

AN EXAMINATION OF THE ORIENTATION NEEDS OF INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS AT THE HUMBER COLLEGE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY &
ADVANCED LEARNING

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to: (a) clarify the meaning of “orientation”, (b) evaluate the effectiveness of the international student orientation program, (c) determine whether the program met the needs of the survey respondents, and (d) ascertain the most appropriate method for the delivery of the pre-departure materials, and ideal schedule for the on-site orientation program. The research study was conducted at the Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, in Toronto, Ontario.

A convenience sample was used, drawing respondents from the 2006-2007 academic cohort. The respondents were asked to complete a web-based survey. From the study’s findings, the respondents equated the term “orientation” as the means for learning more about Humber and its services. They indicated that the two primary resources they used for their pre-departure preparation were: (a) viewing the Humber international student website, and (b) dialoguing with family, friends and alumni. Their primary orientation needs were consistent with the basic needs addressed in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory. It was found that the respondents preferred to continue to receive pre-departure materials through regular mail, and that the scheduling of the on-site orientation remain the same. The data results were discussed, and recommendations for program improvements and future research were provided.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The transition and adjustment to Canadian postsecondary education is challenging for international students. Studies have shown, that in addition to personal and academic issues faced by all freshmen students, international students had to contend with: immigration regulations, adjustment to a new culture, communicating in a second language, financial difficulties, finding appropriate housing and functioning without their normal support system (Symons and Page, 1984; Kaczmarek, Matlock, Merta, Ames and Ross, 1994; Hanassab and Tidwell, 2002; Murphy, Hawkes and Law, 2002). Furthermore, the students' expectations for their life in Canada, often did not match the realities they faced once in Canada. The difference in reality was often attributed to a misunderstanding of the cost of living, housing options, their right to work, and the availability of on-campus jobs. Their level of knowledge was often dependent on the information accessible to them in the pre-departure stage, the reliability of that source of information, and their interpretation of the presented material (Huxur, Mansfield, Nnazor, Schuetze, and Segawa, 1996).

International students are part of the growing diversity of students on postsecondary campuses. From the literature on non-traditional students, it was concluded that the receiving institution should strive to understand the needs of their diverse student populations, and develop programs to assist these students

in their adjustment to their new environment (Rentz, 1988; Jacobs, 1993; Strumpf and Sharer, 1993).

International student orientation is a crucial element to the international students' transition and a significant part of a multi-faceted approach to their retention...Designing effective comprehensive orientation programs to help the transition of international students is one of the important challenges facing American campuses.

(Meyer, 2003, p. 1)

The focus of this study was international students enrolled at the Humber College Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning (Humber), located in Toronto, Ontario. Humber is recognized as a leader in polytechnic education, having served over 22,000 full-time and 56,000 part-time students. In January 2007, 790 international students were enrolled at Humber, and by January 2012 that number had risen to 3,496 (Humber College Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning, 2012).

1.1 Background of Study

"International students are defined as non-Canadian students who do not have "permanent resident" status and have had to obtain the authorization of the Canadian government to enter Canada with the intention of pursuing an education." (Statistics Canada, 2010). They were enrolled at all levels of education, from primary through to graduate studies. Some students arrived to study language, or entered Canada as part of an institutional exchange or scholarship program; however the majority came to Canada to complete a full-

time program of study. Canada has consistently been one of the top eight host countries for international students (Chui, 1996; Institute of International Education, 2012). In 1920, Statistics Canada began collecting data on international students. At that time there were 1,300 students; that number grew to approximately 42,000 by the mid-1970s (Chui, 1996). By 2011, there were 239,131 international students in Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012).

Previous studies of international students, reported that students chose to study in Canada because of: the quality of education offered, Canada was considered a safe country, the cost of tuition in comparison to other countries, and the prestige of a Canadian degree or diploma (Walker, 1999; Prairie Research Associates Inc, 2004). Postsecondary institutions in hosting these students have benefitted. The international students have enhanced the institution's profile, helped cultivate contacts in the targeted recruitment countries, increased the enrolment in specific programs, as well as generated revenue for the institution from the substantially higher tuition fees (Chui, 1996; Knight, 2000). As a consequence, many postsecondary institutions, including Humber, had invested time, effort and money into recruiting international students to their campuses.

For their role in hosting international students, Cunningham (1991) concluded, the postsecondary institution had an obligation to provide support and services to the international student. These supporting services were administered through an international student centre, or at minimum, through

an international student advisor. The designated centre, or International Student Advisor (ISA), was instrumental in orientating the students to the institution, education system and cultural elements of the host country. The ISA became the advocate for the international student, who mediated between levels of institutional bureaucracy and outside government agencies (Commission on Foreign Student Policy in Canada, 1981; Cunningham, 1991; Althen, 1995; Thompspon, 1996; Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2008).

1.2 Humber International Student Services

At the time of the study, International Student Services (ISS) was under the jurisdiction of Humber's Student Services. However, in 2008 the ISS team was transferred and merged with the existing International Centre, which was responsible for international recruitment, admissions and international projects.

The International Student Services team was responsible for the following services:

- The development and implementation of an international student orientation program.
- Guidance with study and work permit applications and other visa documentation.
- The administration of the health care program.

- Facilitated educational workshops (e.g. Canadian and US immigration sessions, job search techniques, adjusting to the Canadian classroom, and income tax preparation).
- Organized social activities (e.g. trips to Niagara Falls, Canada's Wonderland, ski trips, bowling, and sailing).
- Provided advice on personal, financial and academic issues and assistance with on and off-campus housing options.

The mandate for International Student Services was to provide the international students with the tools necessary to facilitate their personal and academic adjustment. The provision of a specially designed orientation program was considered core to aiding in the students in their transition to Canada.

Research shows that first impressions have a direct effect on how international students perceive our culture, which in turn affect how they relate to their peers and professors, and ultimately how well they do in their studies. The impact of an organized and culturally sensitive orientation program should not be underestimated. (Thompson, 1996, p. 64)

1.3 Orientation Program

At Humber, attendance at orientation is not mandatory however students are encouraged to attend both their academic school orientation, as well as the program organized by International Student Services. Orientation is scheduled the week preceding the start of each academic semester. Prior to 2010, orientation was a decentralized process involving input from four distinctive

areas making the process confusing for both staff and students. The Registrar's Office and the academic schools sent pertinent information to both domestic and international freshmen; Humber Students Services maintained the college orientation website, and the International Student Services team notified the international students about their special orientation program. Information was released to freshmen students six weeks prior to the beginning of the semester.

In 2010, the orientation process was centralized through the department of Student Success and Engagement (SSE). The department was tasked with overseeing the college-wide program, and coordinating the agenda with the academic schools. Recognizing the significant increase in the number of international students in recent years, and that this group of students had specific needs not addressed in the standard programming, the department of Student Success and Engagement formed a liaison with International Student Services. This department shared the responsibility of advertising both the academic and international student orientation programs to the international students. They also provided registration support, and recruited student volunteers to assist with the on-site international student orientation program.

The international student orientation program consisted of three phases: (a) a pre-departure welcome package; (b) on-site programming during orientation week; and (c) social activities, as well as a Meet & Greet welcome reception.

Pre-Departure Welcome Package.

Six weeks prior to the start of the semester, International Student Services mailed a pre-departure welcome package to the freshmen students. The package consisted of a four page booklet and a series of inserts. The booklet contained information on: the visa application process, services offered by International Student Services, temporary and permanent accommodation, a sample budget, what to expect upon arrival in Canada, living in Toronto, and upcoming social activities. The inserts advertised the on-site international orientation sessions, as well as various social activities and trips. Due to the volume of admissions applications, and subsequent mailing costs, the welcome package was mailed only to students who had confirmed their acceptance offer, and who had paid their tuition fees.

On-site Programming.

At the time of the study, the on-site program consisted of four, 1.5 hour workshops: "Welcome to Canada", "Academic Success", "Staying Healthy" and "Looking for a Job", offered through the course of orientation week. Although students were strongly encouraged to attend orientation, attendance was not mandatory. During orientation week, the International Student Services team also assisted students with off-site settlement issues, e.g. assistance in opening a bank account, arranging a shopping trip, and offering guidance in the search for off-campus housing.

Social Activities.

During orientation week, freshmen students were invited to join the International Student Ambassadors on a downtown Toronto walking tour, and a trip to Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) a temporary amusement park. International Student Ambassadors were international students who were hired to assist in the International Centre. The freshmen students were also given the opportunity to meet staff and other students through the organization of various social activities, e.g. a trip to Niagara Falls, or a ski trip early in the winter semester. A Meet & Greet, an informal welcome reception, was scheduled the third week of the semester. The reception provided freshmen students with the opportunity to meet the International Centre staff, and network with other international students.

1.4 Problem Statement

There is a lack of research dealing with the effectiveness of orientation programs and the benefits they have for students entering Humber. In recent years an increasing number of international students have arrived at Humber, unprepared and ill-advised for: immigration realities, financial responsibilities, academic expectations, social-cultural differences, and lacking basic knowledge of Canada or Humber.

The purpose of this study was to identify the needs of the international students who responded to the survey, in order to improve, or develop an

effective orientation program. The program will seek to improve the readiness of the respondents, increase the on-site attendance, and improve the quality or usefulness of service. This study:

1. Determined the elements that the respondents felt important as part of their pre-departure preparation and transitional needs.
2. Clarified what the term “orientation” meant to this group of respondents.
3. Examined what were relevant topics for on-site workshops.
4. Queried the most effective delivery method for pre-departure materials, as well as the appropriate timeframe for the on-site orientation sessions.

1.5 Research Questions

The intent of the research was to address the following research questions:

1. What was the respondent’s understanding of the term “orientation”? Did it differ from the commonly accepted North American concept? i.e., academic insights, social networking possibilities and the opportunity to engage in social activities prior to the start of the semester.
2. What were the articulated needs of the respondents? Did the current model utilized by Humber meet those needs?

3. What was the most effective delivery method for the distribution of pre-departure materials? What was considered as the appropriate timeframe for the on-site orientation sessions?

1.6 Research Design

The initial research strategy used a mixed method approach, incorporating a web-based survey and a post-survey focus group. According to Cohen, Marion and Morrison (2004), the greater the correlation in the results of the two methods, then the greater the confidence level achieved for the study.

Prior to this study, no analysis of the international student orientation program at Humber had been conducted necessitating the development of a research project that consisted of a survey and focus group. The survey questions used to collect data were derived from a review of the literature, networking with other International Student Advisors (ISA) across Canada, feedback from alumni, and observations made by the researcher in her role as an ISA. Two national surveys on international students in Canada (Walker, 1999; Prairie Research Associates Inc, 2004) provided a framework for the development of the survey instrument.

The survey instrument consisted of 18 questions presented in several formats. The formats included: survey items rated on a 4 or 5 point Likert-type

scale, yes or no questions, an open-ended question, and a series of multiple choice questions.

1.7 Significance of Study

The topic of receiving and graduating, international students from postsecondary studies is relevant to both the federal and provincial governments. The federal government sees international students contributing to: Canada's global competitiveness, bringing economic benefits to Canada and local communities, potentially enhancing the diversity in the classroom, filling labour market gaps and becoming potential immigrants (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010; Council of the Federation Secretariat, 2011). The Provincial Nominee Programs, under the auspices of provincial and territorial governments, offer trained graduates a pathway to immigrant status to fill current labour demands (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010). In the *Progress Report 2011* (Ontario Government, 2011), the Ontario Government stated that: they planned to increase international student enrolment by 50% over the next five years, add or increase scholarship programs, expand the Provincial Nominee Program, and work with the federal government and other provincial governments to facilitate student visas and recruit students to Canada.

To achieve augment the labour force gaps, it was important that the international students adjusted to life in Canada, and were successful in their academic endeavours. One contributing factor to graduating these students was

ensuring that they were offered a comprehensive orientation program which aided in their transition, and subsequent retention (Meyer, 2003).

International students have been present at Humber since its inception in 1967; however no analysis of the international student orientation program has been conducted. While the results of this study may not be generalized outside of Humber, the study was unique in that it examined the pre-departure and transitional experiences of the respondents. The research literature on international students primarily examined broader issues such as: tri-level policy issues, globalization of campuses, the impact of immigration guidelines, cultural adaptation, classroom mechanics, and socio-economic issues (Commission on Foreign Student Policy in Canada, 1981; Symons and Page, 1984; Council of Ministers of Education Canada, 1986; Knight, 2000). Another important aspect of the study was it focused on college level students.

1.8 Definition of Terms

- 1. *International Students:*** are visitors to Canada who had been granted permission by Citizenship and Immigration Canada to study in this country. As non-residents they adhered to the policies of the Immigration Act (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012). The term *foreign student* was interchangeable with *international student*.
- 2. *International Student Advisor (ISA):*** is responsible for the planning and implementation of services and programs for international students;

liaised with faculty and service organizations; and advocated on behalf of the student (Althen, 1995).

3. *“International student orientation* is a crucial element to international students’ transition, and a significant part of a multi-faceted approach to their retention. Enrollment of international students does not guarantee their graduation. Designing effective comprehensive orientation programs to help the transition of international students is one of the important challenges facing American campuses”. (Meyer, 2001, p.1)
4. *Orientation*: “any effort on the part of the institution to help entering students make the transition from their previous environment to the collegiate environment and to enhance their success in college.” (Upcraft and Farnsworth, 1984, p. 27)
5. *Freshman student*: a student in their first year of postsecondary studies.
6. *College*: in Canada this term typically refers to students studying at a community college. Alternatively in the US education system, the term can refer to undergraduate university campuses.
7. *Web-based Survey*: “require the instrument to be available on a Web site, and individuals are solicited – either by traditional mail, e-mail, telephone, or through other access information to enter the survey Web site; they complete the form online and then click on a “submit” button when they have completed it.” (Granello and Wheaton, 2004, p.388)

8. Agents: Individuals or companies contracted by Humber to recruit international students. The students pay a fee to the agent to assist them with: determining their program major, assist with the application to Humber, and guide them with their immigration application.

1.9 Summary

For years, Canada has been a destination for international students who wished to continue their studies, and prepare themselves for a career. Postsecondary institutions have welcomed international students as their presence has increased the diversity in the classrooms, and contributed to the globalization efforts of the institution. Likewise, the federal and provincial governments view these students as potential resources to fill the labour market gaps.

