

Research, Trends, and Issues...Oh My! What We Know About Institutional Practices and Priorities for the First-Year Experience

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www.sc.edu/fye

Session Outline

- Definitions and background
- 2017 National Survey of The First-Year Experience
- National trends and issues for the first-year experience
- National trends and issues for first-year seminars
- Reflection and takeaways

Qualifications



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Section 1:

DEFINITION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE (FYE)

WHAT? A Working Definition of FYE



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WHAT? A Working Definition of FYE



“The first-year experience is not a single program or initiative, but rather an intentional combination of academic and co-curricular efforts within and across postsecondary institutions.”

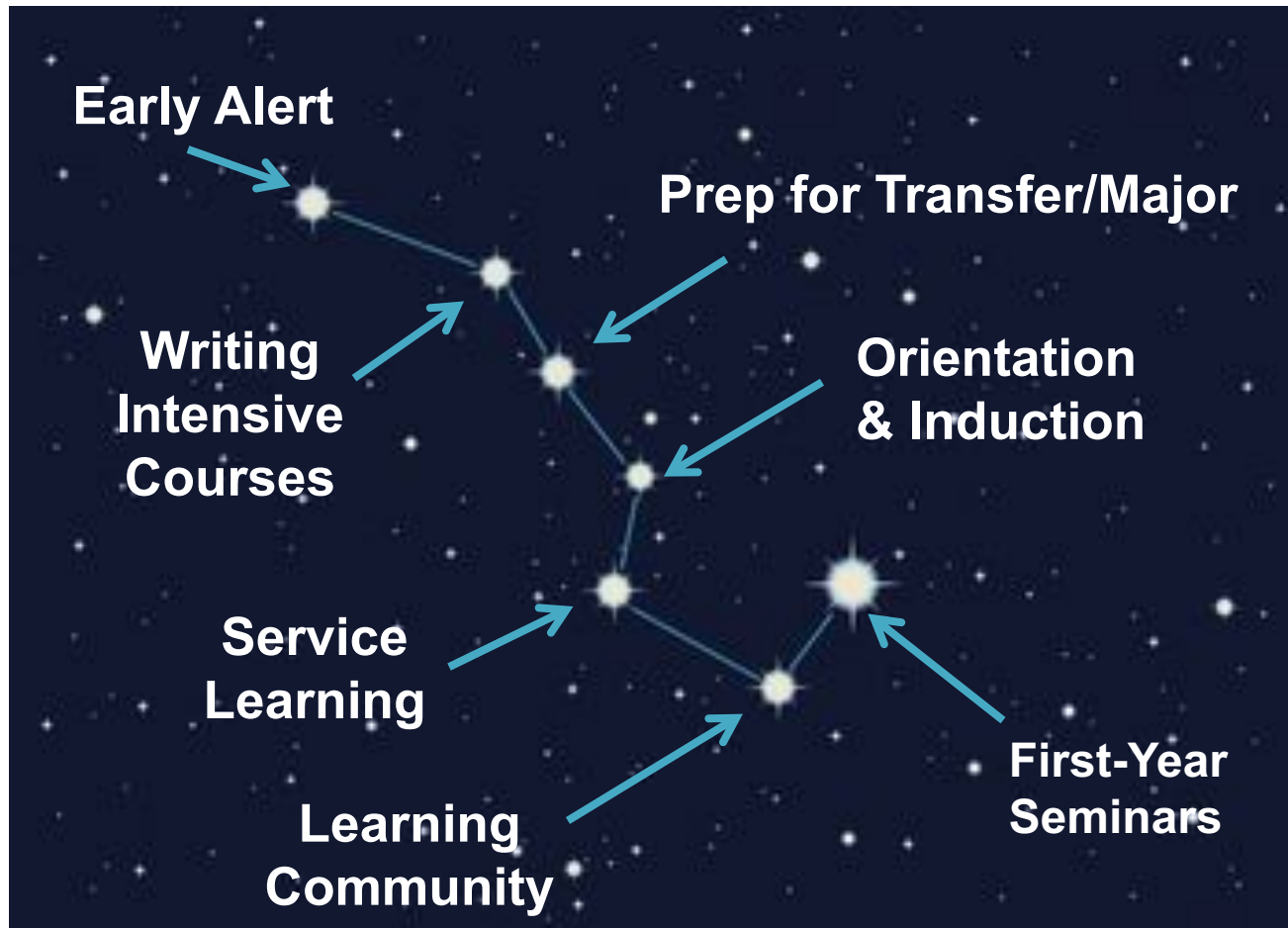
(Koch & Gardner, 2006)



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FYE: A Constellation of Support



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

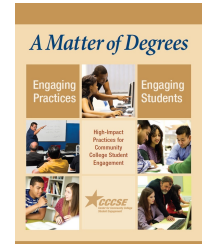
Whether they're called "senior capstones" or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of "best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



Association
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Universities



HIPs for CC Student Engagement



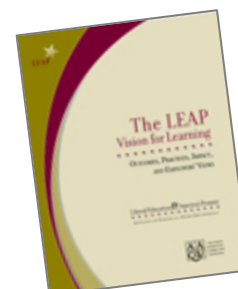
- Assessment & Placement
- Orientation
- Academic Goal Setting & Planning
- Timely Registration
- Accelerated or Fast-Track Developmental Ed
- First-Year Experience*
- Student Success Course*
- Learning Community
- Class Attendance
- Alert & Intervention
- Experiential Education Beyond the Classroom
- Tutoring
- Supplemental Instruction



FYS as High-Impact Practice

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.”



Outcomes of FYE/FYS



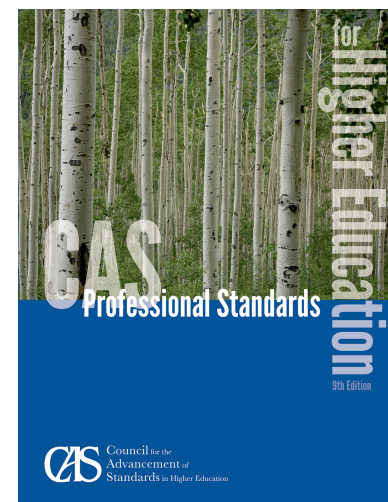
“First-year and transition programs...should have a greater influence on **setting the tone for what it means to be an educated individual and the responsibilities that come with gaining a postsecondary education.**”
(Torres & LePeau, 2013)



Guidelines for Excellence in FYE

Young & Keup (2018) CAS First-Year Experience Cross-Functional Team Framework

- Is guided by goals related to institutional mission
- Includes more than one and preferably many elements of the curriculum and cocurriculum
- Focuses on the success of a large number of first-year students, including those from special populations
- Has strong administrative supporting leading to institutionalization, resource allocation, and sustainability
- Built on assessment activity leading to constant improvement





Section 2:

2017 NATIONAL SURVEY OF THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE (NSFYE)

Overview of the 2017 NSFYE: Content

- Adaptation of the National Survey of First-Year Seminars offered 9 times from 1988-2013
- Institution-/program-level survey
- Online instrument
 - General info about institutional attention to the first year
 - Extended modules on first-year seminars, pre-term orientation, and first-year academic advising
 - Other modules on first-year learning communities, residential programs/initiatives, early-alert systems, and common reading programs

