

FEATURED ARTICLE

ROARing 20s: Cultivating Responsible, Optimal, Authentic, and Resilient Students

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While COVID-19 exacerbated challenges facing higher education institutions, it also created unprecedented opportunities for growth using an asset-focused lens. With the abrupt shift to virtual engagement, one institution reimaged orientation programming to prioritize well-being through a student-centered and equity-minded approach. These frameworks informed the strategy for helping students understand the interconnectedness of well-being topics as they matriculate into, and engage with, the campus community. In assessing students' knowledge, confidence, and intention to support themselves and their peers during the transition to college, this initiative helped students build resilience and focus on their well-being while navigating the pandemic and beyond.

Keywords: Well-being, health and well-being, student-centered, equity-minded, flourishing, resilience, alcohol, substance use, college health

Well-being is essential to college student learning, development, and success. Many first-year orientation programs offer educational initiatives to raise awareness about health and well-being services. These efforts cover high-risk alcohol and substance use, stress management, and sexual violence prevention. Federal and local regulations require institutions to implement prevention activities related to these issues during orientation because of their impact on college students (Enough is enough, 2020). With the shift to fully remote or hybrid environments during the COVID-19 pandemic, many place-based institutions faced challenges and opportunities when complying with these regulations. During this time, one institution reimaged health and well-being education to center student needs, prioritize equity-advancing strategies, and emphasize building skills that promote resilience. These efforts are essential to co-creating campus environments that value well-being and recognize the interconnectedness of health and well-being issues that college students may confront.

This paper describes how one institution successfully designed and implemented growth-focused, virtual prevention programming during the pandemic. Through this process, we partnered with students to advance community well-being through a student-centered and equity-minded approach. We begin by describing the university context and the impact of COVID-19 on student well-being. Next, we provide a history of orientation well-being programming at the institution, culminating with the realities of fall 2020. We then offer an overview of the conceptual frameworks guiding the development and implementation of the Responsible. Optimal. Authentic. Resilient. (ROAR) orientation program. Finally, we close with the program outcomes, highlighting lessons learned and paths forward as we continue to leverage orientation programs to co-create a health-

promoting campus environment.

Impact of COVID-19

To contextualize fall 2020 orientation programming, we must reflect on how the global pandemic affected higher education institutions. University communities experienced unique challenges while navigating COVID-19. The abrupt transition to virtual delivery of programming and support services to mitigate the spread of the virus has substantially altered the ways students live, learn, and stay connected to their respective communities.

As universities navigate this ongoing crisis, they can choose to adapt pre-disaster systems that were deemed effective. Alternatively, they can prioritize a growth perspective by interrogating existing systems and norms to re-envision their structure and implementation (Bauwens & Tosone, 2010; Chin & Talpelli, 2015). Like previous epidemics, COVID-19 disproportionately disadvantages historically minoritized populations, further illuminating pre-disaster systems and structures that contribute to health disparities. Moreover, displaced university students may experience varying levels of additional psychological distress. Beyond the global pandemic, students may face loss and grief, financial distress, and unanticipated adjustments to their learning environment due to the abrupt transitions away from their communities. Understanding these impacts, we must examine orientation content and delivery to ensure they meet students' needs during the pandemic. Furthermore, we must also consider these factors in the context of the specific institution and campus culture.

University Context

This large, private, urban institution has approximately 31,450 students enrolled across three undergraduate schools, 13 graduate and professional schools, and one medical center. The institution currently enrolls 8,842 undergraduate students across three schools, two of which participate in the ROAR new student orientation discussion.

In higher education, topics such as substance use and well-being are often political, and this university is no different. Students at this institution take pride in their activist efforts; the campus culture is one where students use their agency to organize and voice their needs to the administration. Furthermore, students advocate for peer-to-peer opportunities for engagement as a tool to both build community and create distance from the administration. Student leaders also wish to act as a protective buffer between the administration and the student body. This advocacy has led to substantial changes across the university, including to orientation programming over the last 15 years.

History of Orientation Programming

At this institution, orientation programming is open to incoming first-year, transfer, and combined plan students in two of the three undergraduate schools. We, the Health Promotion department, oversee the implementation of the health and well-being orientation content, including the alcohol and substance use and stress management education. From 2007 to 2012, the university used an online alcohol education program to fulfill the EDGAR Part 86 requirement. In 2012, we piloted a newly developed peer-led discussion on safer alcohol and substance use, and we simultaneously offered the online alcohol education program. Evaluation data indicated that the new program met the outlined objectives; moreover, students preferred the peer-led discussions. Therefore, starting in 2013, the institution terminated its contract with the online alcohol education program. In its place, we administered the EDGAR Part 86 compliant peer-led harm reduction discussion about

alcohol and substance use with incoming first-year students.

