



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

The Power of Peers: Exploring the Impact of Peer Leadership Experiences

Jennifer R. Keup, Director

Dallin George Young, Assistant Director of
Research, Grants, and Assessment



REINVENT
MARCH 30 - APRIL 2
INDIANAPOLIS



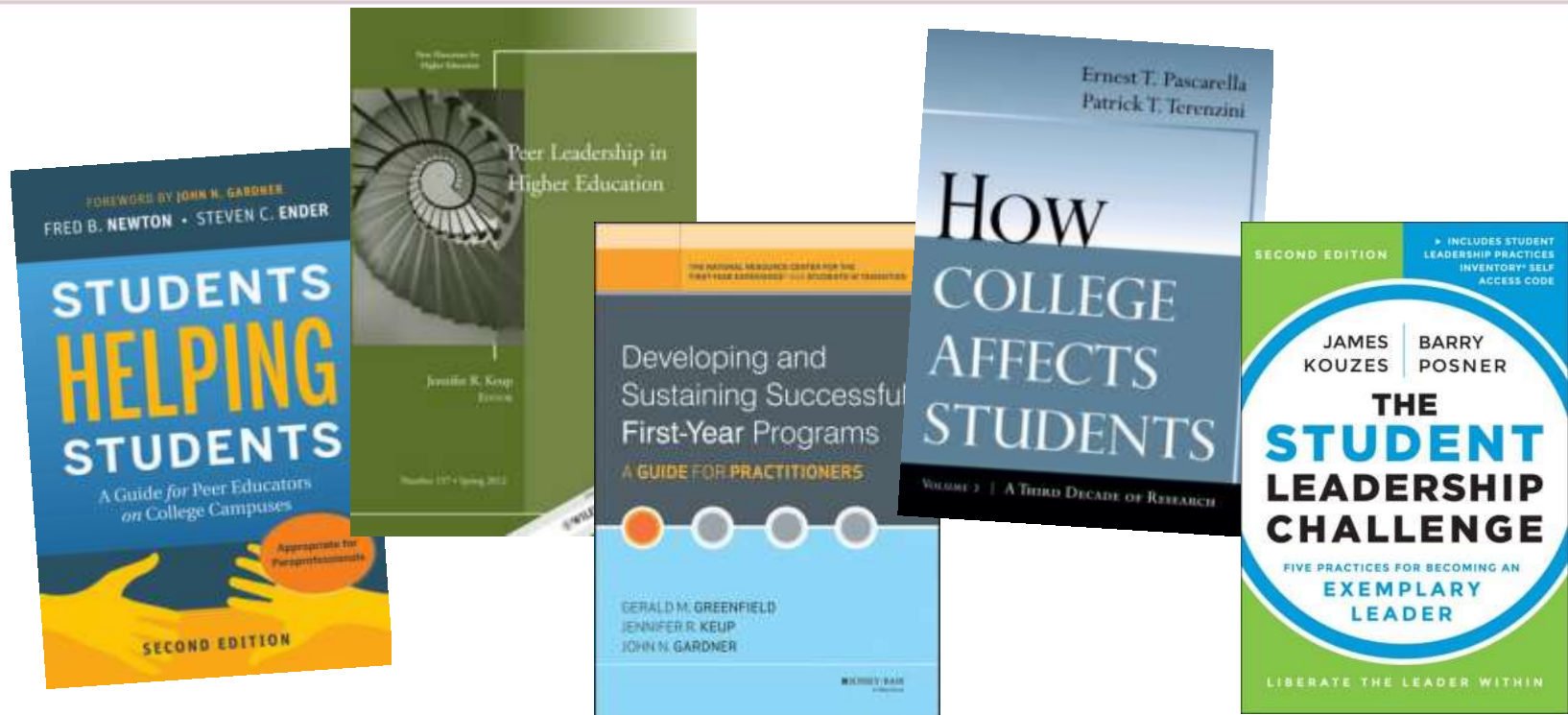
April 1, 2014

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
- Advance their understanding of peer leadership as an emerging and innovative high-impact practice
- Have the opportunity to compare features of their peer leadership programs to a national profile of characteristics of students experiences in these roles



Introduction

BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

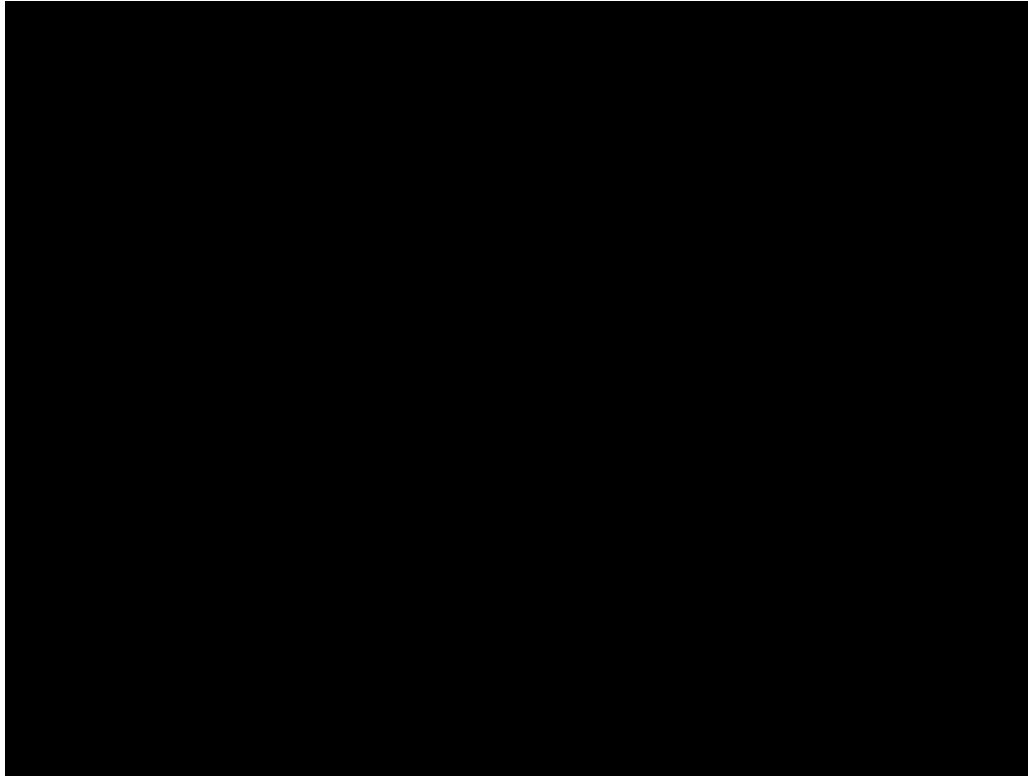
Peer Influence Happens



NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

www.sc.edu/fye

Peer Influence Happens



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)

