



# Program Review

## Orientation and Transition

Part of the Orientation and Student Success Department

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# Orientation and Transition Program Review

## I. Introduction and Executive Summary

The Division of Student Affairs at Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) initiated a [program review process](#) to evaluate student affairs departments within a five-year cycle comprehensively. Program review is a reflective process that allows departments to describe and assess their functions or services and identify areas performing well and needing improvement. The review process is separated into three phases. The first phase focuses on creating a self-study, which you are beginning to read. The self-study outlines the department's history, structure, strengths, challenges, and future direction. The second phase is led by an external review team that provides outside perspectives and recommendations to the department. External reviewers conduct interviews to obtain views, feedback, and suggestions from stakeholders who interface with the department (e.g., SLCC administrators, faculty, staff, and students). Finally, the last phase focuses on creating a three-to-five-year departmental strategic plan that moves recommendations forward. Program review complements the Northwest Commission on College and Universities (NWCCU) new accreditation standards that emphasize the importance of implementing frameworks for continuous improvement through self-reflection and synthesis of data.

This self-study specifically focuses on one area of the [Orientation and Student Success \(OSS\)](#) department: [The Orientation and Transition](#) function. The other tasks of OSS focus more explicitly on the retention and support of continuing students and will be discussed in a second self-study conducted in 2024. This self-study is a current snapshot of how the Orientation and

Transition area of the OSS department functioned when it was drafted. This report took about two months to complete, and as such, college-wide and departmental changes may have occurred, that need to be reflected in the sections below. During such an event, the external review team will receive materials and updated information during their site visit to reflect the latest changes.

### SLCC's Mission, Vision, and Goals

[Salt Lake Community College](#) (SLCC) is a public, open-access, comprehensive multi-campus community college committed to serving the broader Salt Lake City community. Its mission focuses on engaging and supporting over 45,000 students annually in educational pathways, leading to successful transfer and meaningful employment. SLCC is also an emerging Hispanic Serving Institution (EHSI) and prides itself in serving the West Side community in Salt Lake — home to the most diverse neighborhoods in Utah.

The College offers associate degrees, certificate programs, career and technical education, developmental education, and workforce training to prepare individuals for career opportunities and an enriched lifetime of learning and growing. SLCC is guided by its vision to become a model for inclusive and transformative education, strengthening the communities it serves through the success of its students. The mission and vision of SLCC are underpinned by a set of seven values embodied by staff, faculty, and administration. These values are listed below with a brief context of how they are used in our institution:

- Collaboration — we believe we're better when we work together.
- Community — we partner with our community in the transformative, public good of educating students.

- Inclusivity — we seek to cultivate an environment of respect and empathy, advanced by diverse cultures and perspectives.
- Learning — we learn as a College by building outstanding educational experiences for students and supporting faculty and staff in their professional development.
- Innovation — we value fresh thinking and encourage the energy of new ideas and initiatives.
- Integrity — we do the right things for the right reasons.
- Trust — we build trust by working together in good faith and goodwill to fulfill the College's mission.

In 2023, the College concluded its [seven-year strategic plan](#) and began drafting a new one. In the meantime, the five goals below guided the strategies and work of SLCC for the past seven years:

1. Increase student completion.
2. Improve transfer preparation and articulation.
3. Align with and respond to workforce needs.
4. Achieve equity in student participation and completion.
5. Secure institutional sustainability and capacity.

### History of the Orientation and Student Success Department

The creation of the Orientation and Student Success (OSS) department was directly correlated with the mission and priorities of SLCC. The College's explicit focus on increasing student access (i.e., institutional sustainability) and student completion, coupled with its emphasis on achieving equity, guided the department's creation and, to this day, continues to



shape how we assess our work (see Section IV for more information). Our efforts center on leading services, programs, and events designed to ensure the successful transition of new and returning students into SLCC's academic and social environments. This work is done through a variety of ways, including:

- Orienting students to SLCC, which also includes assisting students to register for classes and connect with resources.
- Staying up to date with the latest College policies, services, and processes, and relaying this information to new and returning students; and
- Teaching students study skills, life skills (such as stress management, time management, etc.), self-advocacy, self-efficacy, and financial literacy.

Over the past ten years, the Orientation and Student Success department has grown immensely, transitioning from an office of eight people (or 5 FTEs) to 47 (or 30.5 FTEs). The department is divided into four areas. First, the Orientation and Transition area leads new student orientations year-round, assisting new and returning students in navigating the course registration process, and develops opportunities to help students connect with on-campus resources and networks. Second, the Student Success area houses our Bruin Scholars program, which connects 300 students with peer mentors and a dedicated success coach to assist them in navigating higher education. This team also leads workshops and activities designed to teach students how to succeed at SLCC. The third area focuses on implementing our Summer Bridge program and works closely with our Student Success team to "jumpstart" 250 underrepresented students into college and provide ongoing support services. The last and newest area that makes up our department oversees the integration of MySuccess—a case management,

scheduling, and early alert software (also known as Starfish) used across the College to facilitate SLCC's completion goals. Although these areas have specific goals and calendars that advance the department's mission, it is common for staff to support one another and share workloads when appropriate.

### History and Future of the Orientation and Transition Area

The Orientation and Transition area of the Orientation and Student Success (OSS) department dates back to the late 1990s when SLCC implemented a new student orientation event to ease the transition of new students into college. At this time, orientation was a function embedded in the Academic Advising department, and academic advisors took turns leading orientations. In the late 2000s, the College was swayed, given the extensive evidence on the benefits of completing a new student orientation, to make orientations a required step for enrolling at SLCC for nearly all new students. This action brought further support to the area, specifically funding to hire new staff, including a director to oversee the program's implementation, leading to the formation of a standalone office. In 2013, the office shifted its name to First-Year Experience (FYE) and increased its staffing and scope of work. Orientation programs remained a core service provided by the FYE department. Still, additional programs joined, including the Bruin Scholars program and a prototype for what later became a Summer Bridge initiative. In 2019, after a [comprehensive review of the FYE department](#), the office changed its name once more to Orientation and Student Success and, given the reviewers' recommendations, created distinct functional areas led by managers dedicated to developing and supervising the staff under each of these areas.

Growth has marked the history of the Orientation and Student Success department, and these last five years are no exception. Yet, despite this growth, the orientation and transition area has only sometimes received the attention it deserves. Orientation programs have a history of being solid and well-designed events supporting SLCC's enrollment efforts. Given this strength, departmental leadership has focused more externally on growing newer programs in the Student Success, Bridge, and MySuccess areas, which may have unintentionally slowed the growth and refinement of the Orientation and Transition area. This review seeks to remedy this by separating this area from the other three so that the commendations and recommendations developed from this review center the work of our Orientation and Transition team.

As you read this document and interact with our various stakeholders on the on-campus visit, there are five topics we would like you to pay close attention to. These are unresolved tensions, challenges, or opportunities that our team has determined as critical in the future of orientation and transition programs at SLCC:

1. **An online versus an in-person orientation experience** – Our online orientation has always been a popular student modality. However, through the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of students completing an online orientation increased in record numbers. Meanwhile, the in-person orientation never recovered its prominence. What is the value of an in-person orientation experience in a post-pandemic world? Should in-person orientation programs evolve to keep up with the emerging time demands of community college students? If they remain as is, what should attendance goals be to maximize a return on the investment of time that staff give to these programs?

