

Committee on Student Services
Monday February 25th, 2019 – 15:00 -17:00 PM
James 302

Present:

Jim Fyles, Ian Simmie, Réginal Labonté, Jacob Shapiro, Martine Gauthier, Jack Collis, Tatyana Romeus-Kebe, Sophie Courtemanche-Martel, Prof. Fabrice Labeau, Axel Hundemer, Kira Smith, Ariunaa Bayarsaikhan, Leslie Copeland, Alex Arkhilanian

Absent or Regrets: Dusica Maysinger, Vera Romano, Johnathan Phillip Britt, Sophia Esterle, Wajih Jawhar, Lina Di Genova, Rosella De Stefano, André Lametti, Jacqueline Leclair, Saumeh Saeedi-Tabar, Aimee K. Ryan, Robyn Lee

AGENDA

1. Approval of Agenda

- a. Agenda timing will be adjusted to accommodate the participation of Interim Deputy Provost Labeau.

The committee approved the agenda.

2. Approval of Minutes

Notes from the last meeting (attached)

The minutes from the last meeting were approved.

3. Business Arising

- a. Discussion of the role of University academic and administrative culture and process in the mental health burden of students.

J. Fyles: For the business arising, we will be looking at the role the university plays in the mental health burden of students. We will take advantage of Prof. Labeau's presence to discuss this topic. We want to inform ourselves on what the dimensions of the problem are and how to move forward.

J. Fyles: We should begin by thinking briefly to ourselves about whether it is an acute problem and ways to solve it.

J. Shapiro: One thing that is important is clarity and setting expectations at the beginning. Compassion is a second important thing. Creating exceptions can be fair but also exceptions can make things less fair. For example, a professor once made the point that grading a third language English student the same way they grade a first language English student would be unfair. Growth is also important, recognizing we are here to learn and that growth is a part of this.

J. Shapiro: Isn't stress part of the game at school? Yes, but there are situations where there is unnecessary stress and this harms students.

M. Gauthier: Equity versus equality is an important piece and sometimes there is confusion between the two.

M. Gauthier: We are seeing an increase in students struggling with academic distress visiting Counselling Services. McGill students have high academic stress compared to students in other universities, especially with U15.

A. Hundemer: It would be interesting to look into this to see why our students are more stressed, is it more exams or more assignments, etc? We have very good students so it is worrisome that we are so high in academic stress. Also, because we have such good students, we want to teach our students more and may over work them because of this. Perhaps there should be some conversation between the professors to discuss this issue more. A potential solution the Dean of Science brought up was to decrease the course content by 25%.

A. Hundemer: One reason there is so much stress among students is because of competition among students.

F. Labeau: Continuing with what Axel said, we put our students in situations that perpetuate stress. Our grading schemes and exams etc, perpetuate stress. For example, we should not grade on our curve, grading on a curve tells our students that they don't have to be good but better. It does not link their work to their achievements.

A. Arkhilanian: Since in Biology there were programs such as honours that's sole criteria was grades, it made it difficult to pursue those types of opportunities if you did not have high grades. However, there were alternative routes that did not rely on grades such as doing a research project where you are chosen based on you work with professors.

J. Shapiro: In a syllabus it may say to read 1000 pages. It is not always the case that all 1000 pages need to be read. Some students realize this and don't read all the pages, but others do not and this is unfair to them. For the clarity piece this is important.

J. Fyles: When starting the program at Mac that took both Arts and Science students, a worry was that Arts students would not be able to handle the math so a math requirement was created for Arts students and there was no requirement for Science students other than a science background. However, it was noticed that Science students were struggling with the readings because they were focusing on reading every page and word whereas Arts students were better prepared to skim their readings as was necessary.

S. Courtemanche-Martel: Professors give work as if students are only taking one class. This means students are unable to prioritize some classes and they are not always able to prioritize the courses they enjoy the most because of all the work given.

F. Labeau: Professors don't have a common understanding of what level work a 3 credit course entails. In Engineering, the rule is that a 3 credit course should not take more than 9 hours per week including in class lessons, tutorials, readings, and peak periods before exams, etc. Not all professors do these calculations when creating their syllabus and this is where the problem lies.

