



**1,618** New Students Attended



**1,192** Families Attended

**4** PRE SEMESTER PROGRAMS

- First Look
- FreshFest
- JumpStart
- One Summer Weekend



What are they studying?



9.8% Business    25.1% Park  
8.1% Music    18.9% HSHP  
37.9% Humanities

**248**   
First-Gen Students

"I am happy my daughter is in IC's hands. I'm impressed and excited to watch her journey." **-IC Parent**



**MORE THAN 200** @ LGBTQA+Social



**20+**

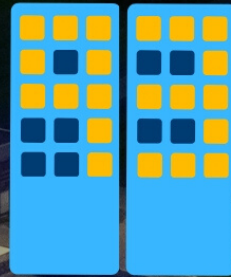
CAMPUS RESOURCE PRESENTATIONS

# FALL ORIENTATION

## Assessment Report



**152** Students of Color gathered at an Affinity Social



Resident Assistants Involved

**# We Are IC**



**20** Commuter Students



**85** Transfer Students

**OVER 34,000**

Meals Shared 

More than

**1,300 SCOOPS** OF ICE CREAM



It's a great day to be a  
FOMBER

Image: orientation staff uniform



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**“ [I enjoyed the] ability to interact with people outside of my specific major, and make great connections that will provide my start at Ithaca with much more security and confidence! ”**

- IC Student '23



Image: class of 2023 photo

The Office of New Student and Transition Programs has gathered feedback from the campus community through a mix of qualitative and quantitative data collection in order to assess the 2019 Fall Orientation program. This feedback collection includes; debrief meetings (with key stakeholders and the August Orientation Planning Committee - AOPC), comment cards (collected from families and guests), open forums (for Orientation Staff), a Qualtrics form (open to faculty, staff, and students), as well as a Skyfactor assessment survey (for all incoming students). For further breakdown, see Appendix A).

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Balanced Schedule:** Balancing a schedule that allows student to learn, engage, reflect, and re-energize

**Academic Transition:** Preparing students to be engaged learners, readied for academic success

**Class Cohort:** Founding class cohort through tradition and connection

**Family Program:** Committing to a high-caliber, family & friends orientation program that informs, reassures, and establishes key partnerships

**Specific Populations:** Intentional scheduling that allows students who hold multiple identities to participate in and celebrate all aspects of themselves

**Additionally:**

- Creating engaging, and experiential learning opportunities that encourage student participation
- Sharing timely and instructional information with students/families at key communication points that is simultaneously encouraging and stirring
- Introducing students to the broader Ithaca community through service, civic engagement, and exploration
- Focusing on the personal and social transition of students with emphasis on a need for deep connection points
- Launching an orientation program that is innovative and well-benchmarked, while honoring beloved traditions

# BALANCED SCHEDULE

that allows students to learn, engage, reflect, and reenergize



Images: two small groups of new students with Orientation Leaders/Mentors.

## length of program

One-hundred percent of the feedback from faculty, staff, student-staff, and new students regarding the length of orientation expressed that eight days was just too long. This was expressed in a number of ways including: "students seem to be engaged and energized until Saturday, when they began to complain of tiredness" and that students were "really tired on the last day of orientation." In addition, we received feedback that students "felt overwhelmed," "had a lack of downtime," and that the schedule "was too packed."

Therefore, we proposed a five-day orientation program with move-in on Tuesday, August 18th to consolidate the length of the program while ensuring we maintain our successful programs and continue to balance our program with virtually all required programming during the daytime, between 10 am – 5pm.

## meal rotations

During the first few days, when new students were assigned to a particular “group meal time,” we found that lines to get into the two dining halls were causing delays and heard anecdotally that some students even skipped a meal entirely.

Universally, student-staff, faculty, staff, and AOPC communicated that “[lines] seemed to be quite overrun.” Additionally, we noticed that dining halls became overcrowded with students who would stay in seats long after meals, making it difficult for others to find tables. This is one of the challenges with the long meal breaks. In particular, the mid-summer change of Towers from a dining swipe option to retail option became challenging in restructuring how we could reasonably feed the incoming class within such a tight timeline. Despite these difficulties, student-staff still expressed that “meals together were a really good idea for my group ... [because] a lot of them didn't have friends yet” and shared that “this is when some of the best conversations occurred.”

Moving forward, we would like to maintain the beneficial small group time over some meals and explore strategies with partners in dining to, for example, expand campus center dining hall seating to the campus center quad, establish a rotation of ‘grab and go’ meals at Towers Marketplace, investigate the financial viability of allowing students to use a meal swipe in a retail space, and/or consider the use of A&E center.

## orientation registration & schedule

We contracted with AlumniIQ to serve as our registration system for orientation. While the registration process was rather simple for the user (59.7% of new students said it was easy to register), it took a lot of work on the back end and we realized that AlumniIQ was not easily able to adapt to our needs. We had many families and guests who did not register for orientation and therefore needed to register at check-in simply to get a nametag. Using the AlumniIQ platform in real time evidenced the number of flaws in the system and slowed down our check-in process. For next year, we have decided not to continue working with AlumniIQ and are beginning conversations to partner internally to create a registration system.

