



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

An Evidence-Based Discussion of Integrating First- and Second- Year Transition Programs

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The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition

Gateway Course Experience Conference
Charlotte, NC | April 13, 2015

Session Goals

- As the result of this session, participants will:
 - Gain a greater understanding of the purpose, organization, and outcomes associated with first-year seminars and sophomore-year initiatives
 - Have the opportunity to contextualize their institutional approaches to a national empirical profile
 - Increase their awareness of how integrated approaches may be constructed to assist students in their success and development during the first two years of college.



INTRODUCTION

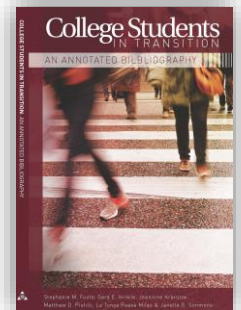


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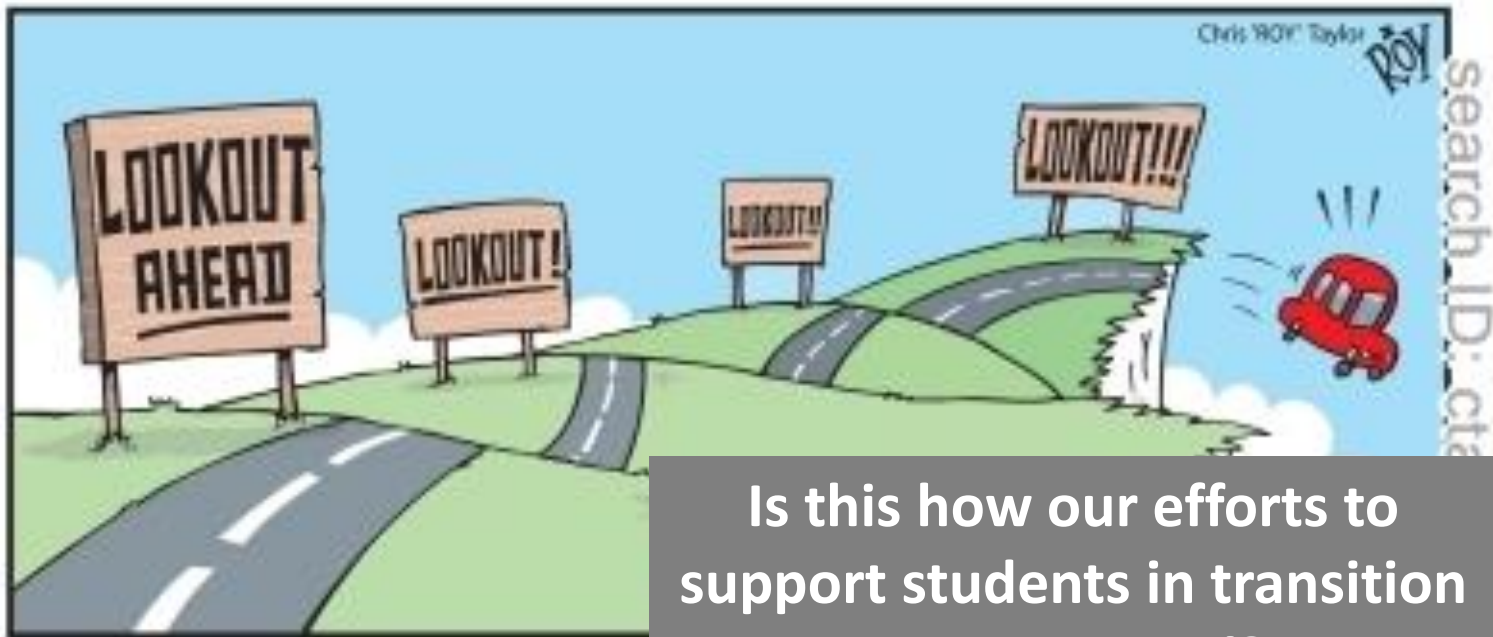
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Definition of Transition

- A transition is “a point or period in which a student encounters an event or non-event that may impact his or her progression toward educational and personal goals.” (*Goodman, Schlossberg, & Anderson, 2006*)
- A student in transition (or students in transition) refers to any student involved in a transition that impacts his or her progression toward educational or personal goals.



Challenge in Perception of SIT Support: “Moving the cliff!”



Is this how our efforts to support students in transition are perceived?



Challenge in Execution of SIT Support: “The relay”

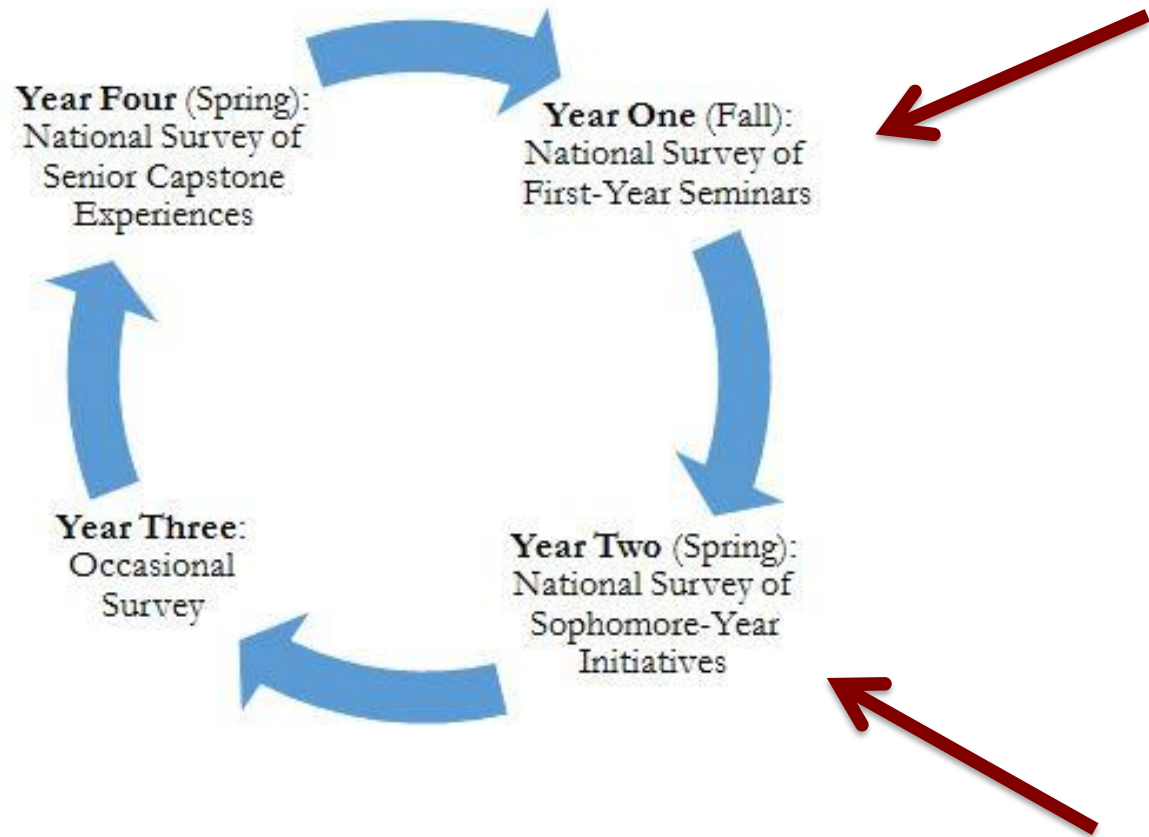


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Criteria for “Excellence”

- “Evidence of an **intentional, comprehensive approach** to improving ... that is appropriate to an institution’s type and mission.”
- “Evidence of assessment of the various initiatives that constitute this approach.”
- “**Broad impact on significant numbers of ... students**, including, but not limited to special student subpopulations.”
- “**Strong administrative support for ... initiatives, evidence of institutionalization, and durability over time.**”
- “**Involvement of a wide range of faculty, student affairs professionals, academic administrators, and other constituent groups.**”



NATIONAL SURVEYS



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First-Year Transition

Issues

- Sense of belonging
- Academic preparation
- Time management
- Finding campus resources
- Financial issues
- Physical/emotional well being
- Understanding culture of higher education

(Collier, forthcoming)

Students

- Racially/ethnically diverse
- Multicultural
- “New-traditional” (first-gen, int’l, veterans)
- Concerned about \$
- Service oriented
- Connected
- Academically “trained” under NCLB culture

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

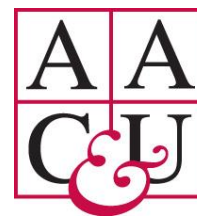
In these programs, field-based "experiential learning" with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in 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
of American
Colleges and
Universities



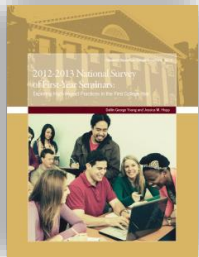
National Survey of First-Year Seminars

- 2012-2013 Administration
 - 3,753 **institutions** were invited to participate
 - 896 campuses responded (23.9% response rate)
 - **804** (89.7% of sample) indicated that they had one or more FYS
- Online instrument collected data on:
 - Seminar features (structural and instructional)
 - Characteristics of students in FYS
 - Administration
 - Assessment
 - Module on HIPs



2012-2013 NSFYS: Participants

Institution type	All (<i>N</i> = 896)	With seminar (<i>N</i> = 804)
Two-year	26.7%	25.6%
Four-year	73.3%	74.4%
Public	54.1%	54.4%
Private, not-for-profit	42.9%	42.8%
Private, for-profit	3.0%	2.7%



2012-2013 NSFYS: Participants

Size of First-Year Class	All (<i>N</i> = 896)	With seminar (<i>N</i> = 804)
< 500	29.8%	29.5%
501 – 1,000	22.8%	22.6%
1,001 – 1500	11.8%	11.9%
1,501 – 2,000	7.6%	7.5%
2,001 – 2,500	6.6%	6.8%
2,501 – 3,000	2.9%	2.9%
3,001 – 3,500	4.1%	4.5%
3,500 – 4,000	2.5%	2.2%
4,001 – 5,000	3.6%	3.7%
> 5,000	8.4%	8.3%



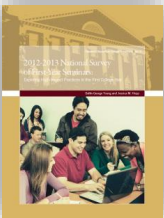
FYS: Most Important Objectives

Objective	Percent
Develop a connection with the institution	44.9
Provide orientation to campus resources & services	37.8
Develop academic skills	36.3
Develop critical thinking skills	23.3
Create common first-year experience	21.6
Develop study skills	20.0
Self-exploration or personal development	17.0
Develop support network or friendships	14.5
Improve second-year return rates	14.5
Increase student-faculty interaction	12.4
Develop writing skills	11.6

