

An Overview of the Sophomore Year

Dallin George Young (@DallinYoung)

National Resource Center for
The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition

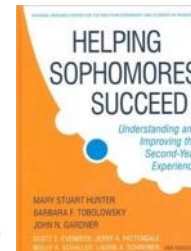
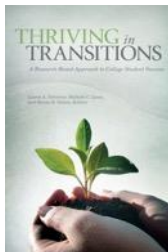
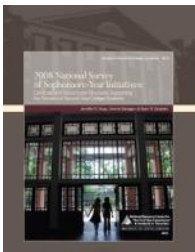
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Implementation and Execution of Sophomore Programs

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CREATING SOPHOMORE PROGRAMS?

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



A black and white photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, a road splits into two paths that curve away from each other. A large, leafless tree stands at the intersection. In the background, another road curves through a field, and a small, isolated tree is visible on the horizon. The sky is overcast.

Existential Questioning

What is the purpose of
my life?

Why am I taking all
these classes?

Practical Questioning

What should I major in?

What career should I
choose?

Sophomore Year Matters

- Engagement
 - Focus
 - Sense of Direction
 - Sense of Belonging
 - Interactions with Faculty
-
- Lead to increases in motivation, academic success, self-authorship and thriving



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



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Sophomore Student
(*Unmotivationus Middlechildibus*)



