



NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

The Trusted Expert and Internationally Recognized Leader
for all Postsecondary Student Transitions

2013 National Survey of Peer Leaders

Presentation for USC PLAN

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Peer Pressure

“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)



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

Defining “Peer Leadership”

“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.**” (*Ender & Newton, 2000, 2010*)

Background on Peer Leaders

- Historically, Peer Leaders were situated in co-curricular roles in orientation or residence life (Ender & Kay, 2001)
- Recently, the use of Peer Leaders in the classroom and academic realm has become more widespread (Greenfield, et al., 2013)
 - Roles: tutors, Supplemental Instruction leaders, and peer advisors
 - Courses: English composition, introductory mathematics, gateway courses, and first-year seminars

Background on Peer Leaders

- The use of Peer Leaders provides benefits to:
 - Programs
 - Improved student outcomes
 - Share the workload with staff and instructors
 - Greater connection between staff, instructors, and students as Peer Leader forms the bridge
 - Students
 - Improved student outcomes
 - Increased attention
 - More opportunities for student interventions
 - Peer Leaders
 - Training and ongoing support
 - Engagement with faculty and staff
 - Challenging duties and responsibilities
 - Reflection and self-appraisal
 - All qualities of what AAC&U defines as a “High-Impact Practice” (Kuh, 2008)

Background on 2013 National Survey of Peer Leaders

- Pilot of National Survey of Peer Leaders in 2009
- 1,972 students responded to the survey
- Results garnered much interest
- Decided to make a more concerted data collection effort building on 2009 pilot

Background on 2013 National Survey of Peer Leaders

- Formed a partnership with 5 leading higher education organizations with strong presence of peer leaders:
 - ACUHO-I
 - International Center for SI
 - NACA
 - National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition
 - NODA

Participating Institutions

Angelo State University
Appalachian State University
Bethany College
Brigham Young University
Campbell University
Cedar Crest College
Colorado State University
East Carolina University
Eastern Illinois University
Fort Hays State University
Framingham State University
Furman University
Georgia Southern University
Hofstra University
Indiana University - Purdue
University Fort Wayne
Indiana University East
Kennesaw State University

Lesley University
Lyndon State College
Madonna University
Minot State University
Missouri State University
Montclair State University
Morgan State University
Northern Illinois University
Ohio University
Oklahoma State University - Main
Campus
Oregon State University
San Jose State University
South Dakota State University
Southern Arkansas University
Southern Illinois University
Stetson University
Temple University

The College at Brockport
The University of Maryland - College
Park
The University of New Orleans
The University of South Florida
The University of Tampa
University of Central Florida
University of Florida
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
University of Maryland Baltimore
County
University of South Carolina
Columbia
University of South Carolina Upstate
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Wayne State University
Wells College
Wittenberg University

Methodology - 2013 NSPL

- 49 four-year institutions participated in the survey.
 - Administered from 3/26/2013 – 6/1/2013
- 4,932 student peer leaders participated, a response rate of 28.6%.
- Sample over-represents women & high academic performers
- Adequate representation by race/ethnicity, class standing, & Pell Grant eligibility

Results

What type of campus-based organization have you worked for as a peer leader, either currently or in the past? (n = 4016)

Peer Leader Experience	%
Student clubs and organization(s)	44.5
Residence Hall	28.9
First-Year Experience	28.6
Campus activities	28.5
Orientation	24.6
Academic - peer advisor	24.5
Community service or service learning	23.8
Academic - Tutor	23.4