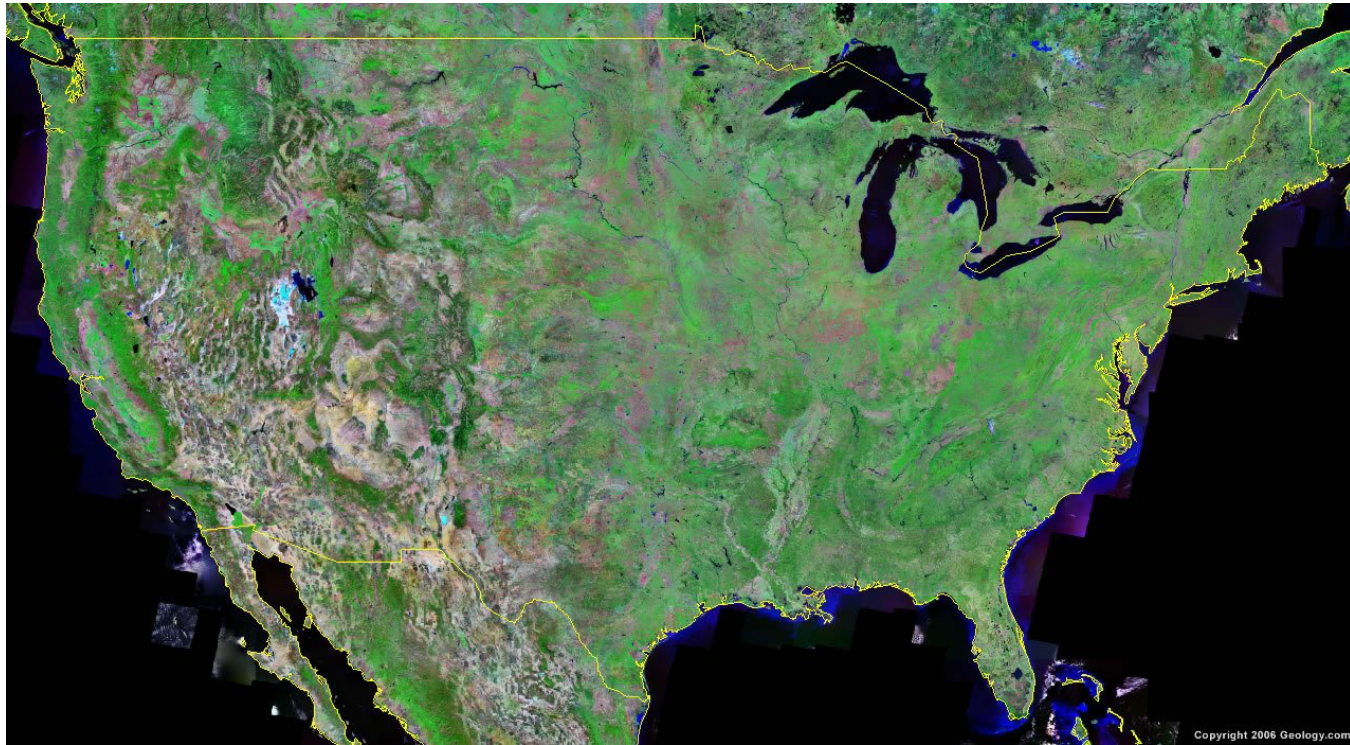
Overview of the 2017 NSFYE: Sample

- 3,977 two- and four-year institutions across the United States were invited to participate
- 537 campuses responded (13% response rate)
 - Two-year institutions underrepresented
 - Public institutions overrepresented
 - Very small institutions (≤ 500 first-year students) seem to be underrepresented
- 525 institutions reported offering at least one FYE program

Overview of the 2017 NSFYE: Sample

Institutional Characteristic	National Representation		NSFYE Respondents	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
<i>Level of institution</i>				
Four or more years	2,963	65.2	410	76.4
At least 2 but less than 4 years	1,582	34.8	127	23.6
<i>Control of institution</i>				
Public	1,714	37.7	312	58.1
Private not-for-profit	1,743	38.3	219	40.8
Private for-profit	1,088	23.9	6	1.1
<i>First-year enrollment</i>				
500 or less	2,962	66.9	224	41.7
501-1,000	615	13.9	103	19.2
1,001-2,000	465	10.5	105	19.6
2,0001-4,000	266	6.0	60	11.2
4,001 or more	119	2.7	45	8.4

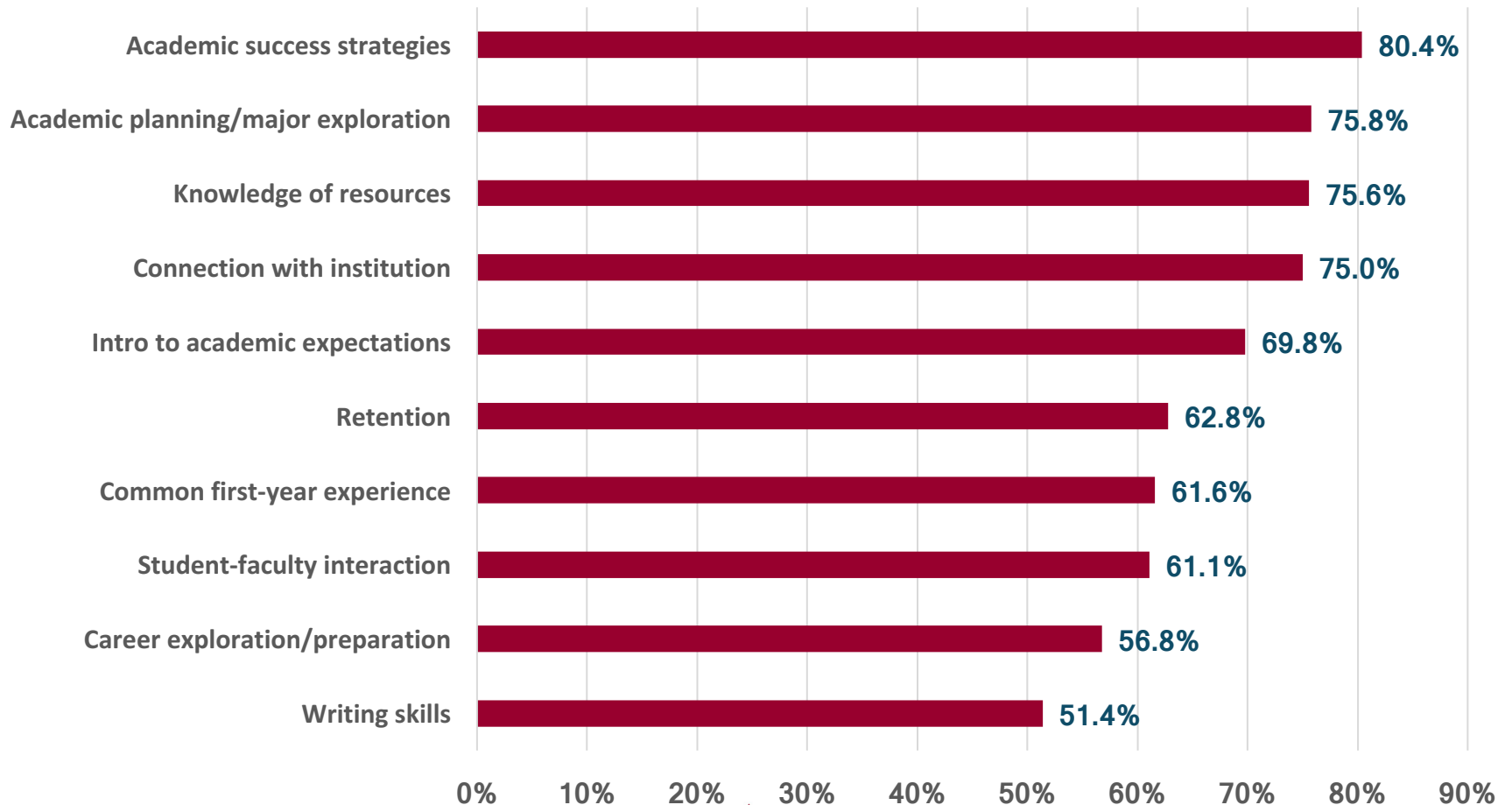




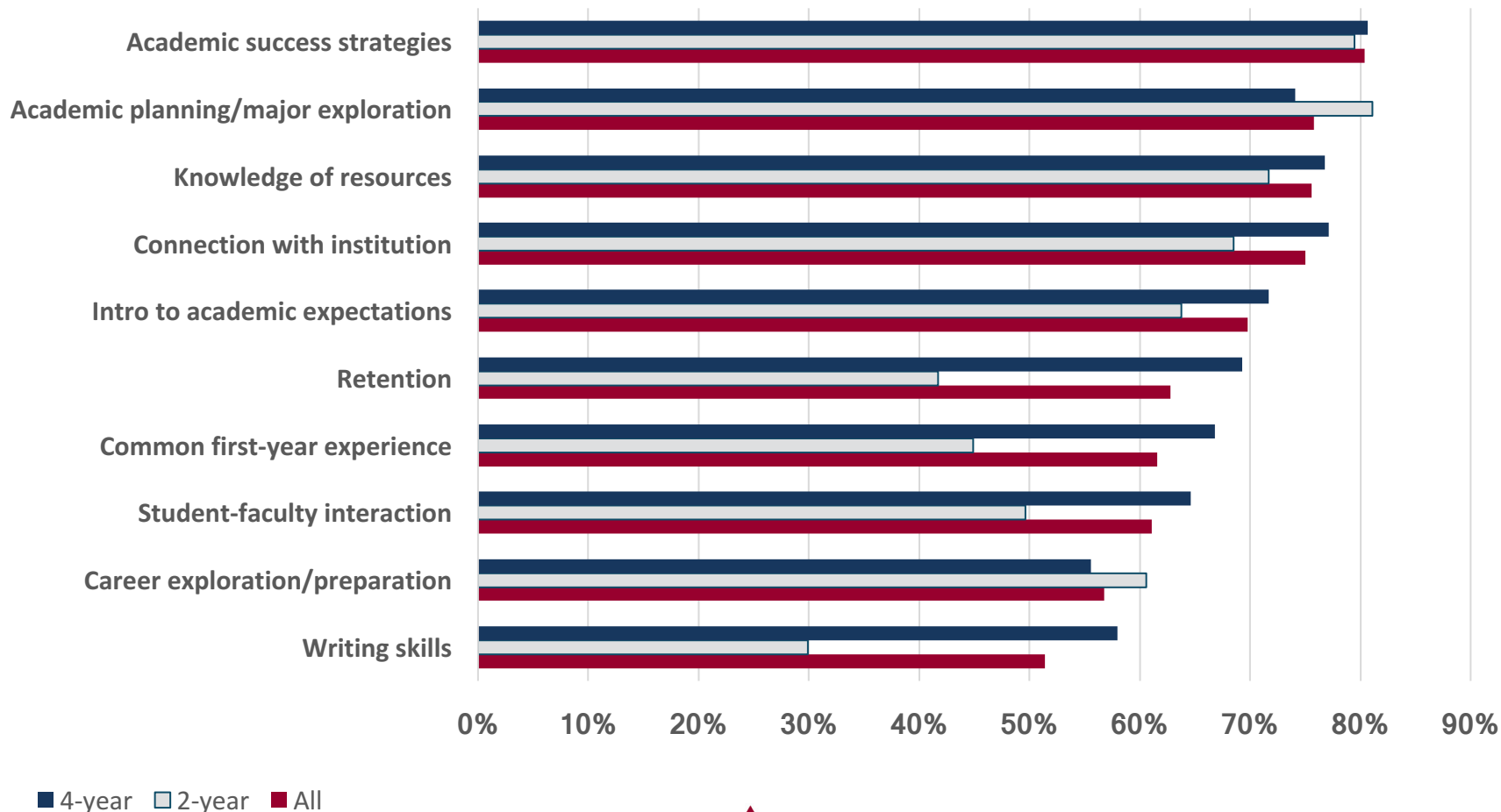
Section 3:

NATIONAL TRENDS & ISSUES FOR THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE

Campus-Wide Objectives for FYE



Campus-wide Objectives for FYE



127 2-year campuses surveyed,
top eight answers on the board.

