



Welcome!

Intensive on the First-Year Seminar

Asheville, NC
June 6-7, 2024



**GARDNER
INSTITUTE**



HOUSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE



NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA


Wifi: Hilton Honors Embassy

Select using a promotional code

Code: **Avles2023**

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Access Digital Workbook:



What We Learned from You Through the Survey

34 institutions responded (58%)

56 individuals responded from those 34 institutions

Findings

(based on responses from 34 institutions and 56 individuals)

- Grading
 - All courses were graded
- Credit hours
 - The most commonly reported number was 3 credit hours
 - Followed closely by courses that carry 1 credit hour
 - Followed by course carrying 4 credit hours
 - Many respondents reported courses that carry variable credit hours
- Effectiveness
 - The most common rating of courses was 'moderately effective'
 - 10 courses were rated 'highly effective'
 - 5 indicated 'no course'
 - (There was some disagreement between individual respondents as to level of effectiveness)
- Required/voluntary
 - Many more required courses than voluntary courses

Mentimeter:

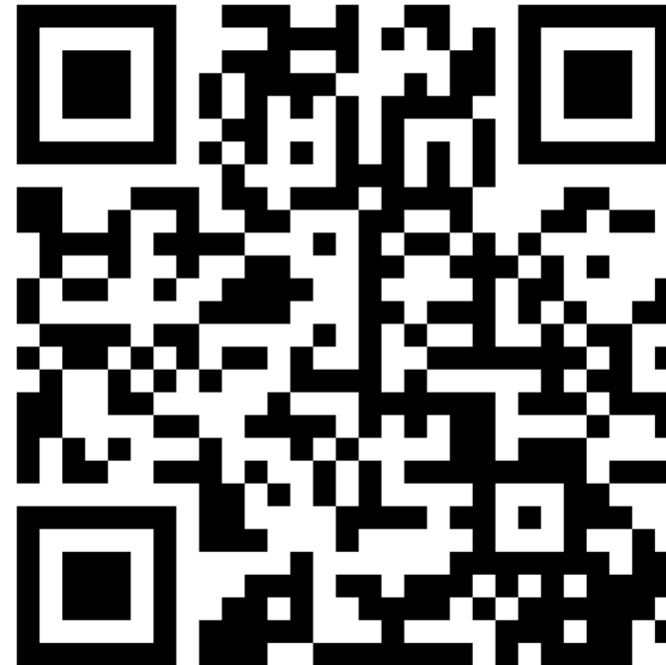
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History & Overview of First-Year Seminars

Dan Friedman, Assistant Vice President of University 101 Programs and the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience at the University of South Carolina

John N. Gardner, Executive Chair and Founder, Gardner Institute

Betsy Barefoot, Senior Scholar and Co-Founder, Gardner Institute

Sara Stein Koch, Institute Fellow and Senior Associate for Institutional Support, Gardner Institute

Intensive on the First Year Seminar

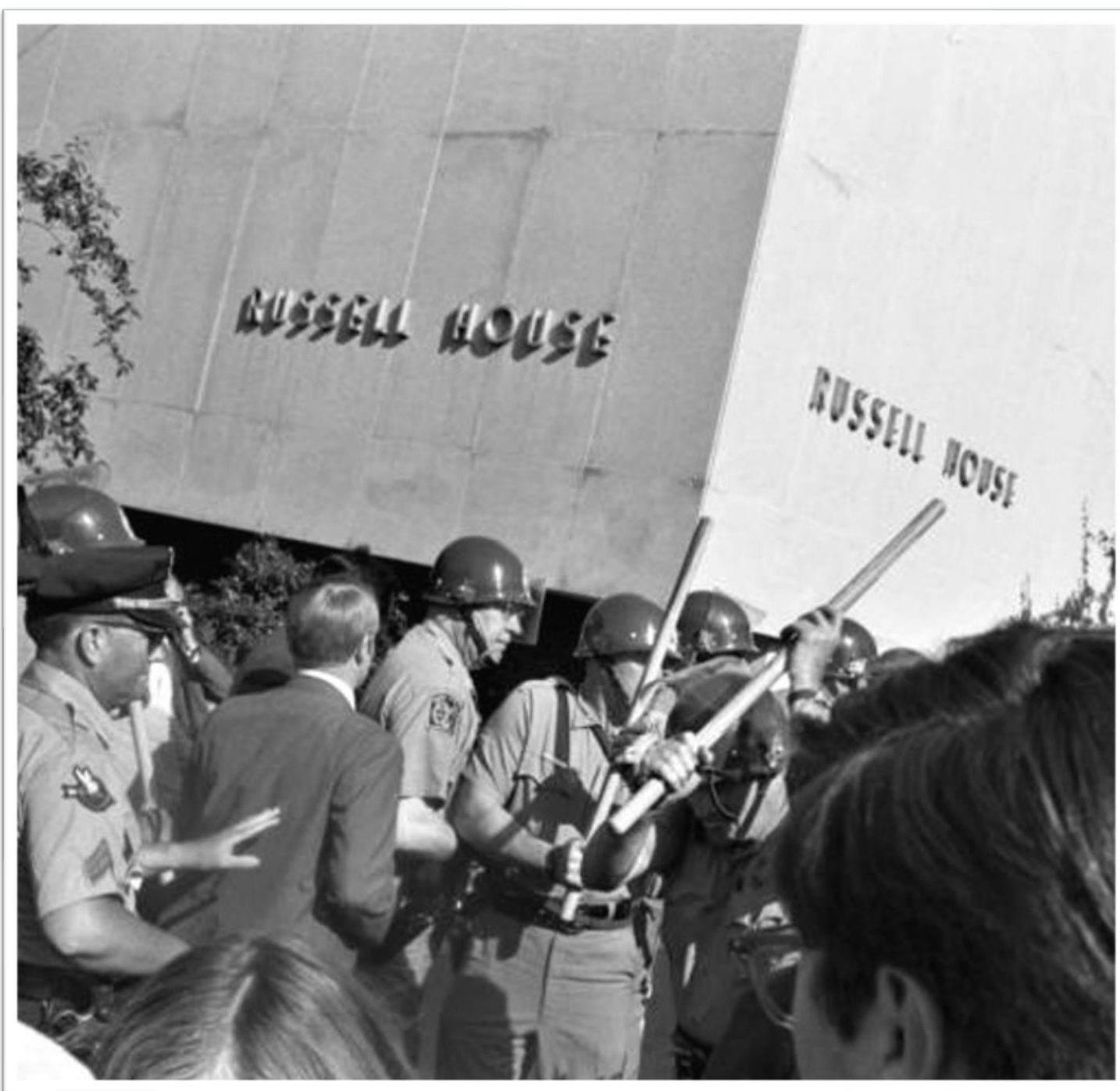
June 6, 2024





TAXI FITNESS NIGHT







University 101 Programs
University of South Carolina



Historical Origins and Founding Premises

“

U101 is for all students. Not just the very bright or not just the disadvantaged.

”



Historical Origins and Founding Premises

“

Desire to make the
university a more humane
place.

”



Historical Origins and Founding Premises

“

Grounded in the human potential movement rather than remediating deficits.

”



Historical Origins and Founding Premises

“

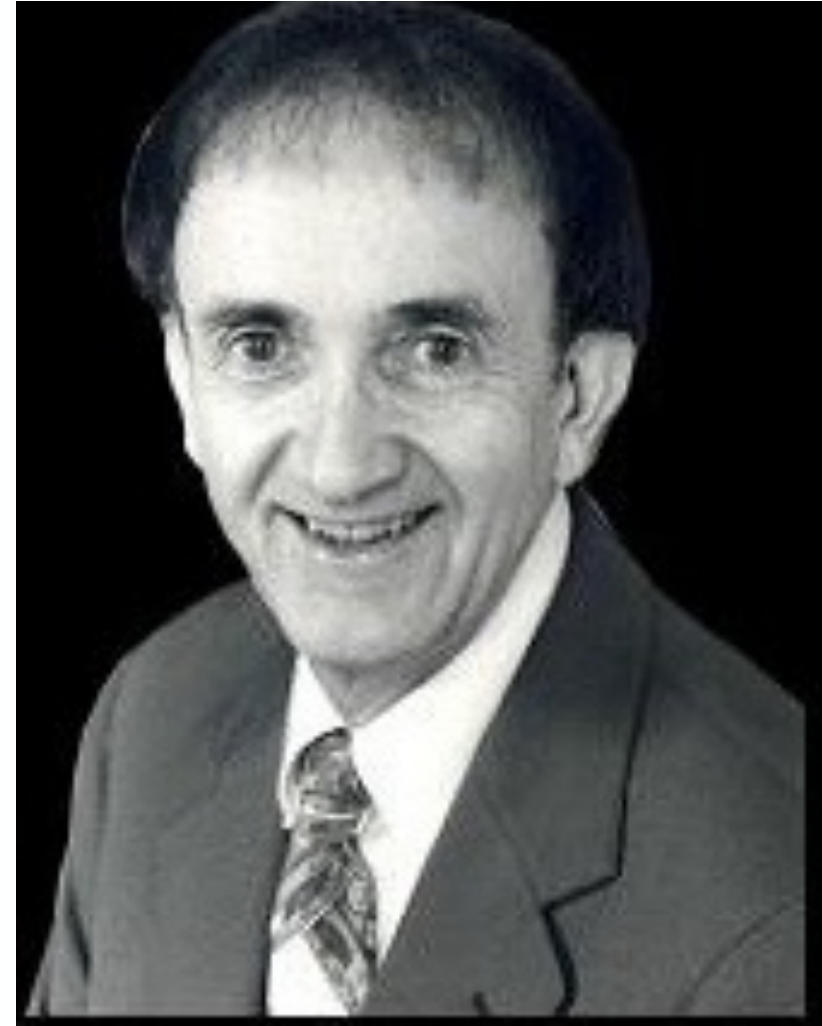
The original intent was to create a dialogue between students and instructor about important aspects of the college experience and to improve the academic orientation of entering students.

