



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

Leveraging first- and second-year transition programs to improve transfer

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National Resource Center for

The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition

National Institute for the Study of Transfer Students

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Why Attend to Transitions?

- Great attention given to the challenges of entering Higher Education (e.g. Yorke 1999, Tinto, 2000; Nutt et al 2005).
- Poor transition can lead to negative student experience, failing and withdrawing (Upcraft & Gardner et. al., 1989)
- A new first-year student probably encounters the greatest transition (Tinto, 1993; York, 1998), particularly non-traditional students (Tett, 2004)
- Efforts to plug leaks in the academic pipeline began with an attention to the first-year of college

First-Year Transitions

- Students' first experience with higher education
- Traditionally represents a shift
 - Socially as students leave home, previous academic institutions, enter new peer group
 - Academically as students are faced with increased expectations, less structure, entering a new organizational environment



First-Year Transitions

- Period marked by:
 - Possibility, new beginnings, new discoveries, freedoms in thought and behaviors, growth in self-confidence, and excitement
 - Challenge with newfound freedom, adjustment to new environments, experiences with failure, lost confidence, and disillusionment



First-Year Transitions

- Students are (still) more likely to drop out of college during and after the first year than any other point
- Programs developed to support first-year transition:
 - Orientation
 - First-Year Seminars
 - Bridge Programs
 - First-Year Reading Experience

Sophomore Transitions

- Outgrowth first-year experience movement
 - True model of student transition and success
- Emerging research and assessment on the second college year
- Recognition that second-year students have needs and face challenges
- Evidence that sophomores are at times the least satisfied of all students



Second-Year Transitions

- Sophomore year has been characterized as:
 - Forgotten
 - Invisible
 - Disillusioned
 - Dispiriting
 - Academy's Middle Children
 - Slump
 - Full of inertia and confusion

(Boyer Commission, 1998; Freedman, 1956; Gahagan & Hunter, 2006; Pattengale & Schreiner, 2000; Tobolowsky, 2008)



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



Transfer Transitions

- Traditionally from two-year to four-year
 - “Reverse Transfer”
 - “Swirl”
- Issues facing students who transfer
 - Articulation of credits/academic progress
 - Social and academic connection
 - Campus culture
 - Completion of academic goals

Inventory

- Programs (1-2 most salient)
 - First-Year
 - Second-Year
 - Transfer
- Objectives of each
 - Stated
 - Latent
- Reach
 - Desired/Designed
 - Actual



Challenge in Execution of Transition

Support: “The relay”



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Challenge in Execution of Transition Support: “The Canyon”