**KEEP
CALM
AND
SURVIVE
SOPHOMORE YEAR**

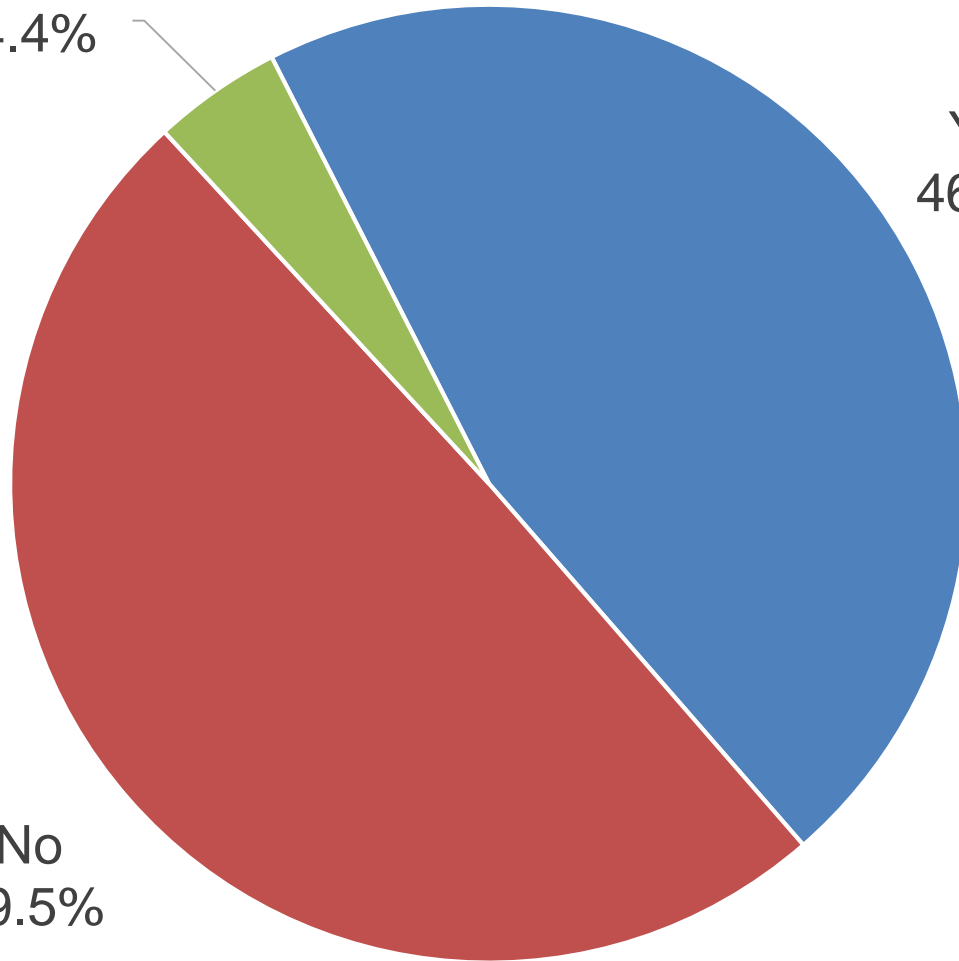
NSSYI: Most Important Objectives

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

Unknown
4.4%

Yes
46.1%

