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The Power of Peers:

Exploring the Impact of Peer Leadership Experiences in the United Kingdom

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#efye2017



June 28, 2017

www.sc.edu/fye

Session Learning Objectives

As a result of attending this session, participants will:

- ...gain a greater understanding of the characteristics and outcomes of peer leadership experiences.
- ...have the opportunity to compare features of their peer leadership programs to a broad empirical profile.
- ...be able to use empirical evidence to consider innovations or refinements to their programs.
- ...advance their understanding of peer leadership as an emerging and innovative high-impact practice.



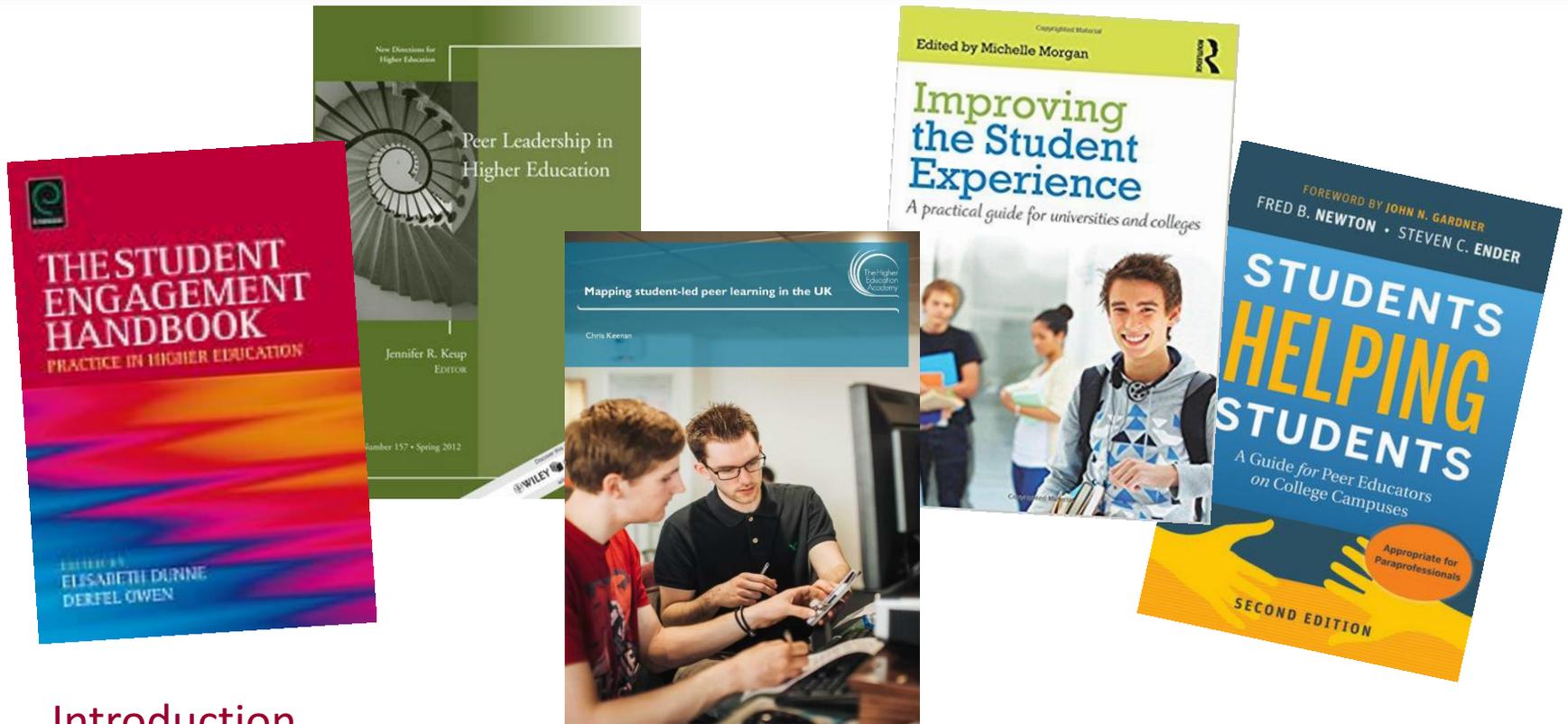
Qualifications

NARRATOR



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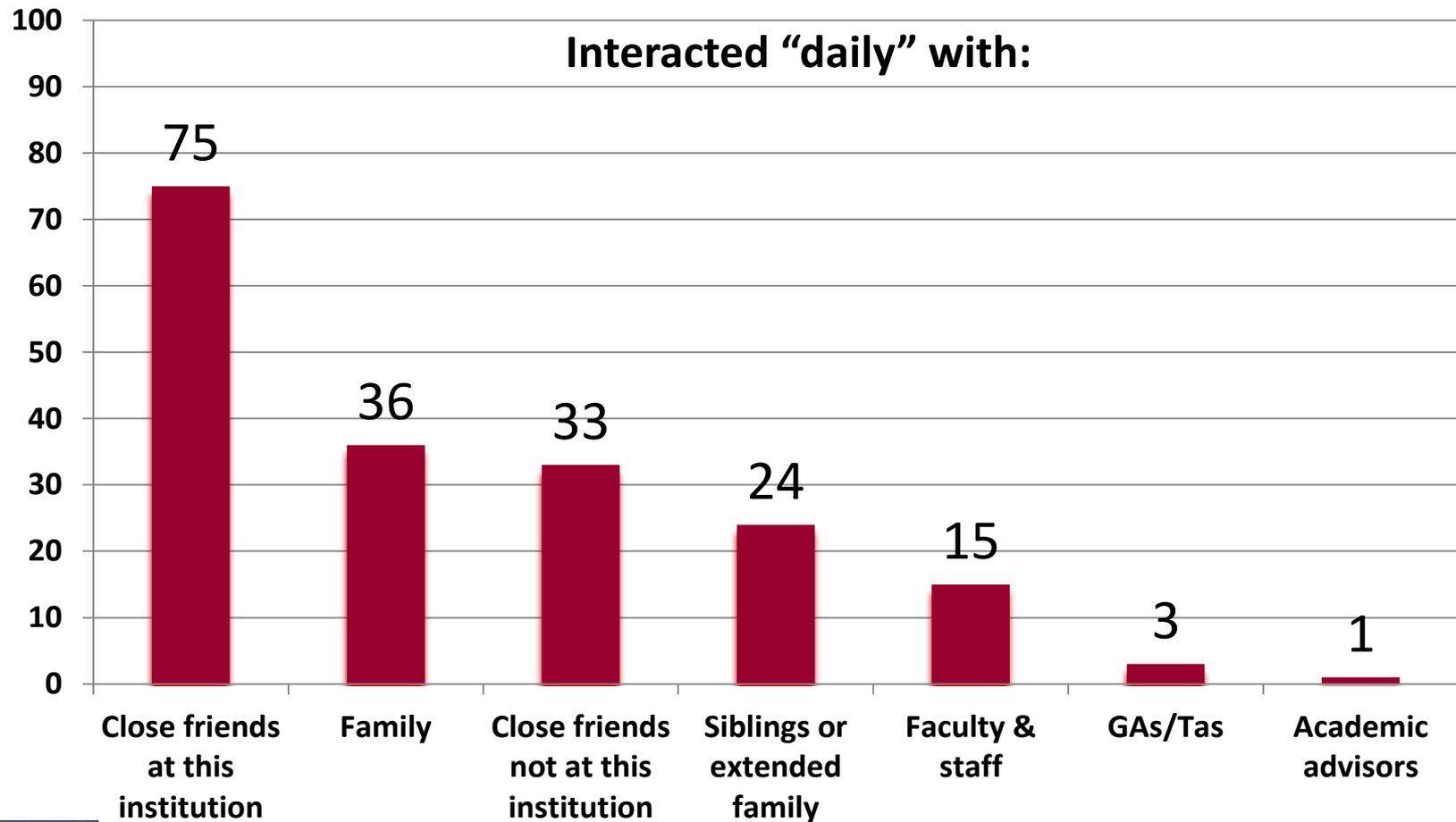
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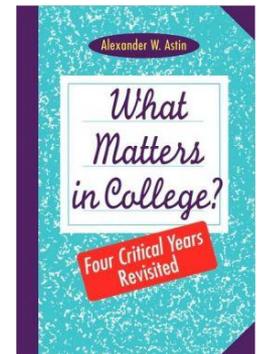
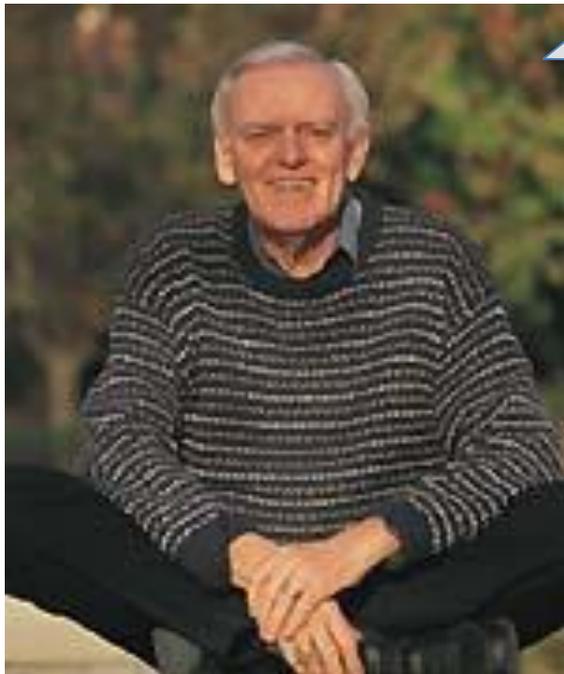
Introduction

BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Support Networks in the First Year

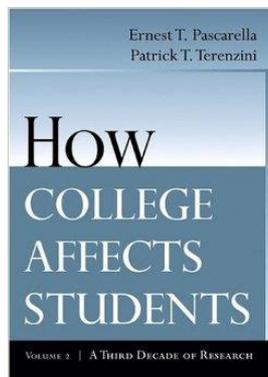
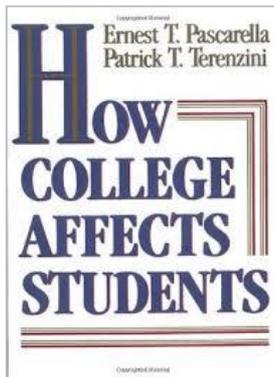


“The student’s peer group is the **single most potent source of influence** on growth and development during the undergraduate years”
(Astin, 1993, p. 398)



“Students’ interactions with their peers also have a strong influence on many aspects of change during college, [including] intellectual development and orientation; political, social, and religious values, academic and social self-concept; intellectual orientation; interpersonal skills; moral development; general maturity and personal development.”

(Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991, pp. 620-621)



Peer leaders are
**empowered to exert
influence in a less
intimidating way** than
staff or faculty
(Cuseo, 1991)



Peer Pressure

- Peers have a significant and profound impact on the undergraduate experience:
 - Intellectual development
 - Academic Engagement
 - Moral Development
 - Clarification of Political and Social Values
 - Determination of Academic and Social Self-Concept
 - Interpersonal Skills
 - Critical Thinking Skills
 - Positive Gains in Writing and Reading Comprehension

(Greenfield, Keup, & Gardner, 2013; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Skipper, 2005)

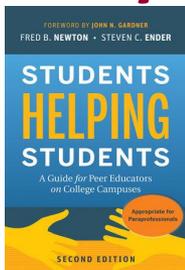
**How do you define
the term “peer
leader”?**



Defining Peer Educators

“Students who have been **selected and trained** to offer educational services to their peers. These services are **intentionally designed** to assist in the adjustment, satisfaction, and persistence of students toward attainment of their educational goals. Students performing in [*these*] paraprofessional roles **are usually compensated** in some manner for their services and are **supervised by qualified professionals.**”

(Newton & Ender, 2010, p. 6)



“To some extent, **the definition of a peer educator is contingent upon the role the student plays.** While the emphasis here is on the educative function, the terms *peer educator*, *peer leader*, and *peer mentor* [may] be used interchangeably.”
(*Latino and Ashcraft, 2012, p. xii*)



What's in a name?

- **Peer mentor**

- More personal
- Typically one-on-one relationship
- Occurs over an extended period of time
- Guidance beyond academic development
- Intensive

- **Student paraprofessionals**

- Paid position

- **Peer educator**

- Academic development
- Frequently includes teaching functions
- Can be a specific range of time

- **Peer leader**

- Promoting positive and ethical change
- Often a formalized term for FYE instruction or elected positions

(Cuseo, 2010)

A Rose by Any Other Name....



Peer Educator Typology: Context

- Individual
 - Promoting positive personal change or individual empowerment (e.g., tutor or counselor)
- Group
 - Promoting collective change or empowering others (e.g., orientation group leader or peer co-instructor for FYS)
- Organization
 - Promoting change in organizational policies, programs, practices or procedures (e.g., student government)
- Community
 - Civic leadership or political change at a local, regional, or societal level

Peer Educator Typology: Roles

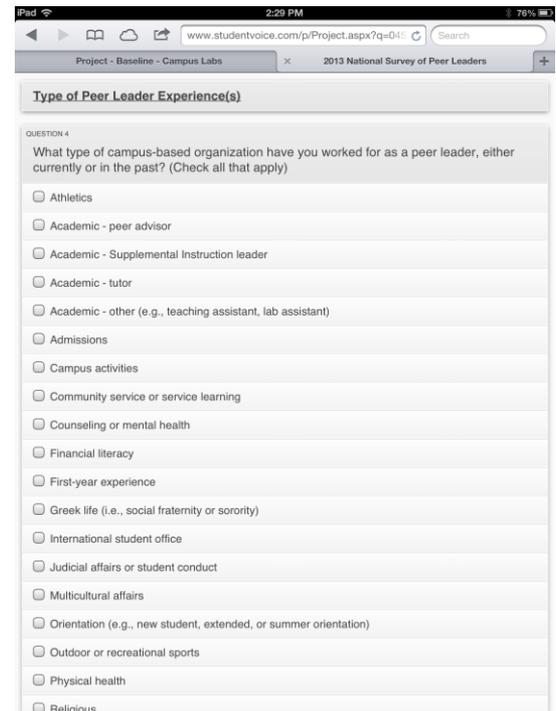
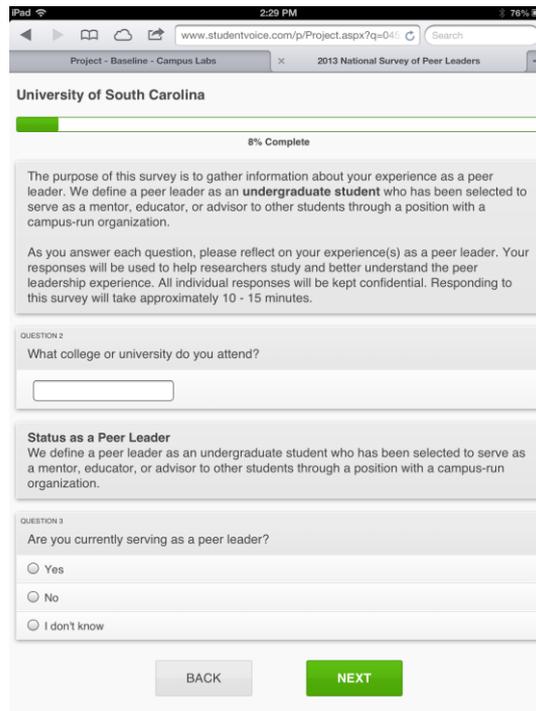
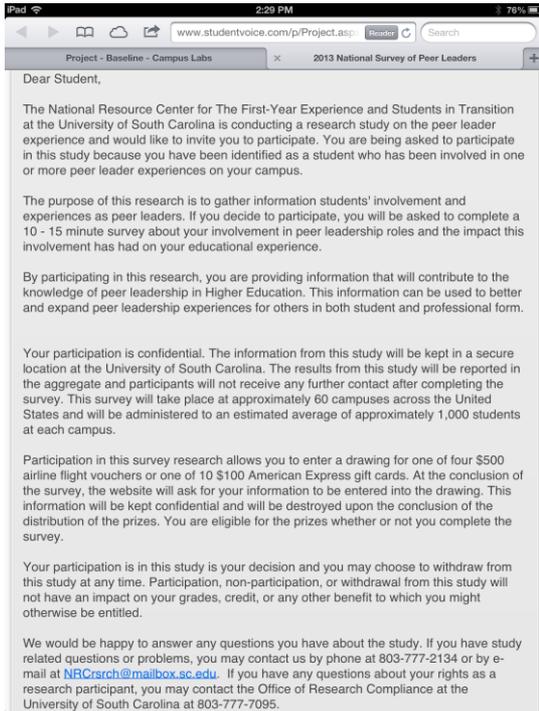
- **Role Model:** leading by example (i.e., displaying exemplary behavior)
- **Personal Support Agent:** helping others identify and resolve personal problems
- **Resource-and-Referral Agent:** knowing when and how to connect students with key support services and resources
- **Academic–Success or Learning Coach:** empowering students specifically for academic success by supplying or modeling learning strategies
- **College-Success or Life-Success Coach:** empowering students' overall success in college and life by supporting or modeling personal (holistic) development strategies

(Cuseo, 2010)

Background on Peer Leaders

- Student paraprofessionals are an effective and efficient resource
- The use of peer leaders provides benefit to:
 - Programs: improved student outcomes, stronger bridge between faculty/staff and students
 - Students: more opportunities for student interventions
 - Peer leaders: engagement with faculty & staff, leadership training





Methodology

INTERNATIONAL SURVEY OF PEER LEADERS

Method: Data Source

2013 National Survey of Peer Leaders

- 2013 survey was a partnership with 5 leading educational organizations involved with peer leaders:
 - ACUHO-I (housing and residence life)
 - International Center for Supplemental Instruction
 - National Association of Campus Activities
 - National Resource Center for FYE&SIT
 - NODA (orientation and induction)
- Institutional recruitment took place first (n = 49)
- 4,932 student peer leaders responded to the survey (28.6% response rate)



Method: Data Source

International Survey of Peer Leaders

- International survey was a collaboration with researchers in 5 English-speaking countries:
 - Australia & New Zealand (5 institutions; n = 302)
 - Canada (12 institutions; n = 610)
 - South Africa (6 institutions; n = 466)
 - **United Kingdom (19 institutions; n = 452)**
- Data collection
 - ISPL spanned 2014-2016
 - **UK spanned April-July 2015**





Academic Coaching



Tutoring Services



Supplemental Instruction



Presentations

Findings

TYPE AND NUMBER OF PEER LEADER EXPERIENCES



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**How are peer leaders
being used on your
campus?**



Most Common PL Sponsors

What type of campus-based organisation have you worked for as a peer leader, either currently or in the past? (n = 451)

Peer Leader Experience	%
Academic: PASS/PAL leader or facilitator	47.7
Academic: Course/Programme representative	29.3
Academic: Peer advisor, mentor, or tutor	23.9
Admissions – Open day ambassador	17.7
Student union clubs and societies	15.3
Peer support volunteer	11.3
Academic: Peer buddies	10.4