While international students contributed to the economic needs of Canada, nevertheless they faced challenges in coming to this country. These challenges ranged from: satisfying the immigration criteria to study in Canada, having sufficient finances to sustain them while in Canada, and studying in a second language. The focus of this study was to determine the needs of the respondents preparing to come to Canada, and adjusting to a new culture and college. Through admitting the respondents, Humber assumed the responsibility for their orientation. The purpose of this study was to: (1) clarify the meaning of "orientation"; (2) evaluate the effectiveness of the international student program;

(3) determine whether the program met the needs of the survey respondents; and, (4) acquire recommendations for the delivery of orientation materials and on-site program scheduling. This chapter presented a brief overview of the organization of Humber's orientation program, the services offered by International Student Services, and the scope of the current international student orientation program.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This chapter will present an overview of the literature, and theory used for this study. In order to examine the orientation and transitional needs of the international respondents at Humber, it was first important to have an understanding of the general orientation paradigm used by postsecondary institutions. Included in this chapter is: a review of the orientation paradigm for freshmen students, a presentation of a framework for an international student orientation program, and a brief history of international students in Canada. The chapter concluded with a discussion of needs theory and a framework for cultural development theory.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Orientation Paradigm for Freshmen Students

An orientation program for freshmen students first appeared at Harvard University in 1636. The university adopted a system whereby the dons and senior students guided the freshmen students in their transition to university life (Rentz, 1988). During the 19th century the responsibility for orientation programming evolved from a student-to-student initiative, to the increasing involvement of faculty (Strumpf and Sharer, 1993). By the late 19th century, orientation courses were offered to freshmen students to assist them in their

adjustment to postsecondary studies (Rentz, 1988). According to Rentz (1988), in 1911, Reed College was the first institution to offer a for-credit orientation course. In more recent times, three orientation prototype programs emerged: (a) a freshmen day or week; (b) a credit course; and (c) a pre-orientation program offered during the summer months. These prototypes became the foundation for all freshmen student orientation programs (Rentz, 1988).

In the late 1970s, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), and the National Orientation Directors Association (NODA) were founded. These organizations provided networking opportunities, professional development, and the sharing of resources to their membership (National Orientation Directors Association, 2009; Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2010). As part of a series of professional guidelines and standards, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education developed a set of criteria for both a freshmen student orientation program, as well as an international student orientation. See Appendix A, for a partial copy of the guidelines for the international student program. The CAS guidelines have been adopted by many postsecondary institutions. Smith and Brackin (1993) proposed that, “the development of the orientation mission must be consistent with the institution mission and with the standards set by the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS)” (p. 36).

According to Rentz (1988), from the late 1920s to the 1950s, orientation programming was directed to the “typical” freshman student, i.e., “an 18 year old,

middle-class, Caucasian" (p.211). Following WWII, the demographics of postsecondary campuses began to change when, veterans, became eligible for funding for postsecondary studies in recognition of their service (Jacobs, 1993; Stumpf & Sharer, 1993). During the 1980s, an increase in the number of international students, students of colour, transfer students and students with disabilities, was observed on postsecondary campuses (Jacobs, 1993).

Freshmen Student Orientation Goals and Components.

Upcraft and Farnsworth (1984) and Periogo and Upcraft (1989) concluded that an effective freshmen student orientation program was the result of defined goals, and a clear understanding of the components of an orientation program. The authors submitted that there were four program goals: (a) to assist students in their academic adjustment; (b) that students received assistance with their personal adjustment to school; (c) that parents and or family members were included in the orientation experience, to help them understand what the student experienced, personally and academically; and, (d) to provide faculty and staff with an overview of the freshmen students, in order to forge appropriate relationships.

According to Upcraft and Farnsworth (1984) and Periogo and Upcraft (1989) there were seven components to the freshmen student orientation:

1. Orientation was a continuous effort divided into three phases: perspective student enquiries, admissions and enrollment and programming scheduled throughout the remainder of the first year.
2. Orientation required the involvement of all sectors of the postsecondary institution from students to administrators.
3. Orientation was grounded in student development practices, and information about the incoming students was shared amongst all departments who assisted students during the orientation process.
4. Orientation programs availed themselves of all accessible mediums: "including media approaches; group programming; academic courses; and individual tutoring, advising, and counseling (Upcraft and Farnsworth, 1984, p. 30).
5. Orientation planners carefully select in which phase, what, and how much information was released to the students to avoid overwhelming them.
6. Orientation was evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that the needs of the students, as well as the goals of the postsecondary institution were met.
7. Orientation was the responsibility of one designated office or individual.

Freshmen Student Orientation Models.

Rentz (1988) presented three possible orientation models: (a) a freshman day or week; (b) a freshman course model; (c) or, a pre-registration model, also known as a summer course program. Of the three models, the freshman day or week, was the most common practice. Shupp (2006) found the one-day orientation, to be overwhelming, boring, and lost the interest of participants, therefore proposed that it be replaced with a comprehensive orientation program. Shupp (ibid) and Upcraft, Finney and Garland (1984) recommended, that a freshman orientation program be derived from the articulated needs and experiences of the students.

Perigo and Upcraft (1989) developed a three phased comprehensive orientation model. Phase One, pre-admissions, which highlighted the benefits of the postsecondary institution to prospective students. The students were provided with school literature, and extended offers to visit the campus. In Phase Two, a pre-enrollment program was directed to those students who had been admitted to the school. The program focused on visitation opportunities, which ranged from one day visits, to an on-campus summer orientation. Phase Three, or initial enrollment program, were the on-campus sessions available to students immediately prior to the start of the semester. It was during this phase, that the entire freshmen class was assembled for an indoctrination of the school. The freshmen students were introduced to the faculty, participated in a series of activities that promoted school spirit, and received an introduction to campus

services. Perigo and Upcraft (ibid), suggested that Phase Three be continued throughout the first semester, rather than limited to one day or a week.

2.1.2 An International Student Orientation Paradigm

International students, in general, were a marginalized community, who encountered unique challenges. These challenges resulted from their immigration status, their transition to a new country, change in lifestyle, adjustment to cultural, social and educational expectations and norms, which made their adjustment more difficult (Jacobs, 1993; Upcraft, 1993; Murphy et al., 2002; Meyer, 2003). As a result of the unique challenges they faced there was a need for a separate orientation for international students.

The literature review for online international student orientation programs unveiled numerous colleges and university international student services websites. These websites provided information on pre-departure information and the postsecondary institution's on-site orientation program. Two websites that were viewed were the University of British Columbia (UBC) and Seneca College in Toronto, Ontario. UBC presented its international students with two websites. The first site, prepared by International Student Services, which provided students with information on: pre-departure, housing, health, permits, working, money, getting around. The site also offered a link to a downloadable copy of the international student handbook which could be downloaded (University of British Columbia International Student Services,

2011). A second UBC website, organized by UBC's Student Services, provided freshmen students with information on the one day GALA international orientation program. Incorporated into the optional one day event was: a campus tour, orientation package, Passport to UBC (visa, work, and health insurance), dinner and conversation circles (University of British Columbia Student Services, 2011).

Seneca College's international student website contained information for both prospective as well as current international students (Seneca College International Student Services, 2011). Students were provided with a brief overview of: services available to them, housing options, health and safety information, a Toronto Guide, and a list of social activities. A link on the international student site directed students to an orientation page which presented an overview of the orientation program. All college related functions, for example, testing, obtaining an ID card, orientation and Eli lab instruction, attendance were mandatory. In addition to the academic functions, the students were offered an option shopping trip, campus and city tour. The program was scheduled over four days.

Although the college and university websites provided information on content and orientation scheduling, they did not address the underlying factors that went into the design and implementation of their programs. Two models, or frameworks for the development of an orientation program that emerged from

the literature review were, Meyer's conceptual framework for a comprehensive program, and a framework presented by Althen.

Meyer's Conceptual Framework for a Comprehensive Program.

The design and implementation of effective comprehensive international student orientation programs should be based on explicitly stated purposes. Orientation is a goal-oriented process. If the purposes are not clear, the planner of the orientation program will have difficulty in developing effective programs. (Meyer, 2001, p. 3)

Meyer (2003) formulated a conceptual framework using information grounded in orientation concepts, international student adjustment problems, cross-cultural education, and human development theory and programming. The framework was comprised of four concepts:

1. The needs of international students.
2. Principles for designing and conducting comprehensive international student orientation programs.
3. The structure of comprehensive international student orientation programs (components).
4. Presenting comprehensive international student orientation programs (approaches).

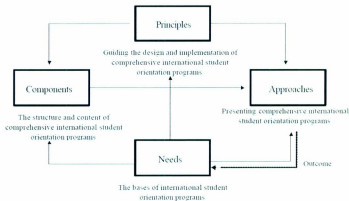


Figure 1. The Relationships of the Four Concepts of the Conceptual Framework for Designing and Conducting International Student Orientation Programs

(Meyer 2003, p. 2)

Concept one, the foundation of the orientation program, represented the needs of the international students. Meyer (2003) determined that there were seven unique needs for this group: cross-cultural adjustment; adjustment to the American educational system and achieving academic success; enhancing English-language proficiency; establishing interpersonal relationships and social support networks; maintaining physical and psychological well-being; managing finances; and knowing immigration regulations.

Concept Two, the principles of designing and conducting a comprehensive program, was guided by the students' needs. Meyer (2003) presented eight principles that influenced the design and implementation of the orientation program were: the principle of meeting international students' needs; the

principle definite purpose; principle of theory guiding orientation practice; principle of facilitating learning and helping student learn how to learn; principle of promoting intercultural learning and cross-cultural adjustment; the principle of cultural and language sensitivity; principle of collaboration; and principle of orientation program followed by assessment.

Concept Three, the “components” of the program were comprised of the orientation structure and the content. The structure included a: “pre-departure or pre-arrival orientation, arrival orientation, on-going or continuing orientation, and returning orientation.” (Meyer, 2003, p. 16). Meyer conceded that while differences in postsecondary institutions influenced the content, there were several broad categories that should be addressed. These categories included: basic needs; cultural and social adjustment; educational adjustment; immigration regulations; and, physical and psychological well-being.

Concept Four, of Meyer’s framework offered several mediums for orientating the international student. The mediums available to the orientation planners were: web posting; networking with current experienced international students; networking with current experienced domestic students; networking with local community; cultural coffee hours; role-playing; American and international document film; international speaker; and, academic and social workshop.

Althen's Orientation Model for International Students.

Althen (1980) suggested that,

there is no one ideal way to organize and conduct a foreign student orientation program. Among the many considerations which contribute to the variety in orientation programs are the numbers and characteristics of the new students to be served; the institution's academic calendar; the presence or absence of the U.S. students, faculty and community representatives who might be of assistance; and the amount of funding available. (p. 1)

According to Althen (1980) there were several constraints that influenced the effectiveness of the on-site or formal orientation program.

1. Their erratic arrival times. Despite a scheduled orientation, students may have arrived in advance, during, or even after the program is over.
2. Their uneven motivation to participate. The students' interest in orientation ranged from attending the pro-offered sessions to being independent and electing not to participate.
3. Their preoccupation with nonacademic matters. The new student might have been more concerned with fulfilling their basic needs, finding housing, resting from jet lag, adjusting to a new climate, making new friends, or, dealing with a sense of loneliness.
4. Their English proficiency. Orientation programmers were challenged to design a program at a level where the majority of the participants understood the content, but not too low as to bore others.

5. Difficulties in evaluating orientation programs. When was the most appropriate time to evaluate the effectiveness of the program? If students were asked to respond at the end of the orientation program, they were asked to comment on experiences they had not had. Or, if the evaluation was delayed for a period of time, the students may have forgotten what they learned in the specific orientation session, as opposed to relating to their new experiences.

To reduce the above constraints, Althen (1980) presented three alternative approaches to a formal orientation program. Approach One, called for the distribution of extensive pre-arrival materials. Ideally, he suggested the pre-arrival materials addressed: arrival times; local transportation; housing options; a summary of potential costs and how much cash to arrive with; an overview of climate changes; what documents, academic and health related to bring with them; items that reminded them of home; an orientation schedule, and, contact information for key personnel at the postsecondary institution.

Althen's Approach Two, called for a program that was flexible in terms of scheduling, accepting of the different learning styles, and the use of personnel and support. To accommodate the different learning styles, Althen recommended that the orientation materials be presented in a variety of formats such as, lectures, printed materials, panel discussions, social activities, or the creation of a buddy system which paired freshmen students with senior students. He saw the inclusion of principle representatives from the postsecondary institution as an

important element to the orientation program. It was suggested that a senior administrator be available to welcome the freshmen students, along with individuals from primary service areas, such as, admissions, the registrar's office, health services, and the learning centre.

Approach Three, promoted an "on-going orientation", that continued past the start of the semester. This approach allowed the ISA to connect with the freshmen international students who had missed the on-site orientation program, or answer questions that had emerged since orientation. This could have been achieved through a series of weekly or least frequent meetings, or structured as a credit freshman course.

Jacobs (1993) advocated that an international student orientation should be distinctive from the general freshmen student orientation, and offered a week or two after the start of the semester in order to accommodate late arrivals. They recommended that the content of the international student orientation include topics that addressed: the welfare and adjustment concerns of international students, i.e., immigration regulations, insurance policies, day-to-day survival on an American college campus. It was further recommended that international students be given the opportunity to interact with domestic students (Jacobs, 1993).

2.1.3 A Review of International Students in Canada

The Commission on Foreign Student Policy (1981), in its review of the history of international students in Canada, found that during the late 1950s and early 1960s, Canada received international students primarily from the colonies or Commonwealth countries, and the United States. By the 1970s and early 80s, there was a shift in sending countries which resulted in, an over-representation of students from wealthy, well-developed Asian countries specifically Hong Kong and Malaysia. A limited number of students came from the poorer, less developed countries (Commission on Foreign Student Policy, 1981; Symons and Page, 1984; Council of Ministers of Education Canada, 1986). In their study of postsecondary education in Canada, Symons and Price (1984) viewed this disparity in the financial background of the international students as being encouraged by postsecondary institutions when students were accepted on the basis of accepted students socio-economic status rather than academic merit. They stated this action contradicted the claim that Canadians were committed to equal opportunity in education. There was a slight decline in the numbers of international students from 1982 to 1986, and during the early 1990s (Chui, 1996). By 2010 the top four sending countries were China, India, South Korea, and the United States (Institute of International Education, Project Atlas, 2010).

Canada's Responsibility to Receiving International Students.

Symons and Page (1984) concluded, Canada had a moral obligation to receive international students. In the past, when there were a limited number of educational institutions and opportunities within Canada, it was necessary for Canadians to go abroad to complete their studies. As payment of their indebtedness to those host countries, Canada was committed to receiving students from abroad. The authors suggested that through the presence of international students, Canadians gained a better knowledge of the world outside of their borders. Through the mobility of students, relationships with other countries were formed and maintained (Commission on Foreign Student Policy, 1981). The students brought an influx of dollars to the local economy. And students, who had graduated from a Canadian postsecondary institution, became the potential human capital needed to augment the diminishing Canadian workforce (Kunin & Associates, 2009; Council of the Federation Secretariat, 2011). The international students also contributed to the classroom and campus environment through their diversity, life experiences, and knowledge of a world view they passed on to others (Commission on Foreign Student Policy, 1981; Symons and Page, 1984, Canadian Education Statistics Council, 2011; Council for the Federation Secretariat, 2011).

During the 1980s, commissioned reports on international education addressed the need for concrete policies, and a clear delineation of the

responsibility each level of government had to international students (Commission on Foreign Student Policy, 1981; Symons and Page, 1984; Council of Ministers of Education Canada, 1986;). The lack of concrete policies contributed to an inferior level of arrangements and services for the international students.

