

The Evergreen State College

Orientation Feedback Survey 2012

Olympia Campus – Transfer Students (N=62)

Methodology

Evergreen faculty adopted a new initiative in November 2011 which defines various structures and activities to support a new graduation requirement: baccalaureate degree recipients will be required to complete a final Academic Statement that will appear in their official transcript. The new graduation requirement will take effect for the entering class next fall 2013, thus a large-scale pilot project is underway for AY 2012-13 to begin implementing the Academic Statement and assess the pilot strategies in order to inform full implementation next year.

One aspect of the Academic Statement support structures is a refined academic orientation that introduces students to Evergreen's philosophy and approach to teaching, explains the Academic Statement, asks them to draft the first iteration of their statement at entry to the college, introduces them to faculty and other students, selects a common text each year that is read by all new students and other members of campus, and includes students in an all-campus Convocation featuring a speaker connected to that common text. For this year's pilot Academic Statement Orientation Week students read *A Mighty Long Way*, and the featured speaker was the author of the book, Carlotta Walls Lanier.

A student survey was conducted to help Evergreen assess the effectiveness of the new approach to the Academic Statement orientation, and student feedback will be used by the Mentor Council and other faculty and staff to refine the academic Orientation Week activities for next year's new students.

The survey sample consisted of a random selection of 50% of the new first-year and transfer undergraduates who entered Evergreen in fall quarter 2012 that were admitted to the Olympia, Tacoma, or Grays Harbor campuses. Because the number of new students entering the Tribal/Reservation-based programs was very small, all new students to the Tribal programs were added to the initial random sample, in the hopes of getting sufficient responses to be useful to the Tribal programs. Returning Greeners and students who dropped out before October 25th were excluded from the sample selection. 1256 students were eligible to take this survey, 634 were selected for the sample, and of the sample 15% responded.

The survey only remained open for a period of three weeks from October 25th to November 14th. During that time, non-respondents (who had not formally opted out) received up to two additional reminders via email. The survey was web-only; email was the sole method of correspondence.

Survey results were analyzed for three distinct groups: Olympia first-time, first-year students (N=26), Olympia transfer students (N=62), and all off-campus Tacoma and Tribal: Reservation-based program students (N=9).

The following report provides results for the transfer participants. The response rate for this subgroup was 19% (62 of 329).

Student Satisfaction with Academic Statement Orientation Activities

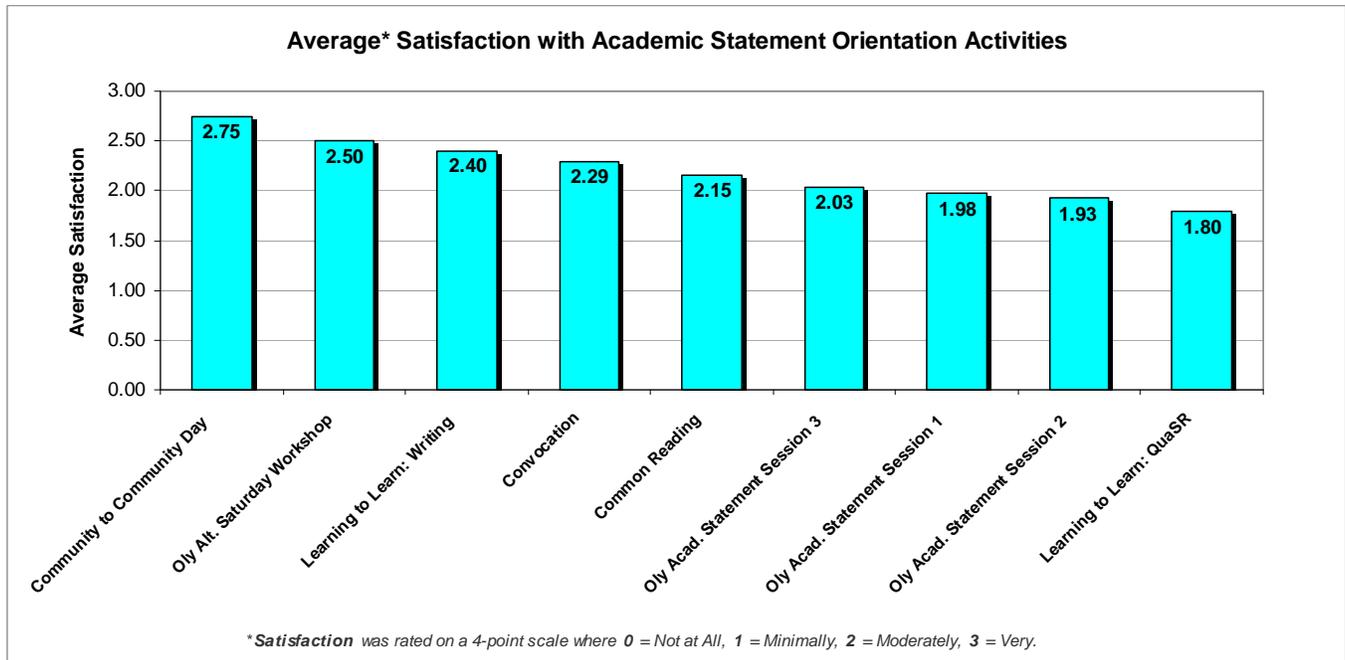
Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with the Academic Statement orientation activities. Transfer students were most likely to partake in the Olympia campus activities. Of 62 respondents, 10% attended the alternative Academic Statement session. 84% of these Transfer students stated that they read the common reading; 73% attended Convocation.