**Name the most important objectives
for a first-year experience program
at two-year campuses.**



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FAMILY FEUD

Acad planning/explore major [81]

Intro to college academic expectations [64]

Academic success strategies [80]

Developmental education/remediation/review [61]

Know about campus resources [72]

Career exploration/preparation [61]

Connection with campus [69]

Student-faculty interaction [50]

Team A

0



Team B

0

- Integrative and applied learning [17]
- Introduction to the liberal arts [16]
- Discipline-specific knowledge [15]
- **Civic engagement [14]**

**WHAT can
we do?**



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Most Common FYE Initiatives

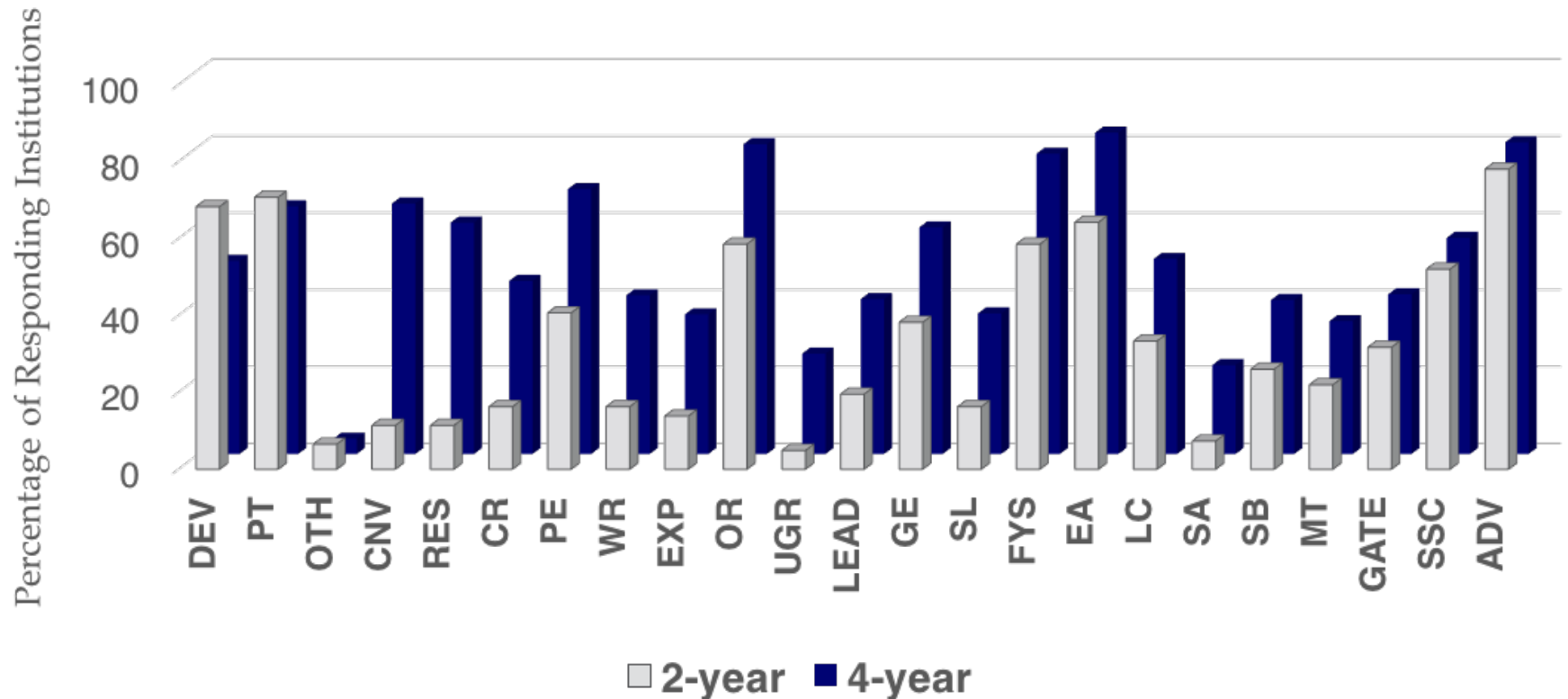
FYE Initiative at 2-year Institutions	%
First-year academic advising (ADV)	78.0
Placement testing (PT)	70.7
Developmental/remedial education (DEV)	68.3
Early alert systems (EA)	64.2
First-year seminars (FYS)	58.5
Pre-term orientation (OR)	58.5
Student success center (SSC)	52.0
Peer education (PE)	40.7
General education (GE)	38.2
Learning communities (LC)	33.3



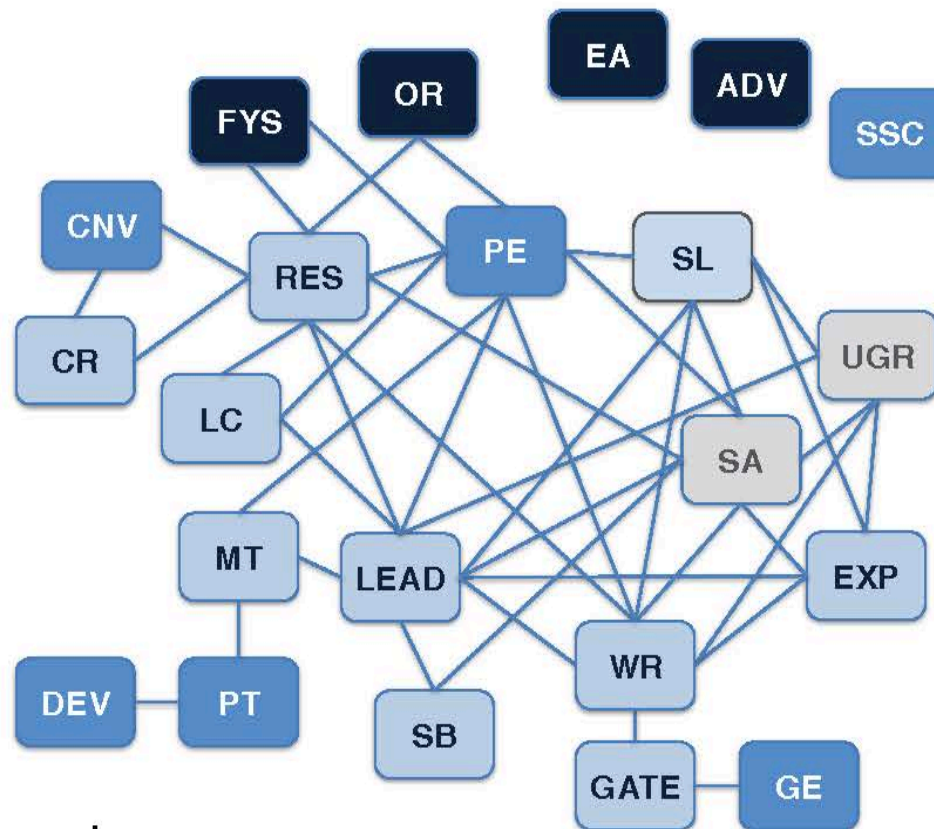
Less Common FYE Initiatives

FYE Initiative at 2-year Institutions	%
First-year gateway courses (GATE)	31.7
Summer bridge (SB)	26.0
Mentoring by campus professionals (MT)	22.0
Leadership programs (LEAD)	19.5
Service learning (SL)	16.3
Writing-intensive coursework (WR)	16.3
Common reading (CR)	16.3
Experiential learning/learning beyond the classroom (EXP)	13.8
Convocation (CNV)	11.4
Residential programs or initiatives (RES)	11.4

Differences by Institution Type



Which FYE programs are individual stars and which form a constellation?



Legend:

Lines represent correlations $\phi > .25$

Colors of boxes represent percentage of institutions reporting FYE program offered.

