# Whose Job ís ít anyway?: Engaging the Dísengaged

Alton M. Standifer Meridith A. Balas University of Georgia

## What Informs Our Perspective

#### Alton M. Standifer

K-12 Education

**Minority Retention** 

Greek Life

Admissions

New Student Orientation

#### Meridith A. Balas

**Residence** Life

New Student Orientation

Higher Education Consulting (Disney Institute)

Public Relations and Social Media

Outdoor Recreation and Leadership Development

### **Our lens: New Student Orientation**

Our Program
Nearly 10,000 new students annually
First Year and Transfer
Fall, Spring, and Summer
2-Day First Year Program
1-Day Transfer Program
Increase in family participation
Our Challenge

Engaging parents, families, and support systems

### How to engage families (when you are not solely responsible)

Know your audience

Over-communicate

Create powerful partnerships

Benchmark and learn from peer institutions

Engage in intentional programming

## **Know your audience**

Who are you serving?

A more involved generation of parents, families, and support systems What are the demographics of students? Geographic Varying levels of academic rigor Generation Minorities and majorities Intersectionality of each student's experiences Who do we want to attract? Underrepresented student populations Out of state and international Academically competitive

### **Over-communicate**

Invite them to campus

What questions do they have?

What needs to be shared and who can share it?

Identify their priorities

Predict questions and answer them proactively

**Routine Newsletter** 

Communication plan

Evaluate (and plan) your touchpoints

Social Media

Facebook!

Twitter, Instagram

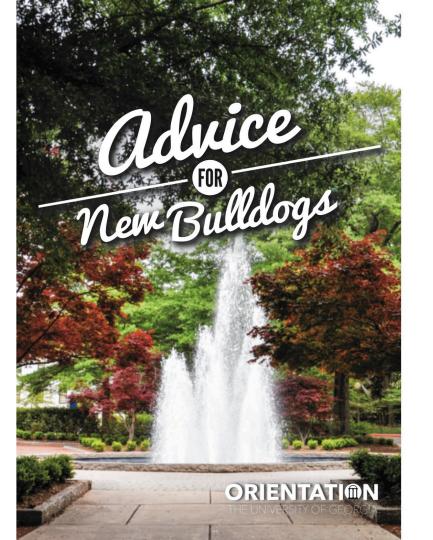
Awareness of other university accounts

#### Over-communicate, but don't over-communicate the same message

## **Create Powerful Partnerships**

Purpose

- Find unique ways to engage families that are beneficial across the university
- Create a shared vision for family engagement
- Be proactive about which messages need to be shared (to who, how, and when)
- Consider the holistic experience
  - College Selection
  - Extended Orientation and Transition Programs
  - Residence Life and Housing
  - Auxiliary Services
  - Dean of Students
  - Development and Alumni Relations





I hope you **love** 

I hope you learn

I hope you never forget

I challenge you to

Best wishes for a great school year,

### **Benchmark and Learn From Peer Institutions**

Peer and Aspirational Institutions

Other institutions where your students are going

Other Parent Program and Transition Offices

# **Engage in Intentional Programming**

**During Orientation** 

Identify the right setting to share certain information

With students

Without students

#### Throughout the first year

A connection to home

Visiting campus

Tools to support students from afar

Towards graduation

Ceremonies

Career preparation

### **Barriers**

Politics of your campus

Funding

Whose voice matters?

"I already know that" "I don't know that I don't know that" Designated staff "That's not our job!"

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