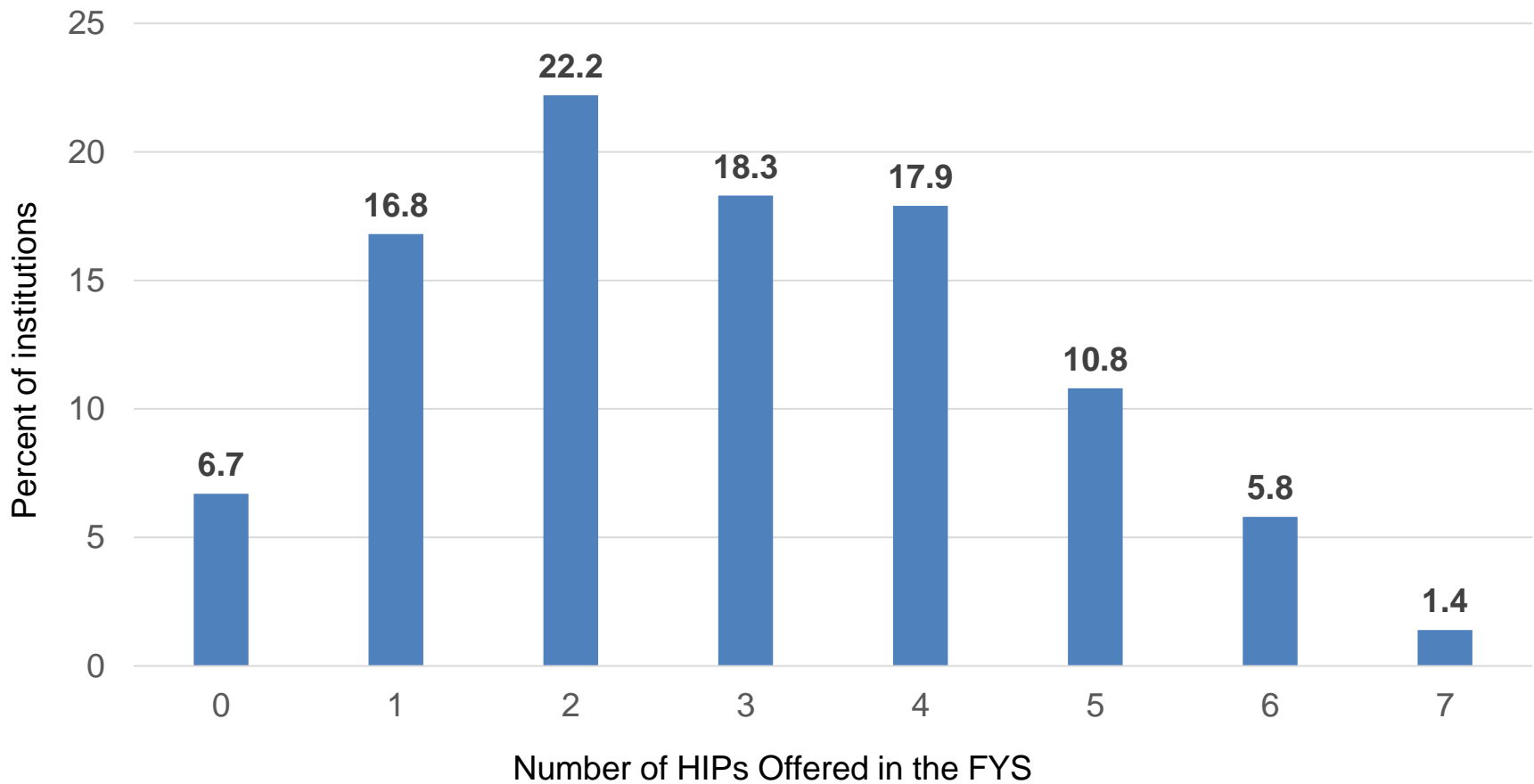


Types of Seminars

	All Seminars (N = 788)	Primary Type (N = 786)
Extended Orientation < Two-Year < Public	60.4%	39.1%
Academic Uniform Content	29.4%	19.0%
Academic Variable Content < Four-Year < Private	28.7%	19.2%
Basic Study Skills < Two-Year	22.6%	3.9%
Pre-professional/Discipline-linked	16.4%	3.8%
Hybrid < Four-Year < Private	23.4%	14.1%
Other	1.5%	0.9%

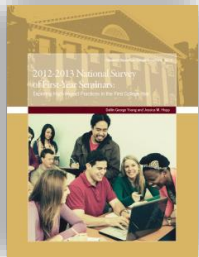


HIPs and First-Year Seminars



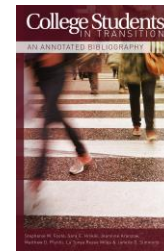
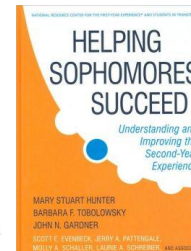
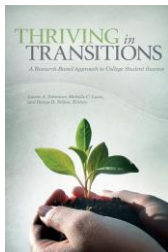
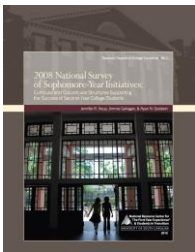
HIPs and First-Year Seminars

High-Impact Practice	%
Produce and revise various forms of writing < Four-Year < Private	42.5
Collaboration and teamwork < Public	67.2
Diversity or global learning < Four-Year	58.5
Service-learning < Four-Year < Private	31.8
Learning community < Public	36.8
Common reading experience < Four-Year < Private	38.1
Undergraduate research < Four-Year	12.8



Second Year: Developmental Milestone

- Critical juncture for students developmentally
 - Academic development
 - Connection to institution and place in the community
 - Career development
 - Personal identity issues
 - Examination of life purpose
- Increased capacity to make progress on important college outcomes



Campus Response to Sophomores?

First-Year

Orientation
Common
Reading
Programs
First-Year
Seminars
Student
Engagement



Senior Year

Capstone
Experiences
Job Fairs
Professional
Licensing
Graduate and
Professional
School
Applications

Junior Year Internships
Study Abroad
Peer
Leadership



Sophomore Student
(Unmotivationus Middlechildibus)



**KEEP
CALM
AND
SURVIVE
SOPHOMORE YEAR**

National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives

- Designed to identify sophomore-specific practices and programs and characteristics of those initiatives
- 2013-2014 Administration
 - Online survey
 - 3,722 **institutions** were invited to participate
 - 778 responded (20.9% response rate)
 - **349** (46% of sample) currently offered at least one sophomore-specific initiative

2013-2014 NSSYI: Participants

Institution type	All (<i>N</i> = 778)	With initiative (<i>N</i> = 349)
Two-year	22.9%	35.1%
Four-year	77.1%	49.4%
Public	54.1%	42.5%
Private, not-for-profit	42.9%	50.3%

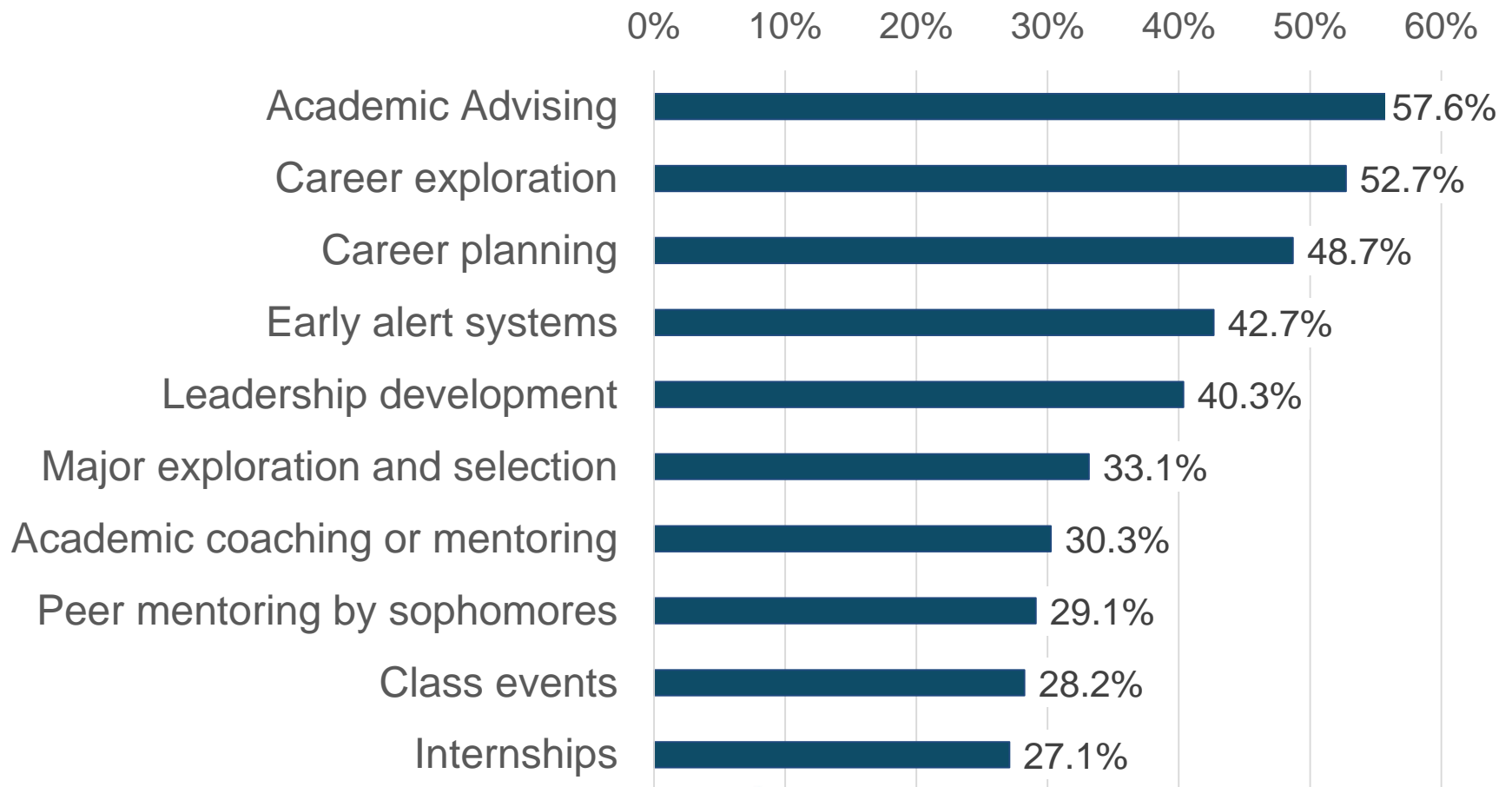
2013-2014 NSSYI: Participants

Number of Undergraduates	All (<i>N</i> = 778)	With initiative (<i>N</i> = 349)
< 500	6.2%	38.3%
501 – 1,000	7.4%	46.3%
1,001 – 1500	8.6%	45.3%
1,501 – 3,000	25.0%	45.0%
3,001 – 5,000	12.6%	48.9%
5,001 – 10,000	17.3%	53.4%
10,001 – 15,000	8.9%	37.9%
15,001 – 20,000	6.1%	47.8%
> 20,000	7.9%	47.4%