In 2016, in response to student concerns about mental health, the orientation administrators, in partnership with the Health Promotion department, incorporated a discussion focused on stress management and healthy lifestyle behaviors. The same student leaders facilitated two separate hour-long discussions: one about alcohol and substance use and one about stress management and healthy lifestyles. Incoming students participated in the alcohol and substance use conversation on the second day of orientation and the stress management and healthy lifestyle discussion on the third and fourth day. We followed this structure from 2016 through 2019 until we redesigned the program amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fall 2020 Orientation Programming

In fall 2020, amid the global pandemic and the push to streamline new student orientation activities, we decided to combine the alcohol and substance use and stress management and healthy lifestyles discussion into one 90-minute program that focused on building student resilience and flourishing. This discussion was offered five times during orientation week. Of the 1,934 students who participated in orientation, 1,766 first-year students attended one of the ROAR sessions.

The institution marketed ROAR as an opportunity to discuss key skills and knowledge to help students flourish and thrive through their transition to the university community. The discussion creates a space for students to operationalize well-being, explore coping and stress management strategies, and reflect on their alcohol and substance use. Through these lenses, ROAR aims to help students navigate decisions in ways that are smart, safe, responsible, and align with their personal goals and values. Furthermore, by combining these topics, students are encouraged to explore how decisions to engage with alcohol and substance use connect to stress management, coping, and overall well-being. To effectively facilitate this discussion, we reviewed existing data related to well-being and established consistent language for describing this concept.

Underlying Frameworks

Institution-Specific Definition of Well-Being

The American College Health Association-National College Health Assessment (ACHA-NCHA) is a comprehensive instrument that collects a wide range of data points related to student well-being, resilience, and other health-related behaviors. The university began administering ACHA-NCHA in 2005, and the assessment is conducted biennially. The most recent iteration occurred in spring 2019. Using validated and reliable scales, we collected data about students' health status, impediments to academic performance, substance use, and mental and physical health (American College Health Association [ACHA], 2019). These data help us localize initiatives to best fit the current students' health and well-being-related needs. Specifically, we used the ACHA-NCHA data to inform elements of the alcohol and substance use, stress management, and healthy lifestyle discussions.

Although the ACHA-NCHA and other assessment tools provide invaluable snapshots of current student's well-being and health-related behaviors, it was imperative to establish a common understanding of what well-being means for our campus community. Having a shared framework helps departments across the institution be more intentional about how they support student well-being. Furthermore, students will also have a baseline definition and dimensions from which they can start to reflect on how they operationalize well-being in their lives. In fall 2019, the institution's student health service spearheaded a broad community-based participatory process to develop and approve a university-wide definition of well-being and associated dimensions.

Definition of well-being

Well-being is an active and continuous practice, informed by ability, capacity, and environment. Well-being engages internal efficacy, promotes inclusivity and cultural humility, fosters a sense of belonging, and creates individual and organizational value. In all areas of the university, well-being is a priority that supports the advancement of knowledge and learning at the highest level and exists in a global context.

Dimensions of well-being

- Career well-being: To pursue fulfillment, connection, and growth in one's work.
- Emotional well-being: To identify and manage feelings while responding and adapting effectively.
- Financial well-being: To access and manage resources to feel secure while meeting current and ongoing needs.
- Intellectual well-being: To explore ideas and experiences that stimulate learning and knowledge application.
- Physical well-being: To engage in a dynamic state of continuous physiological renewal.
- Relational well-being: To develop positive, supportive, and ongoing connections in interpersonal, community, and organizational spheres.
- Spiritual well-being: To seek and express meaning, purpose, and "connectedness to the moment, self, others, nature, and the significant or sacred" (Delagran, n.d.).

The fall 2020 ROAR orientation program used the university well-being definition and dimensions as a key framework for the content. Individual well-being is complex and requires space for students to explore and name their needs. It also helps students develop agency when advocating for their well-being in academic, administrative, and extracurricular spaces. Using a university-wide definition of well-being and the associated dimensions also contributes to the continuity of care by establishing a common language from which departments across the institution can coordinate efforts.