From the viewpoint of foreign students, inadequacies exist in a number of areas: access to continuing advice and assistance while resident in Canada; rules governing employment, access to health coverage and social services; opportunities for intercultural communication; preparation for the students' return home after studying in Canada, and support and continuing liaison following the return home. (Council of Ministers Canada, 1986, p. 12)

Representing the federal government, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), assumed the responsibility of determining who was admissible to Canada, and the conditions of their stay (Symons and Paige, 1984). From the findings of the Commission of Foreign Students Policy (1981), both the federal and provincial governments enacted policies that impacted the status of international students. In 1973, as a way to control the incoming students, the federal government removed the condition whereby individuals who had entered Canada as a student, were eligible to apply from inside Canada for landed immigrant status. It was also during this time that students lost the privilege to work in Canada. The Immigration Act of 1978 added further restrictions whereby: visitors to Canada could no longer change their status to that of student from within Canada; and students were required to first seek permission from

CIC before they were allowed to change their program choice, or institution (Commission of Foreign Students Policy, 1981).

The ministries of education in each provincial and territory established their own education standards; while the individual postsecondary institution set their own admission criteria, recruitment strategies, fee structure and service levels. As the number of international students grew, and the cost of education increased, the provincial governments questioned to what extent they could continue to subsidize the education of international students (Canadian Federation of Students, 2009). In 1976, the Provinces of Ontario and Alberta introduced differential fees (Commission on Foreign Student Policy, 1981; Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 1986). The two provinces justified the tuition increase on the grounds that the parents of international students did not contribute to the tax base (Commission on Foreign Student Policy, 1981). Each postsecondary institution had the right to set its own tuition fees, which resulted in differential fees that ranged upwards to three to five times greater than that of a domestic student (Canadian Federation of Students, 2009). The effect of the new fee schedule created further barriers to international students from poorer countries, where already fewer than 10% of the international students came (Commission on Foreign Student Policy, 1981).

Decision to Study in Canada.

Several reasons have been identified as to why students have elected to study abroad: a shortage of seats in schools or programs in their home country, the reputation of the programs, the opportunity to study at academically strong schools, their understanding of Canadian culture and recommendation of family and friends who had studied in Canada (Commission on Foreign Student Policy, 1981; Canadian Education Statistics Council, 2011). From the findings in *Canada First 2004*, a national survey of international students, the respondents listed additional reasons such as: Canada was considered a safe country, the cost of education compared to other countries, attractive admission conditions, availability of scholarships, other sources of financial support, and exchange agreements (Prairie Research Associates Inc, 2004).

Institution's Responsibility to International Students.

As presented in the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education guidelines, it was the institution's responsibility to "orient international students to the expectations, policies, and culture of the institution and to the educational system and culture of the host country" (2008, pg. 5).

The role of the International Office, and in particular the ISA, was to provide the students with information or assistance with: the institution's physical environment, visa requirements and regulations, financial matters,

housing, health services, registration procedures, academic policies, information on local customs, and, banking information (Althen, 1995; Thompson, 1996).

These services for orientating international students may have entailed: a pre-departure package, an on-site orientation program, a reception, handbook or other materials distributed upon arrival, or, an orientation program that continued into the semester (Cunningham, 1991; Thompson, 1996). Cunningham (1991), in his study of services available to international students in Canadian postsecondary institutions found: 71.7% of the institutions offered an orientation for new students, 60.4% offered a reception program, 54.7% provided pre-departure information to incoming students, 47.2% produced an international student handbook, and 85% of the institutions provided some form of reception service. International student orientation programs were offered at 95% and 77% of colleges and universities, respectively. The duration of the orientation program averaged four days. The content and format of these programs included: information of the Canadian education system, social activities, a reception with institutional officials, city tours and dances. Cunningham found the international offices used various means to communicate with the freshmen international students: telephone (28.2%), word-of-mouth (21.4%), mailings (19.7%), posters and flyers (12%), and via newsletter (7.7%).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Rodgers (1991), in his review of student affairs, considered whether student development theory was a practical platform for student affairs practice. Four common developmental theoretical families utilized by student affairs personnel included: psychosocial, cognitive-structural, person-environment interaction and typological. Psychosocial theory examined development issues, or life events, through the lifespan of the individual, and their response to the event. An example was Chickering's model of seven vectors of student development (Chickering, 1972). Cognitive-structural theorists such as Perry (1970) looked at how individuals made sense of their experiences. In contrast, the person-environment interaction theorists examined what happened when the student and college environment interacted. John Holland's person-environment interaction theory was an example (Readon and Bullock, 2004). The last theoretical family, typological, considered phenomena that influenced the processes and patterns of development of individuals rather than groups, e.g. Kolb's experiential learning model (Turesky, 2005).

Upcraft, Finney and Garland (1984) offered that it was difficult to apply student development theory to orientation programs because: (a) no theory was inclusive to the exclusion of others; (b) students may not have been able to relate their experiences to the psychodynamics of their development; and (c) there was an assumption that male and female development were the same, and not all theories were application to minority student development. They posited that "A

model, rather than a theory, if based on entering students' experiences, can apply to all students, not just late adolescent, mainstream students. When orientation programs are based on student needs and experiences, rather than theories about student development, they are more successful." (Upcraft et al., 1984, p.12).

Wright (1984) expressed that the development theories were reflective of Western human behavior concepts, thus failing to consider the influence of social climate on the development of minority students.

A review of the literature found studies on freshmen orientation models or student development theory, however, little was written on the orientating of international students. Murphy et al. (2002) concluded that although international students possessed some of the same needs as domestic and minority students, it was their: adjustment to a new country, language proficiency, immigration status, lack of familiarity with the host country, and separation from all that was familiar, that made programming for them unique.

Meyers (2003) and Althen (1980) both referenced Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs as a primary consideration when developing a comprehensive orientation program for international students. Maslow (1954), in his development of a positive theory of motivation, constructed what is more commonly referred to as, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow contended that his framework, while not necessarily universally applicable to all cultures, was more adaptable than a simpler approach of examining common human characteristics. While he found there may have been some deviation in the order

of needs, his framework of needs applied to the majority of the people studied. The framework consisted of a series of levels; each level needed to be satisfied before the individual was able to progress to the next level, thus creating a hierarchy of needs. The foundation, or, physiological level, was built on the premise that until an individual's survival needs, i.e., hunger, body comforts and thirst were satisfied; the individual could not focus on other needs in their life. Once their physiological needs were addressed, Maslow saw, safety, as the second level of needs. Those needs encapsulated, "security, stability; dependency; protection; freedom from fear, from anxiety and chaos; need for structure, order, law, limits; strength in the protector; and so on." (Maslow, 1954, p. 39). The third level of the hierarchy focused on a sense of belongingness and love needs. Maslow found that individuals hungered for affection, which resulted from the absence of friends and loved ones. He saw individuals as being highly motivated to fulfil that need. In the fourth level, esteem needs, he contended that a person had a desire to demonstrate confidence, independence and freedom, while gaining recognition, attention and appreciation. Maslow described four additional levels: the need to know and understand, aesthetic needs, self-actualization and transcendence, however it was the lower four levels that were applicable to the current study.

Murphy et al. (2002), indicated that part of the uniqueness of programming for international students, was attributed to their having to adjust to a new culture. A review of the cultural adjustment literature rendered several

models. Lysgaard (1955) in his study of Norwegian Fulbright Grantees in the United States saw the adjustment of the individual following the path of a U-shaped curve, based on their situation and time of transition. The introductory stage represented a time where the individual was happy, intrigued by their new home, equating their sojourn to being an adventure. After some time, the pleasure wore off leaving the individual feeling less adjusted and falling into what Lysgaard referred to as a "crisis" stage. Eventually, the individual experienced an upswing in their life which signified that they had started to integrate into the host society, which left them feeling better adjusted to their new life.

Oberg (1960), offered a different approach to Lysgaard's model, where he determined that cultural adjustment was culture shock, a phenomenon which simulated a medical trauma to the body. "Culture shock tends to be an occupational disease of people who have been suddenly transplanted abroad. Like most ailments, it has its own symptoms, cause, and cure." (Oberg, 1960, p. 177). The individual went through a process where they were unable to fully participate in their host environment until they had adjusted sufficiently. In the honeymoon stage, the initial stage of adjustment, the individual was a fascinated with their new environment. After days or even months, the euphoric feeling wore off leaving the individual facing the reality that they are far from home, and having to cope with a different environment. During this stage of crisis, the individual lost the familiar signs and symbols that had guided them in their

everyday behavior. Oberg suggested that this loss of the familiar triggered hostility and aggression toward the new environment, and the individual turned to persons from their old culture for comfort. If the individual was able to get past the second stage and adopted a “this is my cross and I have to bear it attitude” (Oberg, 1960, p. 179), Oberg saw the individual on the way to recovery. They had managed to reach a stage where they were able to have incorporated elements of the new environment into their lives, language, and now had the ability to maneuver in the host society. The fourth stage of adjustment occurred when the sojourner had accepted their new life and environment.

Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963), studied individuals who worked, or studied abroad. They proposed a W-curved model of adjustment, an extension of Lysgaard’s U-shaped curve model. The W model, accounted for both the adjustment when the individual underwent when entering the host country, as well as the re-adjustment that the individual underwent when they returned to their home country. The second U-curve replicated the first trajectory, starting with a honeymoon stage, which reflected the individual’s anticipation of their return home. The authors saw the return home as a “psychological relocation”, where the individual realized that as a result of their time away from home, and adaptation to a new culture, there had been a shift in their expectations and values thus creating a crisis situation. Gullahorn and Gullahorn found that during this crisis stage the lecturers were critical of the procedures at their home universities. While abroad the lecturers had experienced freedom from

obligations that had allowed them time to concentrate on their creative professional pursuits. Eventually, the lecturers reintegrated into their home society ridding themselves of the feeling of isolation and alienation and began to value the similarities and differences between their host and home country.

The review of the literature found criticism for both the “U” and “W” curves. La Brack (n.d.) suggested that while culture shock was still a viable explanatory tool, the curve models failed to withstand empirical testing and research. Trainers found, the curve models could not be replicated when applied to their students’ experiences, the fixed time periods for the stages did not withstand scrutiny, therefore of no value when predicting culture shock.

2.3 Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the literature related to: (a) a freshmen student orientation paradigm; (b) the development of an international student orientation framework; (c) a brief history of international students in Canada, and the postsecondary institution’s responsibility to the students; and (d) concluded with a discussion of a theoretical framework. It was found that there were commonalities between the freshmen and international student orientation programs. The authors advocated that in order to formulate a comprehensive orientation program, the needs of the students must be first assessed. They concluded that orientation be at minimum a three-phase process. Students should receive extensive materials about the institution and services in

advance of their arriving at the school, and that orientation continue past the one day or week put aside at the start of the semester. What differed for the international students, were the needs, or challenges they faced which were attributed to: their immigration status, social and cultural differences, language proficiency, and their pre-occupation with non-academic issues.

The literature review found limited resources where a practical application for orientation programs had been derived from a theoretical model. Upcraft et al., (1984), came to the conclusion that it was difficult to apply student development theory to the orientation process, thus recommended that a model, rather than a theory be applied to the development of an orientation program. When developing an orientation model for international students it was reported that the students' basic needs must be first considered. These needs replicated Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1954). However, the uniqueness of the international students' social and cultural background, led to a review of cultural shock, and the "U" and "W" models of adjustment. Symons and Price (1984) stated, that if a working model was not incorporated at the postsecondary institution, students would return to their home country dissatisfied with their overseas experience, or leave Canada without receiving the full benefit of their experience.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter will present an overview of the development of the research study and methodology. Included in this chapter is an overview of web-based survey design, a summary of the data collection, an explanation for the development of the survey instrument, and a description of the sample. The research procedure is outlined, followed by an overview of the response rates. Ethical considerations are addressed at the end of the chapter, along with a list of limitation and delimitations.

3.1 An Overview of Web-based Survey Design

Researchers frequently used email and web based surveys (Cobanoglu and Cobanoglu, 2003). Granello and Wheaton (2004), found that email surveys and web-based surveys, were the two most common means of online data collection. With email surveys, the survey was embedded in the email message, where the respondent completed the survey, then was directed to return the completed survey through return email. In contrast, the procedure for web-based surveys entails the respondent being contacted by mail, phone or through an electronic means, given an URL for a dedicated web site where the survey was located. Once completed, the respondent submitted their responses electronically. When compared to paper-based surveys, the Granello and Wheaton (2004) found several advantages to the online data collection. The advantages included: reduced response time, lowered costs, ease of data entry, flexibility and control

over format, advances in technology, recipient acceptance of the format, and the ability to obtain additional response-set information. In their review of the literature, the authors found that individuals with a college education were more accepting of the online data collection format; however, the respondents had some concerns about the disclosure of their email address. They also found that confidentiality and anonymity were not challenged with the online formats.

Web-based surveys were never completely random or anonymous as the researcher had access to the respondents' email addresses (Gunn, 2002; Kypri and Gallagher, 2003). To address the issue of anonymity, the selection of an appropriate survey software package was important. By selecting software that was hosted outside of the researcher's personal or institutional domain increased the degree of anonymity. Ideally, the software permitted the researcher to set the collection parameters where the respondent's email address was not collected (Daley, McDermott, McCormack Brown, Kittleson, 2003).

Umbach (2004), from his study of best practices for web surveys, reported there were several disadvantages attributed to online data collection. These disadvantages appeared in the form of coverage error, sampling error, measurement error and non-response error. Coverage error resulted if potential respondents were excluded from the survey. Respondents may have been excluded if they: (a) did not have an active email account, or, (b) did not check their email account on a regular basis. Sampling error occurred when there was unequal access to the internet amongst the respondents. In terms of

measurement error, it was the researcher who determined whether the respondent's attitude towards the online presentation of the survey influenced the results. Non-response errors occurred, "when individuals in a sample are unwilling or unable to complete a survey." (Umbach, 2004, p. 27).

Granello and Wheaton (2004), in their review of online data collection methods, considered the limitations that were a consequence of this type of survey methodology. The limitations included: representativeness of the sample, response rates, measurement errors and technical difficulties. The authors found that although the use of the internet had risen in 2000, the users were predominantly educated Caucasian males, or users under the age of 35. Their review of the literature found that online data collection produced lower response rates when compared to the paper method. To counter the lower response rates, they suggested multiple reminders be sent to the recipients. In addition, it was recommended that open-ended questions be avoided, or kept to a minimum, as they were seen to cause abandonment of the survey. Granello and Wheaton (2004), further concluded that there was little known about the psychometric influences on an electronic survey compared to the paper format. Technical difficulties arose from: the variance of computer literacy of the users, whether the participants had dial-up or high-speed access to the internet, the capabilities of the user's operating platform and their ability to load the survey easily, and the formatting of questions.

LeFever, Dal and Matthiasdottir (2007) in their paper on online data collection in academic research, suggested there were positives and negatives to the use of web surveys. The use of web surveys were cost efficient, convenient and produced results in a very short timeframe. Web surveys permitted respondents to respond at their convenience, and from any location. The authors found a number of limitations such as: in order to participate in the study the respondent required access to the internet; and if the respondent failed to complete the survey immediately, they might have forgotten to return to the survey at a later time. Email solicitation, for participation in the survey, may have been seen as spam by the respondent's email host, and consequently delivered to the recipient's junk mailbox. The reliability of the survey may also have been comprised if the respondents did not meet the eligibility requirements to complete the survey. The authors found that the response rate for web surveys to be lower than that of paper-based form. However, the authors suggested that web-based surveys allowed the respondents to freely participate, thus created a greater quality of response.