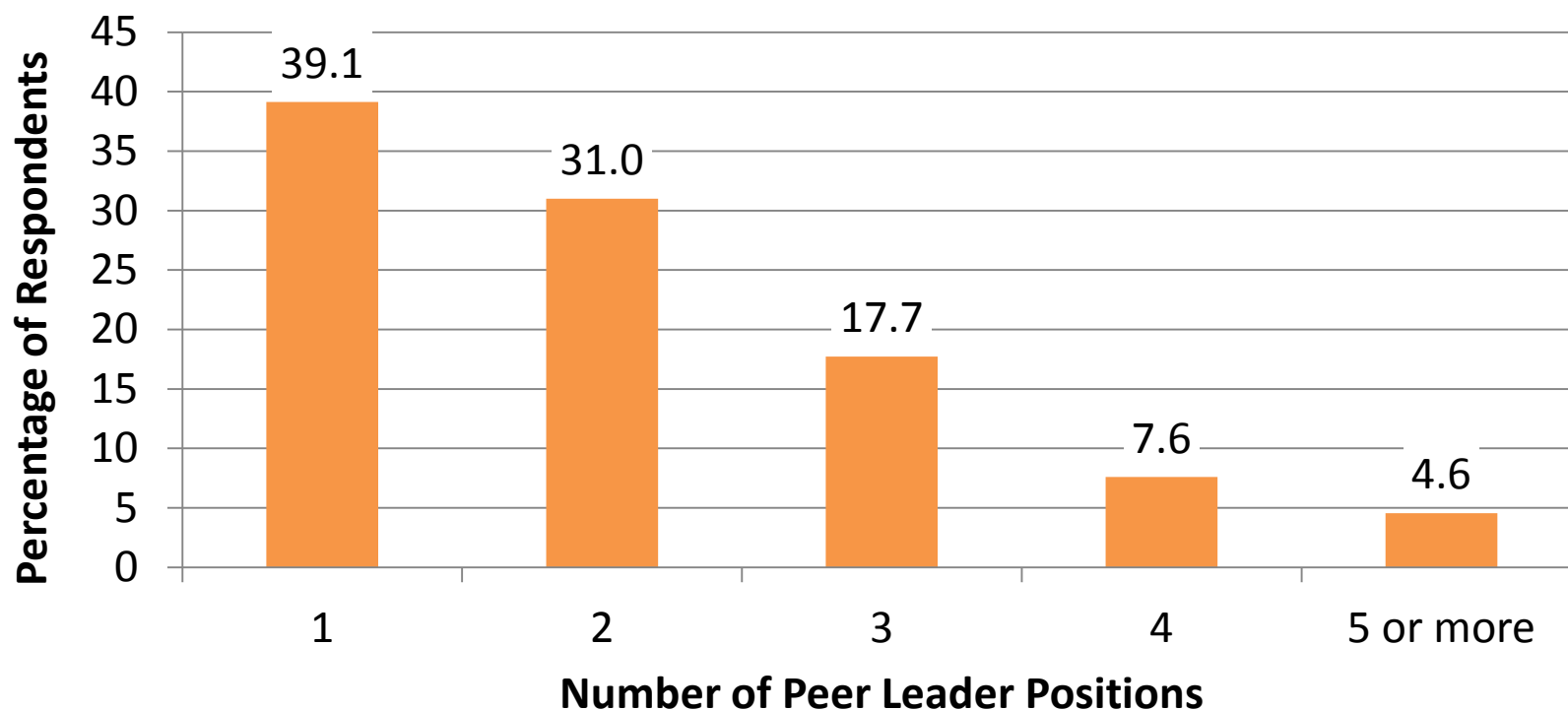
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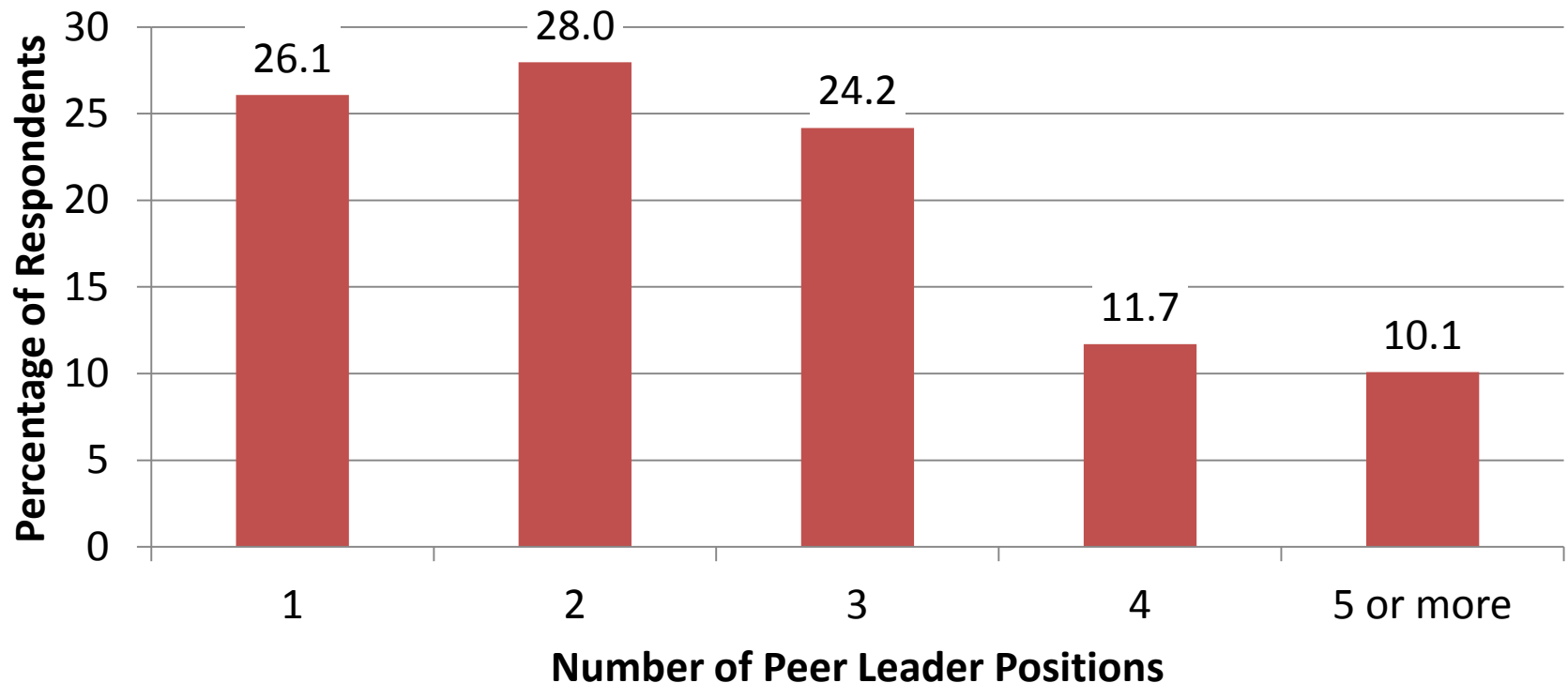
Number of Peer Leader Experiences

How many peer leader positions do you currently hold? (n = 3527)



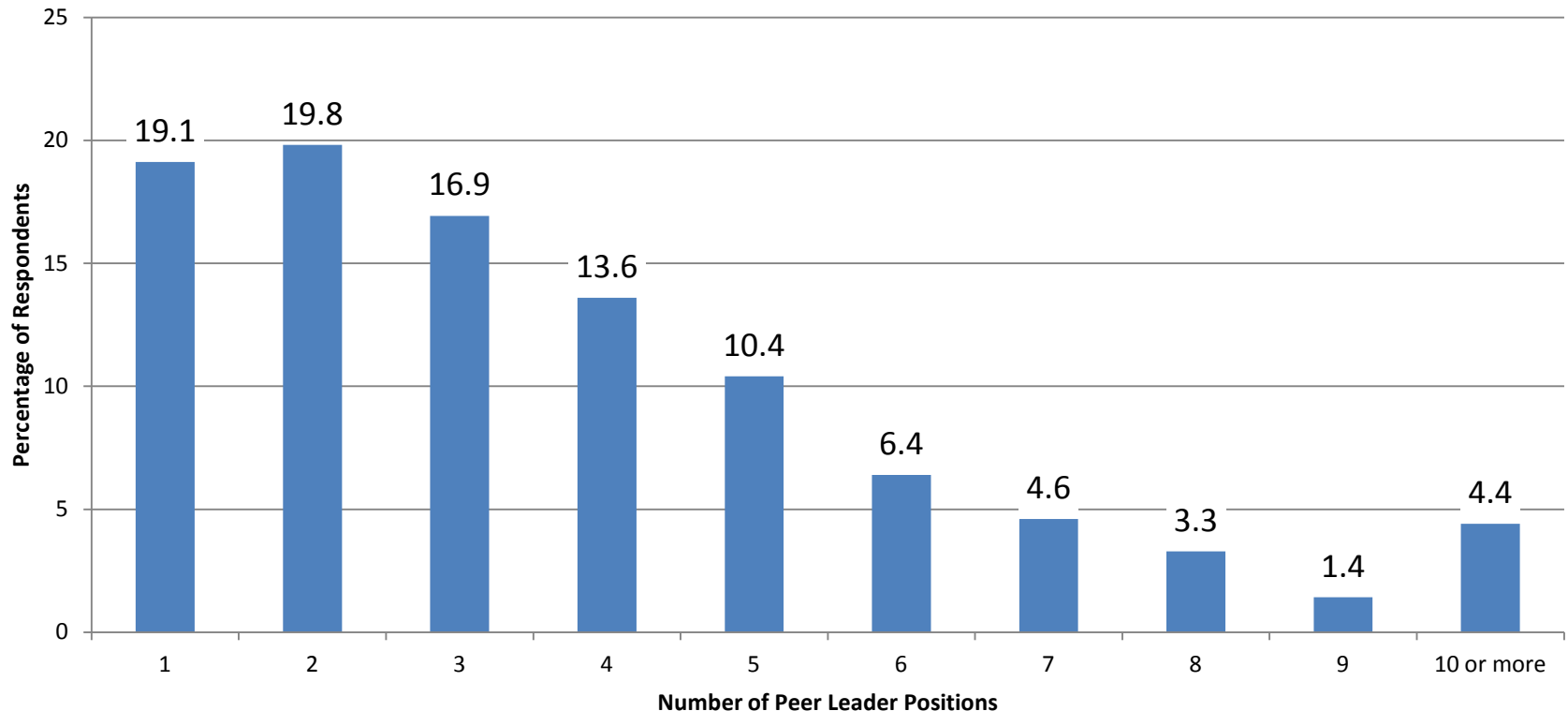
Number of Peer Leader Experiences

What is the highest number of peer leader positions have you ever held at one time? (n = 4016)