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)

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.**”

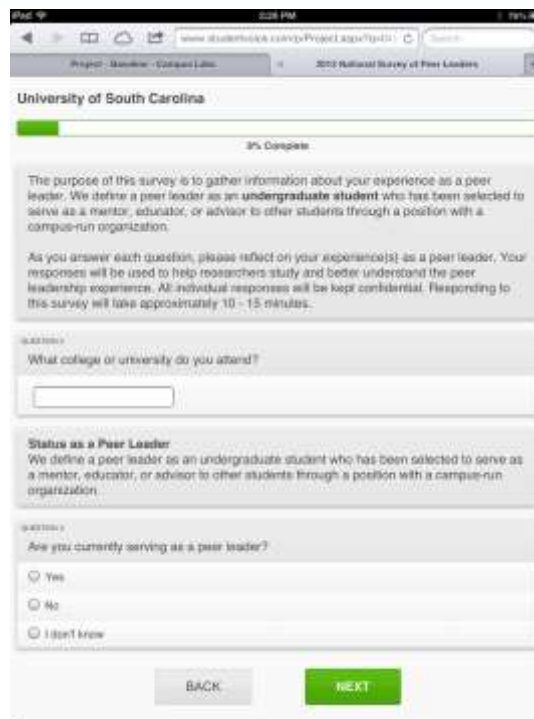
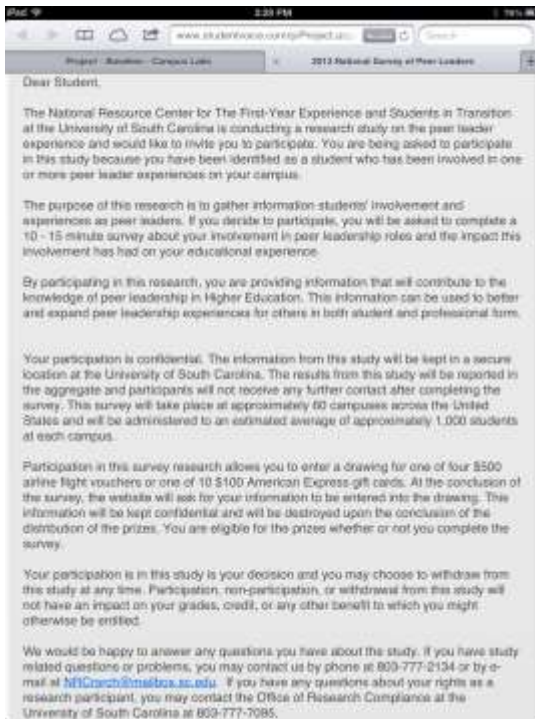
(Ender & Newton, 2000; Newton & Ender, 2010)

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; Shook & Keup, 2012*)
 - Roles: tutors, Supplemental Instruction leaders, and peer advisors
 - Courses: English composition, introductory mathematics, gateway courses, and first-year seminars

Background on Peer Leaders

- Peer leaders are empowered to exert influence in a less intimidating way than staff or faculty (*Cuseo, 1991; Hart, 1995*)
- 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

2013 NATIONAL SURVEY OF PEER LEADERS

Method: Data Source

2013 National Survey of Peer Leaders

- Pilot in 2009 garnered 1,972 student respondents
- 2013 survey was a partnership with 5 leading educational organizations involved with peer leaders:
 - ACUHO-I
 - International Center for Supplemental Instruction
 - NACA
 - National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition
 - NODA
- Institutional recruitment took place first

49 Participating Institutions:

2013 National Survey of Peer Leaders

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

Method: Data Source


2013 National Survey of Peer Leaders

- Student survey administered from 3/26/2013-6/1/2013
- 4,932 student peer leaders responded to the survey (28.6% response rate)
- Student sample over-represents women and high academic performers
- Student sample has adequate representation by race/ethnicity, class standing, & Pell Grant eligibility



Findings

TYPE AND NUMBER OF PEER LEADER EXPERIENCES



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



NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

www.sc.edu/fye

Most Common PL Sponsors

What type of campus-based organization have you worked for as a peer leader, either currently or in the past? (n = 4,016)

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

Most Common PL Sponsors

What type of campus-based organization have you worked for as a peer leader, either currently or in the past? (n = 4,016)