1. How satisfied were you with the following Academic Statement Orientation activities?	Not at all satisfied	Minimally satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Very satisfied	Did Not Participate
<i>For each activity, mark the box that best describes your level of satisfaction or whether you did not participate in the activity.</i>					
Common Reading: <i>A Mighty Long Way</i> by Carlotta Walls Lanier	7%	8%	36%	34%	16%
Convocation: Olympia campus event with speaker Carlotta Walls Lanier (Tues. Sept. 18, 10AM-Noon)	5%	5%	27%	36%	27%
Olympia Academic Statement Session 1: Learning with Faculty at Evergreen/Philosophy and Introduction (Mon. 3-5 PM or Tues. Alternate Session)	8%	15%	23%	29%	26%
Olympia Academic Statement Session 2: Seminar on Carlotta Walls LaNier's <i>A Mighty Long Way</i> (Tue. 3-5 PM)	7%	16%	21%	24%	32%
Olympia Academic Statement Session 3: Writing of the Academic Statement: Entrance Essay and Introduction to Academic Statement (Thu. 3-5 PM)	5%	10%	29%	21%	36%
Olympia Saturday Alternative Academic Statement Workshop and Orientation Forum (Sat. Sept. 22)	0%	0%	5%	5%	90%
Learning to Learn at Evergreen: Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning (QuaSR Orientation Week Workshop)	0%	2%	7%	0%	92%
Learning to Learn: Cultivating Your Writing Power at Evergreen (Writing Center Orientation Week Workshop)	0%	0%	5%	3%	92%
Community to Community: Day of Caring, National Problems - Local Solutions (Friday, Sept. 21)	0%	0%	2%	5%	94%
Tacoma Evening Event with Carlotta Walls Lanier (Tues. Sept. 18)	0%	0%	0%	2%	98%
Tribal Reservation-based Program: Seminar on <i>A Mighty Long Way</i>	0%	0%	2%	0%	98%
Tacoma Lyceum Seminar on <i>A Mighty Long Way</i>	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Tacoma Orientation (Sat. Sept. 15)	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Tribal Reservation-based Program Orientation	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

Note: Percentages have been rounded and may not add up to 100%.

How satisfied were you with the following Academic Statement Orientation activities?

Mean satisfaction ratings were calculated for activities in which five or more students participated. For Transfer students, the activities with the highest means of satisfaction were “*Community to Community Day*” and the “*Olympia Alternative Saturday Workshop*,” while the activity with the lowest mean satisfaction was “*Learning to Learn: QuaSR*.”