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

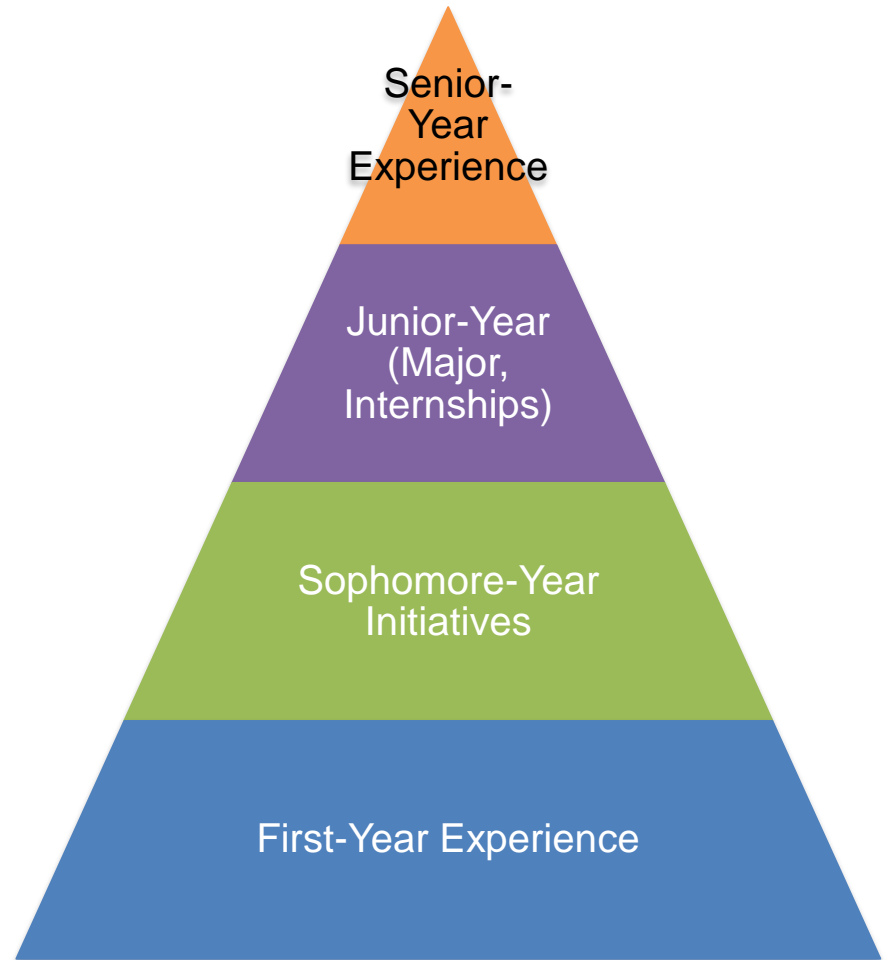


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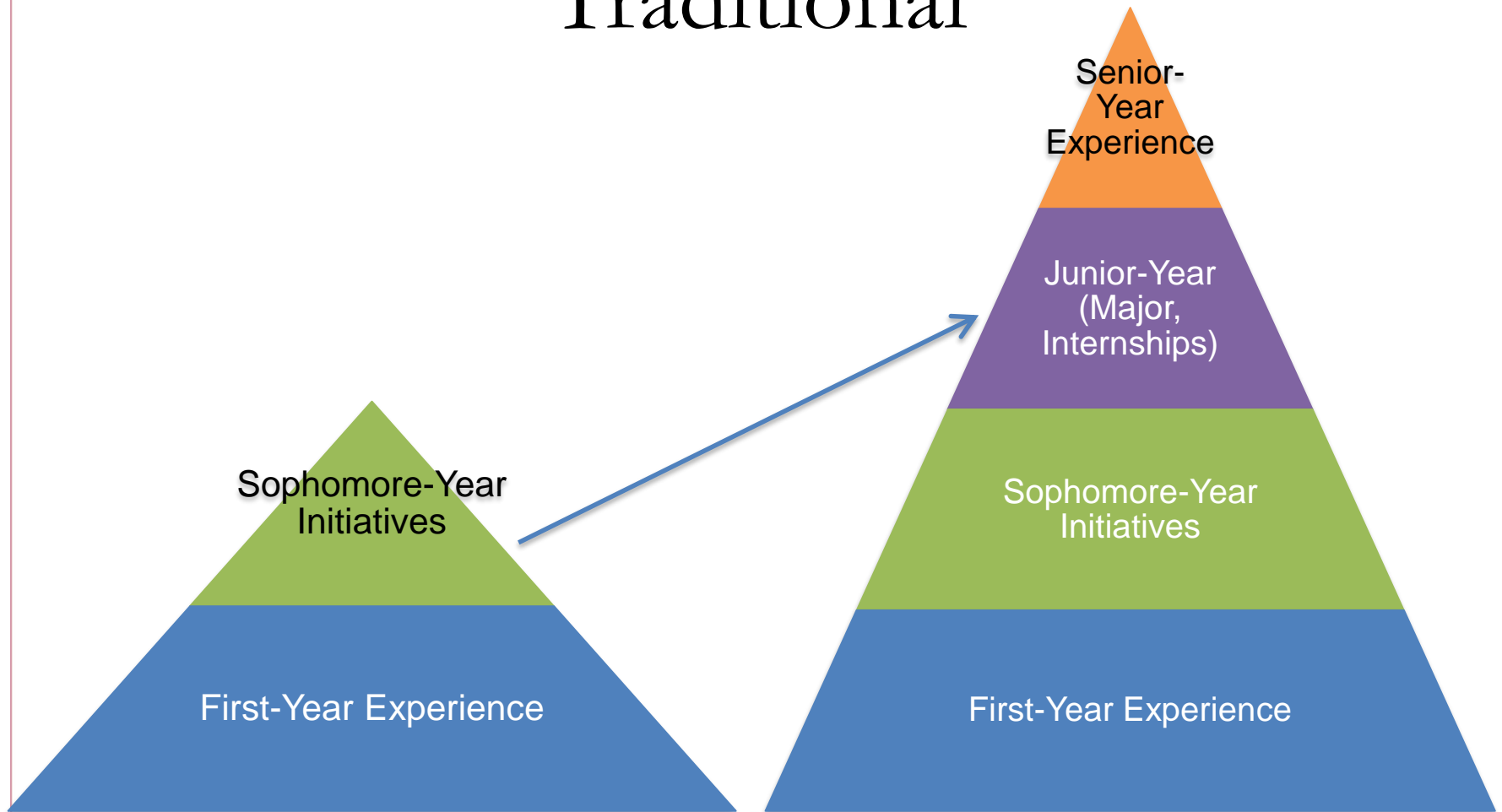
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Vertical Alignment

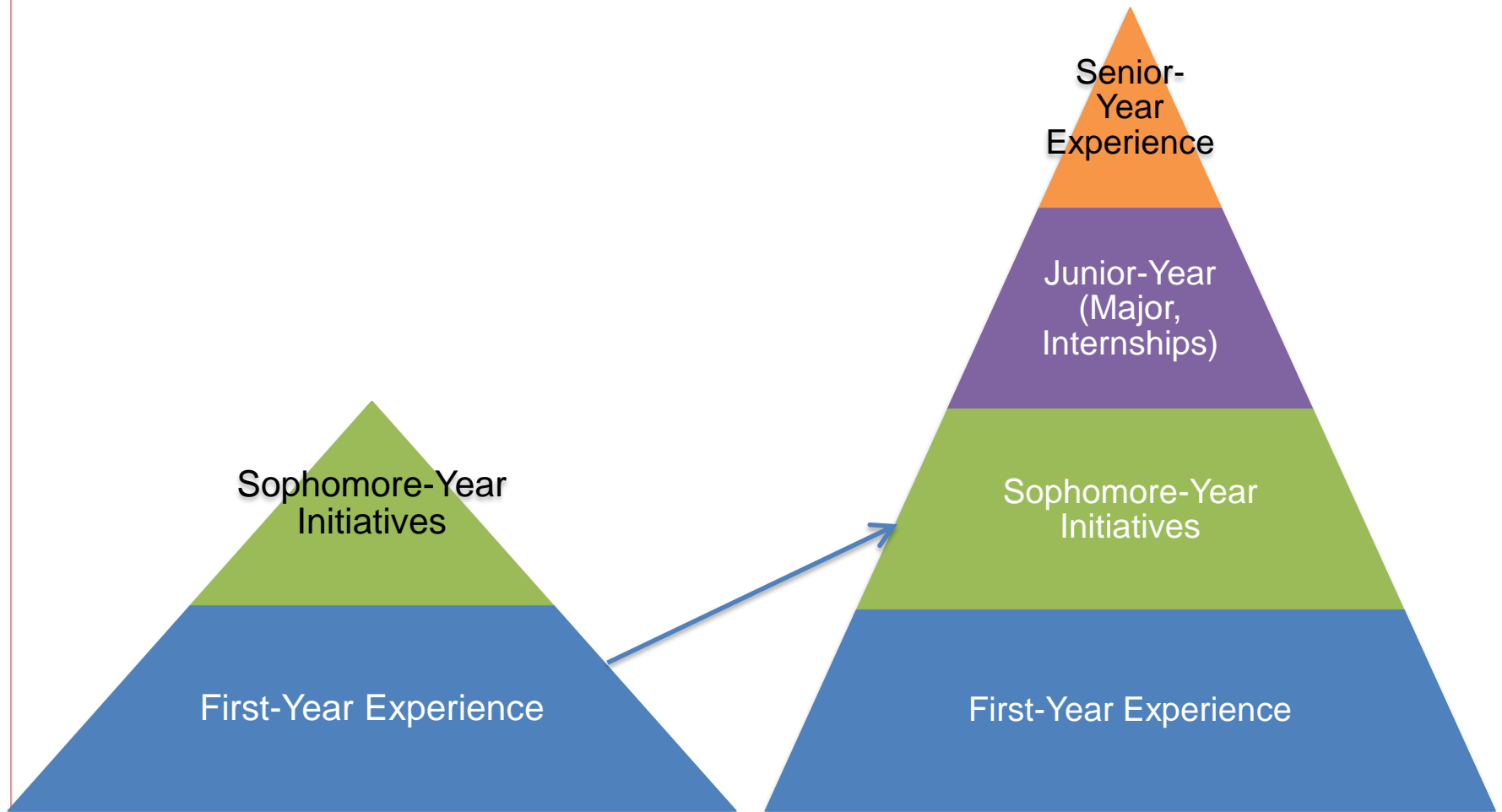
What students learn in one lesson or course prepares them for the next lesson or course. Educational experiences are purposefully structured and logically sequenced so that students gain the knowledge and skills to progressively prepare them for more challenging, higher-level work.