Students should not have more than 54 hours of work per week, but when professors go over their 9 hours then it becomes difficult for their students.

F. Labeau: The hope is that the Local Wellness Advisors (LWA) who will be hired in the Faculties will be able to bring that education to the professors. Right now we have professors who have different perspectives of when to provide exam accommodations or allow students to miss a test. With the LWAs we hope they will be able to educate the professors on this topic.

J. Fyles: This is why the assessment policy will be so important and great since it will provide at least a framework for what is acceptable and what isn't.

L. Copeland: We cannot forget that the students who come to the university are all A students. When they begin their first semester before everyone has filtered out, they are all stressed and worried because of this. This is why the the transition to university is so important.

F. Labeau: Since they are all A students, their first failure will be experienced here with us. How do we create a safety net for them?

J. Fyles: How do we get them to the end of their educational career at McGill without thinking they failed?

M. Gauthier: When talking to Alumni, they often say that they McGill was tough but they are grateful for it. Also, McGill has a high graduation rate. Therefore, it is somewhat hard to justify changing the rigorous program since we are graduating students.

F. Labeau: Alumni are telling our students that they learnt resiliency the hard way, but is there a way to teach them this the easy way?

M. Gauthier: Professors have not changed the way they teach in decades, so why is it affecting our students so much now?

J. Shapiro: It may not be that it is affecting student more now, but rather students are more open to speaking up.

4. SS and Rossy Hub Update

a. Martine, Vera

M. Gauthier: We continue to be on track with the renovations for the Hub. Renovations will be completed in May and some time afterwards will be spent testing the processes and procedures before opening since there are 225 processes and procedures. We have 7 LWAs in place and we will be hiring more, for ISS, Athletics, Management, Science and Graduate students.

M. Gauthier: Our 20 websites will be combined into one and we will be doing a launch of the virtual hub in the next few weeks.

K. Smith: How will the LWAs be evaluated?

M. Gauthier: There is a large process in place for evaluating the LWAs and this will be joint between the faculties and Student Services.

A. Bayarsaikhan: The LWAs have been given a toolkit to use to evaluate the needs of their faculties and feedback and we are currently collecting feedback from the Wellness 101 workshops.

M. Gauthier: Everything the LWAs do include 1-1s, groups and faculties they are embedded in will be closely reviewed especially within the first two weeks since this is the duration of the pilot.

A. Hundemer: Will the LWA participate in the faculty meetings and with the department?

M. Gauthier: The LWAs will be able to interact with the faculties so the LWAs can address the faculty needs. For example, Science really wants their LWA to help change the faculty in which case the LWA will be working on workshops etc. 30% of the LWAs' workload will be spent working with faculties.

5. McGill Orientation Survey

- a. Ian Simmie, Director, Campus Life and Engagement and Leslie Copeland, First Year Coordinator, Campus Life and Engagement

Ian Simmie and Leslie Copeland presented on Campus Life and Engagement (CL&E) Orientation. The presentation is attached to the meeting minutes.

S. Courtemanche-Martel: Having participated in Orientation as a leader, it is nice to see the impact it made. However, this is the first time these results have been shared.

L. Copeland: The feedback is given to the faculties but it seems the information has not been passed down.

J. Collis: During orientation, I noticed a divide between commuter students and residence students. How do you work to rectify this?

I. Simmie: The divide was noticed by CL&E as well and that is why an effort to integrate commuter programming and residence programming was made. Also the commuter coordinator works closely with residence.

R. Labonte: Why does the faculty of Law have low participation?

L. Copeland: The faculty of Law and Medicine do not participate in orientation as they host their own orientation. They do advertise the resources and sometimes ask someone from CL&E to speak but they host their orientation separately.

NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday March 20; 2:30-4:30, James 303.