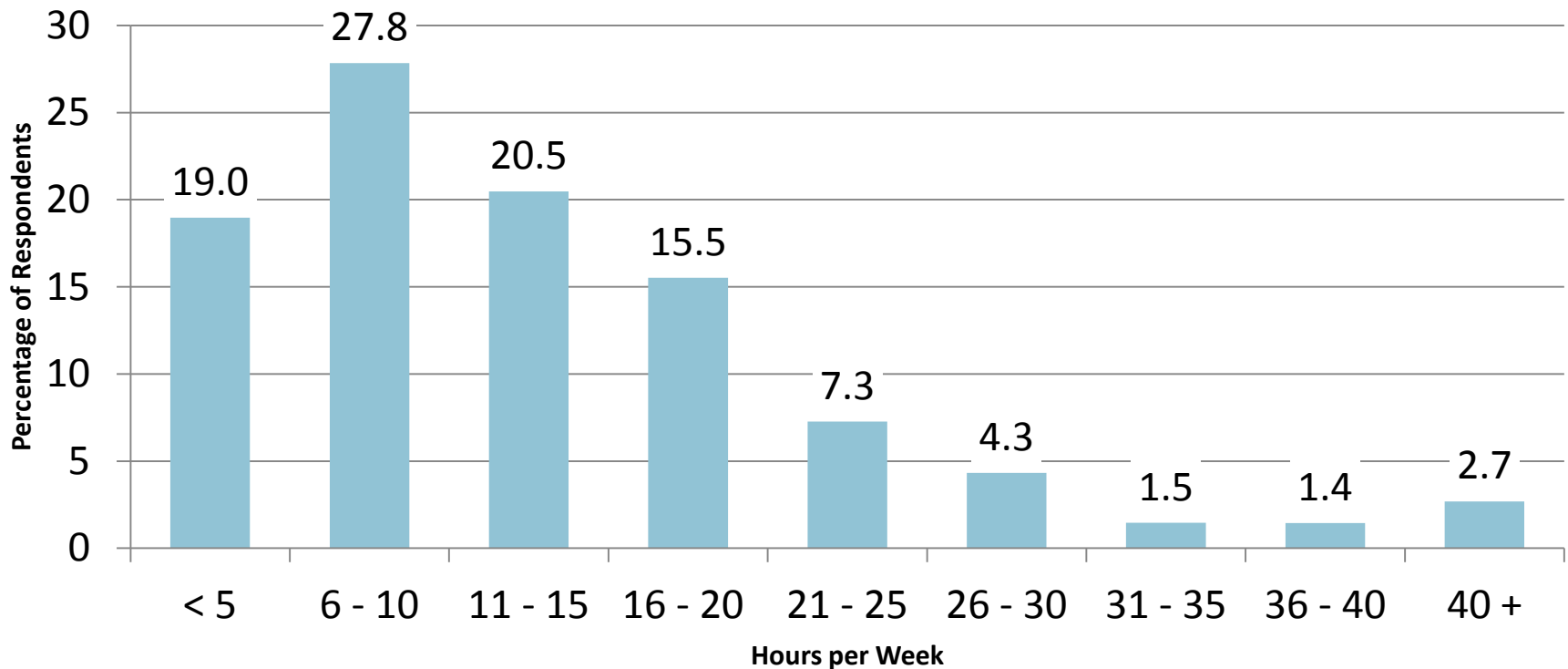
Number of Peer Leader Experiences

Including any current positions, how many total peer leader positions have you held during your college experience? (n = 4016)



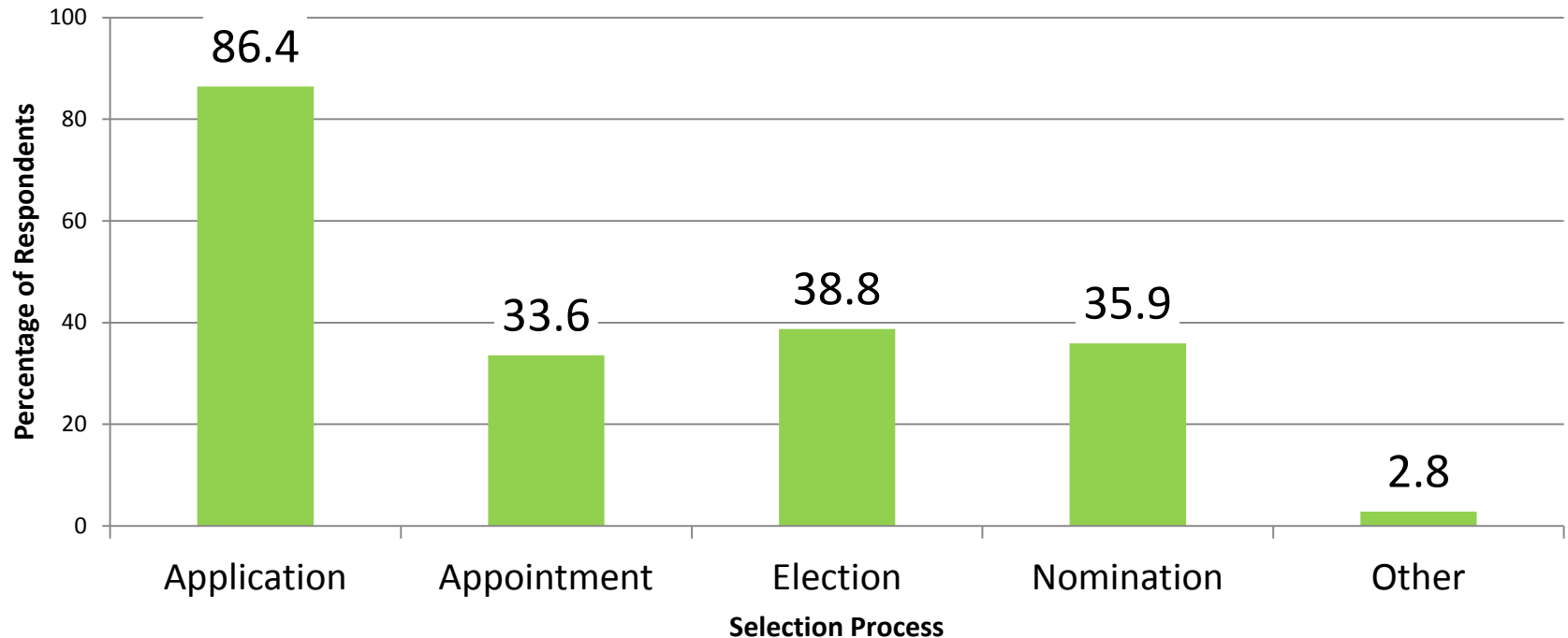
Time Spent on PLEs

On average, how many hours per week do you spend performing your peer leader responsibilities? (n = 4016)