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

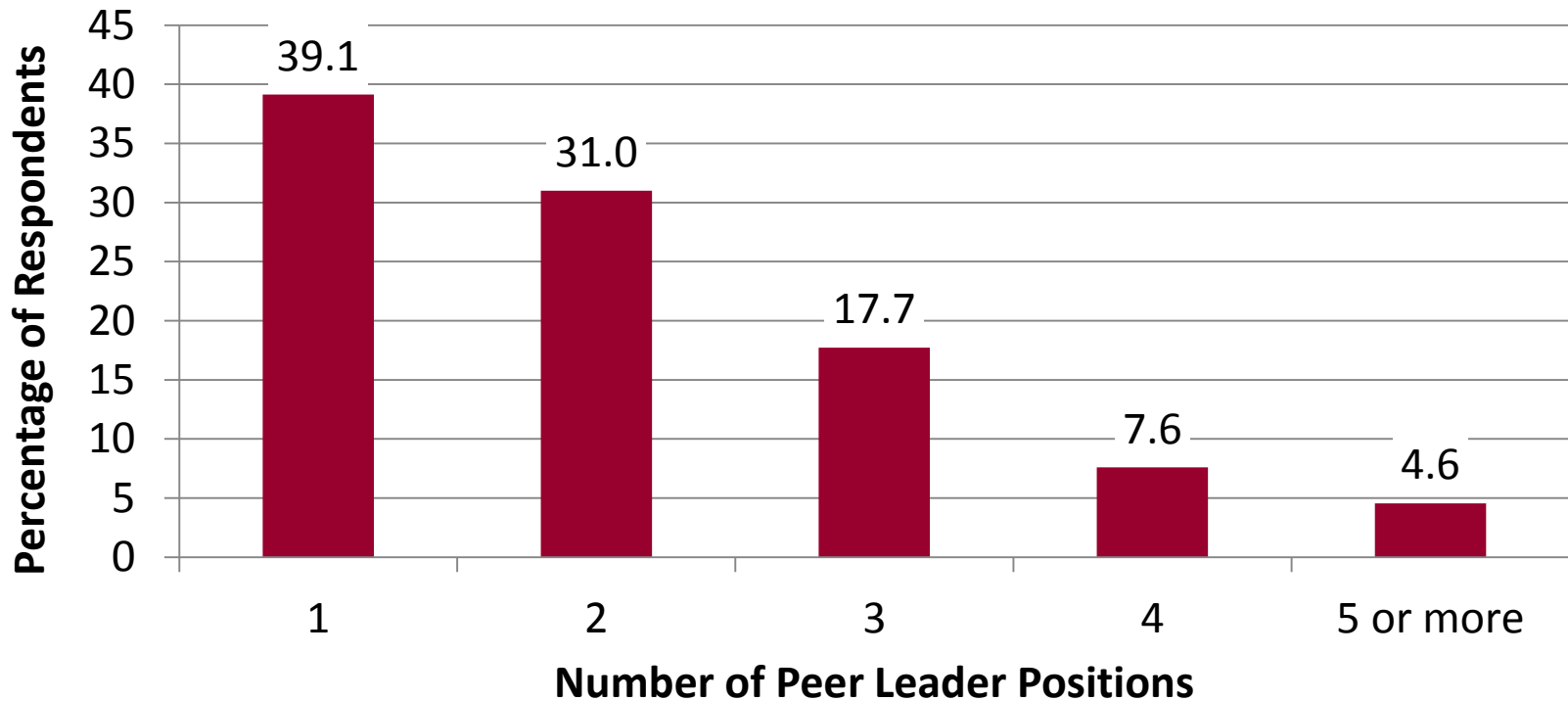
Least Common PL Sponsors

What type of campus-based organization have you worked for as a peer leader, either currently or in the past? (n = 4,016)

Peer Leader Experience	%
Athletics	9.5
Admissions	9.3
Religious	8.9
Academic-Supplemental Instruction leader	8.7
Multicultural affairs	5.4
Study abroad	5.2
Outdoor or recreational sports	4.3
Counseling or mental health	3.1
Student productions or media	2.8
Judicial affairs or student conduct	2.6
Physical health	2.6
International student office	2.2
Financial literacy	.8

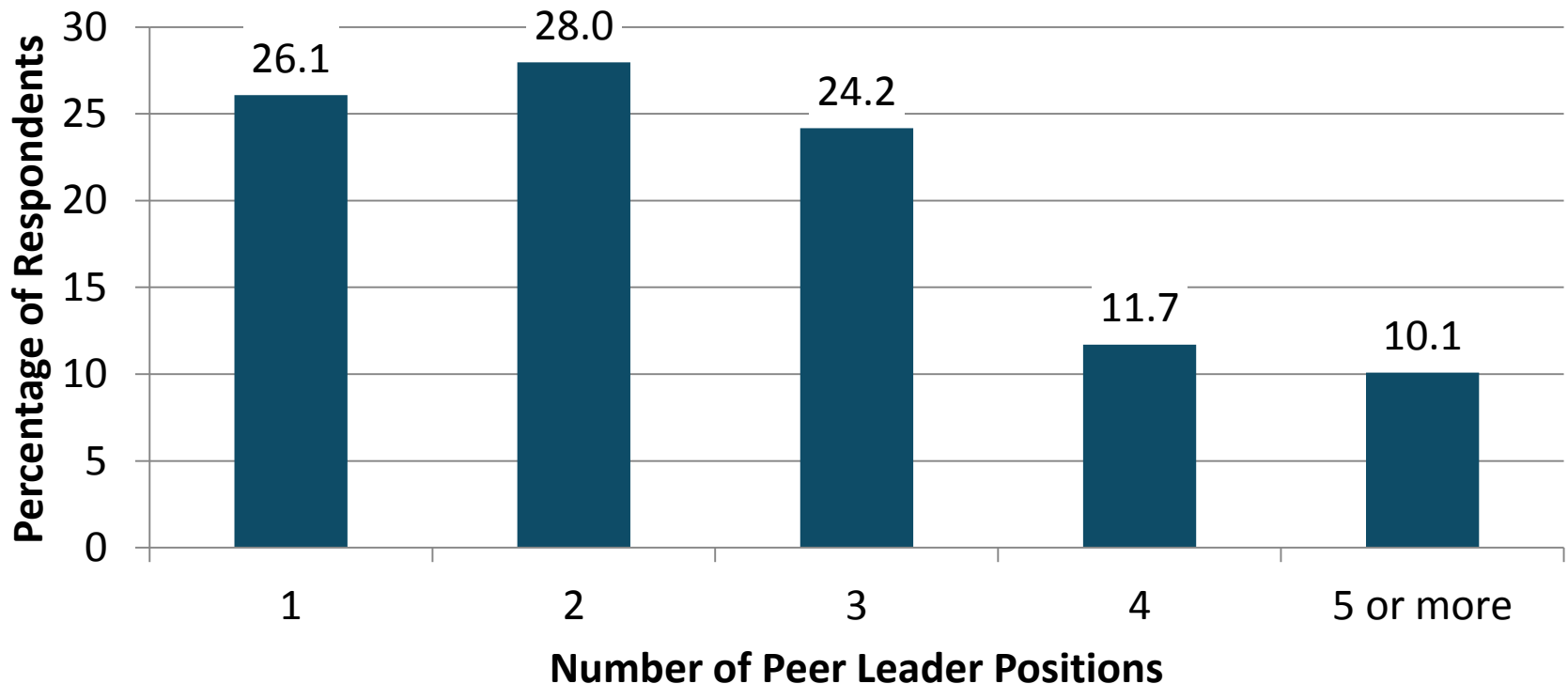
Number of Peer Leader Experiences

How many peer leader positions do you currently hold? (n = 3,527)