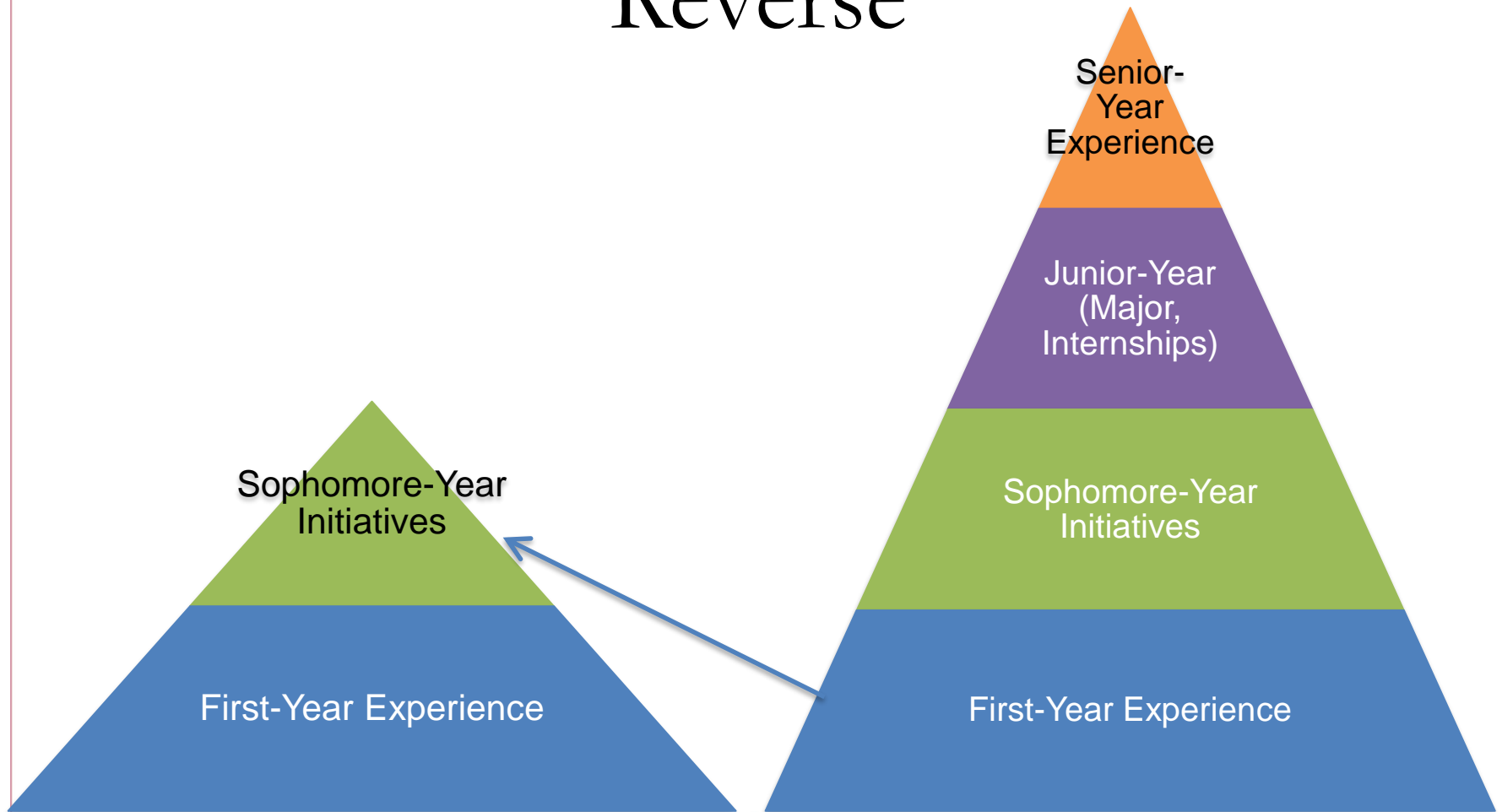
Vertical Alignment: Transfer - Traditional