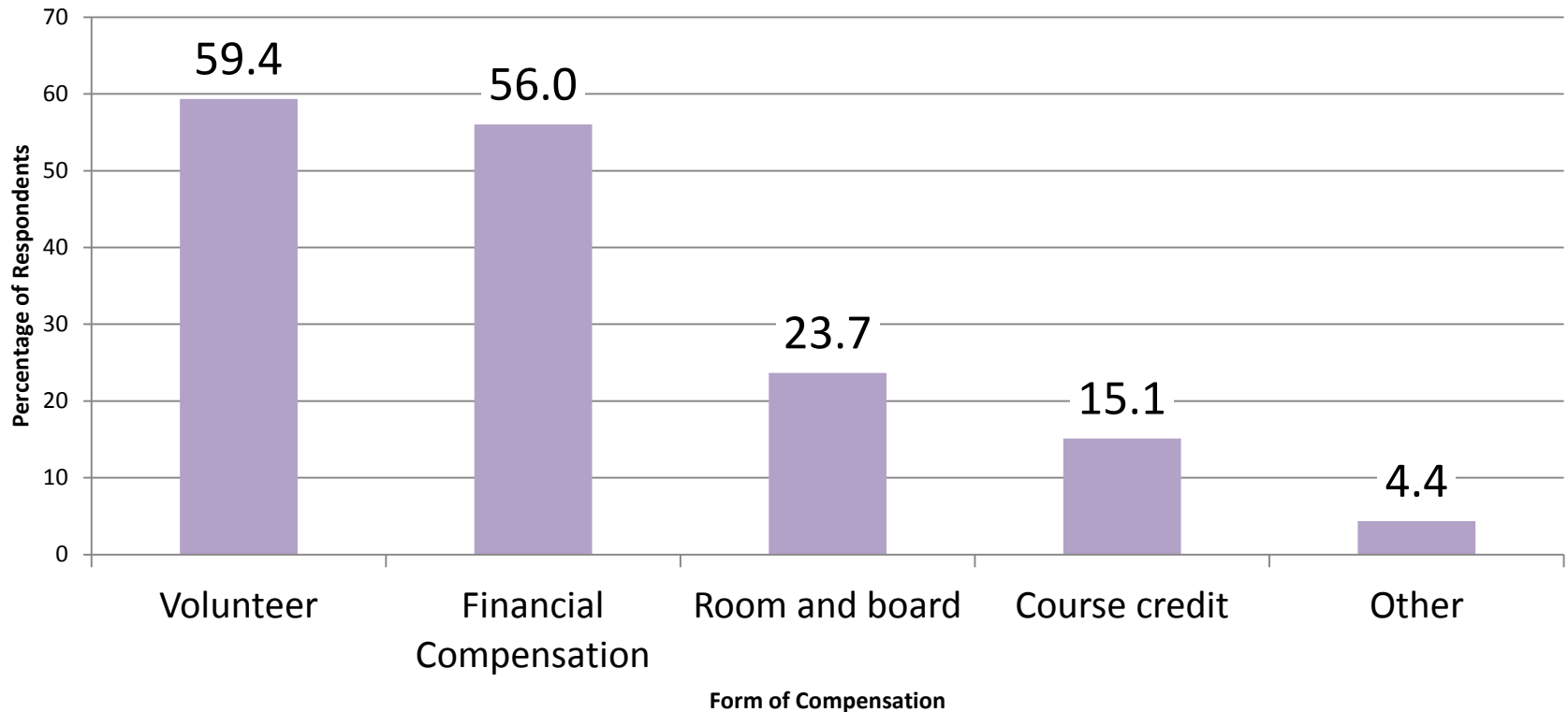
Selection Process

Which of the following best describes the peer leader selection process you went through? (n = 3942)



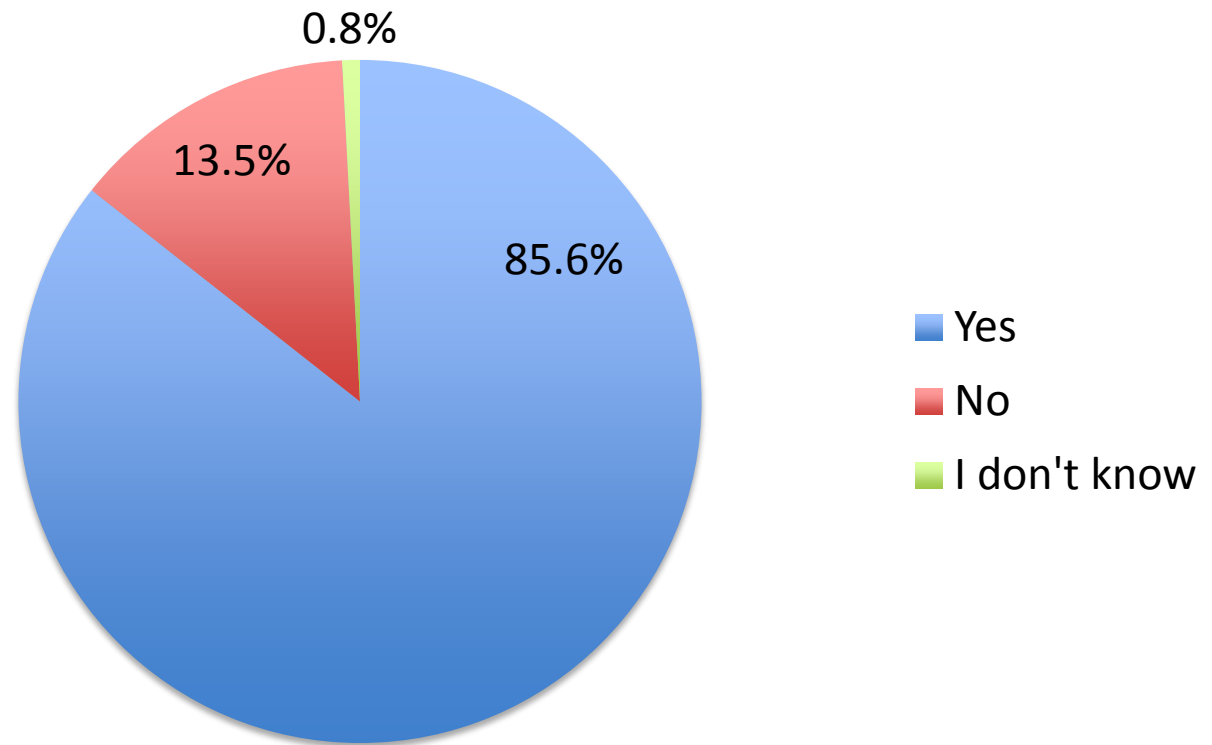
Compensation

What compensation did or do you receive for your work as a peer leader? (n = 3942)



