

Guarini Orientation Restructuring Proposal

GSC Alumni Committee

November 2021

Overview

Orientation is the first opportunity for Ph.D and Masters students to congregate and create community connections at Dartmouth. In addition to attending mandatory events, students also can attend a small number of social events. We've identified that there may be an opportunity in Guarini's orientation to create deep and meaningful connections between graduate students and between the student community and Guarini administration. In this short proposal, we suggest creating a class representation, implementing a weekend trip and increasing the number of social events. Our goal for this restructuring would be to shape orientation as a community connection program that is more inclusive, fulfilling and long lasting.

List of Recommendations:

- Implement a class representation scheme (e.g. animal representatives) to create unity amongst the incoming class cohort
- Increase the number of social events for individual populations (e.g. BIPOC) and overall graduate community
- Develop a series of weekend excursions for graduate students to connect off campus
- Create a consistent line of Guarini swag that is handed out to Guarini students at a similar time every year (e.g. Guarini BBQ)
- Focus a series of events on transitioning incoming students to graduate school at Dartmouth (e.g. Transitioning to Graduate Life event, see Orientation Event Schedule)
- If possible, move the resources panel to be an in-person event to create more personal connections between resource personnel and graduate students
- Collect feedback from incoming and current students about orientation

Current Guarini Orientation Structure

Guarini has a three day orientation, generally during the beginning of September, that is specifically set aside by all programs for Guarini orientation events. Generally, these three days are dedicated to ensuring all Guarini students attend mandatory training. However, in response to COVID-19, Guarini moved many of its mandatory events to be asynchronous on Canvas. This included the Ethics training, Title IX training and the resources panel.

Guarini also hosts a few social events during these three orientation days. The largest of which is a BBQ where all students, faculty and staff are invited to attend. There are also often smaller mixers that are hosted during these three days, and these are usually coordinated by the Guarini Fellows.

The Graduate Student Council also coordinates several social gatherings during orientation. This includes the activities fair and other mixers. The number of events can vary depending on the social chairs.

Deficiencies in the Current Structure

The fundamental deficiency for the current Guarini orientation is its inability to foster community among graduate students. There is a lack of Guarini-community wide events dedicated to allowing first-year graduate students to create relationships, get to know one another, and foster bonds as a collective.

Several, if not all, of the social events that currently occur during Guarini orientation include the broader Guarini community. For first years, this structure does not provide an adequate environment that emphasizes fostering relationships for graduate students at an important transition into the Guarini community.

In many cases, the community building vacuum is filled by departments. These entities organize retreats, orientations, or other events to build intra-program cohesion. Yet, the lack of a Guarini-wide equivalent to these events denies a valuable cross-program interaction for first years.

Combined, the lack of social event programming, the absence of programming tailored to first years, and the nonexistence of inter-program community building at the crucial stage of entering graduate school creates a siloed Guarini community from the onset. Currently, this division forces other Guarini and Graduate Student Council events to attempt to correct this situation. This proposal aims to correct these issues.

Animal Representatives

There is a lack of community amongst Guarini students which could partially be due to the lack of a unifying symbol. Tuck, Geisel and undergraduate students all come in as a class year and can build cohesion around their class year. For Guarini students, who are both masters and Ph.D students with differing timelines, it can be difficult to build cohesion. Therefore, there needs to be a symbol or grouping where Guarini students can build cohesion with each other and the graduate school itself.

We propose using animal representatives to represent a matriculating class at Guarini. Since there is no numerical value, any Guarini student in this “animal” class can associate with this symbol until they graduate. It can also be a way to generate fun swag or events to help build community.

We believe that this can start with the incoming students selecting their animal representative as a group during orientation. This can be followed by themed events throughout the year.

