



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

Global Perspectives on Undergraduate Peer Leadership

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2017 NASPA
INTERNATIONAL
SYMPOSIUM



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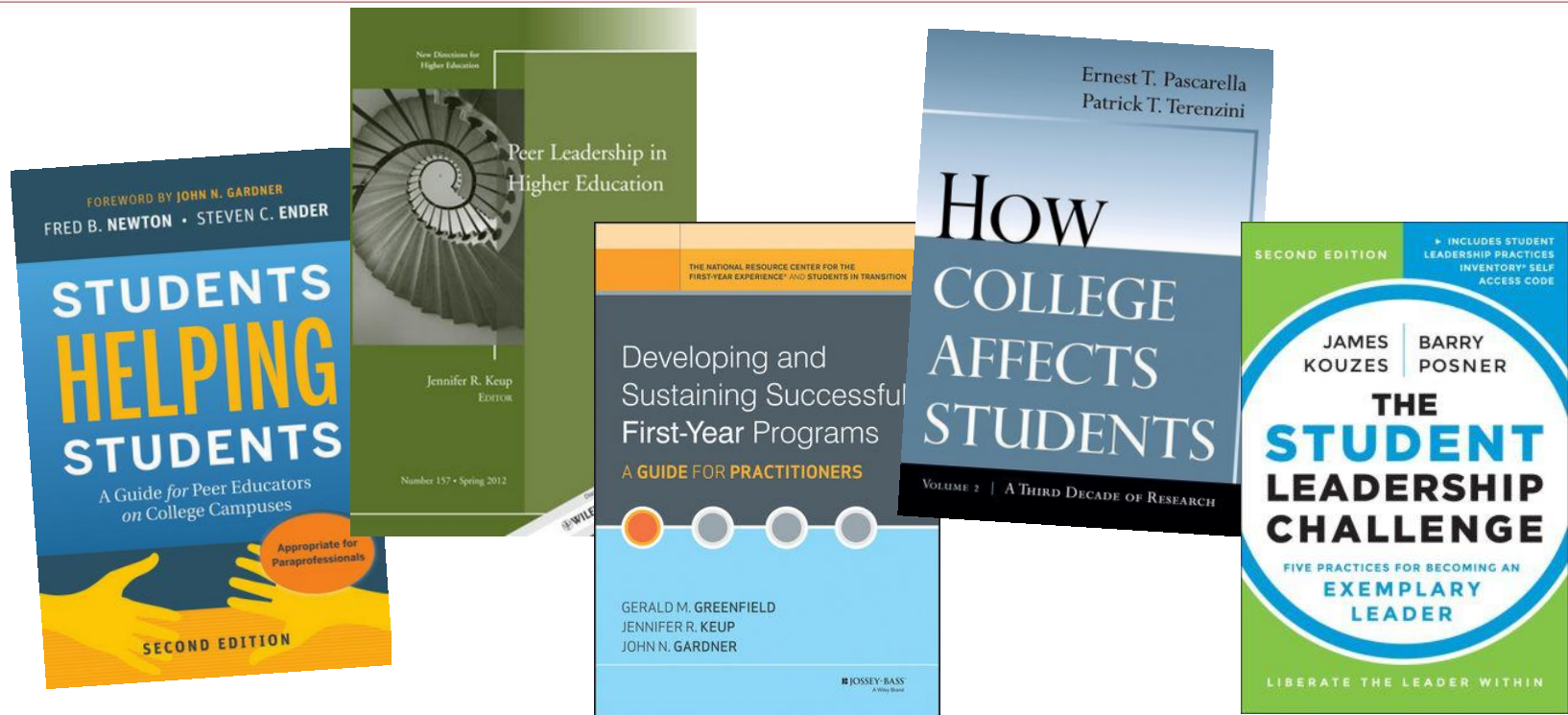
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Session Learning Objectives

As a result of attending this session, participants will:

- ...gain a greater understanding of the characteristics and outcomes of peer leadership experiences in their own country and globally.
- ...have the opportunity to compare features of their peer leadership programs to a national and international profiles.
- ...be able to use empirical evidence to consider innovations or refinements to their programs.
- ...advance their understanding of peer leadership as an emerging and innovative high-impact practice.