**STUDENT
SERVICES**



Overview of Orientation at McGill



Overview

1. Introduction to O-Week & Goals
2. Changes Over Time
3. Students Helping Students –
Student Leadership
4. Questions

Introduction to O-Week

- Orientation Week
 - traditionally last week in August prior to start of class
 - full-year planning process starting with review of assessment results
- Discover McGill - 20 years old – Introduced in 2000 – Kicks off O-Week
 - Purpose to unify the University's welcome of new undergraduate students
 - Orientation culture change initiative – more integrated, cohesive program
 - Collaboration with campus-wide stakeholders – OPG and GOPG
- Discover Mac on the Macdonald Campus – more integrated week of orientation
- Discover McGill for Graduate Students introduced in 2010
- Tailored orientation for specific & diverse student populations (e.g., Francophone, Transfer, Commuter, Alternative Frosh programs)
- January Admits – In addition to January orientation they are invited to following Fall orientation activities

Goals of Orientation Week

- Inform new students and their parents of and/or provide academic, social and personal support programs and services
 - make strong, meaningful connections
 - create a sense of belonging and mattering
- Inform students on how to:
 - Get involved and make personal connections within the McGill and Montreal communities;
 - Develop academic and personal skills
 - Achieve a healthy lifestyle (i.e., health and wellness)

Changes Over Time


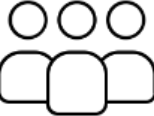





- Adapted Programming and Training to Address Institutional Priorities
 - Sustainability
 - Consent
 - Diversity/Inclusivity Awareness, e.g., Access Allies
 - Wellness e.g., Harm Reduction Team
 - More alternative, less alcohol-centric programming
- Orientation and transition process starts May 1st with new student communications (including emails, social media, webinars and McGill 101)
- Student Leadership = Increased responsibility and accountability
 - Frosh Advisory Committee (OSVRSE, ODOS, Student Reps)
- Orientation programming for first-year commuter students (undergrad & grad)