Student-Centered and Equity-Minded Approach

In addition to the well-being framework, two core values and principles guided the ROAR development process: being student-centered and equity-minded. In the context of the global pandemic and the mostly virtual university experience, student-centered and equity-minded approaches are complementary and serve as both guiding values and practices.

At its core, student-centered learning "identifies students as the owners of their learning" (Lee & Hannafin, 2016, p. 707). Ownership and autonomy are core tenets of active engagement with the material, which facilitates deeper student learning. Klipfel and Cook (2017) expand on this idea to recognize that learner-centered pedagogy requires a fundamental shift in worldview that also must translate into practice. Educators must recognize that each student is unique and design practices that center and embrace the complexity and individuality of each student.

Equity-minded approaches similarly center the uniqueness of each student but within the context of oppressive systems. To be equity-minded is to recognize and dismantle existing systems of power and privilege within an organization (Coleman et al., 2021). When applied to educational pedagogy, equity-minded approaches require the interrogation of existing knowledge and its origin in an effort to center multiple ways of knowing. Additionally, we must recognize and challenge the White Western settler-colonialism upon which much of the United States' education system is founded.

Within the context of the global pandemic, some key considerations for being student-centered and equity-minded include access, screen (or Zoom) fatigue, belonging, and community. Access is different in the virtual setting as students are logging onto computers from all around the world. Administrators must recognize that

technology such as laptops and stable internet connections may vary across the student population. Therefore, curricula must accommodate inevitable technical and connectivity issues. Consideration of synchronous and asynchronous curricula may increase access for students across time zones, in addition to providing multiple avenues for engagement with the content (COVID-19 Best Practices, n.d.).

Recognizing that students are experiencing their university through a screen also means that students are more prone to screen (or Zoom) fatigue (Lee, 2020). Designing programs to prioritize the most important learning objectives can limit session duration. It is crucial to also understand and balance students' lived experiences of being introduced to their universities in virtual environments. Where in-person orientation provided informal relationship-building opportunities between activities, students in virtual orientation programs primarily establish connections with others through the programs they attend. Peer connection helps facilitate a sense of belonging and thus should be incorporated into all orientation formats.

The values and practices of being student-centered and equity-minded guided the development process for ROAR, including the content delivered to incoming students, peer facilitator training, program implementation, and community partnerships.

Content of Student Discussions and Facilitator Training

Incoming Student Discussion Content

To best meet students' needs as they navigate the global pandemic, we used an asset-focused approach and framed the ROAR discussions around well-being and flourishing. The logistical limitations of a condensed, virtual orientation provided an opportunity to accelerate the shift to this approach. The pedagogical decisions to approach conversations around stress management, coping, and alcohol and substance use within the well-being and flourishing frameworks was more holistic and translated into the following goals and objectives for the ROAR discussion:

Goals

- Promote student and community flourishing at the university and beyond
- Prioritize a university culture that values and promotes well-being
- Redefine and shift the "University Stress Culture" to one of well-being
- Establish community norms that promote a shared responsibility for supporting peers
- Promote intentional engagement in the university community

Objectives

By the end of the session, students will be able to:

- describe what well-being means to them at this time,
- set intentions for engagement within the university community throughout their time as a student,
- create a plan for connecting with the university community,
- develop a more nuanced understanding of effective coping strategies that can be used to navigate the transition to college,
- identify (campus) resources that students can use to support their well-being,
- develop skills to better support peers,
- identify as a member of the university community, and
- recognize their role in developing norms around shared community responsibility.

To help incoming students understand the connection between flourishing and alcohol and substance use, we drew from Martin Seligman's theory of well-being (Seligman, 2011). This theory complements research

related to values, flourishing, and authentic excellence to facilitate the design of an intentional, values-based approach to individual development (Crace & Crace, 2019). To apply this theory, we must analyze personal values and how they are expressed throughout the college experience and across a range of circumstances. Stress management discussions often emphasize how to prevent or mitigate the stress that students will experience. In the flourishing framework, students can focus on how to optimize their college experience while leading with their values, viewing stress as a necessary companion to authentic, values-based engagement.