2. **Serving a multi-campus institution** – SLCC has three primary locations (i.e., Taylorsville Redwood Campus, South City Campus, and Jordan Campus) and has been expanding its presence across Salt Lake through a variety of centers and smaller campuses that have been founded in the past decade (i.e., West Valley Center, [Herriman Juniper Campus](#), [Westpointe](#)). As SLCC's physical presence grows, it has been challenging to think through how to best serve all these locations effectively, given limited staffing and resources.
3. **Orientation as an engaging process leading to first-year success** – Ever since becoming mandatory, orientations have served, perhaps unintentionally, as a triaging tool where we guide students to their next steps in the enrollment process. Despite our messaging, students arrive at orientation at all stages of the enrollment process. Some need to do [admissions updates](#), others without placement scores, and some completely lost and need guidance on their next steps. With so many varying needs, our primary focus has been helping students understand their next steps and answer their most immediate questions, leaving little room to explore beyond the urgency of registering for classes. Our work has become very transactional, but it is critical to meet our enrollment goals. How can we begin to think of orientation as a process designed to support students through their first semester of College? What are ways in which we can weave orientation and transition events together into a seamless process focused on connecting students to on-campus communities?
4. **Partner with academic departments and faculty** – Since becoming a [Pathway School](#), Orientations have been representative of the eight educational pathways or [areas of study](#) that govern SLCC. Academic Advisors from all eight areas helped create the online

orientation and are present in every in-person orientation. We acknowledge, however, that there's a gap in how we are working with our academic partners. It has been difficult for faculty and deans to support in-person orientations year-round. Yet, we know the importance of connecting students to their academic departments early on but have struggled to devise a way to do this in our current programming.

5. **Individualized orientation versus standardized experiences** – SLCC serves various students, including online learners, students in short-term workforce-oriented technical fields, degree-seeking undergraduate students transferring to a four-year school, concurrent/dual enrolled students, new students transferring to SLCC, English language learners, and international students. This degree of diversity in our students (and their academic goals) pushes us to present information in general terms or talk about processes that are relevant to one group more than others. To what degree do we individualize our orientations without creating bottlenecks to enrollment or more work for our staff and partners?

## II. Description of Program and Services

The primary purpose of Orientation and Transition is to support student success. Through comprehensive orientation sessions and subsequent transition events, incoming students are introduced to the SLCC campus, academic resources, and student services, ensuring they have the foundational knowledge to navigate the College effectively. We ensure students are aware of and can access various resources, including academic support services, career guidance, and co-curricular activities. The services offered provide an avenue that embodies the College's values by actively collaborating with various departments, engaging



with the community, providing inclusive support, continuously learning and innovating, acting with integrity, and building trust among students and colleagues. These efforts collectively reduce opportunity gaps by ensuring all students have access to essential resources, updated information on college policies, and support that fosters a more equitable college experience. In alignment with the above purpose, this section will examine seven core services the Orientation and Transition Team is responsible for delivering. These include New Student Orientation, SLCC Days, Lunch and Learns, Mega Fairs, Bruin Bash, Registration Assistance (in-person and online), and leadership development for student leaders.

### New Student Orientation:

In-Person Sessions — serves ≈2000 students annually.

In-person orientation serves as a crucial and enriching experience for incoming students, offering them a comprehensive introduction to the vast array of resources and services available to support their academic journey. Although all students are encouraged to do an orientation, SLCC places registration holds on all new first-time college students, former-concurrent, and early high school graduates. Students can register for an in-person session online, over the phone, or in person. In-person sessions are offered at Taylorsville Redwood, South City, and Jordan campuses. Registration holds are released on the same day for students attending the in-person session, whereas for the online session, the hold is removed 24 hours (at the most) after completion.

Upon registering for orientation, students receive an [automated email](#) containing essential details such as the date, location, and time of the upcoming orientation event. To ensure a smooth and informed experience, students will receive timely text messages and email

reminders twenty-four hours before the scheduled orientation. These reminders include parking instructions, campus maps, and a courteous reminder about COVID-19 health protocols in place. Upon arrival at orientation, students will be greeted at the check-in desk, receiving a [First-year Student Handbook](#), an [agenda](#) outlining the day's proceeding, and a lanyard for their names. Additionally, students will be asked some brief questions to verify and update their chosen area of study and residency information.

A [pre-show presentation](#) will be in the orientation room, designed to create a welcoming atmosphere and foster excitement among the students as they embark on their college journey. This engaging introduction segment culminates with a land acknowledgment, setting the stage for the plenary presentation. During the [plenary session](#), information is provided about the transferability of various associate degrees and the distinctions between types of associate degrees. The plenary also covers different avenues for financing education, including scholarships and financial aid options. Students can register for their classes near the end of the session and engage with current and incoming students. Lastly, we provide students with information on how to stay in contact with our office post-orientation, fostering a sense of community and support from day one.

*Analysis:* While we acknowledge the importance of the information provided, we also recognize that our presentations have been lengthy and, candidly, somewhat stale. Presenting a large amount of information in a four-hour session can be overwhelming. We are exploring ways to enhance student engagement and add a fun factor by piloting tools like [Mentimeter](#) in the upcoming spring semester.

We have experienced an ongoing challenge with Academic Advising's timeliness, particularly when some Academic Advisors must arrive on time to present during the advising session. Their tardiness results in placing the responsibility on our team to cover the information meant to be shared by some Academic Advisor. While we have discussed protocols of redirecting students to their Academic Advisors rather than offering advice ourselves, there are instances where our team members fill in for them during orientations, relying on online resources for the specific area of study. Unfortunately, due to frequent changes in certain areas of study, the information available on the website may only sometimes be current.

Another area in our in-person orientation that needs improvement is ensuring that students complete the necessary steps before attending the orientation to be prepared to register for classes when they arrive. Currently, students arrive at orientation at varying stages of the application process, including those who still need to complete the placement process or the required application updates to ensure they enroll for their intended matriculating term. This has led to frustrations with Academic Advising, as they must take on admission-related tasks to assist students in completing the necessary steps before registering for classes.

Prison Education Orientation (In-Person) — serves ~80 students annually.

SLCC has a [Prison Education Program](#) (PEP) housed at the Utah State Correctional Facility since 2017. Its growth in recent years have required us to add an orientation for students in this program. To implement this orientation, our staff went through a two-hour training session with the director of the program and the coordinator to ensure compliance with state bylaws, designating us as 'volunteers' at the Utah State Correctional Facility. During this training session, we submitted the necessary documentation for background checks and provided a photo of the

visitor badge, which we received on the day of the orientation. This training is valid for five years, and currently, nine of our team members have completed this training and are planning to increase this number by fall 2024.

Our orientation presentation differs for this student population, and it can be viewed [here](#). We conduct three types of orientations: one for returning students, another for new students, and the third is an ESL orientation. Due to the location of these orientations, our presentation needs to be uploaded to a USB thumb drive, which is processed by the correctional facility personnel two weeks before our visit. All electronic devices are prohibited. The application process is conducted on paper, including the SLCC application, class catalog, potential career opportunities per areas of study, a form for students to indicate which classes they wish to register for, and Financial Aid forms. These [handouts](#) are collated into a packet for students to complete during the orientation. Once completed, our campus partners enter their information manually after orientation.