Dark Blue = > 70%

Royal Blue = 50-69%

Light Blue = 30-49%

Gray = < 30%



Section 4:

NATIONAL TRENDS AND ISSUES FOR FIRST-YEAR SEMINARS

Most Common FYE Initiatives

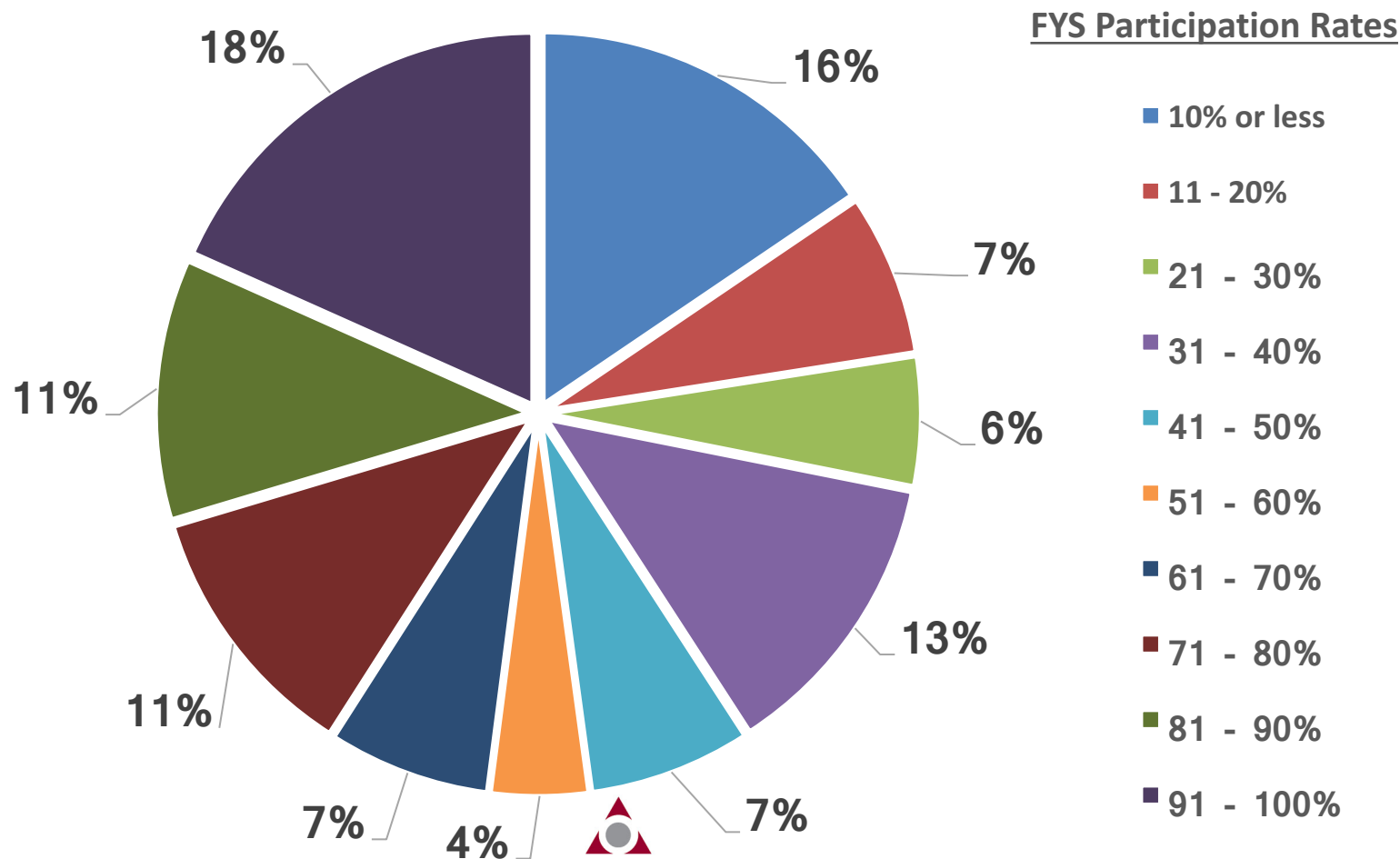
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Peer education (PE)	40.7
General education (GE)	38.2
Learning communities (LC)	33.3

Access to First-Year Seminars (FYS)

- 73.5% of survey respondents offer FYS and 62.1% indicate that it is one of the primary programs by which first-year objectives are met
 - 58.5% of responding 2-year institutions offer FYS
 - 41.8% of responding 2-year institutions report that it is a primary program to meet FY objectives
- Minority of responding 2-year institutions indicate that it is required of all FY students
- Often required for targeted populations (e.g., dev ed, EOP, honors, international students)