This approach encouraged students to lead with their values when prioritizing their well-being, intentionally selecting community engagement opportunities, building relationships with peers, making decisions around alcohol and substance use, and becoming active participants in creating communities in which students take pride. During the session, we incorporated a variety of engagement opportunities. Students had the opportunity to reflect on their goals and values; create a definition of well-being; set intentions for engaging in the university community; identify factors that might indicate a peer is in distress; list self-care strategies that they can practice; think about how engaging in alcohol and other substance use is connected to their goals, values, and well-being; and set intentions for engaging with alcohol and other substance use safely if they choose to partake. Creating space for students to reflect on and strive for congruence between personal values and behaviors related to alcohol and substance use and stress management aligns with best practices in harm reduction approaches to substance use and positive psychology (Erickson et al., 1997).

The engagement tools also encouraged students to build new relationships with peers from an authentic, values-based lens. Participants were able to view live feedback from their peers and recognize that others shared similar values and goals for engaging with the University community, thereby helping incoming students feel more connected with each other. Ultimately, planning an interactive, relational orientation discussion for incoming students around multidimensional well-being, values, and flourishing can shift institutional structures and norms to universally promote holistic well-being.

Facilitator Training

In addition to the innovative content selection for the incoming student session, we continued to train student leaders rather than administrators to facilitate these discussions. Bronfenbrenner's five ecological systems theory supports the idea that peers play a crucial role in individual student development and the larger systems and communities within which students are situated (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Shelton, 2018). In past years, incoming students appreciated the peer-led discussions because students shared their experiences navigating such issues on-campus. Restrictions related to the COVID-19 global pandemic prevented first-year students from being on campus, making it imperative that they have an opportunity to interact with and learn from peers.

Historically, the peer facilitator training consisted of a comprehensive three-day in-person training on alcohol and other substances, stress management, and facilitation skills. Applying the student-centered framework, we adjusted the schedule to minimize virtual fatigue and accommodate students in different time zones. We condensed the training to six hours two-hour blocks over three days; each two-hour training was offered in the morning and afternoon of each training day to allow students in different time zones to participate. We prioritized the peer facilitator learning objectives and structured the training such that facilitators engaged in exercises that allowed them to think about and apply the concepts in their own lives. Doing so equipped them with the skills to help their peers do the same. The activities helped facilitators understand that well-being, substance use, and flourishing can be applied and experienced differently for each person. There is no one prescribed application of these concepts.

Virtual Delivery

Early in the orientation planning process, we decided to deliver the first-year discussion and facilitator training virtually. In the context of the COVID-19 global pandemic, this decision allowed us to accommodate students living and learning worldwide. Communicating this information early allowed students to choose the discussion or training time that best fit their schedules or request accommodations accordingly. We also recorded the sessions so students who were unable to join live due to poor internet connection or other reasons could still receive and engage with the content at a later date.

Due to technology constraints, we hosted the first-year sessions as webinars instead of meetings with breakout rooms. This structure limited how facilitators could interact with participants. To encourage students to actively participate in the session, we used an online polling tool, which allowed participants to send in anonymous responses to multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Facilitators used the responses to contextualize subsequent content, helping to center students' experiences in the session.

Partnerships

Delivery of the ROAR session would not have been possible without key partnerships across the university. The Health Promotion department worked closely with the university's Orientation, Wellness, and Information Technology (IT) departments to implement the program. While the Health Promotion department created the session and facilitator content, the Orientation department helped navigate session scheduling and logistics, including communication with all the incoming students. The IT department helped us explore various facilitation modalities. Given the large number of first-year students participating in the discussion, we needed to ensure that the virtual platform could accommodate the group size. The virtual modality informed the way we structured the discussion and engagement opportunities. We also partnered with an undergraduate school-based Wellness professional who conducted interviews with potential facilitators and supported program recruitment. It was the significant partnership from these three entities that ensured the success of this initiative.

Advancing health and well-being requires collaboration across departments at the institution, recognizing the role each of us plays in supporting students as they live, learn, and engage in our campus communities (International Conference on Health Promoting Universities and Colleges, 2015; World Health Organization, 1986).

Impact

Given the new direction of the fall orientation programming and the importance of assessing its impact, both immediate and long-term, we implemented a posttest evaluation to measure whether students achieved the outlined objectives. We also incorporated questions that encouraged students to think about their action plans for engaging with the campus community and practicing self-care strategies. Specifically, we asked about the types of student organizations they would be interested in joining, one self-care strategy they would commit to for the year, and one value they hoped would guide their engagement in the university community. These questions were intended to evaluate how students planned to engage with their values as they transitioned into the University community.