Overall Orientation Week Feedback

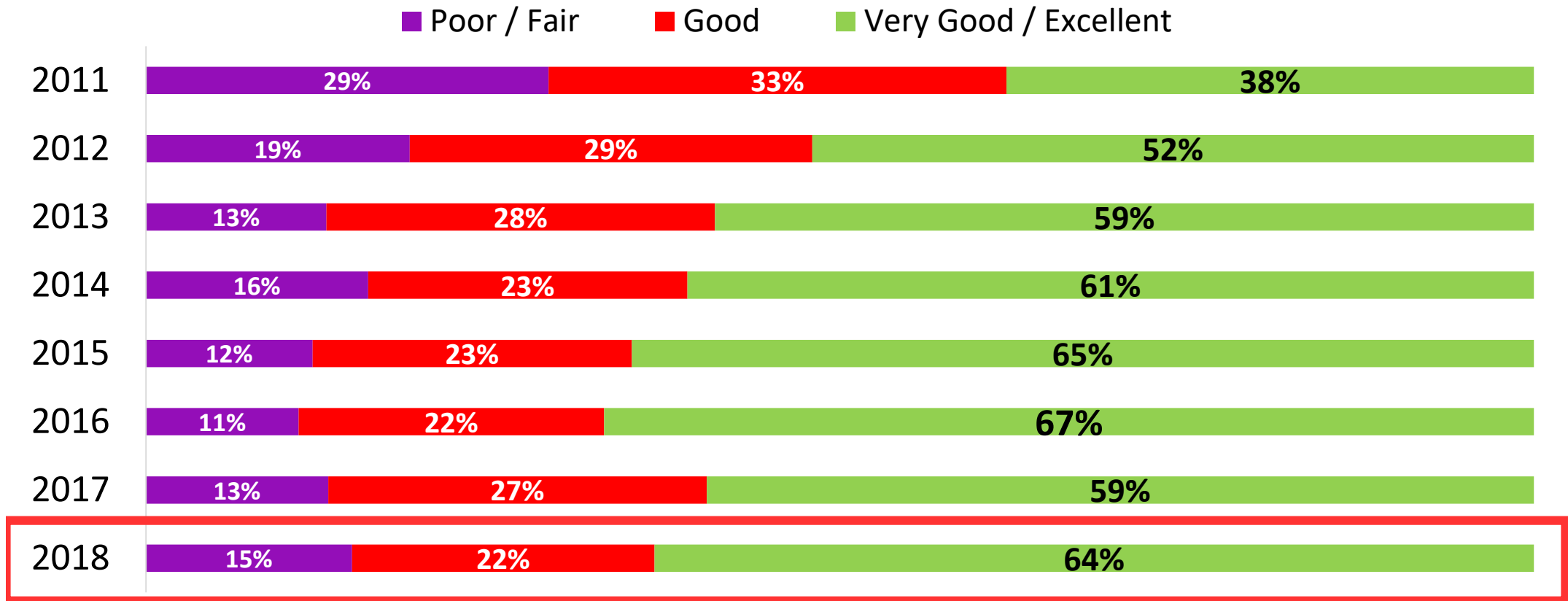
n=940

Percent of students who agreed with the following (Considerably & Great Deal)

	2017	2018	
	77%	79%	Felt welcomed at McGill.
	74%	74%	Met other students.
	69%	69%	Felt connected to McGill.
	60%	63%	Found information on how to get involved.
	39%	43%	Felt prepared to achieve a healthy lifestyle while at McGill.

Overall Orientation Week Experience Feedback

n=961



Students Helping Students

Students Invest in Helping New Students Transition to McGill Orientation Week Depends on Student Leaders & Volunteers

- Shared ownership and responsibility to create a healthier and safer orientation experience
- Students have partnered with the subject matter experts on the development of training content
- Students Helping Students – Volunteer Recruitment (1,800 volunteers) – campaign each spring to recruit for next year's orientation volunteers and other volunteer opportunities



Back in 2000...

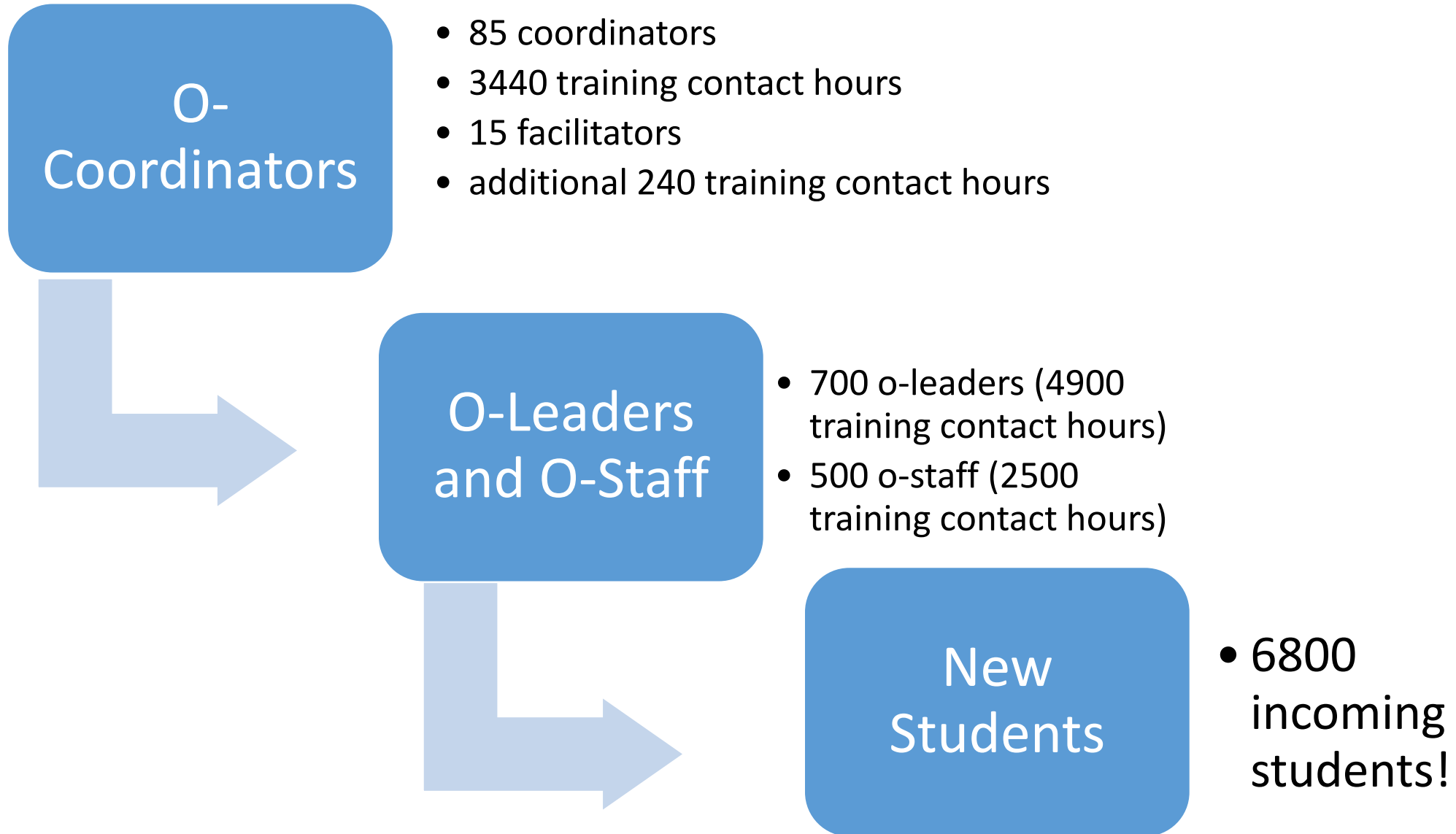
- 4,000 new undergraduate students in 2000
- We needed 400 volunteers – We had 75!