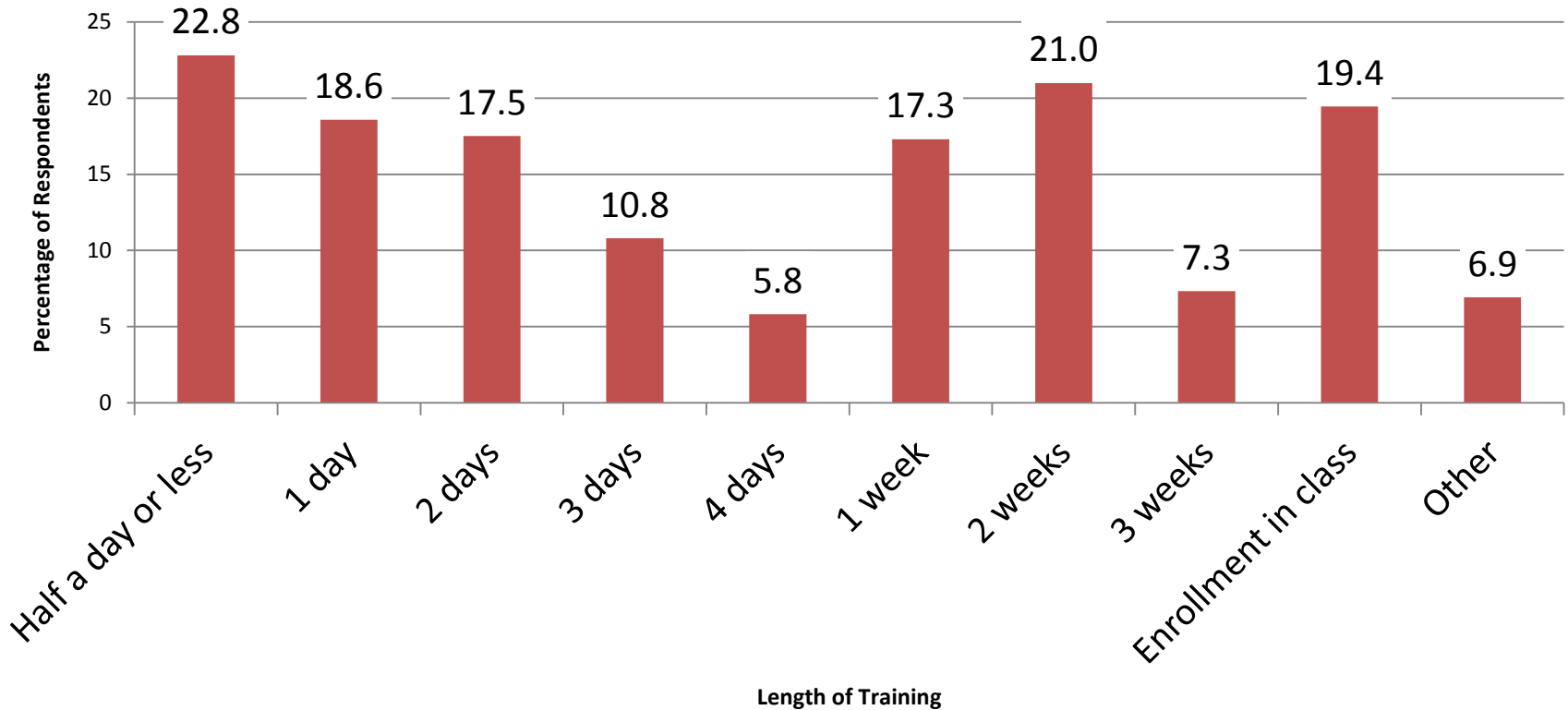
Training

Were you trained for your peer leader position(s)?
(n = 3942)



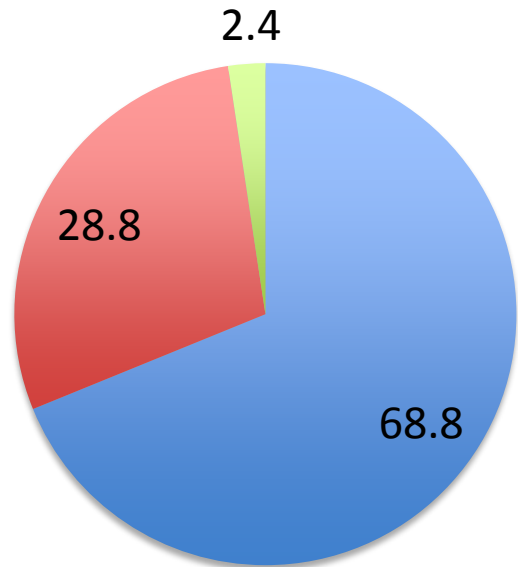
Training

How long was the initial formal training for your current and/or previous peer leader position(s)? (n = 3353)



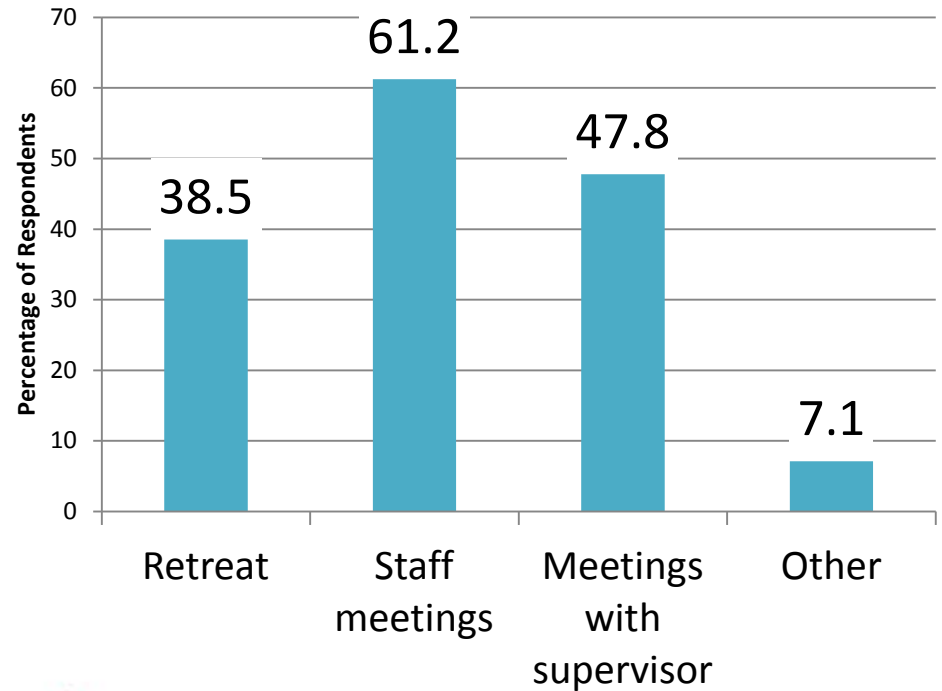
Training

Did you receive any additional ongoing formal training after the initial training? (n = 3353)



