

Quality Enhancement Plan



New Student Orientation Online

Orientation
Retention
Completion



Orientation Topics

- ◆ Student services (Advisement, Financial aid, Bookstore and How to pay for classes)
- ◆ Student resources (Library and Learning lab)
- ◆ Scheduling placement testing and proctored exams
- ◆ Introduction to Canvas and how to get around the course room.
- ◆ Campus life (email, activities, health analysis centers and alumni)
- ◆ Campus safety
- ◆ Recommendations from the QEP Committee

QEP Proposal

Mandatory New Student Orientation Available Online (its' not just for the online student)

Working Concept

At Mississippi Gulf Coast Community college (MGCCC) we desire to create, maintain and support innovative methods which support student centered learning. One new direction which could enhance student and faculty confidence is to offer a one credit hour course - new student orientation online.

This orientation would be required for all new students starting with MGCCC including returning (within two years), transfer, and dual enrolled. The orientation would include, but not be limited to: (see orientation topics)

Rational for orientation online

One of the most concerning challenges is student retention and completion; how do we become better and offer students the opportunity to be successful? Mandatory online orientations are increasing in value amongst institutions of higher learning. Students who attend MGCCC are not only taking traditional courses, but they are now enrolled in online, hybrid, and flipped classes all at one time. Students who choose to attend MGCCC are put through a rigorous on-site orientation with a wealth of information given in a matter of a few hours. An online orientation would allow students to work at their own pace over a three to five-week period to learn about the resources available at MGCCC; as well as, allow them to gain experience working in the online environment. How will creating an online orientation be the catalyst that improves retention and completion rates? A study conducted by Richland Community College of implementation of a required online orientation saw a "7.7% increase in retention in online courses alone" (Jones, 2014). The type of orientation and how we choose to use it for our students will be what is new.

Jones, Kona. "Mandatory Orientation Programming." *Canvas Community*, 26 Aug. 2017, community.canvaslms.com/groups/admins/blog/2015/04/14/orientation-programming.

Expected Outcomes

- ◆ Builds student **confidence** using Canvas and knowledge of services available.
- ◆ **Increases** retention in online and hybrid courses.
- ◆ Allows advisors and faculty to **determine** students who are “at risk” quicker.
- ◆ Would free up time spent doing orientations.
- ◆ Gives faculty more **time** to concentrate on courses and not trouble shoot issues students are having with the Canvas course-room.
- ◆ Faculty confidence in students’ **ability** to use Canvas.
- ◆ Would **encourage** faculty to utilize Canvas for all their courses.
- ◆ Faculty would **need** to become more uniform in how the information is organized on Canvas.
- ◆ Registration would be more **efficient**.

Strategies/Actions to be implemented:

The new student orientation online would actually be of little cost to MGCCC. The course would be set up in Canvas and students could gain access through the college website once they have completed the application process. Students can register for the course that best fits into their schedule. The cost would be in the time needed to set up the course room and monitoring students who have not completed the online orientation. Students who do not complete the orientation within the time frame specified would have the orientation shell added to their Canvas course list and time would be allotted for them to complete. Testing would be done at the completion of each module, students who score less than 80% would be allowed to test until the desired score is reached. Students who complete the orientation online will be assigned a Complete (P) or Incomplete (I) on their transcript. Students would not be able to move through to the next module in the orientation until a satisfactory score is reached. Two items for consideration would be for someone to 1) monitor the progress of students taking the orientation online and 2) utilizing a person to contact students who are not progressing in a timely manner. This action would identify the “at risk” students faster and could prevent students from withdrawing or not completing courses, thus improving retention rates.

The website can include a link to tour Canvas before a student takes the orientation online. For a quick resource, “Troy online has established such a link to help students navigate Canvas” (Troy online). Through a review of several community and university websites, online orientations are setup specifically for the goals each institution is trying to accomplish. MGCCC’s strategy would be to increase retention, enhance student success and aid students in understanding the rigors of taking online courses.

“TROY Online.” *Troy Online - Orientation*, trojan.troy.edu/online/orientation.html.

Accountability

Excellence

Leadership

Respect

Service

Learning support effectiveness

Student Cohorts

For many students who choose MGCCC the idea of taking an online course can be overwhelming. The recommendation is a small sampling of new students who are registered for classes be required to take the orientation online. Modifications can be made to improve the online orientation once feedback is gathered through an online survey given to our eLearning support team, enrollment specialists, support staff, faculty and students. Administration could then determine the best time to go live with requiring orientation online for all newly enrolled students.

Measurement/Assessment

The measurement of this action to implement orientation online for new students would be to see a decrease in student withdrawals and instructor initiated drops from courses. MGCCC's overall enrollment can exceed 10,000 students on any given semester. A quantitative approach should be utilized to assess the trends of current students. We define retention as a progressive re-enrollment until a student has completed with certification, diploma, or a degree.

Based on the existing data from the online fact book sources are seven to ten years old, so trends may have improved since this data was collected. One method of gaining a more clear picture of how an orientation online could improve retention would be to develop a model to give a more precise measurement of how students interact with canvas while completing orientation. This would allow administration, faculty and eLearning to gain more insight and make improvements to increase student retention in the classroom and course room.

What questions could be answered by doing a quantitative research?

- ◆ Total counts – Total number of times a student accesses the orientation course.
- ◆ Days until they started the orientation after registering for the course.
- ◆ Days between access, action taken and taking test.
- ◆ Inactivity- How many days between accessing course room.

Commitments:

Improve retention and reduce time to completion in college readiness coursework through curriculum review/revision, technologies such as an early alert system and increased learning support services.

Measurement/Assessment continued

This research would enable the institution to -

- ◆ Engage our students to increase retention rates
- ◆ Compare cost of retention versus recruitment
- ◆ Identify “at risk “ students quicker

Methodology

A survey or an online form accessible to students that indicates reasons for withdrawals could be provided.

Analytical data gained from Canvas on student interaction in the orientation online.

Previous enrollment data could be compared to students who complete the orientation online.

Resources:

In order for the online orientation to be successful, it will take input from several different sources. Departments that would be most affected.

- ◆ Student Services
- ◆ eLearning
- ◆ Enrollment Specialists
- ◆ Institutional Relations
- ◆ Research and Effectiveness
- ◆ Faculty
- ◆ Students

Names and Contact information:
