
International Student Orientation

Assessment Report

Berkeley International Office

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Overview

The Berkeley International Office (BIO) strategic plan emphasizes the importance of continuous improvement of our products, services, and processes. Each year, we seek to improve our International Student Orientation (ISO) through a comprehensive assessment designed to identify areas for improvement and maximize on program strengths.

This assessment report will analyze and summarize the results of the survey, looking at the helpfulness of the individual orientations sessions, evaluating Student Learning Outcomes, and identifying both areas of value and improvement. It will also compare data across years to identify trends and changing audience needs.

The data and survey report will be used by BIO in the planning of future orientations to increase the event's relevance to and engagement of incoming international students.

Goals

- 1) Assess specific learning outcomes of both virtual and in-person aspects of the International Student Orientation
- 2) Assess student satisfaction with the overall structure, quality, and helpfulness of International Student Orientation
- 3) Compare data with previous years to note changes and trends.

Summary Report

Demographic of Respondents

Responses: A total of 127 people responded to the ISO assessment survey.

Orientation Attendance: Out of those 127 respondents, 55 indicated that they attended the virtual orientation sessions. 71 of the respondents indicated that they attended the in-person welcome day.

Gender: Male: 50.4% , Female: 47.3%, Declined to answer: 2.4%

Home country: The largest number of students reported China as their home country (22.8%), followed by India (14.2%), and Taiwan (7.1%), which is in line with the previous year's statistics. A total of 44 home countries were reported, which is an increase from the previous year (38).

Student type: Out of 127 respondents, students identified as the following student types:

- First-year: 20%
- EAP/transfer: 31% (7% EAP, 24% transfer)
- Graduate: 49% (39% Masters, 10% PhD)

Absence at Orientation

Reasons for absence at virtual orientation:

The most common reasons for not being able to attend the virtual sessions include:

- Student was traveling at the time (40%)
- Time zone difference (38%)
- Had other commitments scheduled for that time (13%)

Access of recordings:

Of the students that did not attend virtual sessions, 51% indicated that they watched the recordings of the sessions after the event.

Reasons for absence at in-person welcome day:

The most common reasons for not being able to attend the in-person welcome day include:

- Had other commitments scheduled for that time (36%)
- Was not yet in the U.S. (36%)
- Had graduate classes that conflicted with the timing (8%)

Virtual Sessions

Schedule:

8:30 AM: Welcome

8:40 AM: Navigating Campus

9:10 AM: Immigration Essentials

9:55 AM: Break

10:00 AM: Health & Safety in the U.S.

10:30 AM: Working in the U.S.

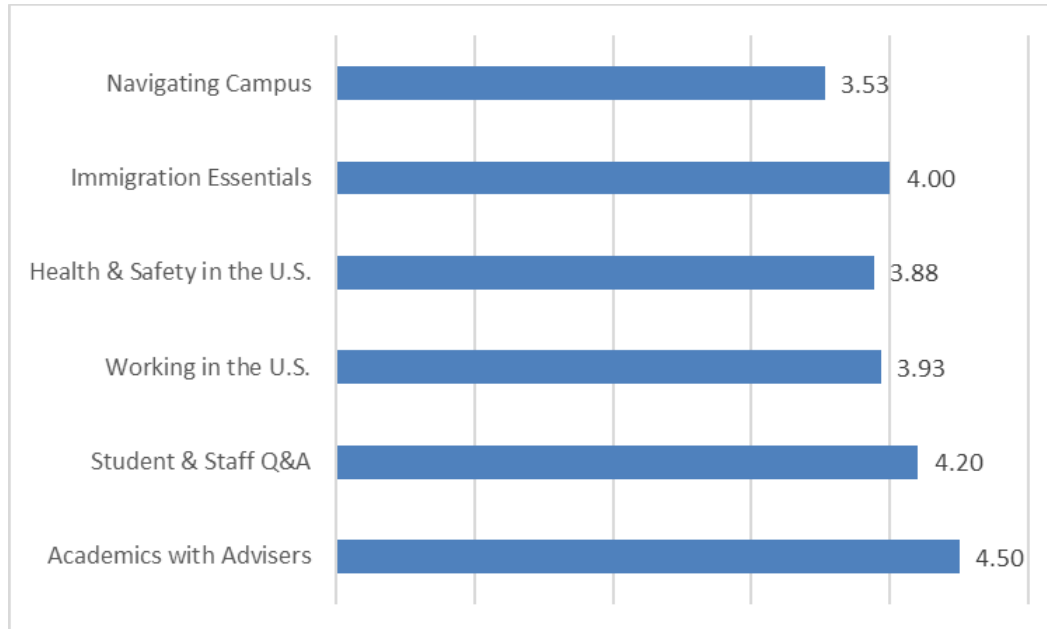
10:45 AM: Student & Staff Q&A

11:15 AM: Academics with Advisers (EAP only), Overview of Taxes and GLACIER (graduate only)