We created two schedule options for new students: (1) a print schedule created by College Relations and Communications and (2) an online schedule available via a third-party app (AlumniIQ). Despite the desire to move fully to a paperless option, Skyfactor showed us that 78.3% of students used the printed schedule at some point and 58.4% of our students used the printed schedule exclusively. Within both the print and online schedules we recognize a need for some language changes. First, our data supports a shift from identifying “mandatory” events on the schedule to instead identifying “optional” programs. Second, our data tells us we should provide descriptions for each event to reduce anxiety and promote engagement. Overall, 61.7% of students agreed that the schedule “was easy to follow.”

# evening programming

Over the seven days of evening programming, we found success in providing engaging spaces for students to connect with their peers as well as keeping students from risky behaviors, such as drinking or smoking. As identified through the college's case log, in 2018 (within the dates of Fall Welcome) the college had sixteen incidents related to alcohol and other drugs while in 2019 (within the dates of Fall Orientation) the college had nine incidents, only four of which occurred within the first-year residence halls. Three of those four incidents occurred within the last two days of the program (8/26 and 8/27).

Most evenings we saw between 400 and 1000 people at a single event; Silent Disco with Religious and Spiritual Life (~300), Neighborhood Events with Residence Life (~300-500), Late Night at Towers Marketplace (~500), Club Glow with Orientation Staff (~700), Neon Night with the Recreational Services (~700), Food Trucks with Orientation Staff (~1000). While we had great success at the events highlighted above, we did receive feedback from orientation student-staff and event planners that there were too many options each night and that some programs suffered in their attendance (less than 10 people). With this information in mind, we are proposing three, consolidated and high-quality evening program options per evening in order to continue to highlight a range of choices without overwhelming students with options.