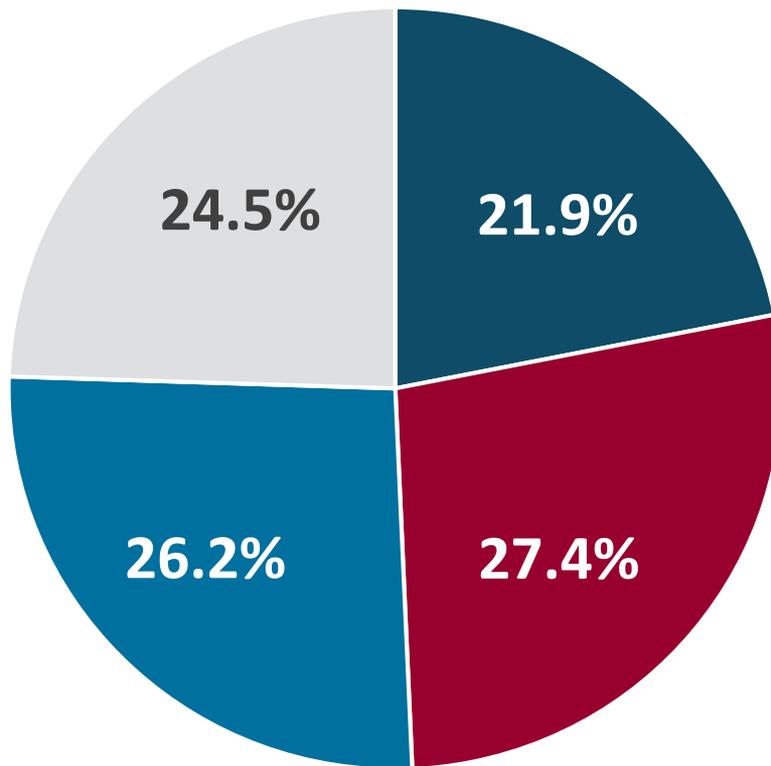


Less Common PL Sponsors

What type of campus-based organisation have you worked for as a peer leader, either currently or in the past? (n = 451)

Peer Leader Experience	%
First-year experience	8.9
Academic: School/Faculty representative	7.8
Academic: PASS/PAL senior mentor	7.1
Orientation (new student, extended, summer)	6.7
Volunteering/service office	6.7
Other non-academic	4.2
Academic: Other (TA, lab assistant, etc.)	3.3
International student office	3.1
Religious	2.4
Residence hall	1.8
Cross cultural activities	.7

PL Sponsors by Category



- **PASS Only: 21.9%**
- **Single role not including PASS: 27.4%**
- **Multiple roles including PASS: 26.2%**
- **Multiple roles not including PASS: 24.5%**

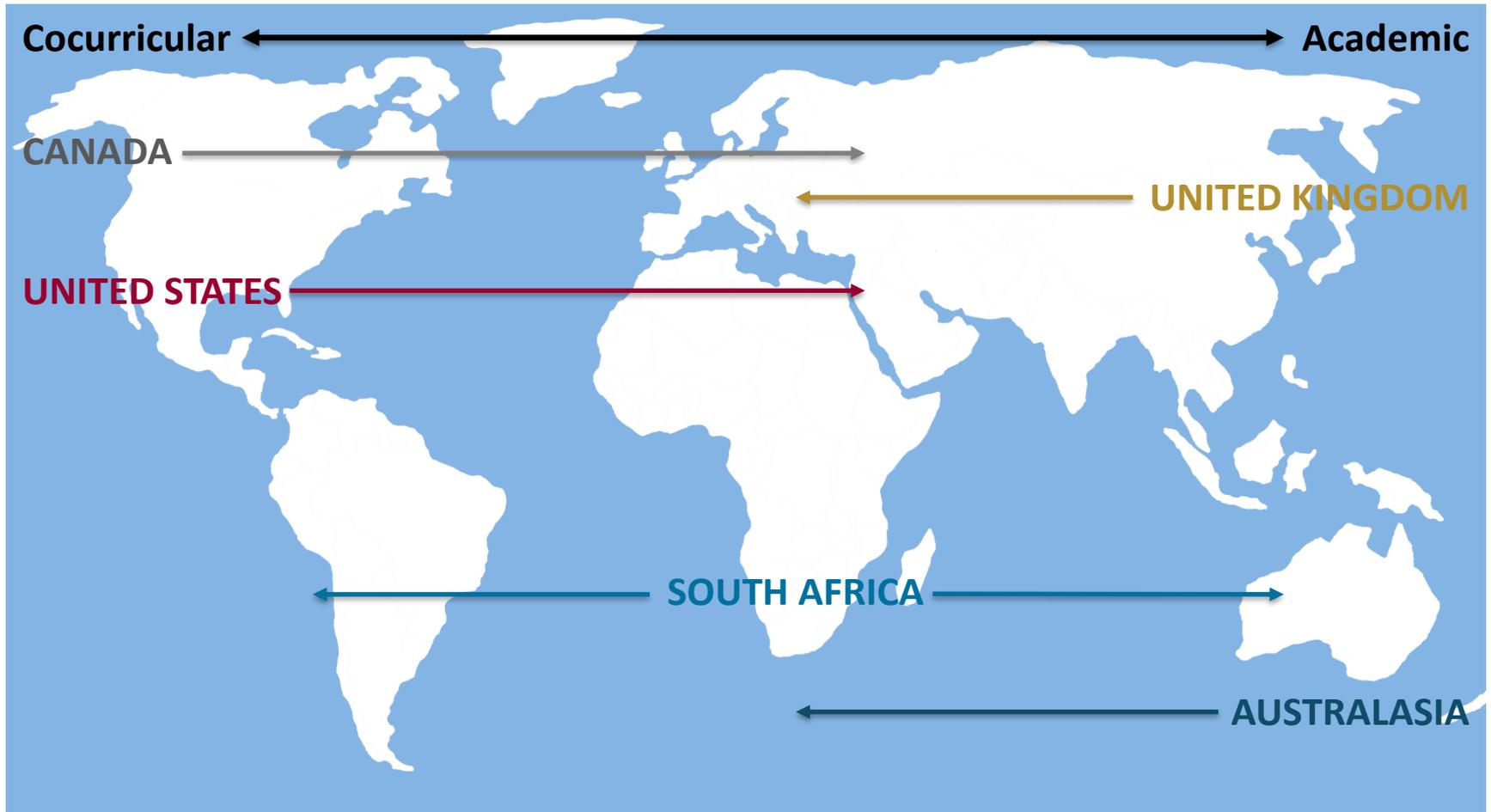


PL Sponsors in Other National Contexts

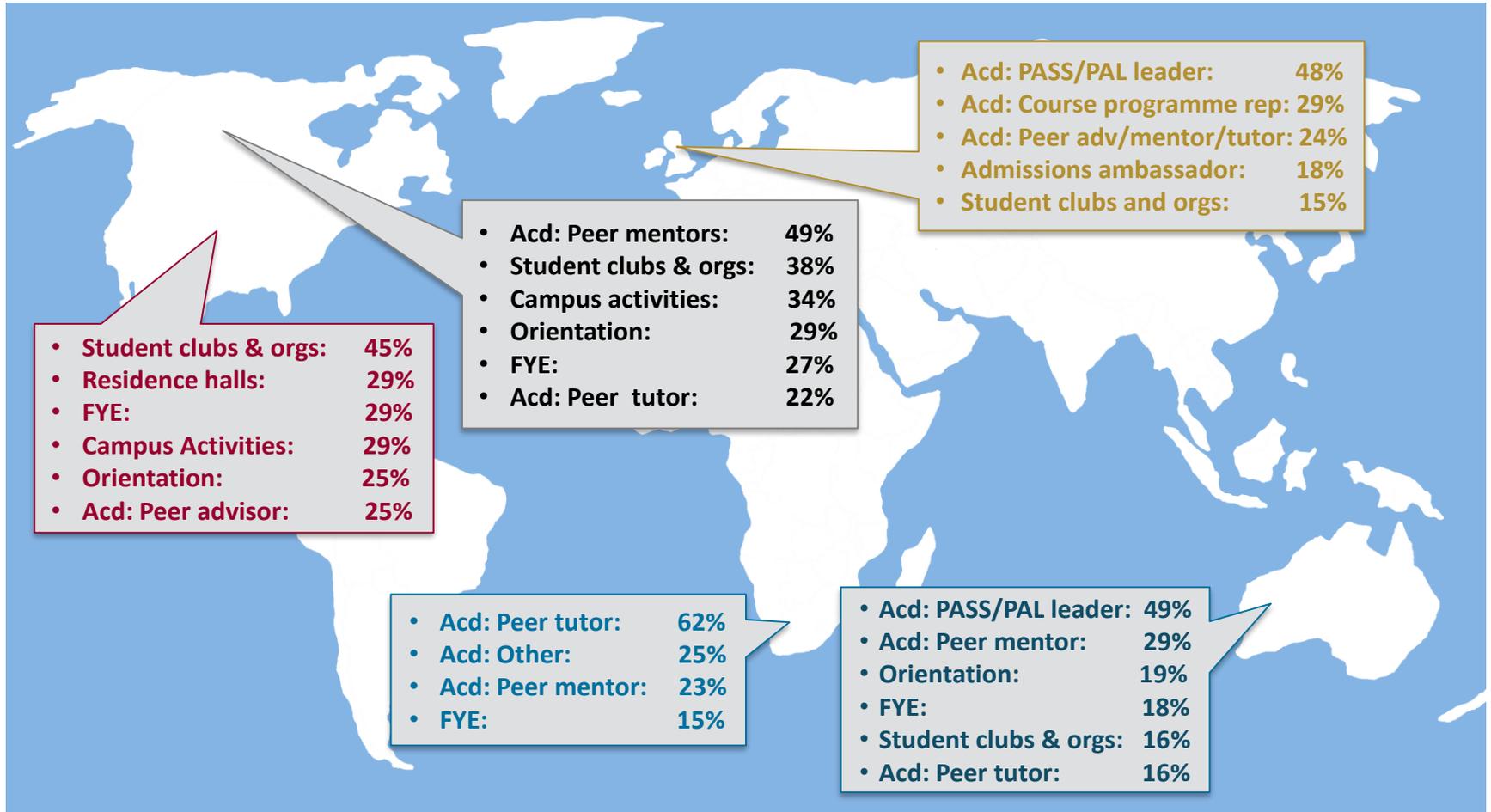
- Career services
- Club/recreational sport
- Counseling/mental health
- Financial literacy
- Judicial affairs & student conduct
- Peer advisor
- Peer mentor
- Physical health
- Secondary school outreach
- Student government
- Student honor societies
- Student productions & media
- Student wellness
- Study abroad