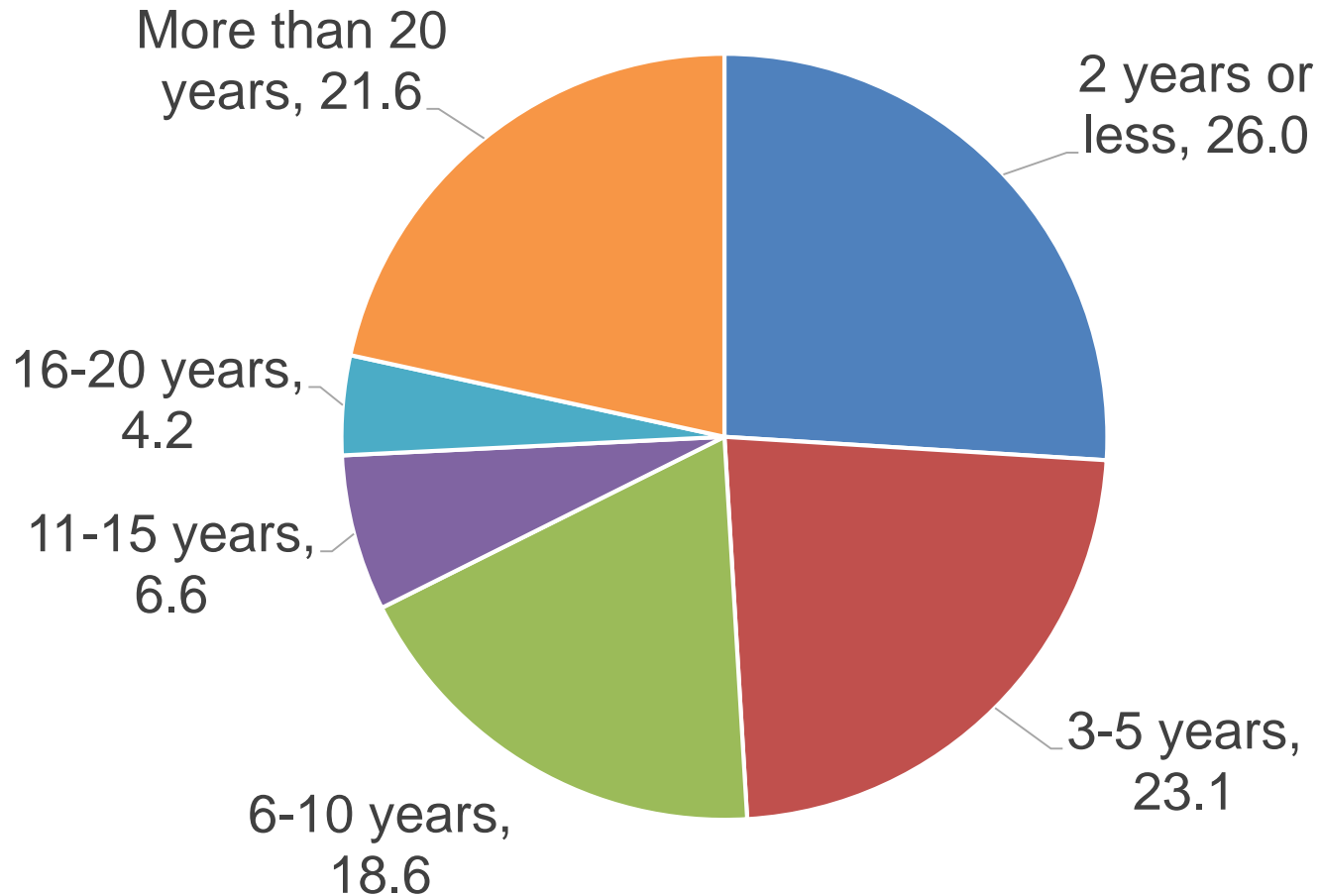
No
49.5%



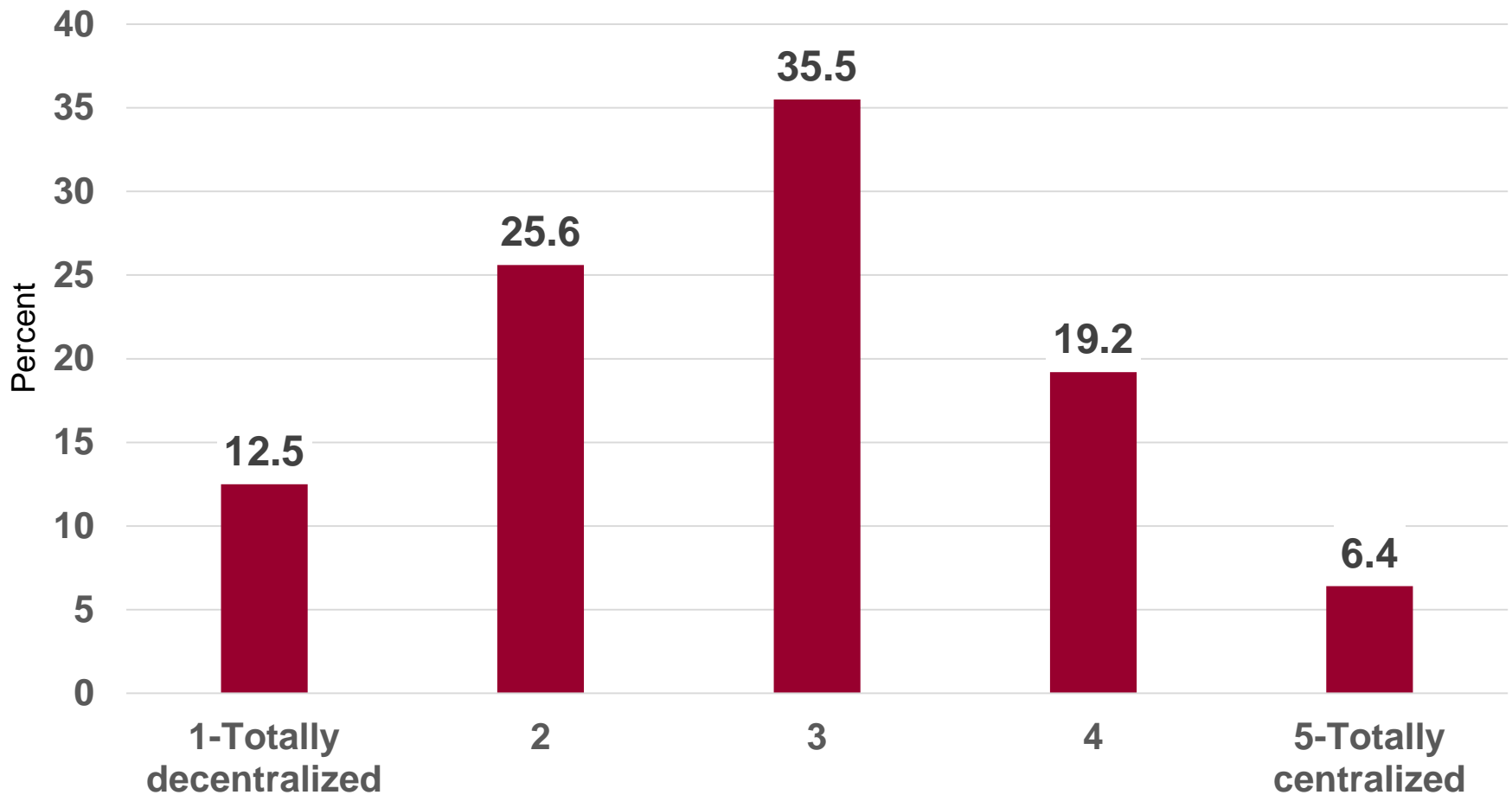
46% of Institutions report offering at least one initiative specifically geared toward sophomores