Image: paint and sip

ATTENDANCE TAKEN AT EVENTS



**Silent Disco**  
**+300 Students**



**Neighborhood Events**  
**~300 - 500 Students**



**Late Night with  
Towers Marketplace**  
**~500 Students**



**Club Glow**  
**+700 Students**



**Neon Night**  
**+700 Students**



**Food Trucks**  
**~1000 Students**



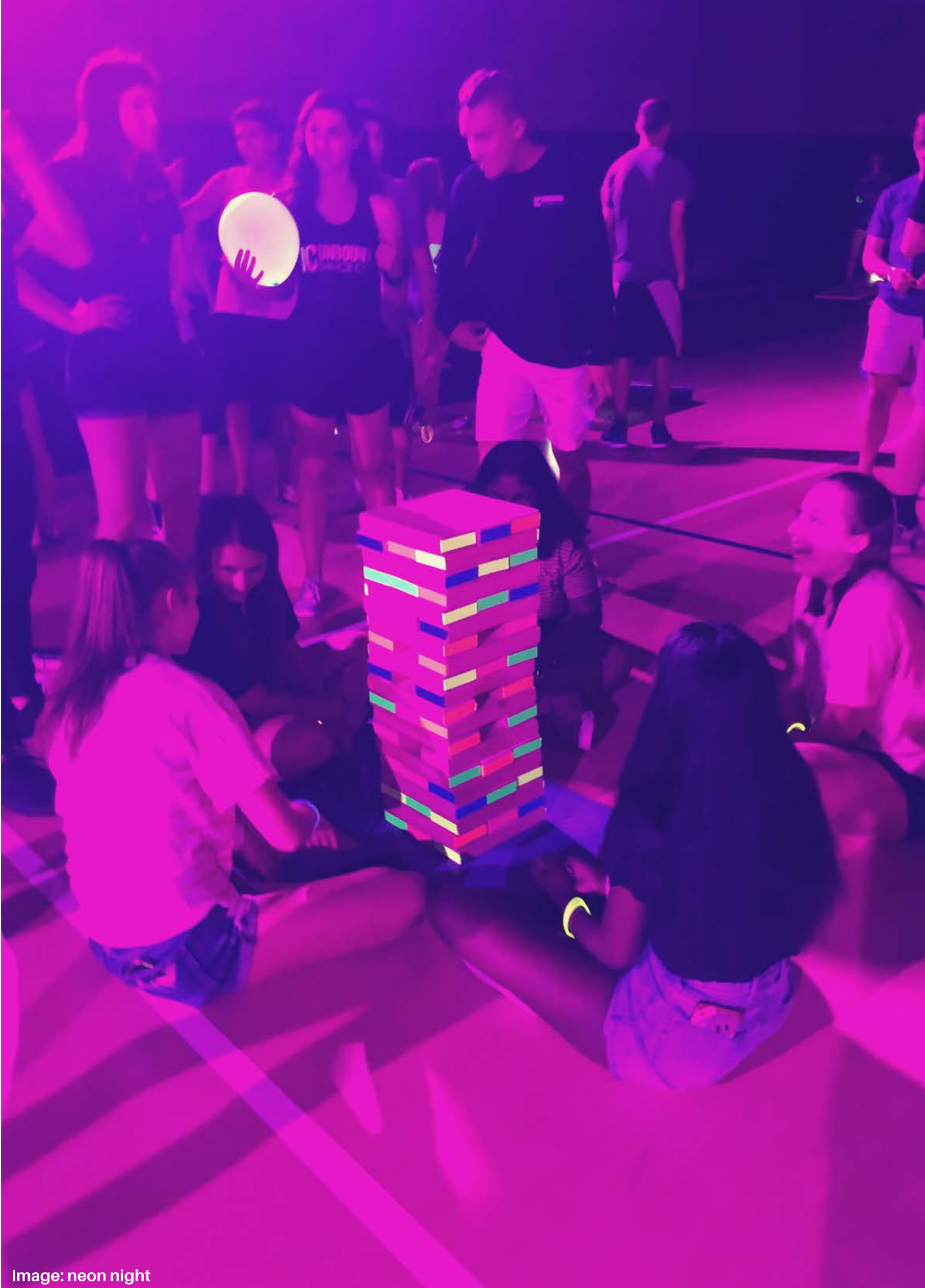


Image: neon night



Image: faculty and staff clapping at Convocation 2019

# ACADEMIC TRANSITION\*

preparing students to be engaged learners, readied for academic success

With a short lead time and few resources, Academic Affairs focused on three goals this past year:

1. Re-envision student registration and build from scratch—and with limited support—an online system to train approximately 1600 incoming students to construct accurate and viable fall schedule.
2. Provide advising and outreach during the summer period for students who would no longer come to campus during the summer.
3. Create an advising schedule and process during August Orientation that would satisfy the campus's need for uniform times and days, and yet allow flexibility in advising, testing, and placement for students in different schools and majors, from those with 90+ credits of required courses, to those who have yet to decide upon a major.

Within this context, a still broader aim was to replace the previous, fragmented process of individual steps with a more continuous arc from the yielding phase of admissions to the start of classes in August, with the goal of reducing melt.

## data and assessment

As is common in assessment, a single round of data rarely provides useful evidence one way or the other as to success or failure. Still, what is clear is that students engaged our self-designed training and registration systems early in the process and, for the most part, managed to successfully and in a timely manner; activate email addresses and create Netpasses; build reasonable fall schedules (including locating and adding an appropriate ICSM); choose an ICC theme; complete math testing; and complete school specific and degree specific tasks. Most students were "ICSM ready" well before the start of classes, as you can see in Appendix B. Other data culled from Sakai confirms the general trend toward active and timely engagement.

\*this section authored by the Assistant and Associate Deans within each school

Still, data and direct and anecdotal evidence—including conversations with incoming students, who made their desire for direct advising on campus in August abundantly clear—enables us to identify five main areas of concern from this first round. As a result, these are the points where we will make large-scale adjustment for next year:

1. Delay slightly the start date for registering for classes to align better with high school schedules, and allow administrative offices more time to deal with current/returning student issues.
2. Simplify the modules: reduce the number of steps and seek actively to avoid information overload.
3. Coordinate outreach and connect webpages to communication campaign.
4. Adjust and strengthen Fall Orientation advising in light of the AY 20-21 Monday start. Our experiences reinforced our understanding that advising for different academic programs varies dramatically. One size and series of contact points does not fit all.
5. Review process for transfer students to support, and provide those who require or want more support with access to some of the outreach provided to first-year students, with differentiation for those (often non-traditional) students, who wish a more streamlined process.

Academic Affairs has already taken action toward addressing items 1, 4 and 5. Work on the final items will be implemented shortly. Item 2, Simplifying the Modules, would benefit from a dedicated instructional designer to help us improve the online systems—both the individual modules and the overall flow among them. In addition to these broad-level changes, individual schools and programs will continue to adjust their processes and outreach to solve specific problems, and to create a stronger sense of ‘yield-to-classes’ flow that will hopefully increase each individual student’s sense of belonging to and being a part of Ithaca College before they arrive on campus in August.

## common academic experience

Overall, we received overwhelming feedback from new students, student-staff, and faculty that the common academic experience should not have occurred in evening hours or over competing events. Students shared that “it just made me miss the event I was most excited for” and that “events like that [should] be set up during the day as a small group activity, [because] you might get better attendance & more cooperation.” Within the campus Qualtrics survey, some expressed a desire for greater communication with faculty and staff” and “[notification] about screenings and ways to be more involved and engaged.” Our office will continue involvement through the CAE committee and work together to determine the best place in the schedule given this feedback and in consideration of any changes within the CAE.

Image: faculty and staff celebrating new students at Convocation 2019





# COHORT BUILDING

founding class cohort through tradition and connection.