*Analysis:* Although this program is relatively new, one area that needs improvement is the distribution of handouts; our team received the information from our campus partners five minutes before the students arrived. This caused frustration among our team because we needed to feel adequately prepared to support students with the financial aid paperwork or to provide insights into available classes. We shared this feedback with the PEP team and our campus partners, suggesting that they share all handouts with us before our sessions to allow for time to review the materials and trust we'll strengthen our partnership in the future.

Concurrent Enrollment VIP Orientation (In-Person) — serves ~80 students annually.

This orientation is designed for high school students enrolled in SLCC college courses to encourage them to continue their education with SLCC. This year, SLCC offered concurrently enrolled students who achieved a 2.0 GPA or higher in their college courses up to \$1,000 in scholarships for their first two semesters at SLCC after high school graduation. The Admissions office drafted an email invitation and shared it with concurrent enrollment students in the Granite, Salt Lake School Districts and select Herriman high schools, inviting them to sign up and register for this orientation. We share similar matriculating information during this orientation using our SLCC Days presentation as a template (see below). This year, we held two concurrent enrollment orientation sessions to accommodate student schedules, including a weekday evening session and a Saturday morning session.

*Analysis:* The greatest threat to this program is attendance. For example, we had low numbers of formerly concurrent students at one of our orientations this year. As a result, we opened registration for students at large to increase attendance. Since we initially intended the concurrent enrollment orientation to have an exclusive feel, we needed two separate orientation presentations. However, we combined the two groups for the advising session and computer lab activities. Holding two sessions simultaneously proved challenging because many students needed clarification on which orientation they had signed up for. Additionally, we required more team members to cover both orientations adequately. Moving to an online-only orientation may mitigate this issue; however, in the meantime, we need help to increase the number of attendees for this orientation.

SLCC Days — serves ≈300 students annually.



SLCC Days is a two-day in-person orientation for high school seniors from the Granite and Salt Lake City districts. During these two days, students complete orientation, meet with academic advisors and career coaches, visit an SLCC campus, and register for classes before graduating high school. The SLCC Days program began as a one-day event in collaboration with the Granite School District. High school seniors attended an SLCC campus to complete orientation and register for classes. Over time, it has evolved to include the Salt Lake City School District, expanding into the comprehensive two-day event it is today. SLCC Day Ones are conducted in March at individual high schools, while Day Twos are held in April at SLCC campuses.

Following Utah College Application Week, typically in October, we connect with high school advisors and district representatives to review and plan the SLCC Days program. During this meeting, we determine the program structure and tentative dates. Once the dates are finalized, advisors at each high school select the dates that align best with their school's schedule. They also begin promoting the program to students. The Admissions office assists school advisors by providing a list of students who have applied to SLCC, facilitating their advertising efforts.

On the first day of SLCC Days, we visit each high school with Admissions to conduct an [orientation presentation](#). This presentation includes engaging activities to build excitement and allow for peer-to-peer interactions. Additionally, staff members support students who still need to apply to SLCC and guide them through the SLCC application process, addressing any issues such as technical errors or application updates and concerns the student may have. On the second day of SLCC Days, students from two high schools travel to an SLCC campus. They

receive swag items, an agenda for the day, and a First Year Handbook. The SLCC Career Services office presents "The Wandering Map," a tool designed as a compass for students to explore potential career paths. Subsequently, students participate in group advising sessions with an Academic Advisor from their chosen area of study. After the advising sessions, students split into groups: one group attends lunch, visits a "mini resource fair," and has a chance to win prizes, while the other group registers for classes in the computer lab. After an hour, the groups switch activities, allowing all students to experience both. At the end of the second hour, everyone gathers for closing remarks and group photos.

*Analysis:* Upon reflecting on ways to improve SLCC Days, we have identified three areas of improvement. The first is our partnership with the Salt Lake School District. While we have initiated outreach through emails and virtual meetings, we have yet to feel adequately supported by our point of contact in this district, particularly with organizing transportation for students for Day Two and connecting us with the UCAC advisors at the high schools. Due to the lack of support from this district, Admissions has covered transportation expenses for the students to and from their respective high schools. Second is the inconsistency of student attendance between Day One and Day Two of SLCC Days. Some students who attend Day One do not return for Day Two, and vice versa. This mirrors the concern we are experiencing of students arriving at varying stages of the application process, like what we encounter with our in-person orientations. Lastly, we encountered an issue with the turnover of advisors at the high schools. In the past year, two advisors left midway through the academic year, one from each district, losing our connection and communication with the Salt Lake School District students. On a positive note, our SLCC Day presentation excels in student engagement. We have observed

a noticeable increase in student engagement compared to our in-person orientations, primarily attributed to the engaging elements we have incorporated specifically for this student population. We have considered using the SLCC Days presentation format for our regular orientations. However, we are concerned that dividing the room into four teams and creating logos, team mascots, and cheers may not be appealing, considering the diverse demographics of the students. Furthermore, we have been asked to expand to more school districts, particularly those in Herriman City, but are hesitant given the high demands on staff's time.

[New Student Orientation \(Online\)](#) — serves ≈7000 students annually.

The primary purpose of the online orientation is to offer students a more flexible and time-efficient alternative to the traditional four-hour, in-person orientation. This orientation is available in English and Spanish to support our students better. The online platform allows us to deliver substantial information quickly to incoming students. Students log in to the online orientation platform and navigate through seven modules: Welcome, Academics, Support Services, Student Life, SLCC Online, Our Community, and Next Steps. Each module has slides with videos, drop-down menus, and hyperlinks to school resources and websites, which they can bookmark for future reference. Students are prompted to complete small quizzes throughout the orientation to check for understanding. Upon completion, students take a final test. Passing this test with 80% or higher marks the orientation as complete and removes any associated hold on the student's account. Any links students bookmarked throughout the orientation can be accessed at the end. Following the orientation, students can proceed with class registration.

*Analysis:* Given most students complete the online orientation, we have spent many resources making it a strong product. Current challenges include: regularly updating the information so it is always accurate for students; finding ways to make the information in the modules more appealing to students; onboarding newer orientation staff to the back-end of the online orientation software; and keeping the Spanish version of the online orientation as updated as the English version, given that none of the professional staff in the Orientation team are bilingual in Spanish. An area we need help navigating is when our online orientation website is inaccessible. The only advice we receive when reporting the issue to ADG (a third-party company hosting our online orientation) is to clear our cache history and close the website before reopening it.

Welcome Booths —serves ≈ 350 students annually.

The primary purpose of the welcome booths is to provide an information area accessible to students who need to ask for directions, check their schedules, or get some essential guidance on navigating SLCC. We have two welcome booths stationed at the Taylorsville Redwood Campus during the first week of classes: one in front of the Student Center (STC) building and the other on the West side, between the STC and the Alder Amphitheatre. This resource is available only for the fall semester; having the booths during the spring semester is not feasible due to concerns for our team's safety in Utah's unpredictable winter conditions. OSS team members staff the booths. Similar booths are available at our Jordan, and South City campuses. The scheduling for these booths is managed by the OSS coordinators at those sites, and instead of booths, they use tables in the hallways of high-traffic areas.

