



## Orientation Script

The Orientation is given every year and includes new and returning students. The exercises can be changed slightly to keep it fresh. Also, many times returning students can be used to help facilitate the sessions. Appendix D, p. 88 of the Handbook presents a “Sample Agenda for a Four-Hour Orientation” that should be reviewed. It differs slightly from the orientation presented here.

The Orientation slides have been divided into different modules so that you can choose what you want to cover depending on the time that you have.

### File Name: Orientation-Introduction

#### INTRODUCTIONS:

**Note:** The purpose of the activity is to provide a warm-up and to establish connections with attendees. While this is an optional activity, it allows the attendee to get to meet others and find out something personal about them.

**Facilitator:** Have students fill out nametags. The items on the nametags can be changed as you wish.

#### ORIENTATION OVERVIEW:

**Note:** This slide describes the purpose and benefits of the orientation

##### Purpose:

- Facilitate assimilation of new students
- Increase ownership of model—a goal of the orientation is to help students understand how affinity research groups are different from other research groups; emphasize how the model supports student success.

##### Benefits:

- Understand basic group/research skills—the orientation has numerous activities that build basic team skills and reviews research skills
- Reevaluate model—the orientation provides you an opportunity

**Facilitator:** Review the slide Let the attendees know that the orientation is divided into four major sections (objectives are discussed in next slide):

- Philosophy and Purpose
- Research Activities and Skills
- Cooperative Team Skills
- Competing Concerns

#### OBJECTIVES

**Facilitator:** Review of the objectives of the orientation.

- Philosophy and Purpose
  - To understand the motivation for being involved in an ARG
  - To learn about ARG's philosophy and purpose
- Research Activities and Skills
  - To discuss the purpose and activities of research
  - To engage in ARG activities that develop a basic research plan
- Cooperative Team Skills
  - To learn and practice the basic elements of a cooperative team
- Competing Concerns
  - For faculty to hear concerns of students
  - For students to hear concerns of faculty

**File Name: Philosophy-Goals**

**Objective: To introduce students to the philosophy and values of affinity research groups.**

**Facilitator:** Start off by putting the attendees into groups of three. Divide the number of attendees by three and count off by that number. Tell the groups where to gather (e.g., all the 1's will meet on the left side in the front of the room, the 2's in the middle of the front side of the room, etc.). Give the groups time to gather and introduce themselves to each other.

**Brainstorming slide:**

**Note:** Brainstorming is an important skill to learn and practice. It also is a good skill for coming up with innovative ways to address a problem. It's important to use brainstorming periodically in activities that you do throughout the year

**Facilitator:** On the brainstorming slide, emphasize the importance of not discussing responses.

**Roles slide:**

**Note:** Assigning roles is a way that students learn how to work in teams. On p. 8 of the Handbook, you will find a variety of roles that can be assigned when students are placed in teams. Role assignments are integrated into any activity that involves teams, and will be used in particular in the ARG workshops. Role assignments are critical to students learning how to work in cooperative teams and professional environment. When you look at the elements of cooperative teams, role assignments belongs to: Professional skills.

**Facilitator:** Randomly assign roles to members of the group. Order the members using a scheme such as: "rank yourselves based on who has traveled the farthest" or "rank yourselves based on birthdates", for example. It's important to discuss each role in terms of what an observer would see or hear if a person was "practicing" the particular role, picking one role to spend more time discussing. A recorder will have eye contact with members of the group and will be writing what he or she hears. The time keeper should checking the time and letting people know how much time remains: Example things that would be said are: "We have one more minute left." For the role of direction giver, emphasize that the direction giver should understand the task at hand. Ask: "What are the types of things that a direction giver might say when the group is brainstorming?" Here, you may want to go back to the brainstorming slide. It's important for students to articulate what they would say if they were practicing a particular role.

**Lumina slide:**

**Note:** The purpose of this section is to give the students a statement and have them reflect on it. Students need to know about the crisis that the US is in regarding the low number of students, in particular those from underrepresented populations, who are going to college and to advanced degrees, in particular in STEM areas. You can use quotes from *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, or other publications. This quote is from the Lumina Foundation.

**Facilitator:** In order to introduce the philosophy and goals of affinity groups, begin by discussing some questions that are relevant to the goals of affinity group. Read the Lumina statement and go over the questions. Remind the time keeper that he or she needs to watch the time to ensure that both questions are answered.

Start the activity. If possible, have flip charts for the groups to write down their answers.

**Report Out Slide:**

**Facilitator:** (Optional) Give the teams a couple of minutes to prioritize their responses.

Call on the recorder from each team to contribute their number one response to question 1. If the response has already been given, then ask them to go to the next one on the list that has not been said. Go around the room until all groups have responded. You may ask if there is another response that the groups feel need to be recorded. Write down responses on a flip chart and place on the wall. Do the same for question 2.