Also included was a series of multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions about incoming students' knowledge related to the session content and confidence with engaging in and intending to perform certain practices. These constructs are consistently used in public health settings to determine the likelihood that an individual will change particular behaviors. To better understand students' sense of belonging and connection to

the community, we asked about students' perceptions of being part of the institution's community and culture. Out of 1,760 students who attended the session, more than 990 students completed the posttest for a response rate of more than 56%.

The first set of questions explored students' interest in extracurricular activities, commitment to self-care strategies, and values to guide their college experience. Respondents expressed interest in various student clubs and organizations, with academic, cultural, and pre-professional groups ranked the highest. Of the self-care strategies discussed in the ROAR session, meditation, exercise, creative expression, taking breaks, and sleeping were among those respondents most frequently expressed interest in practicing. Respondents listed many values they hoped would guide their engagement with the university community, with honesty, integrity, empathy, being open-minded, and respect listed most often. Establishing a relationship with one's values and practicing self-care strategies would allow individuals to flourish through transitions such as starting college.

To assess students' knowledge, we asked questions about harm-reduction strategies when consuming alcohol and other substances and recognizing when a peer may be intoxicated or experiencing alcohol poisoning. More than 81% of respondents correctly answered that practices such as eating before drinking, counting the number of drinks you consume, avoiding drinking games, alternating alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, setting a limit for the number of drinks you will consume in a night ahead of time, and only drinking one alcoholic beverage per hour are all protective factors if one chooses to use alcohol. Consistent with harm-reduction approaches, students need to identify strategies for minimizing the consequences of alcohol and substance use, should they partake. Of these protective factors, students were most likely to eat before drinking, stay with the same group of friends the entire time they were drinking, and count the number of drinks consumed. Approximately 25% of respondents indicated that they do not plan to consume alcohol. Reflecting on the strategies that are most aligned with their values, students are more likely to make decisions about how to engage in alcohol and substance use in a way that is smart, safe, and responsible. Data related to harm-reduction strategies are outlined in Table 1.

[Table 1]

Table 1

Protective Factors Students Are Likely to Use If They Choose to Consume Alcohol

	Likely	Somewhat likely	Somewhat unlikely	Unlikely	I do not plan to consume alcohol
	%	%	%	%	%
	N	N	N	N	N
Protective behavior					
Eat before drinking	64.1% 631	6.9% 68	1.9% 19	0.5% 5	26.6% 262
Stay with the same group of friends the entire time you are drinking	58.7% 578	12.4% 122	1.8% 18	0.6% 6	26.5% 261
Count the number of drinks you consume	52.6% 518	14.6% 144	4.2% 41	1.8% 18	26.8% 264

Set a limit of the number of drinks you're going to consume in a night ahead of time	47.3% 466	14.4% 142	7.9% 78	3.7% 36	26.7% 263
Alternate alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages	45.8% 451	19.5% 192	5.1% 50	3.1% 31	26.5% 261
Stick with only one kind of alcohol when drinking	36.2% 357	21.2% 209	11.9% 117	4.0% 39	26.7% 263
Only drink one alcoholic beverage per hour	34.6% 341	19.6% 193	12.2% 120	6.8% 67	26.8% 264
Avoid drinking games	33.0% 325	20.6% 203	11.1% 109	8.4% 83	26.9% 265
Avoid taking shots	31.7% 312	18.1% 178	13.4% 132	9.9% 98	26.9% 265

Respondents correctly identified signs that might indicate someone is intoxicated or experiencing alcohol poisoning: more than 86% correctly identified slurring words and passing out, 78% correctly identified stumbling, and 68% correctly identified slower breathing. Having the knowledge and skills to support peers can help create a community where students feel more connected and where health and well-being are priorities.

We incorporated a Likert-scale question to measure students' confidence related to certain topics discussed in the ROAR session, as outlined in Table 2. Respondents indicated their level of agreement with each statement. Approximately 78% of respondents agreed that they felt confident in their ability to define what well-being means to them; more than 73% felt confident in their ability to look out for peers in the university community and identify self-care strategies to manage stress; approximately 71% felt confident identifying soothing and self-care strategies to manage stress. More than 65% of respondents felt confident using campus resources to support their well-being and using effective coping strategies to manage stress through the transition to college. Finally, over 57% of respondents agreed that they felt confident creating and implementing a plan to engage with the university community.