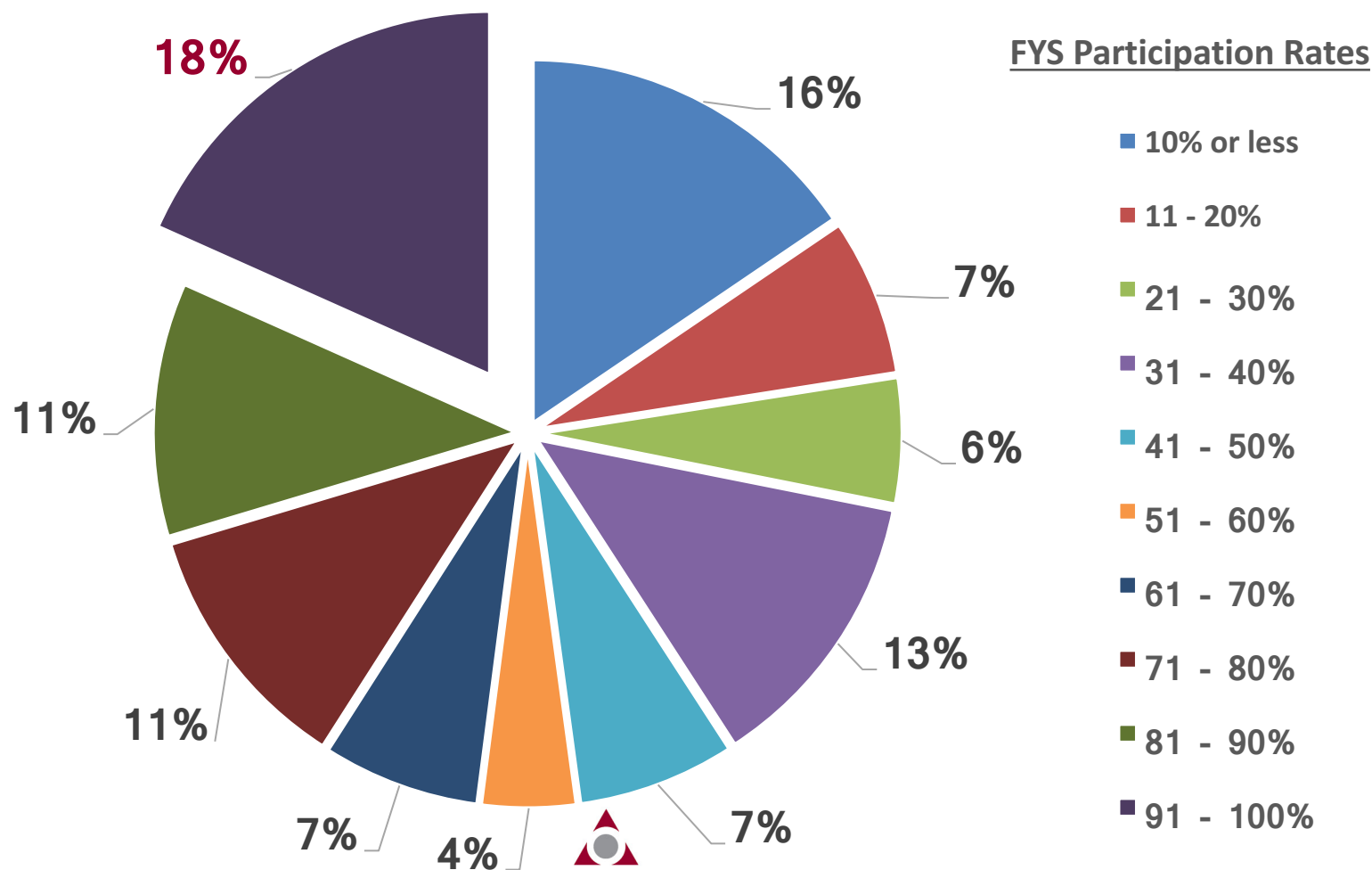
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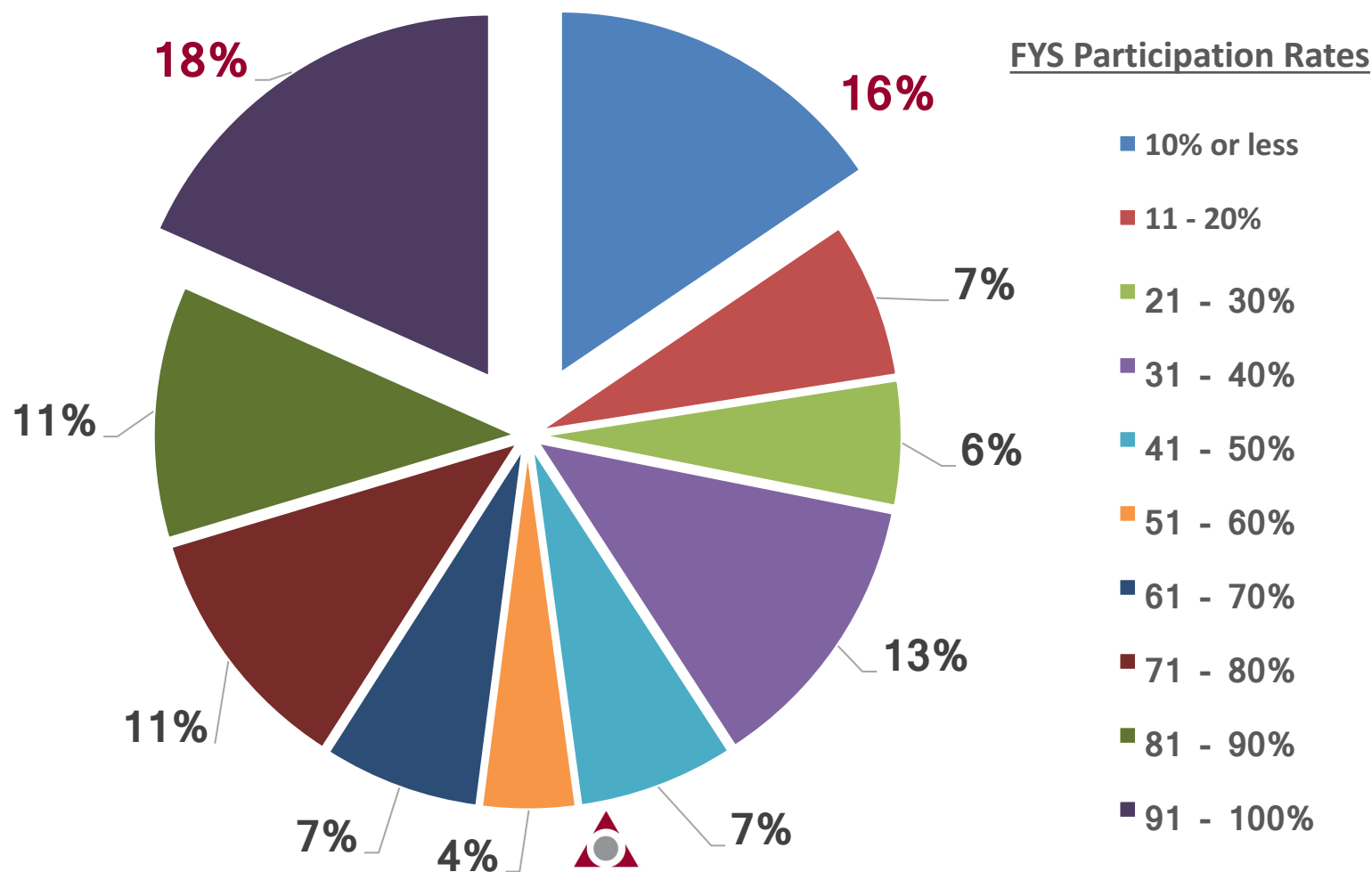
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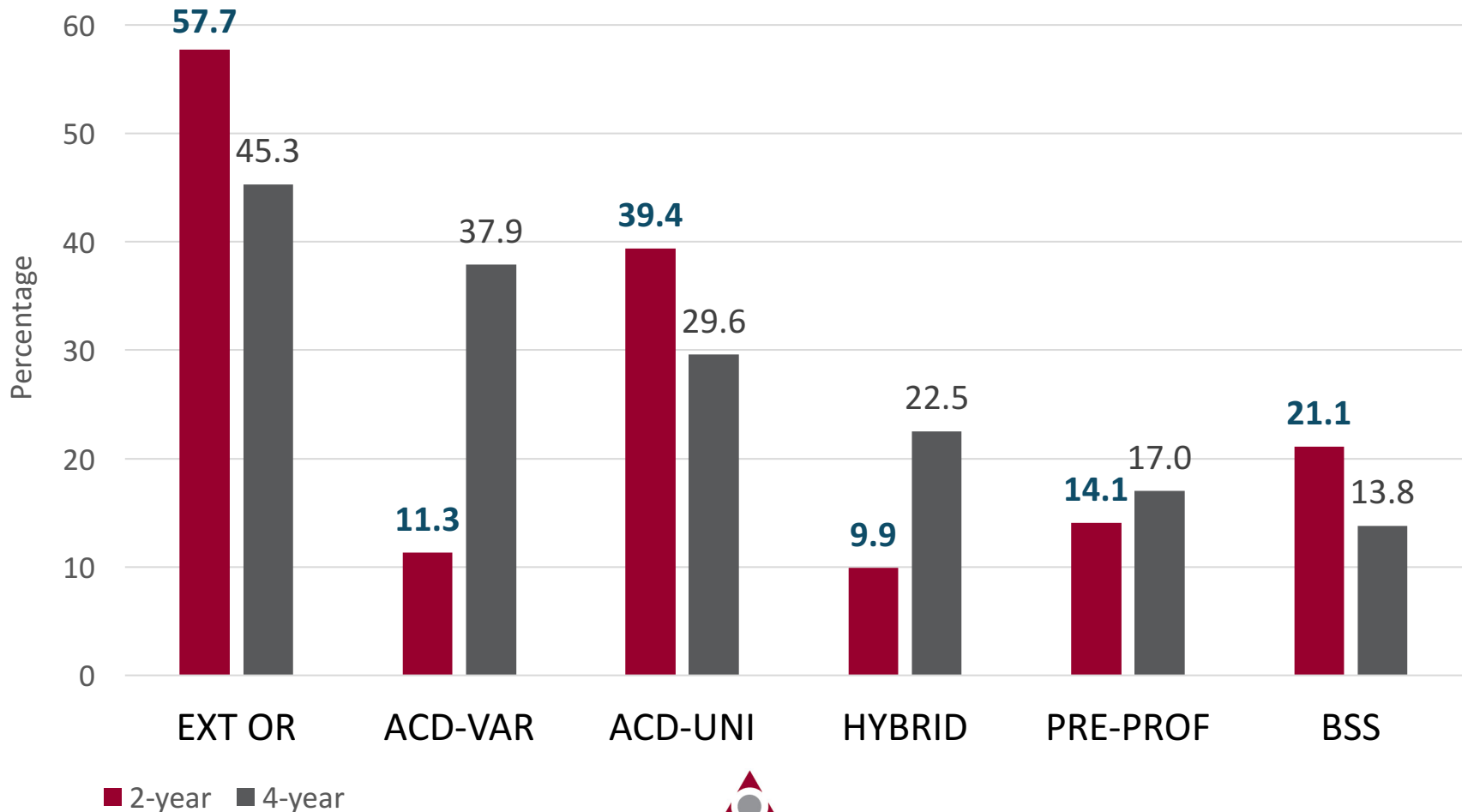
Types of First-Year Seminars Offered

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

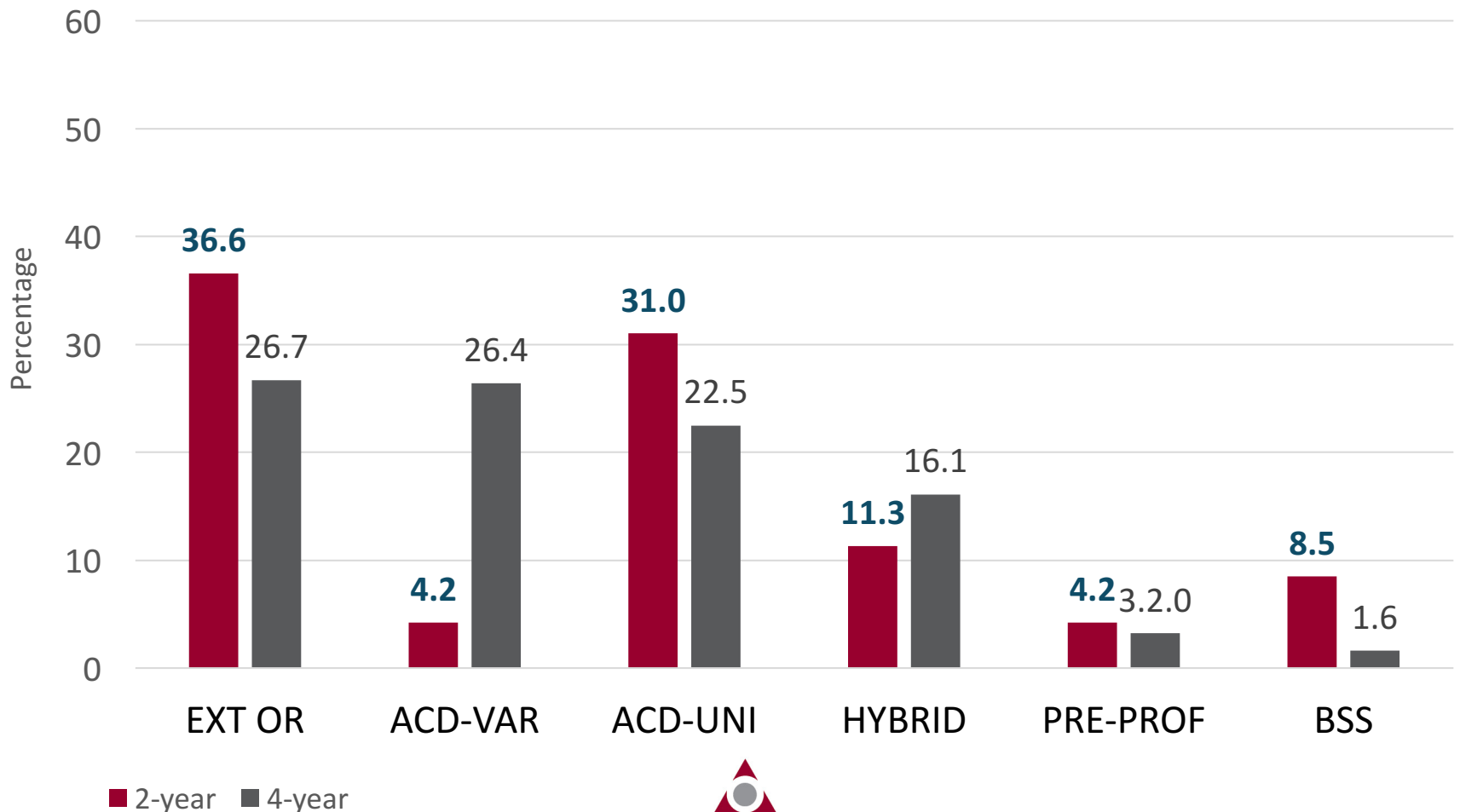
Types of First-Year Seminars Offered

Seminar	Distinct Types		Primary Type	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Extended orientation	182	47.6	109	28.5
Academic/various topics	126	33.0	85	22.3
Academic/uniform content	120	31.4	92	24.1
Hybrid	77	20.2	58	15.2
Preprofessional	63	16.5	13	3.4
Basic study skills	58	15.2	11	2.9
Other	17	4.5	14	3.7