”



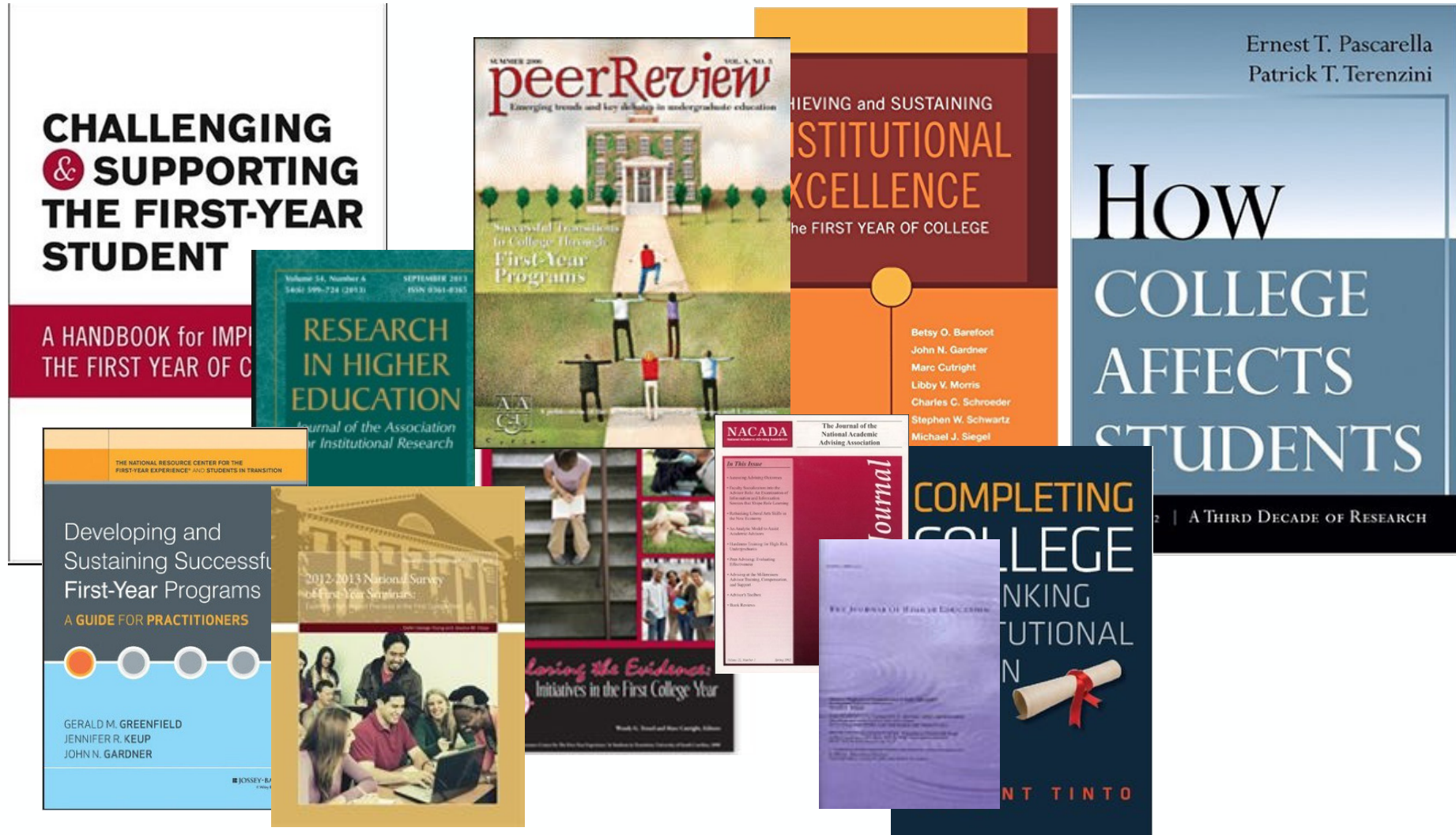
Does it Work?

- Academic achievement – GPA and hours earned
- Persistence to second year
- Utilization of campus resources



Paul Fidler

Body of Research



FYS as a HIP

High-Impact Educational Practices

First-Year Seminars and Experiences

Many schools now build into the curriculum first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies. First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members' own research.

Common Intellectual Experiences

The older idea of a "core" curriculum has evolved into a variety of modern forms, such as a set of required common courses or a vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community (see below). These programs often combine broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curricular and cocurricular options for students.

Learning Communities

The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with "big questions" that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link "liberal arts" and "professional courses"; others feature service learning.

Writing-Intensive Courses

These courses emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines. The effectiveness of this repeated practice "across the curriculum" has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and, on some campuses, ethical inquiry.

Collaborative Assignments and Projects

Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one's own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research.

Undergraduate Research

Many colleges and universities are now providing research experiences for students in all disciplines. Undergraduate research, however, has been most prominently used in science disciplines. With strong support from the National Science Foundation and the research community, scientists are reshaping their courses to connect key concepts and questions with students' early and active involvement in systematic investigation and research. The goal is to involve students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions.

Diversity/Global Learning

Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address U.S. diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore "difficult differences" such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.

Service Learning, Community-Based Learning

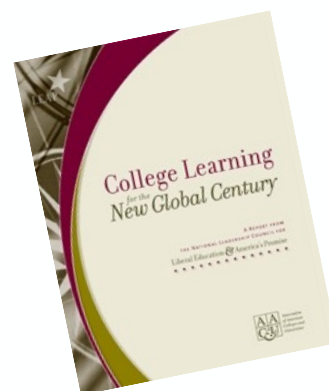
In these programs, field-based "experiential learning" with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both *apply* what they are learning in real-world settings and *reflect* in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life.

Internships

Internships are another increasingly common form of experiential learning. The idea is to provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is taken for course credit, students complete a project or paper that is approved by a faculty member.

Capstone Courses and Projects

Whether they're called "senior capstones" or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of "best work," or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well.



Prevalence

75%

of respondents
reported having
a first-year seminar

Potential Rationales for FYS

- Enhances student persistence
- Increases academic performance and degree attainment
- Assists with academic & social integration
- Encourages & intrusively demands active student involvement in learning
- Helps students transition to new learning environment and community
- Transmits culture and expectations of institution
- Other reasons?

Table Time

- What are the main rationales for the seminar on your campus?
 - Make a list of the top 3-5 reasons for your seminar.

What is a First-Year Seminar?

A course designed to “assist students in their academic and social development and in their transition to college. A seminar, by definition, is a small discussion-based course in which students and their instructors exchange ideas and information. In most cases, there is a strong emphasis on creating community in the classroom” (275-276).

Types of First-Year Seminars

Extended orientation seminars

- Focus on topics to ease the transition to college, develop skills needed for academic success, and encourage student engagement.

Academic theme

- Focus on interdisciplinary themes other than college transition. While college adjustment and study skills may be included, the major focus is exploring a selected topic. May be uniform content across sections or various topics generated by individual faculty.

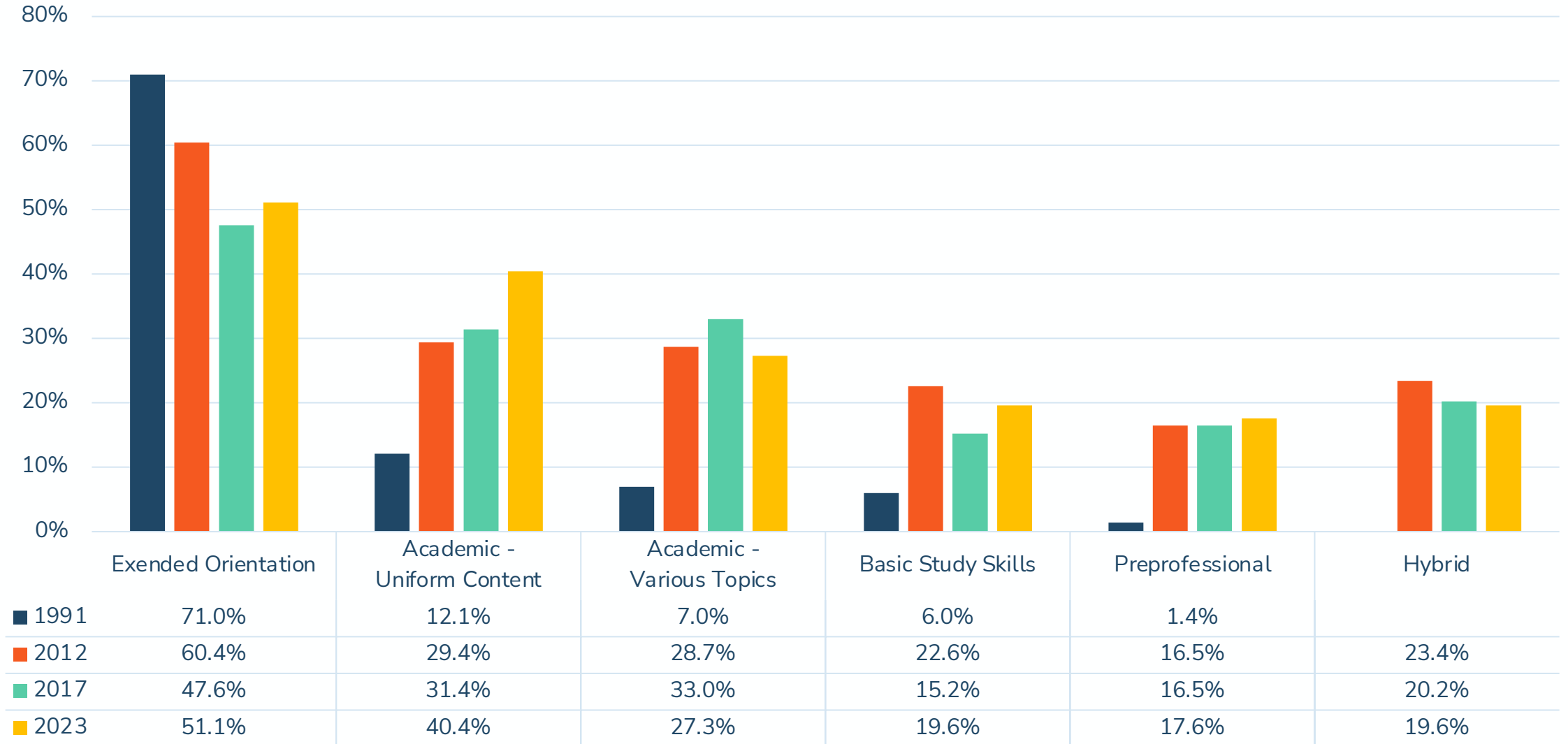
Professional or discipline-based seminars

- Generally administered by academic departments and serve as an introduction to major or discipline.