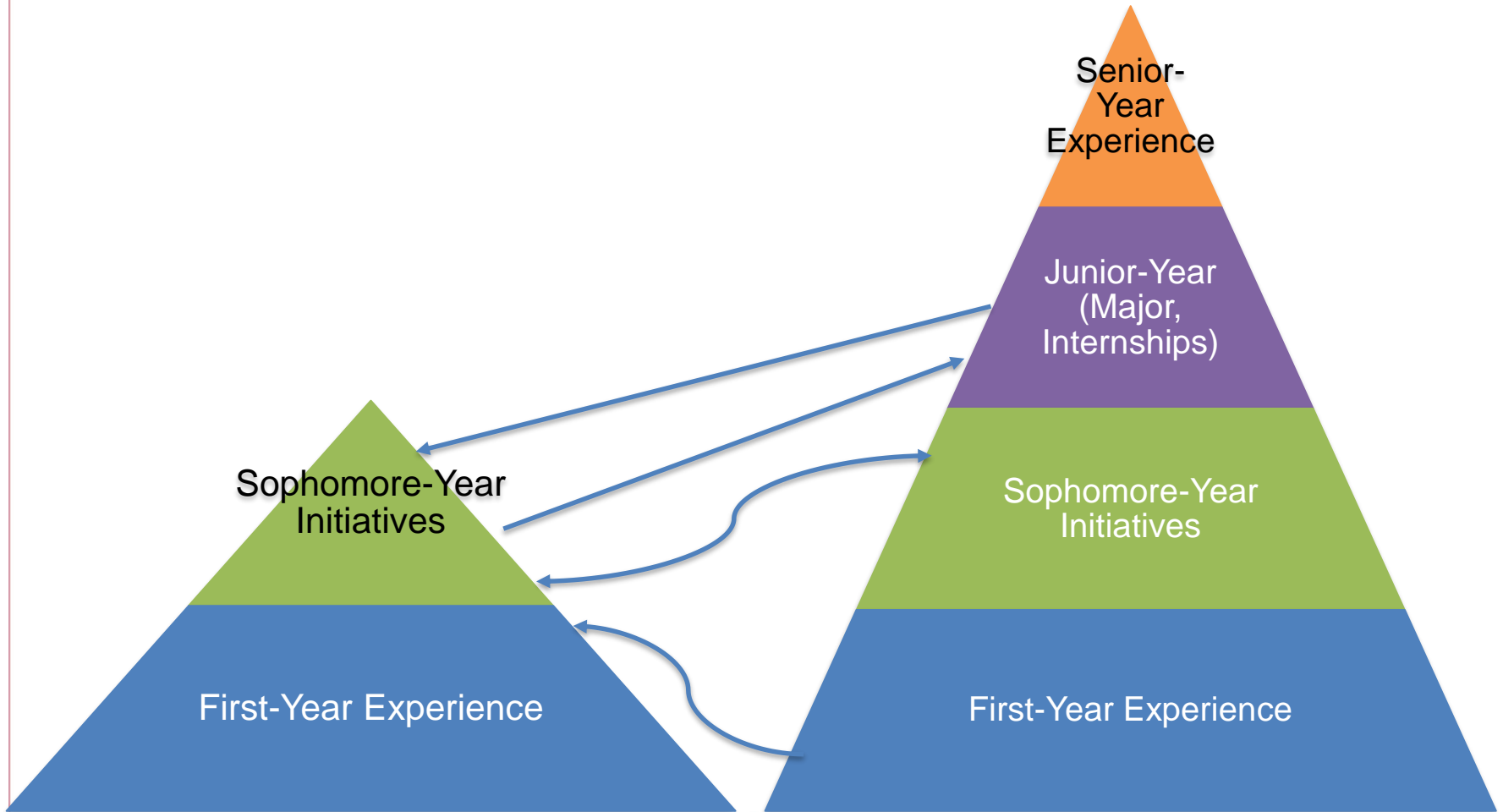
Vertical Alignment: Transfer - Early



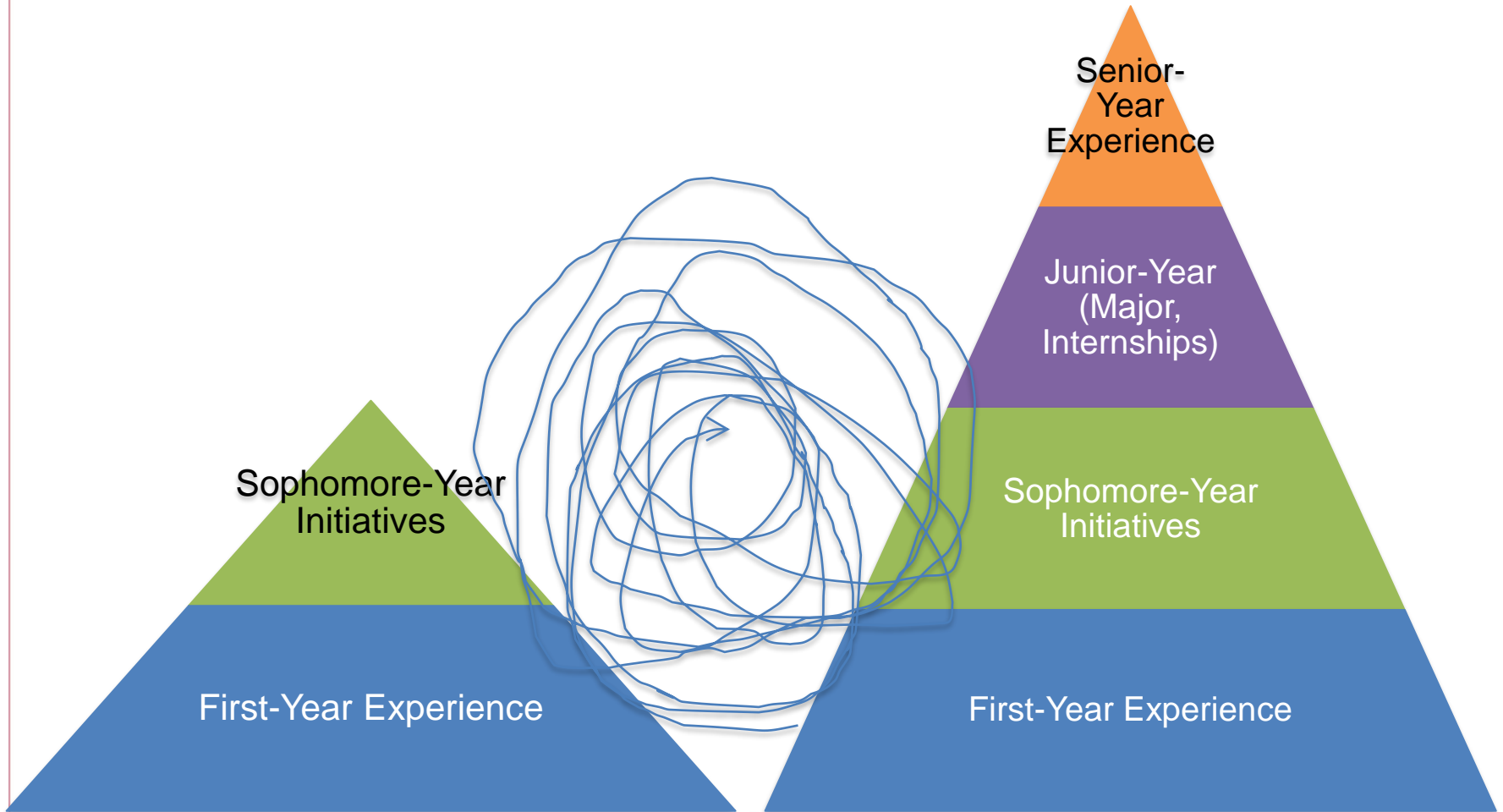
Vertical Alignment: Transfer - Reverse



Vertical Alignment: Transfer - Swirl