Kypri and Gallagher (2003), in their study of using an online survey tool amongst university students, identified two factors that may have influenced the survey return rate. The authors discovered that many of the students' mailing addresses listed with the university were incorrect or incomplete. Secondly, they found that students preferred to use their personal email account from an external service, e.g. Hotmail, rather than their university designated account.

Kypri and Gallagher used a combination of mail, telephone, email and the internet to inform and remind students of their survey.

Crawford, Couper and Lamias (2001) examined non-response rates, and abandonment rates in web surveys, amongst students enrolled at the University of Michigan. They concluded that it was important that there was a minimal time lapse between the invitation to participate, and the reminders sent to the students. If the students neglected to respond, then additional email reminders were sent. The students were also reassured that their answers were confidential. The researchers found less than a quarter of the students responded to their survey. They analyzed the survey results for coverage error, the length of the survey, the timing of the reminders, racial and gender differences and year of student. There were no significant differences in response rate for gender and race; they did find differences between students who were informed the survey took less than 10 minutes to complete, compared to students who were told the survey took upwards to 20 minutes to finish, with the former demonstrating a lower response rate. In terms of year of study, freshmen students had the lowest response rate, and sophomore students produced the highest rate. The authors also observed that using open-ended questions at the beginning of the survey, generated a high level of abandonment.

To increase response rates, and decrease non-response rates, studies showed that: attention to research design, avoidance of open-ended questions, drop-down menus, plain visual screens, clear navigational aids, pre-notification

of the survey, clear instructions, direct access to the survey via a specified URL, multiple email reminders and use of incentives positively impacted the response rate (Bosnjak and Tuten, 2001; Gunn, 2002; Daley et al., 2003; Granello and Wheaton, 2004; Umbach, 2004).

In their study on the use of a web-based survey to collect health risk behavior amongst college students, no significant difference between response rates for web or mail-based approach was found (Pealer, Weiler, Pigg Jr, Miller and Dorman, 2001). The evidence showed that interest in the survey content, and ease of completion, were more important than length of the questionnaire to response rate. The authors found a high completion rate amongst the web-based survey respondents. The web format allowed for ease of data entry which minimized the chance for error.

Item response, and missing data, was a concern for researchers. Item non-response occurred through errors in coding and data entry, or when the respondents were directed to skip questions, or answer items from another series of questions (Cronigner and Douglas, 2005). It was suggested that if there was a large sample, and the number of cases with missing data were few, the researcher could simply drop those cases from the study. However, "as the amount of missing data increases and the sample size decreases, the choice of how to address missing data is potentially more consequential." (Cronigner and Douglas, 2005, p. 35). The authors offered an alternative way of compensating for the missing data, the use of EM, expectation maximization. EM constituted creating

a “best guess” for the missing data. Cronigner and Douglas (2005) presented four recommendations for the avoidance of missing data whereby the researcher: (a) paid attention to survey design; (b) looked for patterns and causes of missing data when each error was encountered; (c) examined patterns for missing data in the entire dataset; a focus group could have been utilized to suggest improvements in data collection, survey design and how to reduce missing data; and, (d) had an understanding of strategies for missing data.

Use of Incentives.

From the literature review there was no conclusive answer as to whether “rewards” or incentives increased response rates. Incentives used in the various studies ranged from money, vouchers for food or goods, online coupons, to simple items such as pens or luggage tags (Cobanoglu and Cobanoglu, 2003; Szelenyi, Bryant and Lindholm, 2005). However studies showed that pre-paid incentives were more effective than “promised” or post-paid incentives which included prize draws (Cobanoglu and Cobanoglu, 2003; Szelenyi, Bryant and Lindholm, 2005). Szelenyi et al., (2005), in their study of the effect of prepaid monetary incentives on response rates amongst colleges students, found that the inclusion of a small monetary incentive as low as \$2 had a major and positive impact on the level of response. They concluded that, “students may perceive incentives as a reflection of the importance researchers assign to their project, as well as the high value attached to each student’s views and experiences....A small incentive, for example, may boost students’ sense of social responsibility and

feelings of obligation, thereby promoting survey response.” (Szelenyi et al., 2005, p. 397).

Cobanoglu and Cobanoglu (2003) found, that when the researcher offered a minimal prize to all respondents, and entered their names in a draw for a larger prize, a higher response rate was achieved. To add confidence that the prize would be awarded fairly, the authors recommended that an agency, or persons outside of the research team, drew the winning name.

3.2 Data Collection

The initial research strategy for this study used a mixed method approach incorporating the use of a web-based survey and a post-survey focus group. The use of mixed methods diminished the bias that might have emerged by relying solely on data from one research method. If the results from the two methods corresponded with each other then the greater the level of confidence the researcher had in their findings (Cohen et al., 2004).

The research instrument developed for the focus group consisted of six open-ended questions that referenced items found in the web-based survey. A copy of the focus group instrument is located in Appendix B. The questions were designed to gather a clearer explanation regarding the respondent’s experiences. A decision was made to forego the focus group due to a poor response rate to the request for participants.

3.3 The Survey Instrument

The survey instrument for this study collected data from the 2006-2007 cohort of international students at the Humber College Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning. The respondents were surveyed in order to: determine the elements the respondents felt important to their pre-departure preparation and transitional needs; clarify the respondent's understanding of the term "orientation"; query what were relevant topics for on-site workshops; and, to identify what was the most effective delivery method for the distribution of pre-departure materials, as well as the appropriate timeframe for the on-site orientation sessions.

Prior to this study, no analysis of the international student orientation program had been conducted at Humber. The development of the survey questions emerged from a review of the literature, informal networking with colleagues from across Canada, comments made by former students, and observations made by the researcher in her role as an International Student Advisor (ISA). In addition, two Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) sponsored surveys, *Canada First: the 1999 Survey of International Students* (Walker, 1999) and *Canada First: the 2004 Survey of International Students* (Prairie Research Associates Inc, 2004) provided a frame of reference for the development of the current survey.

The choice to conduct a quantitative study, particularly a web-based survey, was selected for several reasons. Those reasons included: a reduced response time, lower costs, ease of data entry, flexibility and control over format, recipient acceptance of the format, and ability to obtain additional response-set information (Granello and Wheaton, 2004). The use of a web-based survey format also: (a) accommodated English as a second language respondents who had stronger reading skills than speaking skills; and (b) allowed access to the survey from anywhere in the world, as the research was conducted during the summer break. Moreover, it was found that many postal addresses for the international students were incomplete or incorrect, thus negating a mail survey.

Survey Monkey © was the software selected to host the survey. As a software domain Survey Monkey© had the capacity to:

- House the survey as well as survey results external to Humber.
- Generate a URL which respondents used to access the survey directly.
- Block student email addresses by setting the anonymous survey response feature which added to the confidentiality of the data.
- Provide an analysis of the data, and produce reports in transferable formats such as Excel.

To test the content validity of the survey instrument, the survey was emailed to a pre-test group. To achieve content validity it was necessary that the questions asked were relevant, and covered the issues under investigation (Cohen et al., 2004). The use of a pre-test group was of particular importance as the

research study was conducted in the researcher's own working environment. Through their review of the survey content, the pre-test group ensured that: assumptions were not made by the researcher; the researcher did not fail to dig deeper for understanding; and, potential respondent behaviours "taken for granted" (Asselin, 2003, p. 100). The pre-test group consisted of International Student Services team members, representatives from the University of Guelph Humber Student Services, and international student alumni. The feedback from the pre-test group asked for clarification of certain questions, and addressed technical or design issues; the appropriate amendments were made to the survey.

The survey instrument consisted of four areas of enquiry: pre-departure preparation, orientation experience, orientation program development and demographics. To investigate these areas of enquiry, 18 questions were developed of which there were: five items ranked on a 4 or 5 point Likert-type scale, four yes or no questions, one question requiring an explanation, and eight multiple-option questions. To avoid confusion, and the potential for misinterpretation of a question, every attempt was made to avoid open-ended questions. The single open-ended question asked the respondents to identify their country of citizenship. A full copy of the survey instrument used to collect data for this study is located in Appendix C.

An introductory email requesting voluntary participation in the study was posted to the international student list serve. A copy of the email request can be found in Appendix D. Respondents were directed to a URL link for the

"International Student Orientation Survey" (see Appendix C). Included in the request was an online information letter which explained the nature of the study and the extent of the respondent's participation. The respondents were also presented with a web-based consent form. A copy of the consent form can be found in Appendix E.

3.4 The Sample

A convenience sample was used for this study. "Convenience sampling...involves choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents" (Cohen et al., p. 102). The respondents for this study were drawn from the international student list serve database. In January 2007, there were 790 international students enrolled at the school (Humber College Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning, 2007).

The researcher was authorized by Humber as an owner of the international student list serve therefore had access to posting messages through that medium. The respondents had voluntarily divulged their personal email addresses for the international student list serve. Moreover, in her role as an ISA, the researcher received a weekly listing of enrolled international students, from the Registrar's Office. The weekly listings were used to confirm the number of current international students as well as the immigration status of respondents who contacted the researcher regarding the research project. At the time of the study, the respondents did not have Humber email accounts, therefore the most

effective way of contacting a large percentage of potential respondents was through the international student list serve. With 790 international students in the 2006-2007 cohort, and 1647 subscribers to the list serve, it was concluded that the request for participation in the study would reach a high percentage of potential respondents. However there were drawbacks to using the list serve. One, not all of the subscribers were eligible to participate in the study, e.g. domestic students, alumni and college personnel. Two, there was no quick means for determining how many of the email addresses were active.

Excluded from the study were: English for Academic Purposes students; Ningbo University students; students enrolled in the Davenport University on-line program; Taiwanese students from the Kaohsiung Hospitality College; exchange students; distance learners; and The University of Guelph Humber students. Further exclusions included members of the list serve who were: domestic students, alumni and college personnel.

To protect the identity of the respondents their responses were submitted directly to Survey Monkey®, and the software was programmed not to track email addresses. Only those respondents who wished to have their name entered into the draw for the incentive prize, or indicate their willingness to participate in a focus group, were required to self-identify in order for the researcher to contact them.

The confidentiality policy was observed through ensuring that the data

was stored in a locked drawer, and only the researcher had access to the data. Once the data had been analyzed then the overall results were shared with the researcher's co-workers.

3.5 Procedure

An introductory email introducing the research study was posted to the international list serve (see Appendix D). Potential respondents were provided with the title of the research, purpose of the research, the timelines as to the availability of the survey, and the approximate time it would take to complete the survey. Respondents were informed that their participation was voluntary and their responses confidential. Those interested were directed to click on the URL link provided in the introductory email, which took them to the survey hosted in Survey Monkey ©.

The respondents who chose to proceed, were first presented with an information letter. The information letter elaborated on the information provided in the introductory email. A full copy is found in Appendix E. Those who agreed to participate, were asked to indicate that they had read and understood the contents of the information letter, and by pressing the "continue" button demonstrated their agreement to participate in the research study. The respondents were then presented with a survey that consisted of 17 questions. A two week time span was provided for the completion of the survey. At the end of the survey respondents were advised that if they wished to participate in a focus

group, or have their name added to a draw for an incentive prize, they should contact the researcher through email.

3.6 Response Rates

The initial email sent to the list serve informed the respondents that they had two weeks to access the web-based survey. To increase the response rate, three reminder emails were posted to the list serve (Crawford et al, 2001; Granello and Wheaton, 2004; Umbach, 2004). From the initial email, three respondents asked to be entered into the incentive prize draw, and one respondent volunteered to participate in a focus group. Email reminder #1 was posted to the list serve a week after the initial posting, bringing the number of survey attempts to 60. Email reminder #2 was posted 10 days after the start of the survey. This reminder generated one addition respondent for a focus group, and two additional names to be entered into the draw. By the scheduled completion deadline there were only 77 survey responses, therefore a decision was made to extend the survey deadline by three days. Email reminder #3 was posted two weeks after the start of the survey notifying respondents of the extension. A week following the closure of the survey an email was sent to the list serve inviting survey respondents to add their name to a focus group.

In total, there were 88 responses to the survey, which reflected a combination of completed or partially completed surveys. Within the survey, respondents were asked if they were willing to participate in a focus group; 19

respondents answered yes, however during the follow-up phase, only two respondents committed to participating. The researcher received two additional queries requesting clarification of what was entailed in the focus group session. A decision was made to forego the focus group due to a poor response rate.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Access to respondents for this study was contingent on the approval of the research proposal by Memorial's Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR No. 2006/07-105-ED) and Humber's Research Committee. Approval from Humber's VP Academic was also required to: (a) administer a web-based survey, (b) conduct a focus group, and (c) use the international student list serve to post bulk email messages. Approval was granted on the basis that there was no risk to the respondents, their participation was voluntary, and the respondent could withdraw their participation at any time during the study. Consent had to be obtained from the respondents and confidentiality had to be observed.

Ethical considerations needed to be addressed as this study was conducted at the researcher's institution. As the International Student Advisor (ISA) worked closely with the international students every effort was made to have the respondents view the ISA in her role as a researcher rather than that of an advisor. The use of a web-based survey, as opposed to conducting interviews, added distance between the researcher and the respondents. By the elimination

of a face-to-face interaction it was anticipated that respondents would respond, honestly and freely, rather than in terms of what they perceived to be the “expected” response.

3.8 Limitations

1. Respondents required access to a computer and possessed a level of computer literacy.
2. Willingness of the respondents to participate. That the respondents answered the questions honestly.
3. Generalizability was compromised as the study did not use a random sample. Respondents were subscribers to the international student list serve.
4. The geographical base from which the respondents were drawn was not viewed to be sufficiently diverse. The majority of the respondents at Humber came from Asia, and in particular India. The experiences therefore of the respondents could not be considered representative of all international students.
5. No control over the respondents who started the survey, but chose to withdraw their consent and discontinued the survey.
6. Potential respondents missing the on-site orientation due to delay in the issuance of their visa to enter Canada.

3.9 Delimitations

1. The study only included Humber respondents. Respondents from the contract groups, i.e., Ningbo University, Davenport University, Kaohsiung Hospitality College, or EAP were not included in the study. The University of Guelph Humber students were also excluded.
2. The responses were generated from only Humber students therefore the results could not be generalized to other post-secondary institutions.

3.10 Summary

This chapter provided an overview of web-based survey design, the development of the survey instrument, and the methodology used to evaluate the research questions. The literature review identified positive and negative outcomes to the use of web-based surveys. The positives included: a reduction in the researcher's cost, the formatting reduced errors in coding, allowed for design flexibility, and gave access to an unlimited sample group (Umbach, 2004). The negatives represented: coverage error, sampling error, measurement error and non-response error (Umbach, 2004). Furthermore, in order for web-based research to have been an effective tool, the researcher could not rely solely on technology, but had to take precautions to ensure that the basic research principles were maintained. Those principles included: knowing one's audience,

establishing a pre-test group, writing clear and concise questions, incorporating a layout that was simple and easy to read, consideration of mixed-mode techniques and the use of follow-up reminders (Daley et al., 2003; Granello and Wheaton, 2004; Umbach, 2004).