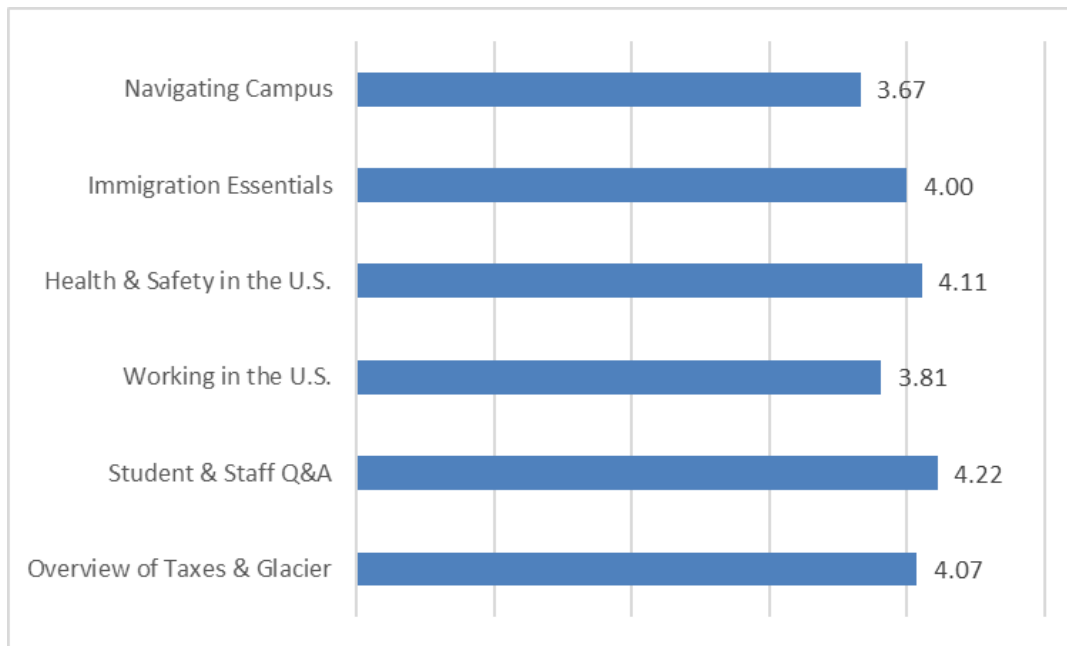
Session Helpfulness

Participants were asked to rank each orientation session based on how helpful they were in preparing them for their journey at Cal. In this ranking, 1 = not at all helpful, 2 = not very helpful, 3 = somewhat helpful, 4 = very helpful, and 5 = extremely helpful.

Undergraduate



Graduate



The lowest rated session for both undergraduates and graduates was Navigating Campus. The highest rated session for all undergraduates was the Student & Staff Q&A, while the highest rated session for EAP students specifically was Academics with Advisers. The highest rated session for graduates was also the Student & Staff Q&A.

The majority of comments on each session were positive. Notable comments included:

- Navigating Campus:
 - Positive: None
 - Negative: Information on resources was not as helpful since students are not yet familiar with campus, lacking information on traveling around campus (e.g. distances, finding classes)
- Immigration Essentials:
 - Positive: Refreshed/reiterated important topics, thorough, easy to understand
 - Negative: None
- Health & Safety in the U.S.:
 - Positive: Helpful insurance and safety tips, informative
 - Negative: Repetitive
- Working in the U.S.:
 - Positive: Clarifying, raised awareness, lots of new information
 - Negative: None
- Student & Staff Q&A:
 - Positive: Staff was helpful, good to hear other questions

- Negative: None
- Overview of Taxes & Glacier:
 - Positive: Clear, eye-opener to resources
 - Negative: None

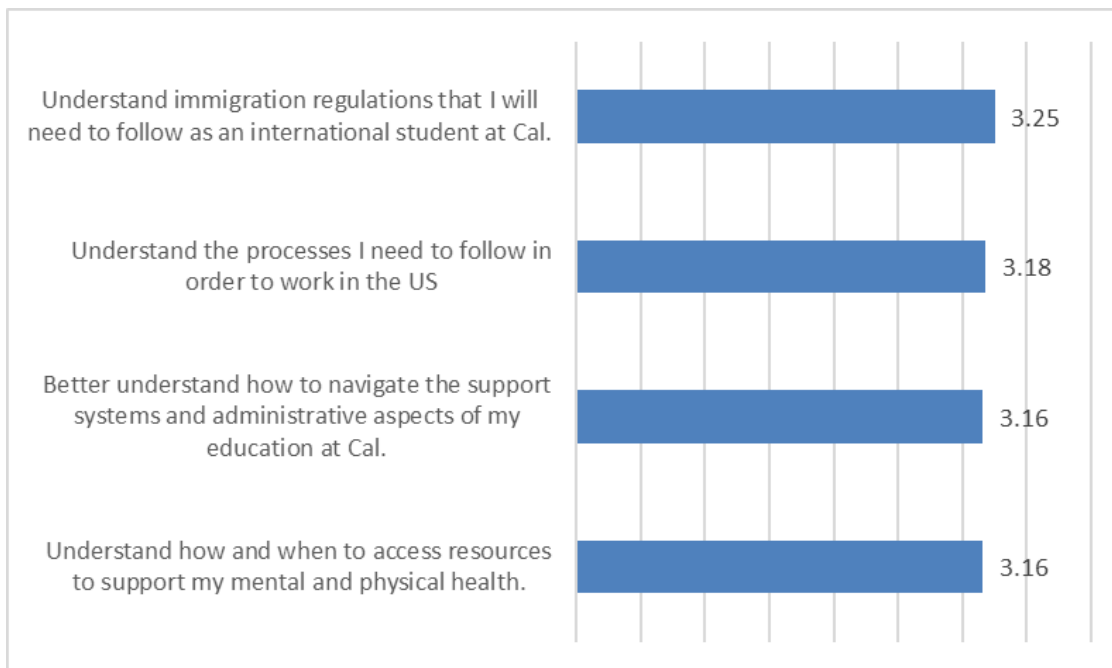
Learning Outcome Assessment

Participants were asked to rank each orientation session based on how strongly they agreed with statements assessing the following learning outcomes ([see Appendix A](#)):

As a result of the International Student Orientation, I...

- Understand immigration regulations that I will need to follow as an international student at Cal.
- Understand the processes I need to follow in order to work in the US
- Better understand how to navigate the support systems and administrative aspects of my education at Cal.
- Understand how and when to access resources to support my mental and physical health.

In this ranking, 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree.



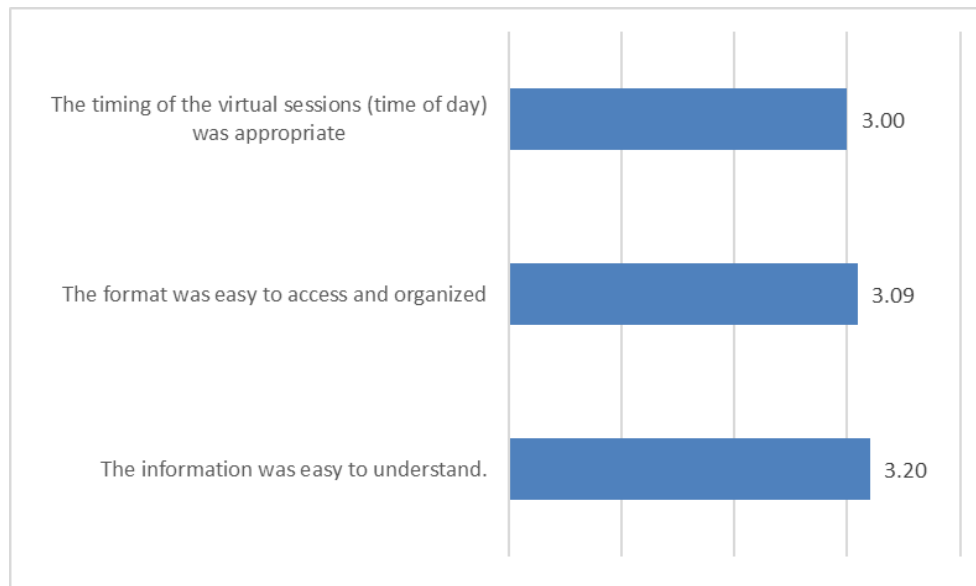
The majority of students agreed or strongly agreed that they had reached all learning outcomes, with the highest ranking on the assessment of understanding “immigration regulations that I need to follow as an international student at Cal.”