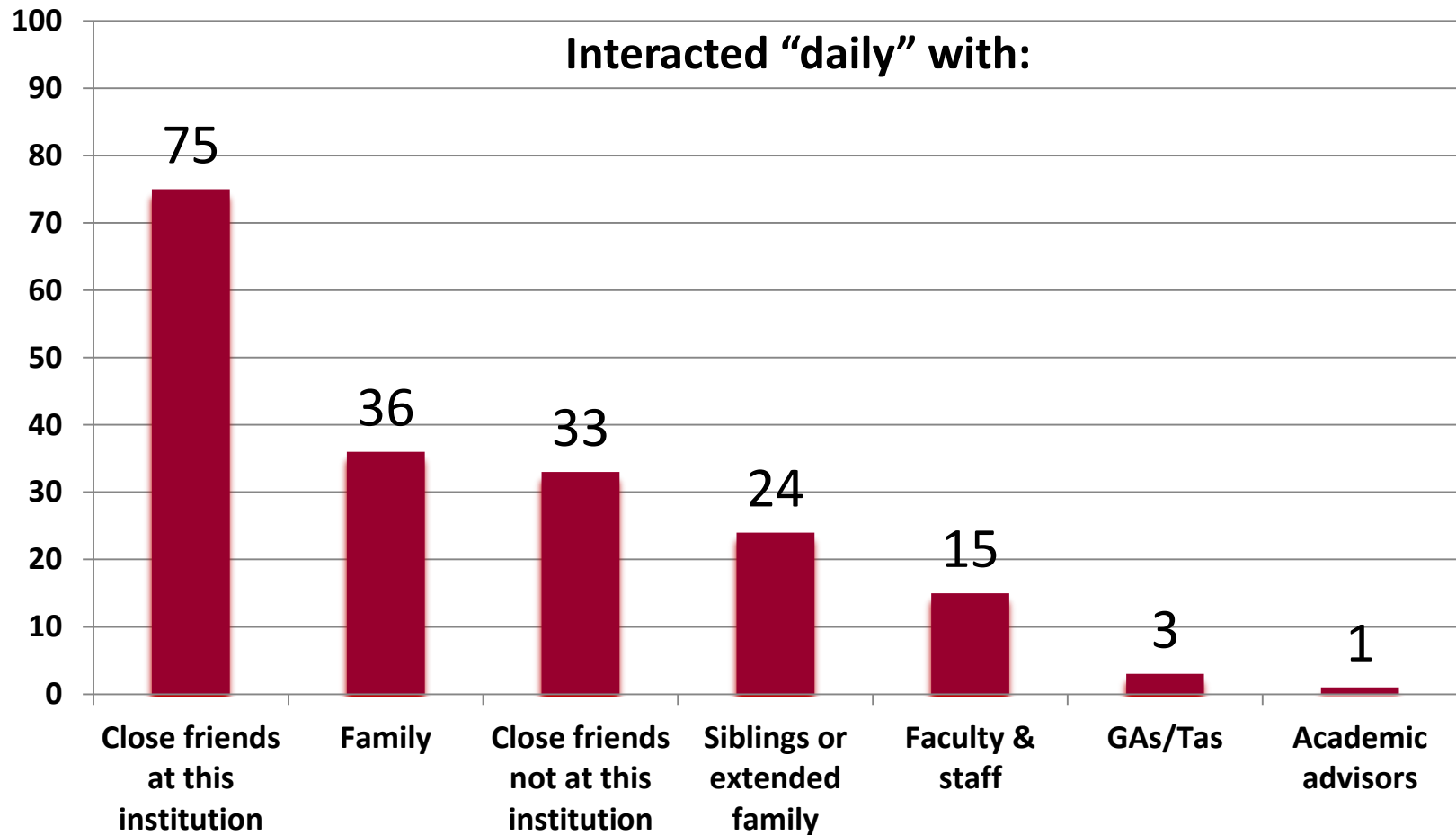




Introduction

BACKGROUND, HISTORY, & REVIEW OF LITERATURE

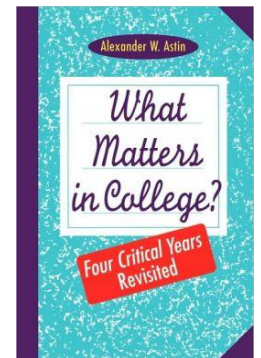
Support Networks in the First Year



*2016 YFYC Survey

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

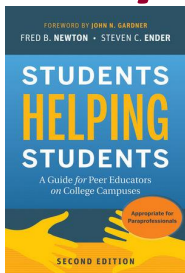
- Peers have a significant and profound impact on the undergraduate experience:
 - Intellectual development
 - Academic Engagement
 - Moral Development
 - Clarification of Political and Social Values
 - Determination of Academic and Social Self-Concept
 - Interpersonal Skills
 - Critical Thinking Skills
 - Positive Gains in Writing and Reading Comprehension

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

Defining Peer Leaders

“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.**”

(Newton & Ender, 2010, p. 6)



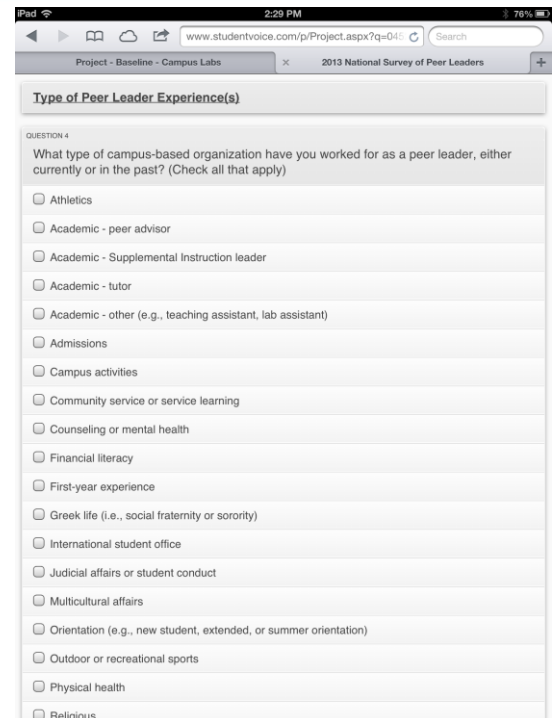
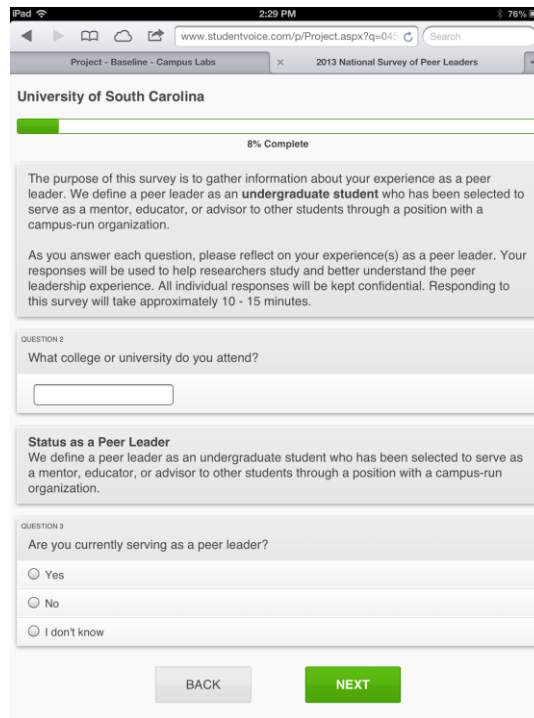
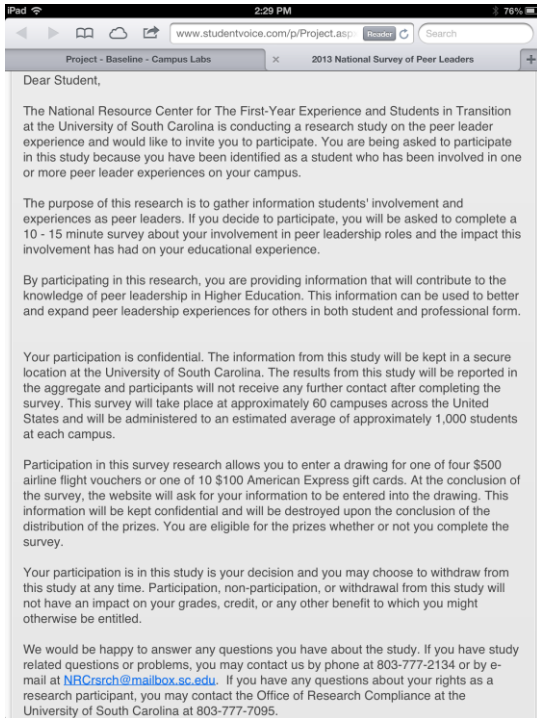
A Rose by Any Other Name....