A major factor in moving to a fall orientation was to promote a sense of class cohort. There were a few questions on the Skyfactor new-student survey that gives some insight into this goal. While we do not have numbers to benchmark against, we are excited to share these students' responses; 80.2% expressed that orientation increased their knowledge of campus traditions, 85.3% expressed that orientation increased their knowledge of campus culture, and 85.7% felt that they engaged in meaningful interactions with new students. For more data, see Appendix C. In the remainder of this section, we highlight two programs meant to help build cohort.



## we are IC

We Are IC was intended to educate new students on responding/taking action on campus, promoting an understanding of power, privilege, and oppression, and creating a sense of belonging and inclusive community through hearing stories of folks at Ithaca College. We were very happy with the attendance at this program and greatly appreciated the stories of the five staff/alumni who shared. Our feedback from the orientation staff identified that students “would have been more engaged” if students were presenting their stories, that students were not as “willing to speak” or “less engaged” either because of the timing within the program (Day 6) and/or because of the topic. Orientation staff had varying responses to the debrief, many of our staff had amazing and engaging conversations while others had students who were “not comfortable discussing identities” in such an open setting.

In 2020, we believe we should add three questions directly related to the above learning outcomes in our assessment efforts in order to determine the success of this program. This year, we only have one (tangentially related) question within the Skyfactor survey indicating that 39.9% of students felt that orientation increased their knowledge of “diversity resources” at the institution. We propose continuing We Are IC and are strongly considering ways to promote student stories through student panelists. We also recommend bringing back ‘Are You Ready for This?’ (a skit-based program from summer orientation) to encourage open dialogue within small groups prior to the We Are IC program.

## midnight madness

While all other evening programs were optional, when building out the schedule AOPC recommended hosting an event like “Play Fair” to promote class cohort; Midnight Madness was our attempt at large-scale teambuilding of this kind. We faced some logistical challenges in putting on this program which is echoed in our feedback, however, our attendance was strong and the atmosphere was incredible

New students reported in Skyfactor that “most people had no idea what was happening,” and that “things were poorly executed.” Similarly, orientation staff felt underprepared to deal with the number of students. Based on the strong and unanimous feedback we received, we recommend not hosting a required program in the evening. Instead, we want to recreate a successful program (i.e. food trucks) and expand this event into a larger, tradition event that brings the class together.



Image: orientation leader helping new student and family check-in for orientation

# FAMILY PROGRAM

committing to a high-caliber, family & friends orientation program that informs, reassures, and establishes key partnerships.

We set an early goal to continue to provide a high-caliber experience for families and friends that informs, reassures, and establishes key partnership. Institutions we consulted with in our shift to a fall orientation model were shocked we would continue to prioritize a family orientation in our first, transition year. However, our feedback shows that on the whole, we were successful in this measure. Families provided feedback stating "overall, a very positive experience, felt very cared for", "highlight for me was seeing the mentor video and hearing the leader's personal introductions", "[the student success] presentation was amazing and eye opening".

We had variable attendance at Family Orientation events; some presenters reported great turnouts while others had less than twenty families and guests in each session (see Appendix D). We will reevaluate session frequency, timing, etc. to craft the ideal family schedule. We also received excellent suggestions for the future including the need for better/clearer campus signage, a printed map within the family schedule, and a clearer student "goodbye." By proposing that Convocation kick off orientation, we can welcome families and guests into the Ithaca College community and use this program to end the day with an all-inclusive space for families and students to say goodbye before diverging schedules.

**“highlight for me  
was seeing the  
mentor video and  
hearing the  
leader’s personal  
introductions”**

**- IC Family Member**

# SPECIFIC POPULATIONS

intentional scheduling that allows students who hold multiple identities to participate in and celebrate all aspects of themselves

We designed our orientation schedule and events with an acute focus on students who hold multiple identities. As such, we intentionally had events and/or special schedules for students of color, first-generation college students, students within the LGBTQ+ community, transfer students, commuter students, and veteran students. On the whole, these efforts were well-received and are valuable components of the orientation program. However, we also faced some challenges in planning for specific populations of students and trying to build the best experience for their unique perspective and needs.



Images (L to R): first-gen students at ithaca FIRSTS first birthday party, students at students of color affinity program

## student athletes

Our student athletes, through no fault of their own, struggled to balance the demands and nuances of the orientation schedule and their fall sport practice schedule. Despite discussions to accommodate student athlete schedules in orientation effectively, there is still work to be done. We are planning initial discussions with Athletics to determine if it is necessary/possible to create a student athlete track through orientation.



# adult learners

The new Orientation Advisory Council has some membership who are in-touch with and therefore vocal about the experience of adult learners within our orientation program. Our protocol with adult learners is to individually design an orientation program that works best for them based on the programs we are offering. However, this year, some of the communication about the flexibility of orientation for adult learners was lost. While some did communicate with us, there were many that did not know to ask about an alternative schedule and therefore may have had a negative experience following a schedule designed for younger students. We are working with academic partners and the Orientation Advisory Committee to consider better practices to communicate with and program for our adult learners.