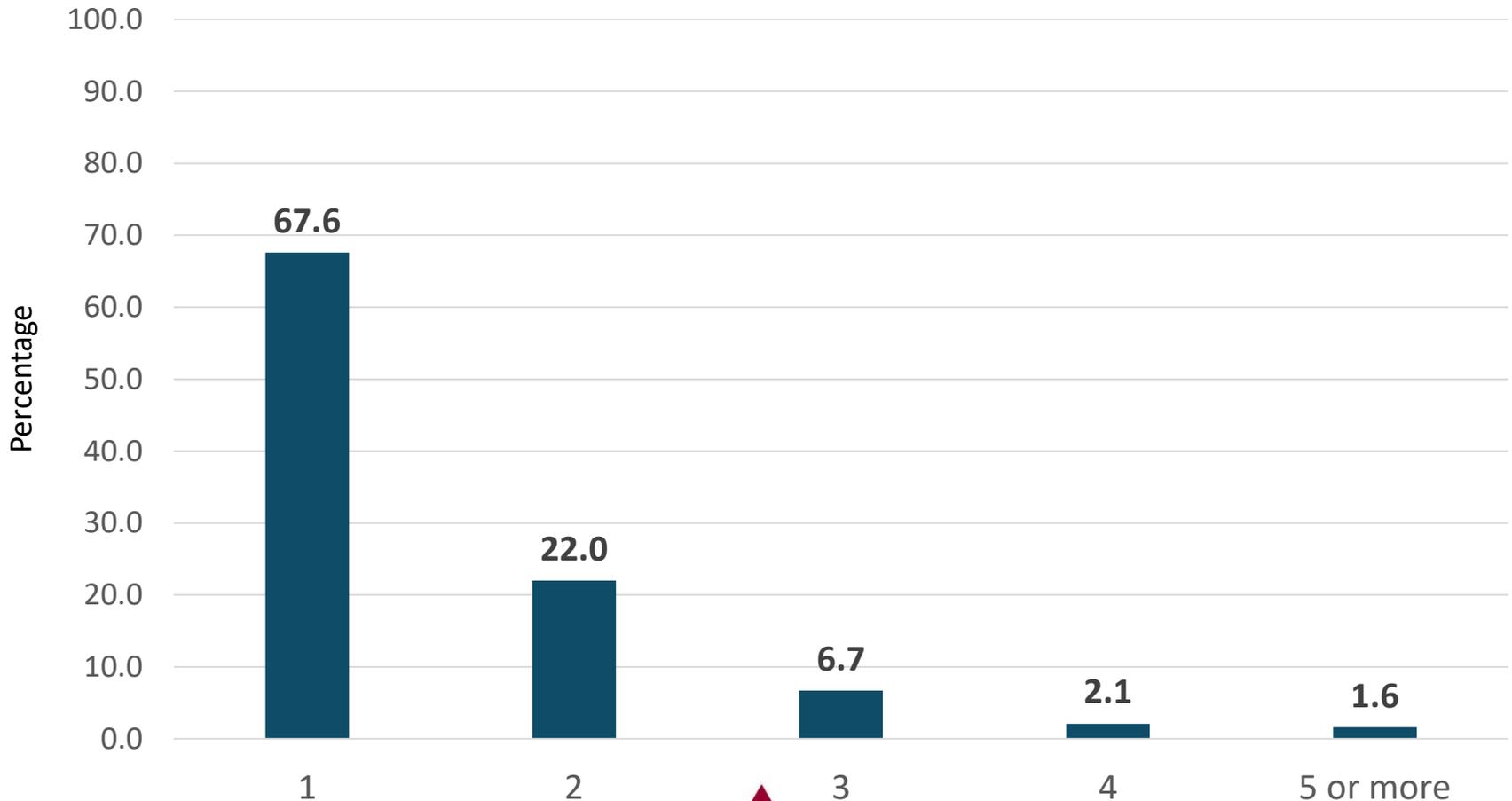
PL Sponsors



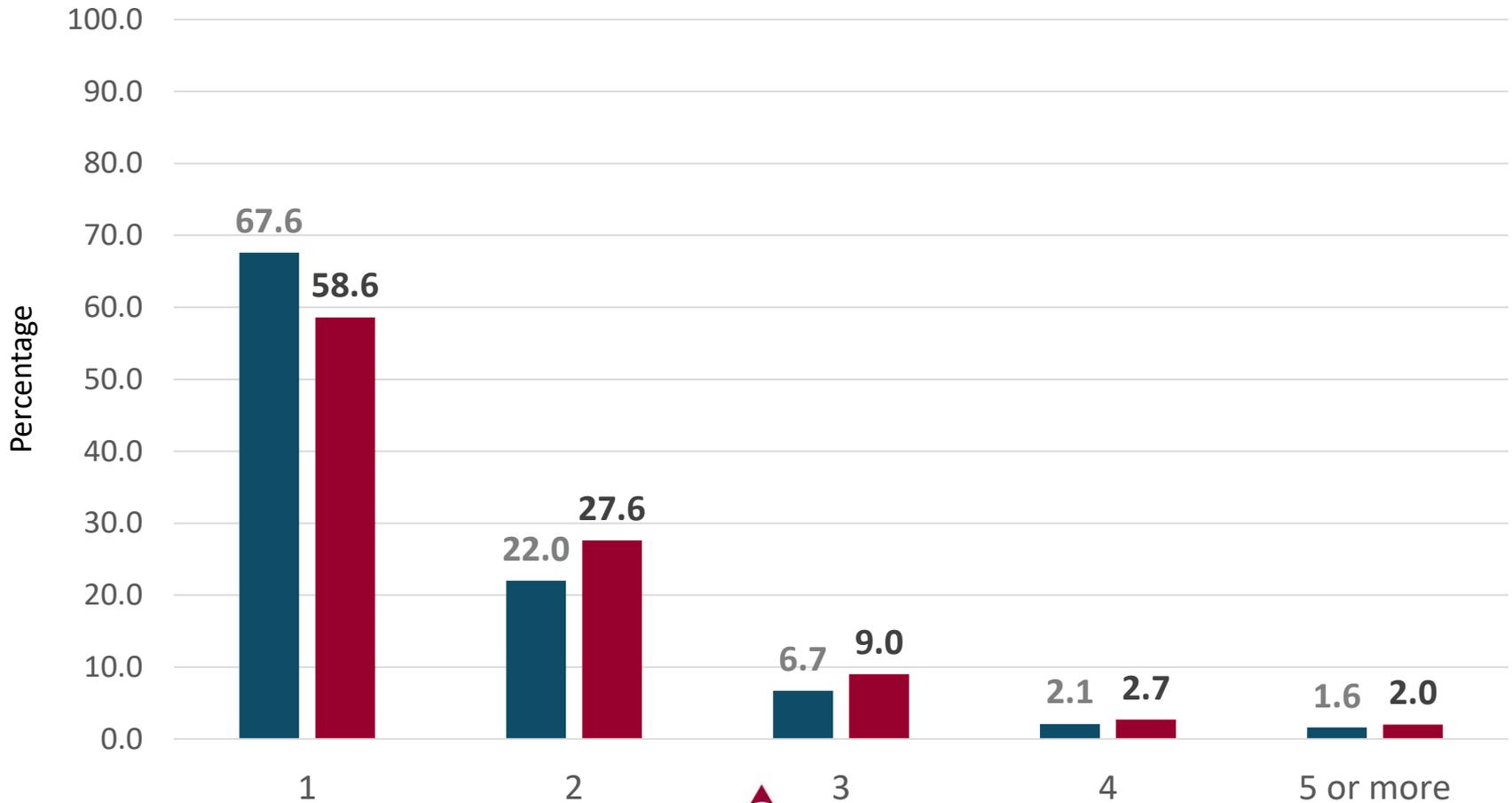
Most Common PL Sponsors



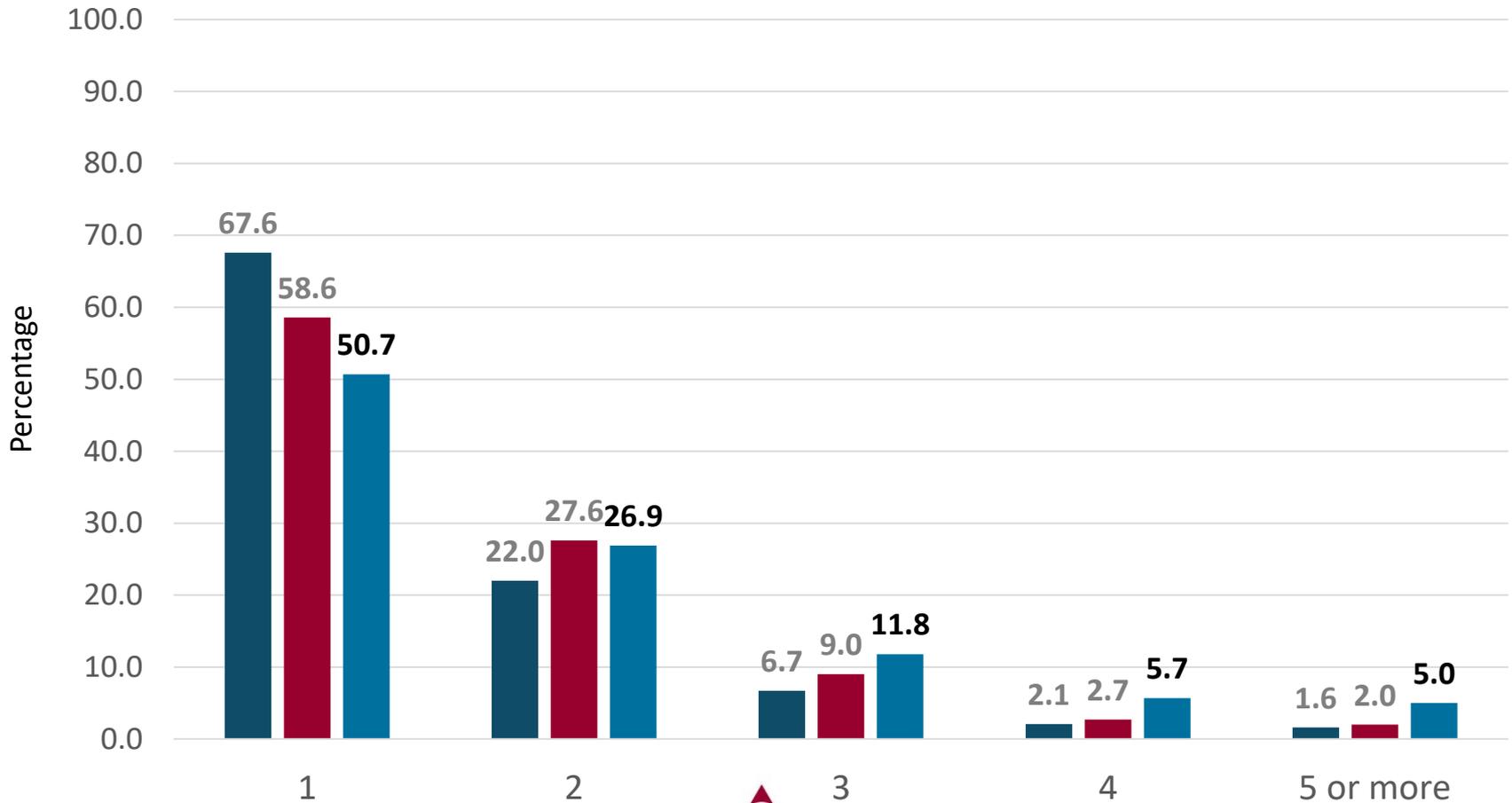
How many peer leader positions do you currently hold?