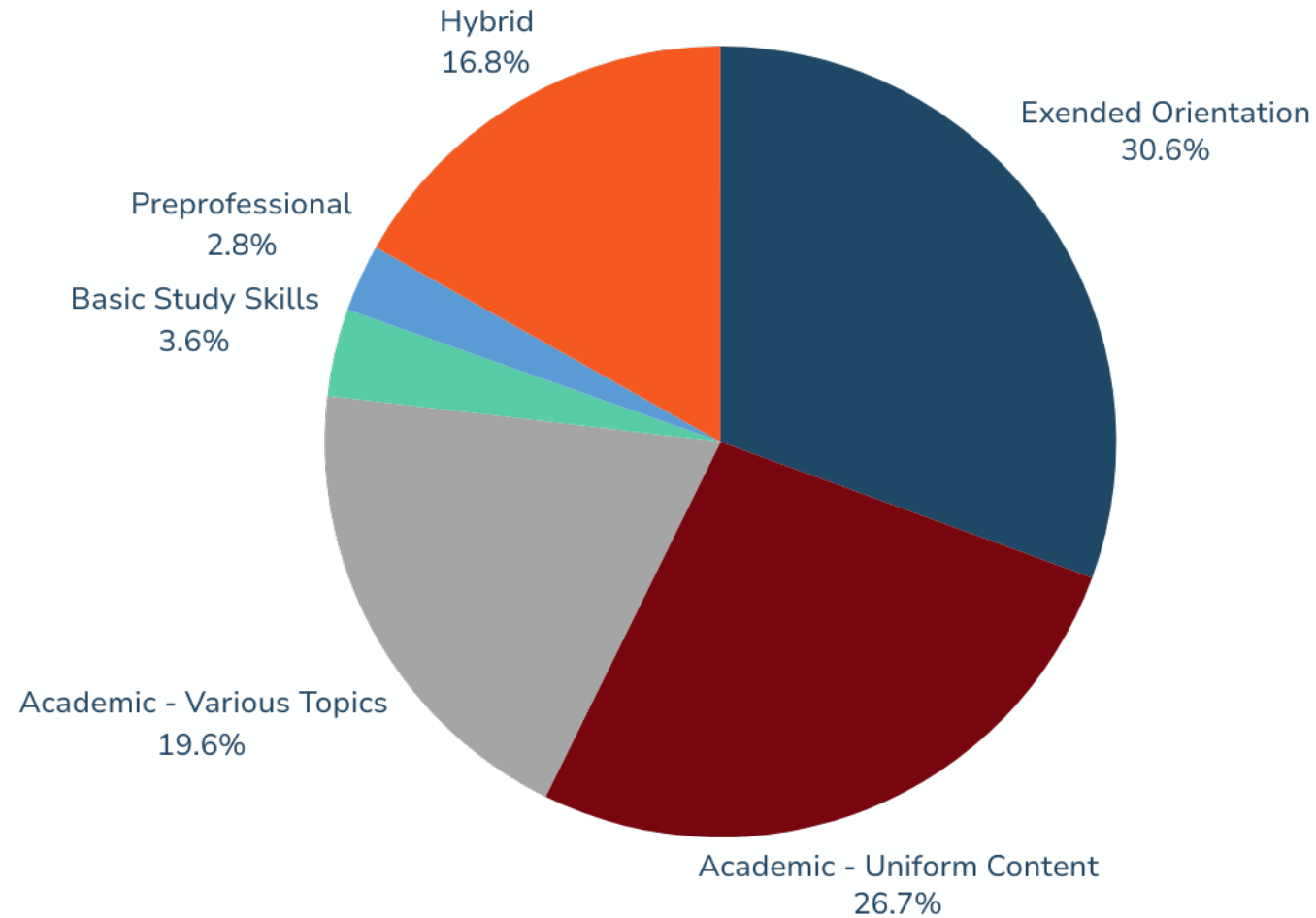
Basic study skills seminars

- Offered to students at high risk of dropping out or having low academic success. Generally focus on study skills and life management skills.

Seminar Type Distribution



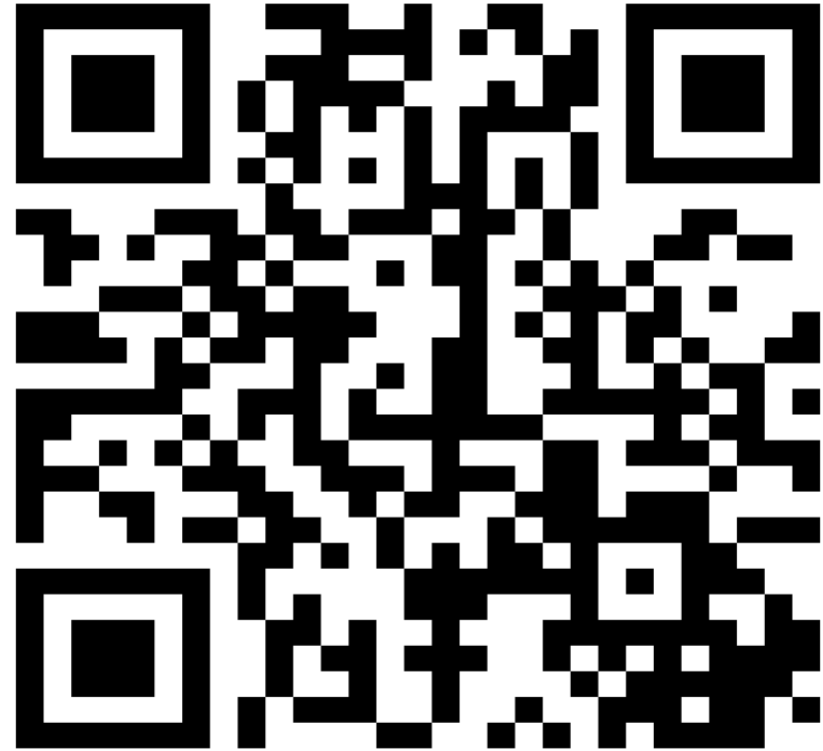
Seminar Type with Highest Student Enrollment



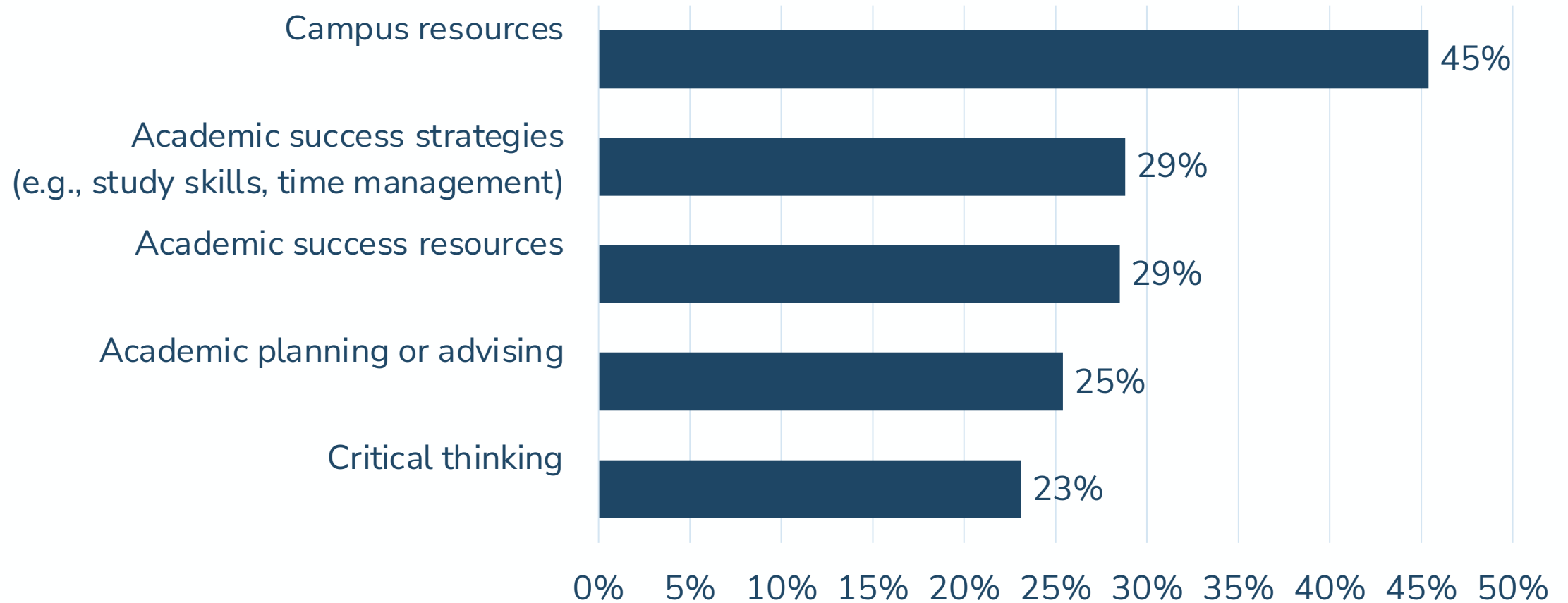
Mentimeter

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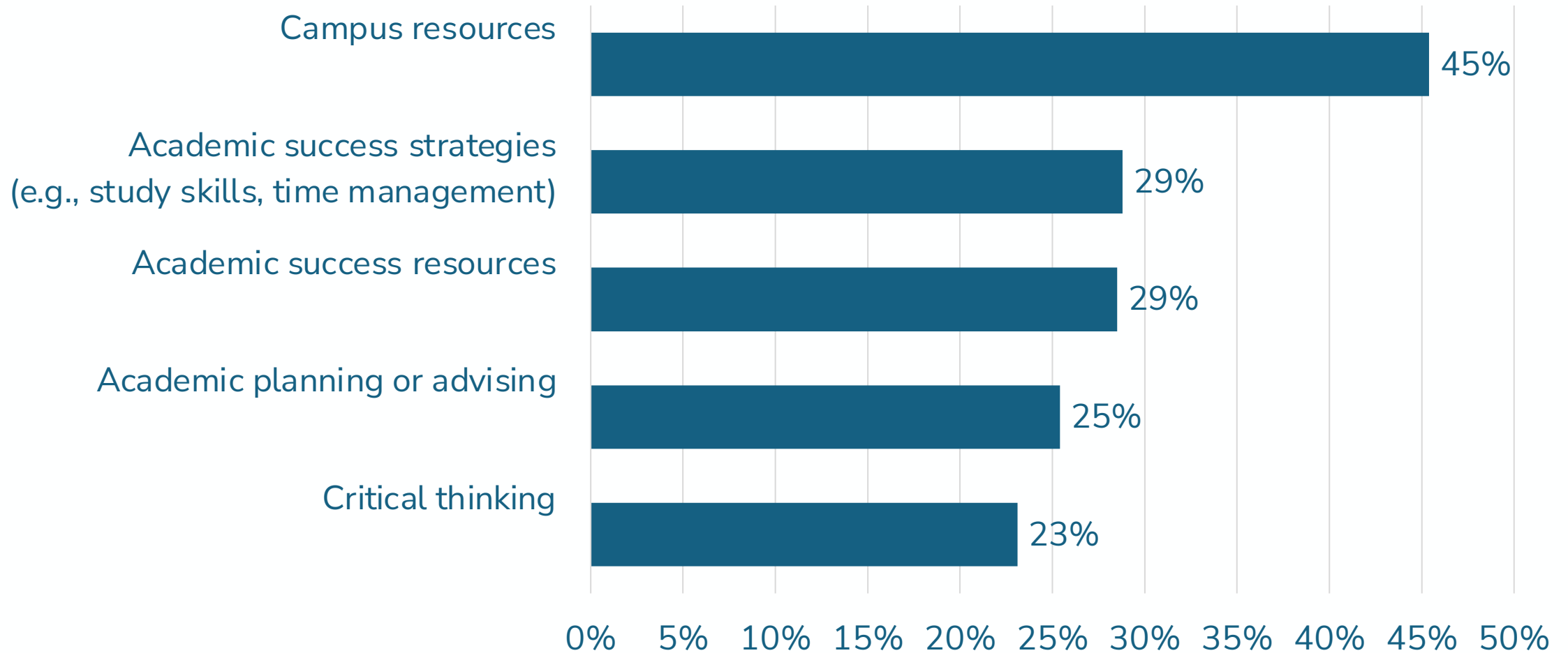
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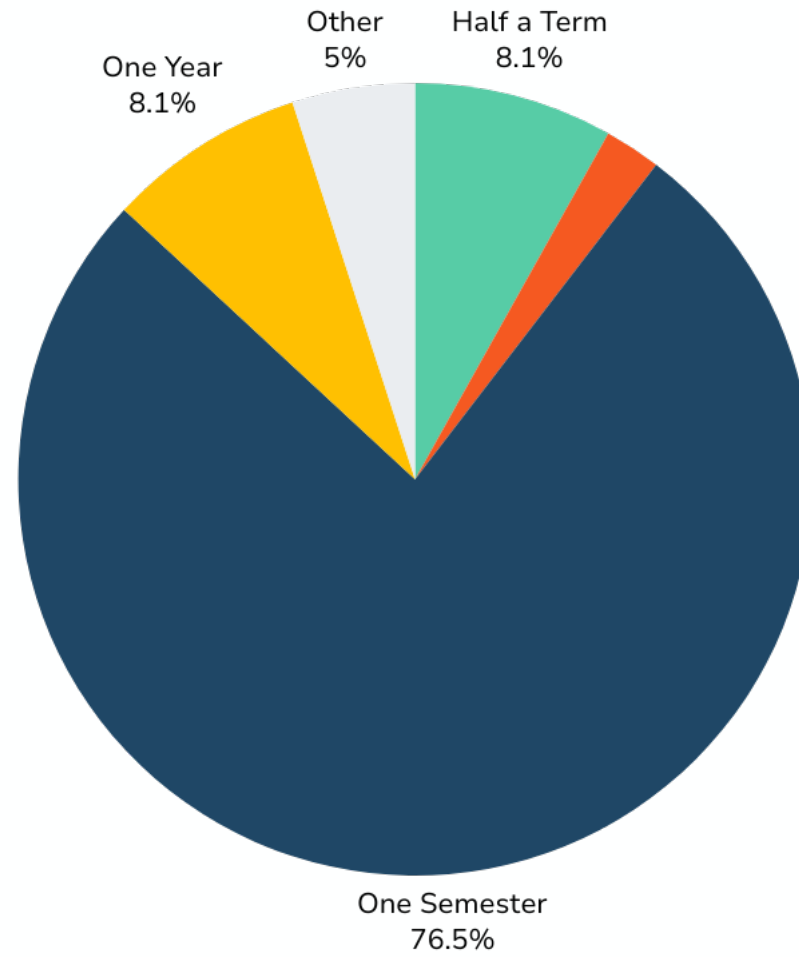
Most Important Course Objectives for First-Year Seminars