# transfer students

Similarly, with such a diverse population we have received a range of feedback from transfer students and the faculty/staff working with this population. According to residential life at the time of Orientation check-in roughly half of transfer students had already checked into their housing assignment. This meant that many students were already on campus during the First-Year program for various reasons; sports teams, academic blocks (for certain programs), and/or to just set up early. Because of this, we suspect, many students did not arrive to transfer student check-in and therefore had a difficult time navigating the transfer schedule. During the AOPC debrief section, three school representatives shared the idea of having (at least) one academic block where transfer and first-year students were together, however we know that at least one school would find it difficult to do this. Students shared a similar opinion through the Skyfactor open-ended question asking for suggested improvements. Some transfer students expressed that transfer orientation "should be when [first-year students] have their orientation" encouraging that a longer schedule might allow for "transfer students [to] have a few days to themselves and get to know the campus on their own time...I was not comfortable having orient

-ation for three days up until the start of classes" and shared that we should "give transfer students more time to adjust before classes start, I would suggest beginning orientation earlier." Another student shared "I would have loved to have had the time to walk my schedule, explore my buildings more, organize my supplies, and other things like that".

Alternatively, we did also hear that some transfer students "did not need three days"

further requesting for a schedule condensed into one day". While recognizing that this is not an ideal structure for each school, the advisory committee is reviewing the pros and cons of bringing transfer students back with first-year students to create a more integrated experience.



Image: transfer student class photo

# ORIENTATION STAFF



Image: 2019 orientation mentor staff



Image: 2019 orientation staff

# ORIENTATION STAFF

We are incredibly proud of the achievement of the Orientation Staff. Skyfactor provides insight into high-impact areas of the orientation program where Ithaca College could focus attention.

According to Skyfactor, orientation staff is both an area of high impact and high performance stating “further improvement will be difficult since current performance is already excellent.” On a scale of 1 (less satisfied) – 7 (more satisfied) with a goal of 5.5 as ‘successful’ Orientation staff ranked at a 5.95 overall. Students were asked if orientation staff were approachable, to which 77.1% responded in the top two choices, as well as; knowledgeable of campus resources (78.1%), able to answer questions (71.5%), and able to communicate expectations of students at Ithaca College (65%) for further breakdown, see Appendix E. On the whole, we are eager to maintain most of our staffing and training structures given the success of this year. Given orientation staff feedback, we want to revisit the structure of assigning orientation leaders in pairs to small groups (vs. solo). Finally, given our experiences with orientation staff, we want to again aim for one-hundred orientation leader positions and twenty-five orientation mentors.

# SUMMER MELT

Overall, the colleges' net melt reduced significantly, although much of that is due to an increase in the number of paid deposits after May 5 (see Appendix F). There were fewer “no-shows” in the Fall 2019 cycle—that is, the difference between paid deposits as of August Convocation, and full-time enrolled first-year students at the Fall Census — with only 7 students compared to 20 in the three earlier cycles. While it is possible that this decrease is related to the increase in communication with incoming students prior to Orientation, and/or a more collaborative new student engagement tracking system with our campus partners, there is no direct data to support this. As stated, there was a significant increase in the number of paid deposits after May 5 as compared to earlier cycles (see Appendix G). Even without considering these numbers, the melt due to cancellations and deferrals in the Fall 2019 cycle was smaller than in the three cycles prior, but not enough to be statistically significant.



Image: move-in volunteers helping new student unload their car

# GENERAL FEEDBACK

## orientation check-in

Overall, we had a number of technical difficulties which delayed our start and created a difficult to navigate check-in process. First, we struggled with our external vendor, AlumniIQ, (see orientation schedule for more information) and getting the self-check-in scanning stations up and running. Due to this delay in getting machines up and running we were quite backed up, which meant that a large group of people were all headed into a small space. This made any organization of lines incredibly difficult, however, on top of this machines continued to stop working and we would be struggling to get people into other lines or get the machine back up and running. We received feedback that orientation was “unclear,” had “no obvious organization,” “lacked signage,” and many suggestions that we should consider assigning “check-in times.”

Additionally, having students complete the FERPA form at orientation check-in is incredibly challenging. There is too much going on in this space and according to Registrar, only half of the student’s forms have been submitted. In order to get a better return and to answer the questions associated, I believe that there should be a space designated for this within the check-in/move-in day, staffed with professionals who could answer questions and offer support. First, for future check-ins orientation needs to be on the main floor with all of the other stations, in fact we are already discussing with Residential Life creating a streamlined ‘single check-in’ station which would include better line organization, increased signage, and more opportunities for communication (like walking through the orientation schedule).

## campus safety

Within Skyfactor, there are “high-impact” factors and one such factor for Ithaca College is Campus Safety. We were encouraged to see that, in general, the majority of new students expressed confidence in safety on Ithaca College campus. In fact, 75.8% of students believed that Ithaca college makes campus safety a high priority, 71.9% were satisfied that this institution keeps the campus safe, and 68.7% believed the institution encourages students to engage in safe behavior. We will continue our partnership with the Office of Public Safety in order to promote the feeling of a safe and secure environment.