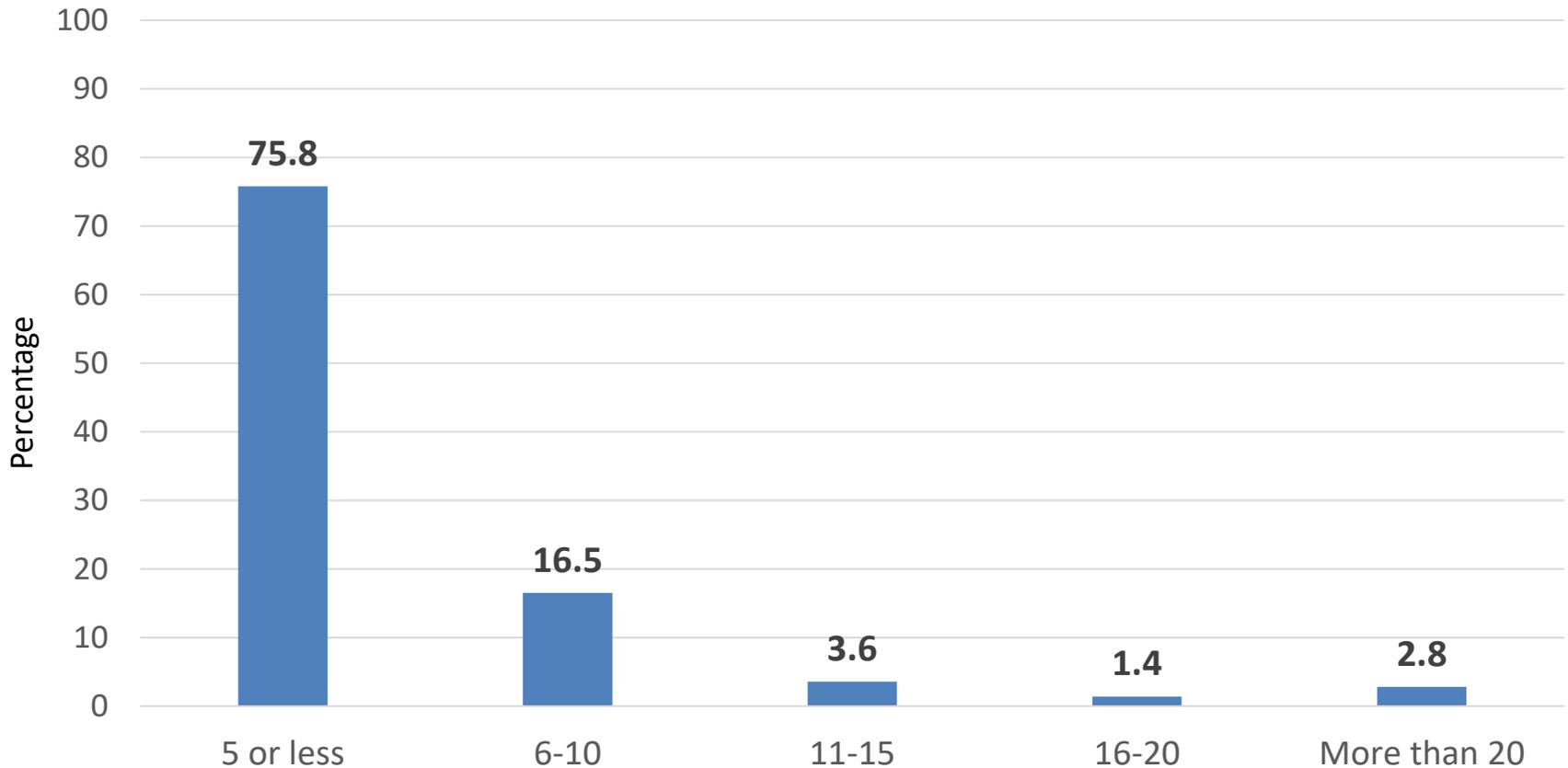
What is the highest number of PL positions have you ever held at once?



How many total peer leader positions have you held at university?



HPW spent on PL Responsibilities



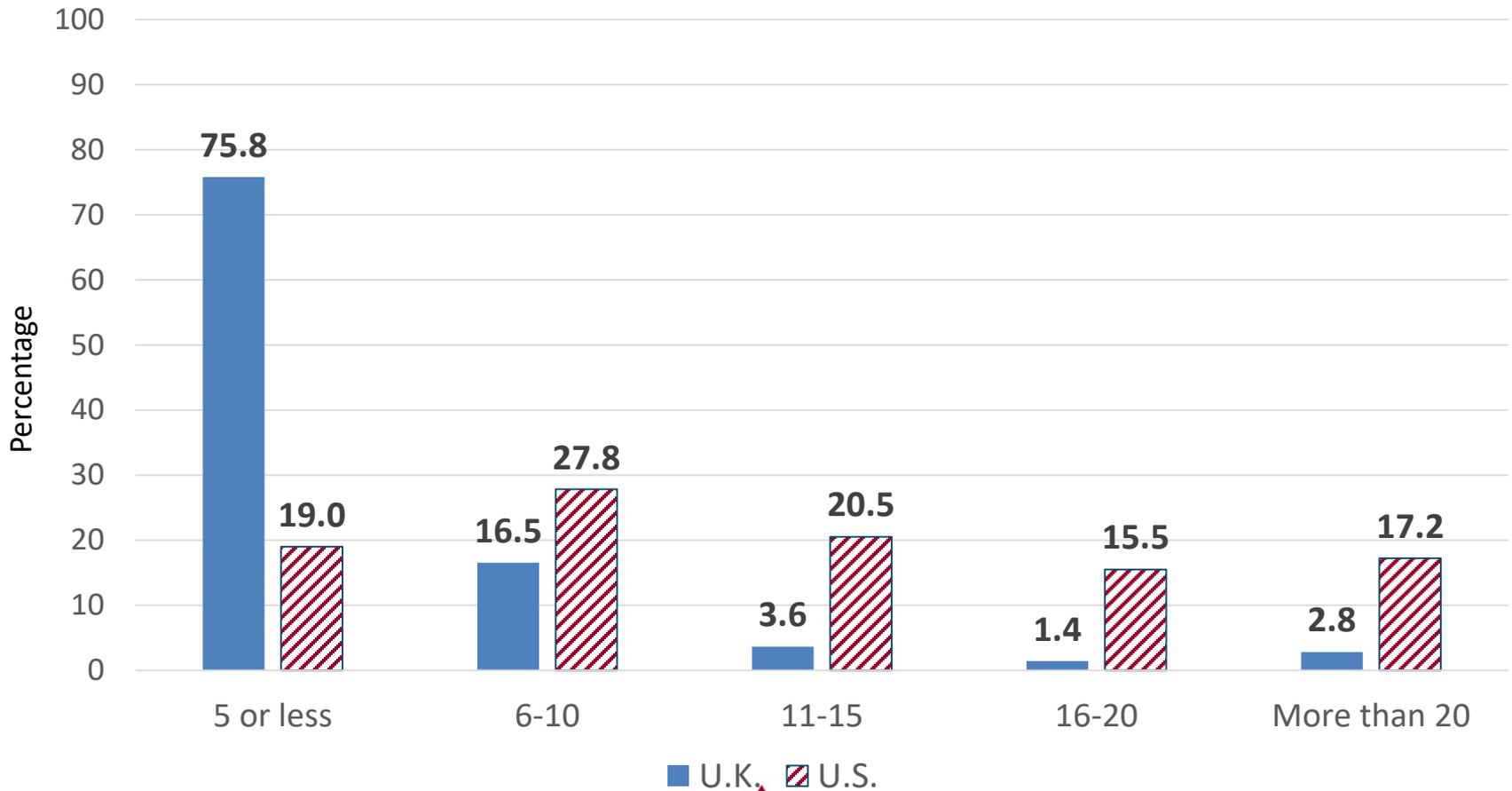
■ Series 1



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HPW spent on PL Responsibilities



■ U.K. ■ U.S.