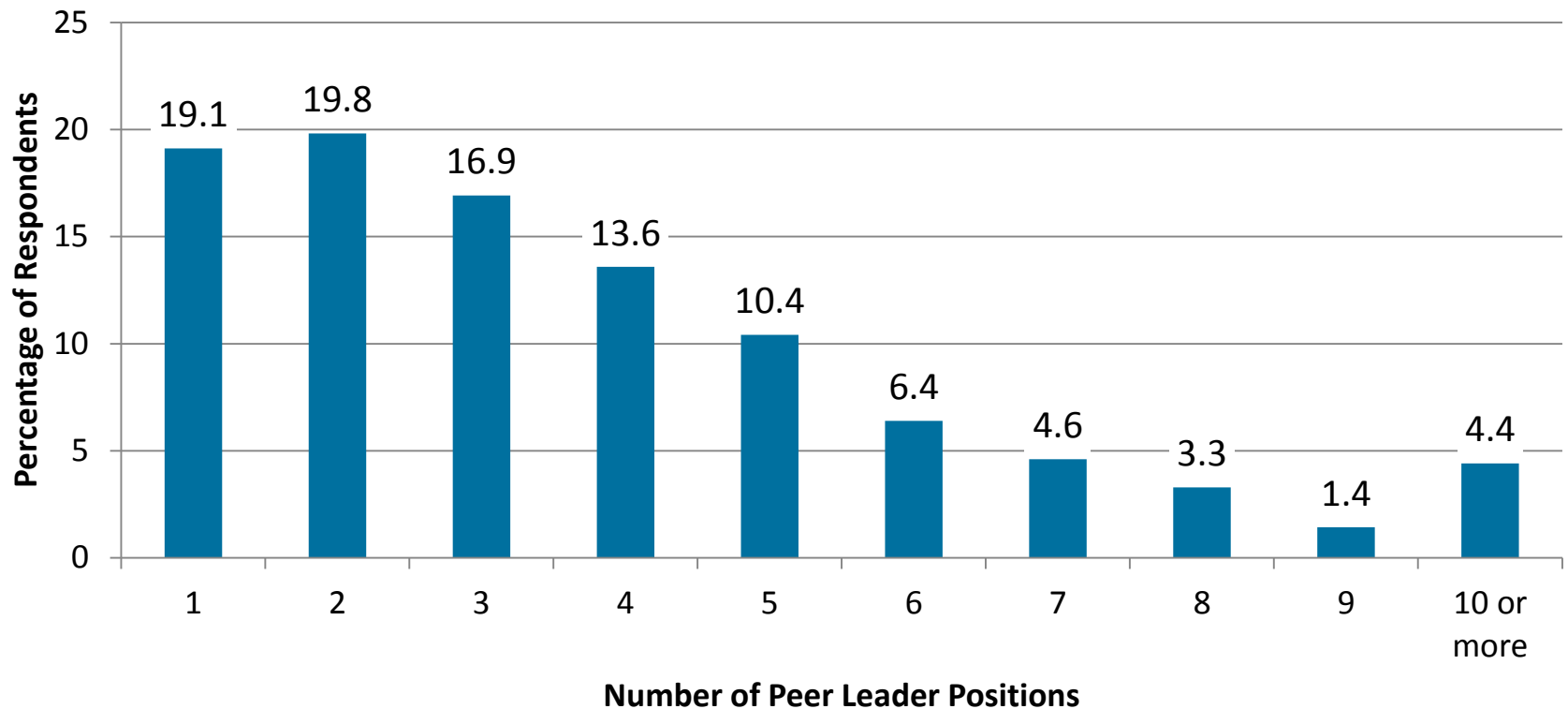
Number of Peer Leader Experiences

What is the highest number of peer leader positions have you ever held at one time? (n = 4,016)