A convenience sample was used for this study. The respondents were asked to complete a web-based survey hosted in Survey Monkey ©. The survey instrument consisted of a variety of question formats such as, ranking Likert-type scale questions, yes and no questions, an open ended question and multiple choice questions.

The respondents were contacted through the use of Humber's international student list serve. In addition to an introductory email, a series of email reminders were posted to the respondents through the list serve. The Survey Monkey © software was used to collect and provide an analysis of the data.

Included in the chapter, was a discussion of ethical considerations since the researcher conducted the research study in her home institution. A set of limitations and delimitations were presented at the end of the chapter.

Chapter Four: Results of Data Analysis

The data for this research study was compiled through the administration of a web-based survey using Survey Monkey ©. The survey was divided into four sections: (1) pre-departure preparation prior to arrival in Canada, (2) orientation awareness and experiences, (3) recommendations for orientation program development, and (4) demographic data. Included in the results was a description for each of the sections.

Eight-eight responded to the request for survey participants. From that group, ten chose not to respond to the question asking for their agreement to participate. Three respondents did not meet the eligibility requirements therefore were not included in the research project. Students who were enrolled at Humber on the basis of an articulation agreement between Humber and their home institution, or who were enrolled at the University of Guelph Humber were not eligible to participate in the study (see “limitations”, Chapter 3). Of further note, not all students elected to answer each question.

4.1: Demographic Data

Table 1 provided a view of the gender of the respondents who participated in the study.

Table 1

<i>Gender of Respondent Group (N=48)</i>		
	Percentage (%)	Actual (N)
Male	56.2%	27
Female	43.8%	21
Total	100%	48

There was an assumption that traditionally, college students entered post-secondary education directly from secondary school, suggesting that the respondents would fall in the 18-20 age group, however, the results from this group of respondents yielded a slightly higher age group (see Table 2). Amongst the respondents, 58.3% were between the ages of 21-25 years, and 22.9% were 26-30 years. An equal number of respondents, or 4%, ranged from 18-20 years, or 30 + years, and 2.1% of the respondents indicated that they were 17 years or younger.

Table 2

<i>Age Cohort (N=48)</i>		
	Percentage (%)	Actual (N)
17 and under	2.1%	1
18-20	8.3%	4
21-25	58.3%	28

26-30	23.0%	11
30 and older	8.3%	4
Total	100%	48

As reported in Table 3, the majority of the respondents, or 58.3% were enrolled in a diploma program, followed by 31.3% registered in a post graduate certificate program, and 4.29% studying towards a degree. The respondents were not asked to self-identify by academic school as program of study was not seen to be as influential in the level of participation in orientation compared to level of study.

Table 3

<i>Type of Program Enrolled in (N=45)</i>		
	Percentage (%)	Actual (N)
Diploma	62.2	28
Post Graduate Certificate	33.3	15
Degree	4.4	2
Total	100%	45

Table 4 provided an overview of the semester of study for the respondents. The majority, or 25.0% of the respondents were in their 3rd semester of studies,

followed by 18.8% in semester 2, and 10.4% in semester 4. What was unexpected was the 25.0% who indicated that they were not enrolled at the time of the study.

Table 4

<i>Semester of Study (N=48)</i>		
	Percentage (%)	Actual (N)
1	8.3	4
2	18.8	9
3	25.0	12
4	10.4	5
5	8.3	4
6	2.1	1
7	2.1	1
8	0.0	0
Not currently enrolled	25.0	12
Total	100%	48

Of the respondents, 72.9% were enrolled in full-time studies, 6.3% in part-time studies, 0.0% in a co-op semester, and, 20.8% indicated they had graduated. The respondents who indicated they were enrolled on a part-time had either dropped to that status because they required pre-requisite courses in order to continue in their program, or they had one or two courses left in order to

graduate. At Humber, international students were not permitted to enrol in a program on a part-time basis.

The respondents were asked to self-identify themselves by their country of citizenship. As seen in Table 5, their responses were further clustered by continent based on the parameters established by World Atlas (World Atlas, nod). The top three regions for country of citizenship were Asia (54.8%), South America (16.7%), followed by North America (14.3%).

Table 5

<i>Country of Citizenship (N=42)</i>		
	Percentage (%)	Actual (N)
Africa	2.4	1
Asia	54.8	23
Europe	12.0	5
North America	14.3	6
South America	16.7	7
Oceania	0.0	0.0
Total	100%	42

4.2 Pre-Departure Preparation Prior to Arrival in Canada

Section 1 of the survey asked the respondents two questions.

In the first question, the respondents were asked to indicate the resources they used, and the usefulness of those resources for their pre-departure preparation.

Table 6 below, indicated that the two primary resources utilized by the respondents in preparing for their departure for Canada were, viewing Humber's international website (85.7%), and speaking with relatives, friends or alumni about their experiences in Canada (81.8%).

Table 6

<i>Sources of Information Used to Prepare for Departure (N=47)</i>					
	Percentage (%)	Yes	Percentage (%)	No	Actual (N)
Received academic orientation information	76.2	32	23.8	10	42
Viewed Humber's orientation webpage	71.4	30	28.6	12	42
Received a welcome newsletter from the International Student Services Office	71.4	30	28.6	12	42
Viewed Humber's international website	85.7	36	14.3	6	42
Searched for information on Canada, education system in Canada, Canadian customs, etc.	71.4	30	28.6	12	42
Talked to relatives, friends or alumni about their experiences in Canada	81.8	36	18.2	8	44

The data recorded in Table 7 showed the respondents determination of the usefulness of the information they received prior to their departure for Canada. Using a 5 point Likert-type scale the respondents ranked the usefulness of the services from very useful to non-applicable. As indicated in the table, discussions with family, friends and alumni received the highest ranking for usefulness (46.5%), compared to the information provided on Humber's college-administered webpage (22.0%).

Table 7

<i>Usefulness of Information Used for Pre-Departure Preparation (N=47)</i>						
	VU	U	SU	NU	NA	Actual (N)
Received academic orientation information	30.0% (12)	40.0% (16)	12.5% (5)	0.0% (0)	17.5% (7)	40
Viewed Humber's orientation webpage	22.0% (9)	34.0% (14)	17.1% (7)	4.9% (2)	22.0% (9)	41
Received a welcome newsletter from the ISS Office	32.5% (12)	27.0% (10)	24.3% (9)	5.4% (2)	10.8% (4)	37
Viewed Humber's international website	32.5% (12)	47.5% (19)	7.5% (3)	7.5% (3)	5.0% (2)	40
Searched for information on Canada, education system in Canada, Canadian customs, etc.	31.6% (12)	42.1% (16)	10.5% (4)	7.9% (3)	7.9% (3)	38
Talked to relatives, friends or alumni about their experiences in Canada	46.5% (20)	18.6% (8)	11.6% (5)	4.7% (2)	18.6% (8)	43
					Answered question	47

NOTE: VU= Very useful; U= Useful; SU=Somewhat useful; NU=Not at all useful; NA= Not applicable

The second question, asked the respondents to indicate their level of concern for their departure for Canada. Using a 4-point Likert-type scale, the

respondents ranked their level of concern for each item, ranging from very concerned to not concerned. As reported in Table 8, for 52.2%, or half of the respondent group, their greatest concern was doing well in their studies, followed by 46.7% who were very concerned about leaving their family and friends. Approximately one third of the respondents, or 31.1%, were very concerned about meeting new people and making new friends. Of lesser concern was the respondents' ability to communicate in English, live in a different culture or learn in a different environment.

Table 8

<i>Concerns About Relocating to Canada (N=46)</i>						
	VC	C	SC	NC	RA	RC
Leaving family and friends	46.7% (21)	26.7% (12)	13.3% (6)	13.3% (6)	1.93	45
Communicating in English	18.2% (8)	20.4% (9)	11.4% (5)	50.0% (22)	2.93	44
Living in a different culture	17.8% (8)	20.0% (9)	33.3% (15)	28.9% (13)	2.73	45
Learning in a different environment	18.2% (8)	31.8% (14)	27.3% (12)	22.7% (10)	2.55	44
Doing well in class	52.2% (24)	30.4% (14)	8.7% (4)	8.7% (4)	1.74	46
Meeting new people and making new friends	31.1% (14)	28.9% (13)	22.2% (10)	17.8% (8)	2.27	45
					Answered question	46

Note VC= Very concerned; C= concerned; SC= Somewhat concerned; NC= Not concerned; RA= Rating average; RC= response count

4.3: Orientation Awareness and Experiences

The respondents were asked in section 2, question 4, to define what “orientation” meant to them. To avoid asking an ambiguous question, the respondents were asked to select from an 8-item list, what they felt best described their understanding of orientation (see Table 9). The results indicated that the majority, or 59.5% of the respondents, saw orientation” as an opportunity to learn more about Humber and the services available to them. Slightly fewer respondents, 42.9%, saw “orientation” as the means to meet faculty and staff prior to the start of the semester, while 31.0%, saw it as a chance to obtain their student ID card, timetable and textbooks. Only 26.2%, saw orientation as a social event designed to help students network with each other through social activities. Even fewer, 11.9%, described orientation as a time set apart to receive assistance with their adjustment to the host country.

Table 9

<i>Definition of “Orientation” (N=42)</i>	Response Percent (%)	Response Count
An opportunity to meet faculty and staff	42.9	18
The chance to learn more about Humber through a campus tour and description of available services	59.5	25
A time to obtain my student ID card, timetable and list of required textbooks/supplies	31.0	13

To learn what is expected of students at Humber	26.2	11
To receive special transition information e.g. How to adjust to a new environment; how to deal with homesickness; learn about personal safety in a new country, etc.	11.9	5
A series of social events, the opportunity to meet other students, the chance to have fun	26.2	11
All of the above	26.2	11
None of the above	0.0	0
Other		1
	Answered question	42

In question 5, the respondents were asked about their attendance at the on-site orientation programs. Of the respondent group, 65.9% stated they had attended their academic school orientation, in comparison to 30.2%, who had attended the international students' orientation.

Table 10

<i>Attendance at Orientation (N=45)</i>				
	Yes	No	Rating Average	Response Count
Your academic school orientation	65.9% (29)	34.1% (15)	1.34	44
International Student Orientation	30.2% (13)	69.8% (30)	1.70	43
			Answered question	45

Question 6 asked the respondents that had attended the international orientation, to assess the usefulness of the on-site program using a 5 point Likert-like scale, ranging from very useful to not applicable/I did not attend. From the responses, 8.6% found the workshops and activities as very useful. From the data compiled in Table 11, 17.1% found the sessions as “useful” or “somewhat useful”. During the proposed focus group sessions, respondents would have been given the opportunity to elaborate on their experiences. They also would have been asked for their opinion as to what would attract more respondents to attend orientation, and what they felt should be included in the orientation program.

Table 11

<i>Usefulness of the International Student Orientation (N=35)</i>		
	Response Percent (%)	Response Count
Very useful	8.6	3
Useful	17.1	6
Somewhat useful	17.1	6
Not at all useful	2.9	1
Not applicable; I did not attend	48.6	17
Other (please comment)	5.7	2
	Answered question	35

As part of question 6, the respondents were given the chance to expand on their previous answer and provide comments on the usefulness of the workshops

and activities. From respondent 1, “do not recall if there was ever one”; and from respondent 2, “I was the only one in the international welcome event”.

In question 7, as displayed in Table 12, the respondents who did attend the international student orientation, were asked to provide an explanation for their absence. The results showed, a lack of knowledge of the orientation sessions as the primary reason for non-attendance (38.6%). For 20.5% of the respondents, they stated that they had not arrived in Canada in time for orientation. Despite the vast geographical area encompassed in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), 0.0% stated they chose not to attend due to travel distance.

Table 12

<i>Reason for Not Attending International Orientation</i>		
	Response Percent (%)	Response Count
I was not in Canada	20.5%	9
I did not know there was an orientation program for international students	38.6%	17
I was unsure as to what was involved in the orientation	6.8%	3
I had other plans that day	4.5%	2
It was scheduled at the same time as my academic orientation	2.3%	1
It was too far to travel	0.0%	0
I was not interested	6.8%	3
Not applicable; I attended the international orientation	20.5%	9
	Answered question	44

For question 8, using a 4-point Likert-type scale, ranging from very important to not important, respondents were asked, based on their experience, to rank the level of importance attributed to the sources of information and services available for pre-departure preparation. From the data that appears in Table 13 below, visa and permit information (95.6%) and financial information (80.0%) were the two key areas the respondents indicated were essential in pre-departure preparation. Of lesser importance were: information on health care (66.7%), information on employment opportunities (64.4%), housing information (53.3%), and, bursary or scholarship information (48.9%). The remainder of the responses were clustered, where a third of the sample (31.1%), found obtaining knowledge about Toronto or how to get around the metropolis as being very important. Information on where to shop (25.0%), information on Canadian customs and values (17.8%), generated slightly more interest than information on social functions (15.9%), student testimonials (15.5%), and participating in real-time web chats (13.3%), which received the lowest ranking.

Table 13

<i>Sources of Information Important in Preparing to Leave for Canada (N=45)</i>						
	VI	I	SI	NI	RA	RC
Visa and permit information	95.6% (43)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	4.4% (2)	1.13	45
Financial information	80.0% (36)	13.3% (6)	4.5% (2)	2.2% (1)	1.29	45
Bursary or scholarship information	48.9% (22)	24.4% (11)	20.0% (9)	6.7% (3)	1.84	45
Housing information	53.3%	28.9%	11.1%	6.7%	1.71	45

	(24)	(13)	(5)	(3)		
Employment opportunities	64.4% (29)	20.0% (9)	8.9% (4)	6.7% (3)	1.58	45
Health insurance information	66.7% (30)	20.0% (9)	8.9% (4)	4.4% (2)	1.51	45
Public transportation information	35.6% (16)	28.9% (13)	28.9% (13)	6.7% (3)	2.07	45
Educational workshops e.g. academic success, income tax, etc.	28.9% (13)	42.2% (19)	17.8% (8)	11.1% (5)	2.11	45
Social activities e.g. local trips, sporting events, movies, etc.	15.9% (7)	38.6% (17)	29.6% (13)	15.9% (7)	2.45	44
Participating in a real-time web chat with staff and students	13.3% (6)	42.2% (19)	20.0% (9)	24.5% (11)	2.56	45
Student testimonials	15.5% (7)	35.6% (16)	26.7% (12)	2.2 (10)	2.56	45
Information on Canadian customs and values	17.8% (8)	46.7% (21)	22.2% (10)	13.3% (6)	2.31	45
Campus tour	31.1% (14)	28.9% (13)	31.1% (14)	8.9% (4)	2.18	45
Map of Greater Toronto Area	31.1% (14)	31.1% (14)	24.5% (11)	13.3% (6)	2.20	45
Information on Toronto	31.8% (14)	36.4% (16)	20.4% (9)	11.4% (5)	2.11	44
Information on where to shop	25.0% (11)	20.4% (9)	36.4% (16)	18.2% (8)	2.48	44
City tour	31.1% (14)	24.4% (11)	28.9% (13)	15.6% (7)	2.29	45
					Answered question	45

Note VI= Very important; I= Important; SI= Somewhat Important; NI= Not important; RA= Rating average; RC=Response count

For question 9, the respondents were asked, based on their experience, how useful, the list of potential workshops would be to freshmen students. The items were ranked on a 5-point Likert-type scale, from very useful to not useful. As indicated in Table 14, 65.2% reported knowledge of Canadian classroom dynamics was very useful, in contrast to only 15.6% who considered a session on time management as being very useful.