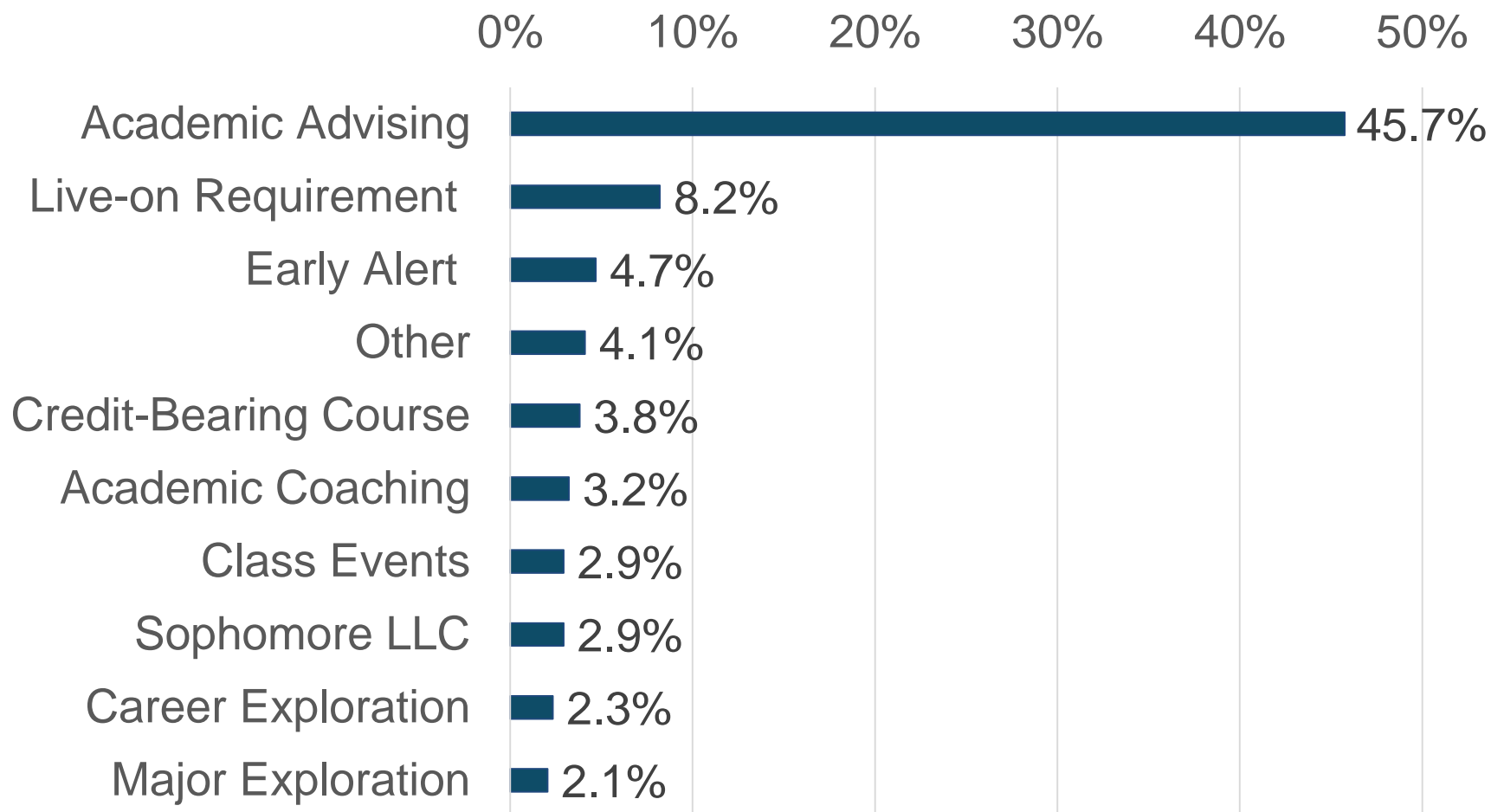
NSSYI: Most Important Objectives

Objective	Percent
Improve retention	62.1
Career exploration	53.5
Career preparation (< 2-year)	45.4
Academic assistance	45.1
Selection of a major (< 4-year)	44.9
Leadership opportunities	43.5
Student engagement	43.1
Connection with the institution (< 4-year; < Private)	34.5
Academic skills	31.7
Graduation rates (< 2-year; < Public)	31.7

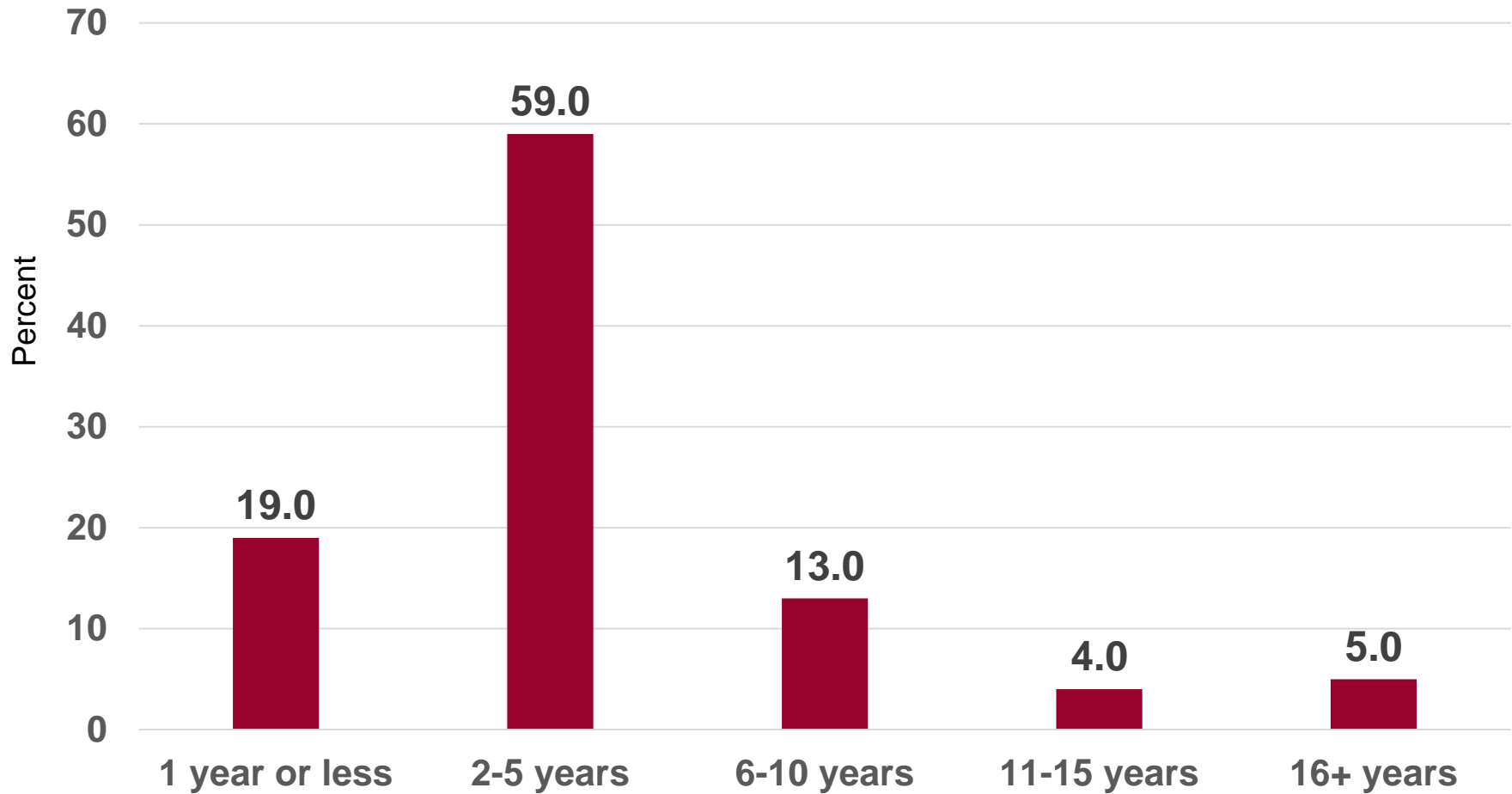
Common Sophomore-Year Initiatives



Primary Sophomore-Year Initiatives



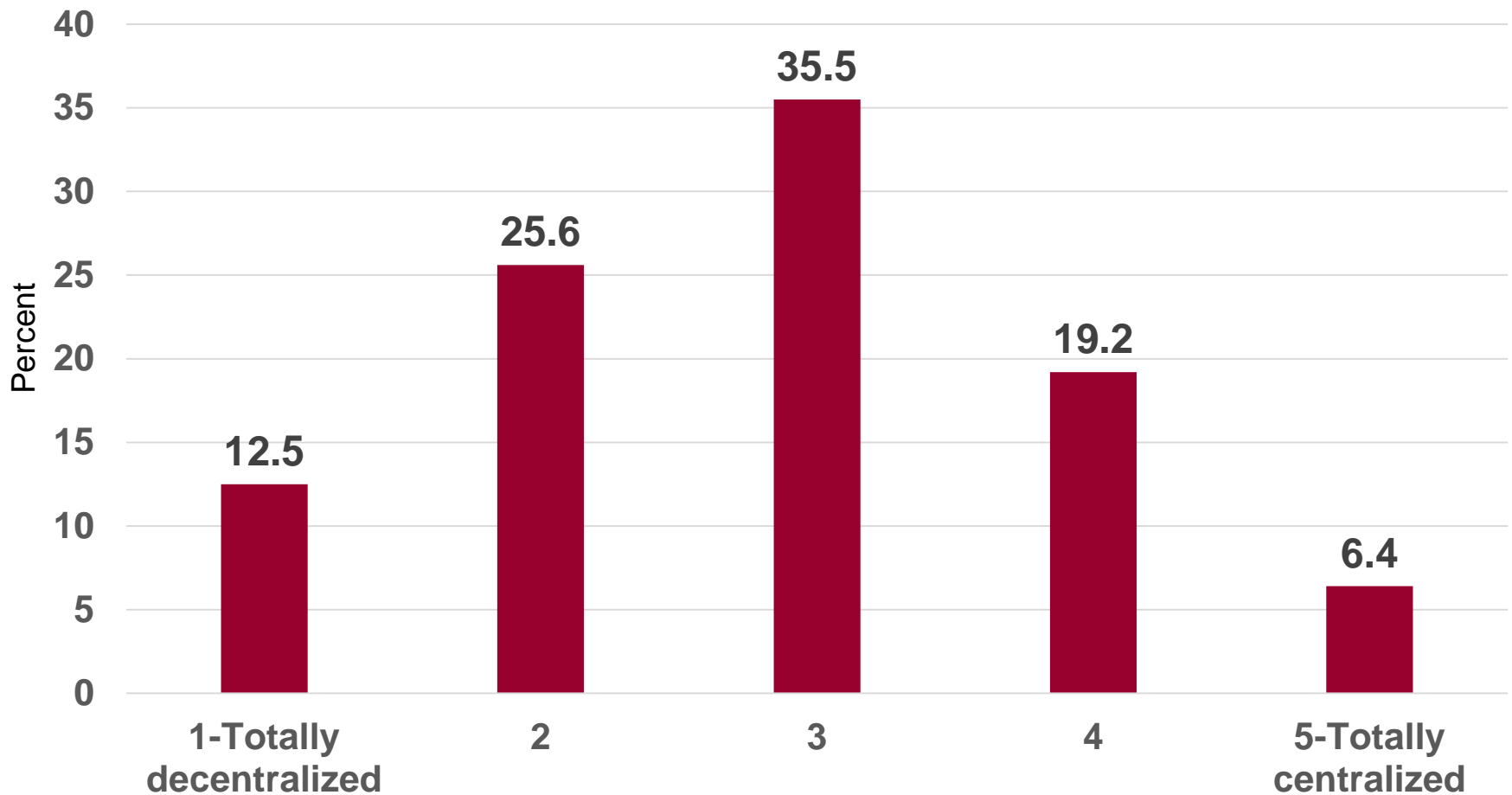
Duration of Sophomore Initiative



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Coordination of Sophomore Initiative





Dallin George Young

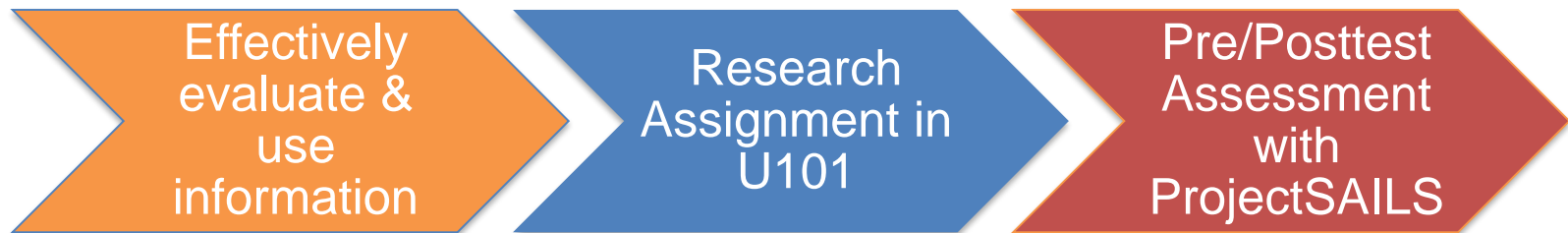
INTEGRATION ACROSS TRANSITIONS

Horizontal Alignment



Strategies used to assess learning and achievement are based on what has been taught and on the learning objectives students are expected to meet.