# APPENDIX

A.

## SNAPSHOT OF FEEDBACK COLLECTION

SKYFACTOR: 573 STUDENTS, OR 35% OF INCOMING STUDENTS

QUALTRICS: 49 RESPONDENTS (FACULTY, STAFF, & STUDENTS)

FAMILY COMMENT CARDS: 56 COMMENT CARDS

ORIENTATION STAFF FORUMS: ABOUT 40 STUDENTS

INDIVIDUAL STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS: 7 OFFICES & THE AUGUST ORIENTATION PLANNING COMMITTEE

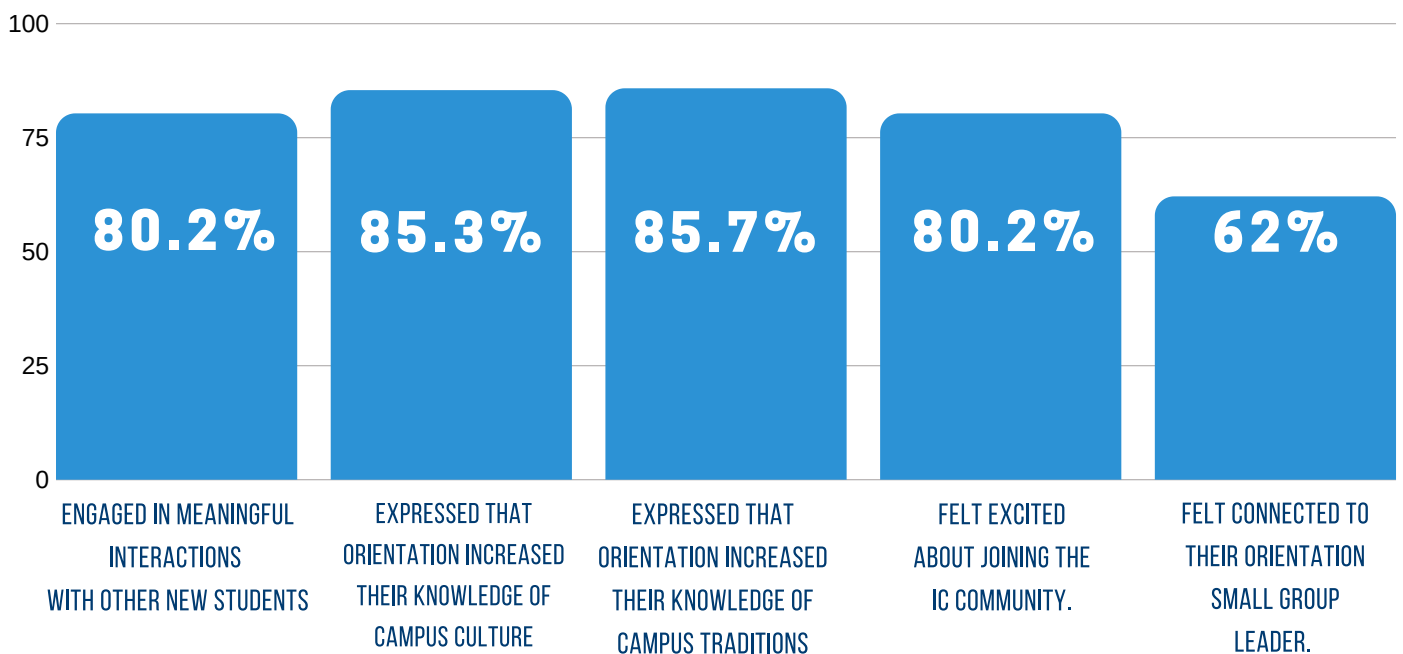
B.

## ICSM REGISTRATION DATE BY MONTH

<MAY 16TH	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	GRAND TOTAL
31	11	1015	274	190	1521

C.

## COHORT DATA COLLECTION



\*BY RESPONDING "MODERATELY" OR HIGHER ON SKYFACTOR

# APPENDIX

D.