Helpfulness of Academic Statement Orientation Activities

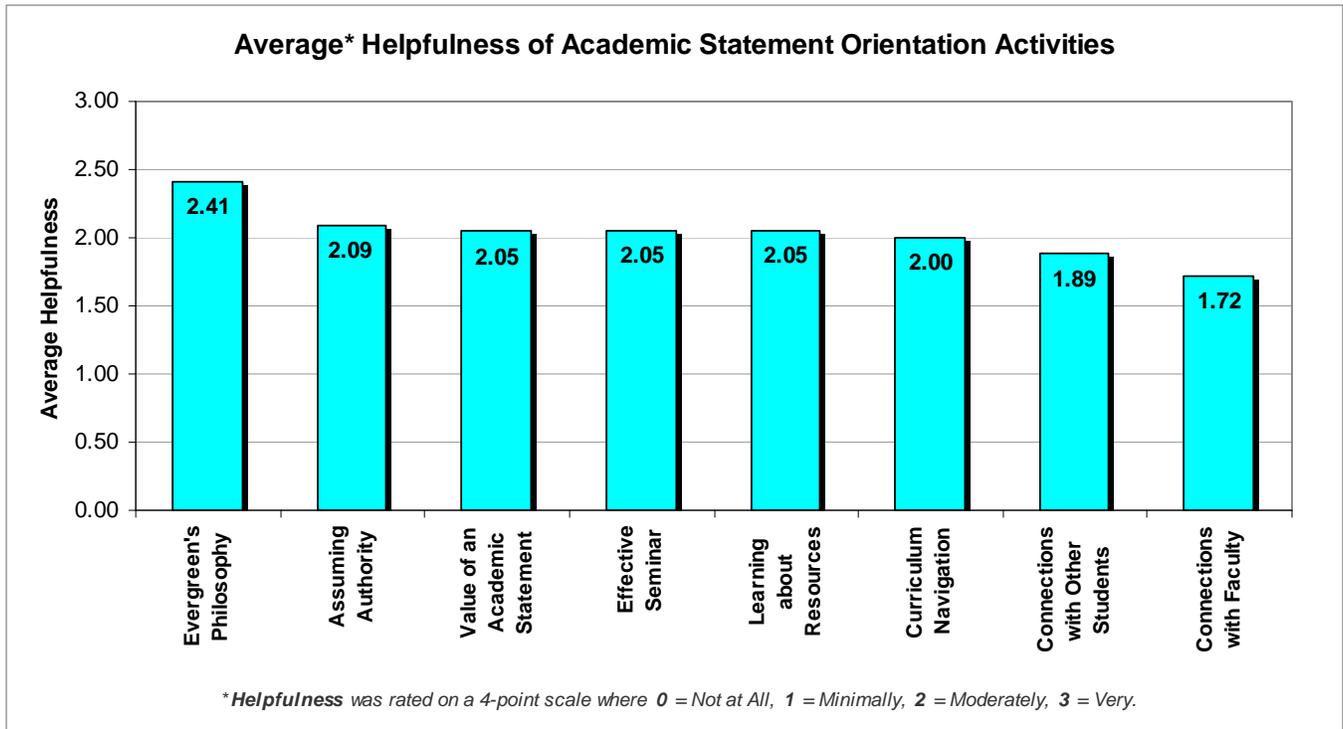
Students were asked how helpful the activities they participated in were in terms of several objectives. Olympia transfer respondents found “*Understanding Evergreen’s philosophy and approach to education*” the most helpful; 52% rated it *very helpful*.

2. How helpful were the activities in which you participated in terms of the following objectives?				
	Not at all helpful	Minimally helpful	Moderately helpful	Very helpful
Understanding Evergreen’s philosophy and approach to education	0%	11%	36%	52%
Understanding the value of an Academic Statement	2%	25%	39%	34%
Learning how to navigate Evergreen’s curriculum	0%	30%	40%	30%
Assuming authority for your educational pathway	2%	23%	37%	37%
Learning how to have an effective seminar	5%	25%	32%	39%
Learning about resources to support your success as a student (e.g., advisors, tutors, student activities, or other support services)	5%	21%	40%	35%
Making connections with faculty	9%	35%	30%	26%
Making connections with other students	9%	25%	34%	32%

Note: Percentages have been rounded and may not add up to 100%.

How helpful were the activities in which you participated in terms of the following objectives?

For Transfer students, the objective with the highest average helpfulness was “*Understanding Evergreen’s philosophy and approach to education,*” while the objectives with the lowest means of helpfulness were “*Making connections with faculty*” and “*Making connections with other students.*”



What was the most meaningful activity for you? Why was it the most meaningful?

Of 62 Transfers, 32 provided a response. The most commonly mentioned activities were the Academic Statement sessions. In particular, students found connecting with their peers through group activities, Convocation, and seminar to be most meaningful. To see the full set of comments, see [Appendix A](#).