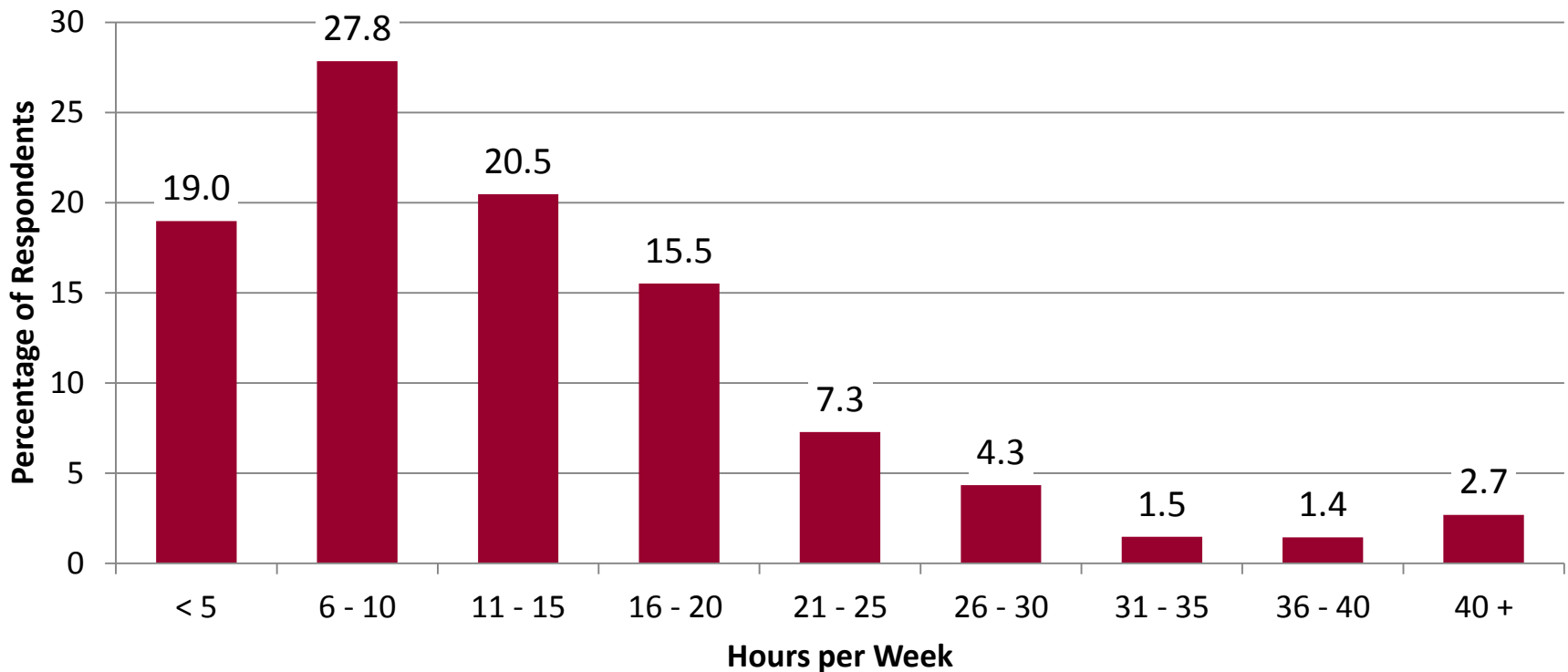
Number of Peer Leader Experiences

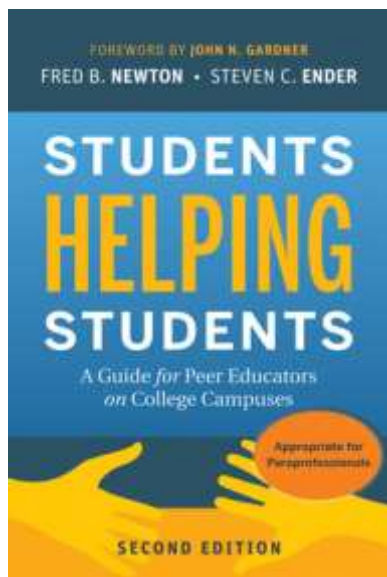
Including any current positions, how many total peer leader positions have you held during your college experience? (n = 4,016)



Time Spent on PLEs

On average, how many hours per week do you spend performing your peer leader responsibilities? (n = 4,016)





“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.”

Results

PEER LEADER SELECTION, TRAINING, & COMPENSATION

PL Selection Process

Which of the following best describes the peer leader selection process you went through (n = 3,942)

Application:  (86.4%)

Election:  (38.8%)

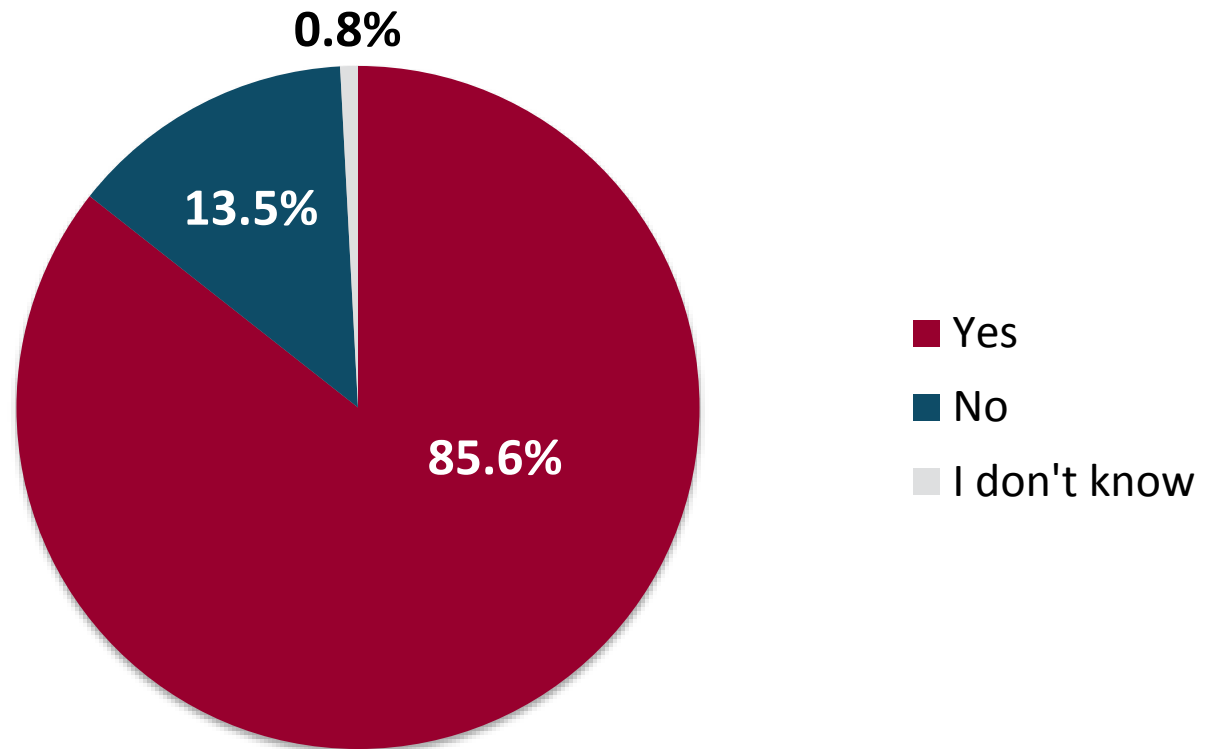
Nomination:  (35.9%)

Other:  (2.8%)

