



Farmingdale State College

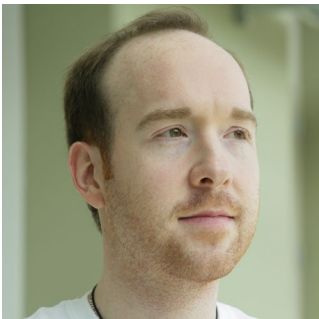




Perspective



Frank Rampello
Assistant Dean of Students



Kevin Schnurr
Staff Associate
Office of Dean of Students

Farmingdale State College (FSC) is a mid-size, four-year institution, and part of the State University of New York (SUNY) system. The leadership in FSC’s Dean of Students office knew in-person orientations were too expensive to produce and more students were opting out. Believing online orientation was the solution to early student engagement, staff tried to create an online orientation using the college’s learning management system.

Next, they found a template-based system that promised a workable solution only to discover they needed “more than a slide show with a next button.”

FSC was able to revive its long-awaited vision for online orientation using Advantage Orientation®. **Soon after launching their new platform**, the State of New York issued a mandate. All state employees were required to complete sexual harassment training. *Could their new online orientation system be used for more than one purpose for more than one department?*

Real-Life Experience

In this case study, you’ll hear from Frank Rampello, Assistant Dean of Students, and Kevin Schnurr, Staff Associate, Office of Dean of Students at FSC. They address the goals, strategies, tactics, and impact of collaborating with the creative and technical talent at Advantage Design Group® (ADG) and using Advantage Orientation® as a comprehensive online orientation solution for students AND a training solution for faculty and staff.

**Farmingdale
State College**
State University of New York



Select the image to preview a webinar recording with Frank and Kevin.



Goal

“We considered using Blackboard, but the project was put on the back-burner as we were too busy to even begin working on the online orientation.”

Situation

Once accepted to FSC, students would have to wait until a summer orientation session to get their questions answered, which at times was months away. As the cost of in-person orientations started adding up, more students with work obligations could not attend.

Providing orientation online became the new objective. They first attempted to build one with their college’s learning management system. “We considered using Blackboard,” Kevin said, “but, the project was put on the back-burner as we were too busy to even begin working on the online orientation.”

Next, Kevin and Frank contracted with a third-party software provider. They wanted the online orientation to be mobile friendly. Disappointed in the final product, they discovered they needed more: a **truly responsive solution** using the latest UX design and interactivity students expect.

It was a few years until Kevin and Frank learned about Advantage Orientation®. **The ADG team listened** to what they envisioned and what they wanted to accomplish. Frank and Kevin canceled their existing contract.

The Plan

The plan to create an online orientation solution included:

- Replace their existing online orientation with one that exceeded their current needs and could adapt to future changes and growth
- Assure the online orientation was ADA compliant
- Apply timers to all slide types so students could complete it in a reasonable amount of time without “flying through” content

“Many of our students work more than part time, so they don’t have time for an in-person orientation,” Frank said. “And that’s why we wanted to bring them a program that satisfied their needs.”

Advantage Orientation® was recognized as the right fit at the right time and the right fit for FSC students. From the very start of the project, the FSC and ADG teams began a partnership to collaborate and create a customized online orientation unique to FSC.



Creativity

Production begins with a Kick-Off meeting, followed by concept development.

Frank and Kevin were relieved to learn about ADG’s tried-and-true production process. After an initial kick-off meeting with their production team, ADG designers created **three concepts** based on FSC’s branding standards. Designs were submitted for review and then refined using preferred elements from each one.

While they could’ve used ADG’s video production capabilities, Frank and Kevin opted to produce video content in house. Videos feature student and faculty hosts and campus scenes. The high level of **custom design** plus unique video content gave campus leaders **the look and feel** they were looking for.



The platform includes unlimited training on how to use **the system’s robust tool set** to make content changes, analyze data, assign administrative roles and much more. Content changes include adding slides, photos, text, and videos. The intuitive interface makes **editing tasks easy** and can be completed in minutes.

FSC staff can even control the time students spend on any type of slide – video or copy – increasing the probability students fully engage with the content. **Content control allows staff to tailor information for different users.** Having the flexibility to make changes means FSC can adapt to new or unforeseeable circumstances, making them ready for any changes that come their way.

Additional features allow the FSC team to get creative and deliver more value through personalization. When students see information that interests them and want to learn more, they can save it to a resource center they can access when online orientation is completed. And, yes, completion is an achievement and deserves to be rewarded! Students receive a **personalized certificate of completion** and email message automatically generated within the platform.