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

INTERNATIONAL SURVEY OF PEER LEADERS

Method: Data Source

2013 National Survey of Peer Leaders

- 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 FYE&SIT
 - NODA
- Institutional recruitment took place first (n = 49)
- 4,932 student peer leaders responded to the survey (28.6% response rate)

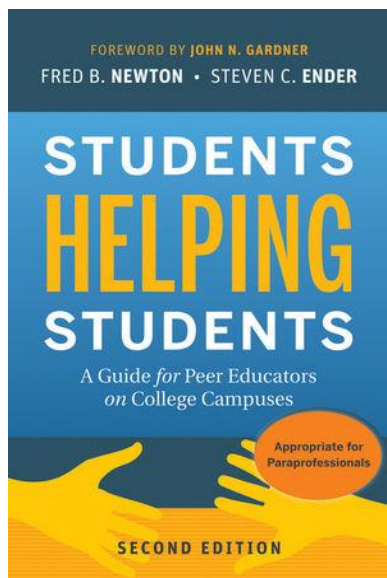


Method: Data Source

International Survey of Peer Leaders

- International survey was a collaboration with researchers in 5 English-speaking countries:
 - Australia & New Zealand (5 institutions; n = 302)
 - Canada (12 institutions; n = 610)
 - South Africa (6 institutions; n = 466)
 - United Kingdom (19 institutions; n = 452)
- Data collection spanned 2014-2016