In 2018...

- 6,800 new undergraduate students in 2018
- 700 Orientation Leaders, 100 Logistical Volunteers just for Discover McGill
- Orientation Volunteers also make these programs happen:
 - Orientation Preparation, Student Matching Programs (CL&E and ISS), Grad Ambassadors, Off-Campus Connects, Grads Connect, January Connects, Logistical Volunteers, Faculty & Non-Faculty Frosh, O-Staff

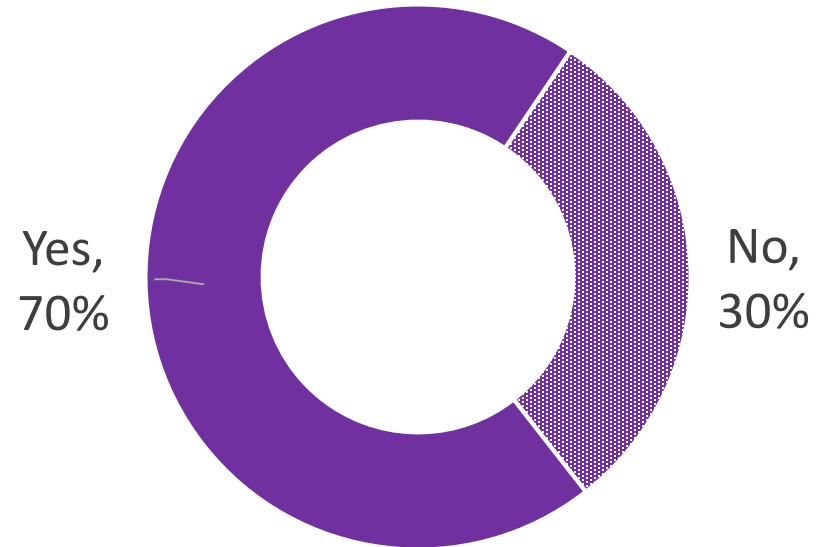
There are over 1800 O-Week Volunteers!
Students Helping Students

Students Helping Students



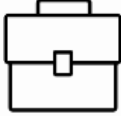



Faculty Frosh

Participation in Faculty Frosh was 70% in both 2017 & 2018



Student Feedback on Leadership

Percent of Orientation Leaders Who....

	2017	2018	
	91%	93%	Took their positions seriously.
	90%	92%	Made group members feel included and at ease.
	87%	89%	Came up with various activities for the group.
	90%	91%	Directed students to resources when necessary.

Questions

THANK YOU!

Any questions?

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