Discussion and Takeaways

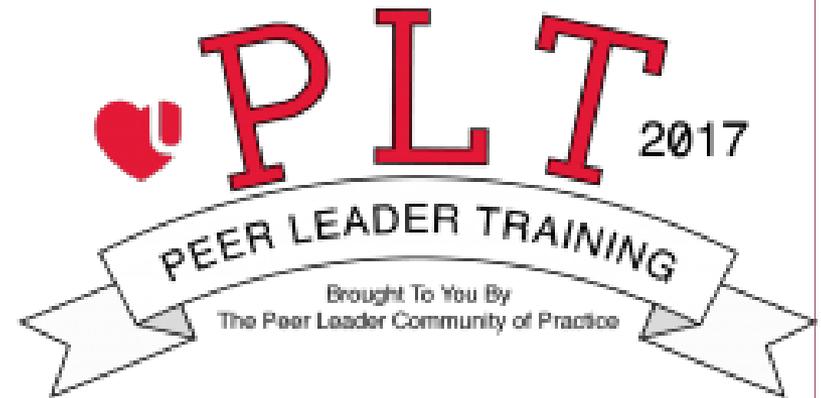
- What are the historic places and current spaces for peer leadership?
- What are emergent peer leader roles?
- What can we learn from international comparisons of peer leader roles?
- Where do we need the benefits of peer leaders?
- Are there concerns about over-involvement in PL roles?



Peer Leader Selection



Turn up your life  Be a PL



Results

PEER LEADER SELECTION, TRAINING, & COMPENSATION

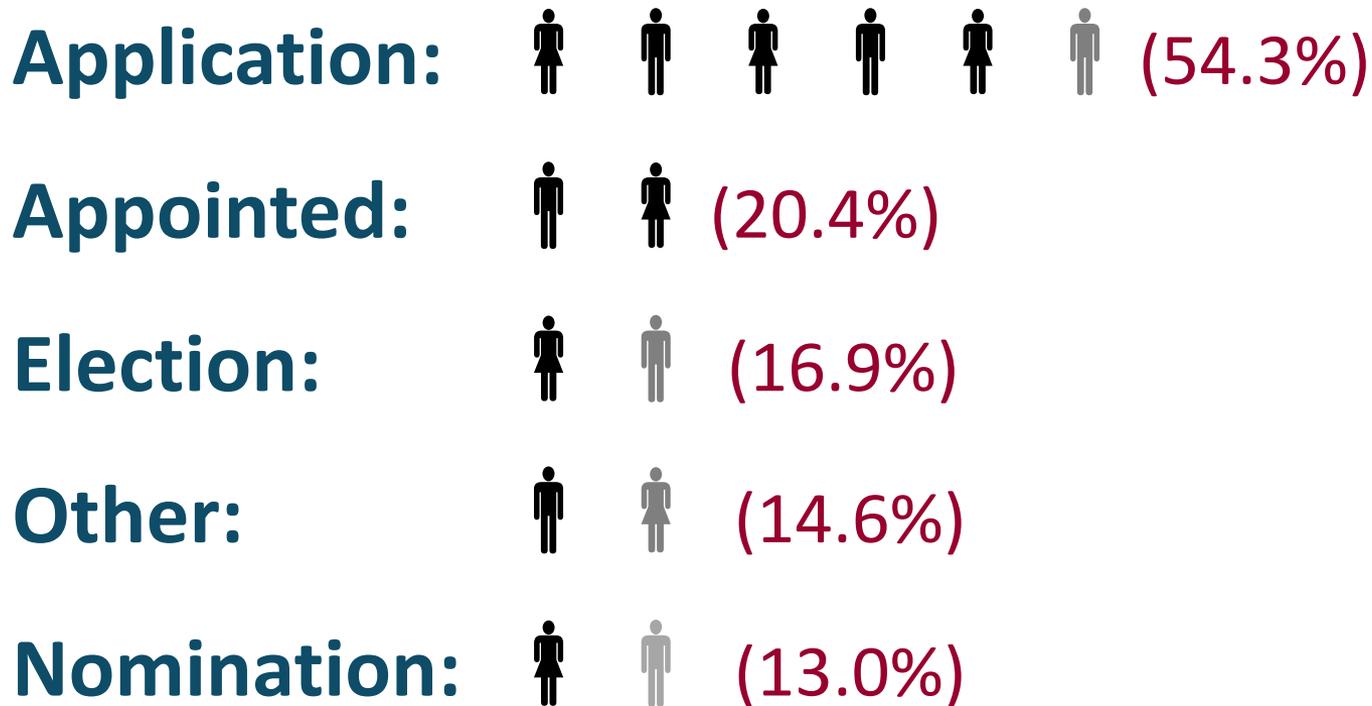


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PL Selection Process

Which of the following best describes the peer leader selection process you went through (n = 431)



PL Selection Process

Which of the following best describes the peer leader selection process you went through (n = 431)

Application:  (54.3%)

Appointed:  (20.4%)

Election:  (16.9%)

Other:  (14.6%)

Nomination:  (13.0%)

- Applied but no interview***
- Completed training**
- Took leadership classes*
- Volunteered*
- Recommendation
- Established club (“made myself the chairman”)
- Default



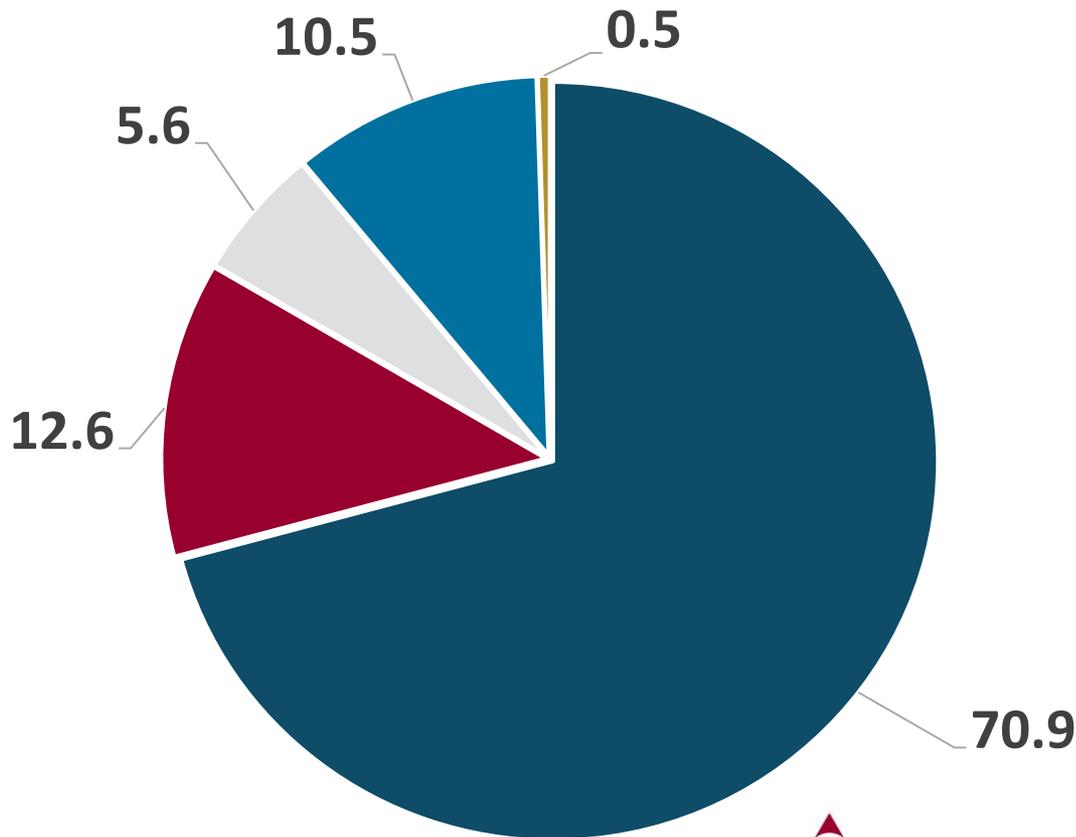
Motivation for PL Involvement



(Portas, Swainston, Byrnes & Hewiston, 2016)

Training

Were you trained for your peer leader position(s)? (n = 430)