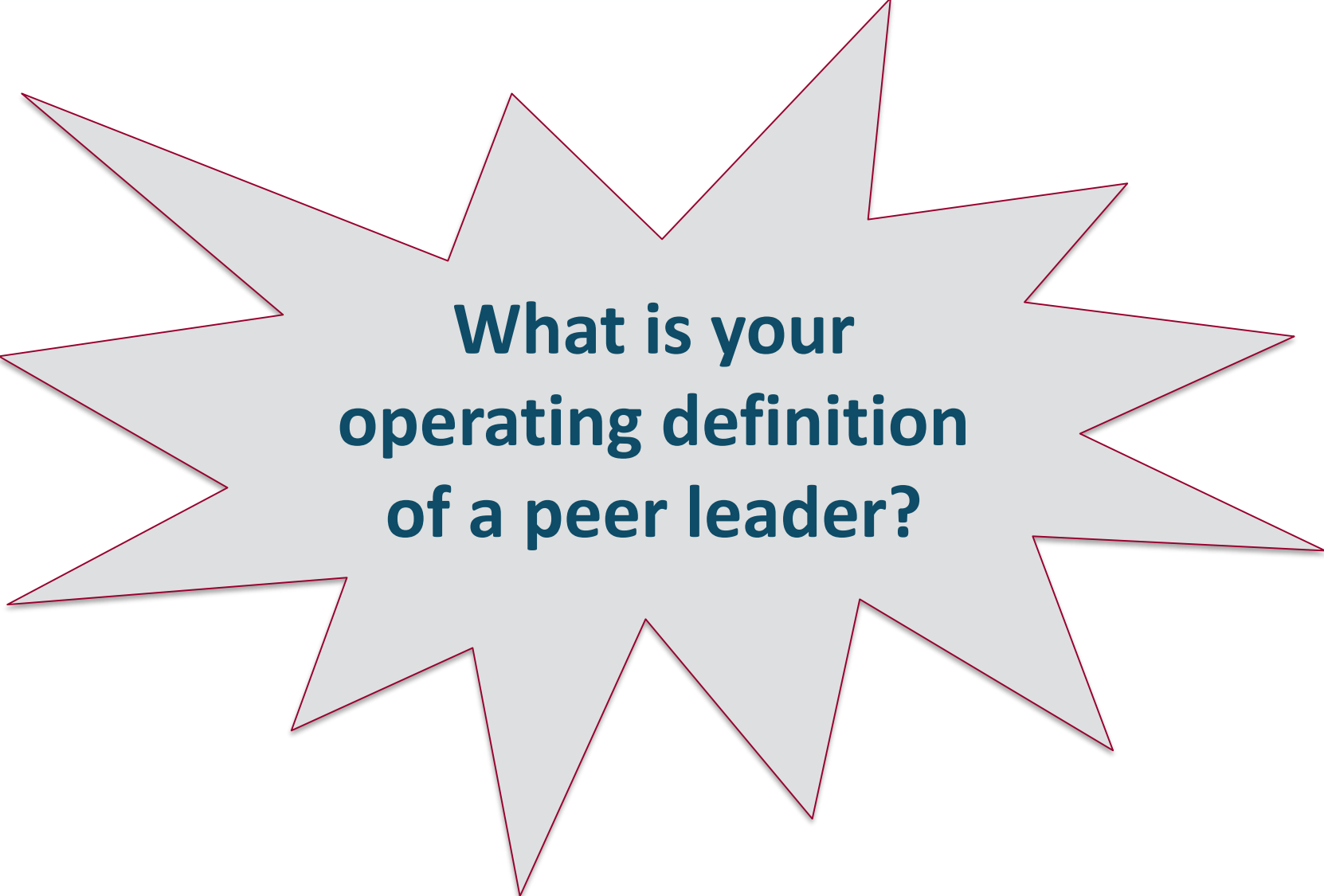




“Students who have been **selected and trained** to offer educational services to their peers. These services are intentionally designed to assist in the adjustment, satisfaction, and persistence of students toward attainment of their educational goals, Students performing in [*these*] paraprofessional roles are **usually compensated in some manner for their services** and are supervised by qualified professionals.”

Findings

PEER LEADER SELECTION, TRAINING, & COMPENSATION



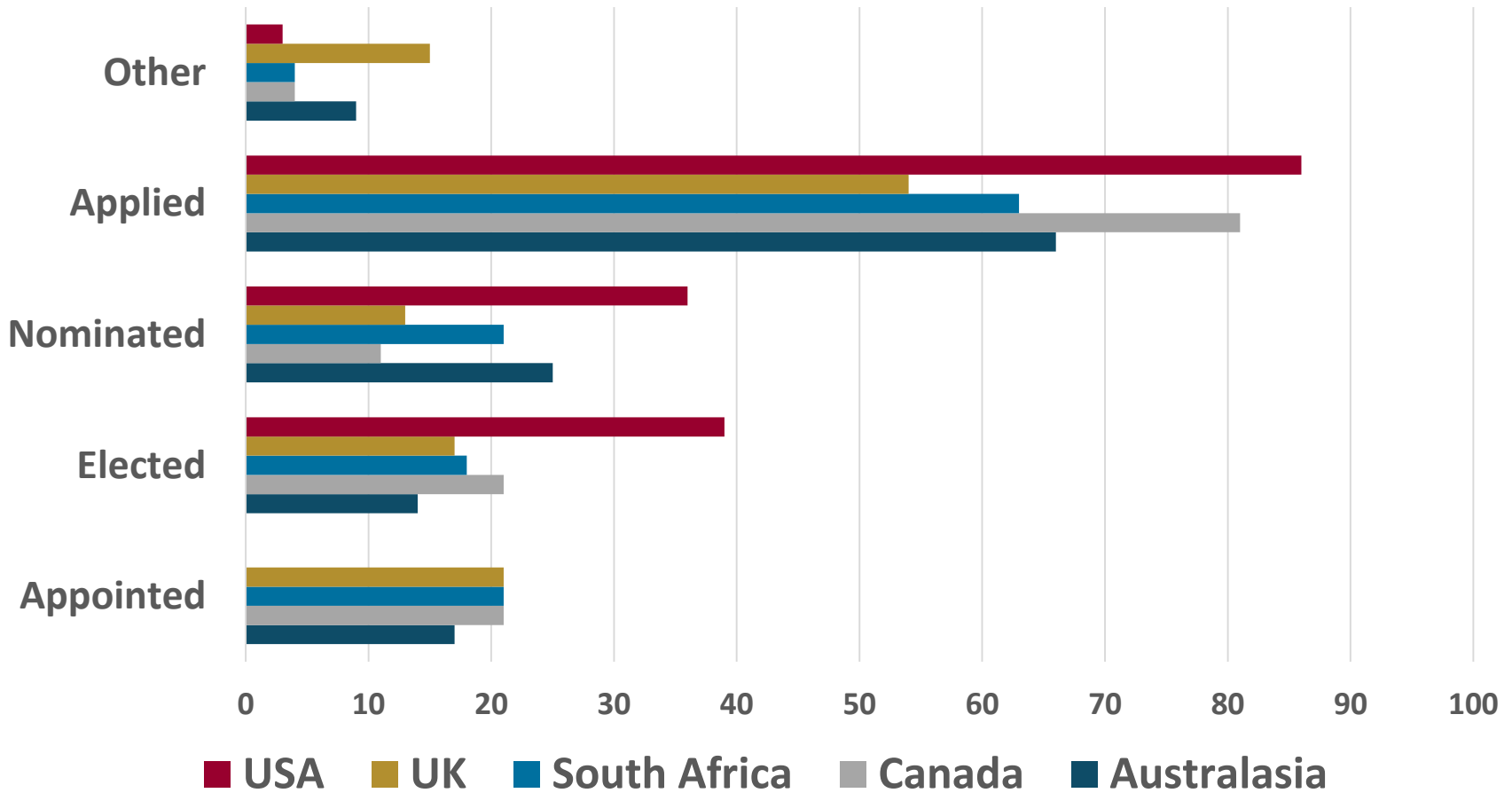
**What is your
operating definition
of a peer leader?**



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PL Selection Process



Training

- Were you trained for (all*) your PL positions?
 - **United States: 86%**
 - **United Kingdom: 71%***
 - **Australasia: 66%***
 - **South Africa: 62%***
 - **Canada: 55%***
- Australasia, Canada, South Africa, & UK all had initial trainings of 3 days or less
- USA had much longer initial trainings