What would you encourage Evergreen to change about these Orientation activities related to the Academic Statement?

Half of the Transfer students provided a response to this question. Student’s comments have been placed into four broad categories: **Logistics/Structure** (20), **Communication** (8), **Content** (5), and **No Change** (2). Logistics and structural suggestions were the most common category, for example, concerns about the schedule being too busy, how groups are assigned, and whether it should be mandatory. To see the full set of comments, see [Appendix B](#).

Note: Several comments encouraged Evergreen to change multiple aspects of their approach to the Orientation activities, and thus have been split into their respective fields.

Participation Obstacles

Of 62 Transfers, 20 did not participate in some or all of the Academic Statement activities. The most common participation obstacles given by those students were: “*Work/employment schedule*” and “*Other*”.

5. If you were unable to participate or chose not to participate in some or all of the Orientation activities related to the Academic Statement, which of the following were obstacles to your participation?	No	Yes
Work/employment schedule	52%	48%
Other	64%	36%
Not interested in content	74%	26%
Didn't know it was required	79%	21%
Didn't seem important	79%	21%
Didn't know where to go	93%	7%
Had not read the book	93%	7%
Lack of childcare	93%	7%
I was not registered for classes at the time of the events	98%	2%

Note: Percentages have been rounded and may not add up to 100%.

What was the most important reason that you did not participate?

Students had the chance to state the most important reason for not participating in some or all of the activities. Of 62 Transfers, 31 provided a comment. Work and scheduling conflicts were identified as the most common primary obstacle. Lack of interest and lack of information were also fairly common obstacles. To see the full set of comments, see [Appendix C](#).

Appendix A – What was the most meaningful activity for you? Why was it the most meaningful?

Of 62 Transfers, 32 provided a response. The most commonly mentioned activities were the Academic Statement sessions. In particular, students found connecting with other students through group activities, Convocation, and seminar to be most meaningful.

Comments

The most meaningful activity was the Academic Statement meetings. I am a EWS and ILC student taking only one class on campus. Participating in these meetings helped me feel more engaged with other students and helped me build a peer support network. I also appreciated the connection with a faculty member. The personal, individualized experience is infinitely better than the new student orientation of my community college.

Writing the intro to the academic statement (drawing from the book) was the most meaningful for me. It allowed me to really think about it and to express it and connect with other students.

The Academic Statement was the most important.

My most meaningful activity was attending the Academic Writing Sessions, which helped me understand the Evergreen system better, especially in regards to how seminars, independent contracts, faculty evaluations, etc. worked.

In my program they have explained the Academic Statement and allowed time to work on it as well as they have explained more on Evergreen's philosophy and approach to education.

System of education at Evergreen. I am a transfer student from a different country and these sessions helped me to understand my new college.

Understanding Evergreen's philosophy and approach to learning

The workshops in the CRC. I got to learn a lot about the different aspects of Evergreen.

I attended all of the required seminars, workshops and activities. Together they were very important for creating a large picture about how Evergreen functions, and what I need to do at the school to succeed. Without one of the seminars or workshops I would not have the broad understanding I do now.

The Academic Planning Seminar. As an older transfer student (with a lot of ideas and self direction) the larger orientations felt boring and at times very discouraging. It was difficult to scope out people I might connect with in a huge room of people.

Seminar with the orientation group. Seminar is such a great tool and to be immersed right away into the ways of Evergreen was perfect.

The introduction to seminar. When I attended the first seminar of my program this year, I had an idea of what to expect and felt better able to navigate the new situation.

The last day that my group met we found ourselves stirred from general disinterest and making a real connection with one another. This was touching, and in that I realized the value of seminars and the potential inherent in this system of education. The overall experience made me value the alternative education system at Evergreen and I am truly proud to be here as a result.

The meetings we had with our assigned faculty for the Writing of the Academic Statement workshops. We got to know everybody in our group and our focus was on what WE want to get out of our education.

Meeting people, because people are what make the community.

Getting to know some of the other students.

Anything social where people actually got to meet each other on their own. It felt more relaxed than any of the academic workshops.

The team building exercises.

I enjoyed the academic planning workshop, it was engaging and creative. It made me excited to be going to Evergreen. Also, I enjoyed the drugs, alcohol, and diversity workshop done in the CRC.

The most meaningful activity for me was the Diversity Workshop. It prepped me for what kinds of values are important at Evergreen.

