

## Orientation Descriptions from CAHEA Institutions

The following is a table that compares the orientation practices of CAHEA institutions that responded to my question on the CAHEA listserv. Below the table are the actual email responses that provide further detail and specifics about these practices. My hope is that this may be helpful to all institutions as we further improve our work with adult students.

	<b>Wisconsin Lutheran College</b>	<b>Mid-Continent University</b>	<b>Simpson University</b>	<b>Life Pacific University</b>	<b>MidAmerica Nazarene University</b>	<b>Palm Beach Atlantic University</b>	<b>Olivet Nazarene University</b>	<b>Judson University</b>
<b>Time Frame</b>	1 week prior to first class for all accepted students	Unknown	3 orientations a year (Fall, Spring, Summer)		When program begins	First course in program	1 week before program begins	First course in program
<b>Length</b>	2 hours	3.5 hours	2.5 hours	1 week	8 hours (then program is online)	3 hour course (Leadership for Academic Success)	2 hours average	5 class meetings @ 4 hours per class
<b>Location</b>	Computer lab on campus	Same location where cohort will meet	Building on campus, different classroom for each stop	Online	On Campus	On campus or online	Same location where cohort will meet	On campus and online
<b>Orient Online?</b>	Yes, starting in January	Working on official one, students now are assisted individually	First online orientation this spring	Orientation is ALL online	Unknown	Course is offered online	Yes, for distance programs	Yes
<b>Reps Present</b>	10 faculty and staff members in total who attend the orientation along with the students from our business office, instructional technology, financial aid,	One administrator and at least one team member from financial aid, advising, and registration for a total of at least 5, depending on the size of the group.	All of the Continuing Studies staff is present and each one is responsible to present the information that pertains to their area of oversight. Other departments on	N/A	Graduate staff, many faculty	N/A	Advisor, ONU Chaplain, first course faculty member, administrator (occasionally)	

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	and AGS offices		campus, i.e., Financial Aid, Admissions and the bookstore all send representatives.					
<b>Agenda</b>	Activate ID cards, activate email accounts, meet representatives, meet their first instructor, campus tour, visit to classroom	Meet cohort members, meet key staff members, celebrate decision to return to school, get paperwork in place, review policies, finalizes registration and financial aid, accepts payments, delivers books, eat food	ID pictures, financial aid, bookstore, President's welcome, Dean's welcome, Admission Team welcome, etc.	MLA, utilizing college resources, adult learning, Blackboard, policies and procedures, Camtasia videos for most of the major items	Finish up Registrar and Financial Aid work, Moodle orientation, library resources, writing assessment, group orientation exercises, review of campus resources, overview of course, tips for success	Technology orientation, using library resources, degree planning, prior learning credits, introduction to next course, writing and APA, study skills	Technology orientation, library orientation, welcome, meet first course instructor, welcome from ONU Chaplain and description of chaplaincy offerings, book delivery (where applicable), visit classroom, etc.	Technology and Blackboard orientation, degree planning, writing diagnosis, welcome, review of resources, academic skill development, student strength assessment, intro to APA
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### Full Descriptions:

#### Wisconsin Lutheran College:

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Wisconsin Lutheran College conducts an orientation a week prior before the first class of each cohort for all accepted students on our campus. We hold the meeting within one of our computer labs so that the students are able to activate their Student ID cards and email accounts. Currently, we are in the process of developing an online orientation for our first online cohorts which will start in January.

The orientation generally lasts for about two hours. Students are able to meet representatives from our financial aid, business office, library, instructional technology office, their instructor for their first course, and the staff members of the Adult & Graduate Studies staff of WLC. Our students also received their Student ID cards and are able to activate their student email and MyWLC accounts. The orientation wraps up with a campus tour and showing students the location of their first class for the following week.

We have around 10 faculty and staff members in total who attend the orientation along with the students from our business office, instructional technology, financial aid, and AGS offices.

Hope this information helps.

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### Mid-Continent University

Jonathon,

This is an excellent question and perhaps a good topic for a CAHEA workshop. I am eager to compare our process with others and perhaps incorporate some new ideas into what we do.

At Mid-Continent University, we are working on a format for an official online orientation for our online students. At this time we don't have one and students are assisted one at a time. We are recognizing there must be a better way to do this. See my responses below for face to face cohort groups.

The purpose of our orientation is multi-fold. It provides an opportunity

- For cohort members to meet one another as well as key staff members who will be serving them throughout their experience.