Training

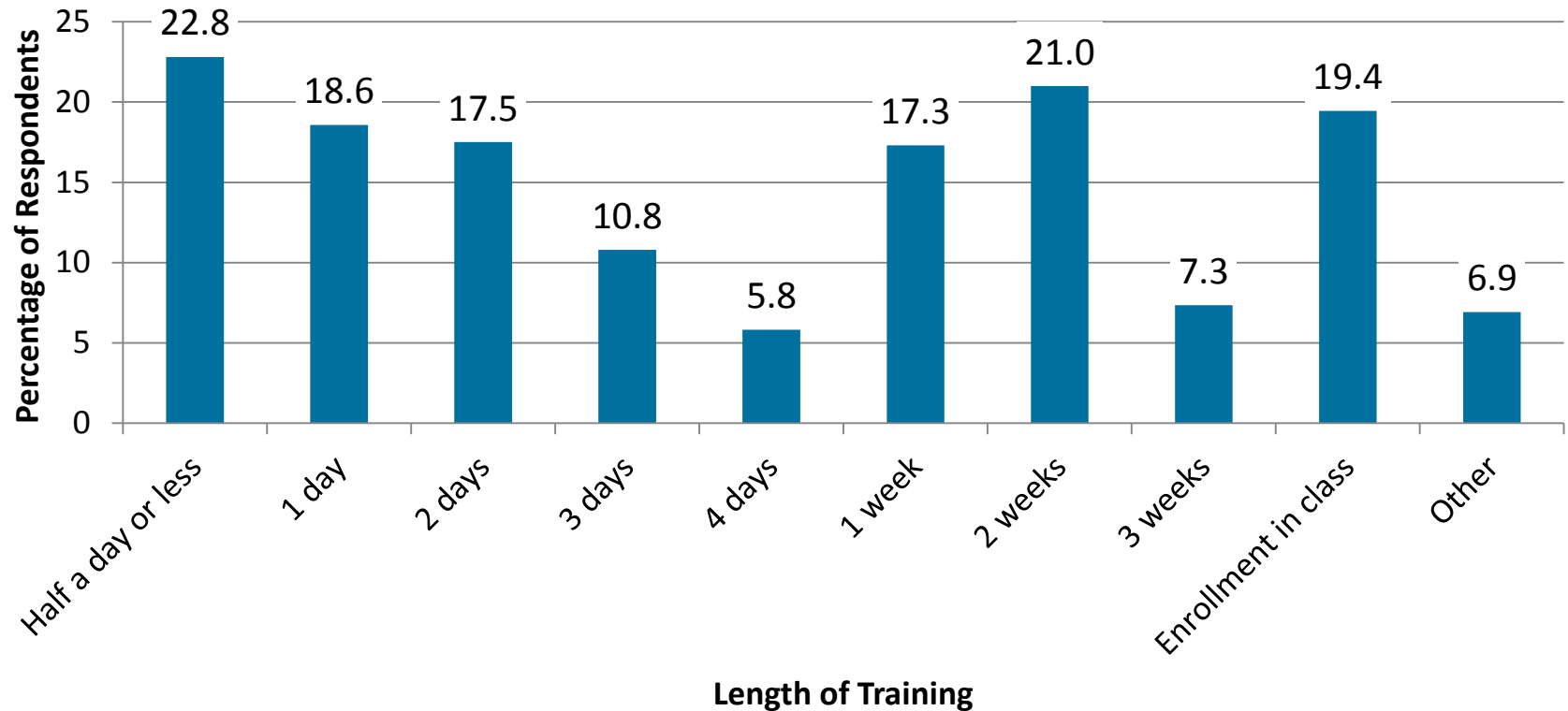
Were you trained for your peer leader position(s)?

(n = 3,942)



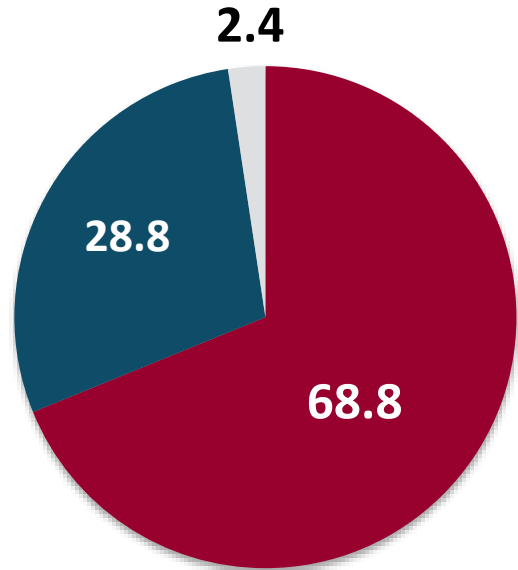
Training

How long was the initial formal training for your current and/or previous peer leader position(s)? (n = 3,353)



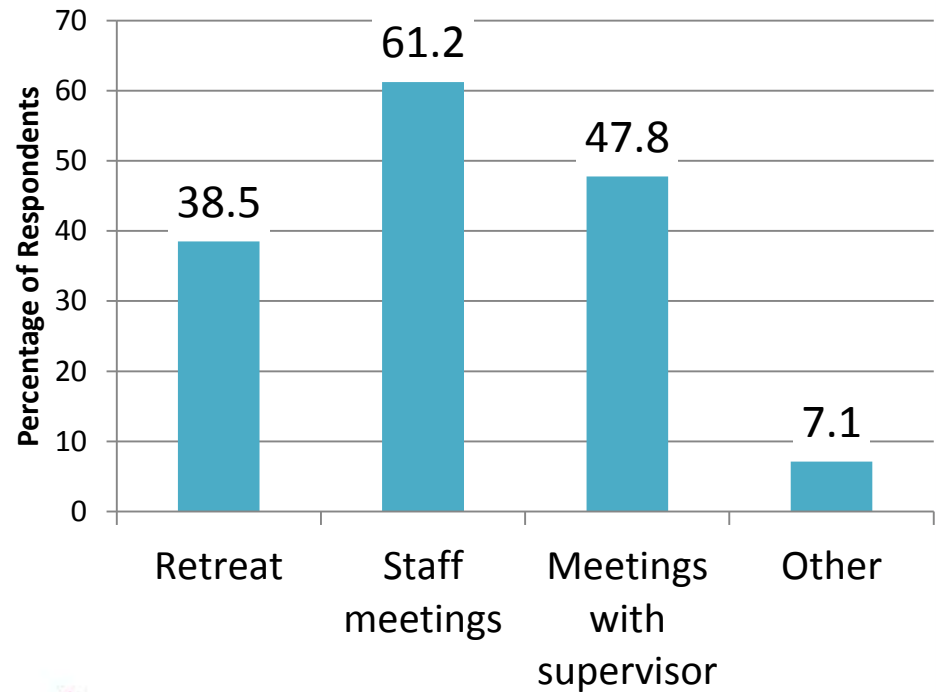
Training

Did you receive any additional ongoing formal training after the initial training? (n = 3,353)