Virtual Sessions Format/Timing

Participants were asked to rank their agreement with the following questions regarding the format and timing of the virtual sessions:

- The timing of the virtual sessions (time of day) was appropriate
- The format was easy to access and organized
- The information was easy to understand

In this ranking, 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree.



The majority of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the timing and format were appropriate, and the information was easy to understand.

The largest exception was that 14% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed that the timing of the virtual sessions was appropriate.

Areas of Value

When asked about what they found most valuable about the virtual orientation sessions, undergraduates placed the highest value by far on the immigration information (35%), which is in line with previous years.

Graduates, on the other hand, placed the highest value on learning about campus resources (22%), followed closely by immigration (18.5%) and international-specific information (18.5%). This is notable, as the session focusing primarily on campus resources (Navigating Campus) received the lowest session rating.

Takeaway: Overall satisfaction was generally high with the offered sessions. They found the information relevant to their specific population, and clear/easy to understand. Similar to the previous year, international students highly valued immigration information.

Participants generally found the virtual format to be easy to access and understand, and around half of those that missed the orientation were able to access the content through the online recordings. There was some indication that the timing of the virtual sessions could be improved.

In-Person Welcome Day

Schedule:

Graduate:

10 AM: Graduate Registration and Coffee Break

10:45 AM: Welcome from Lisa García Bedolla. Vice Provost for Graduate Studies

10:55 AM: Graduate Student Panel

Undergraduate:

1:30 PM: Undergraduate Registration and Check-In

2:00 PM: Undergraduate Student Panel

2:45 PM: Teambuilders

3:45 PM: International Student Mixer

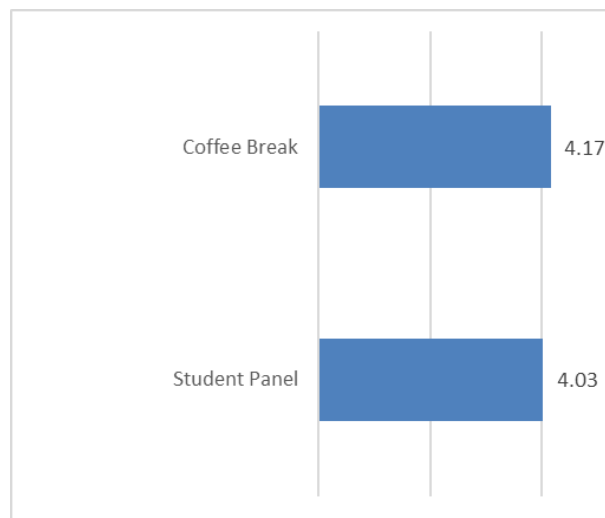
Registration

Undergraduate students gave the registration process an average satisfaction rating of 4.2, while graduate students gave the registration process an average rating of 4.5.

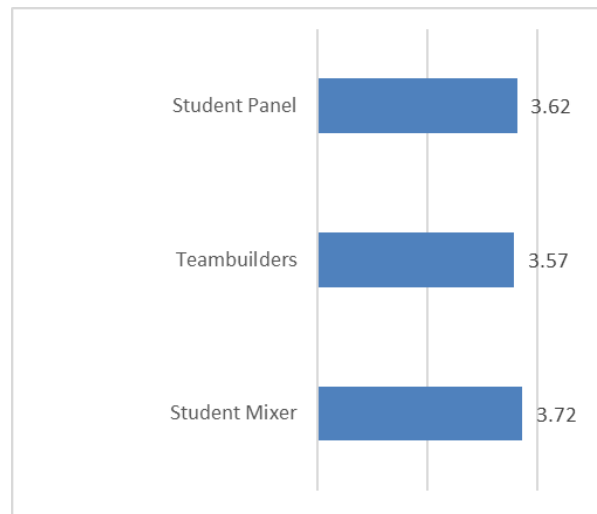
Session/Activity Helpfulness

Participants were asked to rank each orientation session based on how helpful each session/activity was in helping them create connections. In this ranking, 1 = not at all helpful, 2 = not very helpful, 3 = somewhat helpful, 4 = very helpful, and 5 = extremely helpful.