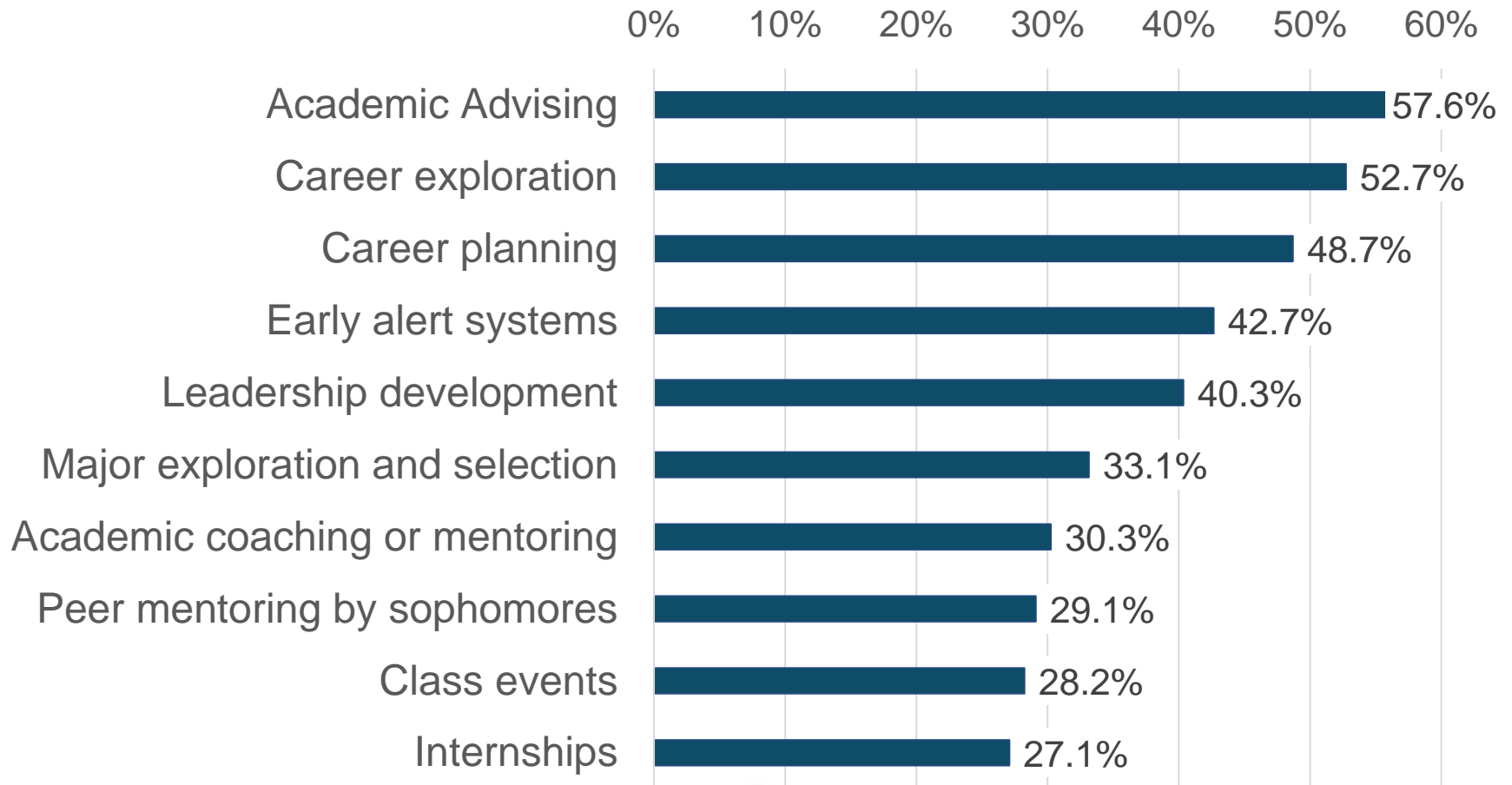
Duration of Sophomore Initiative



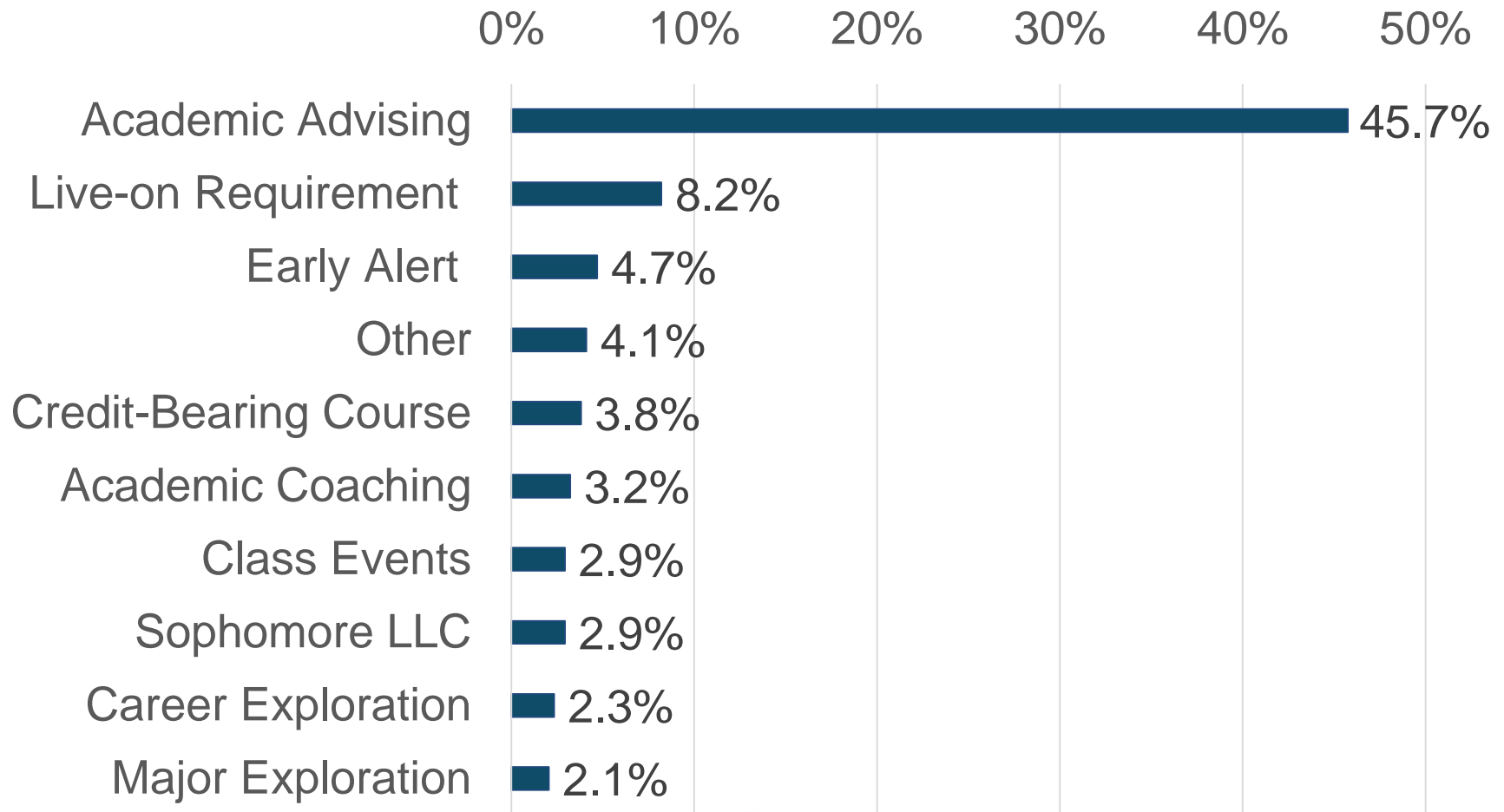
Coordination of Sophomore Initiative



Common Sophomore-Year Initiatives



Primary Sophomore-Year Initiatives



Most Important Objectives for Primary Initiative: Academic Advising



- Academic Assistance
- Retention
- Selection of a Major
- Graduation
- Student-Faculty Interaction

Most Important Objectives for Primary Initiative: Residential Initiatives



- Connection with Institution
- Student Engagement
- Retention
- Support Network
- Self-Exploration



Most Important Objectives for Primary Initiative: High-Impact Practices



These initiatives include such sophomore programs as internships, learning communities, service-learning, undergraduate research

- Student Engagement
- Intercultural Competence
- Civic Responsibility
- Leadership Opportunities
- Career Preparation and Exploration
- Critical-thinking Skills



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Most Important Objectives for Primary Initiative: Major and Career-Focused



- Career Exploration
- Career Preparation
- Selection of a Major
- Retention
- Graduation



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Examples of Sophomore Programs

- University of South Carolina
 - SophoMORE series
 - http://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/student_success_center/beyond-your-courses/sophomore_success/
- Ohio State
 - STEP
 - Faculty buy-in and interaction with students is key
- Belmont University
 - Growth & Purpose for Students (GPS)
- Norfolk State
 - Graduation Academy for STEM students
 - Sophomore summer bridge
 - Sophomore/Junior transition week
- HBCU-UP (National Science Foundation)
 - Benedict College – supplement tuition of STEM students to improve credit-hour momentum in sophomore year

Assessment and Decision Support

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT WHAT SOPHOMORE STUDENTS NEED TO BE SUCCESSFUL?

What are Sophomores Saying?

Sophomore year is worse or much worse than first year	17.7%
Courses are worse/much worse than first year	21.0%
Getting grades below a B average	16.4%
Still unsure of my major	9.9%
Surviving...barely	27.3%

Sophomore Experiences
Survey, 2014

Sophomores Slumping?