Most Important Topics in First-Year Seminars

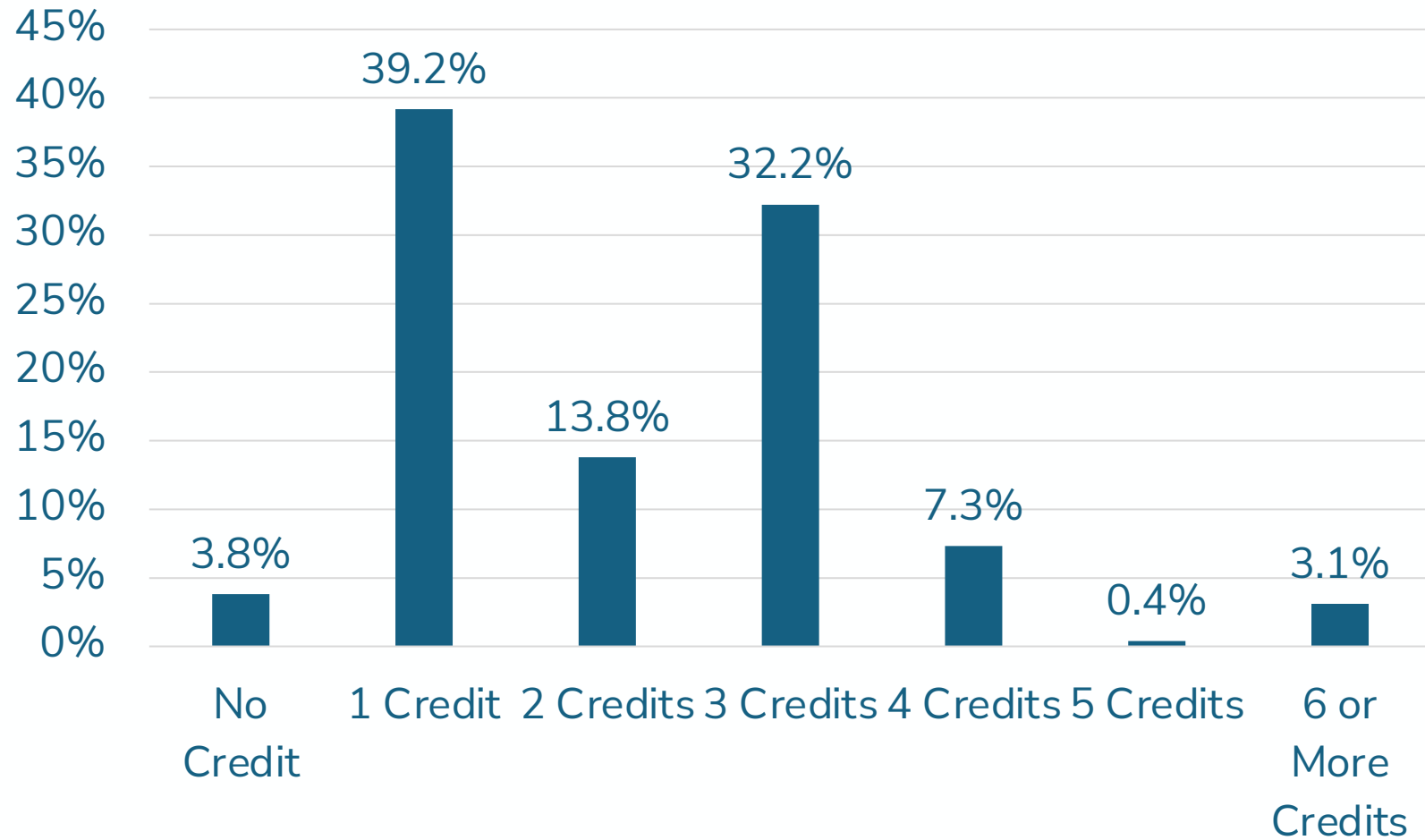


Typical First-Year Seminar Duration

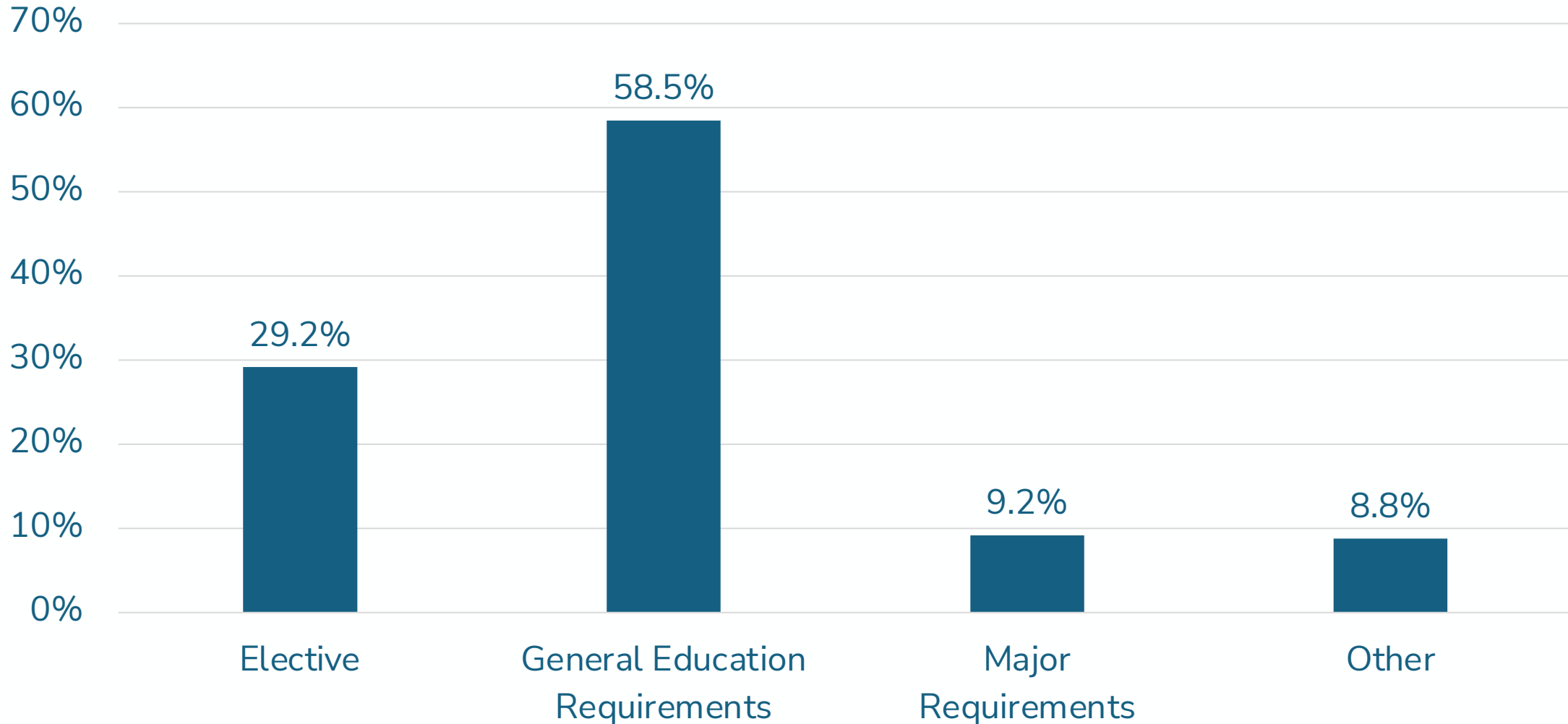


First-Year Seminar Credits

86% are letter-graded

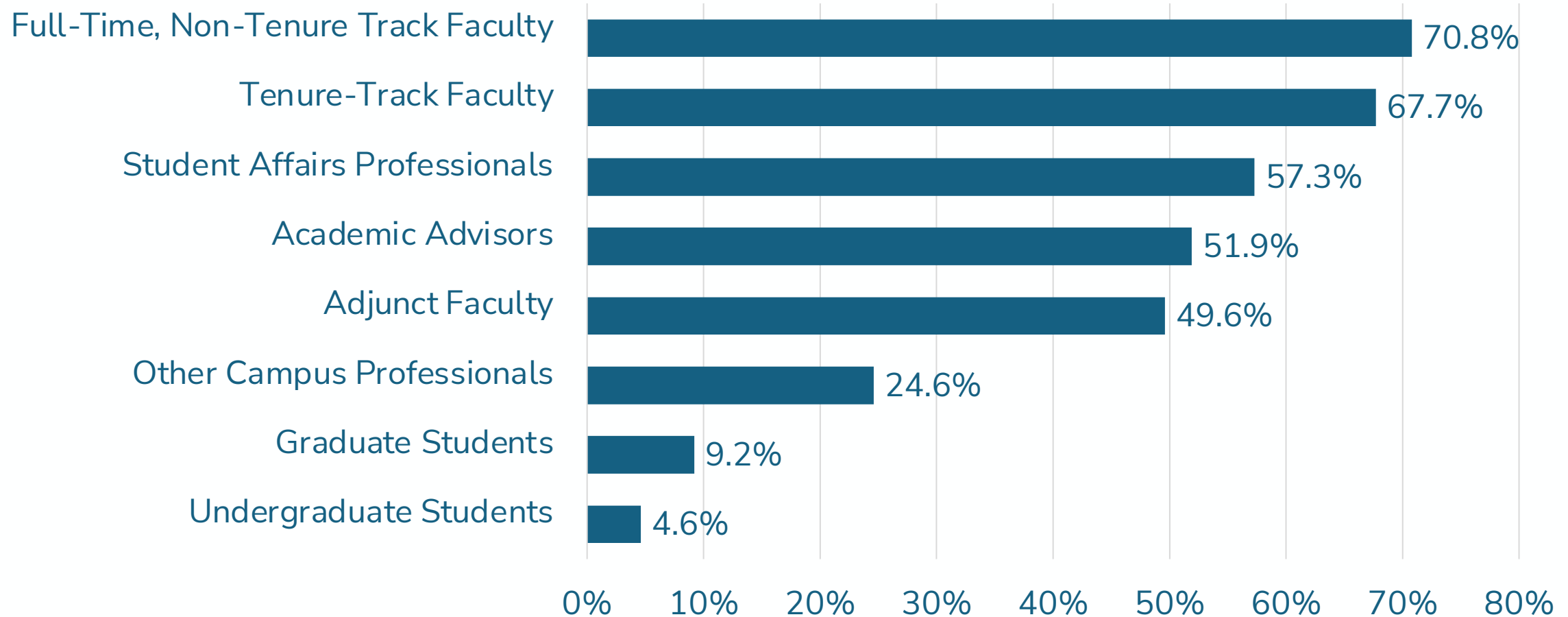


Application of First-Year Seminar Credits



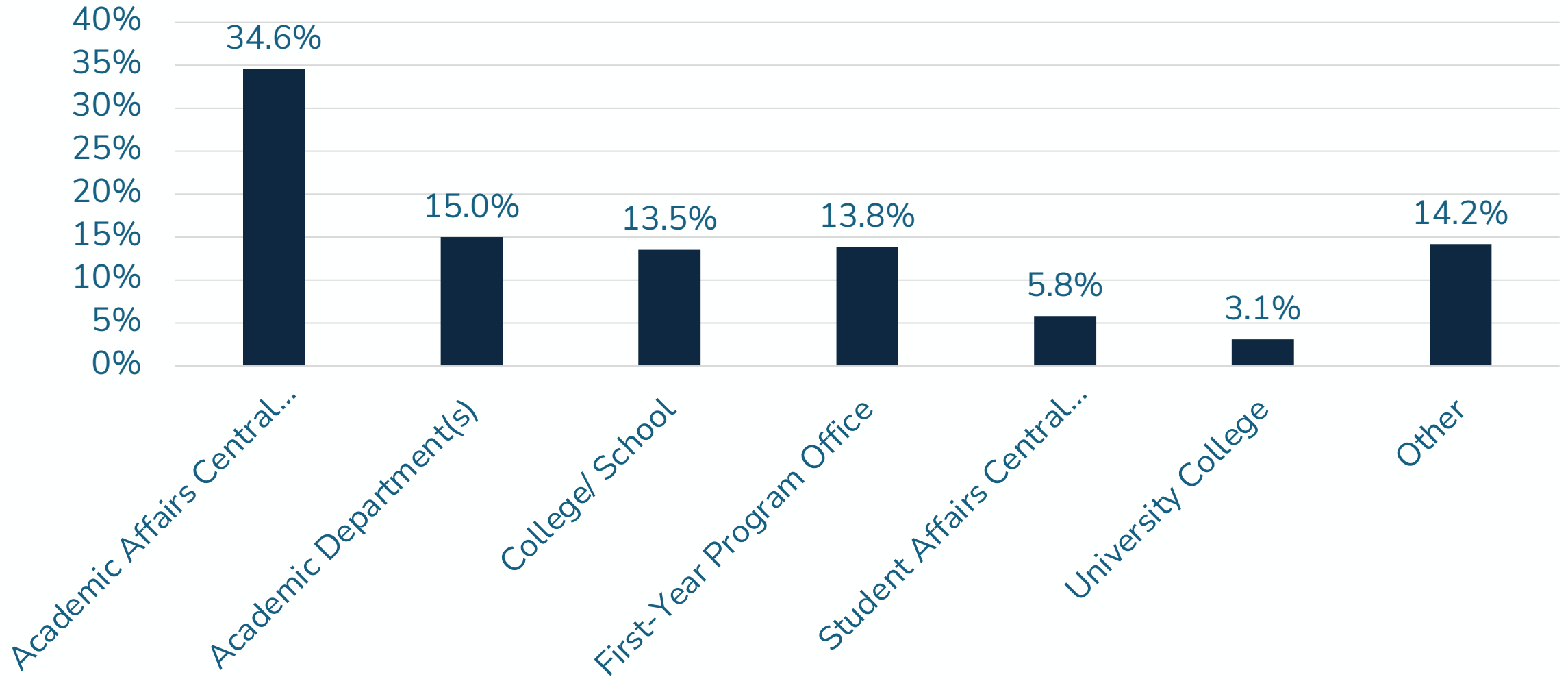
Forthcoming: Johnson, J.D. & Krsmanovic, M. (2025). First-Year Seminars. In Johnson, J.D. (Ed.), 2023 National Survey on the First-Year Experience. National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition, University of South Carolina.

First-Year Seminar Instructors



Forthcoming: Johnson, J.D. & Krsmanovic, M. (2025). First-Year Seminars. In Johnson, J.D. (Ed.), 2023 National Survey on the First-Year Experience. National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience & Students in Transition, University of South Carolina.

First-Year Seminar Administration



Potential Commonalities

- Small class size
- Discussion intensive
- Peer connections
- Faculty-Student interaction
- Early & frequent feedback
- Intentional development of community
- Reflects & supports institutional mission and goals

What is Most Effective?

- According to results from the First-Year Initiative Study (2002), college transition theme seminars perform best overall across ten learning outcomes.
- Seminars with more contact hours generate greater learning outcomes than fewer contact hours.
 - Vaughan, A. L., Pergantis, S. I., & Moore, S. M. (2019). Assessing the difference between 1-, 2-, and 3-credit first-year seminars on college student achievement. *Journal of the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition*, 31(2), 9-28.
- Seminars utilizing undergraduate teaching assistants produce greater learning outcomes except in the areas of critical thinking and academic skills.
- Evidence suggests that elective (voluntary) courses produce greater learning outcomes, even when statistical controls are applied for student demographics and course characteristics.

Swing, R. (2002, September 27). Essay Four What type of seminar is best?

9 Characteristics of Successful Seminars



Final Reflections

- How many of the 9 characteristics apply to your seminar?
