined for this group and further tests were conducted to compare the course grades and fall-to-spring persistence rates of students in the ATD cohort who did and did not attend orientation.

Participants

Although over 700 students attended some portion of the New Student Orientation in Summer 2012, 482 students (302 female, 176 male, and 4 not reported; age $M = 22.30$, age $SD = 8.77$) completed paper-and-pencil versions of a survey consisting of 15 items at both the beginning and the end of orientation. The majority of attendees were White ($N = 278$, 57.7%) and the remaining students were More than One Race ($N = 51$, 10.6%), Hispanic ($N = 42$, 8.7%), Native American ($N = 39$, 8.1%), Black or African American ($N = 38$, 7.9%), Asian ($N = 13$, 2.7%), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (2, 0.4%), and Not Reported ($N = 19$, 3.9%). Of the 482 students who attended orientation, 447 (92.7%) enrolled in TCC classes during Fall 2012. Moreover, 312 (64.7%) were in the Fall 2012 ATD cohort. These 312 students represented 9.6% of the entire Fall 2012 ATD cohort at TCC ($N = 3,246$).

Survey

Students responded to the 15 survey items on a 4-point scale (ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*) and there also was an option to select *not applicable* for each item. To examine whether the students' responses changed on the survey items across pre- and post-orientation completions, a number of dependent-samples *t*-tests were conducted, with a 95% confidence level. Mean post-orientation scores were significantly higher than the mean pre-orientation scores for 14 of the 15 survey items. The largest gains were for the following items: "I know where to go for assistance if I have problems with TCC's electronic resources" (mean increase of .74), "I understand the importance of completing the Educational Planning Worksheet early in my college career" (mean increase of .57), and "I understand how to use the academic calendar to know when to add, drop, or withdraw from a class" (mean increase of .54). The item for which the difference between pre- and post-orientation scores was not significant was "I believe college will be just like high school" (mean decrease of .03).

The present findings suggest that the New Student Orientation contributed to students' understanding of TCC services and processes as well as their perceptions about college and what it takes to be successful as a college student. However, results suggest that attendees were unlikely to believe that college will be just like high school, both before and after orientation. Statistical results are presented in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1. Pre- and Post-orientation Means on Survey Items (N = 482; Statistically Significant Differences in Yellow)

Item	Survey Items		Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I am comfortable about attending college.	Pretest	3.36	.70
		Posttest	3.55	.58
2	I believe college will be just like high school.	Pretest	2.06	.84
		Posttest	2.03	.94
3	I am comfortable in my ability to balance my life outside of college with my life at school.	Pretest	3.28	.72
		Posttest	3.37	.64
4	I plan to get a degree from TCC before moving on to the next stage of my life.	Pretest	3.38	.86
		Posttest	3.45	.75
5	I know how to log in and access TCC's various electronic resources (i.e., TED, MyTCC, Blackboard).	Pretest	3.30	.80
		Posttest	3.53	.62
6	I am comfortable using TCC's electronic resources to enroll, obtain information and check online resources.	Pretest	3.22	.78
		Posttest	3.46	.68
7	I know where to go for assistance if I have problems with TCC's electronic resources.	Pretest	2.70	.91
		Posttest	3.44	.70
8	I understand the enrollment process more clearly.	Pretest	3.10	1.62
		Posttest	3.50	.64
9	I understand how to use the academic calendar to know when to add, drop, or withdraw from a class.	Pretest	2.89	.89
		Posttest	3.43	.71
10	I understand the importance of completing the Educational Planning Worksheet early in my college career.	Pretest	2.79	.95
		Posttest	3.36	.78
11	I understand that Academic Advisors assist students with choosing classes that relate to their academic goals.	Pretest	3.32	.72
		Posttest	3.54	.63
12	I understand that students who have not decided on a major should meet regularly with career services.	Pretest	3.06	.83
		Posttest	3.45	.71
13	I understand that I should plan to spend 2-3 hours outside class studying for each hour I am in class.	Pretest	3.29	.78
		Posttest	3.52	.66
14	I know there is a financial aid office on each campus.	Pretest	3.27	.82
		Posttest	3.54	.70
15	I know where to go for assistance if I have problems with the financial aid process.	Pretest	3.13	.83
		Posttest	3.54	.65

Table 2. Dependent t-test Results for Survey Items (Degrees of Freedom = 481 for each test)

Survey Items		t	p-value
Pair 1	I am comfortable about attending college.	-6.58	< .001
Pair 2	I believe college will be just like high school.	.72	.47
Pair 3	I am comfortable in my ability to balance my life outside of college with my life at school.	-2.35	.02
Pair 4	I plan to get a degree from TCC before moving on to the next stage of my life.	-1.95	.05
Pair 5	I know how to log in and access TCC's various electronic resources (i.e., TED, MyTCC, Blackboard).	-6.69	< .001
Pair 6	I am comfortable using TCC's electronic resources to enroll, obtain information and check online resources.	-6.82	< .001
Pair 7	I know where to go for assistance if I have problems with TCC's electronic resources.	-16.82	< .001
Pair 8	I understand the enrollment process more clearly.	-5.36	< .001
Pair 9	I understand how to use the academic calendar to know when to add, drop, or withdraw from a class.	-13.51	< .001
Pair 10	I understand the importance of completing the Educational Planning Worksheet early in my college career.	-12.30	< .001
Pair 11	I understand that Academic Advisors assist students with choosing classes that relate to their academic goals.	-7.03	< .001
Pair 12	I understand that students who have not decided on a major should meet regularly with career services.	-9.48	< .001
Pair 13	I understand that I should plan to spend 2-3 hours outside class studying for each hour I am in class.	-6.84	< .001
Pair 14	I know there is a financial aid office on each campus.	-7.34	< .001
Pair 15	I know where to go for assistance if I have problems with the financial aid process.	-11.17	< .001

When examining the survey results of orientation attendees in the Fall 2012 ATD cohort (N = 312), the only difference from the overall results was that the difference between the pre- and post-orientation means for one item was significant when the scores of all attendees were combined, but not when including only this subgroup. Specifically, the first-time students' pre- and post-means were not significantly different for the item, "I am comfortable in my ability to balance my life outside of college with my life at school." Yet, it is important to note that the difference between the means (.08 for ATD cohort) was very similar to the difference for the entire group of attendees (.09). The slightly larger difference for the entire group combined with a larger sample size likely resulted in the effect being significant for the group of all attendees but not the ATD cohort.

Course Grades and Persistence

Of the 3,246 students in TCC's Fall 2012 ATD cohort, 312 (9.6%) attended the New Student Orientation in Summer 2012, leaving 2,934 (90.4%) who did not. Using chi-square tests with a 99% confidence level, these two groups of students were compared on their rates of success (defined as earning a grade of C or better) and persistence from the fall to their first spring semester. Findings revealed that students in the ATD cohort who attended orientation (795 of 1,136 grades = **70.0%**) had a significantly higher rate of success in all of their Fall 2012 courses than did those who did not attend orientation (5,810 of 9,335 grades = **62.2%**). Moreover, students in the ATD cohort who attended orientation (259 of 312 students = **83.0%**) persisted to their first spring at a significantly higher rate than did those who did not attend orientation (2,083 of 2,934 students = **71.0%**).

Conclusions

Survey results suggest that students who attended TCC's New Student Orientation learned a lot about college in general and, more specifically, about how to navigate TCC's campuses, systems, and offices. Although it is not possible to draw causal conclusions based on these results, findings also revealed that students in the ATD cohort who attended the orientation demonstrated better performance in their classes overall and had higher rates of fall-to-spring persistence than those who did not attend.