Dissatisfied with....	Percent
My grades	19.9%
Advising	20.3%
My living situation	20.3%
My health	18.4%
My interactions with faculty	13.1%
My peer relationships	12.8%
The whole college experience	12.3%
The amount I'm learning	14.1%

Sophomore Experiences
Survey, 2014



About 1 in 5
sophomores are
experiencing a
“slump” in motivation,
grades, or satisfaction
with the college
experience

Sophomore Experiences
Survey, 2014

About 1 in 5 sophomores are "thriving" on campus:

- Engaged learning
- Positive perspective
- Academic Determination
- Social Connectedness
- Diverse Citizenship



Thriving is a strong predictor of student success measured by student persistence and GPA

Sophomore Experiences Survey, 2014

Pathways to Thriving

- Pathways to Thriving for African American Students
 - Psychological Sense of Community
 - Spirituality
 - Faculty Interaction
 - Institutional Integrity

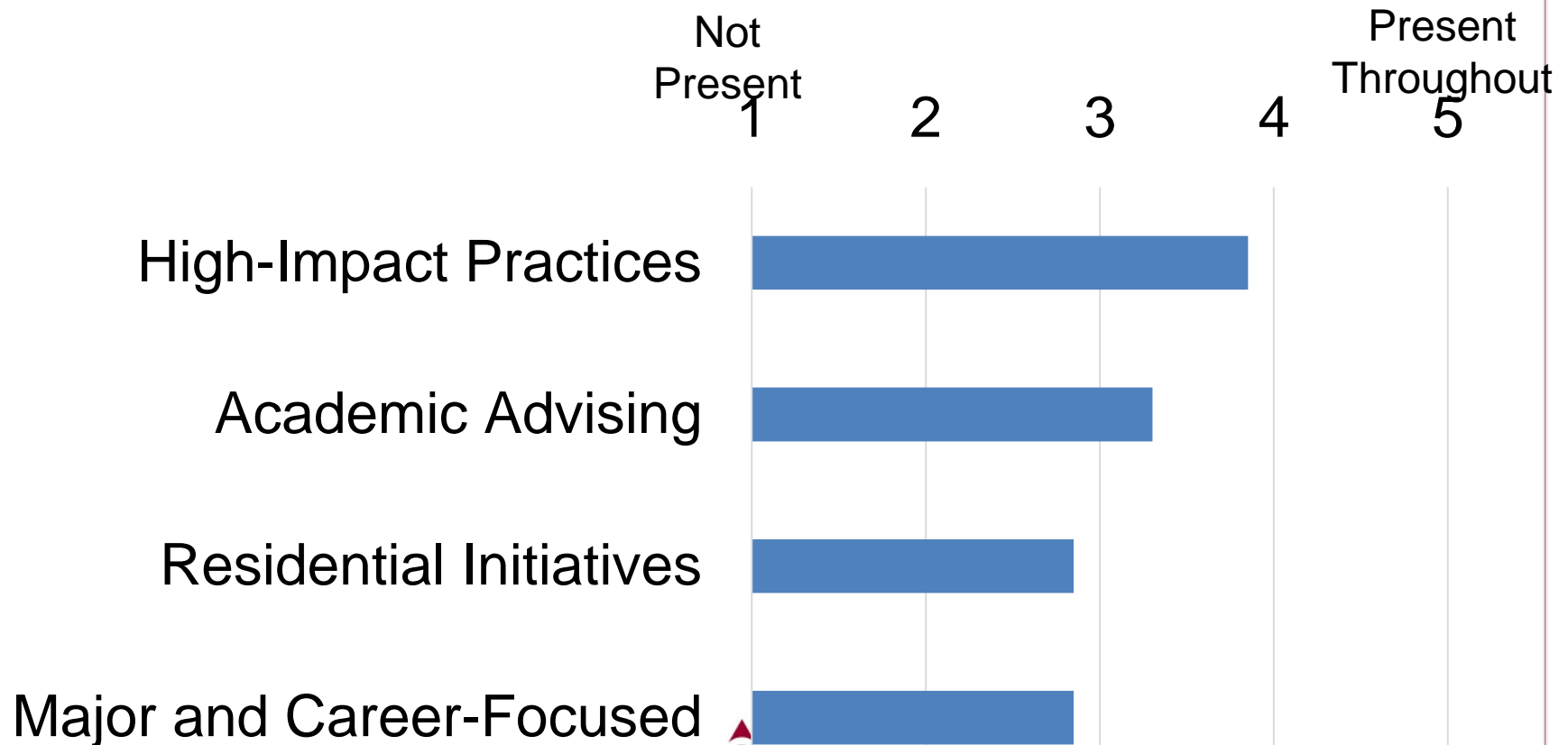


Characteristics of High-Impact Practices

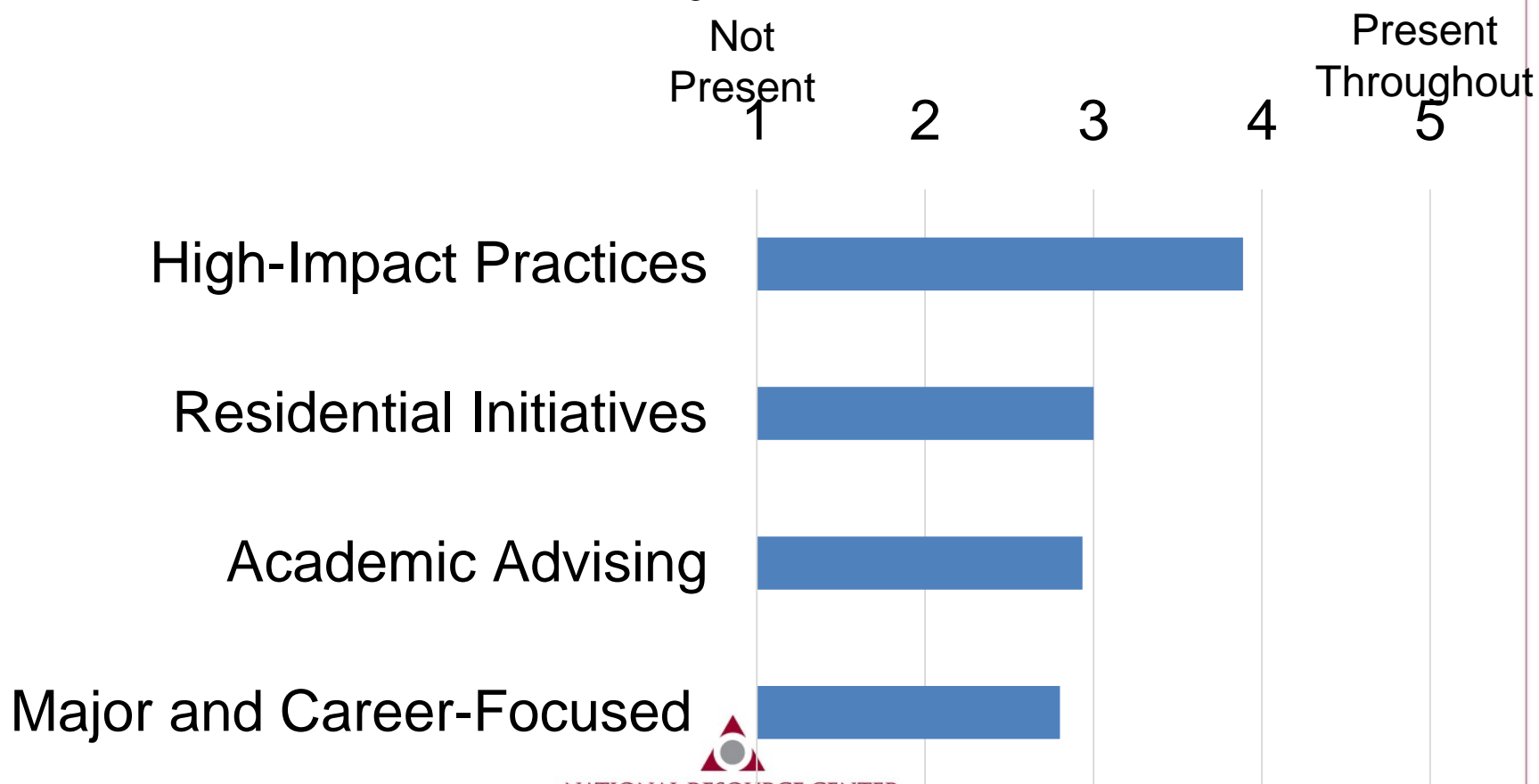
- Creates an investment of time and energy
- Includes interaction with faculty and peers about substantive matters
- Real-world applications
- High expectations
- Includes frequent feedback
- Exposure to diverse perspectives
- Demands reflection and integrated learning
- Demonstration of competence/Accountability

(Kuh & O'Donnell, 2013)

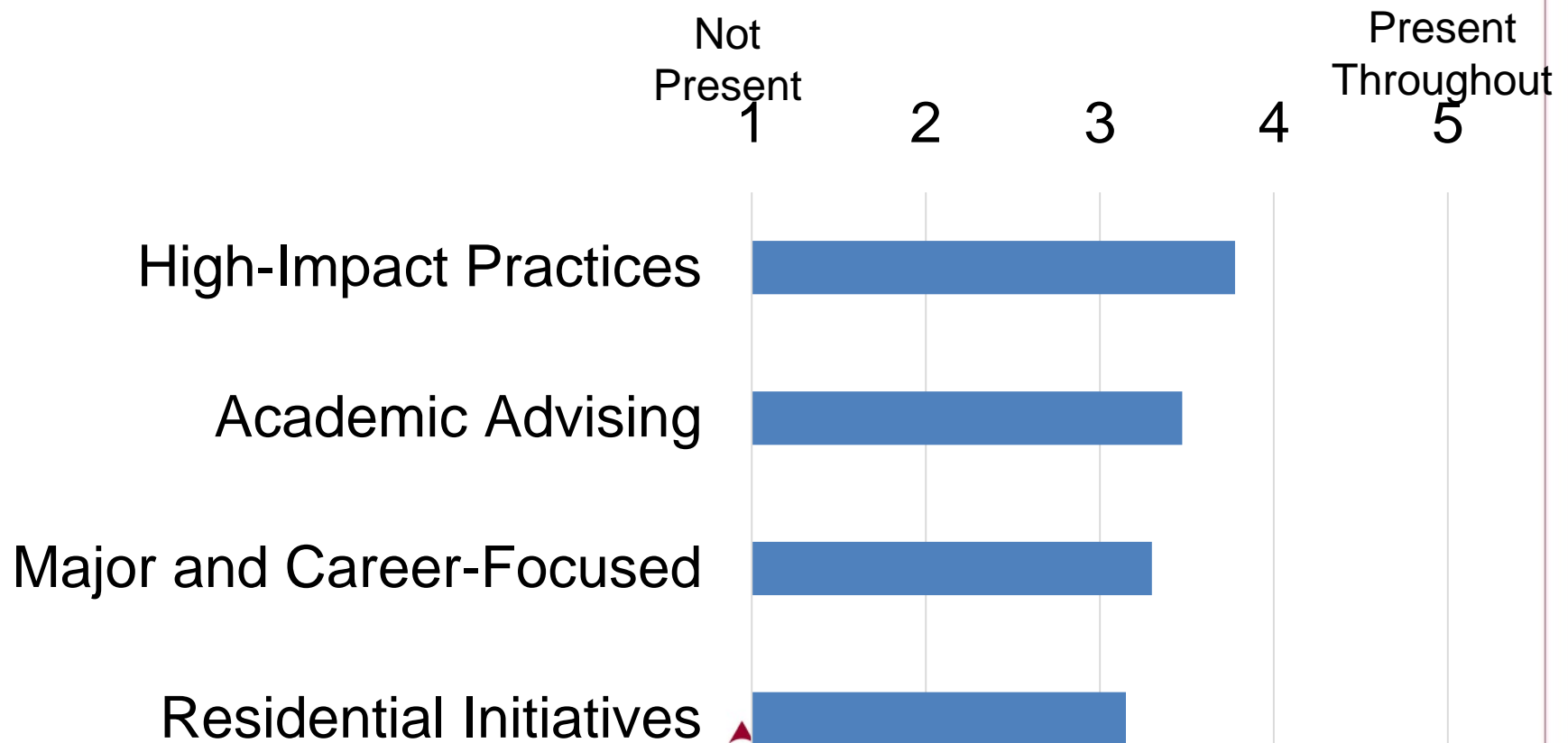
HIP Criteria in Sophomore Initiatives: Performance Expectations at Appropriately High Levels