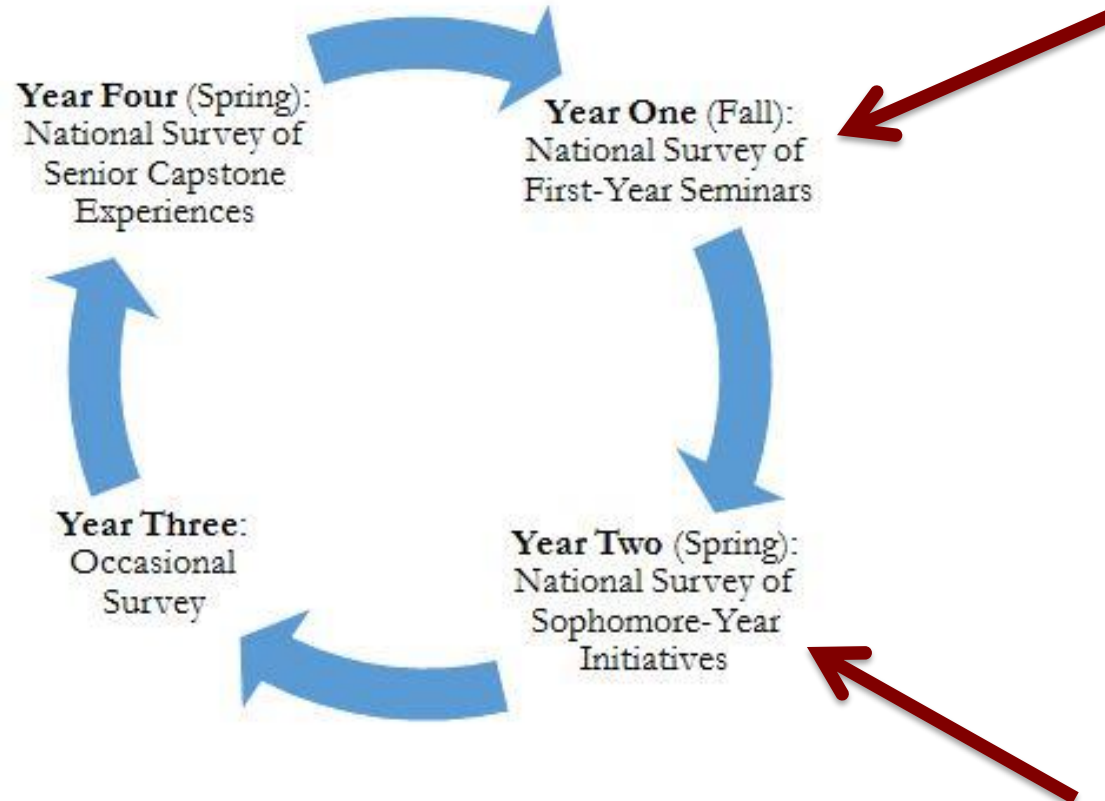
Vertical Alignment: Transfer - Swirl



So, how do we take advantage of existing student transition support structures to support transfer student transition?