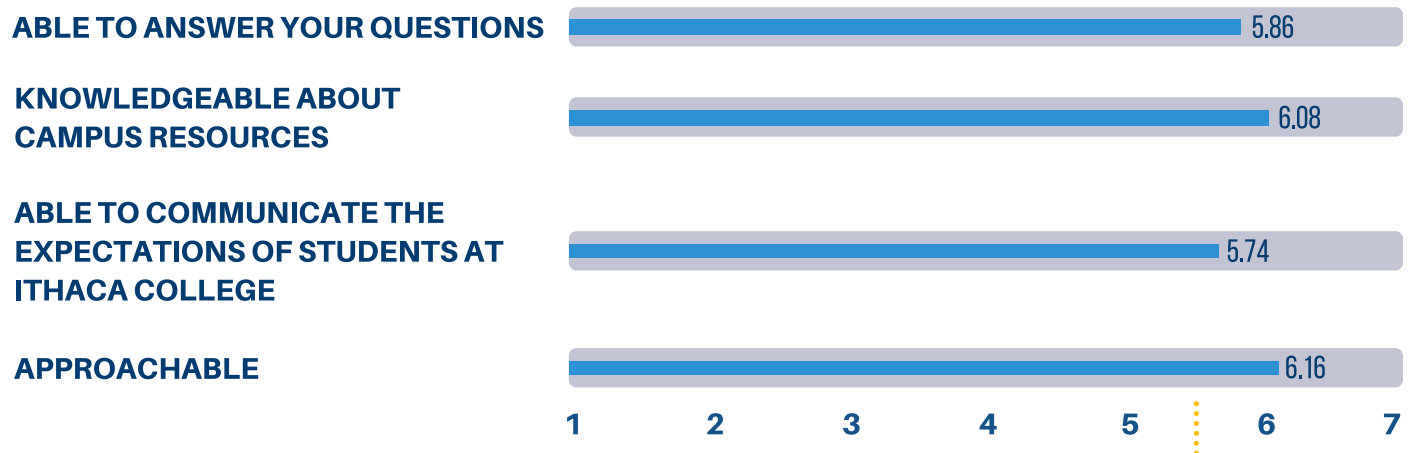
## FAMILY PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Dining Hall Tours for Families
- Family and Friends of Athletes
- Family and Friends of First-Generation Students
- Family and Friends of Exploratory Students
- Presentation on Student Success
- Rotational Workshop Sessions (*offered between 3 and 5 times*)
  - Residence Life
  - Health and Wellness
  - SHARE/Title IX
  - Center for Academic Advancement
  - Office of Public Safety
  - Career Services
  - Alcohol and Other Drugs/Judicial Affairs
  - Center for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Social Change
  - Office of International Programs
  - Office of Religious and Spiritual Life
- Coffee and Q&A

E.