**Grassroots slide:**

**Facilitator:** The purpose of this slide is to discuss the importance that each person plays in making a difference. While organized initiatives are important, every person can play a role in making a difference. Many of the bullets may have already been said by the groups, and it is important to validate what they came up with—add to the list on the slide or point out that the point had already been made.

**ARG Goals Slide:**

**Facilitator:** State that the ARG model was developed to engage students and facilitate their success. By being a member of an ARG, students will have the “tools” needed to succeed both in school and outside of school.

**Affinity Research Group Slide:**

**Note:** Decide if you want to keep the yellow box at the bottom. Our philosophy is to expand participation in research, and we are open about it.

**Facilitator:** We use this slide to talk about the features of ARG- The inner circle gives the goals of increasing retention, increase the number of students involved in research, and to facilitate the research process. What’s on the outer parts of the circle is what research has shown improves persistence:

- Faculty interact with students outside of the classroom
- Provide role models and mentors for students—students relate to others who have similar life experiences; students will persist if they see others succeed who are like them
- Establish a student culture in the department (Affinity Research Groups provides a home for students)
- Help students set clear, realistic, and attainable goals

The other two items in the circle are the skills that an ARG focuses on. The bullets show some of the features of an ARG.

- Integration of diverse students (involve undergraduate and graduate students; students with different abilities and strength)
- Cooperative group interaction (team skills are taught and practiced)
- Deliberate and intentional development of skills (skills will be developed through workshops)
- Support structure (students work as a team; may have individual tasks, but they belong to a research group)
- Best practices (ARG documents and promotes best practices)

### **Core Values Slide**

**Facilitator:** This presents the core values of a research group that adopts an ARG model: Going over the values helps students understand that, as a member of an ARG, the faculty mentors are committed to their success and the success of the research projects.

- *Student Success:* An ARG values the deliberate development of skills in each student to ensure their success.
- *Cooperation:* An ARG values cooperation in all interactions, including mutual respect of opinions and ideas of all members, promotive interaction, positive interdependence, and individual accountability.
- *Excellence:* An ARG values excellence and strives to achieve it in all its actions.

### **File Name: Team-Skills**

**Objective: To facilitate the students' awareness of how they work in groups and to provide a basic understanding of cooperative groups.**

**Note:** Activity 1 provides a way for students to rate themselves and see where they are in teams. This provides a way to begin monitoring the students' growth as members of an ARG.

### **Task/Maintenance Questionnaire Slide:**

**Facilitator:** Questionnaire can be found on p. 92 of the handbook Appendix.

1. Direct students to questionnaire and have them fill it out.
2. Pass out scoring sheet and have students fill it out.
3. Discuss the scoring sheet.

Typically, group interaction can be broken down into two sets of actions: task actions and maintenance actions. Task skills are those skills that are required to complete a task, such as understanding what needs to be done, being able to give direction to the group, assessing understanding, keeping the group motivated and on task, and aggregating everyone's contribution and/or understanding. Maintenance deals more with interpersonal skills--making sure that everyone is contributing, making sure that everyone gets along, and being a positive force in the group.

Being low in one area indicates that some attention should be spent in improving other skills. There must be a balance between getting things done and working well with your team members.

**Cooperative Group Skills Slide:**

**Facilitator:** Review the 5 elements of a cooperative group. See pp. 5-7 of Handbook for discussion of the elements. Talk briefly about the elements. Students will be going over them in more detail in the next activity.

**Task (Jigsaw) Slide:**

**Facilitator:** Randomly create new groups of three by counting off. Ask those with the same number to get together. Have them introduce themselves to each other. Come up with a technique to have the members of each group rank themselves, e.g., by next birthday or number of buttons/pockets on their clothes.

Review the rules of jigsaw. See description of the technique on p. 90 of the Handbook. Tell the group to remember who their members are. Now have all the 1's go into a group, 2's, and 3's.

Let the groups know that all the 1's will assigned positive Interdependence; 2's will be assigned promotive interaction and social skills; 3's will be assigned individual accountability. Their task is to read their assigned material, learn the material, and teach it to the members of their original group (who will learn it as well as they have learned it). They will be able to work with the members of their group to come up with a way to make it memorable.

**Strategy for Presentation Slide:**

**Facilitator:** Ask the groups: What makes a lesson or presentation effective?

**Strategy for Presentation (VAM) Slide;**

**Facilitator:** Talk about the VAM strategy (make their individual presentations Visual, Active, and Memorable). Encourage them to be creative. Have them read the handout and discuss a strategy for presenting it to their groups. Pass out flip chart paper to each member so that they can have something to draw on for presenting their material to members of their original group. Emphasize that they will have 5 minutes to teach the elements assigned to them. Walk around as students/faculty are working so that you can answer questions about the material if necessary. You want to make sure that everyone understands what they will be teaching to others.

**Presentation Slide:**

**Facilitator:** Get everyone back to their original group. Tell them that they each have 5 minutes to teach their lesson to the other team members. Call time after 5 minutes so that the next person can present their material. Repeat for the next person.