Yes, for all PL positions

Yes, for most but not for all PL positions

Yes, for some but not most PL positions

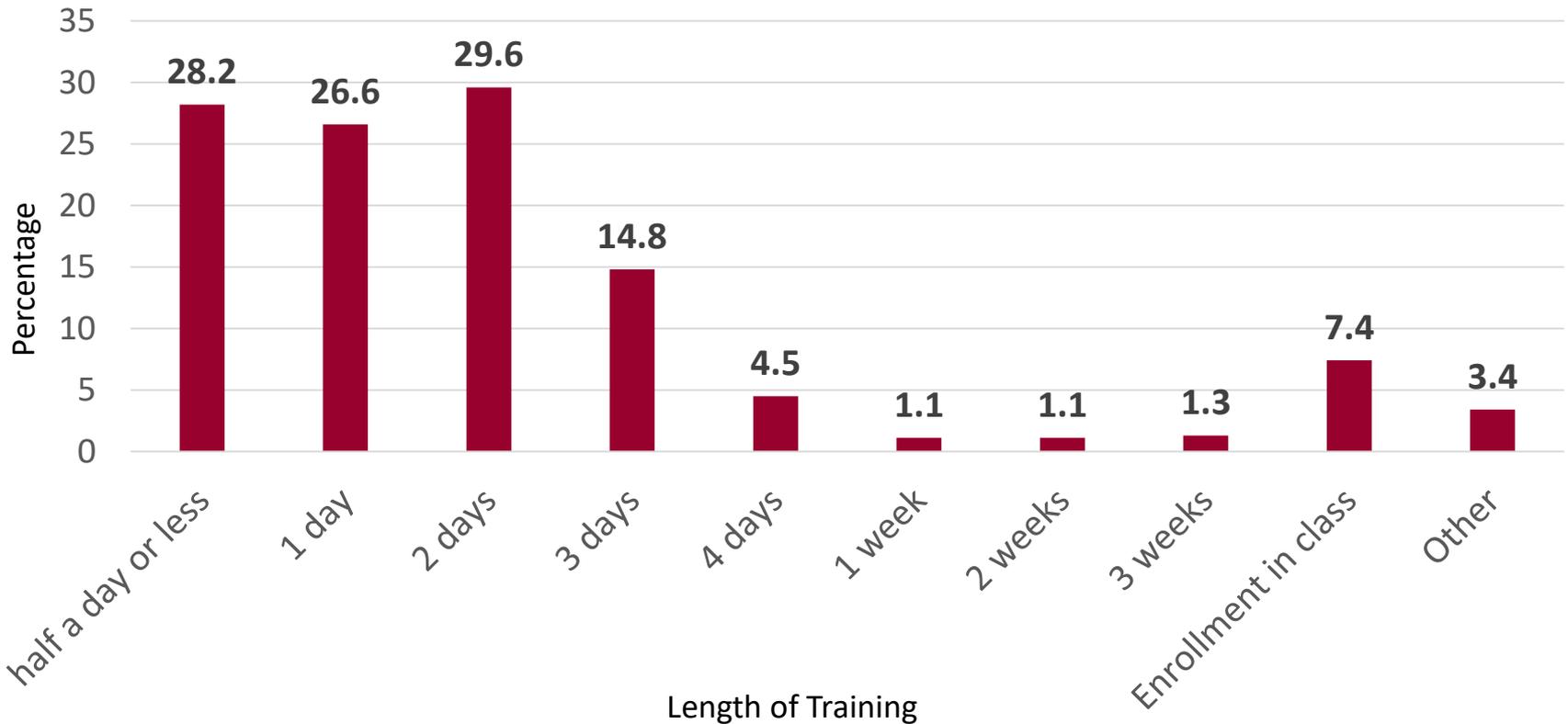
No

I don't know



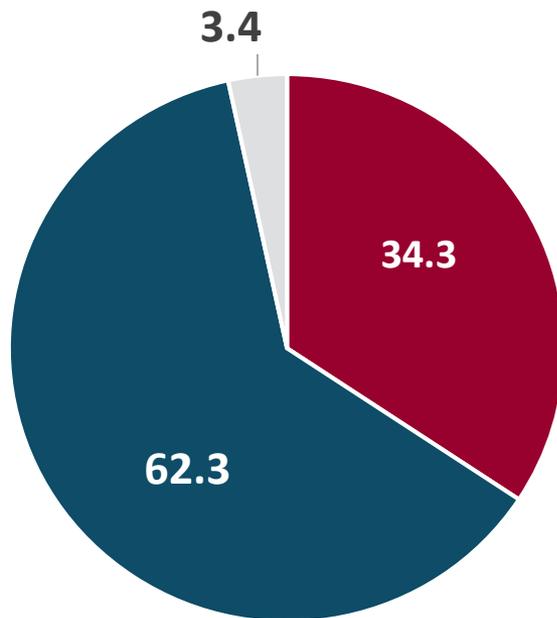
Training

How long was the initial formal training for your current and/or previous peer leader position(s)? (n = 379)



Training

Did you receive any additional ongoing formal training after the initial training? (n = 379)



■ Yes ■ No ■ I don't know

What type of additional ongoing formal training did you receive? (n = 130)

- Training meetings/ Workshops: **74.6%**
- Meetings with supervisor: **30.0%**
- Staff meetings: **11.5%**
- Other: **10.0%**
- Retreat: **6.9%**



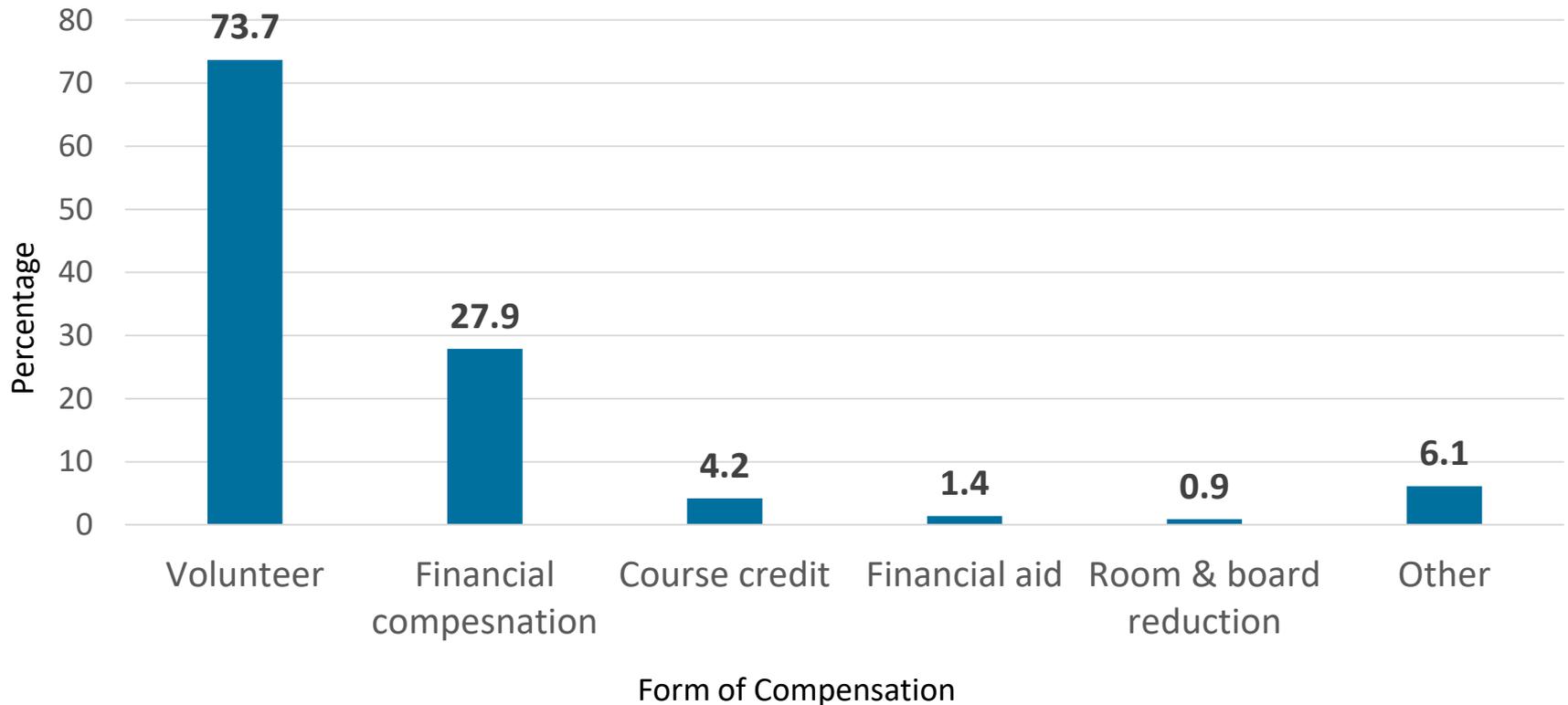
Trends in Peer Leader Training

- Longer training modules
- Ongoing support & professional development
- Curricular components
- Outcomes focused
- Focus on supervision as part of training
- Peer leadership & training among peer leaders
- Integrated across campus and across PLE



Compensation

What compensation did or do you receive for your work as a peer leader (n = 426)



Peer Leader **vs.** Student Paraprofessional



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Food for Thought

- How might motivation differ by student backgrounds (gender, SES, race/ethnicity)?
- How do we structure training as a professional development activity?
- How to retain the best of peer leadership when paying students for their work?
- How does PL selection, training, and compensation affect issues of equity and access to peer leadership opportunities?





Findings

PEER LEADER OUTCOMES



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**What are the stated
outcomes for peer
leaders at your
institution?**



Outcomes of Peer Leader Experiences

- Student peer leaders were asked to report their growth in four outcome areas:
 - “To what degree has the following (outcome) changed as a direct result of your peer leadership experiences?”
- Outcome areas
 - Skills
 - Undergraduate Experiences/Relationships
 - Employability
 - Self Confidence
 - Academic Performance

Skill Development Outcome Gains from PLEs	% Increased
Leadership	91.3
Interpersonal communication	89.1
Teamwork	86.5
Organisation	82.4
Adaptability	80.2
Decision making	78.3
Time management	75.1
Project management	72.7
Problem solving	72.3
Critical thinking	72.0
Presentation	71.0
Creativity	64.7
Written communication	54.3

Skill Development Outcome Gains from PLEs	% Increased
Leadership (+PASS Only; +Multiple Roles w/PASS)	91.3
Interpersonal communication (+Multiple Roles w/PASS)	89.1
Teamwork	86.5
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Project management	72.7
Problem solving	72.3
Critical thinking	72.0
Presentation	71.0
Creativity	64.7
Written communication	54.3

Undergraduate Experience Gains from PLEs	% Increased
Meaningful interaction with peers	89.8
Feeling of contribution to the campus community	86.8
Knowledge of campus resources	86.5
Feeling of belonging at institution	80.7
Meaningful interaction with profs/teaching staff	80.3
Interaction with people from different backgrounds	79.1
Meaningful interaction with staff members	78.6
Knowledge of people from different backgrounds	77.8
Understanding people from different backgrounds	77.1
Desire to persist at institution	64.6
Desire to engage in continuous learning post-grad	62.3



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(Portas, Swainston, Byrnes & Hewiston, 2016)



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Employability Outcome Gains from PLEs	% Increased
Building professional interpersonal relationships	88.3
Bringing together info from different places	78.0
Providing direction through persuasion	77.0
Analyzing a problem from new perspectives	76.7
Creating innovative approaches to a task	74.2
Applying knowledge to a real-world setting*	71.7
Expectations for success in a FT job after grad	64.9
Sharing ideas with others in writing	62.1
Engaging in ethical decision-making	60.7



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Expectations for success in a FT job after grad (+Multiple Roles w/PASS; Multiple Roles w/o PASS)	64.9
Sharing ideas with others in writing	62.1
Engaging in ethical decision-making	60.7

(Portas, Swainston, Byrnes & Hewiston, 2016)

Gains in Academic Performance from PLEs	% Increased
Academic skill development	50.7
Overall academic performance	38.4
Average marks for your degree	27.3
# of modules/subjects completed each term	16.4
Facilitate timely graduation	8.1



Gains in Academic Performance from PLEs

% Increased

Academic skill development (ranked last among skills)

50.7

Overall academic performance

38.4

Average marks for your degree

27.3

of modules/subjects completed each term

16.4

Facilitate timely graduation

8.1



Self Confidence Gains from PLEs	% Increased
Confidence to interact with your peers	89.8
Confidence to interact with academics/lecturers and other university staff	86.9
Confidence that you have the employability skills required of a grad	80.4
Confidence in your ability to complete academic work to a good standard	59.2



Experiences and Effects of PL Role

“This experience enabled me to get more involved in the Sociology Society, provide support to the first year students and get more involved in my course”

“PASS provided me with an opportunity to develop my leadership skills.”