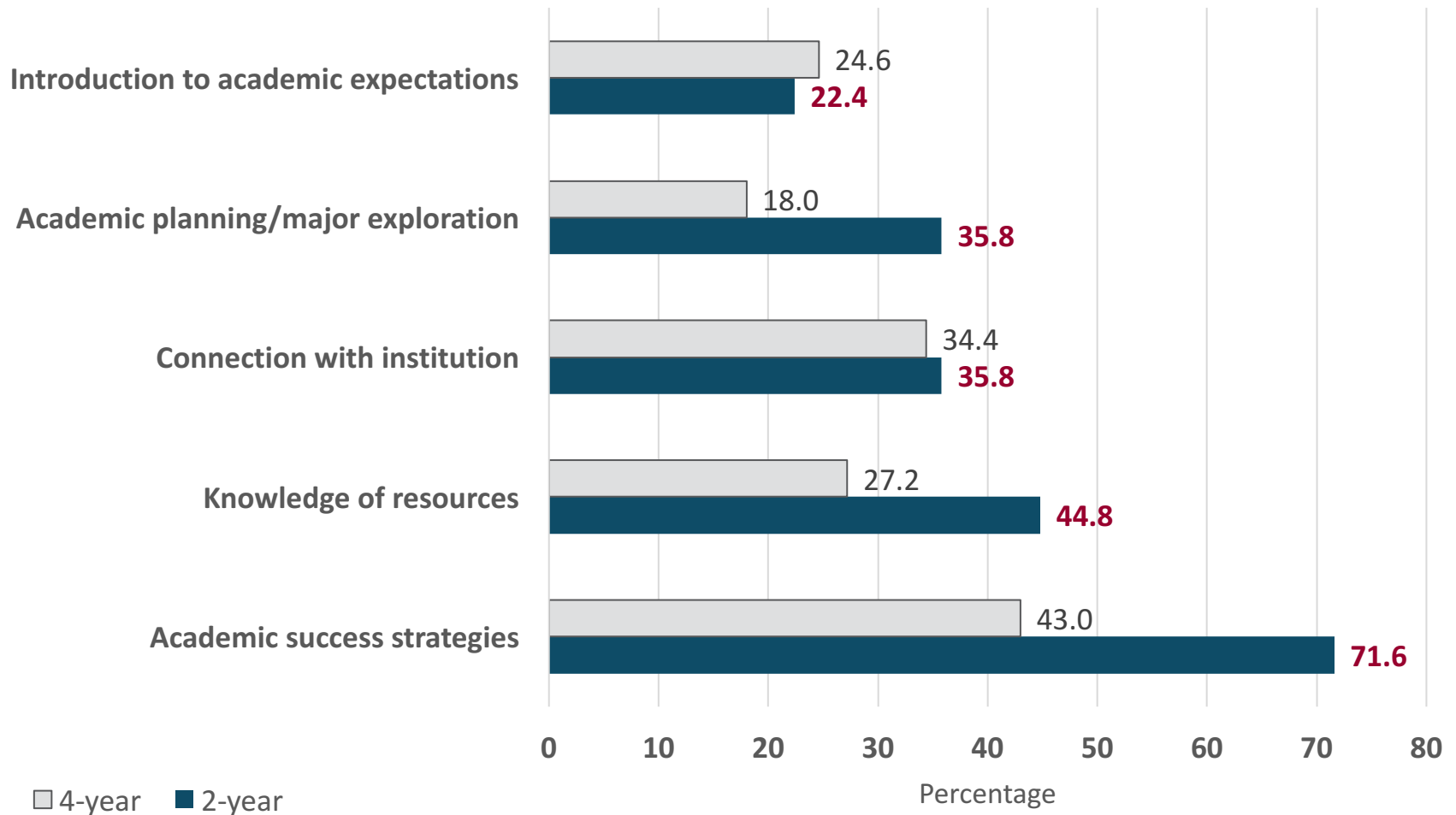
Distinct Types of FYS Offered



Primary Types of FYS Offered



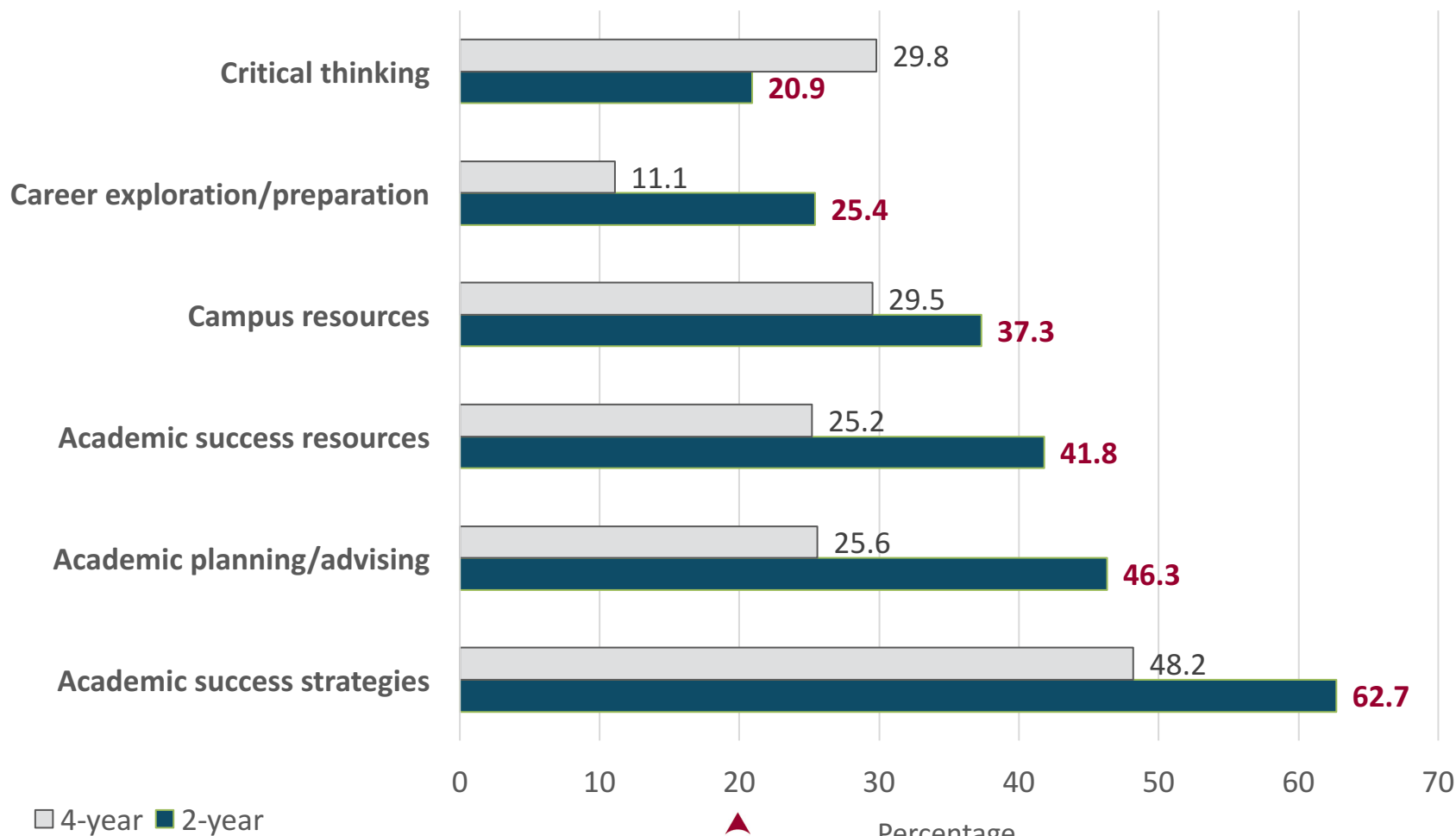
First-Year Seminar Objectives



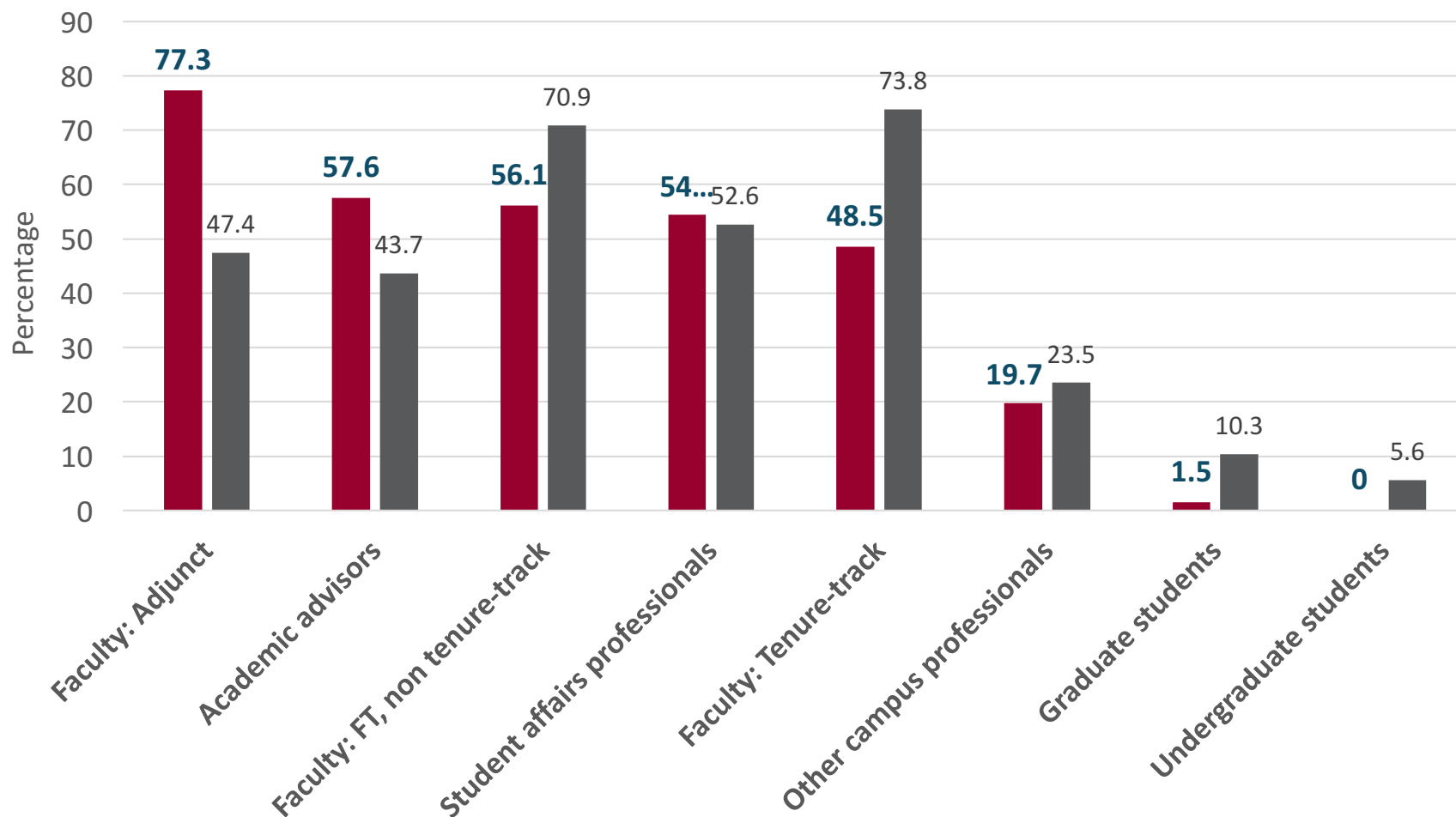
FYS Characteristics at 2-Year Campuses

- Most often lasts for one term (70.2%)
- Credit hours
 - 41.8% carry 3 credits
 - 40.3% carry 1 credit
- Credit is most often applied as an elective (50.8%)
- Nearly all give letter grades (90.2%; *85.0% at 4-yr*)
- More often incorporate online components (83.3%) and have online only sections (68.2%) than 4-year campuses

First-Year Seminar (FYS) Content

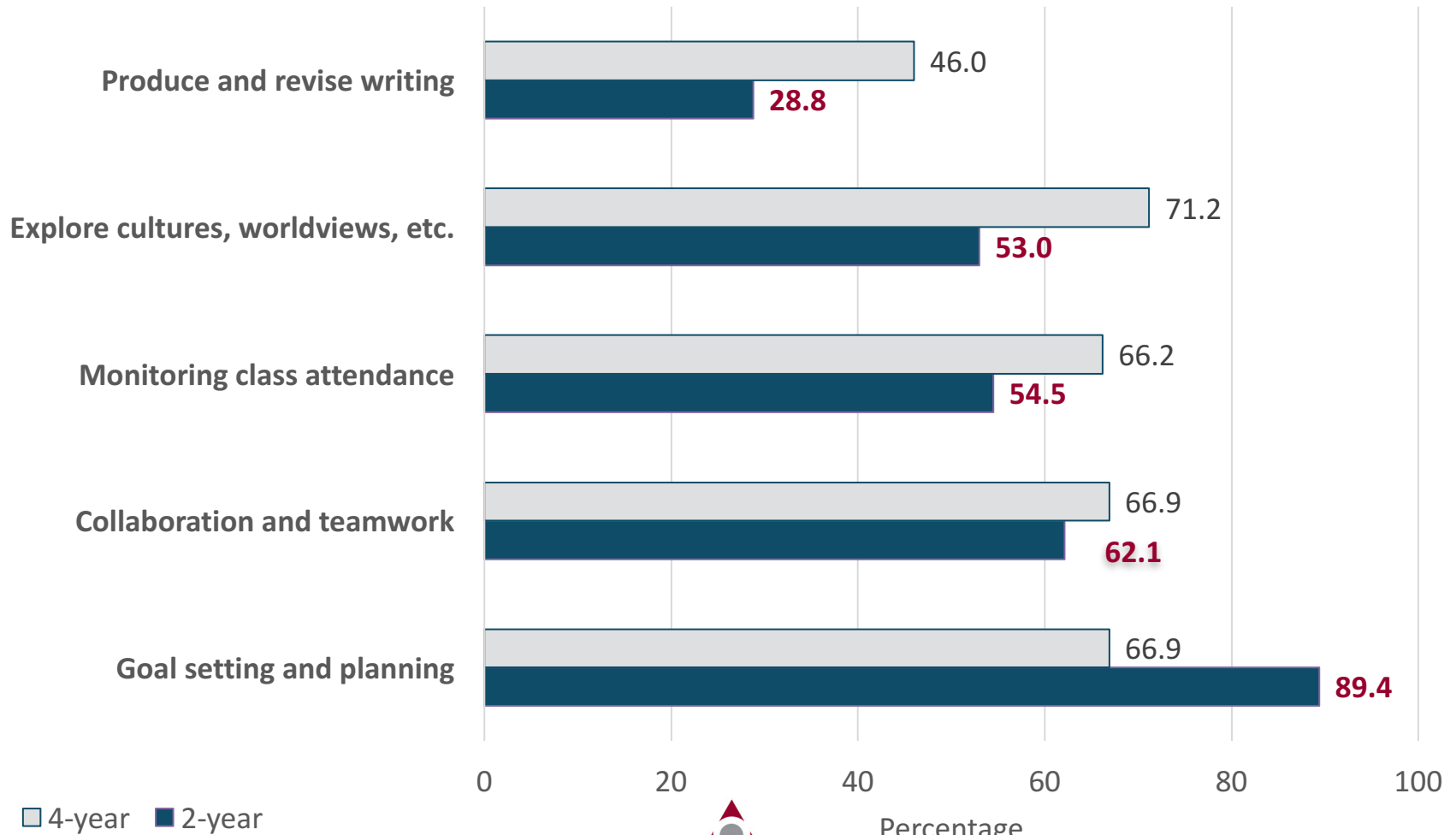


First-Year Seminar Instruction



■ 2-year ■ 4-year

Pedagogical Approaches in the FYS



Assessed Outcomes of FYS

Outcomes Measured at 2-year Institutions	%
Student satisfaction	64.0
Retention or second-year return rates	47.2
Student-faculty interaction	41.6
Connection with the institution or campus	40.4
Analytical, critical thinking, or problem-solving skills	39.3
Writing skills	39.3
Knowledge of institution or campus resources and services	39.3
Common first-year experience	33.7
Introduction to college-level academic expectations	33.7
Academic success strategies	32.6

FAMILY FEUD

Acad planning/explore major [81]

Intro to college academic expectations [64]

Academic success strategies [80]

Developmental education/remediation/review [61]

Know about campus resources [72]

Career exploration/preparation [61]

Connection with campus [69]

Student-faculty interaction [50]