Table 14

<i>Recommended Orientation Workshops (N=46)</i>						
	VU	U	SU	NU	RA	RC
The Canadian classroom - faculty expectations, types of assignments, evaluation techniques	65.2% (30)	10.9% (5)	19.6% (9)	4.3% (2)	1.63	46
How to manage my time	15.6% (7)	42.2% (19)	28.9% (13)	13.3% (6)	2.40	45
How to study for exams	29.5% (13)	31.9% (14)	29.5% (13)	9.1% (4)	2.18	44
How to take notes	20.9% (9)	37.2% (16)	25.6% (11)	16.3% (7)	2.37	43
How to improve research, reading & writing skills	31.1% (14)	37.8% (17)	20.0% (9)	11.1% (5)	2.11	45
Using the library	24.5% (11)	44.4% (20)	20.0% (9)	11.1% (5)	2.18	45
How to use technology e.g. WebCT, email	36.4% (16)	38.6 (17)	20.5% (9)	4.5% (2)	1.93	44
Where to get academic help	24.5% (11)	44.4% (20)	20.0% (9)	11.1% (5)	2.18	45
					Answered question	46
Note: VU= Very useful; U= Useful; SU= Somewhat useful; NU= Not useful; RA= Rating average; RC= Response count						

4.4 Recommendations for Orientation Program Development

Section 3 of the survey asked two questions.

From the data listed in Table 15, responding to question 10, the respondents indicated their preference for delivery method for pre-departure materials. Their preference was for pre-departure materials being sent through mail (35.5%), followed by the information delivered on a DVD (28.9%). The third preference, was for the information to be delivered through an interactive web-based format (20.0%), whereas, the least preferred method of delivery was electronically through email (15.6%).

Table 15

<i>Recommended Pre-Departure Delivery Method (N=45)</i>		
	Response Percent	Response Count
A pre-arrival newsletter/handbook sent by mail	35.5%	16
A pre-arrival newsletter/handbook sent by email	15.6%	7
An interactive web-based orientation program	20.0%	9
A DVD containing pre-arrival information	28.9%	13
Other (please specify)	0.0%	0
	Answered question	45

In question 11, as seen in the Table 16 below, the respondents were presented with three scheduling options for the on-site orientation, and asked for their preference. An overwhelming majority of 63%, preferred that the on-site

orientation be kept to the traditional week prior to the start of the semester. From the respondent group, 26.1% chose evenings during the first month of the semester, compared to 10.9% of the respondents who indicated that weekends during the first month of the semester was ideal.

Table 16

<i>Preference for Timeframe for On-Site Orientation (N=46)</i>		
	Response Percent	Response Count
The week before classes start	63.0%	29
Evenings during the first month of classes	26.1%	12
Weekends during the first month of classes	10.9%	5
	Answered question	46

4.5 Summary

This chapter was a compilation of the study's results, beginning with a description of the respondents' demographics. A greater number of males than females responded to the survey. Over half of the respondents were from Asia. Noteworthy was that the majority of the respondents were 25-30 years, which was considered older than a student typically arriving at college straight out of secondary school.

From the survey results, it was found that the two primary sources of information for their pre-departure preparation were accessing Humber's international student website, and consulting with family, friends and alumni. In terms of influence, or usefulness, the respondents turned to their family and friends for advice. It was interesting to note that while family and friends appeared to play an important role in the respondent's life, the respondents ranked doing well in class, ahead of leaving their family and friends, as their main concern when leaving home.

The purpose of this study was to gather a better understanding what orientation meant to the respondents and what their orientation needs were. Almost 60% of the respondents viewed orientation as the means to learn more about Humber, its environment and available services. The social aspects of orientation captured the attention of just over 25% of the respondent group. What appeared to have the least amount of correlation with the term "orientation" was information on how to transition to Canada.

The primary orientation needs were receiving information on: visas and permit information, finances, health insurance, employment, housing and bursary and scholarships. It appeared that once the respondent's basic needs were met they were able to focus on getting to know their new environment, academic preparation and social activities.

Attendance at the international student orientation workshops was low, and of little value to those who had attended the workshops. Finally, the findings indicated that the respondents showed a preference for receiving the welcome package through mail, and participating in an orientation program the week preceding the start of the semester.

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Discussion and Recommendations

This study examined the respondent's understanding of the term "orientation", their orientation and transition needs, the most effective delivery method for distribution of pre-departure materials, and what the respondents considered the most appropriate timeframe for the on-site orientation sessions. The key elements for the pre-departure preparation for arrival in Canada, and relevant topics for on-site orientation workshops, were explored using a web-based survey located on Survey Monkey ©.

This chapter responded to the research questions by drawing conclusions based on the findings and data analysis results. Included in this chapter was a discussion of issues raised in the problem statement. The final section of Chapter 5 presented recommendations that emerged from the study.

5.1 Conclusions

The research questions that were investigated were:

1. What was the respondent's understanding of the term "orientation"? Did it differ from the commonly accepted North American concept? i.e., academic insights, social networking possibilities and the opportunity to engage in social activities prior to the start of the semester.

2. What were the articulated needs of the students? Did the current model utilized by Humber meet those needs?
3. What was the most effective delivery method for the distribution of pre-arrival materials? What was perceived as the appropriate timeframe for the on-site orientation sessions?

5.1.1 Research Question 1: What was the respondent's understanding of the term "orientation"? Did it differ from the commonly accepted North American concept? i.e. , academic insights, social networking possibilities and the opportunity to engage in social activities prior to the start of the semester.

The first question (Table 9), sought to clarify the respondent's understanding of the term "orientation", and whether the understanding coincided with the North American concept of orientation. The following findings emerged from the data: more than double the respondents (59.5%) were interested in learning more about Humber compared to those interested in the social aspects of orientation (26.2%). Other items of importance were: the opportunity of meeting faculty and staff (42.9%), and equipping themselves with a student's basic necessities, i.e., ID card, timetable, textbooks and supplies (31.0%). It was concluded that the respondents were more concerned with preparing themselves for their studies, than engaging in social activities. The common denominator between the respondents and domestic students was their

focus on academics, even if it was limited to meeting the faculty (Smith and Bracken, 1993; Strumpf and Sharer, 1993).

5.1.2 Research Question 2: What were the articulated needs of the students? Did the current model utilized by Humber meet those needs?

The second question, investigated the orientation needs of the freshmen students. The respondents were asked to rank a series of items, as well as the level of importance attributed to each item, for assisting someone coming to, or who had recently arrived in Canada (see Table 13). The study yielded findings where the ranked items fell into three tiers of importance. Of high importance was information related to: visa and permits, finances, bursary and scholarships, housing, employment and health insurance. These items ranked in order from 95.6% down to 66.7%. The mid-range important items were: public transit, a campus tour, and map of GTA, information on Toronto, a city tour and educational workshops. These items ranked from 35.6% to 28.9%. The least important items included information on: shopping, Canadian customs and values, social activities, student testimonials and web chats. These items ranked from 25.0% to 13.3%. From these findings, the following conclusion was made: the respondents placed a higher value in items which resolved their physiological or basic needs, replicating Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory (Maslow, 1954). Once those needs were addressed, then consideration could be given to other

aspects of their life. The respondents placed less emphasis on the social aspects of a North American orientation model.

The second part of the research question asked, whether Humber's current orientation program met the needs of the respondents. The current program consisted of a pre-departure welcome package, on-site orientation workshops and activities. From the data, 71.4% of the respondents indicated that they had received the pre-departure package. However, receipt of the package did not generate the expected outcomes. Only 32.4% of the respondents found the material to be very useful, only 30.2% of the respondents said they had attended the international student orientation sessions, and, 38.6% claimed they were unaware of the international student orientation. The conclusion from the results was that the material was either insufficient, or was not presented in a format clearly understood by the respondents. Consequently, it appeared that the promotion of the international student on-site orientation program required improvement.

5.1.3 Research Question 3: What was the most effective delivery method for the distribution of pre-departure materials? What was the perceived as the appropriate timeframe for the on-site orientation sessions?

The third question, dealt with program logistics. The two areas of consideration were: (a) preference for the delivery method of pre-departure

materials, and (b) the timeframe for the on-site programming. The findings for the preference in delivery method were: materials sent by mail (35.6%), materials formatted on a DVD and delivered by mail (28.9%), materials uploaded to an interactive web-based program (20.0%), and materials sent through email (15.6%). The conclusion reached, was the respondents wished the delivery method to remain the same. Overall, there was a preference for materials being forwarded by mail rather than through electronic means, as the website and email options were ranked much lower.

In terms of the on-site program scheduling the findings were: the week prior to semester start (63.0%), evenings during the first month (26.1%), or, weekends during the first month (10.9%). The conclusion drawn was, there was a preference for keeping the on-site program in the current timeframe. There was no true commitment to moving the on-site workshops, possibly as they may have interfered with the respondent's free time.

5.2 Discussion

As stated in Chapter 1, this study was undertaken to investigate ways to improve the readiness of the students, increase attendance at the international student orientation and potentially improve the quality or usefulness of the service offered to the freshmen students. Questions addressing these issues were imbedded in the survey.

5.2.1 Improving the Readiness of the Students

Fundamental to this study was determining the orientation needs of the international students at Humber. It was a discovery of: what sources of information were primary to the respondents in their preparation to depart for Canada; the respondent's opinion of the available resources, and the usefulness of these resources; and, the respondent's concerns for moving to Canada.

Orientation Needs of the Freshmen International Students.

The findings in Chapter Four suggested, that the primary orientation needs of the respondents included information on: visas and permits (95.6%), finances (80.0%), health insurance (66.7%), employment (64.4%), housing (53.3%), and bursaries and scholarships (48.9%). The responses were consistent with the findings from the Humber International Satisfaction Survey (Singh and Fu, 2005), the Humber specific raw data from the 2004 *Canada* First national survey (Prairie Research Associates Inc, 2004), and observations made by the researcher in her role as an international student advisor (ISA). A number of explanations emerged as to why these items ranked high.

The researcher had anticipated that the respondents would rank the need for information on visas and permits high. In order to be granted a study permit, the respondent first had to satisfy the Canadian embassy or high commission officials, that they had a valid reason, as well as the financial means to come to Canada.

The high ranking of information on finances was also expected, as the international tuition fees were typically 3.5 times greater than that of a domestic student. For the 2011-2012 academic year, the international tuition fees were \$12,200, compared to approximately \$3,500 for a domestic student (Humber College Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning, 2011). Moreover, Toronto had the highest cost of living of any city in Canada (Living in Canada, 2012). Freshmen students were advised to allow for, at minimum, an additional \$12,000 for their living expenses (Humber College Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning, 2011). Regardless of being provided a summary of potential yearly costs, the researcher still observed respondents arriving with insufficient funds to pay for their tuition fees and living expenses. It was concluded, that respondents felt that the International Students Services team had overestimated the actual costs.

The procurement of health insurance was one of the conditions set by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), when they granted the respondent permission to study in Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2011). The Province of Ontario, excluded international students from the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP). Therefore, the responsibility for insurance fell to either the academic institution to arrange coverage on behalf of their students, or direct their international students to an appropriate insurance provider. To ensure all international students had access to medical treatment, Humber embedded the cost of an OHIP replacement insurance premium in the tuition fees.

Employment was a concern for the respondents. With over 22,000 full-time and 56,000 part-time students enrolled at Humber there were limited job opportunities on-campus. Many of the on-campus jobs were designated “work study”, where provincial government grants offset payroll costs for the employers. The respondents were ineligible to participate in the work study program (Humber College Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning, Career Centre, 2011). Respondents often arrived with the unrealistic expectation, or assumption, they would receive preferential treatment over domestic students, and be granted on-campus jobs. The rationale for this expectation was based on the differential tuition fees, and the fact, they did not have the same freedom to find off-campus work, when they first arrived. Too often the respondents structured their budget based on the probability of having a part-time job. They assumed their wages would cover their tuition and living expenses, when in reality their wages would only off-set some of their expenses. To be eligible for an off-campus work permit the respondent needed to have studied full-time, for six months, and be in good academic standing (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2011).

From those responding to the survey, 53.3% found knowledge of housing to be very important. In the pre-departure materials and on the International Student Services website, potential freshmen were presented with three housing options: the student residence, home stay and off-campus housing. The respondents were not guaranteed a room in the student residence, and only a

limited number of rooms were put aside for interested students. The researcher found that the home stay option, operated by an independent provider, generated little interest. The majority of the respondents preferred to live off-campus, due to lower costs, and the ability to cook their own food. What was a concern to the International Student Services team was the number of respondents who arrived in Canada without pre-arranging their housing. Due to the number of students, at most, the International Students Services team was limited to directing the respondents to the college-approved off-campus housing website, or direct them to a weekly city rental guide. For the South Asian students, in particular those from India, they tended to use their cultural connections to find roommates.

What the researcher found puzzling was the relatively low interest in bursary and scholarship information. The researcher concluded that either the respondent was from a family of means, or had made private arrangements for a loan. From the findings of Prairie Research Associates Inc (2004), 30.5% had arranged for a loan to cover their stay in Canada. Another possibility, was that the respondent had arrived with a sense of entitlement, assuming their international status would grant them certain concessions. These concessions would have included, the subsidizing, or deferment of tuition fees by the college. No such promises would have been made to this effect.

Pre-Departure Information and Its Usefulness.

Within the survey the respondents were asked to respond to questions regarding: (a) what sources of information or services they accessed prior to

coming to Canada, and, the usefulness of that information or service; and, (b) what information sessions would have been useful once they arrived in Canada.

The sources of information accessed for pre-departure were subdivided into two streams, resources provided by Humber, or resources independent of Humber. For the Humber-related resources, the international website (85.7%) was the most accessed resource. An almost equal amount of attention was given to the academic school orientation materials (76.2%), Humber's orientation webpage (71.4%), and the pre-departure package prepared by the International Student Services team (71.4%). While the international website was the most accessed Humber item, in terms of level of influence, it was on par with, the academic orientation materials (30.0%), and the international student pre-departure materials (32.4%). These findings presented two challenges for the International Student Services team. One, this appeared to indicate the importance for keeping the website current, and visually appealing. Two, to examine the content on the website, and ensure that the items the respondents indicated were of importance, were integrated into the site. Before the content was modified it would be prudent to review the current demographics, i.e., age groups, marital status, and the geographical diversity of the respondents, to ensure the needs of those sub-groups are met.

The ranking for the pre-departure welcome package (32.4%) was higher than expected. The welcome package was mailed to freshmen respondents who were listed in "paid" status, six weeks prior to the start of the semester.