- To what extent are your current or planned structures aligned with achieving the previously stated rationales for your seminar?
- What changes might be needed to optimize the success of your seminar?



Ensuring the Relevance & Excellence of the First-Year Seminar

Dan Friedman, Assistant Vice President of University 101 Programs and the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience at the University of South Carolina

Betsy Barefoot, Senior Scholar and Co-Founder, Gardner Institute

Kimberly Koledoye, Professor and Program Coordinator
Houston Community College

Intensive on the First Year Seminar

June 6, 2024



The Prescription



R_x

PATIENT NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Prescription:

Relevance
(doing the right things)

Excellence
(doing things right)

Date _____ Signature _____

A black pen with gold accents is positioned diagonally across the bottom right of the form.

Words of Wisdom

Components need to be purposeful and integrated. Don't try to do everything. Focus on a few things that matter, and do those well.

Family Attic Syndrome



Could v.
SHOULD

Words of Wisdom

Design your first-year seminar for the students you have, not the students you think you have or those you desire.

60-60 / 30-30

1. How would you describe students on your campus?
2. What do they need the most help in their first-semester?



Call for Volunteers





FAMILY FEUD FAMILY FEUD FAMILY FEUD FAMILY FEUD FAMILY FEUD FAMILY FEUD FAMILY FEUD



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FAMILY FEUD

Top Challenges that First- Year Students Face

Managing time

Academics

Responsibility for self

Finances

Wellness issues

Making friends/fitting in



BACK

What makes
First-Year Seminars
Effective?

9 Characteristics of Successful Seminars



Supporting First-Year Students

Give students the information & support they need....

when they need it

and when they are ready to receive it.



Elements of a Successful Seminar

Faculty Development

Assessment

Peer Leaders

Campus Wide
Involvement & Support



Basic Principles



1.

Community should be established early to promote a sense of belonging and to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.

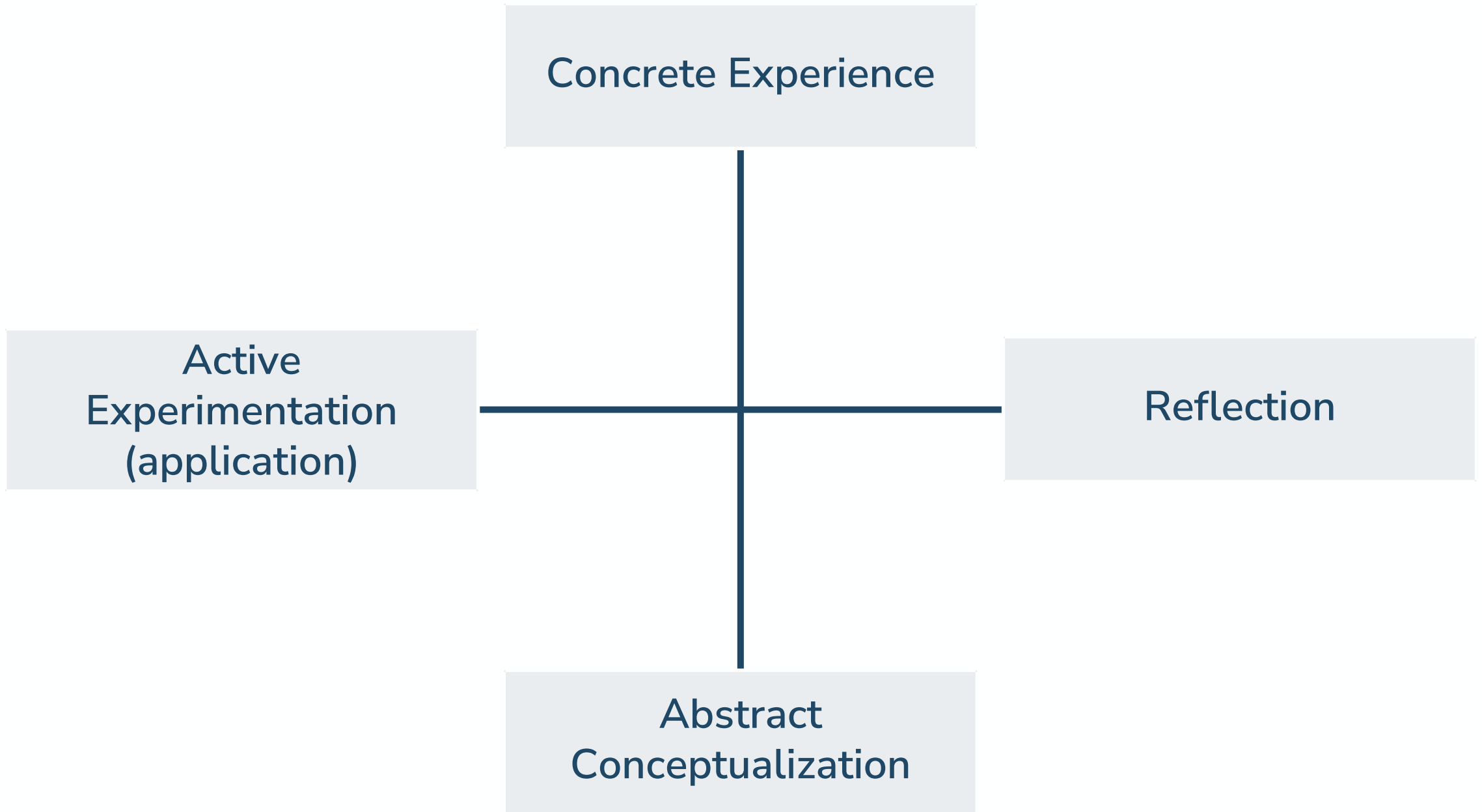
2.