■ Yes ■ No ■ I don't know

What type of additional ongoing formal training did you receive? (n = 2303)



Outcomes of Peer Leader Experiences

- Student Peer Leaders were asked to report growth in four outcome areas
 - “To what degree have the following [outcomes] changed as a direct result of your peer leadership experiences?”
- Outcome Areas:
 - Skills
 - Undergraduate Experiences
 - Employability Outcomes
 - Academic Performance

Outcomes of PLEs

Skill Development	% Increased
Leadership	87.3
Interpersonal communication	82.5
Teamwork	77.5
Time management	73.6
Project management	72.9
Organization	71.5
Presentation	67.5
Critical thinking	65.8
Written communication	53.4

Outcomes of PLEs

Undergraduate Experience	% Increased
Knowledge of campus resources	83.6
Meaningful interaction with peers	81.2
Feeling of belonging at institution	76.6
Meaningful interaction with staff members	75.9
Interaction with people from different backgrounds	75.6
Meaningful interaction with faculty	73.3
Understanding people from different backgrounds	72.9
Desire to engage in continuous learning	71.8
Desire to persist at institution	68.9

Outcomes of PLEs

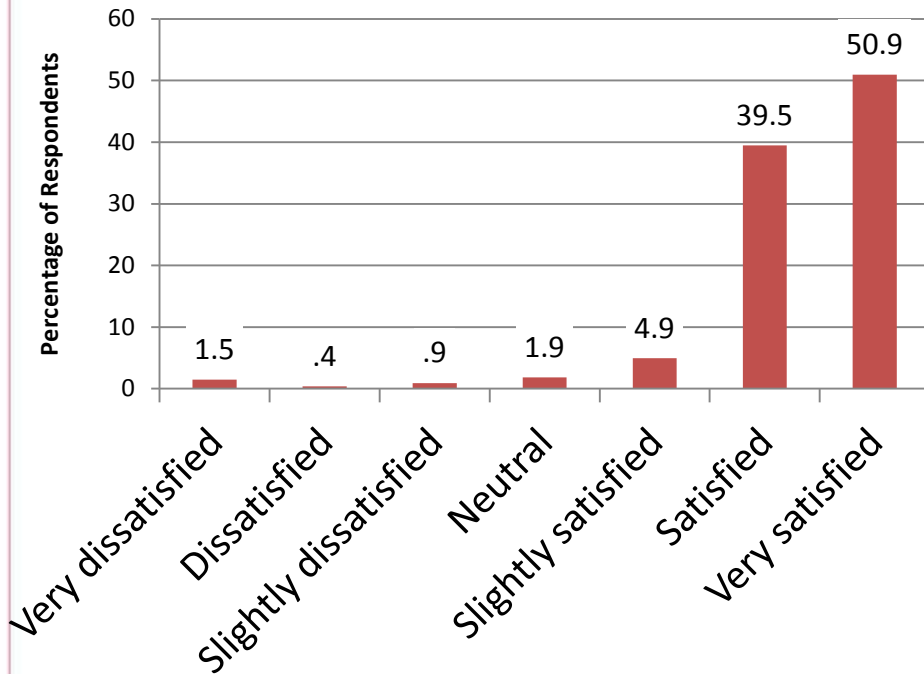
Employability Outcomes	% Increased
Building professional interpersonal relationships	77.9
Applying knowledge to a real-world setting	72.7
Bringing together info from different places	71.2
Providing direction through persuasion	67.8
Analyzing a problem from new perspectives	65.8
Expectations for success in a FT job after grad	65.5
Creating innovative approaches to a task	65.4
Engaging in ethical decision-making	64.5
Sharing ideas with others in writing	46.2

Outcomes of PLEs

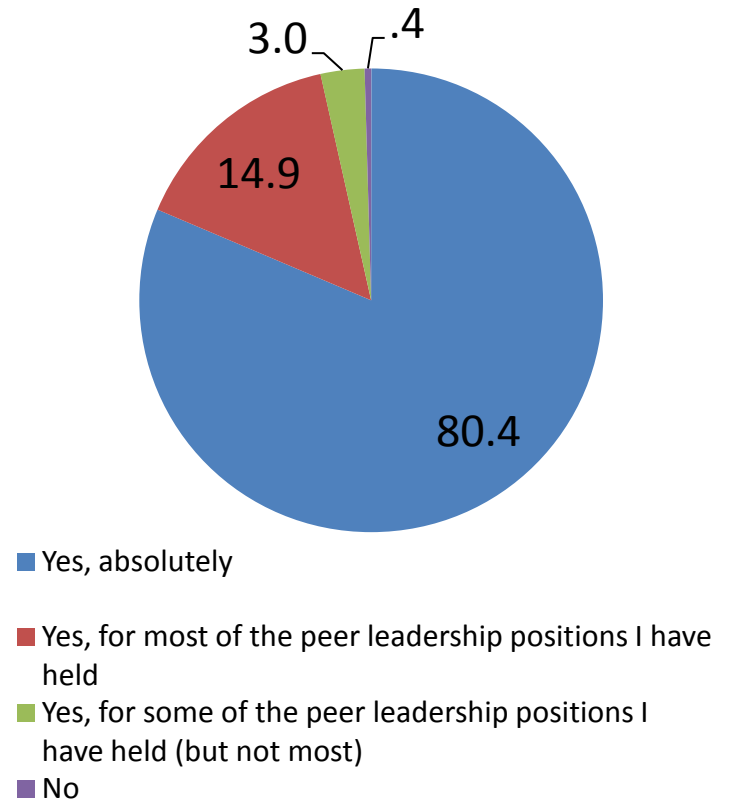
Academic Performance	% Increased
Academic skill development	39.9
Overall academic performance	23.8
Grade point average	19.0
# of credit hours completed each term	15.1
Facilitate timely graduation	1.8

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?



Takeaways - Overall

- Peer Leaders Report Engagement in Experiences
 - Largest concentration of respondents reported spending between 6 and 15 hours per week on PL responsibilities
 - Many have training experiences of a week or longer
 - Majority report ongoing training
 - Nearly all respondents (96%) would recommend at least some peer leadership positions to other students

Takeaways - Overall

- Peer Leaders Report Growth as a Result of Experiences
 - Overall majority report gains on nearly all outcomes in skills, undergraduate experiences, and employability outcomes
 - Academic outcomes not as strongly affected by PLEs
 - Differences in outcomes related to type of PLE

Are you ready to get nerdy?