■ Yes ■ No ■ I don't know

What type of additional ongoing formal training did you receive? (n = 2,303)



**What peer leader
training models are
you findings most
effective?**

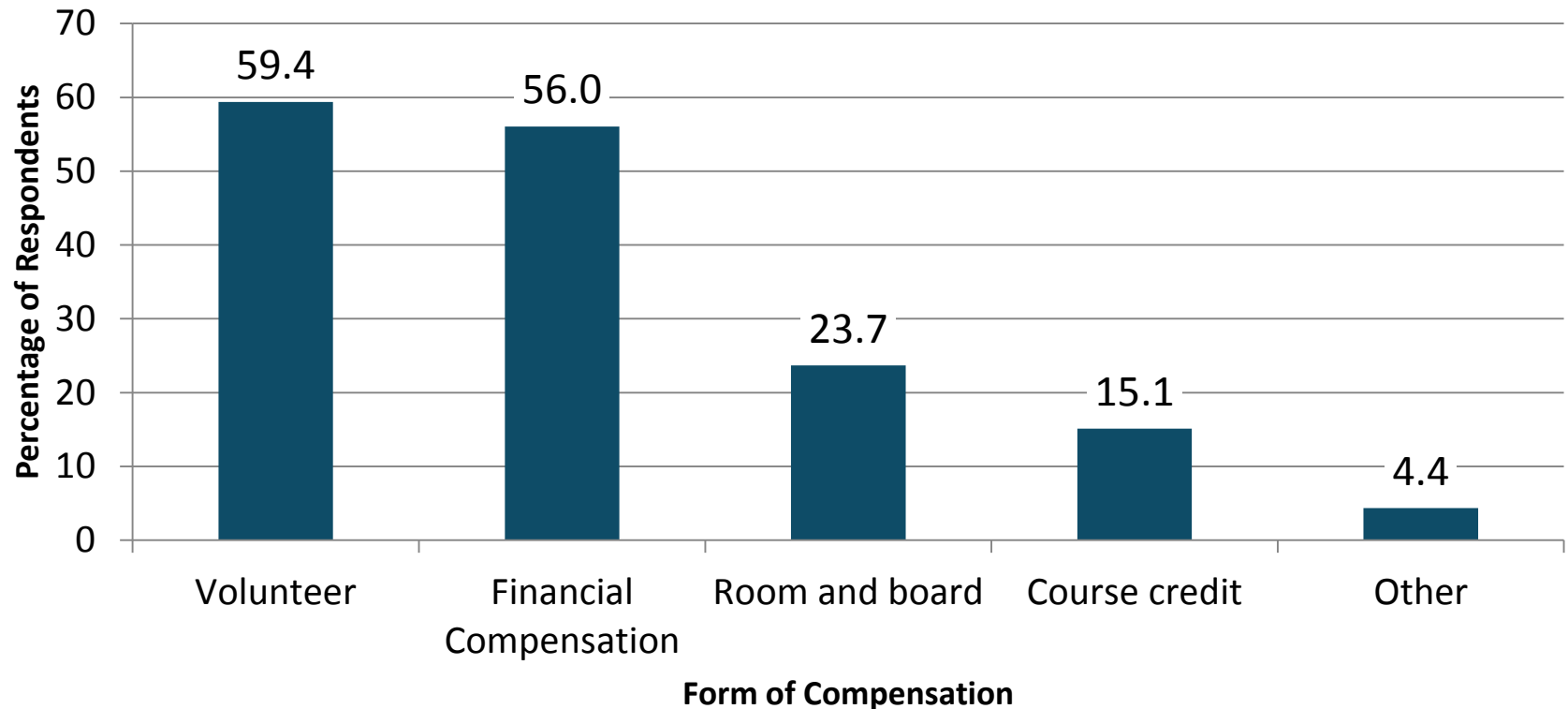


Trends in Peer Leader Training

- 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 = 3,942)





Findings

PEER LEADER OUTCOMES

**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
 - 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

Self-Rated Change in Skills

“Peer leadership increases your communication skills dramatically... I just feel strongly about peer leadership because it boosts your confidence.”

by

“The responsibilities of peer leadership helped me to learn more about organization, time management, as well as teamwork, and cooperation.”



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

Self-Rated Impact on Undergraduate Experience

“When I first got the job I was shy and unsure of myself a lot of the times but over the past almost two years I have grown and become more confident. I have learned to communicate effectively with people from different backgrounds. I have also had the opportunity to become close to faculty and staff that I work with. I feel more connected to campus and have enjoyed being there for freshmen students that are struggling with the college transition.”



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

Self-Rated Change in Employability

“Tutoring in the writing center made me more interested in pursuing a career related to assisting students with writing, especially ESL students .”

“Because of my leadership experience, I finally figured out what I want to do with my life after I graduate. I am much more motivated now than I was when I was a freshman to complete my courses with decent grades. I am very motivated to learn the content of my courses as opposed to just getting a grade.”



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

Self-Rated Change in Skills

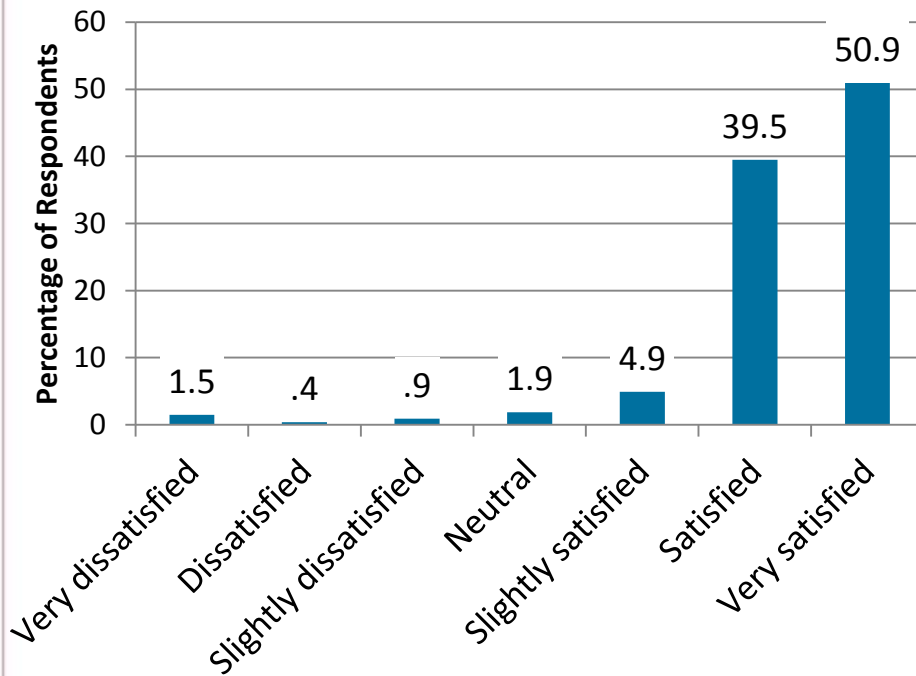
**“As a Biology major, tutoring in chemistry
has improved the information**