Examples of Events for Community Building with Animal Rep

Choosing an Animal Rep:

- Hold 2-3 events to identify an animal representative. These can be ice breakers where people choose traits they want to convey in their animal rep or people self-identify as a specific animal.
- The final event of orientation should be students voting on their animal representative.
 - Followed by an event soon after that announces the animal representative (maybe even with swag?)
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Events throughout the year can be “animal” themed to help promote community and networking within the same group:

- Animal Trivia Night
- Paint and/or Craft nights
- Wine and cheese mixers
- Coloring sessions
- Networking (e.g. between different animal groups, faculty, and alumni)
- Volunteer Days with Reward Points (e.g. Like Hogwarts or the Dartmouth House system)

Examples of Animal Representation



Weekend Trips

Similar to the first year trip reserved for undergraduates, we believe that graduate students would benefit from a couple of weekend trips to (1) explore Dartmouth and the Upper Valley and (2) strengthen bonds with their fellow classmates. Students will select the trip(s) that they would prefer to attend via a survey sent at the beginning of the summer. The first weekend trip consists of outings to various communities in the Upper Valley and unique sites on Dartmouth's campus. The second weekend trip is a trip to Moosilauke Lodge, allowing students to bond with each other in a unique Dartmouth environment. The weekend trips will occur on the Saturday and Sunday of each orientation week.

Weekend 1: Explore the Upper Valley

When: 10AM to 3PM each day.

Where: Norwich, Quechee, Lebanon, West Lebanon.

Transportation: UV Transit or Dartmouth-owned buses/vans**.

Meals: Bring your own lunch.

Fee: TBD.

Borrowing from the undergraduate structure, the Upper Valley trip will provide an opportunity for incoming graduate students, especially students from other countries or from outside of New England, acquainted with the area and what it offers. This trip can cover a mix of local markets and stores (e.g., downtown WRJ, downtown Lebanon, Norwich farmers' market, etc.), as well as fun outdoor spaces (e.g., Gile Mountain), and more!

Weekend 2: Melt Away at Moosilauke Lodge

When: 12PM Saturday to 12PM Sunday.

Where: Moosilauke Lodge.

Transportation: Dartmouth-owned vans**/personal vehicles.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner included.

Lodging: Bunkhouses or outdoor camping.

Fee: TBD.

Moosilauke Lodge is an incredible opportunity for graduate students to meet one another, make friends, and bond in an environment that's extremely unique to Dartmouth. All meals are communal, urging students to mix, mingle, and make new friends. Bunkhouse and tent-based lodging is available for those who wish to stay overnight. Various activities can be planned to give the weekend structure, e.g., outdoor movie, team building activities, hiking, exploration, etc.

**For Dartmouth owned vans, graduate student drivers would need to undergo an additional training session.

Orientation Event Schedule

GUARINI ORIENTATION

EXAMPLE ORIENTATION FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS
MANDATORY*; VIRTUAL/HYBRID

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
8/29	8/30 <i>Welcome to Dartmouth*</i>	8/31 <i>Drop-In Questions</i> Tie Dye with Houses	9/1 <i>Transitioning to Grad Life</i>	9/2 <i>Panel for Int'l Students</i> Int'l Student Mixer	9/3 Drinks with the GSC	9/4 Campus Tour Weekend Trip
9/5 Outdoor Movie Night	9/6 First-Gen Lunch Campus Tour	9/7 <i>Ethics Panel*</i> <i>Drop-In Questions</i>	9/8 Grad Womxn Lunch Lab Safety*	9/9 BIPOC Lunch Campus Tour Guarini BBQ	9/10 Resource Panel* Activities Fair Drinks with the GSC	9/11 Wine & Cheese Mixer Weekend Trip

Event descriptions:

Activities Fair: The GSC will coordinate a fair for graduate student groups to recruit interested first-year students and postdocs.

BIPOC Student Lunch: A catered lunch for BIPOC students to gather and connect. Resource-sharing.

Campus Tour: The GSC and interested graduate students host a couple tours of campus. If the budget allows, we can provide ice cream or coffee.

Drinks with the GSC: The GSC Executive Board and interested representatives host a couple of informal events with drinks (alcoholic and/or non-alcoholic) and games.

Drop-In Questions: Office hour style event for students with questions about Guarini, graduate student life, the Upper Valley, etc.

Ethics Panel*: Guarini's mandatory ethics panel. IDE can be consulted to add a bias and inclusivity component, which is not currently a part of graduate student training.

First-Generation Graduate Student Lunch: A catered lunch for first-generation students to gather and connect. Resource-sharing.

Graduate Womxn Lunch: A catered lunch for graduate student womxn to gather and connect. Resource-sharing.

Guarini BBQ: Guarini's traditional BBQ.

International Student Mixer: The GSC and the International Student Fellow can plan a mixer to connect international students with each other.