Production Process





Technology

Overview Report

SELECT DATES

START DATE:

01/08/2018

END DATE:

8/23/2020

SELECT STUDENT TYPE

Staff
▼

APPLY FILTER

RESET FILTERS

STARTED **1397**

COMPLETED **1384**

INCOMPLETE **13**



With Advantage Orientation®, new students at FSC don't have to wait for a summer orientation or welcome event to get their questions answered. As soon as they're admitted, they're prompted to complete online orientation. Busy students can take a break at any time and when they return to orientation, the platform remembers where they left off. This means that part-time students that may work a job or two can complete orientation without wasting time, at times convenient for them.

Personalized Content

The system enables the creation of member groups. This functionality allows the FSC team to provide alternative or additional content for different user experiences. For example, prospective students and their families are served different information than admitted students.

Each user experience can be tracked and analyzed in real-time by designated administrators. This capability means the platform can be assigned multiple purposes and enable multiple administrators to measure a broad range of the most relevant impact and outcome data. As a result, Advantage Orientation® is a comprehensive solution that crosses over campus departments - marketing, recruiting, admissions, enrollment, and yes, orientation.

FSC's platform has other technological advantages, too, like an assessment tool used to create scored tests or surveys for all users or for unique member groups. **Each assessment includes a reporting panel** so the FSC team always has access to data they can use to inform insights into strategic outcomes such as engagement, retention, satisfaction, and readiness.



Adapting to Change

“The stakes couldn’t have been higher... and ADG could not have been more sensitive and attentive overseeing our launch and checking-in frequently to ensure the program stayed on track.”

Soon after launch, New York State required state employees receive sexual harassment prevention training. FSC staff considered addressing this important issue to meet the mandate as a challenge and a privilege.

“The stakes couldn’t have been higher — sexual violence prevention and response — and ADG could not have been more sensitive and attentive overseeing our launch and checking-in frequently to **ensure the program stayed on track**,” Frank said.

FSC had weeks to launch a sexual harassment prevention training — the pressure was on! FSC’s entire HR department worked side-by-side with orientation coordinators who received **weekly completion reports**. This level of communication played an important role as they ultimately achieved a near perfect completion rate.

This campus-wide effort and aggressive awareness campaign paid dividends. To nudge campus employees to complete training, they:

- Broadcasted a campus-wide email alert
- Delivered an opening-week address
- Led departmental meetings

Compliance Management

It’s one thing to provide information and training, but how does the institution know if compliance requirements have been met?

Because of the platform’s **built-in guided navigation**, employees engage in content in a prescribed order. **Each interaction leaves a digital footprint**, viewable in the system’s reporting panel. When a user interacts with a slide programmed as the last one in the module, training is deemed as officially complete. This level of reporting transparency provides the institution evidence of compliance and campus leadership with greater peace of mind.

Interaction with the last slide of the program also **generates an automated email** and personalized certificate of completion. Employees receive **acknowledgement of their accomplishment** they can proudly display while knowing they are contributing to an environment that respects the safety and security of everyone in the college community.





Going Forward

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With the management, creative and technical expertise from Advantage Design Group® and the customized design and capabilities of Advantage Orientation®, Farmingdale State College was able to revive its online orientation program and **provide students with an engaging and interactive onboarding experience**. FSC leaders are prepared to respond to change and always have a choice: they can easily update content or pivot to **deliver orientation as a hybrid or totally virtual program**.

Students are “connecting to the school and really getting plugged in,” Frank said. As a result, more students are successfully completing enrollment and beginning their college career with greater confidence. Staff have access to mandated training and the institution is operating in compliance, providing everyone greater peace of mind.

“Everyone is ecstatic. This project represents a combination of fiscal responsibility, a high-quality product, and near-universal participation,” Frank said.

About Advantage Design Group®

Advantage Design Group® is a multimedia production and software development firm established in 1998. This certified, woman-owned small business is the largest online orientation production company in America, employing over 40 full-time staff. The company’s diverse talent includes digital specialists in art direction, UX design, programming, video production, content development, project management and training.

Advantage Orientation®, the company’s cloud-based orientation software, is currently deployed by hundreds of higher education institutions in three countries. The platform provides an interactive and media-rich experience to support successful transitions for new students and new hires.

Visit AdvantageDesignGroup.com to request a live tour.

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