Lunch and Learns — serves ≈ 70 students annually.

Historically, SLCC has encountered low retention rates among Native American, Pacific Islander, and Latina/o/e students. The "Lunch and Learns" series was established in collaboration with the Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs to address this issue. We organize three targeted events designed to address barriers faced by students from these communities. The sessions offer insight into college enrollment processes, financial aid, and scholarships while connecting students with resources that enhance their college experience. Additionally, these events allow students to interact with supportive staff members from these communities. We want to improve this resource by meeting with leadership from the ODMA office and gathering information from these communities to re-strategize our approach and find the best ways to support these communities.

Mega Fairs — serves ≈ 300 students annually.

Mega Fairs is a partnership with the Thayne Center for Student Life, Leadership & Community Engagement. Mega Fairs allow students to connect with campus resources, clubs, and community partners. This program originated from a collaborative effort among SLCC coordinators responsible for the community engagement fair, campus resources fair, and club rush events. These were merged to improve the student experience and avoid scheduling conflicts. Mega Fairs occur during the first weeks of the Fall and Spring semesters and are hosted at the Taylorsville Redwood, South City, Jordan, and West Valley campuses. We want to expand to serve the Juniper Campus in the upcoming semester.

As the event begins, students are given stamp cards and asked to visit the different tables made up of clubs, campus resources, or community partners. Once students fill their



stamp cards, they bring them to our prize table, where they can exchange them for prizes. At this table, they can scan a QR code to complete a Mega Prizes form, entering them into our "Mega Prize" giveaway. Prizes vary each semester and may include wireless headphones, video game consoles, tech devices, and SLCC merchandise. The same process occurs at each campus, except West Valley Center, which focuses exclusively on on-campus resources due to its smaller size. The card system is not used there, but students can still scan the QR code to participate in the Mega Prizes giveaway. Following the conclusion of Mega Fairs, we use the QR code data and stamp card to count and calculate participation statistics for each fair. We recognize that the participation percentage may not accurately represent the total number of students engaged at the fair since not all students who attend may have completed or obtained a stamp card, nor would they have turned them in.

*Analysis:* We want to strengthen our presence at the West Valley Center. During the fall semester of 2022, we saw 15 students, and hosting a similar fair at this location is counterintuitive and not cost-effective in terms of staffing. However, our numbers doubled this year because a faculty member brought their students to talk to us. Moving forward, we plan to partner with faculty members and the Center's site manager to determine if moving this fair into a workshop-type event based on student interest and needs is a better solution. Moreover, with the opening of the Herriman Juniper Campus, we may also need to expand our presence to serve this location and re-prioritize our staff's time.

Bruin Bash — serves  $\approx$  1500 students annually.

Bruin Bash is a student convocation organized with the Thayne Center for Student Life, Leadership & Community Engagement. The convocation is pivotal in fostering community on

campus and setting a positive tone for the academic year. Taking place during the first week of the fall semester, its primary objectives align perfectly with creating a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere for both new and returning students. Bruin Bash is open to students' families and friends and offers diverse activities that provide a platform for students to connect with peers, faculty, and staff members. Traditionally, the President and the Student Body President have delivered welcome speeches to motivate students to excel in their areas of study while emphasizing the importance of taking this step to further their educational and professional goals. However, considering past low attendance at the beginning of convocation, we are re-evaluating our approach. With a somewhat entirely new staff in the Thayne Center and amid the challenges the Pandemic brought to in-person programming, this partnership is still relatively new. Still, it has proven successful and well-celebrated by the larger campus community.

#### Course Registration Assistance:

In-Person Registration Assistance — serves  $\approx$  1,500 students annually.

In-person registration support is crucial for college students as they navigate their academic journeys. This resource allows students to ask questions, seek clarification, and receive personalized guidance. If the student has not met with their advisor, we encourage them to schedule a meeting during these sessions. When students meet with their academic advisor, they can collaboratively draft a course plan that aligns with their goals and interests. This ensures that students make informed decisions about their course selections, helping them stay on track for graduation and minimizing potential scheduling conflicts.

*Analysis:* "Rush," as we internally call the month of August, when we assist the most students, is a busy time for our team. As a result, our team faces challenges, often feeling spread thin while balancing multiple responsibilities, including office coverage, staffing welcome booths, and providing computer lab support. The increased number of "registration events," such as ESL Express Registration sessions organized by Academic Advising, often rely on our staff to support their programs. Given these challenges, we plan to share feedback with Academic Advising to optimize the timing of ESL Express Registration events.

Virtual Registration Assistance — serves  $\approx$  600 students annually.

Recognizing the diverse student demographics SLCC serves, we established the virtual registration option to accommodate varying student needs. The primary goal of virtual registration is to offer accessible support to students who require additional assistance with class registration but cannot come to campus. Students can sign up for a Virtual Registration appointment through our [booking site](#). Once the student confirms their appointment, the orientation leader will receive an email notification, much like a meeting invite, which they can accept and add to their calendar. Twenty-four hours before the appointment, a coordinator sends a reminder to the student and the orientation leader. Meetings occur on Microsoft Teams, where orientation leaders assess the students' needs and provide guidance. While Virtual Registration's purpose is class registration, we have learned its usefulness in addressing general college navigational questions.

*Analysis:* This service has proven to be an effective tool to streamline support for students with quick enrollment questions. We want to strengthen this service by integrating it into the existing MySuccess (i.e., Starfish) structure used by departments that serve enrolled

students. This will make referrals to services much easier, as that's become one of our primary outcomes from these meetings.

### Student Leadership Development

We are committed to fostering student leadership development through a multifaceted approach that empowers our orientation leaders to thrive both on campus and in their future careers. We accomplish this by providing various opportunities, including involvement with regional and national associations like the Association for Orientation, Transition, Retention in Higher Education Conference ([NODA](#)), the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators ([NASPA](#)), and First Year Experience Consortiums. Attending these conferences provides student leaders valuable insight into orientation practices, which they share with their peers and explore ways to implement them into our work.

Student leader retreats occur twice a year and serve as a dedicated space for training, reflection, and team building to ensure our student leaders excel in their roles. These retreats are complemented by regularly scheduled student leader monthly meetings, which keep our team informed, sharpen their leadership skills, and foster a sense of community across Orientation and Student Success. These meetings and trainings cover various topics, including communication, conflict resolution, teamwork, and time management, among others, thus enhancing their leadership skills.

At the beginning of each semester, student leaders must meet with their supervisors to create [SMART goals](#) for leadership development. These goals are revisited throughout the semester in a one-on-one setting. We encourage student leaders to dedicate an hour weekly to working on their SMART goals. These goals have ranged from activities such as visiting a student

club on campus to improving time management skills. In February, we conduct a thorough annual review process that includes student leaders re-interviewing for their roles and submitting cover letters and updated resumes. This comprehensive process serves as a platform for students to develop essential interviewing skills, encouraging them to reflect on their experiences within our office. Additionally, it provides an opportunity to receive constructive feedback during the interview process and in the broader context of their overall performance. Beyond these structured experiences, our student leaders engage in diverse projects that allow them to develop soft and practical skills and improve their public speaking and communication abilities. For example, two of our student leaders interested in marketing took the lead in creating content for our social media platforms, including [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#).