Depending on the destination country, the mail may have taken several weeks to reach the respondent, and the respondent may have already left for Canada. Thus, by the time the welcome package reached the respondent, the relevance of the information may have been diminished. Since the findings and reality did not appear to co-relate, the International Student Services team needed to review the critical path for the release of the pre-departure materials, for receipt in a more timely fashion.

The Humber College orientation site was ranked the lowest in terms of usefulness (22.0%), well below other Humber resources. At the time of the survey, there was no direct link to the orientation page. The page was either located through a Google search of the Humber page, or accessed through the student's "My Start" page. These results appeared to illustrate the need for: situating an orientation link on the Humber main page, uploading the next semester's orientation details well in advance of the semester start, and examining the content, and design layout for the site.

For resources external to Humber, information received from relatives, friends or alumni (81.8%) appeared to be more popular than the respondent's independent research on Canada (71.4%). The respondents ranked the usefulness of the information from relatives, friends or alumni as the highest overall (46.5%) for both Humber, and external resources. The usefulness of the information on Canada (31.6%) from the respondent's independent search, was ranked equivalent to the Humber generated materials and web pages. The conclusion

drawn was relatives, friends or alumni were influential in the respondent's choices and preparation. This finding was consistent with the findings from Humber's International Student Satisfaction Survey (Singh and Fu, 2005) and the 2004 *Canada First* results (Prairie Research Associates Inc, 2004). This validated the importance of Humber for creating effective advertising campaigns reaching out to the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) population.

What was unexpected was the high number of respondents (71.4%) who claimed they had sought out information on Canada, the education system and Canadian customs prior to departing for Canada. This ranking did not tally with the types of questions, and number of respondents who arrived at the International Centre, largely unprepared for the realities of living in Canada. Therefore one questioned how extensive was the search, and the reliability of the sources the respondents used.

Concerns About Moving to Canada.

Moving to a new country can be challenging, however when the respondents were questioned as to their concerns in settling in a new country, there were some expected responses, as well as surprising results. Just over half of the respondents (52.2%), indicated that they very concerned with doing well in class. Obtaining an education abroad was a major financial commitment; however it was the means to a desired end for many respondents. Many international students wished to remain in Canada after graduation, and obtain permanent resident status (Walker, 1999; Prairie Research Associates Inc, 2004).

In order to achieve this goal, the respondent had to be successful and complete their program. Thus, “doing well in class” may have been subjective. For some, it might not have meant being an “A” student, but achieving sufficient grades to graduate. Once they had graduated, and had obtained a post graduation work permit, hopefully they had sufficient time to meet the eligibility requirements set by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) for their permanent resident application.

As anticipated, 46.7%, of the respondents were concerned about leaving their family and friends. The advantage for respondents having decided to attend a postsecondary institution in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) was the large number of ethnic and cultural communities. The GTA attracted the greatest number of immigrants, thus providing local community resources to draw upon (Milan, 2011). Furthermore, Humber was located in the catchment area for South Asians, and in particular, individuals from India.

The third highest item of concern, was meeting new people, and making new friends (31.1%). The development and formation of new relationships might not be an easy task, or as easy as it was in their home country. Through sheer numbers it was easier for respondents from the Asian countries, and in particular, India, to connect with fellow students from their geographical region (Table 4.5). However for respondents from countries with lower sending numbers, it forced them to interact with students from other countries, or domestic students. For an introverted student this may have posed a challenge,

pushing them outside of their comfort zone, especially if English was their second language (Meyer, 2001).

It was noteworthy, that only 18.2% of the respondents were concerned with their ability to communicate in English. This result suggested that the majority of the respondents had arrived in Canada with a reasonable proficiency in the language. However, the respondents may not have realized to what extent their fluency in English was important. At Humber, many courses required participation through class presentations or group work. The faculty expected that the respondent perform at the same language proficiency level as a domestic student.

“Living in a different culture” and “learning in a different environment” received similar rankings in levels of concern, 17.8% and 18.2% respectfully. This may have been an indicator, that the respondent had reconciled that they would encounter differences in both of these areas, and confident that they would adapt. Or, they could have been naive about the realities, and fallen into the “young and overconfident” category. Or, another possibility was that the respondent felt there was no need to adapt or adjust to a new culture, but to live life as usual.

5.2.2 Increasing Attendance At Orientation

As reported in Table 10, 65.9% of the respondents attended their academic orientation, compared to 30.2% who attended the international student orientation. When asked why they were absent from the international student

orientation, 38.6% stated it was because they were unaware of the program. Such an outcome appeared to demonstrate the need to distribute pre-departure materials well in advance of the regular schedule. For some, the delay in receipt of the welcome package was attributed to the package being sent to their agent rather than the respondent. Many respondents hired an agent to make an application to Humber on their behalf, and often it was the agent's contact information that was on file. In the future every attempt should be made to ensure that the respondent's information is listed on the application rather than the agent's.

An additional 20.5% of the respondents indicated that they were not in Canada in time for the on-site orientation. A review of the literature presented opposing views on whether attendance at orientation should be mandatory or not. Cunningham (1991) found that 67% of the respondents in his study of postsecondary service providers recommended that orientation be mandatory for freshmen international students. Their justification was the respondents who attended orientation received information that would help them to avoid certain situations. Althen (1995) disagreed with imposing a mandatory orientation on international students. While recognizing the amount of planning and organization that staff had invested in organizing an orientation program, he concluded that their efforts did not necessarily have the same degree of importance to the student. He recommended that the ISAs experiment with orientation approaches

FSAs [foreign student advisors] are advised to adopt a somewhat more lighthearted attitude, experimenting with various approaches to orientation and trying to find ways to make their programs more enjoyable and attractive that students will want to take part. (Althen, 1995, p. 157)

At Humber, attendance at orientation was not mandatory, although there has been debate to make it mandatory. The overriding thought was students have free choice and should not be penalized for choosing not to attend orientation. At times the attendance was out of the respondent's control. It was not a matter of the respondent deliberately avoiding orientation, but rather a reflection of a delay in the processing of their visa, or, they had experienced difficulty in arranging for a flight to Canada. However in the future, the benefits of attending orientation should be highlighted, so that respondents make every effort to put their affairs in order to arrive in Canada for orientation week. There were further benefits to having the respondent arrive in Canada early. Advantages such as: making arrangements for their housing, opening a bank account, acclimatizing to a new environment, touring the campus and familiarizing themselves with the public transit system.

As reported in Table 11, only 8.6% of the respondents who had attended the international student orientation saw it as being very useful. The majority of the responses fell equally between "useful" and "somewhat useful", 17.1% each, leaving 2.9% of the respondents suggesting there was no value in the workshop sessions. The low ranking appeared to indicate that the current program failed to meet the needs of the respondents.

The existing on-site workshops were: “Welcome to Canada”, “Academic Success”, “Staying Healthy” and “Looking for a Job”. These received varying degrees of success, ranging from one or two students, to 20+ students. The “Welcome to Canada” and the “Looking for a Job” sessions tended to be the most popular sessions. However, in the “Applying for a Job” workshop, there was a discrepancy in the expectations of the students and the objectives of the presenters. The students arrived expecting to be directed to job awaiting their arrival, rather than receiving information on job search techniques. Due to the minimal attendance at the workshops there was the need to determine: what workshop offerings would be valuable to the freshmen students prior to the start of classes, as opposed to later in the semester; examine the content in the workshops; and, following Althen’s (1995) suggestion, how to make the program more appealing to the freshmen student.

5.2.3 Improve the Quality and Usefulness of the Service

To improve the quality and, or, usefulness of the services, the respondents were asked to respond to questions on pre-departure delivery methods for materials, on-site scheduling, as well as on-site workshop topics.

Pre-Departure Delivery Methods for Materials.

From the findings as reported in Table 15, 35.6% of the respondents indicated a preference for the pre-departure welcome package being delivered through regular mail, compared to 15.6%, who suggested the same material be

sent by email. In today's technologically advanced world this differential was unexpected. Ideally, Humber would prefer to send the materials electronically because: it eliminated the high postal costs, and an almost instantaneous transmission of information, rather than the material taking days or months for the respondent to receive. However, these findings may have been an indicator of the respondent's not having regular access to the internet. On the other hand, quite a number of respondents had made an online application to Humber. They had the capability of scanning their documents and continued to mail the International Centre staff on a regular basis, therefore this differential was puzzling. In future studies there is the need to clarify whether it was the agent using the online systems as opposed to the respondent. From the respondents, 28.9%, recommended a DVD containing the pre-departure materials be mailed to them, and only 20.0% selected a web-based orientation program as their preference. The result for the DVD was not necessarily out of sync, as not all respondents may have had access to a DVD player or computer. Yet the low ranking for the web-based orientation program was unexpected. In future studies the respondent should be provided more information so that they had a clear understanding of what was entailed in a web-based program.

On-Site Orientation Scheduling Preference.

When asked as to their scheduling preference for the on-site orientation, the majority, or 63.0% (Table 16) of the respondents considered the traditional timeframe, the week preceding the start of the semester as the most appropriate.

Slightly more than 25% of the respondents suggested evenings during the first month of the semester, and only 10.9% recommended that orientation program be held on weekends at the start of the semester. This would appear to suggest that the scheduling of the on-site orientation remain the same. And, if additional workshops were to be offered, they should be integrated into the regular 8:00 am to 6:00 pm class timeframe. The latter two results might be interpreted as the respondents having to deal with a long commute, not wanting to remain late at school, or having to travel to school on a non-class day.

Potential Workshop Topics.

The respondents were asked to rank the usefulness of the following potential workshops: "The Canadian Classroom", "How to Manage Time", "How to Study for Exams", "How to Take Notes", "How to Improve Research", "Reading and Writing Skills", "Using the Library", "How to Use Technology", and "Where to Get Academic Help". As reported in Table 14, 65.2% of the respondents saw "The Canadian Classroom" as very useful. None of the other suggested workshops came close to garnering the same level of response. The second highest ranking, 36.4%, was accorded to "How to Use Technology", a workshop that would have familiarized the respondent with technological systems used at Humber, i.e., WebCT and email. The academic success components, i.e. "How to Study", "How to Take Notes", "How to Manage Time", all received a low ranking, 29.5%, 20.0% and 15.6% respectively. It appeared from the findings that the respondents made a distinction between, increasing their understanding of the Canadian classroom

environment, versus workshops that might have contributed to their academic success. The researcher concluded that the respondents were comfortable with their current study habits, and ranked the academic success components accordingly. Rather than offering the academic success workshops during orientation, they might be better scheduled before, or after mid-term exams, once the respondents have undergone a series of course evaluations.

5.3 Survey Design and Response Rate

When the respondent opened the survey they were first presented with an information letter and web-based consent form (see Appendix E), asking for their voluntary participation in the research study. The respondents were given the choice to continue or exit the survey. Ideally, if a respondent had clicked on the “no, I do not agree to participate” button, they would have been redirected to a final, or exit page thanking them for their time. Although the survey instrument had been tested by both the researcher as well as a pre-test group, some of the respondents were able to proceed without responding to the consent question.

Based on years of observation of students’ behaviour when completing forms or surveys, in the original survey instrument, the researcher had formatted each question to appear separately. Thus, the respondent would not have been able to proceed to the next item without answering the current question. However, as a condition of the ethics review guidelines, respondents were

informed that they could freely choose to by-pass any question they did not wish to answer. A consequent of this restriction may have resulted in a loss of approximately half of the anticipated responses and was viewed as having a limiting effect on the study results. The results raised a number of subsequent concerns. Firstly, the size of the non-response group, and secondly, reasons for the non-response on items that dealt with age, gender and citizenship. Thirdly, whether the respondent's language proficiency was a factor in interpreting the survey questions. As part of the pre-test phase, the survey instrument had been sent to English as Second Language alumni for their feedback. And finally, whether the respondents were aware that if interrupted they could resume the survey at a later date.

The overall low non-response rate may have been the result of survey overload, the scheduling of the survey, or the survey delivery method. Humber students were continually being asked to participate in surveys, for example, First Year Integration and Tracking Systems (FITS), the provincial-wide Key Performance Indicators (KPI) survey, and the evaluation of their professors each term. Thus, adding for their participation in a non-academic related research study may have resulted in survey overload.

The timing of the survey may have also been a contributor to the low non-response rate; the survey was administered during the summer of 2007. Some of the respondents may have been enrolled in courses during the summer, and consequently did not have the time to respond to the survey. Or, for the

respondents who were not enrolled in the summer session, they might not have had access to a computer. The low non-response rate might also have been attributed to the delivery mode. An unfortunate consequence of using email was whether the researcher's email was deposited in the respondent's "inbox", or their email host's spam folder.

5.4 Survey Demographics

Consistent with the rest of the survey, just under half of the respondents answered the demographics questions. The respondents were predominately males from Asia. Although the majority of the respondents (58.3%) were registered in diploma course, 31.3% were enrolled in post graduate certificate programs, and 4.2% in degree programs. The age of the respondents leaned towards a slightly older group. Of the respondents, 22.9% were 26-30 years old, and the 30+ group equalled that of the 18-20 years, which one might consider to be the typical age of a college student straight out of secondary school.

A puzzling result was the number of respondents who indicated they were not enrolled, when asked for their semester of study. It was plausible that the "not currently enrolled" respondents interpreted the question in a several ways: they elected to list themselves in this category because it was the summer session and they were not taking classes; the respondent had graduated; or, the respondent was registered with the list serve but had not started their classes.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the results of the study these recommendations are made.

1. The orientation needs of the respondents be assessed on a regular basis, possibly every two years. This would ensure that the International Student Services team keeps their practices current and responsive to the needs of the respondents.
2. That future surveys be conducted during the academic year to capture a viable group of respondents.
3. To negotiate with the Registrar's Office to gain access to the students through their student record services (SRS) portal. Since this study was conducted, Humber has instituted an email account system for students. Through the use of the SRS portal potential respondents can be reached through their Humber, as well as personal email addresses. The international student list serve well convenient, lacked currency and not all subscribers would meet the survey's eligibility requirements.
4. A survey instrument be designed with the provision that would restrict advancement, until a response to the current question had been provided. This would eliminate, or at least reduce item non-response.
5. The content of the international student website be reviewed, and modified where necessary, based on the findings of the study. That the

site be assessed for its user-friendliness, and consideration be given to adding an interactive component to engage the respondent when they visited the site.

6. Fostering greater communication with alumni. The study's findings indicated the value of recommendations from family, friends and alumni; however alumni have been under-utilized by the International Student Services team. Investigate a systematic way of keeping the alumni apprised of developments in the International Centre, possibly through a newsletter.
7. It is recommended that the Humber College orientation webpage: improves its accessibility; that the information for each intake be updated a minimum two to three months in advance; and, that the layout and content be changed in order to generate interest.
8. The distribution of the international student welcome package be delivered to the respondents three months prior to their departure for Canada. Although the respondents preferred that the materials being mailed to them, due to print and mailing costs, as well as the changing technology, an interactive web-based orientation program would be a viable option to pursue.
9. A review of the International Student Services marketing practices was required, in response to the findings of this study. A high percentage of

respondents indicated that they were unaware of the ISS orientation, therefore consideration needs to be made as to how, and when the International Student Advisors first communicate with the respondents. Working with international admissions, have materials promoting the International Student Services included in the acceptance packages. Consideration be given to the development of an email campaign directed to all respondents. The campaign would begin three months prior to semester start, regardless of whether the respondent had committed to Humber, or paid their fees.