The "Diversity and Inclusion" workshop, it recognized the voices on Evergreen's campus that are often silenced in a respectful way. It did not feel tokenizing.

The session on diversity was the most impactful to me. The "you are welcome here" exercise helped me see my fellow students for their differences, and helped me realize that we all have common ground at the same time.

Reading Ms. Lanier's book and hearing her speak was the best part for two main reasons. First, reading the book before school started helped me get back in the habit of academic reading after taking a hiatus from school. Second, her story was so compelling and her message of valuing your education was inspiring.

I thought the Carlotta activity was really amazing - a very smart thing for Evergreen to do to get people thinking and get people thinking with one another. I liked that the students had a sort of obligatory assignment to do before coming to Evergreen and that if the students actually read her book everyone would be able to participate and truly get the most out of the learning activity. I felt a personal connection to Carlotta and it was nice to be able to share that and other feelings with other students. Additionally, I liked the activities throughout orientation where the students were sort of forced into group activities and to "mingle" with one another; to break the ice and get to know one another - very cool experience!

Hearing Carlotta Walls LaNier speak. It was interesting to hear about the event from the first person perspective

Hearing about other programs and how students in them felt about them--realize importance of carefully choosing and enrolling early.

Having Carlotta come and talk to us. It was so meaningful because these kinds of opportunities do not come up all the time and I felt fortunate to have her at the Evergreen State College.

Convocation. Hearing Carlotta Walls LaNier speaking in person about her book was moving and inspirational.

Convocation, because it was welcoming.

Convocation was very welcoming. It was nice meeting other students around my table, as well as during the workshops with the faculty.

Meaningful? None of it. I came here to make art, wrong school I guess.

None really.

Appendix B – What would you encourage Evergreen to change about these Orientation activities related to the Academic Statement?

Half of the Transfer students provided a response to this question. Student’s comments have been placed into four broad categories: **Logistics/Structure** (20), **Communication** (8), **Content** (5), and **No Change** (2). Logistics and structural suggestions were the most common category; common examples were, concerns about the schedule being too busy, how groups are assigned, and whether the activities should be mandatory.

Broad Category	Full Comment
Content	<i>Try to make the seminar classes more engaging/interesting to incoming students, especially if they're going to be mandatory. [...]</i>
	<i>More thorough instruction on how to have an effective seminar.</i>
	<i>More information about education process, how our tasks will be given, where to get books and other information about studies.</i>
	<i>I would also encourage an improved method of letting students know where to meet their faculty for these workshops. Perhaps a flyer of some sort with their faculty's name and room number that could be given to the student when they first arrive at check-in? I never received the email that my faculty apparently sent out to the group and had trouble finding the room.</i>
	<i>I think the motivation behind the Academic Statement would be more apparent if some sample transcripts were available to view. I'm not sure it was very clear why the change to require the Academic Statement was being made.</i>
	<i>For non-traditional students, I don't see the value of having to go to the sex, drugs and alcohol meeting. I thought it was boring because, for me at least, I have a family, I live independently from my parents, and I am responsible for myself.</i>
Logistics/Structure	<i>We didn't need three separate days for the meetings with the teachers, and I think that you should pair students up with a teacher that focuses on their desired area of study.</i>
	<i>[...] Also, some of the activities planned at night seemed exclusive to students living off campus – there should be a better effort to integrate off campus students with students living in the dorms.</i>
	<i>The orientation could have been, as a whole, more organized. Apparently, the students were supposed to be assigned to a faculty member and attend three workshops throughout the week; I was not assigned to one and had to run around all over trying to figure out where I was supposed to be. It was equally frustrating to have to drive back and forth from Lacey to attend some of the “mandatory” events that didn't seem THAT important, especially when I arrived early to a session and it was considered “full.” However, and thankfully, every staff and faculty member I did encounter was extremely helpful and friendly. In the end, I was able to find a group, (thanks to Carrie Margolin) to participate with in the orientation activities and I truly learned a lot about Evergreen.</i>
	<i>The location of the group meetings, my group was in the library lobby. It was extremely distracting, noisy and we eventually went outside to hear each other. There was construction outside and we felt we did not have a real space to be productive. It felt very unorganized with students arriving late or lost.</i>
	<i>The faculty who ran the workshops suggested we meet again to talk. I think it would be a good idea to have this as a standard opportunity to connect new students together who have had the chance to bond.</i>
	<i>That they are not required or structured differently. I will continue with examples of this. For instance the Carlotta Walls talk may have been captivating for a History student but studying Biology and Natural Sciences this had no interest to me. Honestly, the book was an easy read and had</i>

no relation to what I'm here to study. (No offense). Another idea would be for incoming students to choose a book to read for orientation BEFORE it's sent out. And during Academic Planning go to the groups/professors assigned to the book they chose. This also might connect faculty to areas of interest and knowledge they have while increasing willingness to care from new students.