**Processing Slide:**

**Note:** This exercise is one way in which students can process and reflect on what has just occurred.

**Review Slide:**

**Note:** This is optional and could be moved to the end of the orientation.

**Code of Conduct Slides:**

**Note:** These are optional. However, Karl Smith's code of conduct has some interesting points.

**File Name: Research-Goals**

**Goals of Research Slide**

**Facilitator:** Have all the students stand. Create groups of 3-5 (depending on number of students). Do the same for faculty mentors.

**Brainstorming Questions Slide:**

**Facilitator:** Let the groups know that they will be brainstorming again. Roles will not be assigned. Ask someone in the team to record the answers and another to check time. Review the questions with the groups.

**Discussion Procedure:**

**Note:** You can enhance this slide by providing a procedure for the groups to prioritize. Let the group know that you will be calling on someone randomly to answer for the group (this is one way of structuring individual accountability).

**Thank you slide:**

**Note:** This is modeling promotive interaction—acknowledging contributions of your team.

**Students Report Out:**

**Facilitator:** Randomly call on one member of the group to share one response that was high on their list. Facilitator should write down responses to post in the room. This is repeated until the facilitator has heard from every group.

**Goals of Research and Activities Slide:**

**Note:** This slide is optional. The information on these slides is typical of the answers we receive when we do this activity. Typically, we go with what the students provide since it is usually complete. This slide allows you to validate what was said and offer other goals and activities.

**Faculty Report Out:**

**Facilitator:** Repeat the same as for the students.

**Benefits and Attributes Slides:**

**Notes:** These slides summarize benefits and attributes and should reaffirm what you have already heard.

**ARG Framework Slides:**

**Note:** The concepts on the slides presented here are described in more detail on p. 28 of the Handbook.

**Research Project Framework Slide**

**Notes:** The research project framework addresses feedback from the evaluation of the model that revealed that students did not understand the significance of their assigned tasks. To address this shortcoming, assigned tasks are mapped to the mission and goals of each research project. For each project, faculty mentors clearly define the mission statement, goals, and tasks that are needed to complete these goals and dependencies among tasks. This information is accessible to all group members. Each student is required to define activities that are needed to complete each assigned task and to propose associated timelines.

**Benefits:** Students learn to manage the research project and understand the importance of their work towards completion of the project. By showing dependencies among assigned tasks, positive interdependence among research group members develops. Having students define activities assures faculty mentors that students understand the steps needed to complete tasks. Timelines help students

define clear goals and balance their time between research tasks and coursework. The framework also helps faculty mentors monitor students when they are assigned multiple tasks.

#### **Defined Deliverables Slide**

**Notes:** See handbook.

#### **Group Meetings Slide:**

**Notes:** The weekly meetings are necessary in order to ensure the progression of research. These meetings can include such things as report progress, refine weekly goals, solve problems, and discuss research. The meetings, which bring together students working on the same research project, should be structured; i.e., include an agenda, review of the last meeting's minutes, status reports, and discussion of problems encountered. Group discussion helps relieve some of the frustration that a student may feel when a task changes and brainstorming can help solve problems articulated by student researchers. Students may be asked to "teach" new concepts, present technical paper summaries, present significant research contributions that have been identified as milestones, and explain technical issues relevant to completing tasks. Constructive criticism is emphasized at meetings. Students can alternate the role of setting an agenda, compiling and recording meeting minutes, which document research progress, and facilitating the meeting.

By-products of these meetings include building positive interdependence, practicing face-to-face promotive interaction, structuring individual accountability, practicing oral and written communication skills, and developing domain expertise. The format aids in revision of research goals, tasks, and methodology. One student takes the minutes of the meeting, while another facilitates the meeting. A large segment of a meeting can be devoted to discussion or a presentation of a paper, research results, or an encountered problem that needs solving.

#### **Workshop Slide:**

**Note:** We have added workshops as a way of teaching skills to large groups of students across different groups. Workshops are similar to large group meetings in the handbook.

#### **File Name: Goals-Objectives**

**Note:** We have a Goals and Objectives workshop that goes into detail about how to write goals and objectives. This presentation is abbreviated. The objective of this set of slides is to have the research mentors share their research goals with the students. After objectives are discussed and examples reviewed, then the discussion will go to developing a research plan. You may not want to go into different examples of timelines. You may not have time to come up with a research plan for the students, but you should allow enough time for students to get started on the tasks that they have. Perhaps the faculty mentor can begin the process prior to the workshop.

#### **File Name: Competing-Concerns**

**Note:** This is an important part of the orientation. It provides students with an opportunity to voice their concerns as well as faculty. It's important that faculty respond to students' concerns.

**Facilitator:** Separate the students and faculty. Each group is asked to come up with a list of concerns.

#### **Prioritize Slide:**

**Facilitator:** Give each person 4 dots and have them place the dots on the items that they think are most important to them.

**Report Out Slide:**

**Facilitator:** Have the students report out the points that received votes starting with the ones with the most votes. Do the same for the faculty report out. Discuss what you've heard.