

Annual Report to Senate on Orientation 2010
Senate Orientation Activities Review Board (SOARB)
November 2010

Board Members:

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SOARB requests that Residence Life be provided with clarification from SOA RB on what elements of orienting students to Queen's University falls under their purview.

Some steps were taken in fulfillment of this recommendation including a review of the role of Residence Life in the Principal's Welcome Ceremony. Direction for the Principal's Welcome Ceremony comes from the more than twenty year-old Jackson

- Queen's Environmental Health and Safety provided risk management training to student event planners and Faculty representatives who approve Orientation programmes.
- ORT worked with the professional staff at Health Counseling and Disability Services to design and deliver more interactive alcohol awareness training to Orientation executives and leaders.
- Post-Orientation gatherings were discussed at ORT meetings. These discussions generated greater recognition of how the practices associated with these gatherings cast a negative light on the University generally and Orientation specifically. The deeper level of understanding of planners and organizers was passed to the front line leaders.
- The section of the leader contract stating "I will not promote the consumption of any substance of abuse among first year students by either pressuring them to indulge, or by buying or giving them any substance of abuse" was emphasized during contract signing.

The above initiatives have highlighted the awareness and seriousness of this issue among student Orientation leaders. Most Faculties created and implemented additional awareness campaigns for their leaders to encourage the elimination of unsafe practices including the overconsumption of alcohol.

In our review of this year's Orientation activities it is SOARB's opinion that the consumption of alcohol, during University sanctioned Orientation Activities, is not

In order to ensure appropriate notice and direction, a policy on accommodation of faith dates should be developed and approved no later than April 2012.

In formulating this policy, SOARB will first seek input from the Senate Committee on Academic Procedures (SCAP). It is the consensus of the Board that any policy for Orientation be consistent with other Senate policies.

- SOARB will consult with SCAP and other campus stakeholders before recommending a policy to Senate.

The interfaculty day, which came about as a result of the modified Orientation schedule, was viewed by SOARB as an opportunity to introduce some new elements to Orientation Week that might address issues, such as negative interfaculty rivalry, which has plagued past Orientation Weeks, and Diversity and Inclusion which are identified priorities for the University. The creativity and commitment of a great number of students and campus partners provided opportunities for both competitive and cooperative activities based on the themes of Intercultural Competency, Recreation and Leisure and Inter-Faculty Relations. Campus partners such as Athletics and Recreation, Queen's University International Centre, Hospitality Services, Diversity and Community Development and Residence Life worked with ORT to develop the best possible programme given the short lead time. Many aspects of the day have positive potential and deserve to be explored further.

ORT is also undertaking initiatives to promote positive and increased inter-faculty relationships; these initiatives will take place during Orientation Committee and Leader trainings. One initiative will create opportunities for committees to share specifics about their organizational structure and programme with other committees and a second will see a modification of the Fall training day to create more opportunities for interfaculty interaction and collaboration.

- SOARB makes no formal recommendation at this time however, SOARB supports initiatives that will meet the educational needs and interests of an increasingly diverse student body. Based on the results of the ORT initiatives, the recently undertaken Orientation survey and focus groups, and a follow-up survey to be administered in January 2011, SOARB may choose to make a recommendation for Orientations 2012 and beyond.

Expectations from incoming students concerning the availability of electronic information have highlighted the current lack of a centralized information repository for information on the various Orientation programmes at Queen's.

- SOARB recommends that the members of ORT work with each other to ensure centralized access to information. The ORT coordinator is encouraged to work with Queen's Marketing and Communications to give Orientation a place of prominence on the Queen's main page.

Given the annual turnover of the Board, SOARB's ability to follow up with individual groups regarding specific recommendations is limited. The Board continues to seek more opportunities to guide Orientation groups and their Faculty offices in the early stages of planning their Orientation Weeks. Because the planning cycle is so tight, as groups seek to have their Orientation programme formalized between the time organizers are hired in late Fall and the end of the Winter semester when most students, including organizers, start summer jobs, substantive changes are hard to implement. It is incumbent on Faculty leadership to support and lead the Orientation programme(s) under their purview.

The value of student-run Orientation and the dedication of the student leaders cannot go unmentioned. Each year the Orientation Round Table, comprised of a small number of upper year students, primarily in volunteer positions, dedicate themselves to creating a welcoming experience for Queen's new student body. In turn, that small group leads almost one thousand orientation group leaders, Gaels, Fres, Bosses, Capes, Teaches, Coaches, Techs, Geckos and Landlords, in welcoming almost 4,000 incoming students. These students work diligently to respond to SOARB's recommendations for change and improvement and to meet the needs of an evergrowing, more diverse student population. To do this they work with each other, their Faculty Offices, Campus Security, Environmental Health and Safety, Physical Plant Service, Room Reservations, Hospitality Services, other campus partners and the City of Kingston. Their dedication and devotion to ensuring that the incoming students are welcomed into the Queen's community is truly outstanding. While there will always be areas to improve on, SOARB is confident that the student leaders of tomorrow, will follow in the steps of this year's leaders and the leaders who have gone before in making Queen's Orientation the truly remarkable experience that it is.