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- To celebrate the cohort members decision to return to school and reassure them they have made a wise choice.
- To get all their paper work in place to ensure that they and we have received everything needed for a successful start.
- To review the policies and procedures of ADVANTAGE.

Since I am very familiar with our orientation process, I am going to go into far more detail than you may be seeking, but after years of doing orientations and fine tuning the process, there may be an idea or two that may be helpful to you.

At Mid-Continent we have cohort groups in about 30 different towns/cities, up to 5.5 hours from campus. We do not have campuses in these locations, but rather utilize facilities within that community. The orientation happens at the same meeting place as the group's classes. The admissions representative attends because he/she is the one person that already knows the student and this is the official "changing of the guard". We bring in a team that includes myself (or another administrator), and at least one team member from financial aid, advising, and registration for a total of at least 5, depending on the size of the group. This team registers, advises, finalizes financial aid, accepts payment, and delivers books. This process begins at 5:00 and usually ends around 8:30. Students sign in when they arrive and are called in the order that they signed in to complete the registration process which includes 3 stations that they visit in this order: 1) Advising 2) Financial Aid and then 3) Registration/books/business office functions. At about 6:00 we begin the actual orientation, with class members coming in and out as needed to meet with f.a. and advising. We always bring in food for our orientation. Typically I lead the orientation. We have close to 2,000 adult students and by doing the orientations I feel like I have met all our students at a minimum at the beginning and at the end (graduation). At the beginning of the orientation, we have some handouts for them to review. These are very helpful. One of the handouts is the bi-monthly newsletter that they will begin receiving. This gives them a sense of what is ahead of them as they see pictures of other cohort groups who are graduating, read tidbits about the programs, etc. Another orientation item is a multi-page handout that includes several pages. One of these pages is dedicated to a collection of comments made from graduates about their experience... reassuring newbies that they can achieve their goal. The next page gives government statistics regarding the financial benefits of education as it relates to employment, salary, etc. The last item in this handout is info on accessing various online library resources. Because we have classes in many different facilities, we have an additional handout that is a facility agreement with the host site so that we can pass along to the students facility highlights and appropriate usage. This is important for us as sometimes classes are hosted by churches, hospitals, businesses, etc. and we want to be sure students are familiar with the services and expectations of the host. After we have reviewed all handouts, students have an opportunity to participate. They are invited to introduce themselves, responding to specific questions. They end by sharing "what their motivation is to get their degree". This is one of the most important things we do at the orientation as the students start "buying into" one another's goals and dreams. I even bring that to their attention, the fact that this is the very beginning of what the cohort experience is like and they will see the relationships blossom as they progress through the curriculum. After this we break for refreshments. When we resume, we begin the somewhat tedious job of going through the policies and procedures of our adult program. We want to be sure they don't experience any surprises. I also weave in to the discussion some items they should be prepared for, such as the amount of time

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they might expect to spend on homework. Hopefully we will not hear later on “no one told me there would be this much work”. You are probably smiling as you read this because you know full well some will still say that. After we complete the review of this manual, they are given a brief overview of their first module and homework assignment, as we require them to do an assignment prior to the first night of each new module. The evening is wrapped up by giving them the final word, which is the task of putting into one word how they feel about their life changing decision to go back to school. This is a very important ending to orientation because it is usually a good mixture of words, with excited and anxious being the two most common emotions expressed. This gives me a chance to conclude with the observation that it is a time of mixed emotions and if they are nervous, etc., that is a very common feeling when making such a big decision and that each of them are probably feeling all of the words expressed by their peers to varying degrees.

Students can “chicken out” between orientation and the first night of class so it is a balancing act between reassuring them that everything will be wonderful and informing them of the challenges of being a student. I attempt to accomplish both.

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### **Simpson University**

Simpson University has three different starts for our ASPIRE (Continuing Studies) Program. We have an Orientation for each of those starts; fall, spring & summer.

Until this spring, all of our offerings were face to face and so the Orientation(s) were as well. This spring we will offer our first entirely online Organizational Leadership major. We will accommodate the online students with their very own "online" orientation.

Orientation is mandatory for all of our students and the entire evening is about 2.5 hours in length. All of the Continuing Studies staff is present and each one is responsible to present the information that pertains to their area of oversight. Other departments on campus, i.e., Financial Aid, Admissions and the bookstore all send representatives.

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On the night of Orientation we "take over" one of the buildings on campus and use a separate classroom for each stop. The main hall is divided into "alphabetical lines" where each student will pick up their personal packet according to their major.