Horizontal Alignment

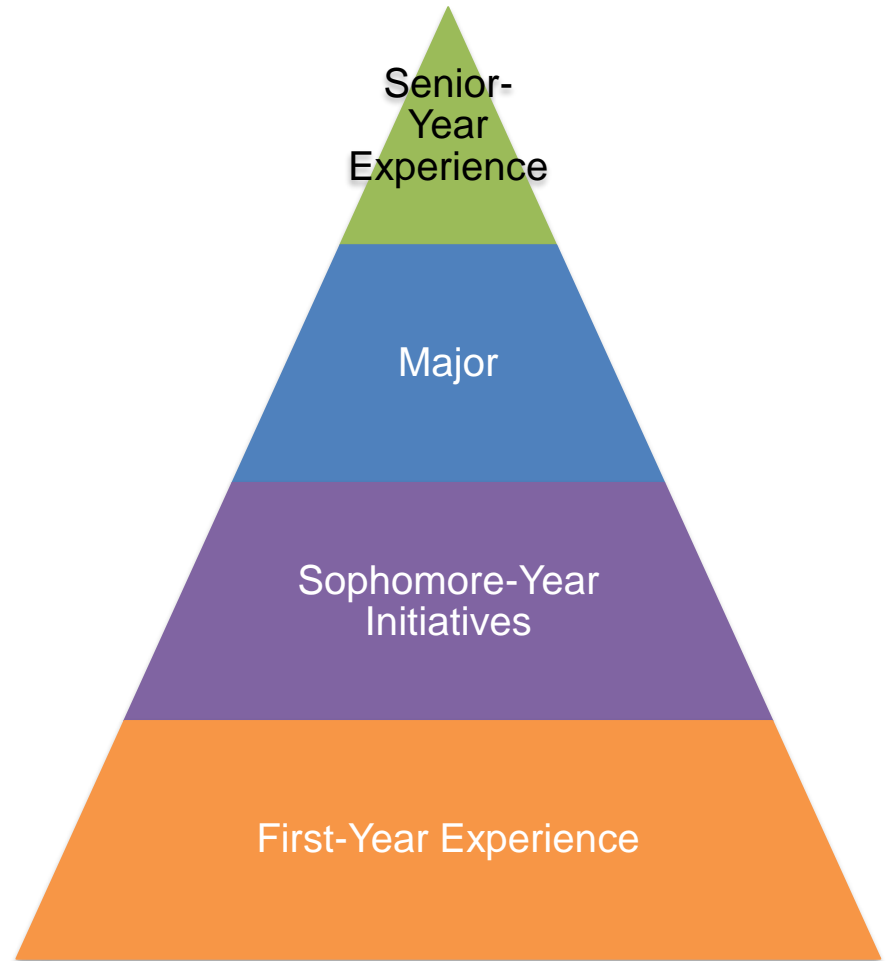


Source: Friedman (2012, pp. 50-51) **NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER**
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Vertical Alignment

What students learn in one lesson or course prepares them for the next lesson or course. Educational experiences are purposefully structured and logically sequenced so that students gain the knowledge and skills to progressively prepare them for more challenging, higher-level work.



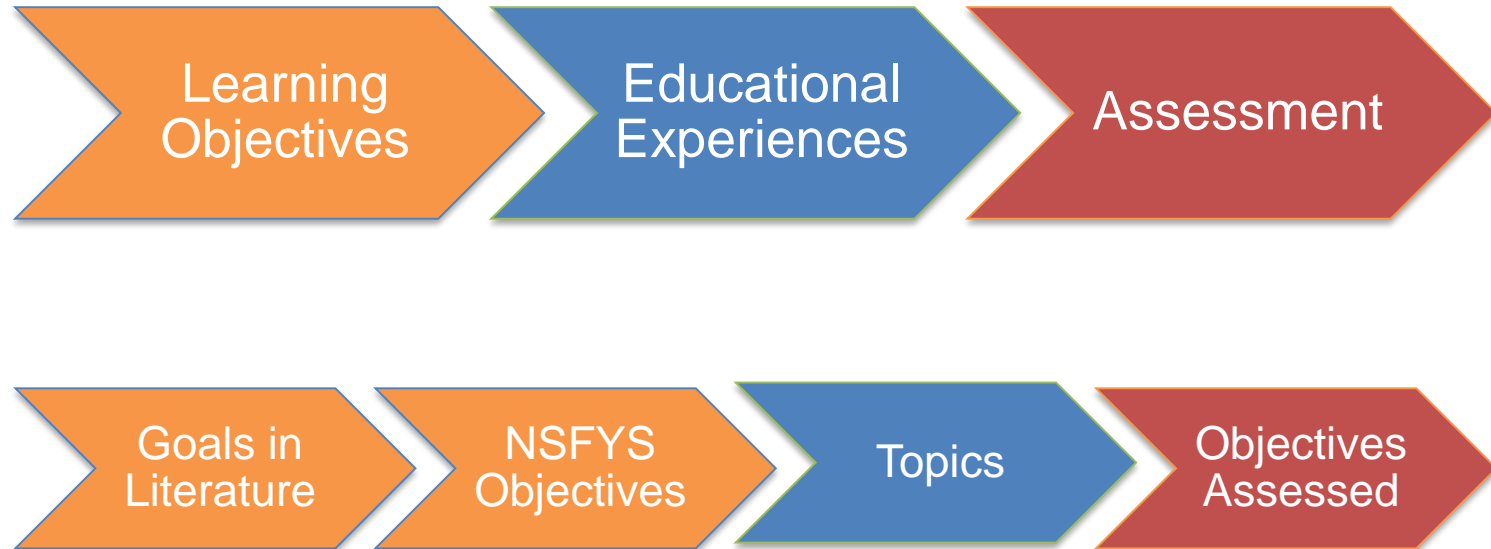
Vertical Horizon

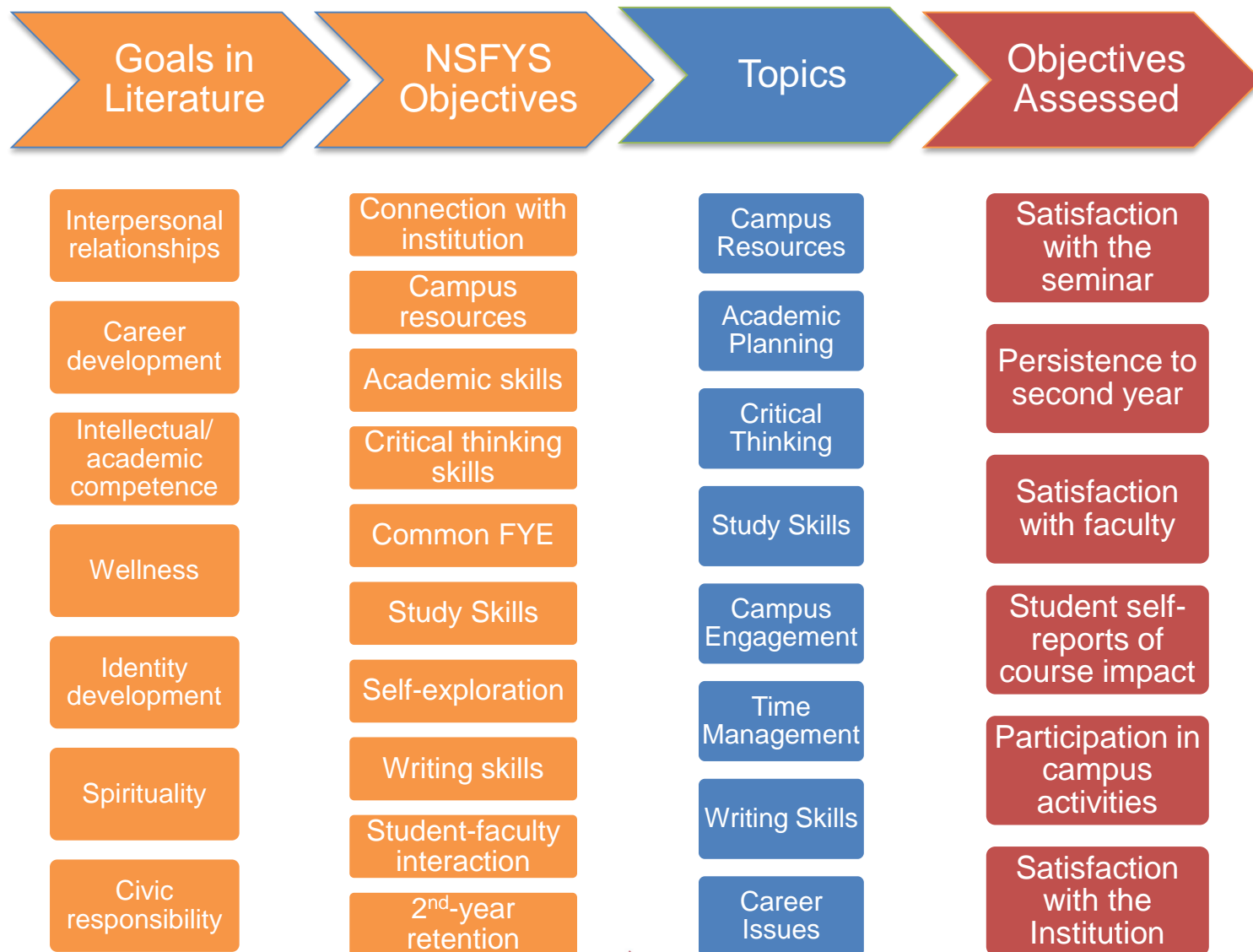


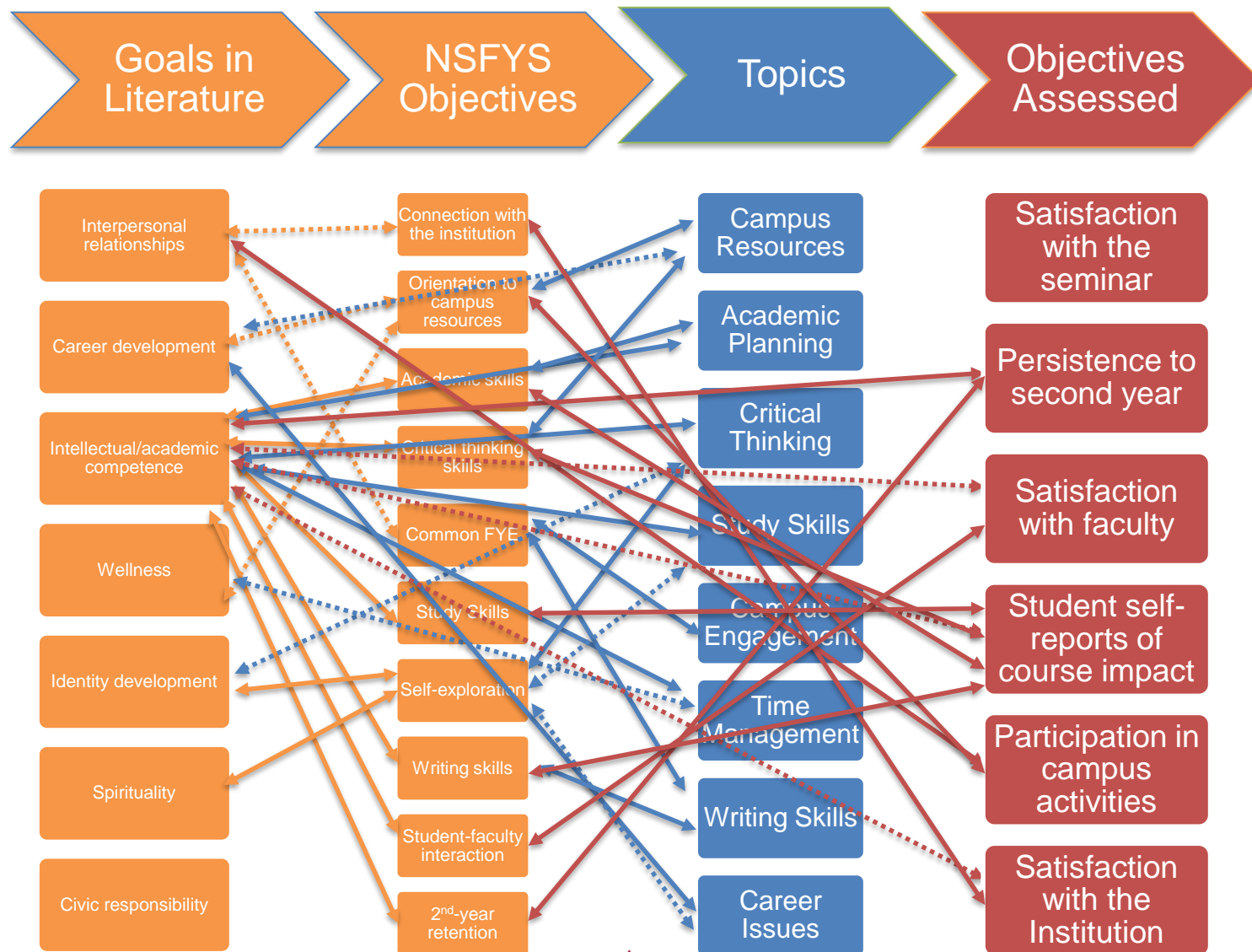
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Horizontal Alignment in First-Year Seminars







