NEW STUDENT AND FAMILY PROGRAMS

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The Office of New Student and Family Programs provides new students and their families with resources and programming to support the academic experience, helping students make a smooth transition to university life, offering new-student programs throughout the year and providing services to keep families and students connected to campus resources.

New Student Orientation

VCU offers an orientation program for incoming first-year and transfer students through the Office of New Student and Family Programs. The New Student Orientation program for first-time freshmen introduces students and their parents to the university, its expectations of them, campus resources, academic programs and courses offered. NSO provides opportunities for new students to interact with faculty, upper-level students and other new students. NSO participants can also meet with faculty members for information about their intended majors.

An important aspect of NSO is academic advising and registration. During advising, students meet with academic advisers to discuss their educational plans and course placement, and they choose classes for the first semester. Students also learn how to use the online registration system to register for classes.

NSO sessions are conducted throughout the summer preceding the fall semester and during the week before classes begin for the spring semester. The summer orientation program for new freshmen also includes a supplemental program for parents and other family members. The orientation evening program focusing on student life provides an opportunity to stay overnight in a VCU residence hall.

Transfer students new to VCU also attend an orientation program, which includes an introduction to the university and its resources, as well as an overview of majors, academic advising and registration. During the academic advising portion, students review how credits completed at another institution apply toward general education, major and elective requirements at VCU. Academic advisers also assist transfer students with selecting courses they will take during their first semester and help students to learn the online registration system used to register for classes.

Programs for parents and families of first-year VCU students

Parents and family members play an important role in their college students’ education. VCU believes that college is a collaborative experience among students, their families, and the faculty and staff of the university. Additionally, the Office of New Student and Family Programs offers several services for parents to support their first-year college students. Parent orientation is offered during the NSO, with programs geared specifically toward parents and their needs as a college parent.

Each fall the Office of New Student and Family Programs offers an online course for parents and family members where VCU faculty and university leaders discuss some of the key topics and issues in education today. “Beyond Orientation: Partnering for Success in Today’s University” provides a network for parents and family members that takes them beyond what they learn in orientation, allowing them a closer look at the first-year experience and what it means to be a student in today’s university. The course is designed to help parents and families relate to their students’ experiences.

Parents also receive a copy of the monthly Parent and Family newsletter via email. Parents may participate in the Freshman Parent Association, providing input on parent programming and events. Parents are encouraged to attend the VCU Fall Fest, as well, with activities planned particularly for families.