*Analysis:* Our orientation leaders are quick learners and are resourceful, especially when supporting students. Many of the changes we have made to our current programs have stemmed from their ideas. These changes include reordering our presentations and implementing a student tracker that helps us count how many students we assist during rush and in what aspect of support they need. Another noteworthy change is the addition of a whiteboard in our main office, STC 258, which details events happening each month in each area. This has enabled us to support each other better when needed. As we look to enhance our student leadership development, we will spend more time strengthening the onboarding process for new hires.

### III. Review of Resources

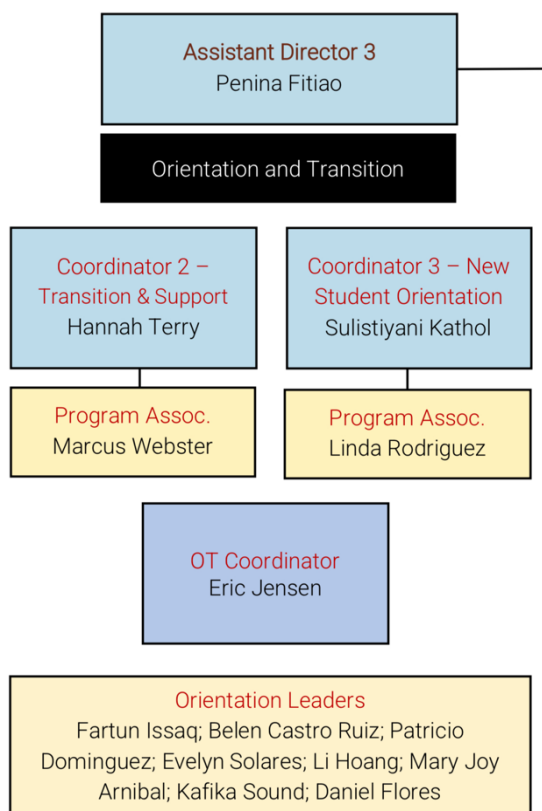
The Orientation and Transition Team comprises three full-time and 11 part-time employees. The three full-time employees consist of an assistant director who manages



orientation and transition initiatives, one coordinator who leads in scheduling and planning orientations, and a second coordinator who oversees transition programs and SLCC Days. The part-time team consists of one coordinator who supports registration efforts, two program associates, and two senior orientation leaders who act as team leaders for the remaining six orientation leaders who assist coordinators in their programs, help students register for classes, and sustain consistent office coverage. Supervision of the orientation leaders is split between the coordinators. All Orientation and Transition employees are housed in the Taylorsville Redwood Campus. However, it is essential to note that the Orientation and Student Success department has staff across four locations: Taylorsville Redwood Campus, South City, Jordan, and West Valley Center.

Over the last five years, this area has seen minimal turnover, with the previous year being the first time two professional staff members left the area. Part-time staff also have a remarkably lengthy tenure in our office, with many orientation leaders staying with us after completing their associate degrees. Orientation and Transition team members have consistent staff meetings, retreats, and one-on-ones. This team also participates in larger Orientation and Student Success departmental meetings. Professional development opportunities include institutional and home-grown departmental training. When funding allows, we do our best to send staff to regional or national conferences organized by NODA or NASPA.

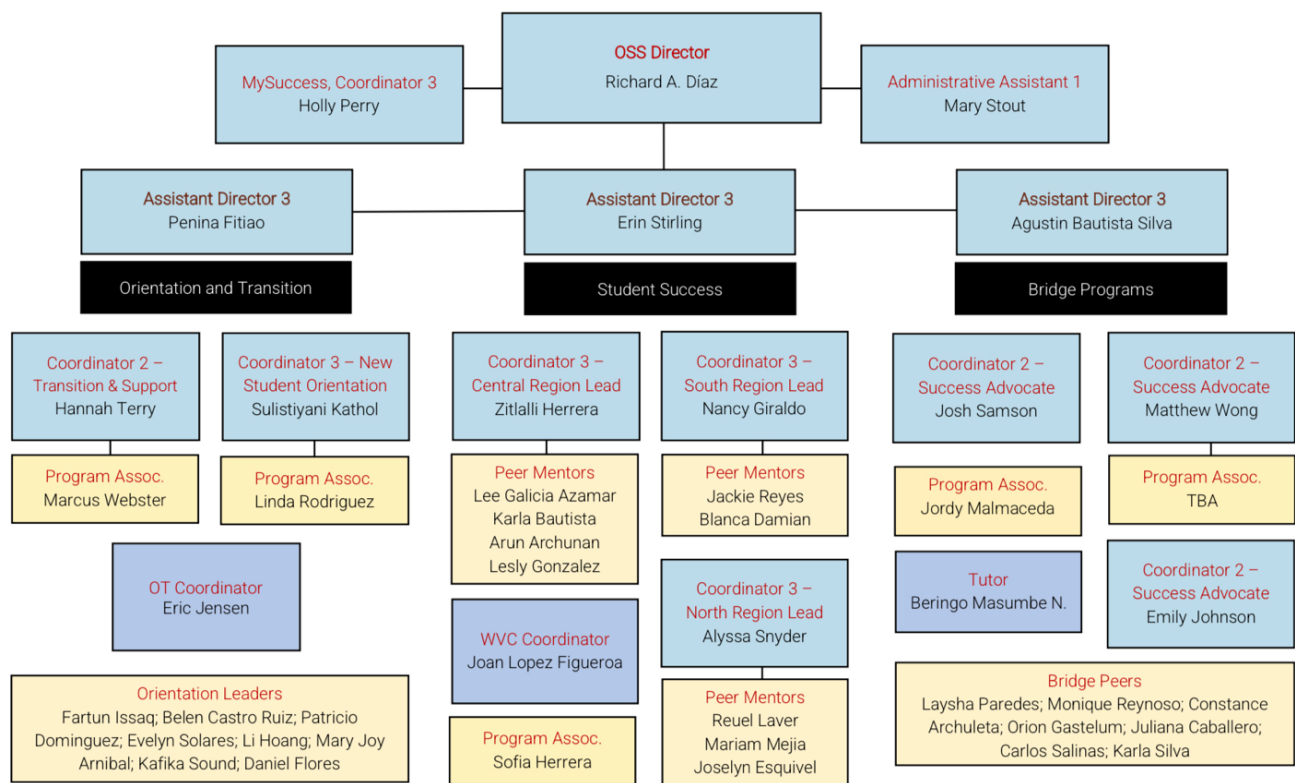
*Figure 1 – Organizational Chart for Orientation and Transition Team.*



All full-time employees are Base funded (i.e., Penina Fitiao, Hannah Terry, and Sulistiyan "Titi" Kathol). Most part-time employees are Base funded, including the two program associates and six orientation leader positions. The PT coordinator and the two remaining orientation leader positions are one-time funded through student fee dollars.

As part of the more extensive Orientation and Student Success Department, the Orientation and Transition team benefits from a network of colleagues who assist them during peak times and share the work by volunteering to lead or co-lead several orientations year-round.