[Table 2]

Table 2

Student Confidence in Navigating Campus Resources and Practicing Self-Care

	Somewhat		Somewhat	
	Agree	agree	disagree	Disagree
	%	%	%	%
	N	N	N	N
I feel confident utilizing campus resources that can support my well-being.	67.0% 652	28.7% 279	3.9% 38	0.4% 4
I feel confident in my ability to utilize effective coping strategies to manage my stress through this transition to college.	65.3% 635	29.9% 291	4.5% 44	0.3% 3
I feel confident in my ability to look out for my peers in the university community.	74.0% 720	23.7% 231	1.9% 18	0.4% 4

I feel confident in my ability to implement my plan to engage with the university community.	57.1%	35.9%	6.0%	1.0%
	556	349	58	10
I feel confident in creating a plan for how to engage with the university community.	59.2%	35.6%	4.6%	0.6%
	576	346	45	6
I feel confident identifying soothing coping strategies to manage my stress.	71.1%	25.9%	2.7%	0.3%
	692	252	26	3
I feel confident identifying self-care coping strategies to manage my stress.	73.7%	24.0%	2.1%	0.2%
	717	234	20	2
I feel confident defining what well-being means to me.	78.1%		1.1%	0.1%
	760		11	1

We also measured students' intentions to engage in certain behaviors, as outlined in Table 3. Again, respondents indicated their level of agreement with selected statements. Approximately 89% of respondents agreed that they intend to look out for their peers in the university community. More than 80% intended to prioritize their well-being while at the institution and use effective coping strategies to manage stress during the transition to college. Over 76% of respondents intended to implement their plan to engage with the university community and use campus resources that can support their well-being. Finally, about 73% of respondents intended to create a plan to engage with the university community.

[Table 3]

Table 3

Student Intention to Prioritize Well-Being and Engage with the University Community

	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
	%	%	%	%
	N	N	N	N
I intend to prioritize my well-being while I'm a student at the university.	81.0%	17.2%	1.4%	0.4%
	787	167	14	4
I intend to create a plan for how to engage with the university community.	73.0%	24.5%	2.3%	0.2%
	710	238	22	2
I intend to implement my plan to engage with the university community.	76.3%	21.7%	1.8%	0.2%
	742	211	17	2
I intend to utilize effective coping strategies to manage my stress through this transition to college.	81.3%	17.5%	1.1%	0.1%
	790	170	11	1
I intend to look out for my peers in the university community.	89.4%	10.1%	0.5%	0.0%
	869	98	5	0
I intend to utilize campus resources that can support my well-being.	76.3%	21.5%	2.0%	0.2%
	742	209	19	2

Knowing that peer connection is associated with a sense of belonging, we asked students about their perspectives of and role in the campus community. More than 90% of respondents were excited to be part of the campus community and felt a responsibility to look out for their peers. Approximately 58% of respondents agreed that they played a part in establishing the student culture, and 46% of students felt like they were part of the campus community. The results are further delineated in Table 4.

[Table 4]

Table 4
Student Sense of Belonging

	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
	%	%	%	%
	N	N	N	N
I feel like I am part of the university community.	46.6%	43.1%	8.2%	2.1%
	457	422	80	21
I am excited to be part of the university community.	90.1%	9.0%	0.9%	0.0%
	883	88	9	0
I play a part in establishing the student culture at the university.	58.9%	29.6%	9.0%	2.5%
	577	290	88	25
I have a responsibility to look out for my peers within the university community.	90.8%	8.8%	0.4%	0.0%
	890	86	4	0

Student participants also shared general session feedback in an open-ended response. The majority of comments were positive. They thought the presentation was very informative, appreciated having student facilitators, enjoyed the interactive activities, and believed the session better prepared them for the college experience (see Table 5). To improve the session, respondents suggested using a different online engagement tool and providing an overview of the session at the beginning so students could more clearly understand how the topics connect.

[Table 5]

Table 5
Participant Feedback Organized by Theme

Theme	Participant Feedback
Informative session	The information was shared in a very engaging manner, and I learned a lot from this meeting!
	I think that the session was very informative and helpful!
	Very specific and informative. Thanks for the guidance!
	I'm just glad to participate in the presentation. It was very in-depth and answered questions that I had for a very long time about well-being.