All of the rooms are numbered and the student receives a map. Step #1: ID pictures, #2: financial aid, #3: go to the Bookstore, etc. At 6:00 the students assemble into the main classroom for the Orientation presentation. Our President gives the opening welcome and some highlights of Simpson University. The Admissions Team congratulates the students on getting all of their paper work completed and has now notified those students that might still need to submit documents. The Director of Enrollment then does an "official" handoff to the ASPIRE Team. This is where I (the dean) address them for the first time as ASPIRE students and introduce the rest of my staff. I am leaving out quite a bit for the sake of time but would be more than glad to elaborate in a phone conversation.

All of the information in the packet is color coded. This packet includes:

Handbook

Registration Form with class schedules and room assignments

Bookstore packet

Green: ASPIRE Highlighted Policies

Pink: ASPIRE Highlighted Services

Purple: ASPIRE Highlighted Resources

Blue: Bookstore Hours

Goldenrod: Data Collection Form

Yellow: Ferpa

Purple: Handbook Receipt Slip

Yellow: What to do before your first class v2

Yellow: Orientation Map

Blue: cardstock Contact Business Cards

I hope this information helps. I will look forward to you sharing the responses you receive with all of us.

Patty Taylor, MA

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## Life Pacific College

We do our orientation all online. Here is the basic outline:

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The purpose is to acquaint the student with major aspects of the program, policies, and procedures.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The student who successfully completes this orientation should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of how to write in MLA style
- Utilize college resources (especially the library) available to degree completion students
- Identify issues facing adult learners and the ingredients for success as a non-traditional student
- Understand the Blackboard course management system and how to succeed as an online learner
- Understand the various Degree Completion Program policies and procedures
- Develop a plan to fulfill student ministry requirements
- Develop a plan to fulfill any prerequisites and/or additional credits needed to complete the program (if necessary)

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Complete the Learning to Use Blackboard course
- Participate in the online dialogues
- Develop a brief plan showing how students intend to complete any missing course requirements (if you have not already done this as part of your admissions process).
- Develop a brief plan showing how students intend to fulfill their ministry formation requirements
- Take a quiz showing that the student understands various aspects of the program

### COURSE SCHEDULE:

Students can complete the orientation from September 27th - October 3rd, and should have all assignments turned in no later than Monday October 4th, which is the day that Foundations for Leadership begins. You will not be able to enter your first course until this entire orientation is complete, including the submission of your ministry formation plan (but excluding your prerequisite fulfillment worksheet. Some of you are still await final admissions approval and so will need to wait until this is complete and your final acceptance letter is received.)

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We have created videos and Camtasia presentations covering most of the major points; our Registrar wants to add something on policies for dropping a class as well, we may add this in the future.

Hope this helps, blessings,

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### **MidAmerica Nazarene University**

Jonathan,

At MidAmerica Nazaren in our School of Business, Adult Studies program we have a Public Administration program that we use a one day(8 hour) onground orientation. The next 52 weeks of that program are online.

We finish up any Registrar's Office or Financial Aid needs, orientation to Moodle (our learning platform), library resources; both on ground and electronic, writing assessment, group orientation exercises, and campus resources.

We have a number of our faculty who teach in the PA program attend to meet the students and give them a brief overview of their course. Some add some tips for success.

I will look forward to your overall results of this inquiry.

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### **Palm Beach Atlantic University**

All new students take a required (Gen Ed.) 3-hour course called Leadership for Academic Success. This course replaced our previous orientation day (Saturday) that did not end up working well for us. The course (like all of our undergrad courses) are offered both onground and online. With this course we can cover all of the various areas in greater depth and students see the course as a part of their academic program rather than "just" an orientation. In this course we cover ...

- technology (eCollege, myPBA)
- using library resources
- degree planning
- Professional Education credits (Prior Learning)
- Introduction to Leadership (our undergrad degree is Org. Management)
- Intro to writing and APA requirements
- study skills for adult students
- etc.

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### **Judson University**

Thank you so much for the chart! I just signed up for the list serve, so I didn't get my info to you.

## Orientation Descriptions from CAHEA Institutions

At Judson, our orientation is included in the first course of the cohort program:

Time Frame and Length: 5 class meetings @ 4 hours per class

Location: On campus and online

Agenda: technology and Blackboard orientation, degree planning, writing diagnosis, welcome, review of resources, academic skill development, student strength assessment, intro to APA

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