Vertical Alignment



National Survey of First-Year Seminars

Purpose

- Administered triennially over past 25 years
- Types of first-year seminars
- Seminar features
- Student characteristics
- Instructional characteristics
- Administration
- Assessment
- Module on HIPs

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



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%

Source: 2012-2013 NSFYS

Participants

Size of First-Year Class	All (N = 896)	With seminar (N = 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%

Source: 2012-2013 NSFYS

Transfer-Specific First-Year Seminars

Institution type	With seminar (<i>N</i> = 804)	With Transfer Section
Two-year	25.6%	10.3%
Four-year	74.4%	89.7%
Public	54.4%	51.7%
Private, not-for-profit	42.8%	46.6%
Private, for-profit	2.7%	1.7%

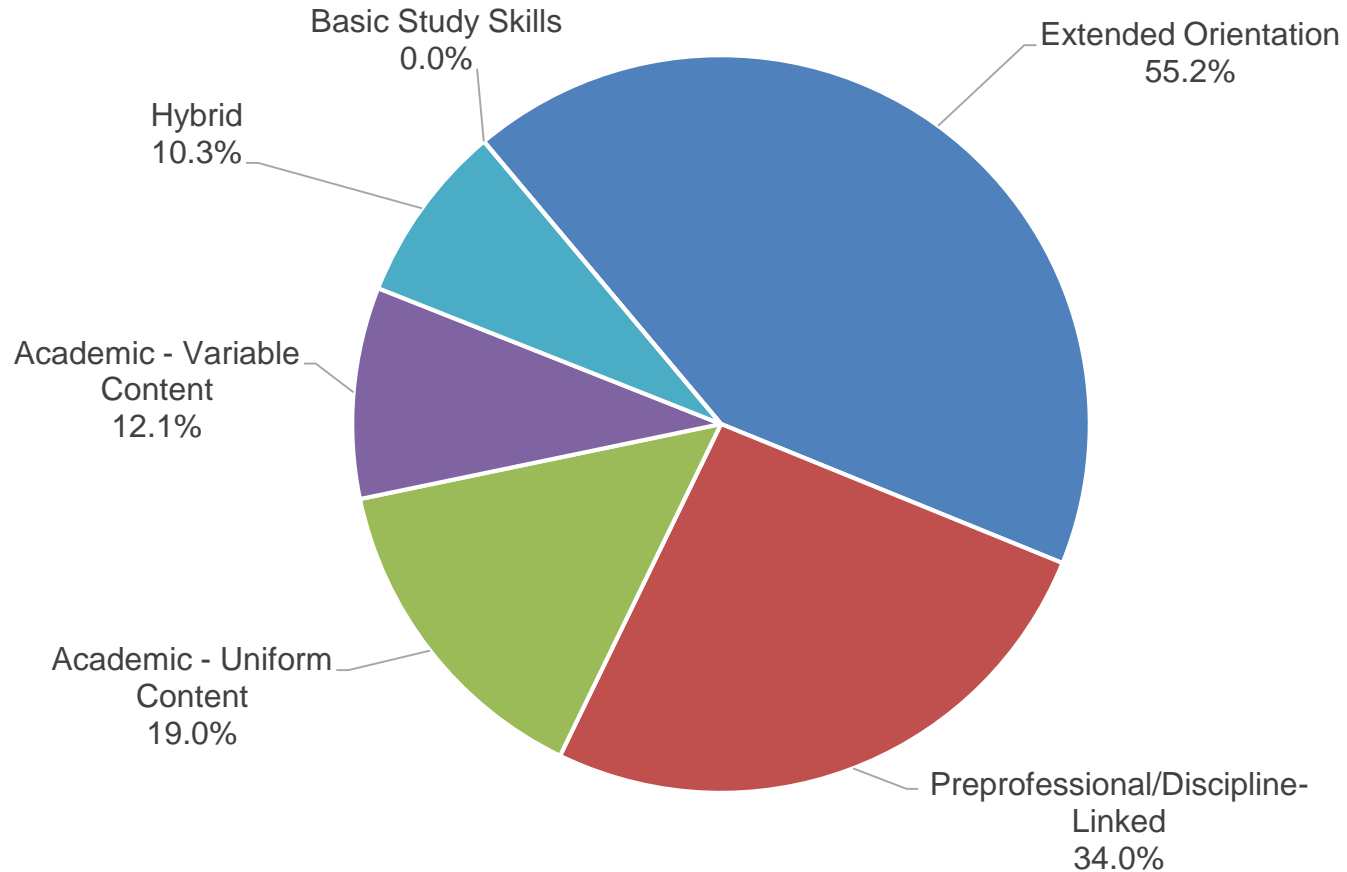


Types of Seminars Across All Institutions

	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%

Source: 2012-2013 NSFYS

Transfer-Specific 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

Top 5 Goals for Transfer-Specific First-Year Seminars

Most Important Objective	%
Develop a connection with the institution	47.4
Orientation to campus resources	43.9
Develop academic skills	36.8
Create common first-year experience	28.1
Develop critical thinking skills	17.5
Improve second-year return rates	17.5
Self-exploration or personal development	17.5

Top 5 Seminar Topics

Most Important Course Topics	All NSFYS %	Offer Transfer Specific FYS %
Campus resources < Two Year < Public	35.7	45.6
Academic planning or advising < Two Year < Public	34.7	43.9
Critical thinking < Four Year < Private	32.6	26.3
Study skills < Two Year < Public	29.8	21.1
Campus engagement	27.7	29.8

**Also in top 6 topics for FYS with transfer-specific sections:
Writing Skills (26.3%) and Time Management (22.8%)**

HIPs and First-Year Seminars

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

Source: 2012-2013 NSFYS

HIPs and Transfer-Specific First-Year Seminars

High-Impact Practice	%
Collaboration and teamwork	69.0
Diversity or global learning	67.2
Common reading experience	51.7
Produce and revise various forms of writing	46.6
Learning community	46.6
Service-learning	36.2
Undergraduate research	12.1

Institutions that offer transfer sections of FYS offer significantly more HIPs in connection with the course.

5 Most Frequently Assessed Outcomes

Outcome	All NSFYS %	FYS with Transfer %
Satisfaction with the seminar	75.9	92.1
Persistence to second year	58.4	81.6
Satisfaction with faculty	52.7	71.1
Self-reports of course impact	49.3	68.4
Participation in campus activities	34.8	55.3



First-Year Objectives and Outcomes

- What are the objectives for first-year students on your campus?
 - Are there different objectives for any first-year seminars for transfer students?
- How are those objectives met?
- How are first-year outcomes assessed?