Appreciation for student facilitators	I thought the facilitators were great at making this webinar interactive! I appreciated people's personal stories.
	This was a thorough and well-thought-out session. The student leaders were super helpful, kind, and informative.
	Great to hear from current students and enjoy the engagement with speakers
Appreciation for interactive activities	I really enjoyed the polls! I didn't expect to gain anything from this presentation, but it was really interesting and helpful to define how I want to experience [campus]. Thank you so much!
	I really loved the implementation of the live interactive poll. It really helped to keep me engaged in the presentation.
Feeling prepared for college	Thank you so much! This was super helpful and took away a lot of my worries!
	I thought the session was helpful and exposed me to a lot of good ideas and campus resources.
	This session made me aware of several self-care strategies and resources of which I was not previously aware.
Improvements for session	Thank you for running it! I'm sure there were a number of resource and time constraints, but if at all possible, I think it would be better to run as an actual Zoom, not as a webinar. It was a bit too easy to zone out. Also, [the online engagement tool] did not work for me. [Another tool] seems to be more reliable.
	I dislike using [online engagement tool] because it limited my responses when I sent it via text. I felt discouraged to participate, and it was hard to maintain focus. I also feel like there was a lot of information that didn't feel like it was tied together. I was so confused and didn't really get the point of this session until the end. Having an overview or outline beforehand would've helped. Also, the speakers weren't as engaging as some of the other sessions I've been to. I think having less speakers (with less awkward transitions) would help.

Following the five ROAR sessions during orientation, students increasingly sought support from the Health Promotion department. There was a tenfold increase in individual direct service sessions compared to the same period in the previous academic year. Of these visits, 20% were a result of the ROAR session. Anecdotally, this demonstrates that ROAR created an environment where students felt empowered to seek support from student health resources.

The ROAR evaluation data suggest that using student-centered, equity-minded approaches that provide students an opportunity to reflect on their values and goals can help students flourish throughout the transition to college. Furthermore, conversations about well-being during orientation can establish a culture where students recognize it as a university priority.

Recommendations and Lessons learned

In addition to the positive impacts, we identified several limitations to the virtual delivery of ROAR. We used a webinar format, which did not allow real-time conversation that would have been reminiscent of an in-person session. Additionally, the virtual format limited opportunities for community building as students could not interact with each other during the program as they would in a meeting or in-person format. Community building is an essential component of orientation programming. Therefore, we tried to alleviate these issues by incorporating several virtual engagement activities throughout the session, which allowed students to see their peers' perspectives on the various topics.

Despite these limitations, we learned that students could lead discussions about critical and often sensitive health and well-being related topics. Moreover, first-year students appreciated learning essential skills to support their well-being while navigating college from near peers. Often, didactic approaches to educating students about health and well-being topics miss an opportunity to center students' needs and perspectives in the learning environment. As institutions continue to incorporate health and well-being activities into orientation programming, we recommend using peer-led initiatives to stimulate community building and cultivate a sense of belonging among students.

Leading with equity helps ensure that when institutions mandate student programming, it is accessible to all students. Challenging structures and policies that unduly burden certain populations and offering accommodations to address inequities is critical to creating an inclusive community where students feel like they belong.

Finally, recognizing that well-being impacts all aspects of students' lives, these efforts should be infused throughout orientation. Through ROAR, students had the opportunity to reflect on their values and self-care strategies, which equipped them with relevant and meaningful skills that they could apply to their specific situation or context.

Though this institution used the COVID-19 pandemic as the impetus to reimagine orientation programming, we recommend colleges and universities engage in a critical review of their practices beyond the pandemic. Using a growth-focused approach that prioritizes multidimensional well-being, student values, and flourishing through a student-centered and equity-minded framework can help create a culture and structures that promote well-being.

Conclusions

Arundhati Roy (2020) described the COVID-19 pandemic as a portal:

Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks, and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it.

During the COVID-19 global pandemic, Universities were able to reconsider how they onboarded students into their campus environments. The shift to virtual and remote service delivery offered opportunities to center students' needs and prioritize health and well-being as institutions orient incoming students to their campus community. Instead of focusing on ways students can prevent or manage stress during this time, framing discussions around flourishing allows students to reflect on their values as a way to develop resilience and optimize their college experience.

One institution leveraged peer leaders to elevate student voices and needs related to health and well-

being. These efforts prioritized equity when addressing potential challenges to student well-being, which were illuminated or exacerbated by the pandemic. Through the development and implementation of ROAR, we learned that infusing health and well-being into orientation programming and ensuring efforts to enhance well-being center the needs and experiences of diverse student populations will ultimately help all college students flourish and thrive.

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