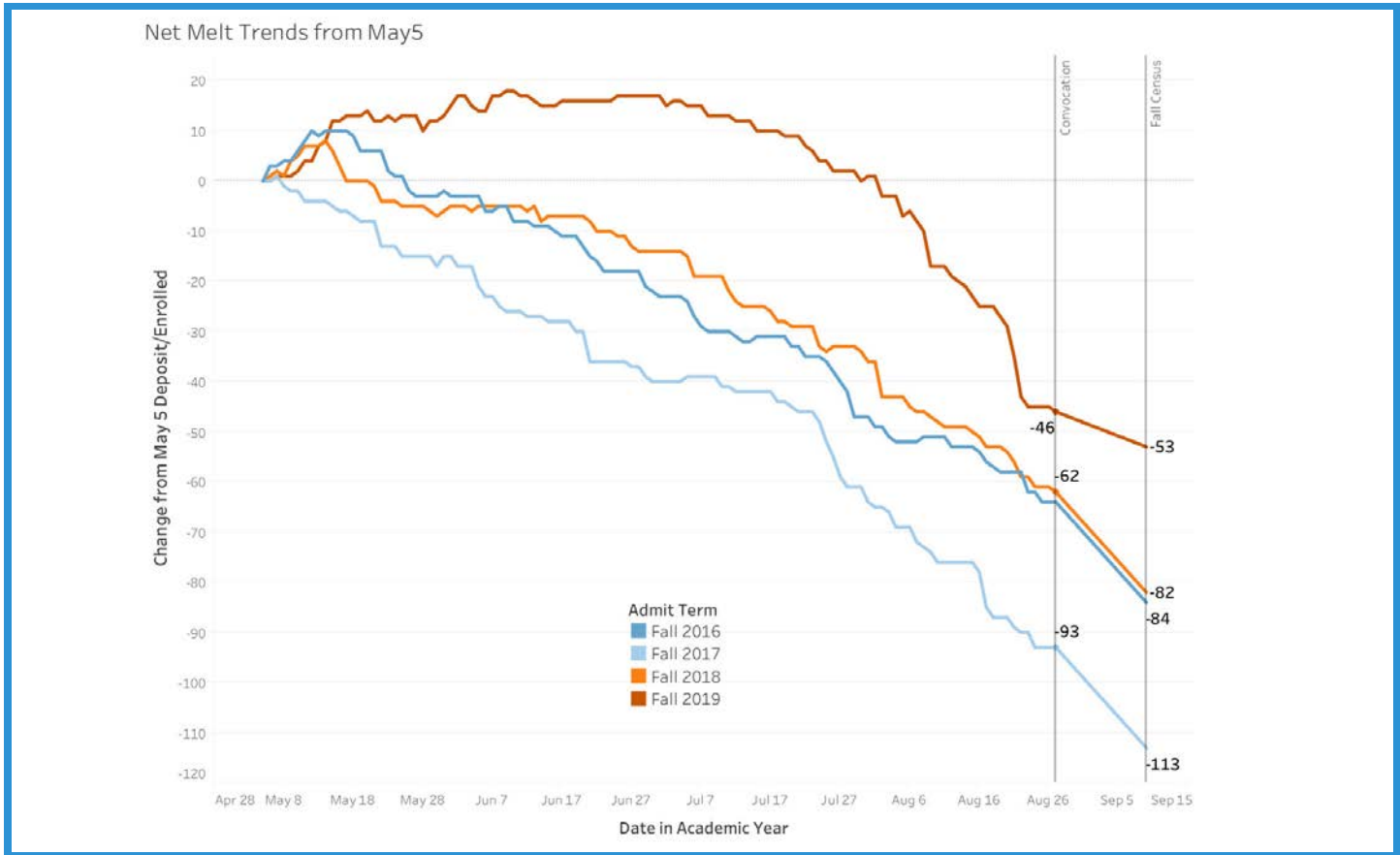
## ORIENTATION STAFF PERFORMANCE

to what degree was the orientation staff...

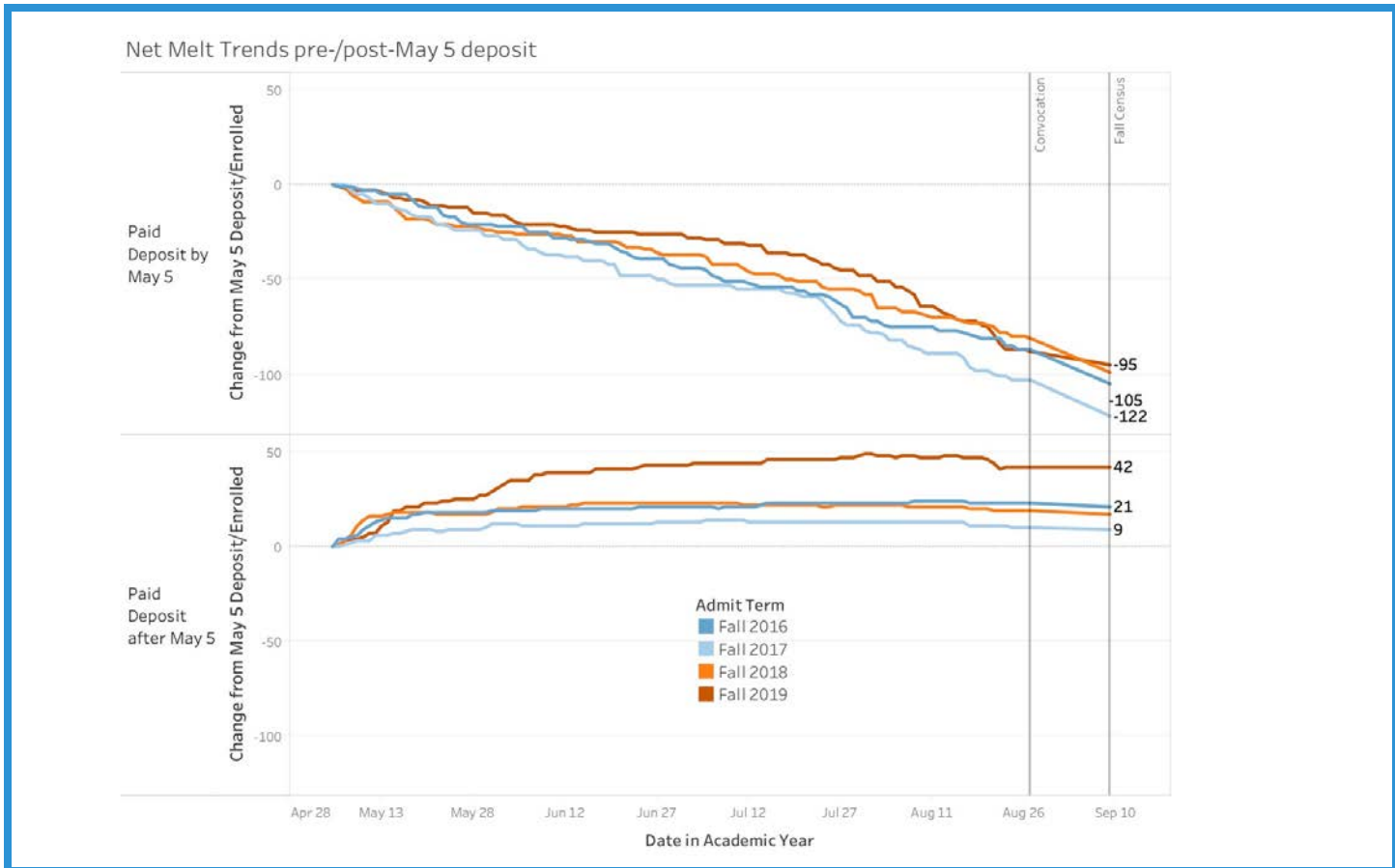


PROVIDED VIA SKYFACTOR, SKYFACTOR SETS 5.5 AS 'SUCCESSFUL'

**F.**



**G.**





ITHACA COLLEGE

Office of New Student  
and Transition Programs