Figure 2 – Orientation and Student Success Organizational Chart.



As a long-standing core function of SLCC, the Orientation and Transition team has benefitted from a stable and secured budget. Nearly all the positions in the team are Base funded. Similarly, about 55% of our programming budget (i.e., \$22,000) is also Base funded. Other sources of funds for this team include student fee dollars collected and redistributed by the Student Affairs Vice President's Office. These funds, known internally as "Servicing dollars," support three part-time staff members and provide about \$18,000 in programming costs. Unlike base funds, Servicing funds must be solicited from the Vice President's office annually, and receiving the same amount as in previous years is only sometimes guaranteed. The Orientation and Transition Team also has access to a revenue account with nearly \$45,000. This fund is used

for emergencies or to cover budgetary shortfalls. Although most of these funds come from selling ad space in the First-Year Handbook, the fund is shared amongst all areas in the Orientation and Student Success Department. The revenue budget is the only one that rolls over year after year. All other funds must be spent down to zero by fiscal year-end; otherwise, funds are swept by SLCC's Central Budgeting.

*Table 1 – Overview of Orientation and Transition Programming Budget.*

OT Service/Program	Fund	Approx. Annual Allocation	Notes
Bruin Bash/Convocation	Base	\$2,500	
Online Orientation Software	Base	\$6,000	Annual maintenance costs.
Orientation Expenses	Base and Servicing	\$10,000	The majority of these funds come from Servicing.
Orientation Leaders	Base	\$3,000	Uniforms, retreats, etc.
SLCC Days/HS Orientations	Base	\$3,500	
Welcome Week/Mega Fairs	Base	\$3,000	
Facility Rental	Servicing	\$2,000	Pays for Saturday events.
First-Year Handbooks	Servicing	\$7,000	Printing costs.
Other/Miscellaneous	Base	\$3,000	Helps fund pilot programs
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$40,000</b>	\$22,000 Base funded and \$18,000 from Servicing.

*Table 2 – Overview of Orientation and Transition Personnel Budget.*

Personnel	Approx. Annual Allocation	Notes
Full-time staff – Base	\$223,226	Includes benefits
Part-time staff – Base	\$130,407	Includes work-study students.
Part-time staff – Servicing	\$31,350	Includes benefits
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$385,023</b>	

2018 marked the last time the Orientation and Transition area received new programming funds. Since then, we have been operating with this annual budget. As we restart programs the Pandemic impacted, we are being affected by increased costs of services and food. For example, our online orientation software increased its annual maintenance fee from

\$5,000 to \$6,000 in 2023. Similarly, we are purchasing fewer snacks for events but spending the same amount of money we did three years ago. However, the biggest threat to our budget is the College's "do more" attitude, which encourages departments to try new initiatives without the necessary resources. Most impactful this year has been the push to support the new Juniper Herriman Campus but with no increases in staff or programming dollars. The limitations in funding and staff have forced our department to think through retiring programs to make room for newer initiatives. We are considering making significant changes to in-person orientations, which may increase the time and resources available to take on more. An idea circulating in our team is to cement the online orientation as the orientation for the College and replace the in-person sessions with more individualized on-campus visits and registration events. We hope this review process can give us more insight into the pros and cons of moving into this model soon.

#### IV. Metrics and Data

Continually assessing our services and programs is a mandated practice by the Student Affairs Division and a critical aspect of the Orientation and Transition area. [Annual assessment](#) projects are designed to help improve our services and programs. Each year, the Orientation and Transition area conducts one or two formal assessment projects to improve our business practices, ensure continuous delivery of high-quality programming, or collect data to make informed decisions about future services. Over the years, our team has conducted various quantitative and qualitative projects and used different instruments to collect data or assess student learning, including surveys, rubrics, focus groups, interviews, and data mining. Although the main population we collect data from are new students, occasionally, we have gathered feedback from student employees, faculty, and staff.

Ongoing surveys administered by the Orientation and Transition team include a [study](#) of all students who completed an orientation but did not register for classes sent in the fall and spring semesters. Students who complete an orientation also receive a survey to assess their satisfaction with the experience. The former gives the team insight into why students don't enroll for classes after completing an orientation. The data has helped the team enhance presentations, follow-up messaging, and how we work with our partners. The latter survey helps us determine immediate changes we need to make to improve our orientation events. Although the satisfaction survey is collected every term, our access to the data is limited as it is housed with our Data Science and Analytics division. Turnover in both areas has hindered our ability to analyze and implement satisfaction survey recommendations consistently.

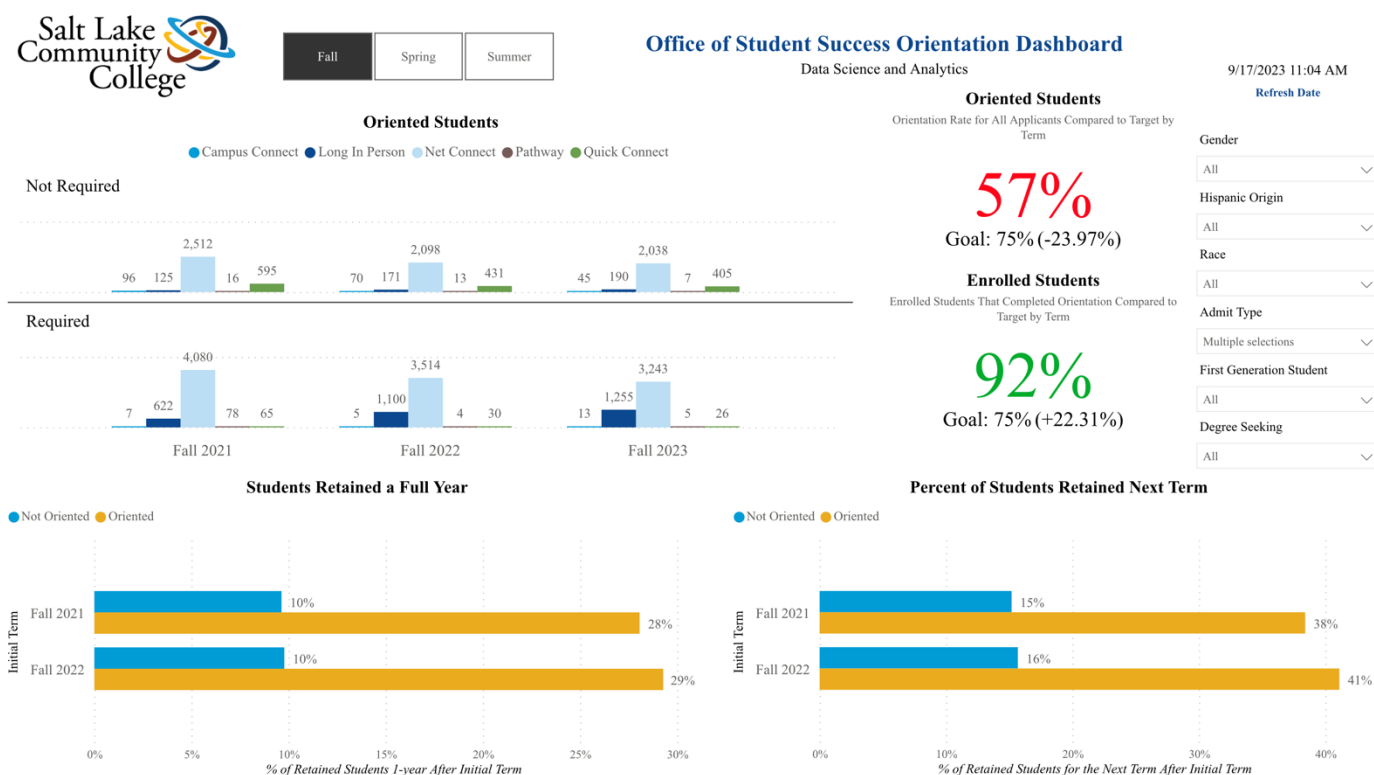
On the other hand, orientation goals are assessed weekly as data dashboards allow us to review current progress toward these four broad objectives quickly:

1. The number and percent of students who complete orientation after admissions.
2. The number and percent of students who completed orientation and registered for classes.
3. The number of students who completed orientation and persisted to their next semester (i.e., semester-to-semester retention).
4. The number of students who completed orientation and re-enrolled at SLCC a year later (i.e., year-to-year retention).

A baseline of 75% has been set for the first two goals. Our office traditionally does a great job of enrolling students into classes post-orientation. Our orientation leaders consistently follow up with students who still need to register for courses after orientation, and virtual registration

meetings allow students to connect with our team remotely if they are stuck in the registration process. Alternatively, students can visit any OSS offices in Jordan, South City, and Taylorsville Redwood to receive in-person class registration assistance. However, our team has yet to meet the goal of having 75% of admitted students complete an orientation, even when filtering the data by students required to complete an orientation as part of their enrollment. The last two goals compare students who completed orientations versus those who did not, indirectly assessing orientation's impact on retention metrics.

Figure 3 – Snapshot of Orientation Dashboard.



The Orientation Dashboard also helps us monitor equity gaps in our services as we can disaggregate the data by gender, race, and first-gen status. An analysis of our data through an equity lens has pushed our department to have a more intentional focus on Native American

and Pacific Islander students, as these groups are not enrolling and persisting at the same rates as their peers.

The Orientation and Transition area has built a strong foundation for using data to make informed decisions. However, we have further work to create a culture of assessment and evidence. For starters, our team can better close the loop on the data collected through surveys, specifically our satisfaction surveys. Furthermore, most of our data-gathering strategies focus on our orientation programs, with little to no attention given to our other services. Lastly, we need to revisit our goal to orient 75% of students admitted. It is time to think of a more realistic goal while at the same time becoming more intentional in increasing the number of students participating in orientation. We have been so focused on meeting our enrollment goal that we have unintentionally ignored opportunities to increase the number of admitted students completing an orientation.

## V. Relationship with Other Functional Units in SLCC

Nearly all our programs require the Orientation and Transition team to collaborate with campus partners. This section outlines our most frequent and critical partners and how we deliver high-quality services.

**Bruin Scholars/Bridge:** As internal partners in the Orientation and Student Success department, these areas serve as our most recurring and active partners. We vigorously collaborate during SLCC Days, where our joint efforts are dedicated to recruiting students for enrollment in the Bridge program through a brief presentation about the program. Upon completing the Bridge program with a GPA of 2.0 or higher, students transition into the Bruin Scholars program, which provides continuous support throughout their educational journey at



SLCC. Similarly, orientation programs have space for the Bruin Scholars team to recruit students into their program and provide wrap-around services beyond the initial orientation phase.

In addition to our recruitment efforts, our collaboration extends to supporting each other during signature events, including Bridge orientations held at the Taylorsville Redwood and South City campuses and the culminating Celebration of Learning after the Bridge program. Moreover, Bridge and Bruin Scholars team members contribute their expertise and assistance by co-leading orientations year-round. During rush periods, they help us with our efforts to register students for classes.

**Admissions:** We collaborate with Admissions during our in-person orientations, the Concurrent Enrollment orientations held in the summer, and SLCC Days. Together, we work to increase student enrollment rates by creating email and text campaigns that promote both orientation participation and class registration. Additionally, we use our social media platforms to encourage students to register for classes, bring attention to upcoming campus events, remind students of important dates, and highlight our office's resources. In preparation for SLCC Days, Admissions facilitate our connection with current representatives from Salt Lake and Granite School districts, which fosters collaboration with UCAC advisors at each high school.

**Academic Advising:** During orientation, students meet with academic advisors representing different areas of study to explore their academic interests and course options. Advisors also introduce students to DegreeWorks, a web-based tool for auditing progress toward graduation and creating a degree completion plan. Furthermore, we collaborate with Academic Advising during ESL Express Registration Events to assist with class enrollment and clear any orientation holds. Advisors also form part of our registration assistance workflow, as

we require all students to meet with an academic advisor before receiving assistance. Advisors help select potential courses for students, and our team helps students register for those classes. Our partnership with Academic Advising is crucial to the success of our programs, and we are constantly investigating ways to strengthen our connection and communication to mitigate potential challenges.

**Career Services:** We recognize that many students may arrive at college with a desire to explore their interests before making a definitive commitment to a specific area of study. We collaborate with the Career Services team to support exploratory students, which conducts a specialized session during orientation. This session is designed to guide students in uncovering their passions, identifying strengths, and clarifying their career aspirations. Our primary objective for this session is to empower students, equipping them with the knowledge and insights to make well-informed decisions regarding their academic journey. Academic Advising and Career Services are featured prominently in the online orientation as representatives from their areas assisted us in developing the online modules.

**Thayne Center for Student Life, Leadership, and Community Engagement:** The collaboration between our area and Thayne Center mostly centers on organizing Bruin Bash and Mega Fairs. Since both departments have a strong commitment to fostering a supportive and vibrant campus community, these events go beyond mere gatherings; they are integral components of our student success initiatives, enabling students to establish connections, learn about resources SLCC offers, and actively participate in campus life, ultimately setting them on the path to academic success and personal achievement. Our student leaders also participate in events and professional development opportunities organized by the Thayne Center. Although

this is an emerging partnership, it has become a strong one, and we hope to continue to maintain the momentum gained over the past two years working with the Thayne Center.

**Student Center/Facilities:** We collaborate closely with the Student Center to schedule rooms that accommodate the diverse needs of orientation and transition events. The process for requesting setup varies depending on the specific campus. It's important to note that our facilities department is currently facing staffing shortages, which may contribute to the difference in how space scheduling is handled. Typically, we need eight rooms for advising sessions, one ample event space for the plenary session, and a computer lab for class registration. Often, we request an overflow computer lab at the South City and Taylorsville Redwood campuses to accommodate the influx of students. Given our significant needs, we often rely on classrooms to conduct orientations on campuses without a Student Center. This increases our competition for space; as per policy, we must wait until all classrooms are booked before being able to reserve space.