Graduate Students:



Undergraduate Students:



Graduates found the coffee break to be most helpful in making connections, while undergraduates found the Student Mixer to be the most helpful. Surprisingly, the Teambuilders activity was lowest rated despite being the activity most targeted towards creating connections (small group icebreakers).

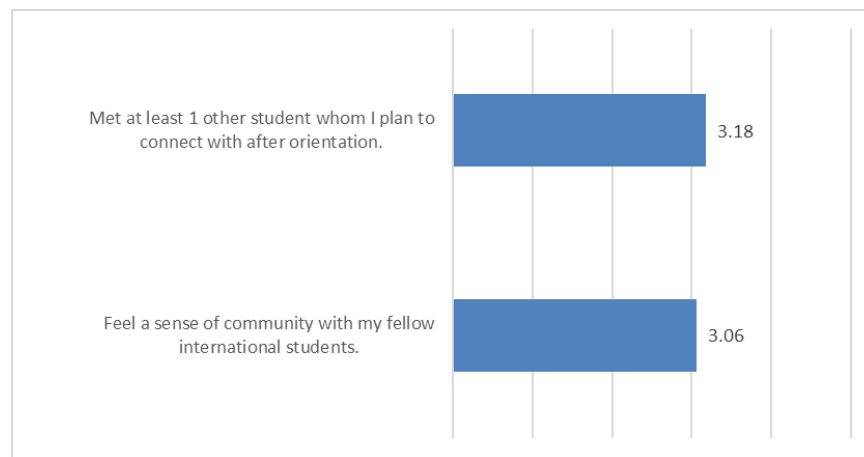
Event Goal Assessment

Participants were asked to rank how strongly they agreed with statements assessing the goals of the in-person welcome day (see [Appendix B](#)):

As a result of the International Student Orientation, I:

- Met at least 1 other student whom I plan to connect with after orientation.
- Feel a sense of community with my fellow international students.

In this ranking, 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree.



Participants generally agreed or strongly agreed with meeting the goals. However, there was a notable amount (15%) that disagreed or strongly disagreed. There is certainly room for improvement in encouraging community and connection-building in the in-person activities.

Areas of Value

When asked about what they found most valuable about the in-person welcome day, undergraduates mentioned the following:

- Meeting other international students (60%)
- Student panel (14%)
- Community/belonging (8%)

Graduate students mentioned very similar themes:

- Meeting other international students (42%)
- Student panel (32%)
- Community/belonging (16%)

Both groups placed highest emphasis on meeting other international students, but graduate students less so, with a higher secondary value on the student panel.

Takeaway: All participants placed a high amount of value in meeting other international students during the in-person welcome day. Facilitating those connections should be the primary goal of this event.

However, it is not clear if the current format and activities best facilitate this. Students generally agreed that the free social periods (Grad Coffee Break and Undergraduate Mixer) were most helpful in this regard, rather than the sessions with more structure (Student Panels and Teambuilders).

Overall Orientation

Areas for Improvement

Participants noted the following suggestions for future topics or improvements:

- More information on resources (campus, bay area, etc.)
- Improved food
- More social events/opportunities
- Campus tour
- Student clubs
- Venue (indoors and outdoors both hot)