Lab Safety*: A mandatory event for students to learn safety protocols for on-campus and DHMC labs.

Outdoor Movie Night: A family friendly movie event with an inflatable screen that can be placed in Kemeny Courtyard or another outdoor space around campus.

Panel for International Students: A panel of current international graduate students and OVIS staff members to introduce international students to graduate student life in the US and the Upper Valley.

Resource Panel:* A panel of staff from different Dartmouth resources that are available to graduate students (e.g., Guarini, Dick's House and Counseling Center, Student Wellness Center, Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity, Safety and Security).

Tie Dye with Houses: The House Communities host tie dye events for their students and postdocs. We can encourage graduate students to attend to increase the graduate student feeling of belonging within the Houses.

Transitioning to Grad Life: A panel of current graduate students and postdocs from diverse backgrounds and with diverse life experiences (from different programs, with and without children, stipend-supported, tuition-paying, etc) and wellness experts that can answer questions and provide tips about life as a graduate student.

Welcome to Dartmouth:* A general introduction to Dartmouth, Guarini, and the GSC. We can invite President Hanlon and other senior administrators. We can cater the event with some local goodies (e.g., baked goods from KAF, etc), hand out merchandise, and book a local band.

Wine & Cheese Mixer: The GSC and the Housing Fellow can organize a wine & cheese social event to help students meet each other.

Other event ideas:

Food truck festival, farmer's market trips, board game night, diverse book club (GWISE + CARE), mocktail mixer, speed friending, "Before I Graduate" mural, match students online over the summer

Orientation Planning Schedule

Tentative, pending meeting with Jane and Kerry in January

Early July: A temporary orientation planning group will be assembled composed of: Jane Seibel, Kerry Landers, the Guarini International Fellow, the Guarini Housing Fellow, the GSC President, the GSC Social Co-Chairs, and the GSC Student Life Chair. They will outline a plan for organizing orientation, which will include the budget and delegating the required actions (e.g., the GSC Social Co-Chairs and the Housing Fellow will plan the Wine & Cheese Mixer).

Late July: A concrete schedule for orientation will be published and communicated to incoming and current graduate students. The planning group will start reaching out to potential panelists for each panel, start ordering merchandise, and publish Canvas Orientation. Guarini administrators should reach out to graduate students and postdocs to inquire about moving to the Upper Valley and finding housing.

Early August: Start to plan social events through booking event spaces and organizing catering. The GSC can reach out to active student groups to confirm their participation in the Activities Fair.

Late August: Write campus tour scripts and find community members who want to give campus tours. Confirm panelists.

Early September: Host orientation. Follow up with a feedback survey on orientation and social events.

Tentative Budget

(based on 2021-2022 Cohort unless otherwise noted)

Responsible Party	Item/Event	Component	Cost	Source
Collaborative	Apparel/Swag	250 T-Shirts	\$1,300	4imprint
Collaborative	Apparel/Swag	300 Bags	\$400 (low quality) \$3700 (high quality)	4Imprint (Low) 4imprint (High)
TBD	First Year Trip #1 and #2	Transportation Day Rental for Van (seats 12) <small>*does not include mileage fee</small>	\$150 a day	Dartmouth Transportation Services
Guarini	First Year Trip #2	Total Cabin Rental for 150 students <small>*based price for 1 night/student</small>	\$2,100	Dartmouth Outdoors
Students	First Year Trip #2	Total for Three Meals for 150 students <small>*based price for breakfast, lunch, and dinner</small>	\$2,850	Dartmouth Outdoors
Guarini	First Year Trip #2	Total Cabin Rental for 150 students <small>*based price for 1 night/student</small>	\$2,100	Dartmouth Outdoors
Students	First Year Trip #2	Total for Three Meals for 150 students <small>*based price for breakfast, lunch, and dinner</small>	\$2,850	Dartmouth Outdoors
GSC	GSC Event	Wine and Cheese Event <small>*based on 21-22 allocated budget</small>	\$1,000	Dartmouth GSC Website
GSC	GSC Event	Outdoor Movie Night <small>*based on 21-22 allocated budget</small>	\$1,500	Dartmouth GSC Website
GSC	GSC Event	Drinks with the GSC	\$400	
GSC	GSC Event	Activities Fair	\$500	