**Prison Education Program:** In collaboration with the Prison Education Program (PEP), we offer an in-person orientation at the Utah State Correctional Facility for both new and returning students. We closely collaborate with representatives from Admissions, Academic Advising, Financial Aid, and the Office of the Registrar offices to serve this student population. Our recent partnership has been primarily prompted by staff shortage within the PEP department and an increase in enrollment following a nationwide reinstatement of Pell eligibility for incarcerated students. During this orientation, students are introduced to the PEP structure, the areas of study they may pursue, available resources, and the classes offered.

**International Student Services (ISS):** Currently, we supply ISS with SLCC swag items and handbooks for incoming international students. Notably, in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, they adapted their orientation to an online format. Starting this spring semester, ISS is resuming in-person orientation sessions. We plan to meet with leadership to establish strategies for enhancing our partnership efforts. Before the Pandemic, both departments partnered significantly to create a meaningful onboarding experience for new international students. We hope to regain this level of collaboration and strengthen our support for international students.

**Office of the Registrar and Academic Records (ORAR):** We maintain an active Microsoft Teams chat with ORAR, which allows for direct and seamless communication during our in-person orientation registration portion. They are crucial in supporting our efforts by addressing day-of application or program of study changes for students. Additionally, they serve as a valuable resource by responding to students' registration queries, thereby expediting the class registration process. This office also handles questions and concerns about transferring credits to SLCC. This is helpful since we have seen an increase in the past five years of students transferring to SLCC and completing orientation.

**Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs (ODMA):** We have partnered with the Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs to address historical challenges in retaining Native American, Latina/o/e, and Pacific Islander students. Together, we established the "Lunch and Learn" series, offering three events that address barriers these students often face navigating higher education. We are upgrading this series to a more comprehensive approach that

accommodates students and their support systems better. Our process includes working with the community to discover needs and finding better ways to address them.

**Financial Aid and Scholarships:** We collaborate with the Financial Aid and Scholarships department to ensure the accuracy of our presentation information. We invite them to conduct a training session on completing paper-form applications as we prepare for our upcoming Prison Education Program Orientation for the Spring semester. Financial Aid and Scholarship staff also helped us develop our online orientation modules, particularly the sections about "financing college." This partnership is the one that we are most looking forward to growing.

Although the following list is not extensive, there are other offices we partner with, albeit in a more transactional manner.

- **Faculty/Academic Affairs:** While our collaboration with faculty is limited, we establish connections within the Academic Affairs division to access valuable information regarding changes to areas of study. This information helps us keep our online and in-person orientations up to date.
- **Office of Information Technology and Library:** We work closely with OIT by sharing a copy of our orientation agendas, allowing them to facilitate open computer access for registration. Additionally, the Library provides valuable support by granting us access to their computer labs if we surpass our capacity for in-person orientation.
- **OneCard Office (Student ID):** We provide them with a list of students attending orientation and a schedule of orientation dates, enabling them to have coverage for the evening sessions. We are devising new ways to speed up the one-card process as it is often the most extended line students must stand in during orientations.

- **Accessibility & Disability Services (ADS):** Coordinating between our office and ADS to ensure an inclusive orientation experience for students with diverse abilities. This collaboration begins with early communication and planning, sharing information on registered students' needs, and how to obtain necessary ADA accommodations.

## VI. Peer and Best Practices Comparison

The Utah System of Higher Education selected our peer institution based on our enrollment size, associate degrees and certificates offered, and student demographics. Through research, the objective of some of our peer institutions aligns with our programs. They conduct orientations that prepare students for college enrollment by providing essential information, resources, and guidance for a successful first semester and beyond. These programs focus on academic planning, career exploration, campus resources, and involvement opportunities while using various communication methods to connect with students. However, we differ in the duration of our programs. While we offer a four-hour in-person orientation and an online modality, our peers' orientation duration varies. It ranges from as short as 30 minutes for some online orientations to 4.5 hours for in-person or live virtual sessions. The choice of modality also varies, with some institutions offering a combination of in-person, online, and Zoom-based orientations to cater to different student preferences and needs.

Central New Mexico Community College (CNMCC) has implemented a noteworthy practice that we find intriguing and wish to consider implementing at SLCC. Specifically, CNMCC has established a structured orientation system that offers clear options for students, complete with detailed explanations of each orientation type. Their approach categorizes orientations based on the students' backgrounds, such as dual credit students (high school students taking

college courses), new students, and transfer and returning students. Moreover, CNMCC extends its support by providing a separate webpage dedicated to supporters and family orientation. This thoughtful and comprehensive approach to direction ensures that students and their families receive the information and guidance they need to succeed at the College. Due to low attendance, the Family and Supporter Orientations have been challenging for us. We discontinued this presentation and decided to restructure our approach to include the students' families and support systems. Incorporating similar practices can enhance our orientation program and serve our diverse student population better.

Our invaluable partnership with the Prison Education Program sets us apart from our peers. While relatively new, this orientation has proved to be a cornerstone of our commitment to equitable education. As we explore the move to an online-only modality, we will remain dedicated to providing essential in-person orientation to students in the Prison Education Program, ensuring they have access to resources and guidance for an informed educational journey at SLCC.

Lastly, we rely on professional associations to anchor our best practices and professional development. Our team is relatively active in NODA, with the director serving in various NODA committees in the past and staff attending NODA conferences regularly, even hosting a NODA regional conference at one point. The [NODA Core Competencies](#), which advance the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) guidelines for orientation programs, anchor our professional development. Lastly, after October 2023, all full-time professionals in the orientation and transition area will be graduates of NODA's Orientation Professionals Institute (OPI). The OPI curriculum is framed to help professionals understand the foundations

of Orientation, Transition, and Retention work. The primary focus of OPI is on new student orientation and the initial transition to the institution as a foundational step in the student transition experience, ultimately promoting student retention.

## VII. Summary Analysis and Conclusion

Through this self-study, our department has outlined the strengths and growth opportunities of the Orientation and Transition area, which is a part of the Orientation and Student Success Department. Through this self-study, a couple of themes emerged:

1. Solid and expansive offerings with a history of serving the needs of new students.
2. Firm budget that funds personnel and programs. Yet, a rising concern for staff is pressure to expand services as SLCC continues to grow amidst a stagnant budget that has yet to grow for the past five years.
3. Readiness to move towards embedding a culture of assessment and evidence in all our programs, focusing on closing the loop on the collected data.
4. Highly collaborative area with room to strengthen partnerships.
5. Robust program rooted in best practices.

Additionally, we've identified several tensions that we hope to explore through the on-site review visit. These themes have been alluded to throughout this self-study, and the lingering questions have been summarized below to guide the on-campus site visit:

1. Should we continue to offer various orientation programs with varying costs and time commitments or create a single orientation entry point with optional campus visits?
2. How do we effectively serve a multi-campus institution, given limits in staff and budgets?



3. How can we transition orientation from a single event to a process with multiple checkpoints and an engaging undercurrent that drives student connections?
4. How could we become better partners to Academic Affairs and include faculty in our new student onboarding process?
5. What's the right balance between offering orientation programs that meet the needs of all students versus individualizing content to make information more relevant to highly diverse students? SLCC serves as the only comprehensive community college in the state of Utah.

As a team, we are excited about the on-campus visit and look forward to making changes that will assist us in better serving our students. Thank you for taking the time to read through this document, and we hope it has served you well in understanding the Orientation and Transition area in depth.