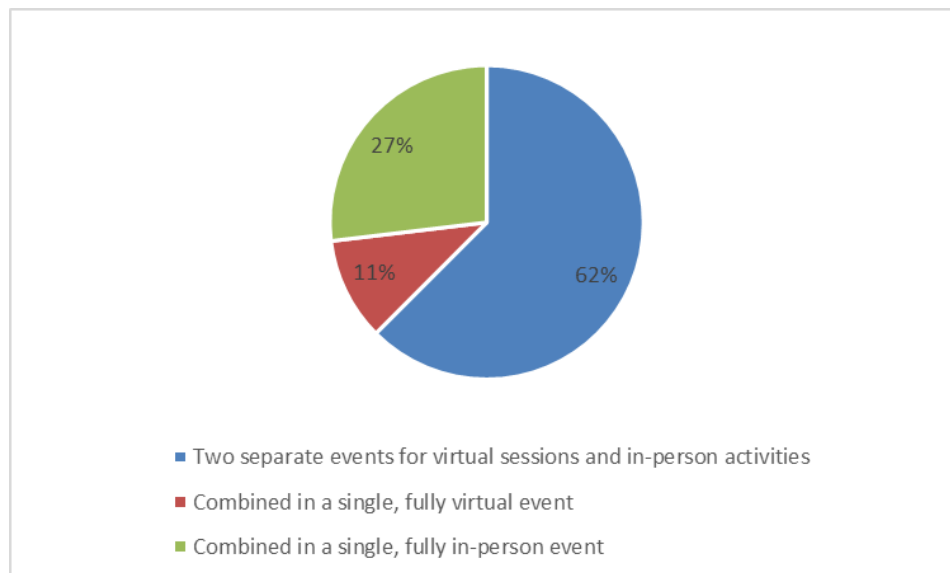
Unanswered Questions

The majority of transfer students did not have unanswered questions. Out of those that did, their questions were primarily about employment, academics/enrollment.

Overall Orientation Format

Participants were asked to indicate their preference for overall orientation format, with the following options:

- Two separate events for virtual sessions and in-person activities
- Combined in a single, fully virtual event
- Combined in a single, fully in-person event



Students highly preferred keeping the current format, with virtual sessions and in-person activities.

Takeaway: Participants generally did not have many suggestions/improvements or unanswered questions. They were content with the current hybrid format of virtual sessions and in-person activities.

Future Recommendations

Data-Driven Recommendations

Collected from assessment data:

- **Assessment incentive:** This year's survey received a much lower response rate than some preceding years' surveys. While this could have been due to various factors, one way to increase the response rate (and thereby get better data) would be to provide an incentive for completing the survey, such as the chance to win a gift card. This method was used two years previous, and saw a much greater response rate.
- **Orientation format:** The overall format of the hybrid orientation was well-received. Students felt the virtual sessions were easy to access and understand, and appreciated the chance to connect with other students in-person. Participants made good use of the video recordings from the virtual sessions. They preferred this format over fully virtual or fully in-person options. However, there is room for improvement in the individual sessions/activities.
- **Virtual sessions improvements:** There was some indication that the timing of the virtual sessions could be improved. Of the students that were not able to attend, it was primarily due to time zone differences or travel conflicts. It may be beneficial to hold the virtual sessions closer to the start of the semester, when students will all be present in the Bay Area.
- **In-person welcome day improvements:** Students were generally less satisfied with the in-person welcome day over the virtual sessions. BIO will want to consider how to make this event more high-value and intentional to fully meet the goals of the event.

Anecdotal Recommendations

Collected from personal experience and adviser suggestions:

Registration: There were multiple registrations (for virtual sessions and in-person welcome day) and students were unclear how to register for each event. Increased clarity on this will likely help with attendance as well as logistics of on-site registration.

Increase interaction: In order to compensate for presenting informational sessions virtually, BIO should increase interaction throughout the sessions, using methods such as live polls, voting, Q&A, quizzes, etc. to increase engagement and keep attention of attendees.

Location/Venue: The in-person welcome day was quite hot (both indoors and outdoors). Based on feedback from both participants and staff/volunteers, it is worth considering other venues to find options that are more comfortable for inclement weather.

Collaboration with Golden Bear Orientation (GBO): GBO check-in took place on the same day as the in-person welcome day, and many international students were tied up for the majority of the day navigating the check-in process. If there is a way that BIO can collaborate with GBO to streamline this process by checking in with BIO rather than GBO, it could relieve a burden from GBO, assist international students in a faster check-in, and increase attendance at the in-person welcome day.

Appendices

Appendix A: Learning Outcomes Grouped By Session

Students will be able to...

1. Understand immigration regulations that I will need to follow as an international student at Cal.
2. Understand the processes I need to follow in order to work in the US
3. Better understand how to navigate the support systems and administrative aspects of my education at Cal.
4. Understand how and when to access resources to support my mental and physical health.

Appendix B: Goals for In-Person Welcome Day

Students will be able to...

1. Met at least 1 other student whom I plan to connect with after orientation.
2. Feel a sense of community with my fellow international students.