Professors seem to not be in agreement about what the model seminar looks like. I went to orientation, thought I would be somewhat prepared for seminar and instead found it misleading. Also, the academic statement work in O-week seems redundant since we are having multiple academic statement workshops throughout the quarter. Most of the information is just repeated.

Make them optional.

Make them a little more organized, show how the Academic Statement should evolve over your time here.

Make sure you send the book to international students in priority mail, so it gets there within a months time.

Less boring, not as long.

I would offer online orientations for students who are already familiar with Evergreen, and have in-person orientations for students who actually need it. I felt that these were constraints of my time where I didn't learn anything I didn't already know. The convocation was nice, a good welcoming ceremony. My faculty was great too. And I learned about the academy statement and seminar. But this is all. [...]

I would encourage more emphasis on the requirement of attending these workshops, as well as a better system of finding out where a student is supposed to meet their faculty. I missed the first day of the workshop because I was mistakenly told that attending all three days of the workshop was not required, and that I could attend another session on another day like the Advising Workshops. [...]

[...] It was effective for the most part, just in a way that I was not particularly enthralled by.

I would appreciate more breaks between the events and seminars. A few of the days of orientations week I found it difficult to even be on time to some of these seminars and events. Even a half and hour or an hour would be better than back to back.

I wish I had a more clear view of what was going on. I felt like I was with a seminar facilitator that I would never have, so I wish it were more related by programs.

I missed a lot of the activities because I didn't understand that they were about the academic statement. Also many of them were offered only when I was in class.

I found it difficult (job/home-life wise) to attend all workshops.

I feel that Evergreen needs to take age into consideration with the required sessions. Students over 25, in my opinion and the opinion of the slightly "older" new students I spoke with that week, don't need (or don't want) education about sex, drinking, or drugs like a new freshman student would. I didn't go to those myself, and presume I will be asked to make them up. But I didn't want to call off work to attend those kinds of sessions.

As a working adult and student commuting from Longview, WA. It was difficult for me to attend these sessions. Luckily I work in a position with a flexible schedule and ample vacation time so I made it work but I can assume many others in my position had a more difficult time.

Communication

The Orientation handout was a bit confusing, I would have liked to see it a bit easier to follow and read.

The Academic Statement portion seemed fairly confused since it was ambiguous as to whether 2012 students are doing it or not.

The Academic Statement is new to everyone, including the faculty, so I think it was a little unclear during orientation but really it will just take some time. Plus, my involvement with the Academic Statement in my class has been wonderful and extremely informative.

Maybe try to be clearer in your goals. I think students understand that TESC is supposed to be different than other colleges, but it's not very clear why.

Make sure the students leave the session feeling like they are part of a community—in the first session; my group watched a video about how evergreen was founded and the difficulties they faced. I learned a lot about the founding principals but I was left with the feeling that Evergreen was not a community, but rather a collection of individuals. The follow-up discussion with the professors did not resolve the feelings of isolation the movie created.

Just make sure that all students are aware of it. The communication to the students about orientation week was very poor.

[...] Also, it was not very clear where/when each required workshop was. It was confusing with all the other workshops. Many students were completely lost and didn't know what was required. There was lots of confusion. Maybe having a clear schedule with dates, times, and location of the required workshops, then another schedule separate with the optional ones would be helpful.

No Change

There was pretty much nothing I would change about my orientation experience.

I would encourage Evergreen to keep it the way that it is now. [...]

Appendix C – What was the most important reason that you did not participate?

Students had the chance to state the most important reason for not participating in some or all of the activities. Of 62 Transfers, 31 provided a comment. Work and scheduling conflicts were identified as the most common primary obstacle. Lack of interest and lack of information were also fairly common obstacles.