COMPENSATION ANALYSIS

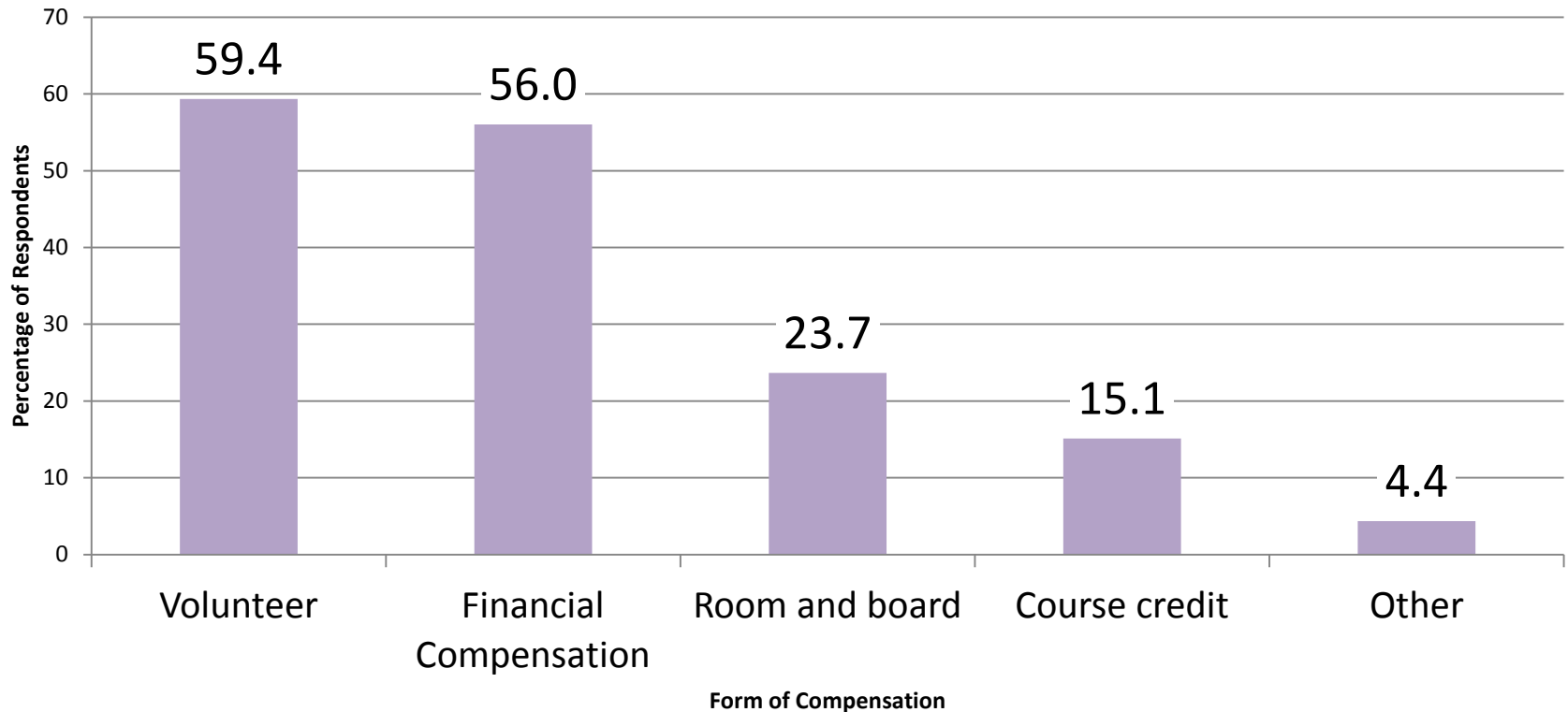


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Compensation

What compensation did or do you receive for your work as a peer leader? (n = 3942)



Influence of Compensation Modes

- Relationship of Compensation Modes to Outcomes
 - Historical PL experiences (Orientation, Residence Life) as paraprofessional roles
 - Oftentimes seen as job training
 - Influence of course credit on outcomes
- Compensation Mode can also be thought of as a proxy for mode of supervision (supervisor, advisor, educator)
- Used SEM to predict role of compensation above and beyond the influence of a set of control variables

CFA Results

27 variables grouped into 5 measures:

- Skills (7 items; $\alpha = .874$)
- Institutional Interaction (3 items; $\alpha = .812$)
- Connection with Institution (4 items; $\alpha = .838$)
- Employability Outcomes (9 items; $\alpha = .931$)
- Academic Success (4 items; $\alpha = .816$)

Notes: Model fit statistics included an RMSEA of .054 and an SRMR of .054 both indicating good model fit.