The focus of this class is having students reflect on and process course content and their experiences, rather than simply distribute information.





Information
Distribution





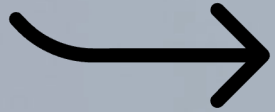
3.

Course content should be tailored to the needs of the students in each section.

4.

University 101 should be an active, engaging and enjoyable learning experience.

FUN



LEARNING





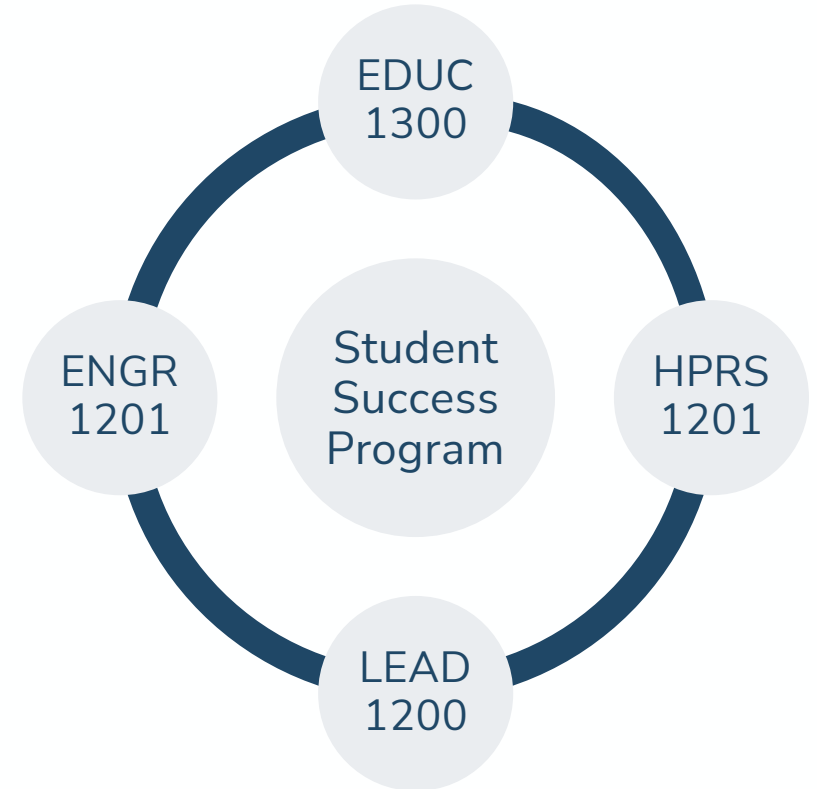
Houston Community College System

- 85,858 Students
- 38% Hispanic, 14% White, 25% African-American, 11% Asian, 4% international, and 8% Other
- 6 Regional Colleges, 14 Centers of Excellence, & 19 Campuses
- 26% HCC students receive Pell Grants



Student Success Course Offerings 2010

- ~~GUST 1270~~ College and Career Planning
- ~~EDUC 1200~~ Careers in Education
- EDUC 1300 Learning Framework
- ENGR 1201 Introduction to Engineering
- LEAD 1200 Workforce Development/Critical Thinking
- HPRS 1201 Introduction to the Health Professions



Academic Student Success Program

Behavioral & Social Science Division

EDUC 1300 Learning Framework

3 Credits

Core Curriculum Elective

13,123 Students

Sections: 547

- 20 Full- time faculty members
- 70-100 adjunct faculty members

University 101



3 credit hour

Extended orientation seminar

Full semester...1st semester

Graded

Fall 2023

Enrollment

6115

Class Size

19

Section Types

24

Sections Offered

327

Extended Orientation: Give students the information and support they need...when they need it...and when they are ready to receive it.

Recognition and Contribution to the Field



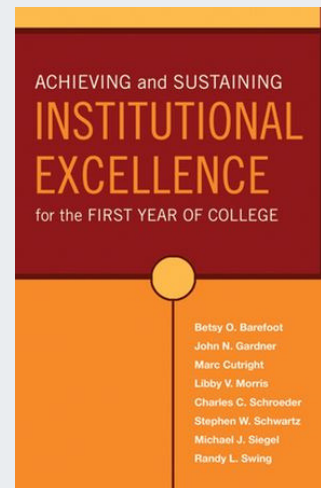
UofSC is recognized as the #1 university in the nation for our first-year student experience/University 101 course.

GOLD EXCELLENCE AWARD

Awarded by NASPA (Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education)

Faculty
Development
Program
(2011)

Peer Leader
Program
(2018)



The University of South Carolina was one of 13 colleges and universities to be named an Institution of Excellence in the First College Year by the Policy Center on the First Year of College.

Learning Outcomes

Foster Academic Success

- Academic skills
- Managing time & priorities
- Academic policies, advising, & resources



Discover & Connect with USC

- Relationships with peers, faculty, & staff
- Opportunities & resources
- History & traditions

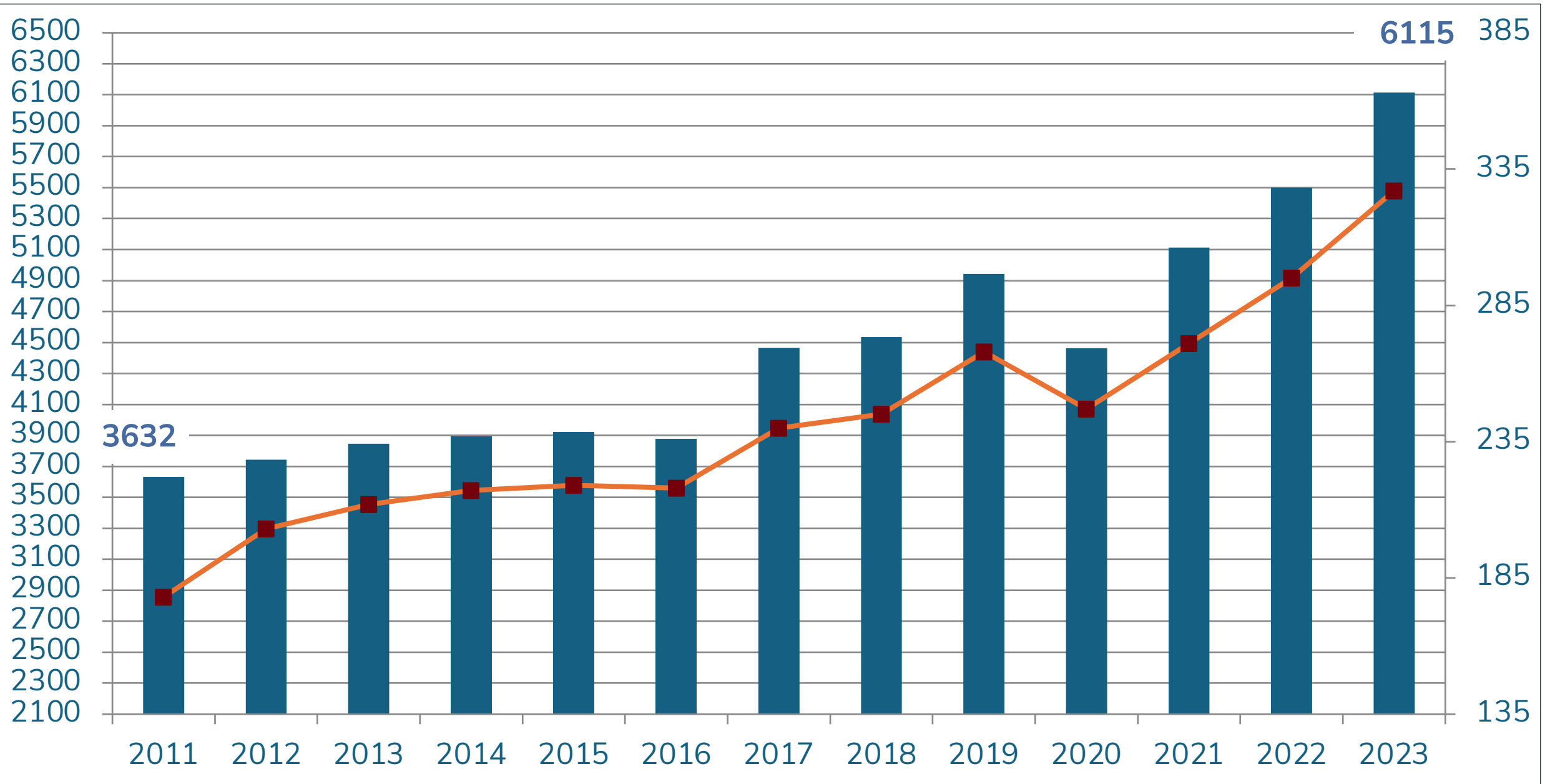


Promote Personal Development, Well-being, & Social Responsibility

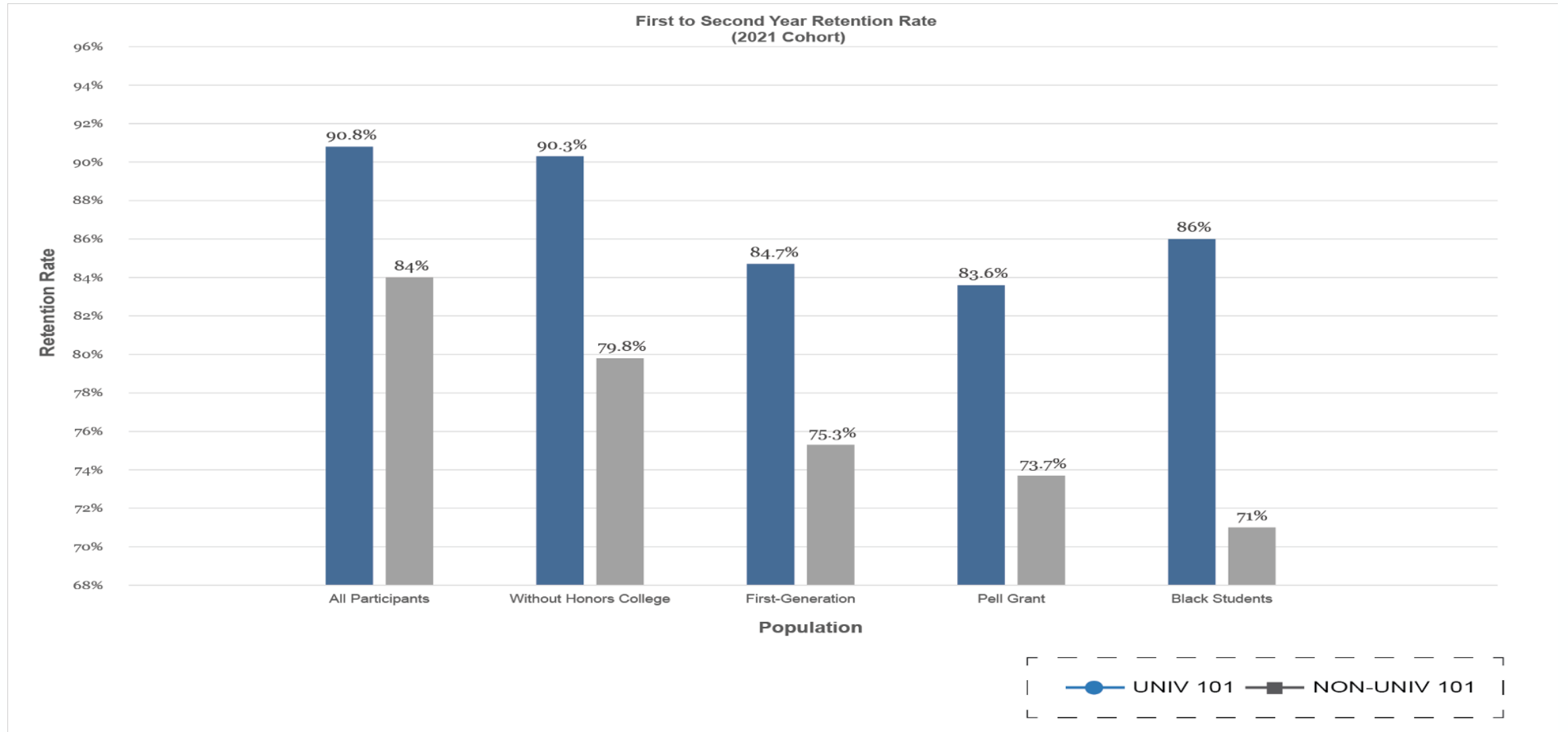
- Values & identity
- Carolinian Creed
- Well-being
- Employability