Top 5 Seminar Goals

Most Important Course Goals	Percentage
Develop a connection with the institution	44.9
Orientation to campus resources < Two-Year	37.8
Develop academic skills	36.3
Develop critical thinking skills < Four-Year	23.3
Create common first-year experience < Four-Year	21.6

Source: 2012-2013 NSFYS



Interpersonal
relationships

Career
development

Intellectual/
academic
competence

Wellness

Identity
development

Spirituality

Civic
responsibility

Connection with
institution

Campus
resources

Academic skills

Critical thinking
skills

Common FYE

Study Skills

Self-exploration

Writing skills

Student-faculty
interaction

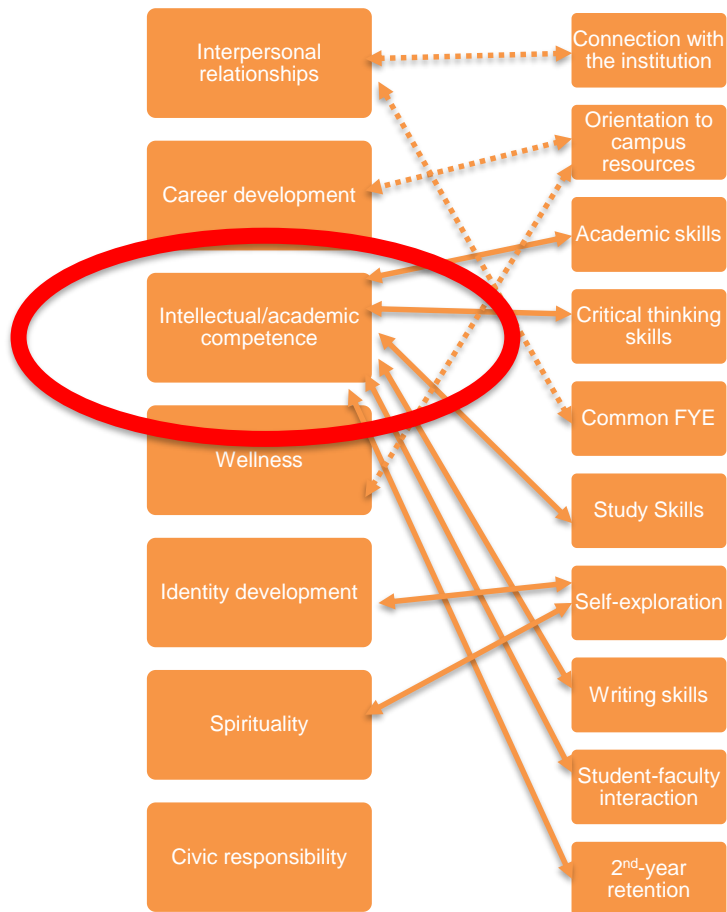
2nd-year
retention





Stated objectives centered on developing academic and intellectual competence

Not much specific stated focus on objectives related to civic responsibility, wellness, or spirituality



Top 5 Seminar Topics

Most Important Course Topics	Percentage
Campus resources	35.7
Academic planning or advising	34.7
Critical thinking	32.6
Study skills	29.8
Campus engagement	27.7

Source: 2012-2013 NSFYS

NSFYS Objectives

Connection with institution

Campus resources

Academic skills

Critical thinking skills

Common FYE

Study Skills

Self-exploration

Writing skills

Student-faculty interaction

2nd-year retention

Topics

Campus Resources

Academic Planning

Critical Thinking

Study Skills

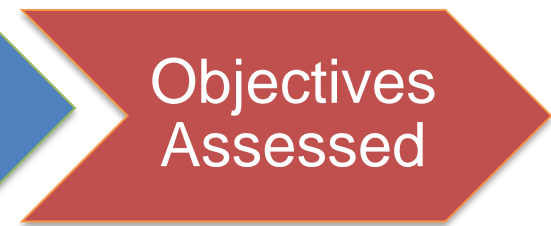
Campus Engagement

Time Management

Writing Skills

Career Issues

Objectives Assessed



For colleges
and universities
who named

Connection
with
institution

as an
objective

Campus
Resources –
47.8%

Academic
Planning –
41.6%

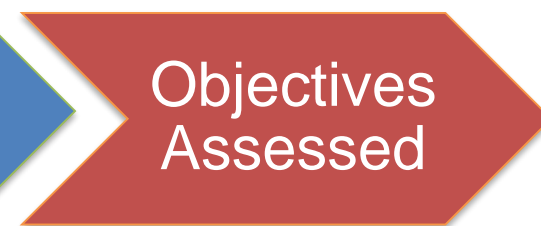
Campus
Engagement –
38.1%

Study Skills –
27.0%

Time
Management –
25.2%

These
were the
top 5 topics

Some evidence
of horizontal
alignment



For colleges
and universities
who named

Orientation to
Campus
Resources and
Services

as an
objective

Campus
Resources –
62.6%

Academic
Planning –
42.3%

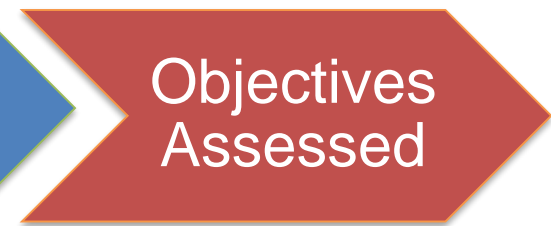
Study Skills –
37.1%

Time
Management –
33.6%

Campus
Engagement –
31.8%

These
were the
top 5 topics

Evidence of
horizontal
alignment



For colleges
and universities
who named

Academic
Skills

as an
objective

Study Skills –
46.2%

Academic
Planning –
37.7%

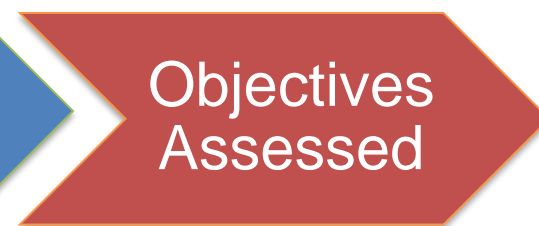
Campus
Resources –
35.2%

Critical
Thinking –
31.5%

Time
Management –
24.9%

These
were the
top 5 topics

Strong evidence
of horizontal
alignment



For colleges
and universities
who named

Critical
Thinking
Skills

as an
objective

Critical
Thinking –
73.3%

Writing Skills –
38.6%

Specific
Disciplinary
Topic – 21.6%

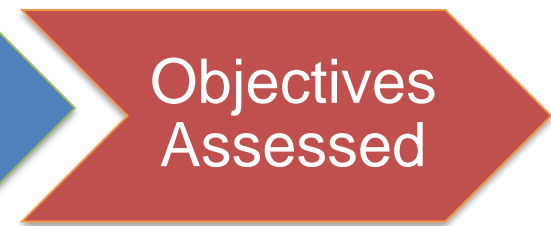
Campus
Engagement –
19.9%

Study Skills –
18.2%

Academic
Planning –
18.2%

These
were the
top 5 topics

Strong evidence
of horizontal
alignment



For colleges
and universities
who named

Common
FYE

as an
objective

Critical
Thinking –
37.4%

Academic
Planning –
35.6%

Campus
Engagement –
35.0%

Campus
Resources –
35.0%

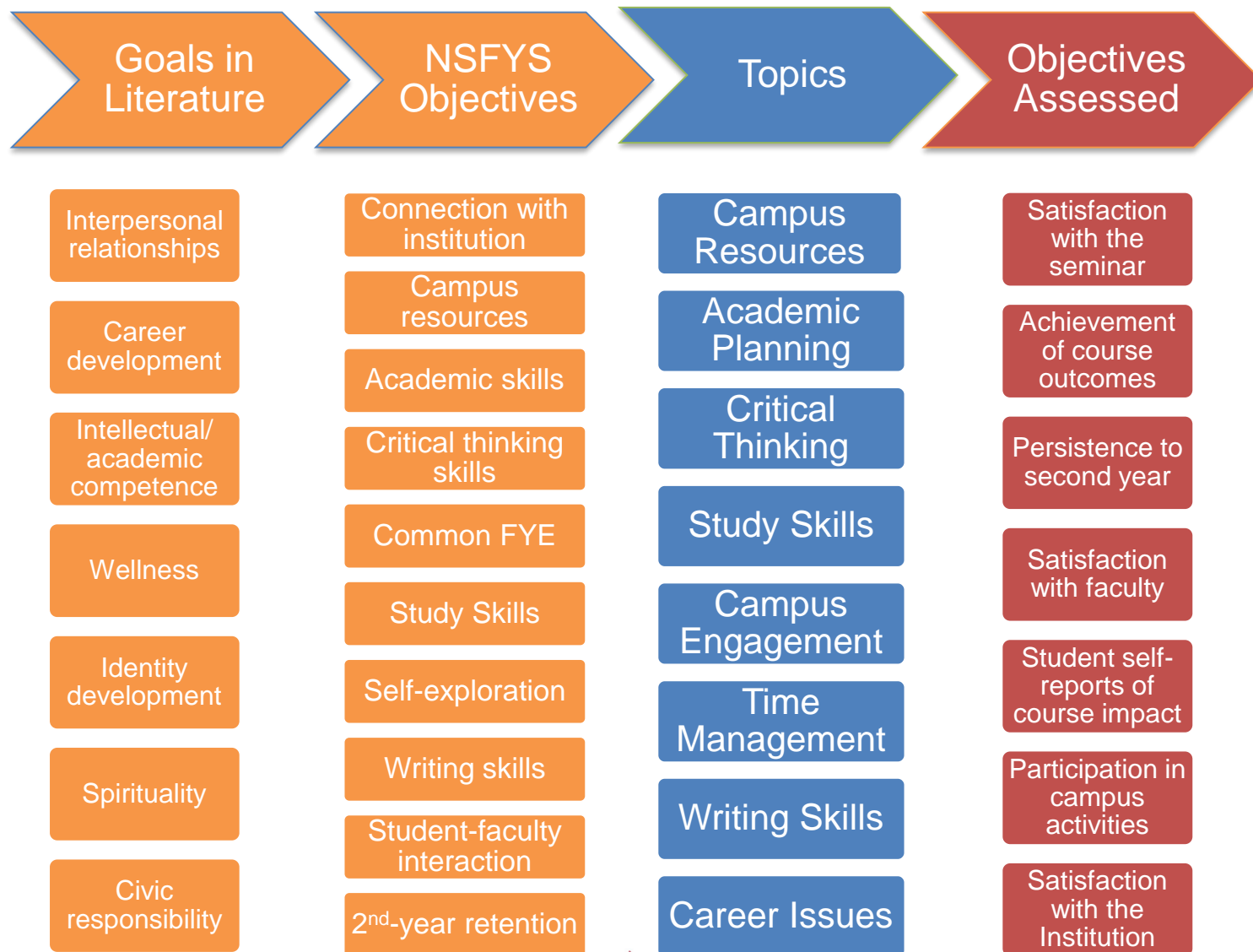
Writing Skills –
22.1%

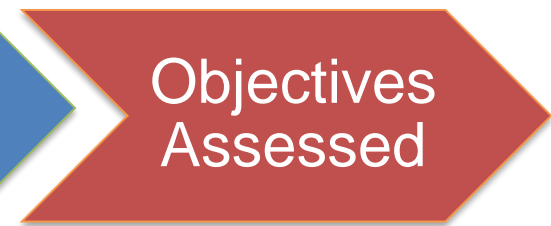
These
were the
top 5 topics

Some evidence
of horizontal
alignment

5 Most Frequently Assessed Outcomes

Outcome	%
Satisfaction with the seminar	75.9
Achievement of course outcomes	68.9
Persistence to second year	58.4
Satisfaction with faculty	52.7
Self-reports of course impact	49.3





