

Building on a Legacy

The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) has a long standing history and legacy of access and success. Each year the program coordinates a special event to welcome its incoming freshmen and transfer students as they transition to the university. This New EOP Student Welcome (NESW) is designed to provide a formal introduction to the history, legacy, benefits, services, and expectations of the program as well as to positively impact our students' sense of belonging and connection with the university, program, staff, and students of EOP. 237 newly admitted EOP freshmen participated in the morning session and 111 newly admitted EOP transfer participated in the afternoon session on September 10, 2013.

Desired Outcomes

To determine if participation in the NESW successfully introduces our incoming freshmen and transfer students to the history, legacy, benefits and services of EOP and positively impacts their sense of belonging and connection with the university, program, staff, and students of EOP, the following learning outcomes have been established:

Following participation students will be able to: 1.) describe the EOP history and legacy; 2.) name at least two of the services offered to EOP participants; 3.) define the conditions to maintain EOP status; 4.) indicate a stronger sense of connection to EOP than prior to attending the event.



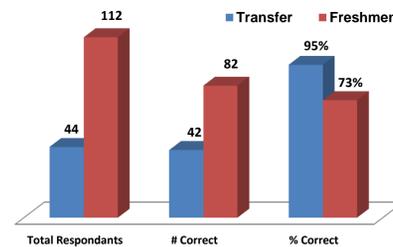
Methodology

All incoming First-Time-Freshmen and First-Time-Transfer EOP students were invited to attend the NESW sessions as a mandatory event. After the sessions, an email online assessment was sent to all students who attended the NESW event (n = 348). This online assessment included open-ended and forced choice questions designed to measure the learning outcomes of the program, as well as one needs assessment question to identify other information students want to know with regard to their college experience. Responses were collected through CampusLabs, the Division of Student Affairs' online assessment source.

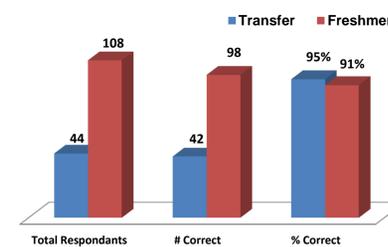
Results

The graphs display the responses to the learning outcomes assessment questions in aggregate as well as transfer and freshmen specific results.

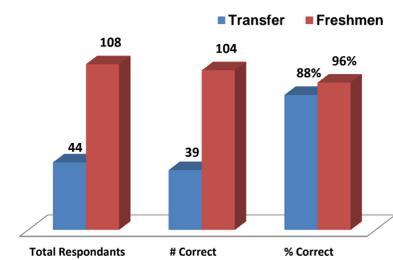
Describe EOP: Its history, purpose, and legacy.



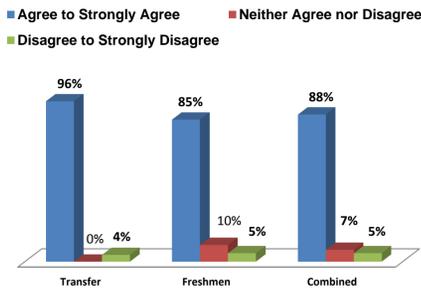
Identify requirements to maintain EOP status.



Provided you honor the provisions of the EOP Acceptance Agreement, how long will you remain in EOP?



I feel better connected with the program and its services.



Other Topics To Aid Transition

In addition to the learning outcomes questions, participants were asked to identify other key topics they wished to learn more about to aid their transition to Cal Poly Pomona.

Top four Freshmen responses (n=108)

- 88 (81%) "I want to learn how to search for internships/jobs;"
- 86 (80%) "I want to learn how to be a good exam taker;"
- 83 (77%) "I want to learn to study like a college student;"
- 82 (76%) "I want to learn about the careers my major will prepare me for."

Top four Transfer responses (n=44)

- 38 (87%) "I want to learn more about scholarship opportunities to pay for college;"
- 37 (84%) "I want to learn how to search for internships/jobs;"
- 30 (68%) "I want to learn how to create a graduation plan;"
- 29 (66%) "I want to learn about the careers my major will prepare me for."

Conclusion

In general, the majority of the EOP students in attendance were satisfied with the overall offerings of the New EOP Student Welcome, demonstrated a good understanding of our learning outcomes, and believed they gained a greater sense of connection with EOP, its history, staff, students, services, and benefits.

We learned that the needs of our transfer students are different from those of the freshmen. While both freshmen and transfer indicated a high interest in when it comes to learning about scholarships and financial aid to support their education, as well as with learning about internships and jobs, freshmen focused more on how to become a successful college student, transfers focused more on how to develop a plan to graduate in a timely manner. This data will be used to guide our advising, college success seminar, and tutorial services planning and programming.

Offering the NESW event to incoming EOP students, therefore, proves valuable for our students to connect with other EOP students, our staff, as well as university faculty in attendance. It also clarifies EOP requirements for students from the very beginning of their college career. Finally, the results from this assessment inform our program about specific topics students want to learn more about, which can be used for programming and services developed through the year.

Implications for Practice

Based on the assessment results, the learning outcomes of the NESW are being met at a relatively good rate. Offering a special program for freshman students separate from transfer students proved successful and this format will be used again for 2014. Greater attention will be given to providing better activities to allow participants more time to get to know one another to create a better sense of connection as members of EOP. The results will also help the advising team to plan for group advising and college success seminars throughout the year to assist both freshmen and transfer students in their first year transition, especially as it relates to financial issues and career development. In order to improve the assessment response rate, the online tool will be made available immediately following the event rather than three weeks later.

