

## **APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY AND NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION**

### **Assessment Data used to Implement Something New**

- In Fall 2007, Chancellor Joel E. Anderson hosted Summit on Retention at UALR.
- Based on assessment data provided at summit, interventions were proposed to improve UALR retention rates.
- One intervention implemented was mandatory orientation for all entering students beginning in the Fall of 2008.

### **Something New: Mandatory Orientation and Resulting Paradigm Shift**

- A committee of faculty and student affairs staff assembled to structure mandatory orientation supported by data from 2004 Task Force on Student Retention; 2005-2006 Strategic Plan; 2006 Foundations of Excellence Committee; 2006-2007 UALR Recruitment and Retention Task Force; 2007 Deans' Retreat and further research.

### **Research**

- National Orientation Directors Association (NODA) and Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS): Orientation is an ongoing process, beginning with a student's first contact...and lasting through matriculation.
- Astin (1993) and Pascarella and Terenzini (1991): Greater student development and satisfaction come with more faculty/student contact outside the classroom.

### **Outcome**

- Committee implemented new components designed to promote student learning outside the classroom throughout the academic year - Campus Life Checkpoints Orientation Series - comprised of Major Mondays, Finding Your Way, and Money Matters.

### **Summation**

Orientation is an ongoing process beginning with the first contact a student has with the University and lasting through matriculation. Through mandating and expanding the New Student Orientation program the Office of Campus Life hopes to increase the number of positive learning experiences students have while here.

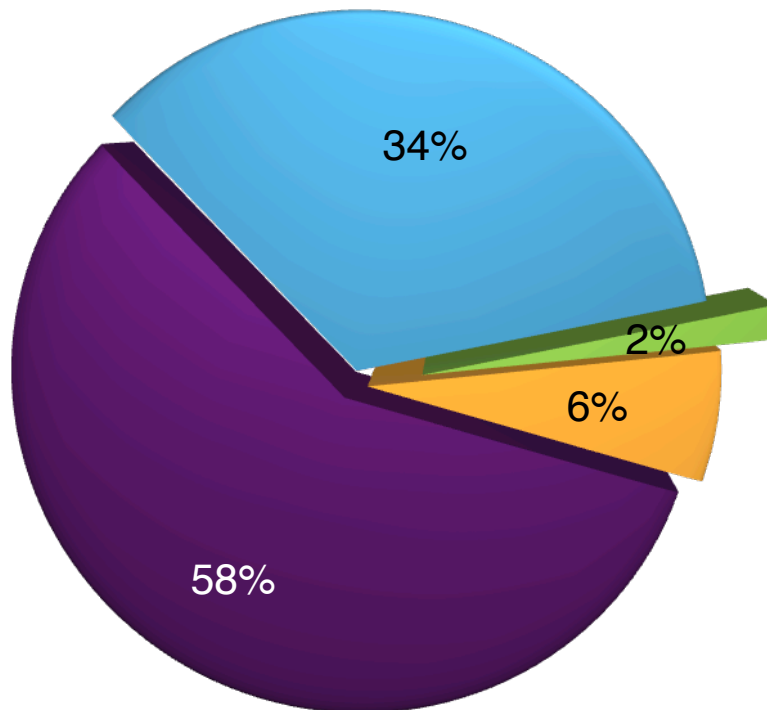
Initial results from assessment of the Campus Life Checkpoints Orientation Series show that the students find the programs offered to be valuable. Appreciative Inquiry will be used to gather data on the positive experiences students are having in future offerings.

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### Campus Life Checkpoints - Total Evaluation as of 10/20/08

Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	N/A
38	22	1	0	4	0

● Excellent   ● Good   ● Average   ● Fair   ● Poor   ● N/A



### Using Appreciative Inquiry to Evaluate Mandatory Orientation

Appreciative Inquiry is being used to evaluate the success of the new programs implemented in the mandatory orientation program. The central tenet of Appreciative Inquiry is to identify what works in a program rather than focusing primarily on what is wrong or broken (Hammond, 1998). In order to identify what worked with the Campus Life Checkpoints Orientation Series, students were asked to evaluate the sessions they attended. The tool used to gather students' responses consisted of Likert scale ratings and open-ended questions regarding each session. Results will be compiled and assessed throughout the academic year.

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### **Selected References**

Astin, A.W. (1993). *What Matters in College: Four Critical Years Revisited*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Hammond, S. (1998). *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry*. Thin Book Publishing Company.

Pascarella, E., and P. Terenzini. (1991). *How College Affects Students: Findings and Insights From Twenty Years of Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.