For colleges
and universities
who named

Connection
with
institution

as an
objective

These were
the top 5
outcomes
assessed

Satisfaction with
the seminar –
76.8%

Achievement of
Course Outcomes
– 69.5%

Persistence to
Second Year –
63.2%

Satisfaction with
faculty – 47.9%

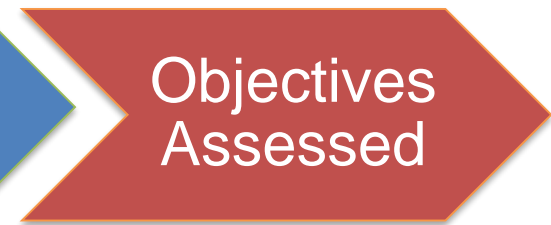
Student self-
reports of course
impact – 45.3%

Connections
with Peers –
44.7%, #6

Student-
faculty
interaction –
28.4%, #12

Satisfaction
with
Institution –
38.9%, #8

Some evidence
of horizontal
alignment



For colleges
and universities
who named

Orientation to
Campus
Resources and
Services

as an
objective

These were
the top 5
outcomes
assessed

Satisfaction with
the seminar –
76.6%

Achievement of
Course Outcomes
– 64.3%

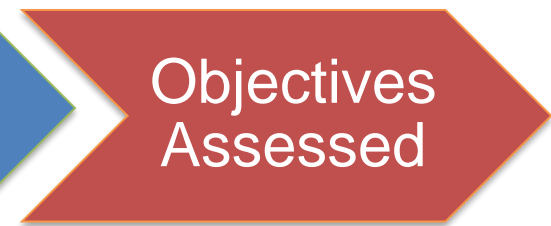
Persistence to
Second Year –
60.2%

Satisfaction with
faculty – 44.0%

Student self-
reports of course
impact – 48.5%

Use of
Campus
Services
– 36.8%,
#8 most
frequent
assessed
outcome

Little evidence
of horizontal
alignment



For colleges
and universities
who named

Academic
Skills

as an
objective

These were
the top 5
outcomes
assessed

Achievement of
Course Outcomes
– 76.8%

Satisfaction with
the seminar –
74.8%

Persistence to
Second Year –
64.9%

Satisfaction with
faculty – 50.3%

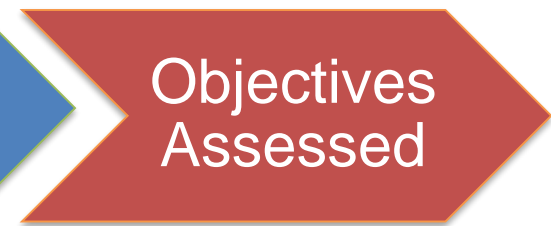
Student self-
reports of course
impact – 50.3%

Grade Point
Average –
47.7%, #6

Student self-
reports of
improvement
– 33.1%, #11

Writing
Ability –
20.5%, #16

Strong evidence
of horizontal
alignment



For colleges
and universities
who named

Critical
Thinking
Skills

as an
objective

These were
the top 5
outcomes
assessed

Achievement of
Course Outcomes
–75.0%

Satisfaction with
the seminar –
71.4%

Critical Thinking –
64.3%

Satisfaction with
faculty – 56.3%

Persistence to
Second Year –
51.8%

Student
self-reports
of course
impact –
45.3%, #6

Writing
Skills –
44.6%, #7

Some evidence
of horizontal
alignment

NSFYS
Objectives

Topics

Objectives
Assessed

For colleges
and universities
who named

Common
FYE

as an
objective

These were
the top 5
outcomes
assessed

Little evidence
of horizontal
alignment

Satisfaction with
the seminar –
72.6%

Achievement of
Course Outcomes
– 68.4%

Persistence to
Second Year –
57.9%

Satisfaction with
faculty – 62.1%

Student self-
reports of course
impact – 42.1%

Satisfaction with
the institution –
42.1%

Connections
with Peers –
40.0%, #7

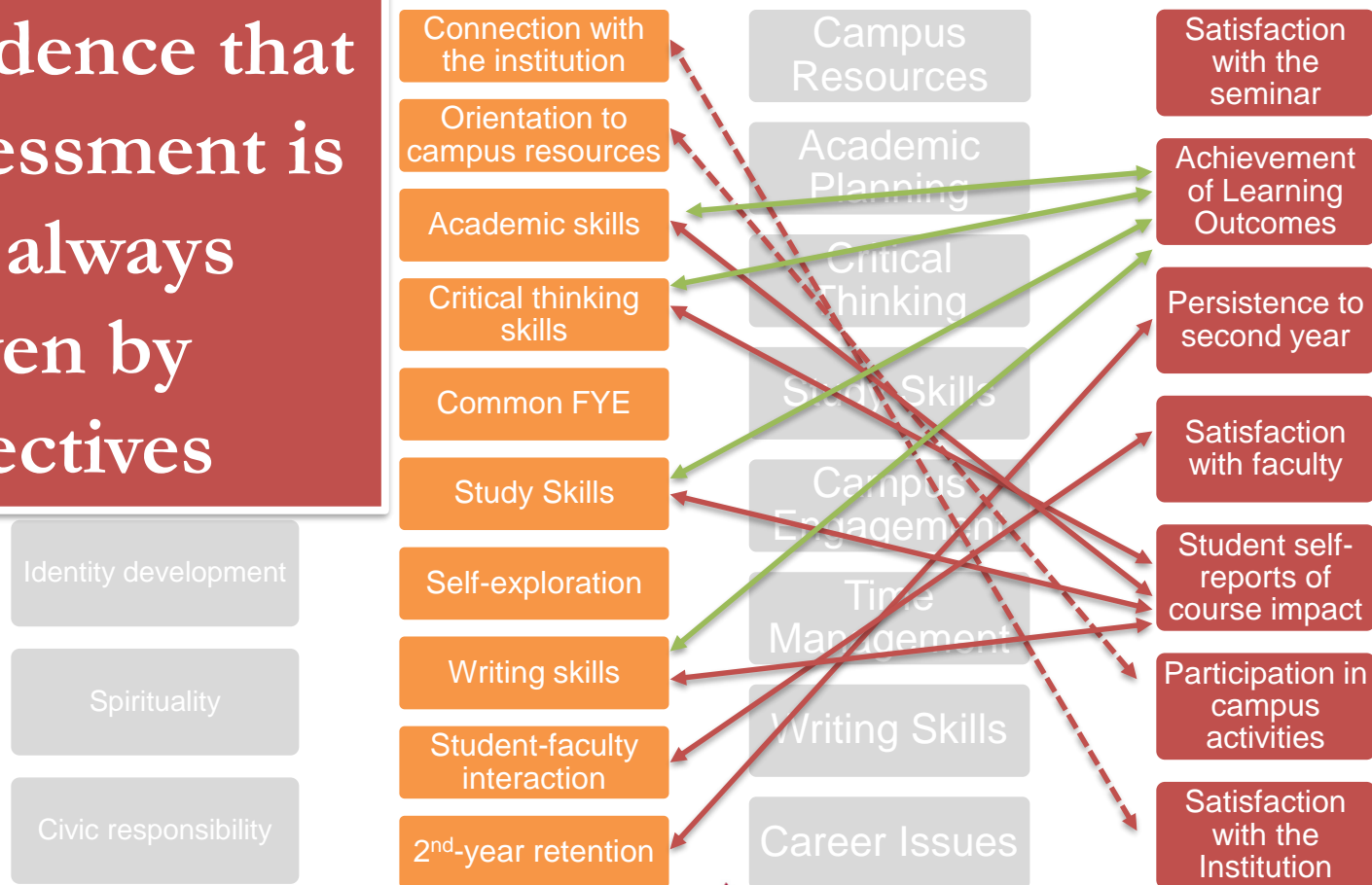
Participation
in Campus
Activities –
37.9%, #8