Team A

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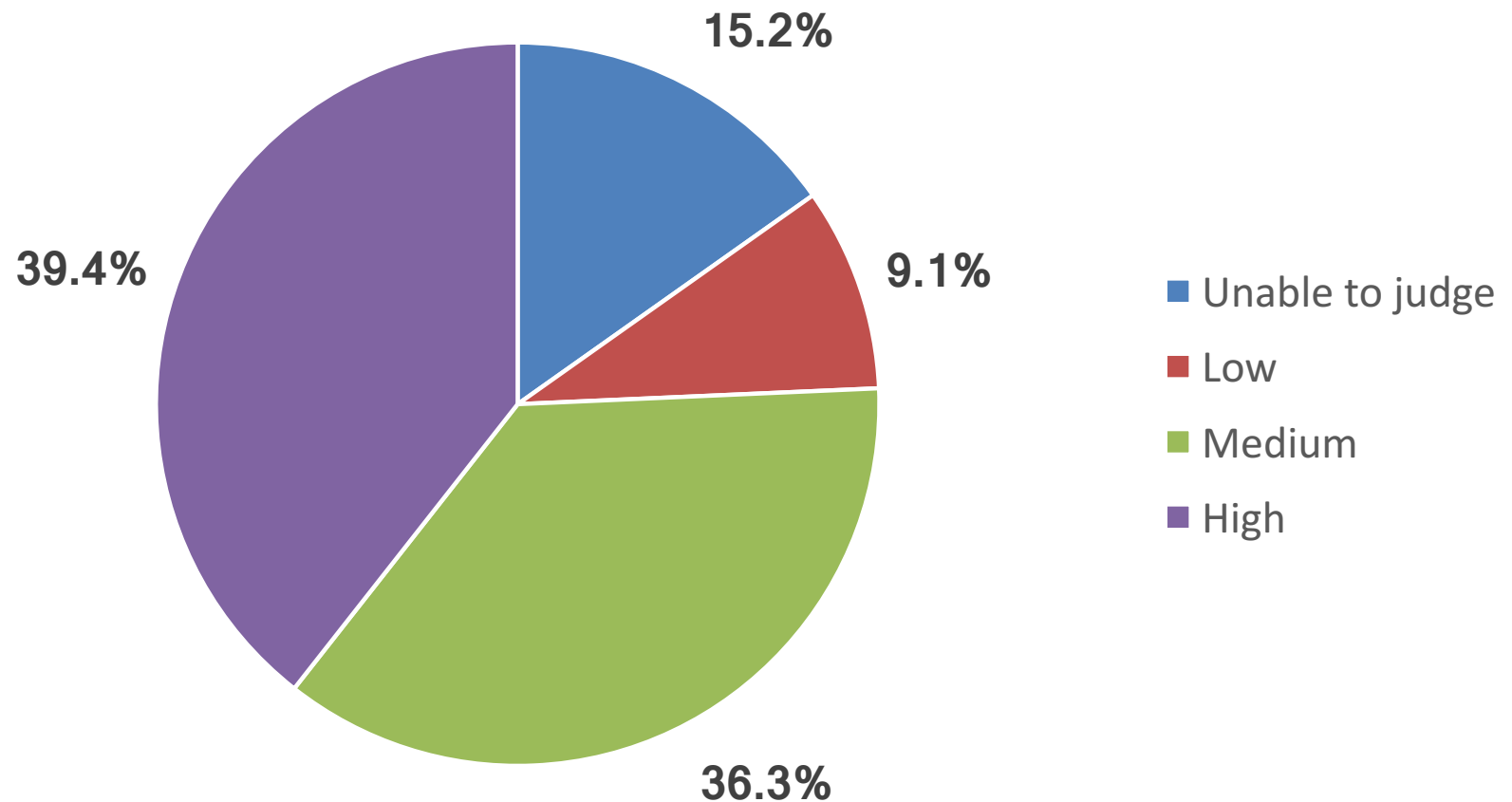


Team B

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- Integrative and applied learning [17]
- Introduction to the liberal arts [16]
- Discipline-specific knowledge [15]
- **Civic engagement [14]**

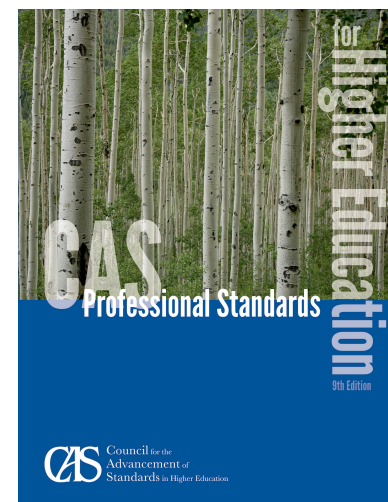
FYS Return on Investment at 2-Year Campuses



Guidelines for Excellence in FYE

Young & Keup (2018) CAS First-Year Experience Cross-Functional Team Framework

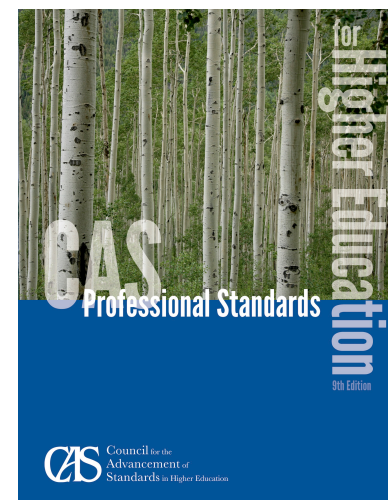
- Is guided by goals related to institutional mission
- Includes more than one and preferably many elements of the curriculum and cocurriculum
- Focuses on the success of a large number of first-year students, including those from special populations
- Has strong administrative supporting leading to institutionalization, resource allocation, and sustainability
- Built on assessment activity leading to constant improvement



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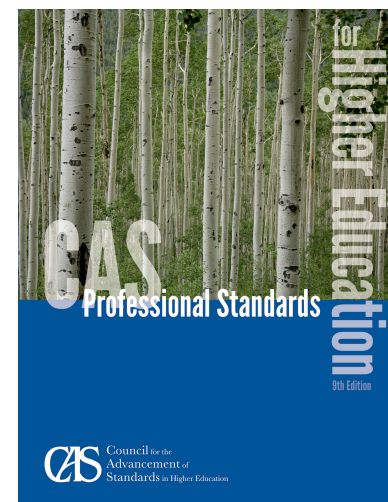
- **Is guided by goals related to institutional mission**
- Include **more than one and preferably many** curriculum
- **Clearly stated objectives for FYE and FYS**
- **More than just about retention**
- **Statistically and practically significant differences by institutional type (i.e., 2-year/4-year)**
- **Transfer and career prep**
- **leading to institutionalization, resource allocation, and sustainability**
- **Built on assessment activity leading to constant improvement**



Guidelines for Excellence in FYE

Young & Keup (2018) CAS First-Year Experience Cross-Functional Team Framework

- Is guided by goals related to institutional mission
- **Includes more than one and preferably many elements of the curriculum and cocurriculum**
- Focus on the success of a large number of first-year students
 - Many different FYE initiatives
 - Array of FYS types (EXT OR & ACD-UC)
 - Curricular, co-curricular, and business services
 - How do these compare to the 4-year sector for transfer students?
- Built on assessment activity leading to constant improvement

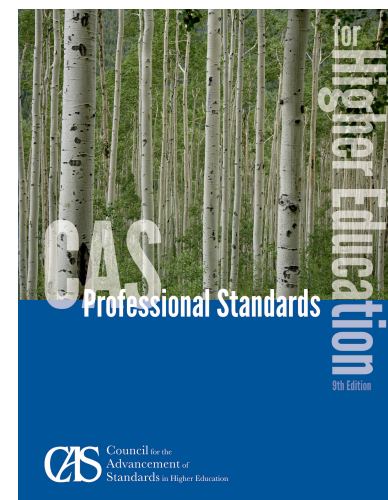


Guidelines for Excellence in FYE

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- Includes more than one and preferably many elements of the curriculum and cocurriculum
- **Focuses on the success of a large number of first-year students, including those from special populations**
- Has strong administrative support
 - Access rates for FYS are lower than ideal
 - Are students being targeted the “right” targets?

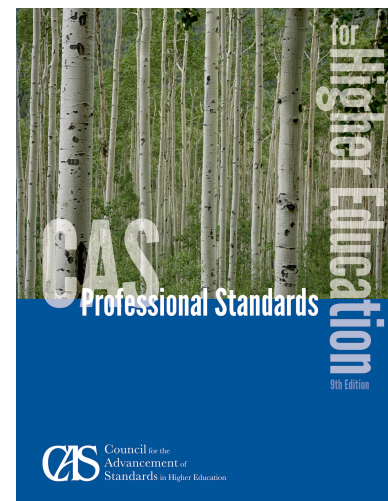
constant improvement



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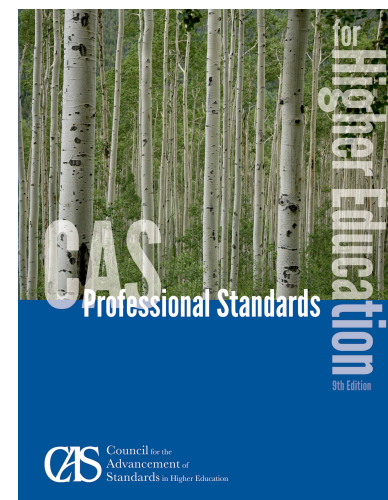
- Presence of a range of campus professionals as FYS instructors
 - Evidence of administrative leadership
 - FYS represents a newer structure on 2-year campuses
 - Decreasing number of institutions with FYS
- **Has strong administrative supporting leading to institutionalization, resource allocation, and sustainability**
 - Built on assessment activity leading to constant improvement



Guidelines for Excellence in FYE

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- Is guided by goals related to institutional mission
- Includes more than one and preferably many elements of the curriculum and cocurriculum
- - FYS assessment activity is happening
 - Some alignment with objectives for FYS but also a lot of transactional measures
 - What can we do with these data to improve FYE and the seminar?
- Built on assessment activity leading to constant improvement





Thought is action in rehearsal.
Sigmund Freud

QUESTIONS, CONCLUDING THOUGHTS & TAKEAWAYS



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Questions & Comments



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