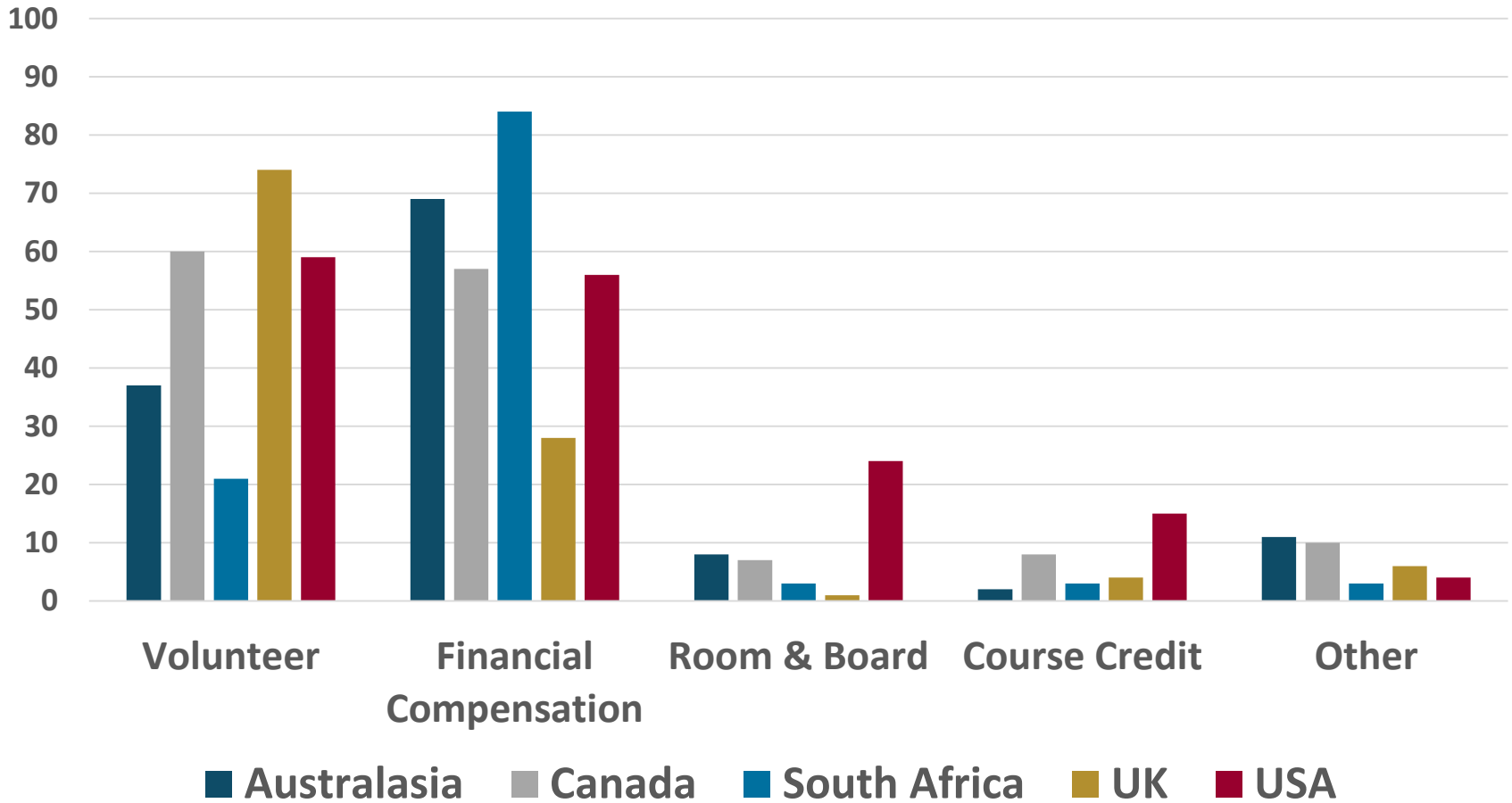
Training

Did you receive any additional ongoing formal training after the initial training?

- **Canada: 69%**
 - **USA: 69%**
 - **Australasia: 68%**
 - **South Africa: 64%**
 - **United Kingdom: 34%**
- *Regular training meetings or workshops*
 - *Retreat*
 - *Staff meetings*
 - *Meetings with supervisor*
 - *Off-campus conference/event*
 - *Course or curriculum*
 - *Observations*
 - *Check-ins*
 - *Structured reflection*



Compensation



Food for Thought

- Potential for innovation!
- Skills to seek in selection vs. building in training
- Duration of initial training
- Extended training opportunities (supervision)
- Peer leaders vs. student paraprofessionals (\$)
- How does PL selection, training, and compensation affect issues of equity and access to peer leadership?