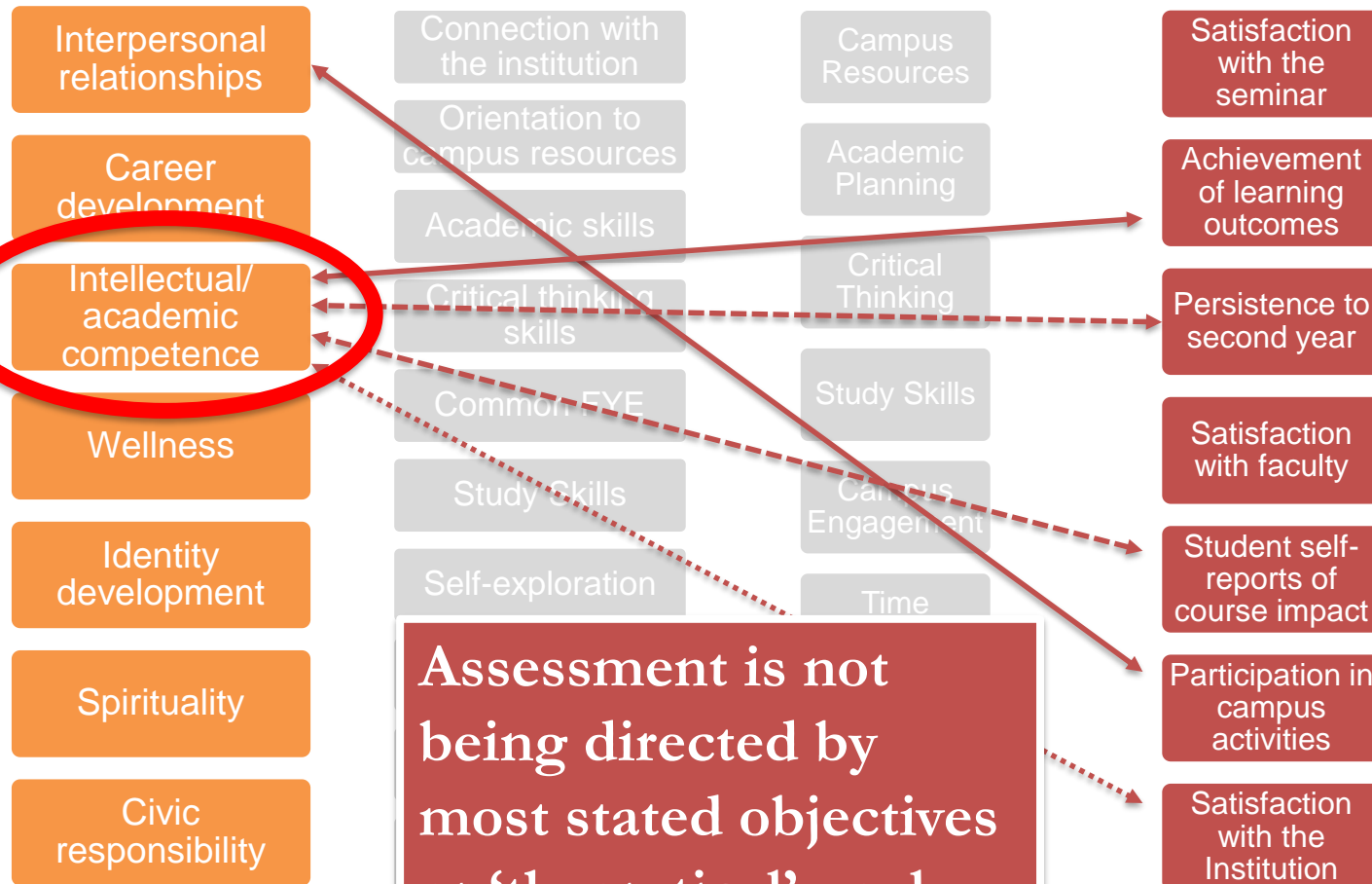
Satisfaction
with
Advising –
36.8%, #9

Critical
Thinking –
34.7%, #10



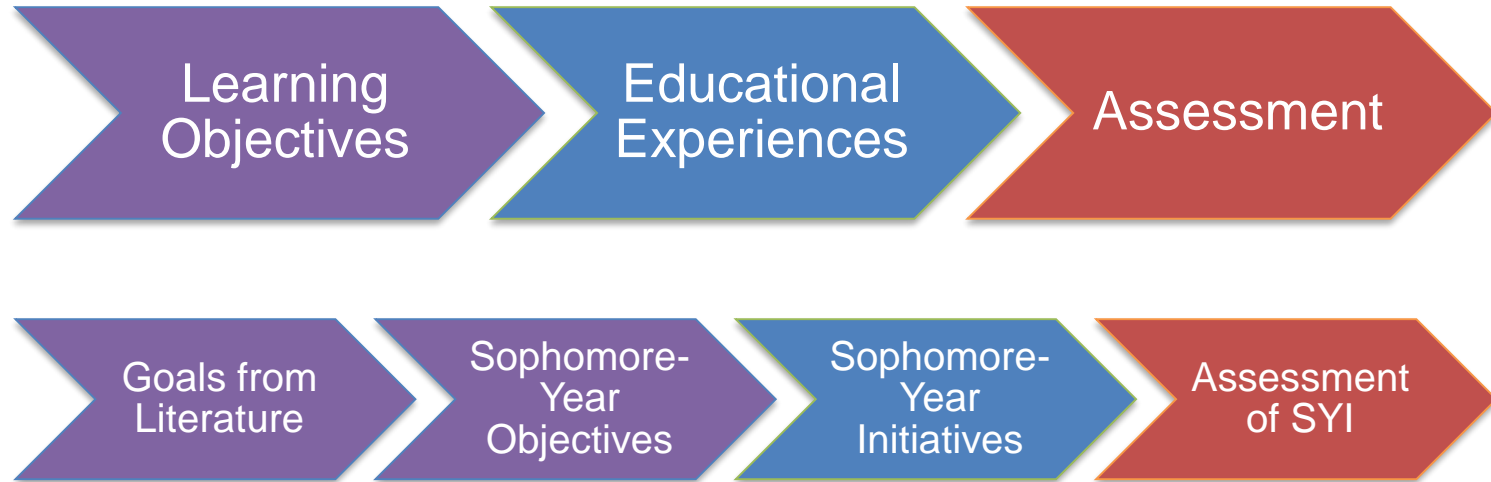
**Evidence that
assessment is
not always
driven by
objectives**





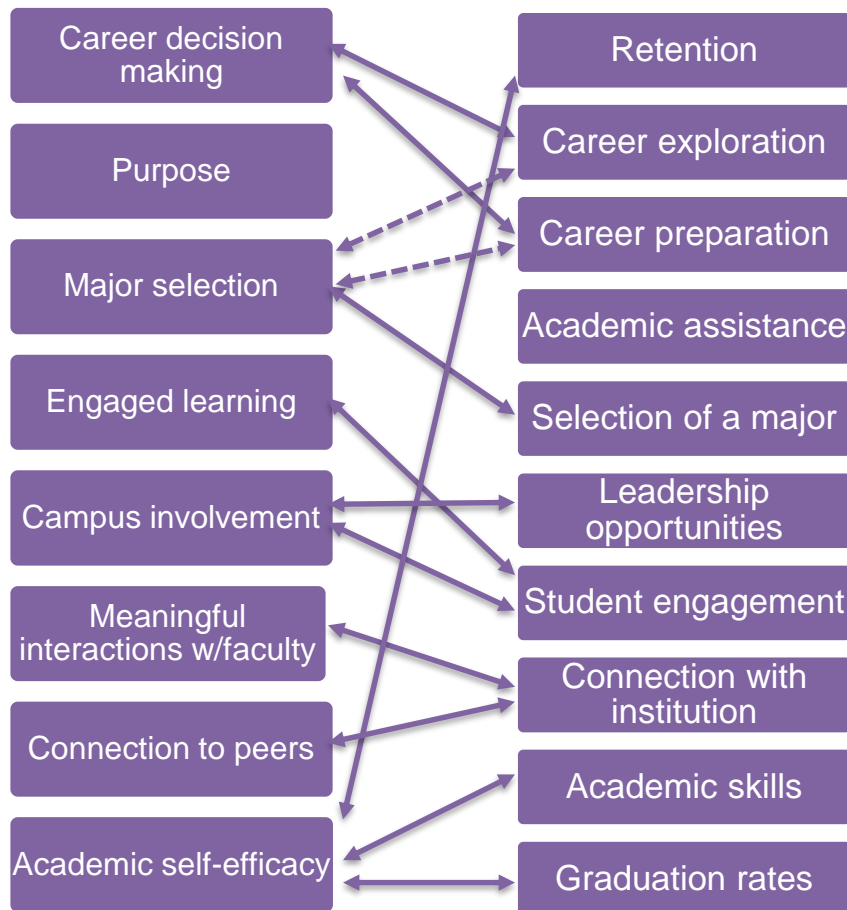
Assessment is not being directed by most stated objectives or 'theoretical' goals for first year

Horizontal Alignment in Sophomore-Year Initiatives



Objectives for the Sophomore Year

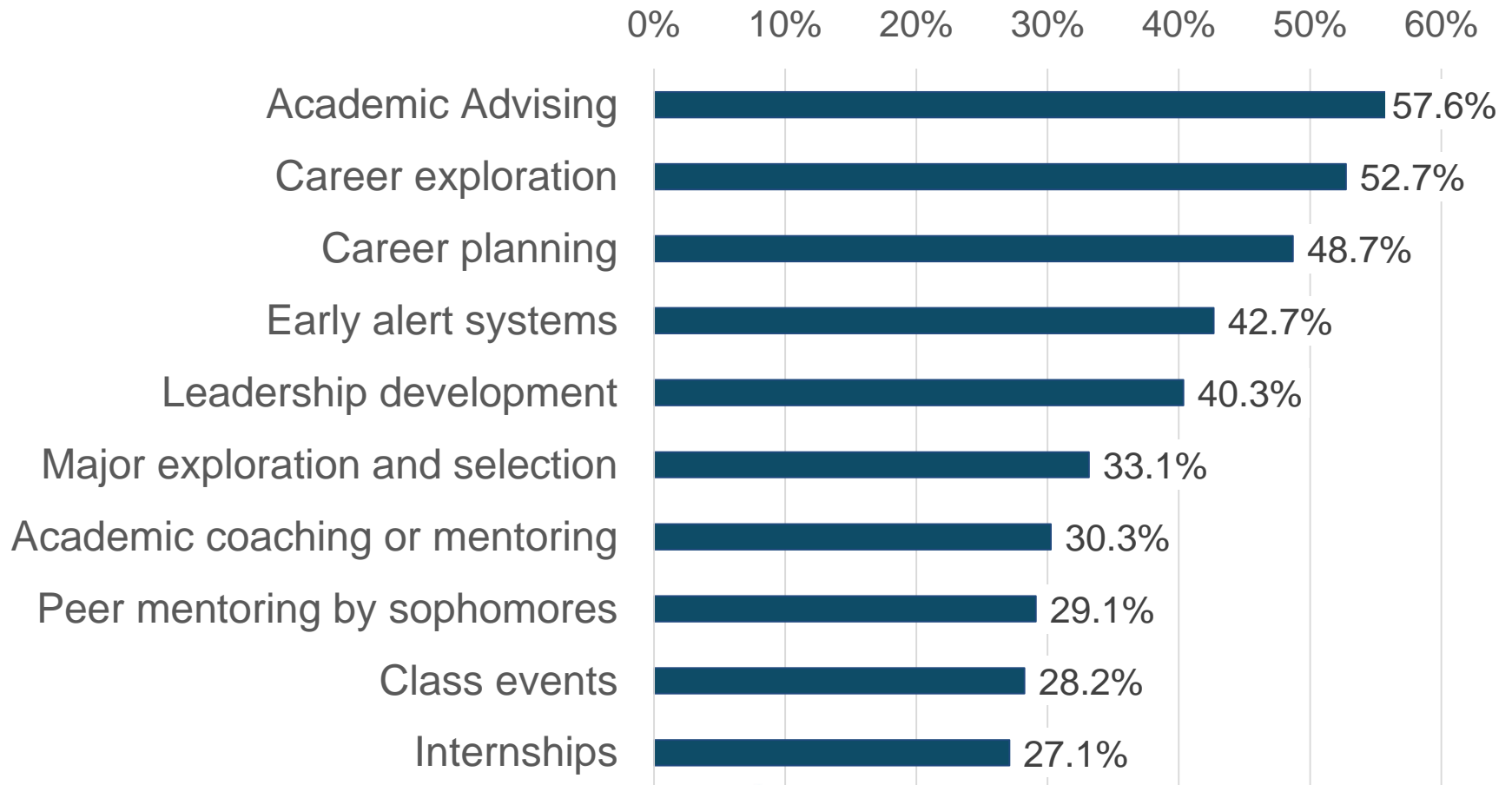
Objective	Percentage
Retention	62.1 %
Career exploration	53.5%
Career preparation < Two-Year	45.4%
Academic assistance	45.1%
Selection of a major < Four-Year	44.9%
Leadership opportunities	43.5%
Student engagement	43.1%
Connection with institution < Four-Year < Private	34.5%
Academic skills	31.7%
Graduation rates < Two-Year < Public	31.3%



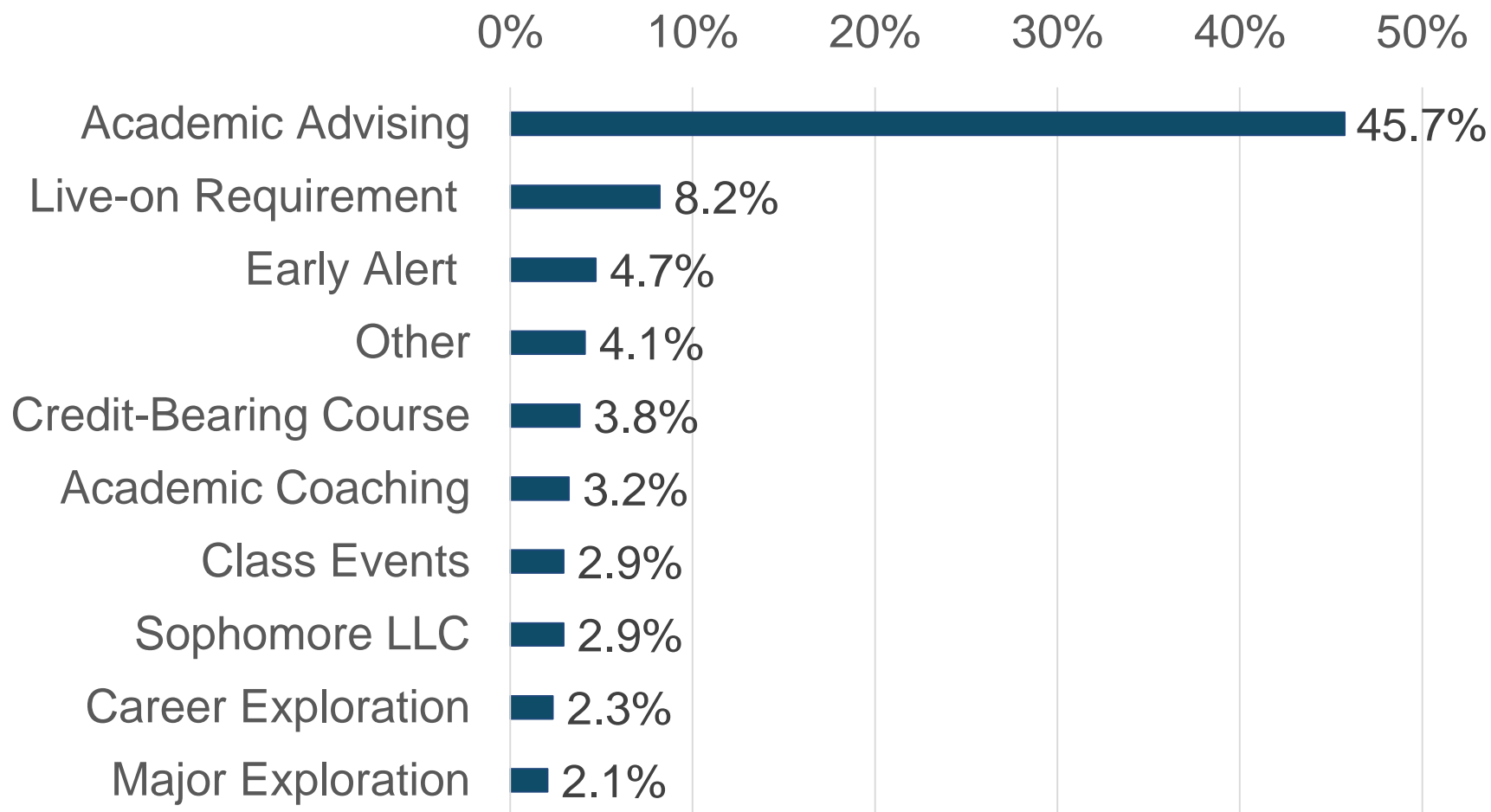
Goals from literature line up pretty well with reported institutional goals for sophomore year