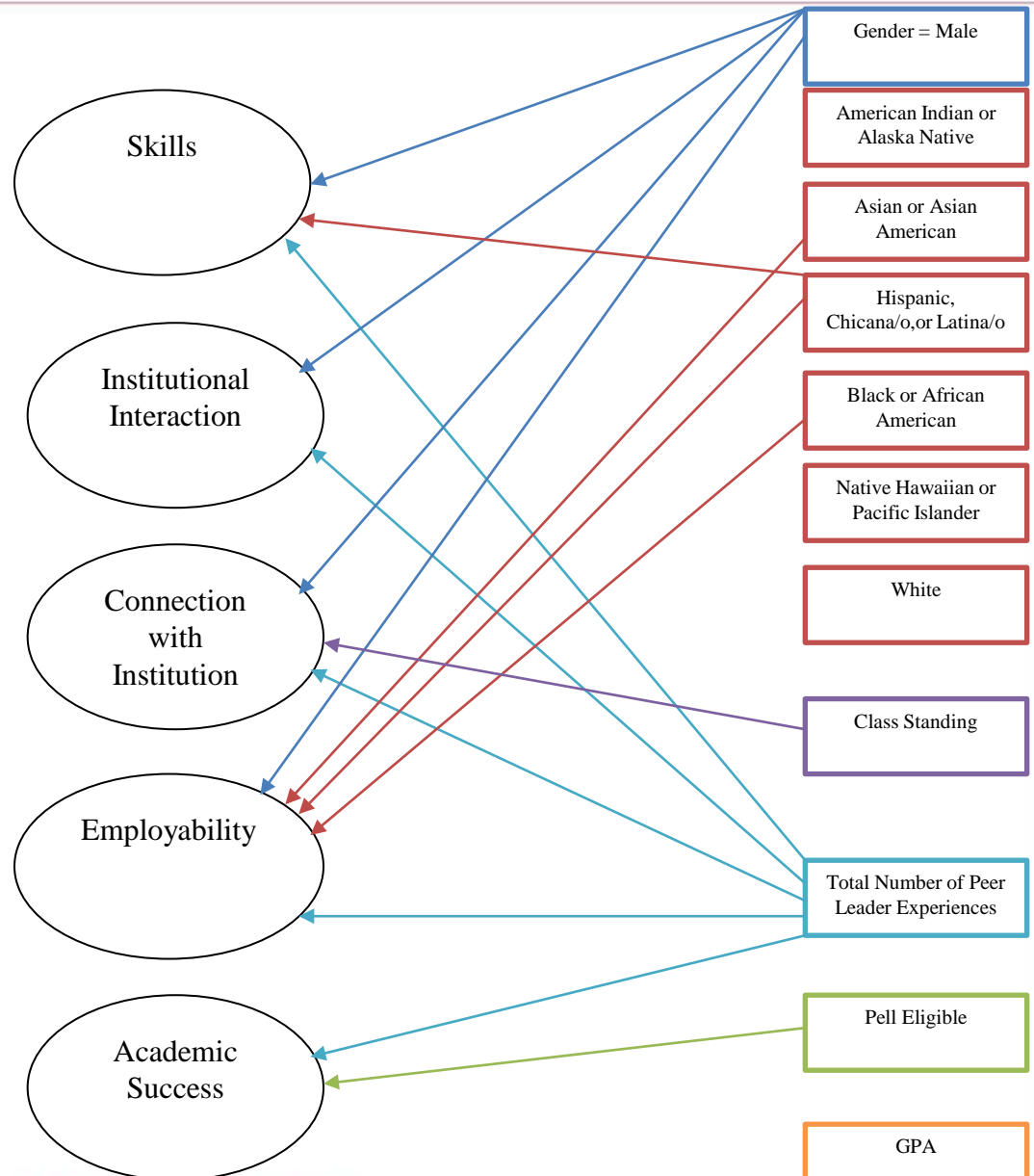
Skills

Institutional
Interaction

Connection
with
Institution

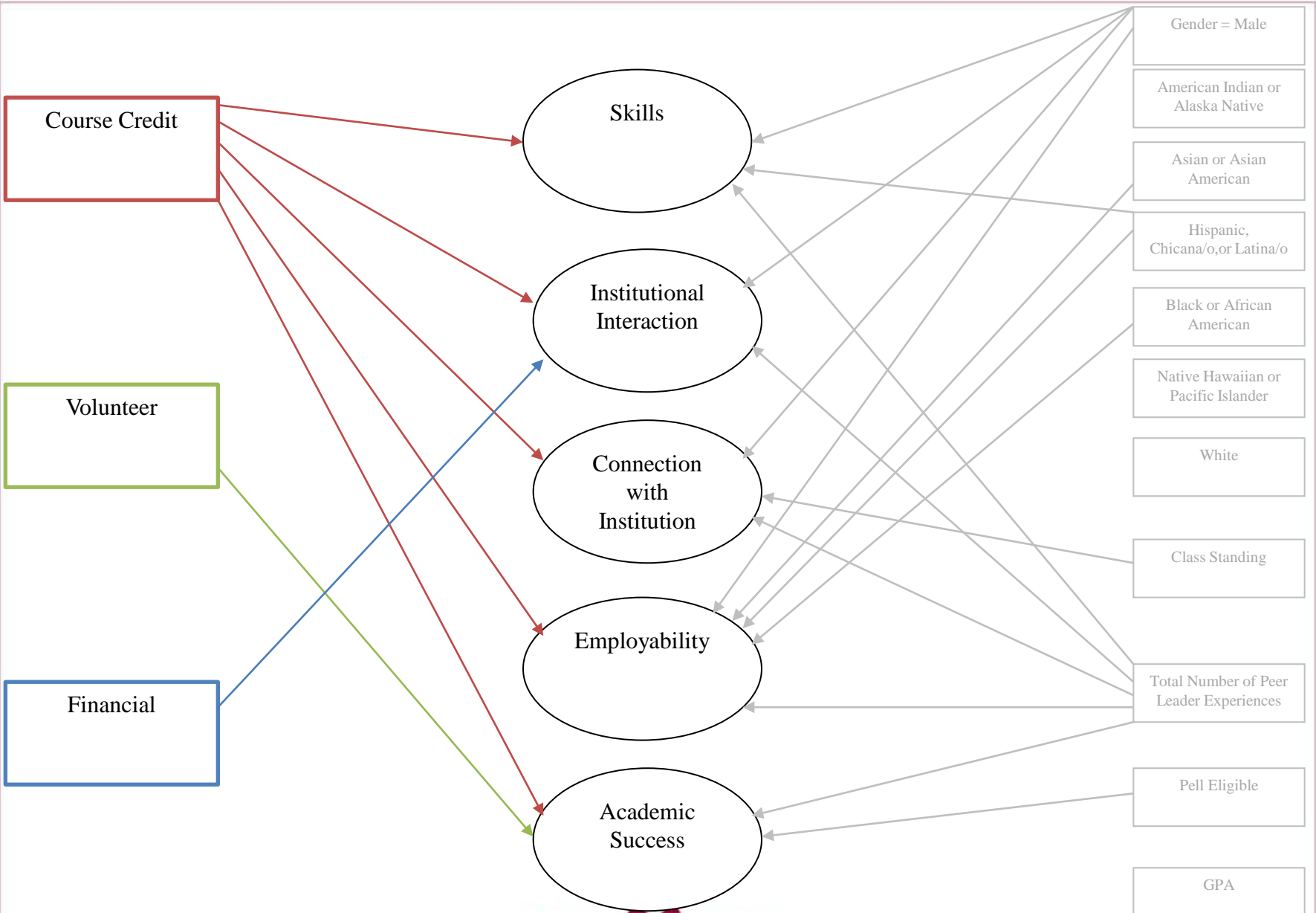
Employability

Academic
Success



SEM Results: Control Variables

- Race/ethnicity was a small and marginally significant positive predictor for all outcomes
 - No pattern for specific race/ethnicity
- Gender: Male was a highly significant negative predictor for all outcomes except academic skills
- Total number of PL positions was a highly significant positive predictor for all outcomes
 - Largest beta for all the outcomes except academic skills



SEM Results: PL Compensation

- Course credit was a consistent positive predictor across all four categories of DVs
 - Academic performance ($\beta = .101, p < .001$)
 - Skill development ($\beta = .085, p < .001$)
 - Institutional connection ($\beta = .069, p < .001$)
 - Institutional interaction ($\beta = .068, p < .001$)
 - Employability outcomes ($\beta = .047, p < .01$)

SEM Results: PL Compensation

- Financial compensation had
 - a small positive effect on institutional interaction outcomes ($\beta = .083, p < .001$)
- Volunteer positions (no compensation) had:
 - No impact on skill development, institutional interaction and connection, and employability outcomes
 - Very small negative impact on academic skills ($\beta = -.062, p < .01$)

SEM Results: Outcomes

- Institutional interaction and academic success are most influenced by PL compensation
- Institutional interaction is affected by both course credit and financial compensation
- Self-rated academic success of peer leaders is more varied by compensation:
 - Course credit fosters self-rated academic success
 - Volunteer peer leader positions and financial rewards hinder students' perceptions of academic success

Significance

- Course credit as compensation for PLE is promising
 - Peer interaction
 - Accountability
 - Interaction with faculty
 - Feedback
 - Greater intentionality
- Academic outcomes of PL experience are unique
- Further the consideration of peer leadership and student paraprofessional
- Equity considerations
 - Financial rewards attract certain students
 - Cost of adding class

Questions and Answers



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