Findings

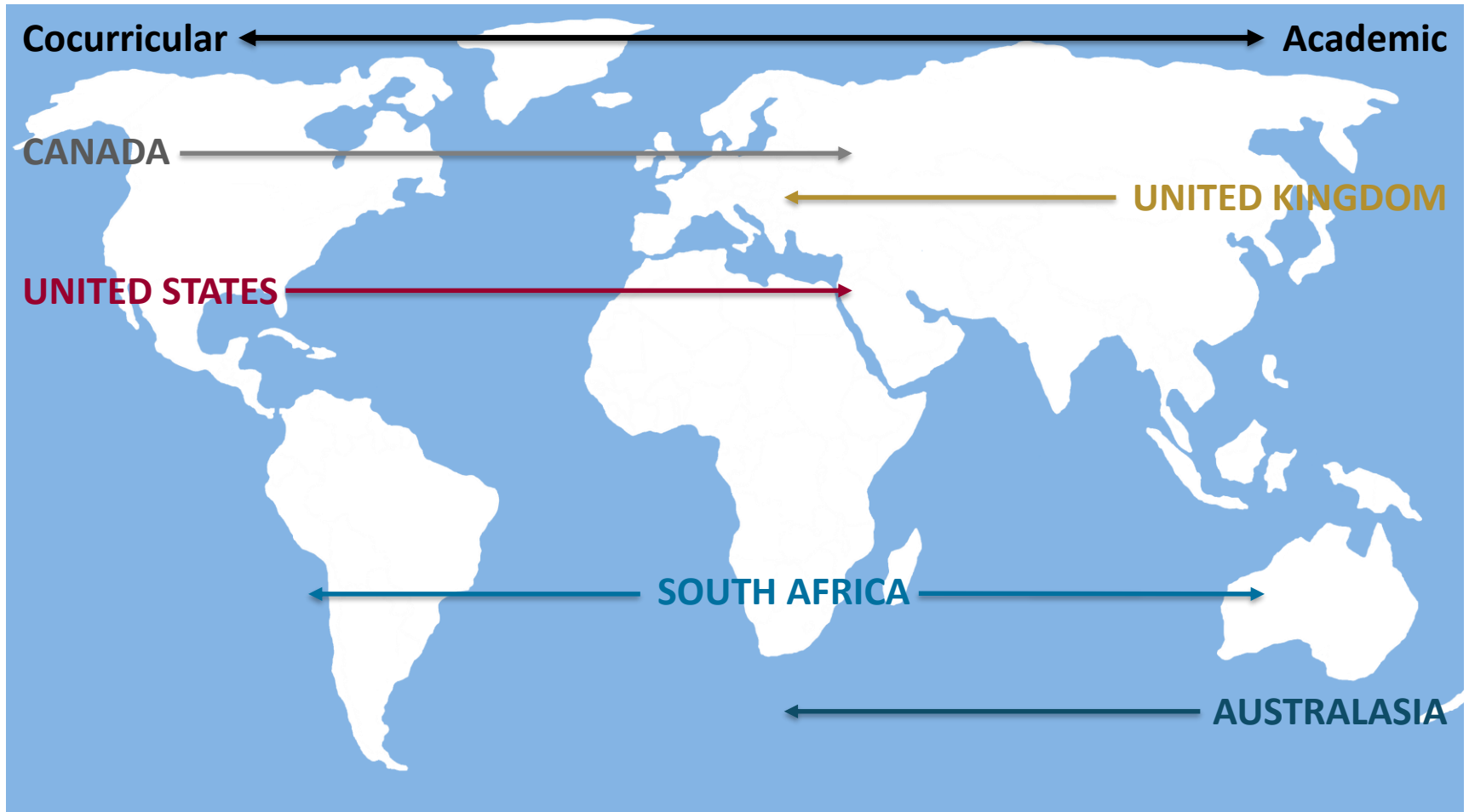
TYPE OF PEER LEADER EXPERIENCES



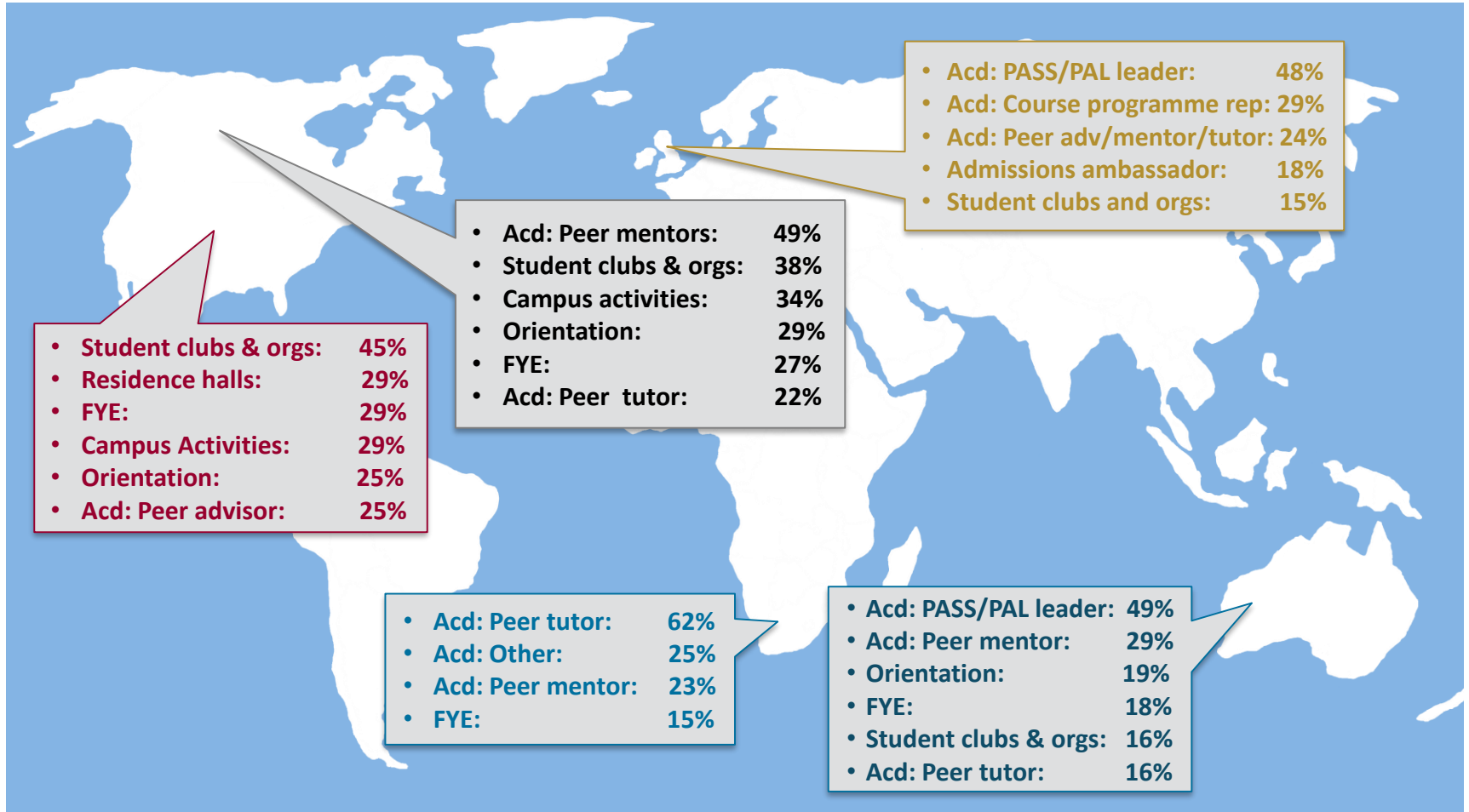
**How are peer leaders
being used on your
campus?**