10. Recommend to international admissions that the contact information for the respondents be a requirement of the application process. This would guarantee the respondents, the intended audience receive the pre-departure materials.
11. Further evaluation of the on-site international student orientation was required. An assessment should be made as to: what information should be provided to the respondent during orientation; the formatting of that information; whether 4-day format was still viable; and, how to make the program appealing so that respondents were engaged in the program.

5.6 Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the orientation needs of the international students enrolled at Humber. To determine these needs a web-

based survey was conducted, using the international student list serve as a means of communicating with the respondents. To establish a starting point, the respondents were asked to clarify what the term “orientation” meant to them. They were also asked to evaluate: the pre-departure materials for their usefulness and method of delivery; the on-site programming for content and appropriate scheduling; and, the usefulness of potential workshops to be incorporated into future sessions.

From the findings, orientation was seen as the opportunity to learn more about Humber and secondly, meet the faculty and staff. The respondents indicated that their primary resources in their pre-departure preparation, was viewing the international student website, and speaking with family, friends and alumni. They communicated that the most important information they required prior to their departure for Canada was related to: visas and permits, finances, bursaries and scholarships, housing, employment and health insurance. The respondents also indicated that the most useful workshop for the on-site program was to learn more about the Canadian classroom. When presented with alternative methods for receiving their pre-departure materials, or the scheduling of the on-site program, they wished to continue the current practices, i.e. receive materials by mail, and participate in an on-site orientation the week prior to the start of the semester. From the data analysis it was evident that the International Student Services team needed to address the marketing of the on-site orientation

as almost 40% of the respondents stated they were unaware of the program which accounted for the low attendance.

A literature review was conducted which examined: a freshmen student orientation paradigm, an international student orientation framework, an overview of international students in Canada, an assessment of web-based survey methodology and a description of theoretical frameworks. It was found that when developing an effective orientation program for either freshmen students or international students, it was critical that the needs of these groups be first assessed. However, international students due to their unique circumstances, i.e. immigration status, transitioning to a new country, their social and cultural adjustment requirements, made programming for them more challenging.

Web-based surveys were increasing in popularity amongst researchers for several reasons such as: being cost efficient, respondents could respond at their convenience, a reduction in coding error, allowed for design flexibility and gave access to an unlimited number of respondents. When compared to response rate for paper based surveys the literature review was inconclusive.

The search for a theoretical framework for orientation resulted in studies that suggested that, it was difficult making the transition from theory to a practical application. As a result Upcraft et al suggested that a model, rather than theory was more appropriate in designing an orientation program. As a consequence of the cultural backgrounds of the international students a review of

the literature on cultural shock, U and W curves was necessitated. There was some applicability of these theories but they could not be generalized to all international students.

The study concluded with a series of recommendations for further research.

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**Appendix A: International Student Programs and Services: CAS
Standards and Guidelines (excerpt)**

[See *The Council for the Advancement of Standards Learning and Developmental Outcomes* statement for examples of outcomes related to these domains and dimensions.]

Consistent with the institutional mission, International Student Programs and Services (ISPS) must identify relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes from among the six domains and related dimensions. When creating opportunities for student learning and development, ISPS must explore possibilities for collaboration with faculty members and other colleagues. ISPS must assess relevant and desirable student learning and development outcomes and provide evidence of their impact on student learning and development. ISPS must articulate how they contribute to or support students' learning and development in the domains not specifically assessed.

ISPS must be:

- ☐ integrated into the life of the institution
- ☐ intentional and coherent
- ☐ guided by theories and knowledge of learning and development
- ☐ reflective of developmental and demographic profiles of the student population
- ☐ responsive to needs of individuals, diverse and special populations, and relevant constituencies

ISPS should provide the campus and larger community with multiple and varied opportunities for discussion to maximize learning, to minimize cultural conflict, or to deal with conflict.

ISPS must:

- ☐ assess the needs of the international student population and set priorities among those needs
- ☐ offer or provide access to professional services for students in the areas of immigration and other government regulations, financial matters, employment, obtaining health care insurance, navigating the health care system, host-country language needs, and personal and cultural concerns
- ☐ assure institutional compliance with government regulations and procedures, including record-keeping and reporting responsibilities
- ☐ interpret immigration policies to the campus and local communities
- ☐ develop and offer educational programs to the campus community to enhance positive interaction between domestic and international students, to develop sensitivity regarding cultural differences and international student needs, and to assist in the understanding of adjustment to a host country's educational system and culture
- ☐ orient international students to the expectations, policies, and culture of the institution and to the educational system and culture of the host country
- ☐ facilitate the enrollment and retention of international students

- ☐ prepare students for re-entry and cultural re-adjustment related to the students' return home
 - ☐ provide appropriate referrals for students whose individual needs may be in conflict with the home culture
 - ☐ provide appropriate and timely referral services to other relevant agencies
 - ☐ determine the educational goals; developmental levels; and social, emotional, and cultural needs of individual international students and specific populations
- © Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education 5
- ☐ collaborate effectively with other services areas, student organizations, and academic departments to meet international students' needs
 - ☐ facilitate international students' participation in campus life
 - ☐ advocate to all areas of the institution for the needs of international students
 - ☐ facilitate sensitivity within the institution and the community at large to the cultural needs of international students

Part 3. LEADERSHIP

Because effective and ethical leadership is essential to the success of all organizations, International Student Programs and Services (ISPS) leaders with organizational authority for the programs and services must:

- ☐ articulate a vision and mission for their programs and services
- ☐ set goals and objectives based on the needs of the population served and desired student learning and development outcomes
- ☐ advocate for their programs and services
- ☐ promote campus environments that provide meaningful opportunities for student learning, development, and integration
- ☐ identify and find means to address individual, organizational, or environmental conditions that foster or inhibit mission achievement
- ☐ advocate for representation in strategic planning initiatives at appropriate divisional and institutional levels
- ☐ initiate collaborative interactions with stakeholders who have legitimate concerns and interests in the functional area
- ☐ apply effective practices to educational and administrative processes
- ☐ prescribe and model ethical behavior
- ☐ communicate effectively
- ☐ manage financial resources, including planning, allocation, monitoring, and analysis
- ☐ incorporate sustainability practices in the management and design of programs, services, and facilities
- ☐ manage human resource processes including recruitment, selection, development, supervision, performance planning, and evaluation

- ☐ empower professional, support, and student staff to accept leadership opportunities
- ☐ encourage and support scholarly contribution to the profession
- ☐ be informed about and integrate appropriate technologies into programs and services
- ☐ be knowledgeable about federal, state/provincial, and local laws relevant to the programs and services and ensure that staff members understand their responsibilities by receiving appropriate training
- ☐ develop and continuously improve programs and services in response to the changing needs of students and other populations served and the evolving institutional priorities
- ☐ recognize environmental conditions that may negatively influence the safety of staff and students and propose interventions that mitigate such conditions

Part 4. HUMAN RESOURCES

International Student Programs and Services (ISPS) must be staffed adequately by individuals qualified to accomplish the mission and goals. Within institutional guidelines, ISPS must establish procedures for staff selection, training, and evaluation;

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Appendix B: Focus Group Questions

1. Did you receive a pre-arrival mailer? If you received a pre-arrival mailer was it helpful? What additions or changes would you recommend? Should this information be sent with the letter of acceptance?
2. How would you define the word “orientation”?
3. The International Student Services Office is considering developing a web-based orientation program what information would be of benefit to you? If we developed chapters/modules for various topics would you work through the information? Should the program be interactive?
4. We have noticed that attendance at the orientation workshops is low, what would attract students to attend?
5. What type of social activities would attract students when they first arrive in Canada?
6. Was your adjustment to Humber, Toronto and Canada readily easy or difficult? What would have eased your transition experience?

Appendix C: International Student Orientation Survey

International Student Orientation Survey

*1. Agreement to participate in survey

- ☐ YES, I agree to participate
- ☐ NO, I do not agree to participate

International Student Orientation & Transition Needs Survey

This survey is being completed by international students at Humber so we may learn more about their experiences prior to and shortly after they arrive in Canada.

1. What sources of information did you receive or use in preparation for your departure for Canada and how useful was each service or source of information? (In each row please make ONE choice for personal use of service, and ONE choice for usefulness of service).

	Use of service	Usefulness of service
Received academic orientation information	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Viewed Humber's orientation webpage	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Received a welcome newsletter from the International Student Services Office	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Viewed Humber's international website	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Searched for information on Canada, education system in Canada, Canadian customs, etc.	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Talked to relatives, friends or alumni about their experiences in Canada	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

International Student Orientation Survey

5. If you attended the International Student Orientation how useful were the workshops and activities for you? (Check one)

- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Not at all useful
- ☐ Not applicable; I did not attend
- ☐ Other (please comment):

6. If you did NOT attend the International Student Orientation please indicate the reason why. (Check one)

- ☐ I was not in Canada
- ☐ I did not know there was an orientation program for international students
- ☐ I was unsure as to what was involved in the orientation
- ☐ I had other plans that day
- ☐ It was scheduled at the same time as my academic orientation
- ☐ It was too far to travel
- ☐ I was not interested
- ☐ Not applicable; I attended the international orientation

International Student Orientation Survey

7. From your experience how important would the following sources of information or services be for someone preparing to leave for Canada and shortly after they arrived? (Check one for each item)

	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not important
Visa and permit information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bursary or scholarship information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Housing information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employment opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health insurance information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public transportation information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Educational workshops eg. academic success, income tax, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social activities eg. local trips, sporting events, movies, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participating in a real-time web chat with staff and students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student testimonials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information on Canadian customs and values	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Campus tour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Map of Greater Toronto Area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information on Toronto	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information on where to shop	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
City tour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

International Student Orientation Survey

8. When you first arrived at Humber how useful would it have been to have information sessions on the following items? (Check one for each item)

	Very useful	Useful	Somewhat useful	Not useful
The Canadian classroom - faculty expectations, types of assignments, evaluation techniques	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to manage my time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to study for exams	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to take notes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to improve research, reading & writing skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using the library	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How to use technology eg. WebCT, email	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Where to get academic help	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. What type of pre-arrival program would you recommend based on your experience? (Check one)

- ☐ A pre-arrival newsletter/handbook sent by mail
- ☐ A pre-arrival newsletter/handbook sent by email
- ☐ An interactive web-based orientation program
- ☐ A DVD containing pre-arrival information
- ☐ Other (please specify)

10. Which would you prefer for on-campus orientation workshops and activities scheduling?

- ☐ The week before classes start
- ☐ Evenings during the first month of classes
- ☐ Weekends during the first month of classes

*11. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male ☐ Female

*12. Your age?

- ☐ 17 and under ☐ 18-20 ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 30 and older

International Student Orientation Survey

*13. Of what country are you a citizen?

*14. What type of program are you enrolled in?

- ☐ Diploma
☐ Postgraduate certificate
☐ Degree
☐ Ningbo University, Davenport University, National Kaohsiung Hospitality College
☐ EAP
☐ University of Guelph-Humber

*15. What semester are you currently enrolled in?

- ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ Not currently enrolled

*16. What is your enrolment status?

- ☐ Full-time ☐ Part-time ☐ Co-op (whole semester) ☐ Graduate

17. Would you be willing to participate in a focus group?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you wish to volunteer to participate in a focus group please email Daljce Newby at daljce.newby@gmail.com and write "wish to volunteer for focus group" in the subject line. Please provide me with your name and how I can contact you.

To be entered in the draw for ONE prize valued at approximately \$50 please email Daljce Newby at daljce.newby@gmail.com and write "prize draw" in the subject line of the email. Please provide me with your name, student number and how I can contact you.

Thank you page

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research project. If you have any further questions or comments you can contact me at daljce.newby@gmail.com

Appendix D: Introductory Email Request

[Date]

Dear International Student,

I am requesting your voluntary participation in my research project, which is entitled *An examination of the orientation needs of international students at The Humber Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning*. The research project will fulfill a partial requirement for my Master of Education degree.

Your participation in this web-based survey is entirely voluntary. To protect your confidentiality you are not asked to provide your name or any other primary identifier.

The purpose of the research project is to determine how we can better prepare students prior to their arrival and to help ease their adjustment into a new academic, social and cultural environment. Your participation will aid in the programming for future students.

The web survey will be available until [date]. The survey will take approximately 15 -20 minutes to complete.

To begin the survey click on the web-link [URL].

Thank you for your contribution.

Sincerely,

Dalyce Newby
Master of Education candidate
dalyce.newby@gmail.com

Appendix E: Information Letter and Web-Consent Form

International Student Orientation Survey

Information Letter and Consent for Web-based Survey

Your voluntary participation is requested in my research project, which is entitled "An examination of the orientation needs of international students at The Humber Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning".

I am a Masters student in the Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland. I am independently conducting a quantitative research project, which will fulfill a partial requirement for my Master of Education degree. The proposal for this research has been approved by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research at Memorial University of Newfoundland. If you have ethical concerns about the research (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at (709)737-8368. This research project is supervised by my advisor, Dr. George Haché, who is associate professor of Education, Faculty of Education, Memorial University. If you require verification or have any questions you can contact Dr. Haché. His contact information is listed at the bottom of this letter.

The purpose of my research project is to learn more about the orientation needs of international students. Of particular interest is how we can better prepare students prior to their arrival and ease their adjustment into a new academic, social and cultural environment. What I learn as a result of this research may benefit future international students at Humber through the incorporation of ideas in orientation planning. The results may also be used as part of a paper delivered to international educators within the next five years. If you wish a copy of the completed research results or report please contact me at the address provided below. Under the guidelines of Memorial University the data for this research will be kept for five years in a locked drawer and at the end of that interval will be shredded. Furthermore approval has also been granted by the Research Ethics Board at Humber Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning to conduct this study.

I intend to accomplish the goal(s) of the research by conducting a web-based survey with international students currently enrolled at Humber. The survey will be available from (start and end date). Following the closure of the survey I will ask students to volunteer to participate in focus groups to further discuss elements of the orientation process. If you wish to participate in one of these groups please email me at dalyce.newby@gmail.com.

What is requested of you?

This web-based survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Your name is not requested on the web-based survey and your responses remain confidential. Of interest is the collective response of this survey as opposed to individual responses. However as part of your agreement to participate you also authorize me to use direct quotes in subsequent reporting.

To keep your identity separate from your responses a separate link for entering the ONE incentive prize draw or indicating your wish to participate in a focus group can be found within the survey. If you choose to participate, you may decline or withdraw from further participation at any time during the research project without penalty and your responses will not be recorded. Furthermore you may skip any question(s) you do not wish to answer.

Agreement to participate:

To indicate that you have read and understood the Information Letter please demonstrate your agreement to participate in this research project by pressing the "Yes, I agree to participate" button below followed by the "Next" button.

Sincerely,

Dalyce Newby
416(675-6622, ext. 4349)
dalyce.newby@gmail.com

Dr. George Haché
709(737-7630)
ghache@mun.ca