“It is something valuable that I can add to my CV and enabled me to engage in peer support”

“This experience provided an opportunity to help other students”

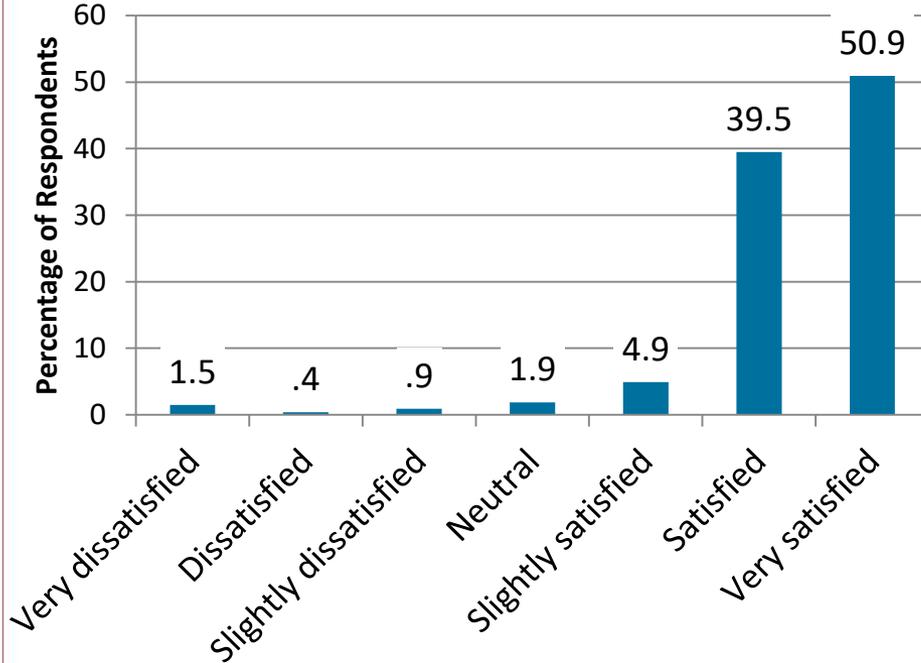
“Developed my own personal teaching and presentation skills”



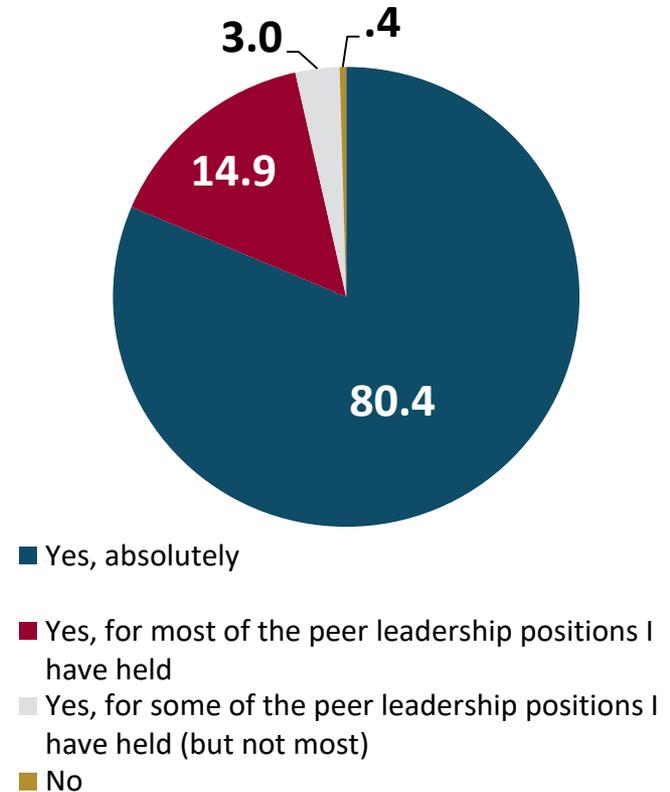
(Portas, Swainston, Byrnes & Hewiston, 2016)

Satisfaction with PLEs

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your peer leadership experiences?

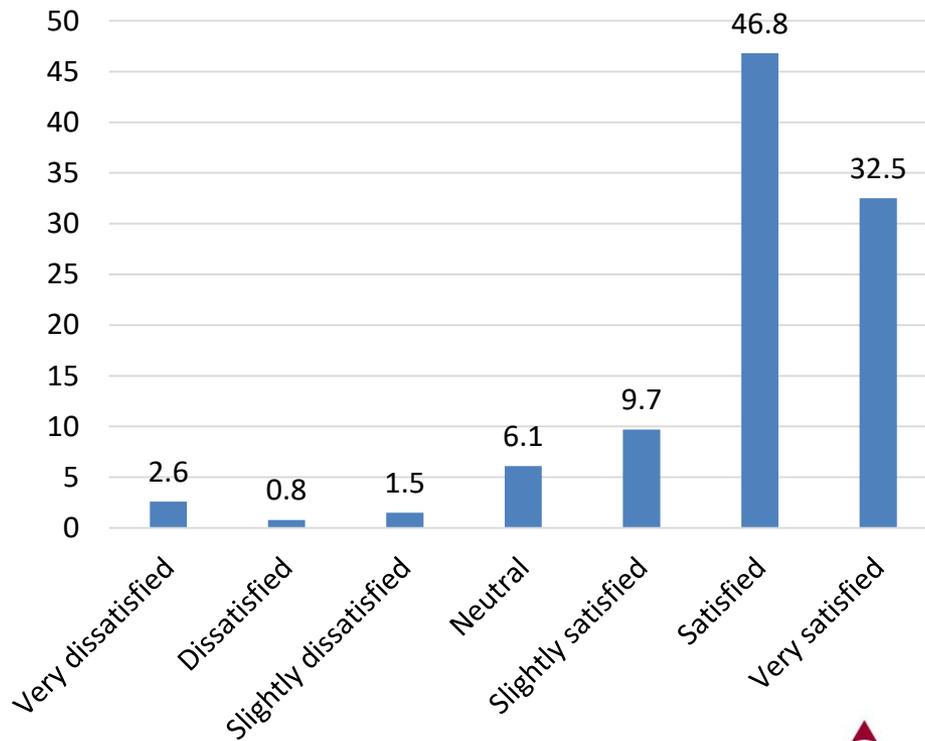


Would you recommend being a peer leader to other students?

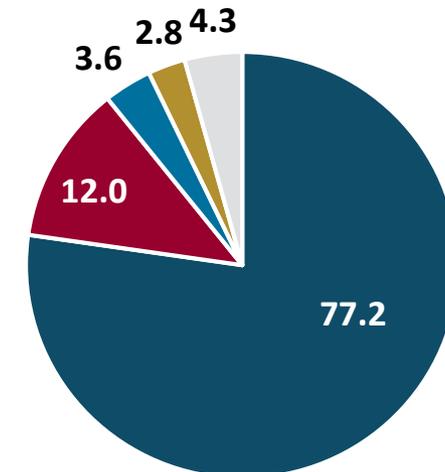


Satisfaction with PLEs

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your PL experiences?



Would you recommend being a PL to other students?



- Yes, Absolutely
- Yes for most of the PL positions I have held
- Yes, for some of the PL positions I have held
- No
- I don't know





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 professor. 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.



Conclusions

PEER LEADERSHIP AS A HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICE



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Definition of High-Impact Practices

“Teaching and learning practices that have been widely tested and have been shown to be beneficial for college students from many backgrounds. These practices take many different forms, depending upon learner characteristics and on institutional priorities and contexts. [*HIPs are*] practices that educational research suggest increase rates of retention and student engagement.”

(Kuh, 2010)



10 High-Impact Practices

- First-Year Seminars and Experiences
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments & Projects

- Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- Internships
- Capstone Courses and Projects



What does it mean to be HIP?



Be on the lookout for hipsters like these...

Characteristics of HIPs

- Creates an investment of time and energy
- Includes interaction with faculty and peers about substantive matters
- Real-world applications
- High expectations
- Includes frequent feedback
- Exposure to diverse perspectives
- Demands reflection and integrated learning
- Accountability



Consider Adaptability of HIPs

“[HIP] key conditions can be adapted and incorporated into any teaching and learning situation inside or outside the classroom to promote higher levels of student performance. There are doubtless other high-impact activities...in which large number of students participate.”

Kuh in Brownell & Swaner, 2010



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High-Impact Practices

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- ✓ Capstone Courses & Projects
- ✓ **Peer Leadership**





Thought is action in rehearsal.
Sigmund Freud

Conclusions

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS & TAKEAWAYS



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Session Learning Objectives

As a result of attending this session, participants will:

- ...gain a greater understanding of the characteristics and outcomes of peer leadership experiences.
- ...have the opportunity to compare features of their peer leadership programs to a broad empirical profile.
- ...be able to use empirical evidence to consider innovations or refinements to their programs.
- ...advance their understanding of peer leadership as an emerging and innovative high-impact practice.



Outcomes and Goals

- What are 3 ideas you will take away from today?
- What are 3 things you plan to do with those ideas?
- Who are three people with whom you plan to share these ideas and plans?
- What resources (think other than money) do you have to implement those ideas?





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