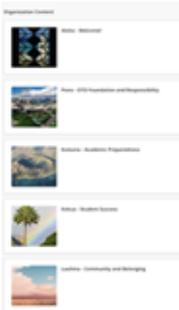


Introduction

Orientation sets the foundation of a student's transition into graduate health profession programs, particularly programs with a hybrid-accelerated format. Literature shows that early engagement and culturally responsive design can enhance student readiness and belonging for incoming students. Feedback from the Hawai'i Pacific University Doctor of Occupational Therapy program revealed the need for stronger communication, cultural alignment, and early support within the existing orientation structure. These findings informed the development of a redesigned student centered orientation framework.

Project Description

This project focused on developing a comprehensive, culturally responsive framework for the Hawai'i Pacific University Doctor of Occupational Therapy orientation program. Supported by a needs assessment, this project redesigned the pre-orientation and orientation process to improve student readiness, professional expectations, and cultural alignment. The redesign integrates the HPU OTD values—Aloha, Pono, Kuleana, Kōkua and Laulima. It also aligns with curricular threads targeting professional identity, cultural community and leadership.



Redesign of online orientation course to align with curricular threads and program values.

Purpose/Aims

Purpose: Create an inclusive, student centered, and culturally responsive orientation framework that promotes both academic success and support in incoming students.

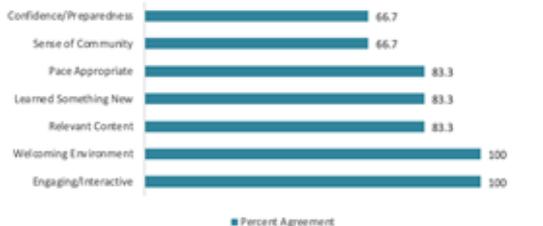
- Aim:**
- Identify gaps via stakeholder needs assessment.
 - Develop virtual sessions and materials grounded in Hawaiian values.
 - Redesign of virtual and in person orientation.
 - Evaluation of program effectiveness by student and stakeholder data analysis.

Results/Outcomes

Analysis of student and faculty feedback highlighted needs in communication, cultural responsiveness, and clarity regarding student expectations during the pre-orientation and orientation process. Implementation of the revised orientation modules demonstrated positive outcomes in preparedness, relevance of information and sense of belonging amongst students.

- Student and faculty feedback confirmed the projects aims: greater clarity, strong, cultural alignment and improved early communication.
- Revised sessions increased student confidence, preparedness, and developed a sense of community.
- Findings directly guided updates to the structure of orientation, supporting the aim of creating a more inclusive and culturally responsive framework.

Pre-Orientation Meet and Greet Sessions: Student Outcomes



Meet and Greet event posters created for social media promotion.

Methods

Data was collected from 40 students (n=17 year 1; n=23 year 2) and 8 faculty and adjunct.

- Assessment:** Collected student and faculty feedback through structured surveys to identify orientation strengths, gaps, and priorities within previous cohorts.
- Analysis:** Analyzed numerical responses using descriptive statistics. Conducted thematic coding of open-ended responses and organized themes within a SWOT framework.
- Planning:** Integrated survey findings, along with literature based on hybrid learning and cultural responsiveness to guide redesign of orientation modules.
- Development:** Redesign, blackboard, modules, refined communication, tools, and created early engagement, meet and greet sessions grounded in HPU core values.
- Implementation:** Delivered, redesigned modules to incoming students and gathered post meet and greet session feedback.
- Evaluation:** Used survey and evaluation results to refine the orientation framework and ensure alignment to project aims and the HPU OTD values.

Discussion

The needs assessment helped identify gaps in clarity, student expectations, cultural responsiveness, and student preparedness within the previous orientation structure. Implementing a redesigned orientation framework helped address these gaps by improving communication, strengthening professional identity, and building student belonging prior to matriculation.

One limitation to this project was a small sample size and short evaluation window, reducing the ability to evaluate long-term impact. Future steps include refining orientation materials based on ongoing feedback, piloting the framework with subsequent cohorts, and gathering long-term follow up data to monitor student readiness and retention over time.

Acknowledgment and References

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