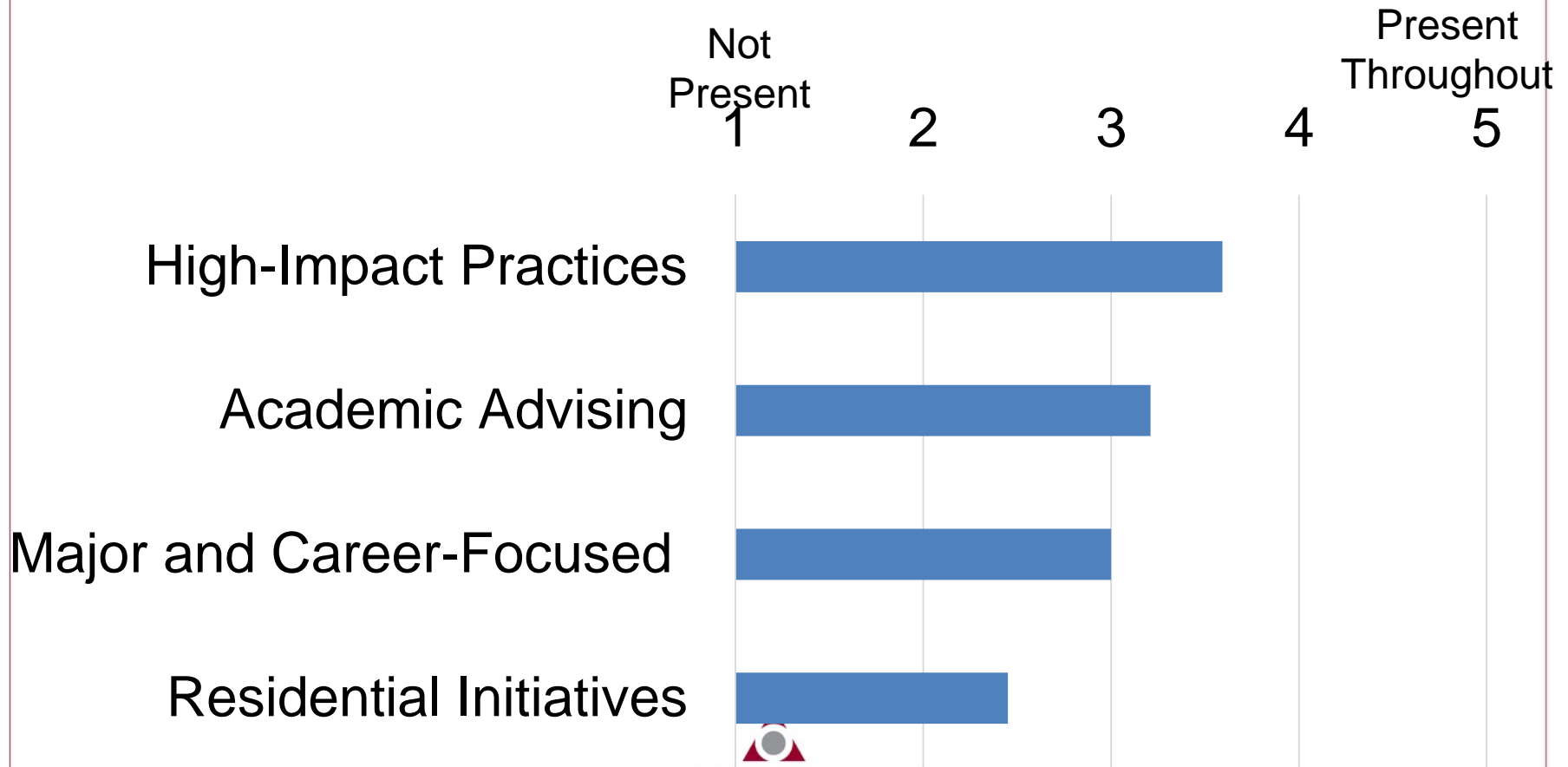
HIP Criteria in Sophomore Initiatives: Significant Investment of Time and Effort by Students