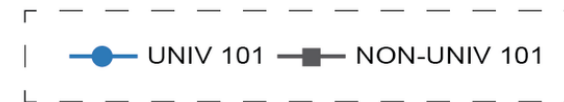
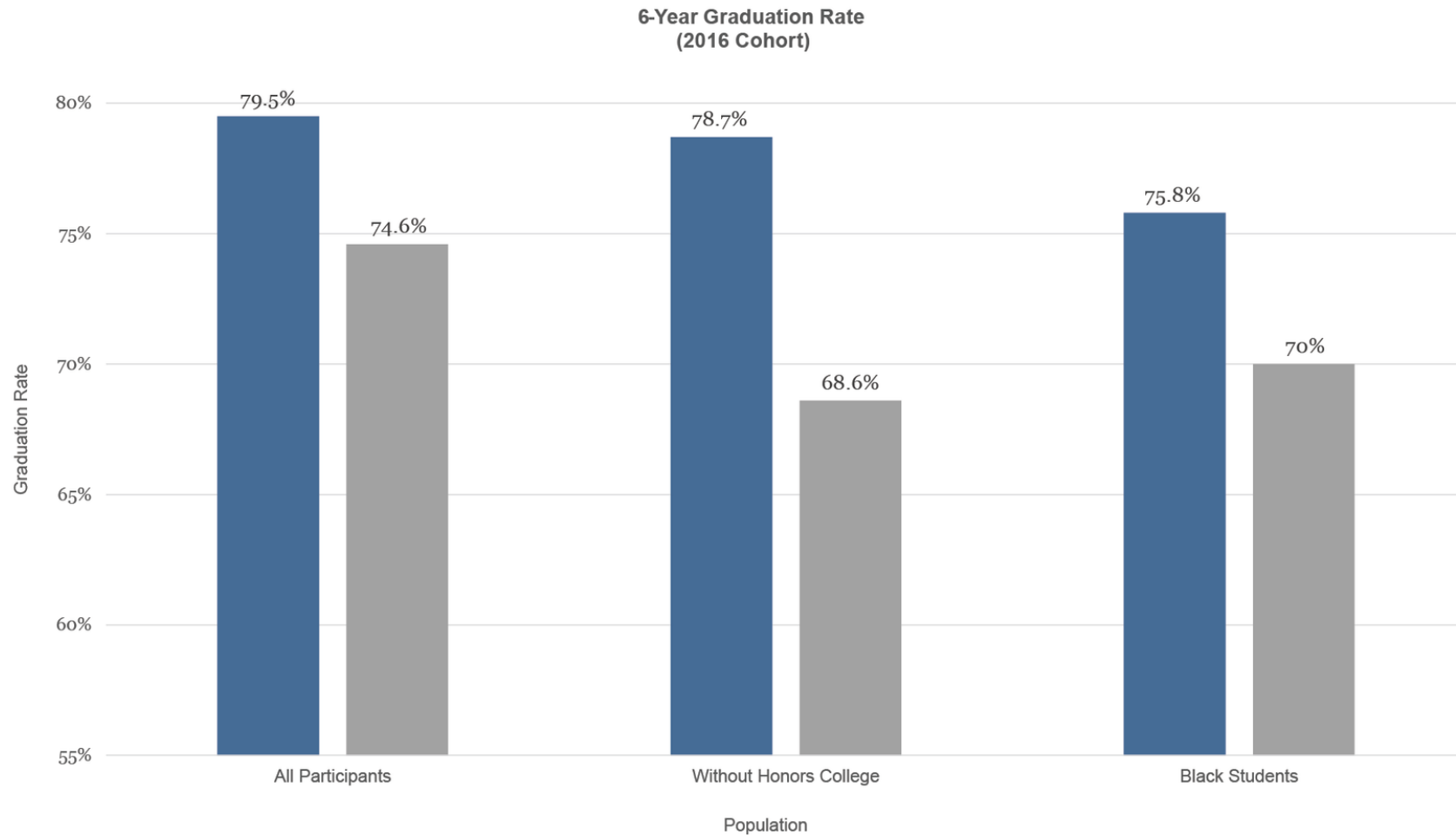
UNIV 101 Enrollment Trends – Fall Semester



First to Second Year Retention (2021 Cohort)

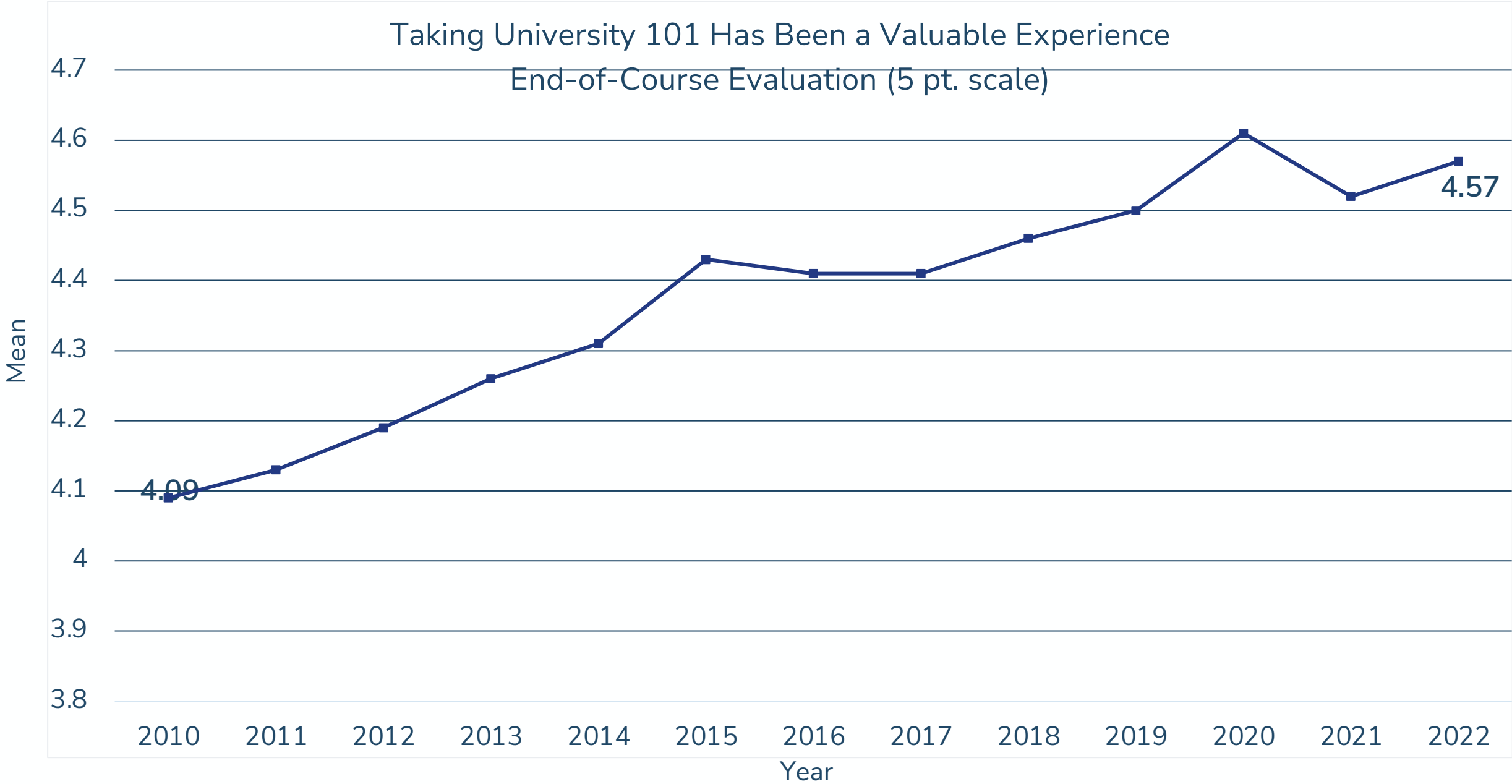


Six-Year Graduation Rate (2016 Cohort)



Student Perceptions of UNIV 101

Taking University 101 Has Been a Valuable Experience
End-of-Course Evaluation (5 pt. scale)



What Makes a First-Year Seminar Work?

3 reasons

Reason One

What predicts Overall Course Effectiveness?

Reason One – Engaging Pedagogy

- A variety of teaching methods
- Meaningful discussion
- Encouragement for students to speak in class and work together
- Productive use of class time
- Meaningful homework & challenging assignments

Reason Two – Informal Early Alert



Reason Three

What factors predict persistence?

- Used FYI data set & included variables from student data file (persistence and GPA)
 - 2,014 responses (72% response rate)
- A series of logistic regressions were conducted
 - Controlled for gender, race, and high school grades

#1 Predictor = Sense of Belonging

Community Building

Safe discussion

Sense of belonging

Learning

Persistence



Words of Wisdom

Consistency is nice, but quality is better. Don't sacrifice the latter for the former.

Words of Wisdom

The course is only as good as the person teaching it. Invest heavily in faculty development.

Words of Wisdom

Seminar instructors should be selected based on their qualification, not their classification.

First Year Seminar

FACT

CRAP

FACT

or

CRAP

Student Affairs professionals had higher ratings on overall course effectiveness than other instructors.

CRAP

No statistically significant differences were found on any of the fifteen FYI factors or course evaluation factors for Division of Student Affairs employees versus non-division employees.