National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives

Purpose

- Third administration; previously in 2005 and 2008
- Designed to identify sophomore-specific practices and programs and characteristics of those initiatives

2013-2014 Administration

- 3,722 institutions invited to participate
- 778 responses from unique institutions (20.9% response rate)
- 349 currently offered at least one sophomore-specific initiative (46% of sample)



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%



Participants

Number of Undergraduates	All (N = 778)	With initiative (N = 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%

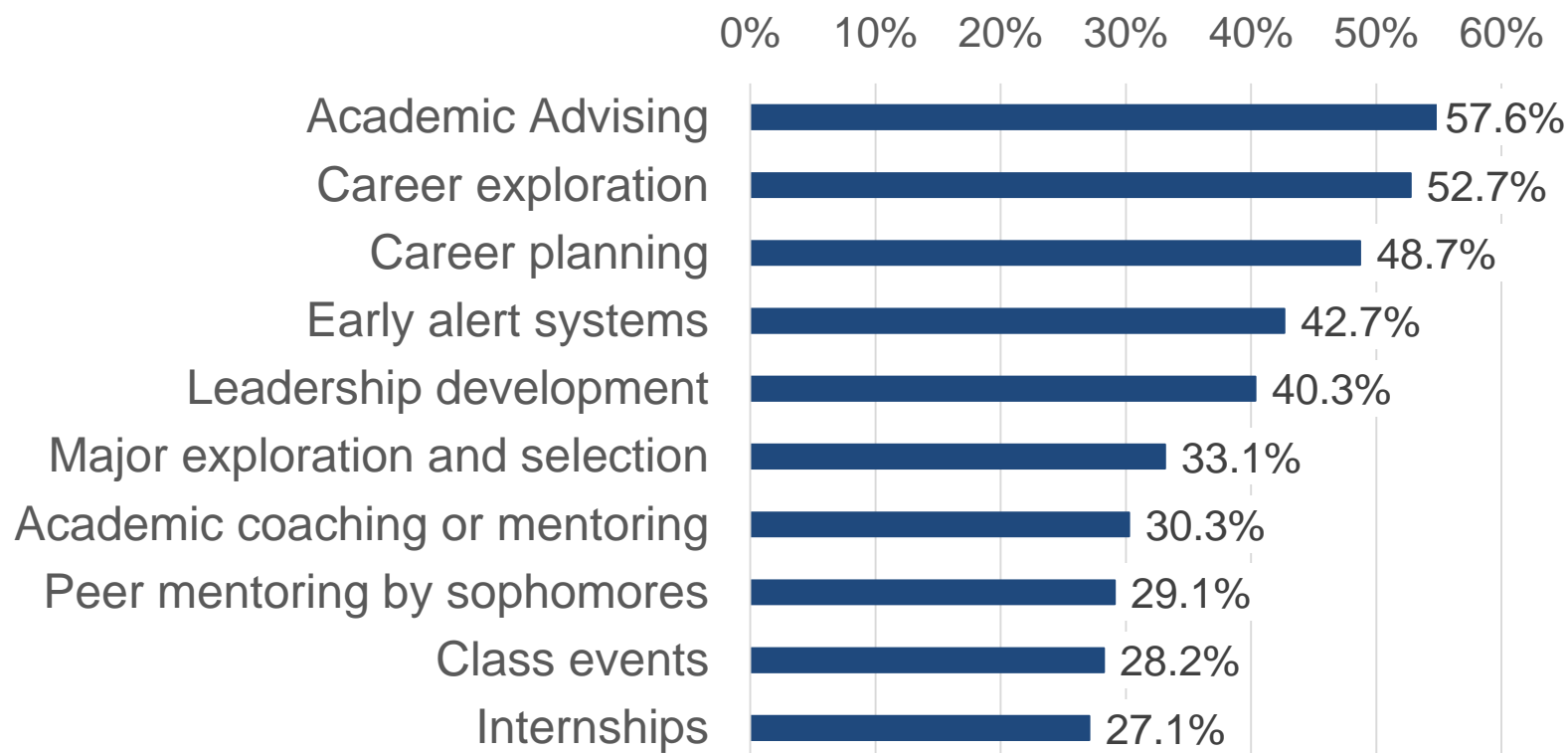
Source: 2013-2014 NSSYI

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%

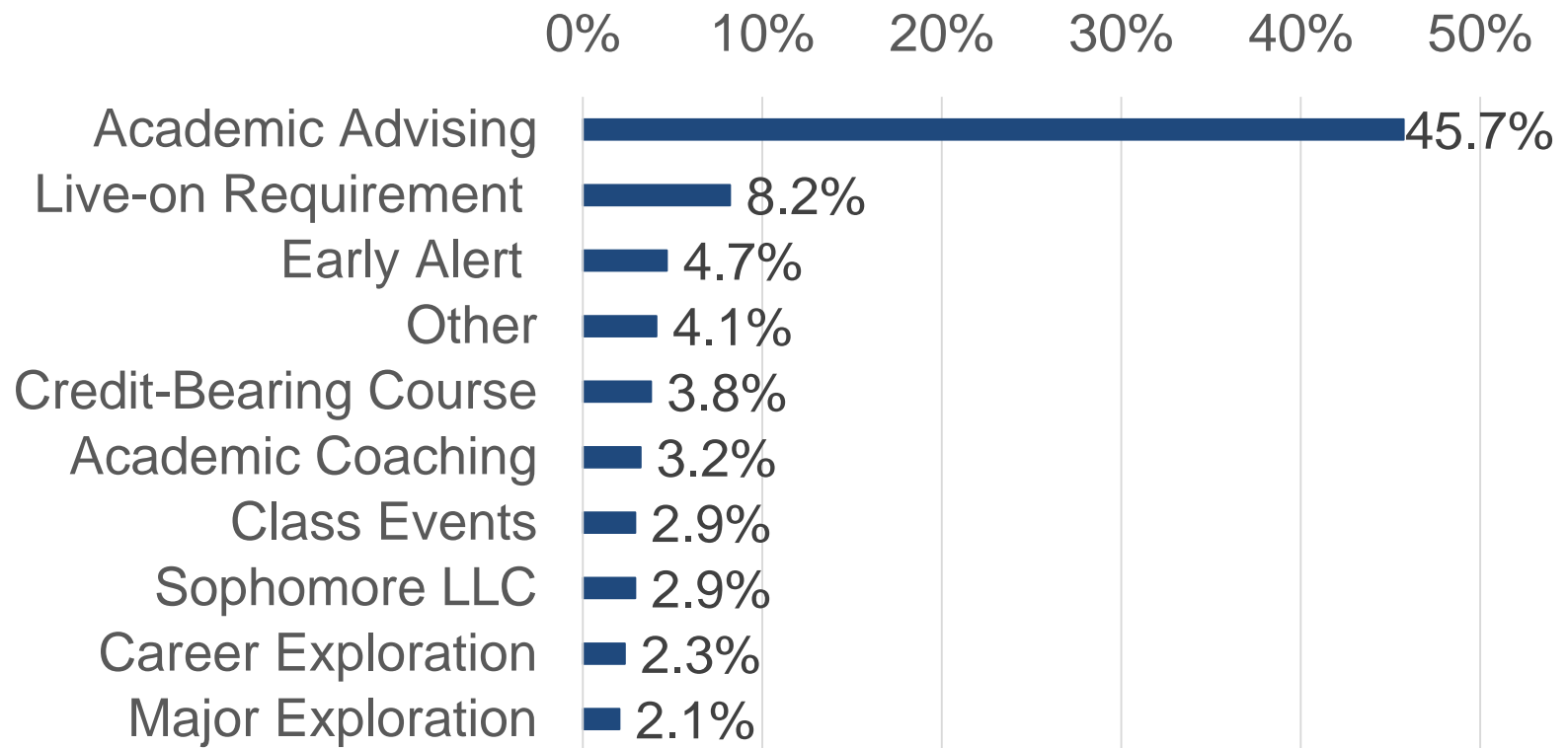
Source: 2013-2014 NSSYI

Most Common Sophomore-Year Initiatives



Only 2 institutions reported sophomore programs focused on transfer-related issues (pre-transfer advising, incoming)

Primary Sophomore-Year Initiatives



Source: 2013-2014 NSSYI

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