PL Sponsors



Most Common PL Sponsors



Less Common/Emergent PL Sponsors

Peer Leader Experience

Athletics

Admissions

Religious

Academic-Supplemental Instruction leader

Multicultural affairs

Study abroad

Outdoor or recreational sports

Counseling or mental health

Student productions or media

Judicial affairs or student conduct

Physical health

International student office

Financial literacy



Others?



Takeaways

- Historic places and current spaces for peer leadership
- International comparisons; what can we learn?
- Emergent peer leader roles
 - How are students defining leadership?
 - Where do we need the benefits of peer leaders?
- Other domains for peer leader roles





Findings

PEER LEADER OUTCOMES



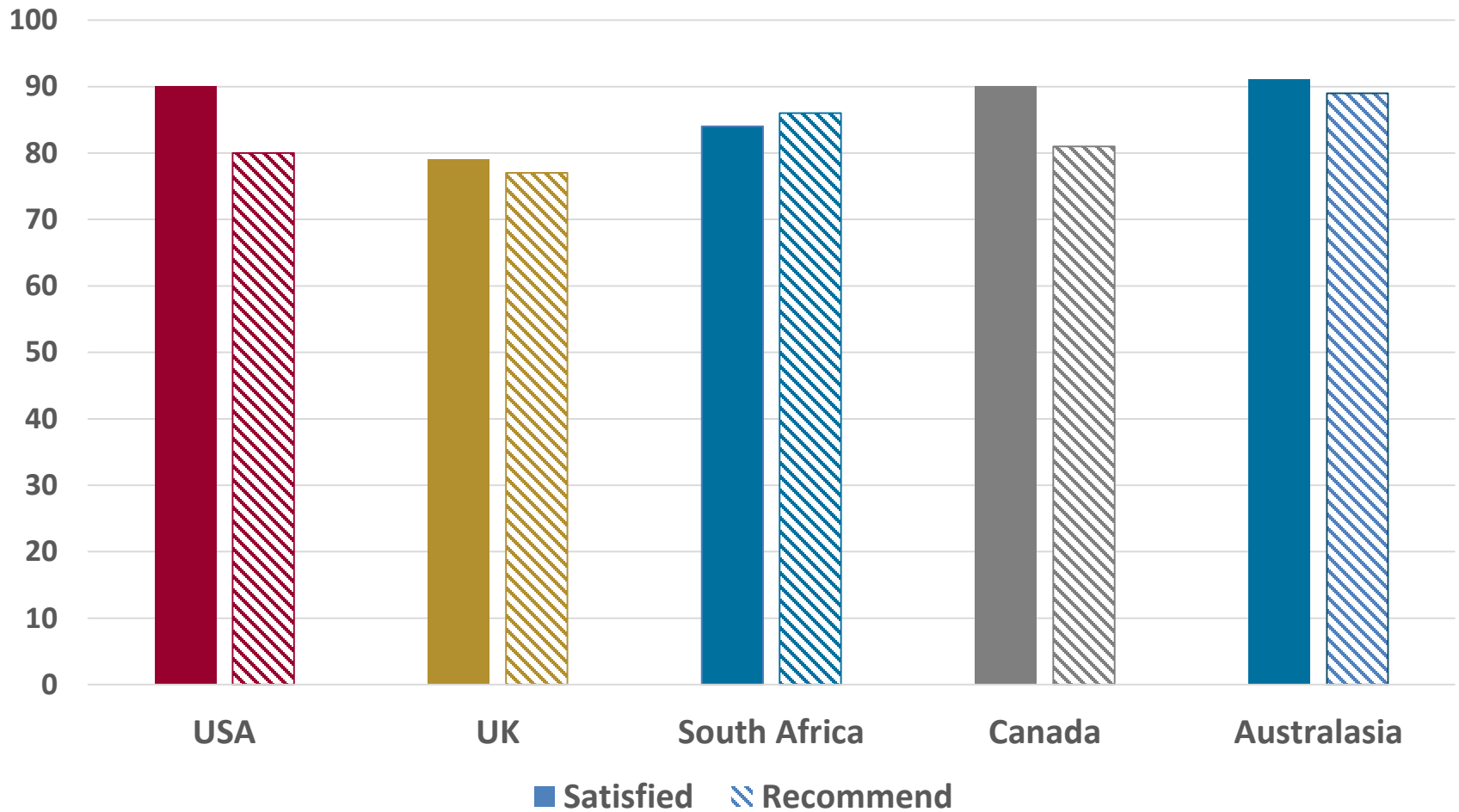
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**What are the stated
outcomes for peer
leaders at your
institution?**