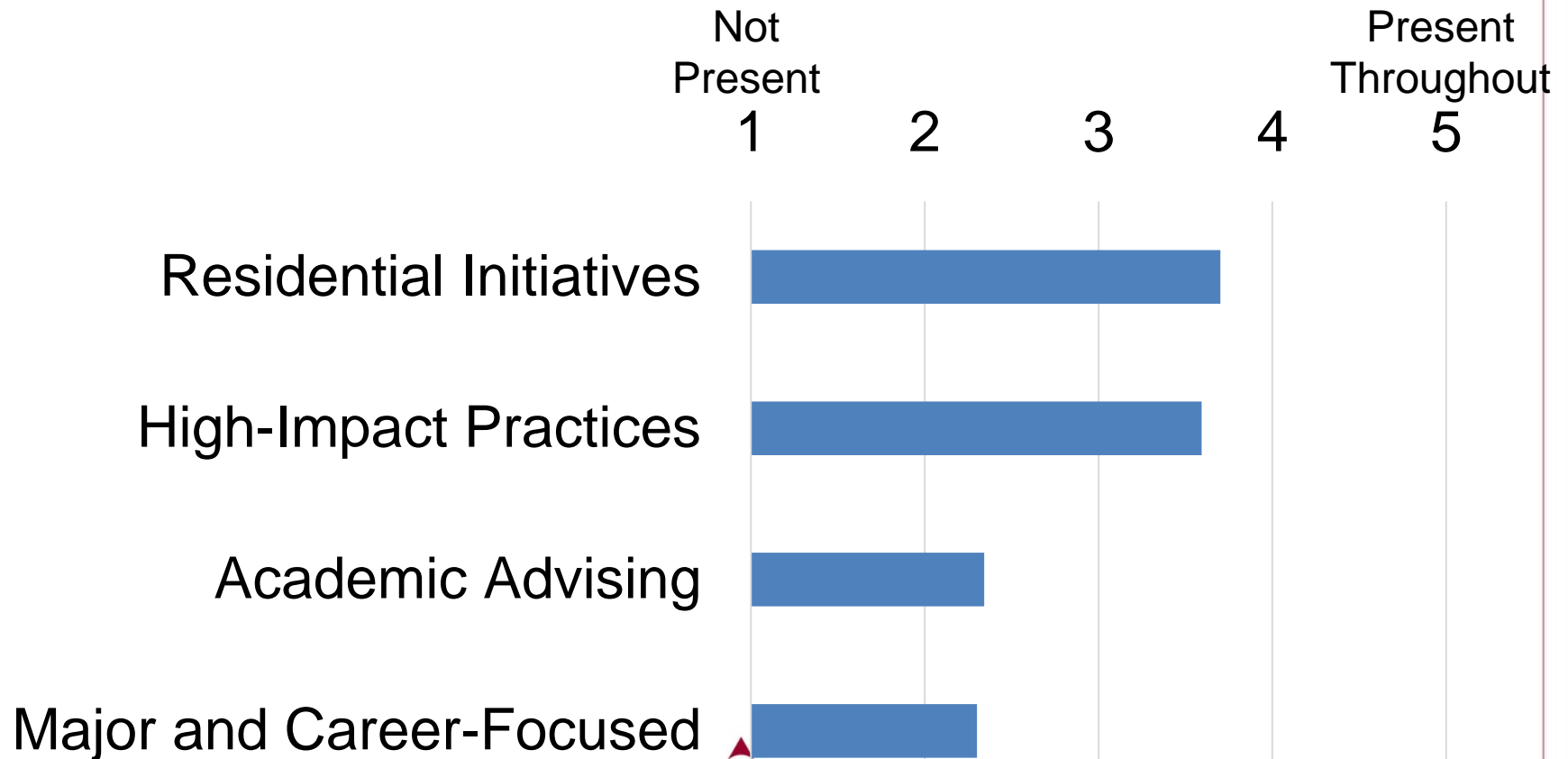
HIP Criteria in Sophomore Initiatives: Interactions with Faculty and Peers about Substantive Matters



HIP Criteria in Sophomore Initiatives: Frequent, Timely, & Constructive Feedback



HIP Criteria in Sophomore Initiatives: Experiences with Diversity



Sophomore Year Assessment

- Consider how you will define “Sophomore”
 - Number of credits
 - Time on campus
 - What information do you already have on your campus about this group and how is it defined there?
- Conduct a data audit
- Choose one or two outcomes and spend several years doing a deep dive

Using National Data for Decision Support

- Consider the level of the data that is available nationally
 - Institution-level data
 - National Resource Center (Nat'l Survey of Sophomore Initiatives)
 - IPEDS
 - Helpful in understanding programs and contexts
 - Student-level data
 - National Student Clearinghouse
 - Sophomore Experiences Survey
 - Helpful in understanding student outcomes

Potential National Data Sources on Sophomores

- Instruments that could be used for sophomores:
 - Sophomore Experiences Survey (free at www.thrivingincollege.org)
 - Student Satisfaction Inventory (Noel-Levitz)
 - Second-Year Student Assessment (Noel-Levitz)
 - Diverse Learning Environments Survey (HERI/UCLA) (Can be used in Second Year)
- NSSE does not target Sophomores

Thank You!

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youngdal@mailbox.sc.edu



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