**“Being a peer leader has affected my
academic performance by surrounding
me with other peers who work hard
both as peer leaders and academically.
Their example has
strengthened my skills as a peer leader.”**

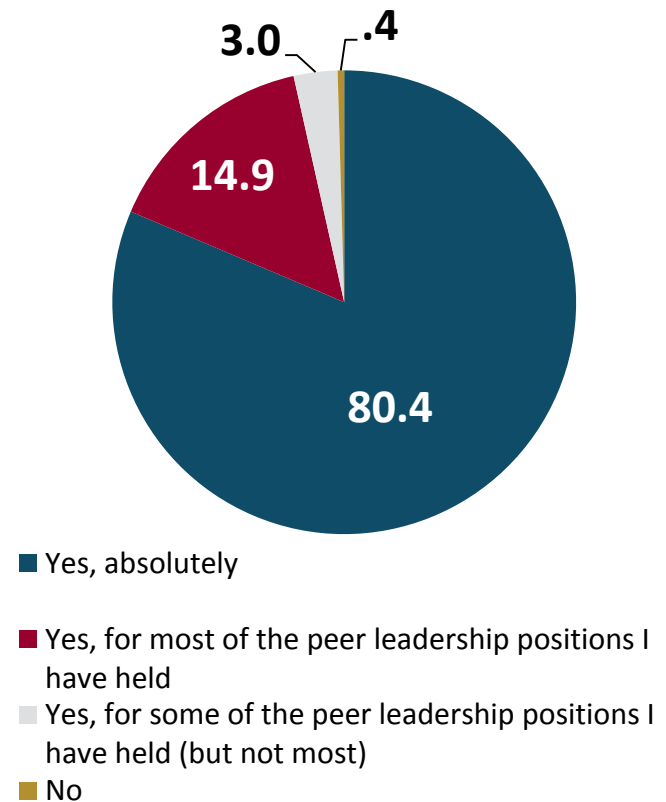
**“Commitments with my peer leader
positions have interfered with the
amount of free time that I have to
study for exams, complete assignments,
and become further involved with my
coursework.”**

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?





High-Impact Educational Practices

First-Year Seminars and Experiences

More schools now hold seminars for first-year students or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty as well as a regular class. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical reading, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and critical skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies. First-year seminars can also involve students with campus-wide questions or scholarship and work faculty members' own research.

Common Intellectual Experiences

The idea of a "core" curriculum has evolved into a variety of student forms, such as a set of required common courses or a centrally required general education program that includes additional integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community (see below). These programs allow students broad fluency—e.g., technology and writing skills/intelligence—with a variety of generally and increasingly specific 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 study one or more linked courses or groups and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities support common topics and/or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link "liberal arts" and "professional courses" within Kansas service learning.

Writing-Intensive Courses

These courses emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including first-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise student drafts of writing for different audiences or different disciplines. The effectiveness of this approach practices "write the audience" has led to parallel efforts to reach across disciplinary boundaries and communication, information literacy, and on some campuses, digital equity.

Collaborative Assignments and Projects

Collaborative learning conditions can be goals for learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and developing one's own understanding by learning networks or the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to group-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 has long been most prominently used in science disciplines. With strong support from the National Science Foundation and the research community, scientists are expanding their courses to include key concepts and questions with students' study and active involvement in research investigations and research. The goal is to involve students with virtually controlled systems, 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 world views different from their own. These studies—which may address U.S. diversity, world cultures, or fields—often explore "difficult differences" such as race, culture, and gender inequality, or contrasting strengths around the globe by income, rights, freedom, and justice. Frequently, international 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 intentional strategy—and often integrated with other courses. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the classroom 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 on a classroom setting on their service experience. 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—so to give them the benefit of experiences and teaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is strict 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 making the most of their college years to create a project of some sort that engages and applies what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of "fine work," or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones are offered both to departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well.



Conclusions

PEER LEADERSHIP AS A HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICE

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

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

“It stands to reason that *[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, 2010

High-Impact Practices

- ✓ First-Year Seminars & Experiences
- ✓ Common Intellectual Experiences
- ✓ Learning Communities
- ✓ Writing-Intensive Courses
- ✓ Collaborative Assignments & Projects
- ✓ Internships
- ✓ Undergraduate Research
- ✓ Diversity/Global Learning
- ✓ Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- ✓ Capstone Courses & Projects
- ✓ **Peer Leadership**

Takeaways - Overall

- Peer leaders report engagement in experiences
 - Largest concentration of respondents reported spending between 6 and 15 hours per week on PL responsibilities
 - Most report active involvement in selection process
 - Many have training experiences of a week or longer
 - Majority report ongoing training
 - Many do not receive compensation (i.e., volunteer)
- Peer leaders report satisfaction with the experience
 - Nearly all respondents (96%) would recommend at least some peer leadership positions to other students

Takeaways - Overall

- Insight into common and potential selection, training, and compensation models
- Peer leaders report Growth due to experiences
 - Overall majority report gains on nearly all outcomes in skills, undergraduate experiences, and employability outcomes
 - Academic outcomes not as strongly affected by PLEs
 - Method of advancing intercultural competency
 - Highly transferable to career
- Peer leadership as an emergent HIP

Questions and Answers

keupj@mailbox.sc.edu

dallin.young@sc.edu