Broad Categories	Comments
Work/Scheduling Conflicts	Work conflicts were the most important reason.
	The sex, drugs, drinking sessions were not important enough for me to cancel work. I was already quitting my full-time job to do school, and that was my last week of work.
	Summer school schedule and moving to Olympia conflicted with being able to participate.
	My work study training was during the orientation which did create a scheduling issue.
	I worked full-time right up until I attended class and I have a family with three children. I just didn't have the time to spend taking a week off before classes start to attend the above orientation activities, though I do feel they could have been beneficial.
	I work and couldn't take a week off.
	I was unable to get the time off work during the day.
	I was unable to attend the QuaSR workshop because of work conflicts.
	I participated in all lectures/seminars that I could. My job had to come first on some days.
	Everything was during the day. I didn't know about the Tacoma evening events, or I probably would have gone. I had to arrange alternative scheduling for things like the academic statement. I haven't even gotten my ASB card yet because it's not open during the evening.
	I did as much as I could fit into my schedule, which includes a full-time job.
	The information was unnecessary. There is no capacity to prepare for seminar until you know your program's individual approach.
	Not Interested
It is a waste of time. I had other obligations during orientation week that seemed more significant. For instance, finding a job, moving into a new home, making friends, saying goodbye to friends and family, and just getting acclimated to Evergreen's environment.	
I didn't go to the diversity one because everyone here is white, it isn't a diverse town at all. I'm used to diversity in St. Louis and this is nothing compared to that.	
For one, I am attending the Olympia campus and two, it wasn't considered "mandatory" on the schedule. I chose not to waste gas in driving to an activity that I really didn't need to attend.	
As a transfer student confident in joining the Evergreen community, I did not feel the need to sit through orientation past the 1st overall orientation I did. The few things I attended were a waste of my time.	
Honestly, the workshops were really boring and not useful for me, probably more helpful for other students.	

Lack of Information

I didn't know about orientation week until I got an email four days prior to it telling me it was happening and that there were requirements. I wish there had been more mailings and emails about this to make it more obvious it was happening. I am taking nights and weekends and didn't realize I would be expected to do anything other than simply show up for class on the first day with my books! I am an older student so I didn't feel the need to attend certain events such as the ones pertaining to drug and alcohol use, or respecting diversity, I feel that I have a solid grip on those ideas already. Overall I would have liked to receive a comprehensive list of everything that would be expected of me, and with more time than four days to schedule it. There were a lot of things I had no idea about and had to find out through word-of-mouth, and certain things I found out about just through dumb luck. As a new student, I would have loved to see a list that outlined in a very easy-to-understand manner, such things as the immunization waiver, when/how/where to get a student ID, all the options for acquiring textbooks (campus bookstore, ILLiad, campus library, etc). I found out a lot of what I needed to do through friends who have worked for Evergreen or attended there. Certain things (like getting an ID) might seem obvious but I simply didn't have any way of knowing and pieced things together as I went. It was a source of stress and frustration for me. I hope this helps to hear! I haven't been sure who to talk to about this stuff!

There appeared to be a lack of clear communication about which sessions were and were not required. Some in my orientation group knew about some sessions but not all of them.

I was not informed of the orientation prior to having made my plans for moving. I attempted to move ahead of schedule but failed. When I showed up on Saturday, hoping to attend the make-up session, I could not find anyone who had any information for me, not even the telephone Operator, who was in fact somewhat rude to me. I sure wish I could have made it though! I would still like to attend an academic statement workshop. How can I do this?

Didn't know it was required and was overwhelmed with so many activities while trying to get used to my classes. Too much all at once.

Did not know I was required to attend all three sessions.

Out of Town

Was coming from out of country.

Out of town, visiting family.

Internship in another state.

Transportation

Twelve mile bike ride with no bus route.

I live in Aberdeen and do not have reliable transportation to make it to the campus in Olympia. I am enrolled in the weekend program that is at the Grays Harbor College Campus.

I commute from Longview, WA. In order for me to justify the repeated trips to Olympia, the sessions needed to be extremely relevant or containing new information. On the days I did come, there were several activities planned for the day that I could relate to or that were mandatory.

Was not enrolled in Evergreen yet.

Other

I was told to go to the alternate schedule because I was only going to miss one day, but I was told I would mess with the dynamic of the group if I wasn't present on the last day.

I was having health issues that prevented me from attending several sessions.