Self-Rated Benefit of PLEs

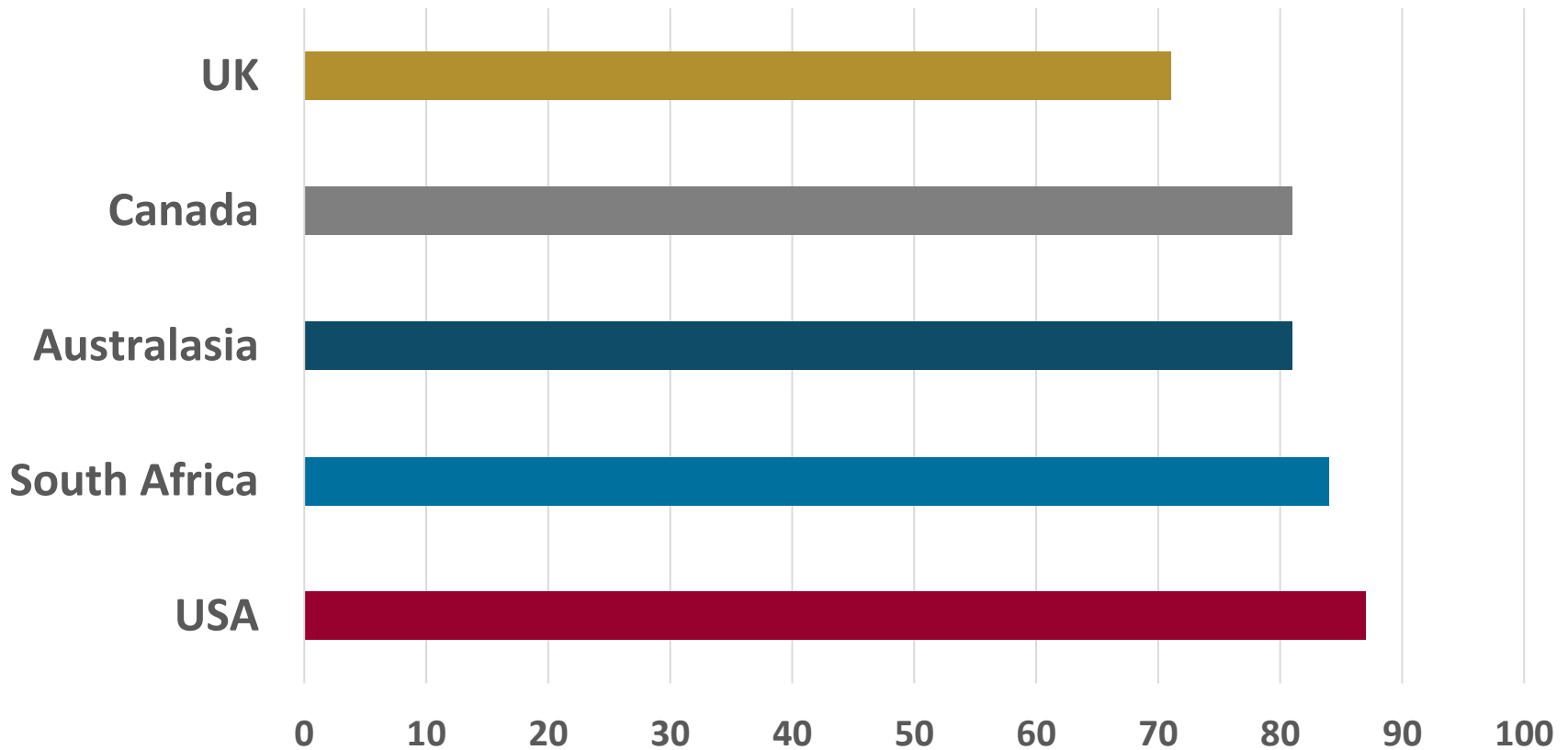


Outcomes of Peer Leader Experiences

- 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
- Thematic presentation of findings

Leadership Potential Unlocked

% of PLs who reported an increase in Leadership Skills



PLEs Advance Employability Skills

- Multicultural competence
- Civic engagement/development as citizens
- Ability to identify, seek, and utilize organizational resources and student programs
- Leadership skills
- Moral and ethical development
- Project management
- Information literacy
- Quantitative literacy



Collegiate
Employment
Research
Institute



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Academic Skills are the Lowest Gains

“Give a Little to Gain a Lot”

Academic Performance (USA)	% 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



Opportunity: Dealing with Difference

- Campus diversity is comprised of historical, structural, **behavioral**, and **psychological** aspects
- PLs report significant improvement in:
 - Knowledge of difference
 - Interaction with difference
 - Understanding of difference
- PL provides exposure beyond social engineering in very diverse contexts
- So organic, it requires reflection and support



PLEs Develop Resiliency Skills

PLs reported increases in:

- Adaptability
- Analytical skills
- Critical thinking
- Innovation
- Integration of ideas
- Problem solving



Applications and Implications

- Commonality of outcomes across countries and contexts
- Areas of potential improvement are some of the most challenging areas to impact (e.g., leadership, intercultural competence, resilience)
- Translation of PLE to employment searches
- Academic skills show the least gains but many PLs are in academics





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 professor. 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.



Next Steps

PEER LEADERSHIP AS A HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICE



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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



Self-Rated Impact of PLEs 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.”



Consider Adaptability of HIPs

“[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 in Brownell & Swaner, 2010



PL as an Emergent HIP

- ✓ 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**



Next Steps

- How aware of high-impact practices are educators and peer leaders in your context? How do you “preach the word” of HIPs?
- Intentionally facilitate the development of PLEs as a high-impact practice
- Use the characteristics of HIPs as a standard for development, administration, and assessment of PLEs





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