Required to Participate in Primary Sophomore-Year Initiative?

Highest when **academic advising** was the primary initiative and lowest for **major and career-focused** initiatives as the primary sophomore initiative

- Underprepared
- Prominent for students who are:
 - First-generation
 - Honors
 - International
 - In a learning community



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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*



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



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

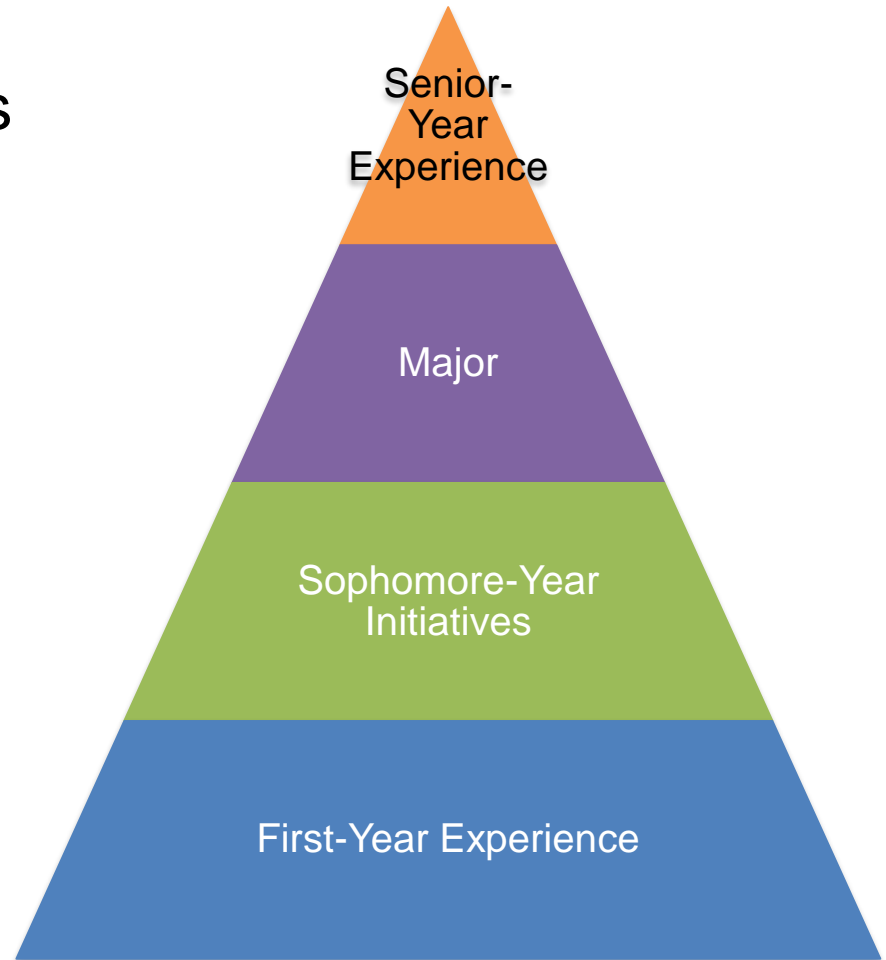


- Career Exploration
- Career Preparation
- Selection of a Major
- Retention
- Graduation



Vertical Alignment

- What are the opportunities for leveraging first- and second-year programs to facilitate transfer transitions?
- What obstacles do these programs present?
- How can we achieve (or approximate) vertical integration for transfer students?



Thanks for your participation!

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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



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