Heavy focus on retention. Purpose is not explicitly stated as objective for second-year students

Common Sophomore-Year Initiatives



Primary Sophomore-Year Initiatives



Primary Sophomore-Year Initiative: Categories

- Academic Advising (45.7%)
- Residential Initiatives (12.3%)
- High-Impact Practices (7.9%)
- Major and Career-Focused Initiatives (6.4%)
- Academic Support
- Curriculum or Course-Based
- Communication to Sophomores
- Campus-Based Events
- Away-from-Campus Events
- Transition-Focused Initiatives
- Financial Aid & Scholarships
- Leadership Development
- Comprehensive Sophomore-Year
- Early Alert



Sophomore Objectives

Retention

Career exploration

Career preparation

Academic assistance

Selection of a major

Leadership opportunities

Student engagement

Connection with
institution

Academic skills

Graduation rates

SYI

Academic
Advising

Residential
Initiatives

High-Impact
Practices

Major and
Career
Initiatives

Objectives Assessed





Academic Assistance

Retention

Selection of a Major

Graduation

Student-Faculty Interaction

For colleges and universities who named

Academic Advising

as their primary SYI

These were the top 5 objectives

Strong evidence of horizontal alignment



Connection
with Institution

Student
Engagement

Retention

Support
Network

Self-
Exploration

For colleges
and universities
who named

Residential
Initiatives

as their
primary SYI

These were
the top 5
objectives

Evidence of
horizontal
alignment



Student Engagement

Intercultural Competence

Civic Responsibility

Leadership Opportunities

Career Preparation and Exploration

Critical-thinking Skills

For colleges and universities who named

High-Impact Practices

as their primary SYI

These were the top 5 (6) objectives

Strong evidence of horizontal alignment



Career Exploration

Career Preparation

Selection of a Major

Retention

Graduation

For colleges and universities who named

Major and Career Focused

as their primary SYI

These were the top 5 objectives

Strong evidence of horizontal alignment

Sophomore Objectives

Retention

Career exploration

Career preparation

Academic assistance

Selection of a major

Leadership opportunities

Student engagement

Connection with institution

Academic skills

Graduation rates

SYI

Academic Advising

Residential Initiatives

High-Impact Practices

Major and Career Initiatives

Objectives Assessed

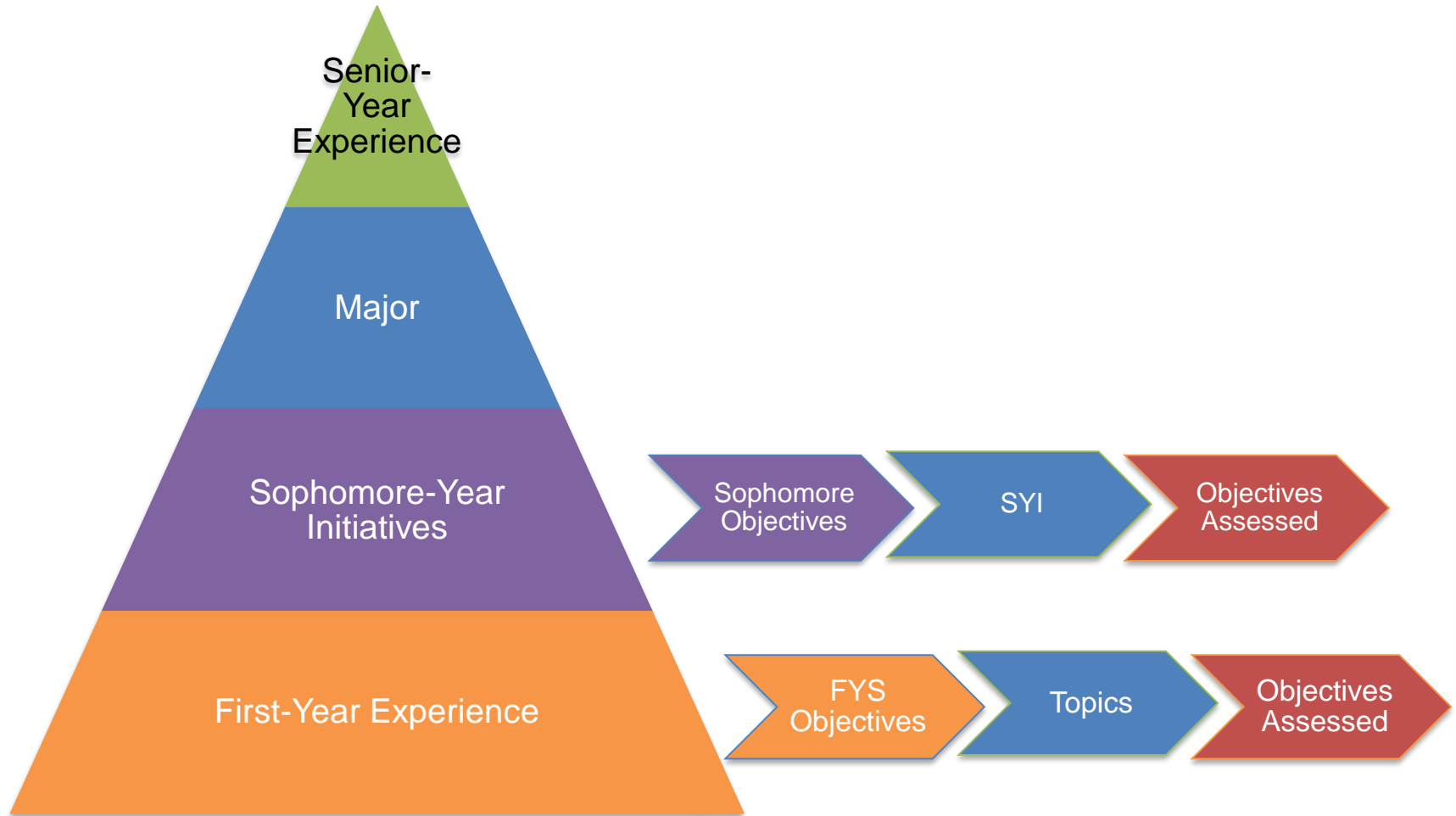
Did not capture in 2014 NSSYI

49.5% of Institutions reported Assessing SYI

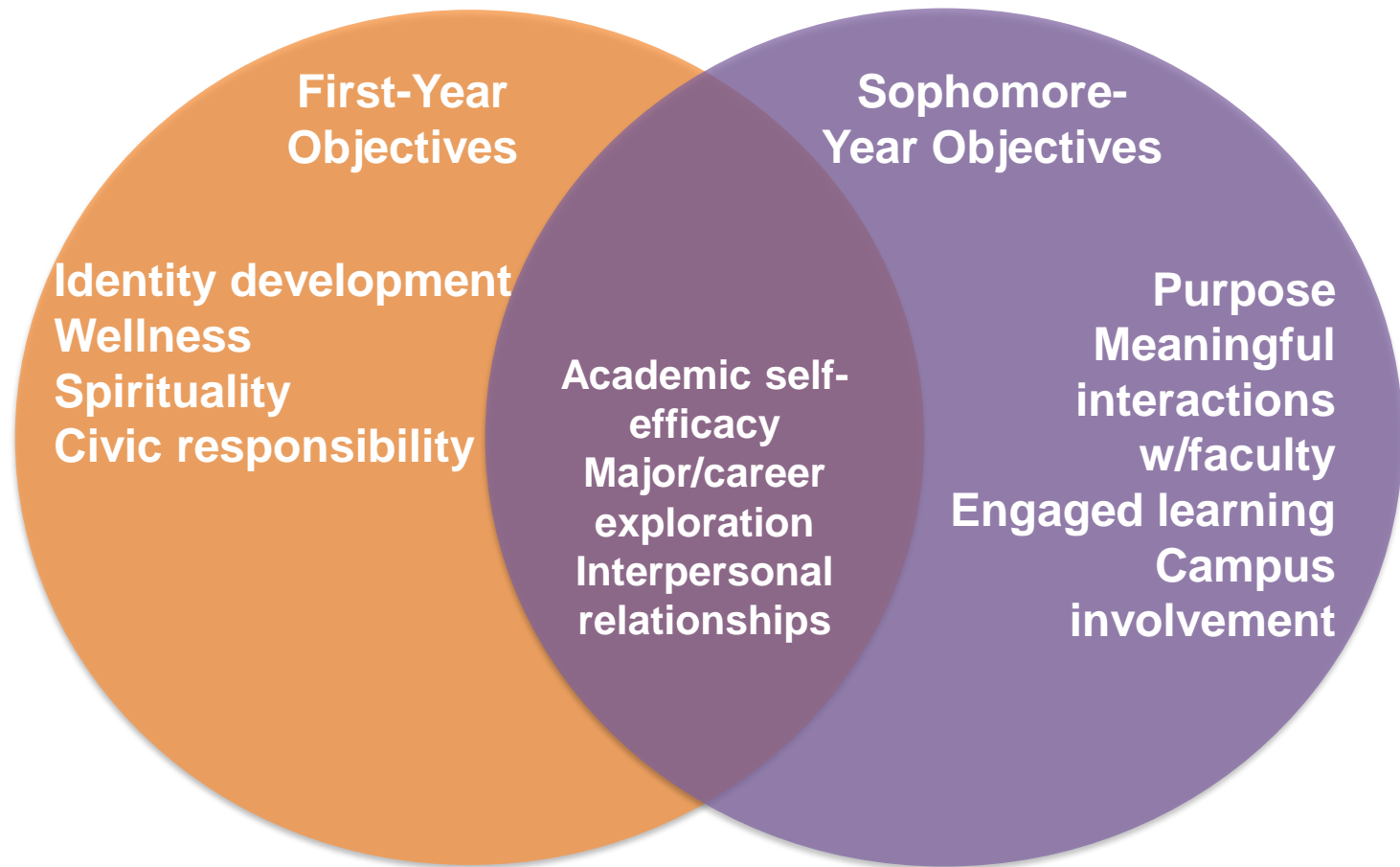
Avenue for Future Research



Vertical Alignment



Opportunities for Vertical Alignment?



Vertical Alignment

	Objective		<i>p</i>	Direction
	First-Year Seminar	Second-Year		
Academic self-efficacy	Connection with the institution	Academic skills	*	-
	Critical thinking skills	Critical-thinking skills	*	+
	Writing skills	Critical-thinking skills	*	+
	Writing skills	Retention	**	-
	Preprofessional preparation	Retention	*	+
Major/career exploration	Critical thinking skills	Career exploration ^a	*	+
	Critical thinking skills	Selection of a major	*	+
	Writing skills	Career exploration ^a	*	+
	Writing skills	Career preparation ^a	**	+
	Writing skills	Selection of a major ^b	***	+
Interpersonal relationships	Connection with the institution	Student engagement	*	+
	Common first-year experience	Student-faculty interaction	*	+

a = Second-year institutional objective, b = both institutional and SYI objective. All other second-year objectives are from initiatives

Opportunities for Vertical Alignment?

- What initiatives do you have in first year that focus on these outcomes?
 - Academic self-efficacy
 - Major/career exploration
 - Interpersonal relationships
- How are they (or how might they) lay the groundwork for initiatives in the sophomore year?
- In what ways are your sophomore initiatives intentionally building on the work of the first year?
- How can you build in assessment of outcomes from the first year to support second-year success?
 - Likewise from second year on?





More information available

**2012-2013 National Survey of First-Year Seminars: Exploring High-Impact Practices
in the First College Year**

Dallin George Young and Jessica M. Hopp

Available Now

www.nrcpubs.com