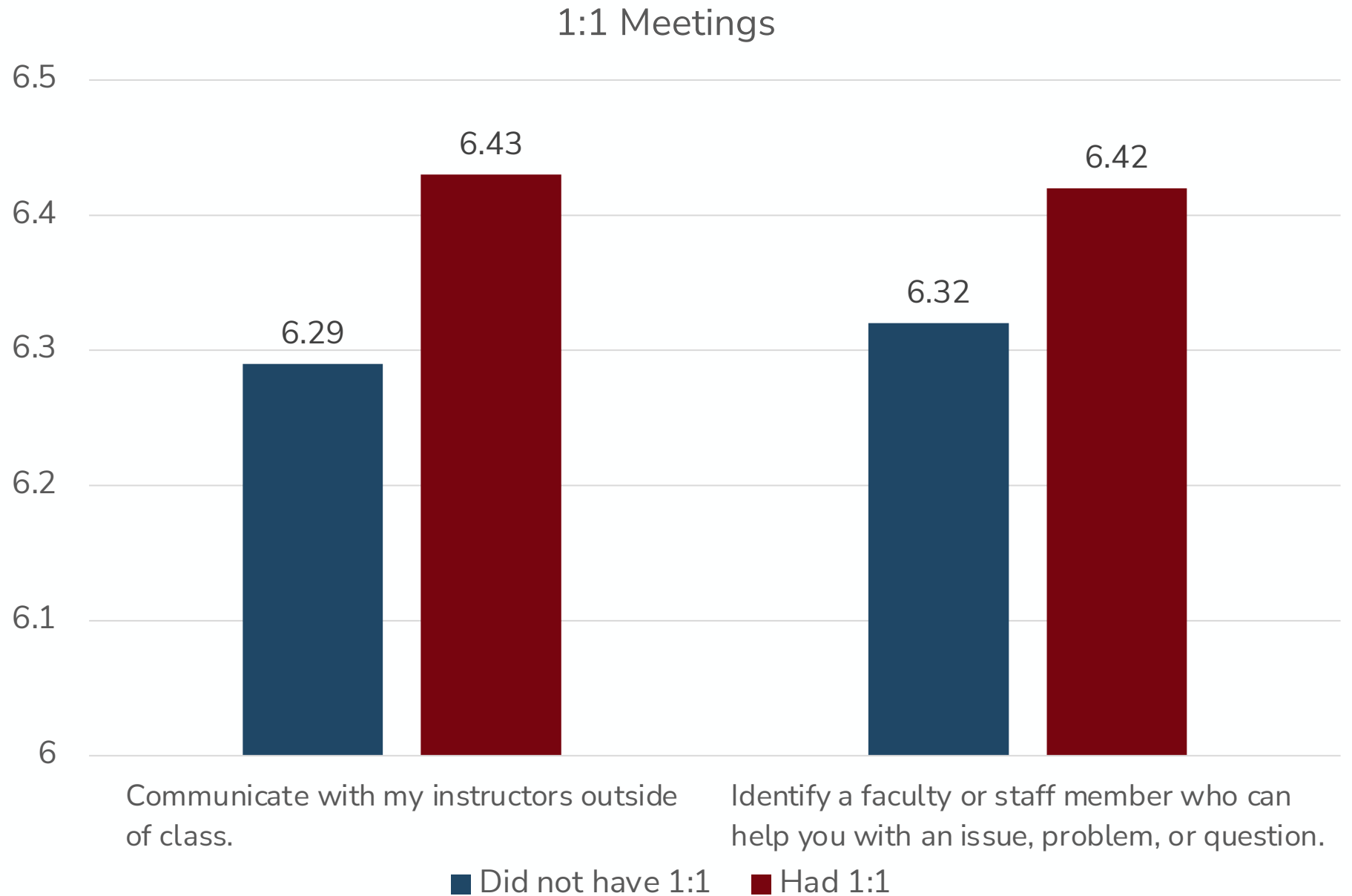
FACT

or

CRAP

Students who had a 1:1 with their instructor reported significantly higher means on the Instructor Effectiveness factor.

FACT



*All comparisons are statistically significant

FACT

or

CRAP

More frequent check-ins with the class (e.g. high or low) was associated with higher satisfaction with the course.

FACT

Frequency of Class Check-Ins

	Rarely or Never	Occasionally	Frequently
Taking University 101 has been a valuable experience.	3.62	4.28	4.56
Establish friendships with peers.	5.36	6.14	6.54

FACT

or

CRAP

U101 seems to contribute positively to students' mental health

FACT

		% Agree
University 101 helped me recognize <u>I am not alone</u> in my experiences, feelings, and challenges.	4.58	92.2%
In this class, I was able to <u>speak openly and honestly</u> about my mental health.	4.45	86.6%
University 101 has helped me better understand the <u>mental health resources</u> available to me.	4.56	91.8%
After taking University 101, I am more likely to <u>seek help</u> for my mental health needs.	4.39	83.0%



Recruitment, Selection, and Development of Instructors

Kimberly Koledoye, Professor and Program Coordinator
Houston Community College

Dan Friedman, Assistant Vice President of University 101
Programs and the National Resource Center for the First-
Year Experience at the University of South Carolina

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Who is uniquely qualified to teach each specific course type?

(round table discussion)

- Extended orientation
- Academic with variable content
- Academic with uniform content
- Pre-professional/discipline linked
- Basic study skills
- Hybrid or combination of types

Other considerations

- Workload
- Student population
- Teaching experience



Historically Who Teaches the Course?

- Adjunct Faculty
- Full-time Faculty (None Tenure Track)
- Full-time Faculty (Tenure Track)
- Student Affairs Professionals
- Academic Advisors

Preferred Characteristics of FYS Faculty

- Student-centered educational philosophy
- Demonstrated excellence in teaching first-year students and courses
- Prior experience with teaching the first-year seminar (student-success course) and/or first-year experience initiatives
- Use of engaging pedagogy that involves students in the learning process
- Use of pedagogy that socially integrates with their classmates (e.g., small-group work/collaborative learning) and connects students with peer leaders/mentors
- Capable of relating to and developing classroom rapport with students
- Genuine interest in advising and mentoring new students.
- Evidence of commitment to out-of-class contact with students

Recruitment and Retention

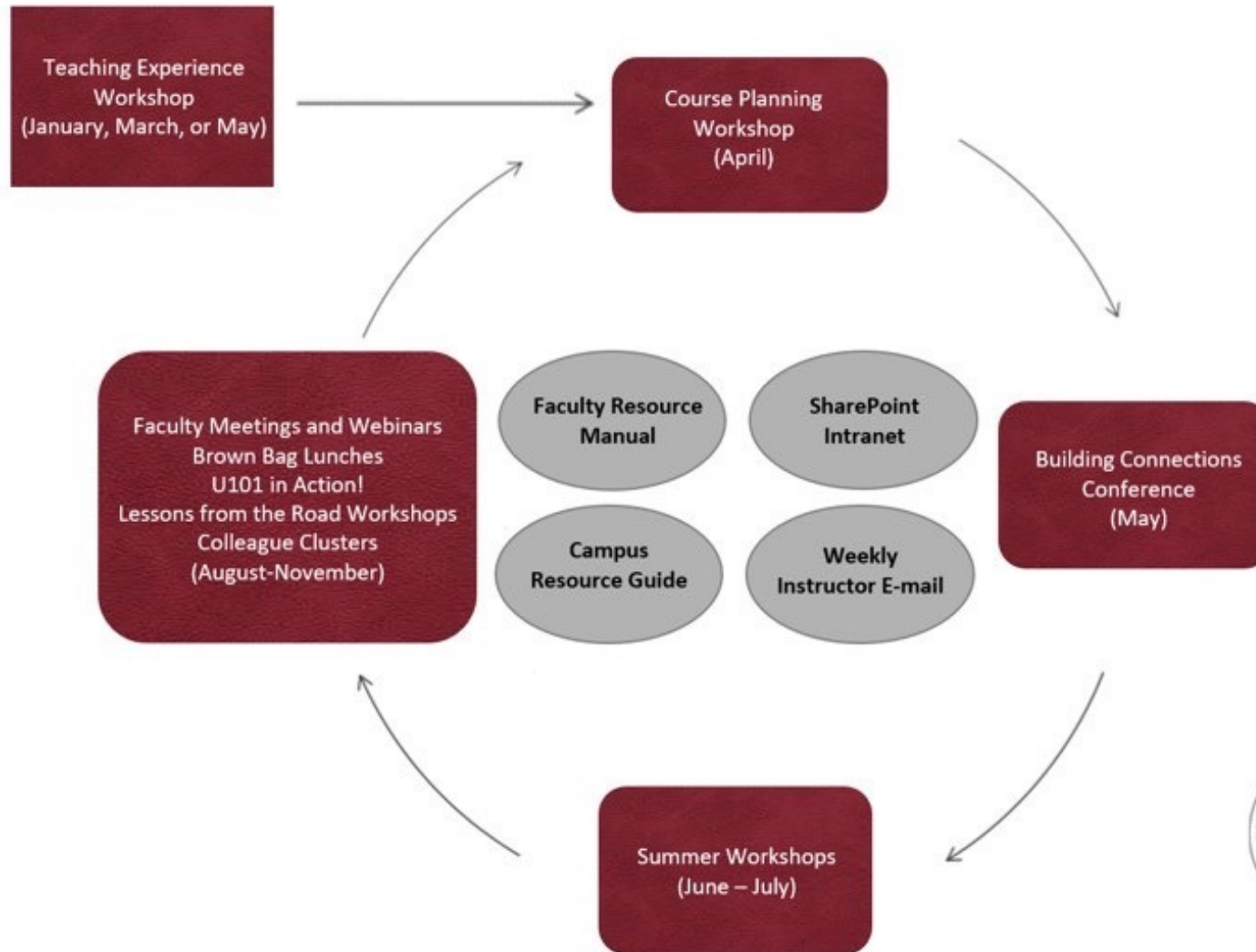
Do academic faculty indicate a more academically rigorous experience (Poll)?

Recruitment & Retention Strategies

- Compensate instructors
- Solicit Buy-in from department chairs and administrators
- Create or define an administrative structure
- Find ways to reduce the time commitment
- Show appreciation
- Appeal to intrinsic motivating factors
 - Cutting edge teaching techniques
 - Ability to form stronger bonds with students
 - Build a community of practice

Development of Faculty

Faculty Development at USC



Reasons to Provide Training for FYS Instructors

Strategy
transfer

17%
student
increase

Technology
Support

Learning
shifts

Points to Consider

Diverse curriculum demands

Diverse faculty

Ongoing professional development





Peer Leaders in a First-Year Seminar

Dan Friedman, Assistant Vice President of University 101 Programs and the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience at the University of South Carolina

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The What and Why

Research about peers has found that students can have significant positive impacts on the development and learning of their peers and that peer groups are the primary forces influencing college student development.

(Astin, 1993; Chickering, 1969; Ender & Kay, 2001; Hazen Foundation, 1968; Latino & Ashcraft, 2012; Terenzini et al., 1996).

Quick Snapshot

Peer Leaders are undergraduate students who are selected and trained to co-teach alongside an instructor.

Aid in the successful transition of new students by connecting them with upper-division students.

Peer Leaders serve as mentors/role models, resources, and facilitators for learning.



Peer Leader Role

Mentor and Role
Model

Resource

Facilitator for
Learning

Training & Support

Application & Interview Process



Spring Orientation



Course Planning Workshop



Fall Training



PL Seminar



Peer Leader Program

Impact of Peer Leaders on First-Year Students

98%

of UNIV 101 students agreed their peer/graduate leader made important contributions to their class.

98%

of UNIV 101 students agreed their peer/graduate leader was an appropriate role model.

97%

of UNIV 101 students agreed their peer/graduate leader was a valuable resource.

Impact of Peer Leadership on Peer Leaders

After serving as a University 101 Peer Leader, students reported the experience improved their:

Mean (measured on a 5-point scale)

% Agree

Interpersonal communication skills

4.89

99%

Facilitation skills

4.88

99%

Helping skills

4.82

98%

Leadership skills

4.88

99%

Self-awareness/understanding

4.82

98%

Blue Ridge Ballroom

Tables: 2, 3&4, 7, 8, 10, 14, 16, 17, 21

French Broad 1 & 2

Tables: 1, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12

French Broad 3

Tables: 13, 15, 18, 19, 20