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FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

The Trusted Expert and Internationally Recognized Leader
for all Postsecondary Student Transitions

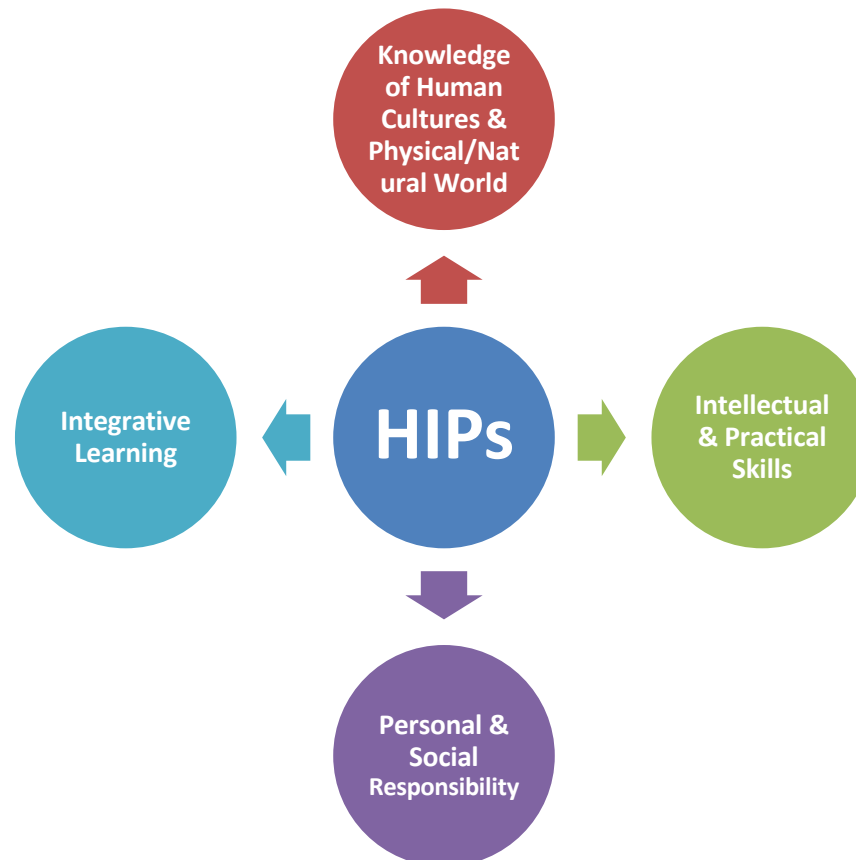Conferences and Continuing Education | Research and Assessment | Publications

High-Impact Practices

Defining Capstone Experiences

- Culminating experience that requires students near end of college years to integrate and apply what they've learned (Kuh, 2008)

- Experiences in the senior year that represent the culmination of years of intellectual, professional, and personal development that prepares students to transition to the next phase in life (Gardner, Van Der Veer, & Associates, 1998)

Forms of Capstone Experiences

HIPs: Self-Reported Gains & Deep Learning

	Deep Learning	Gains General	Gains Personal	Gains Practical
First-Year				
Learning Communities	+++	++	++	++
Service Learning	+++	++	+++	++
Senior				
Study Abroad	++	+	++	
Student-Faculty Research	+++	++	++	++
Service Learning	++	+++	+++	++
Senior Culminating Experience	++	++	+++	++

+ p < .001, ++ p < .001 & Unstd B > .10, +++ p < .001 & Unstd B > .30

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(Kuh, 2008, p. 15)

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Session Focus

1. How might organization of capstone experiences at two-year institutions prepare students for transfer?

2. What is the prevalence and structure of capstone experiences at four-year institutions?

3. What is the current level of participation among transfer students?

4. What strategies can be used to engage more transfers in capstone experiences?

National Survey of Senior Capstone Experiences

- April – June 2016
  - 389 institutions who had participated in National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives and National Survey of First-Year Seminars
  - 3,140 additional institutions serving undergraduates
  - Invitations sent to Chief Academic Officers, Chief Executive Officers, and Chief Student Affairs Officers
  - Baseline, web-based survey platform
  - 383 responses (11% response rate)

2016 NSSCE Sample

Institutional Characteristic	NSSCE (*N* = 383)	National (*N* = 4,427)
Type		
Two-year	14.9%	37.0%
Four-year	85.1%	63.0%
Control		
Public	47.5%	36.8%
Private, not-for-profit	48.0%	33.4%
Private, for-profit	4.4%	29.8%

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Capstone Experiences in the

TWO-YEAR COLLEGE

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Where Are Capstones Housed?

- Academic departments/disciplines = 51.4%

- Programs = 42.9%

- Campuswide initiatives = 14.3%

Types of Capstones Offered

Capstone Experience	Discrete Type	Most Prominent
Capstone course (department/discipline-specific)	77.1%	25.7%
Internship	57.1%	22.9%
Certification or licensing exam	34.3%	11.4%
Comprehensive exam	28.6%	5.7%

Primary Objectives for the Capstone Course

- Career preparation = 42.9%

- Critical-thinking skills = 34.3%

- Integrative and applied learning = 28.6%

- Academic skills = 22.9%

- Analytic or inquiry-based skills = 22.9%

- Professional certification = 22.9%

A Capstone By Any Other Name

- Service-learning

- Student/faculty research

- Experiential learning
  - Internships, co-op experiences, field experience, clinical assignments, community-based projects

Capstone Experiences in

FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

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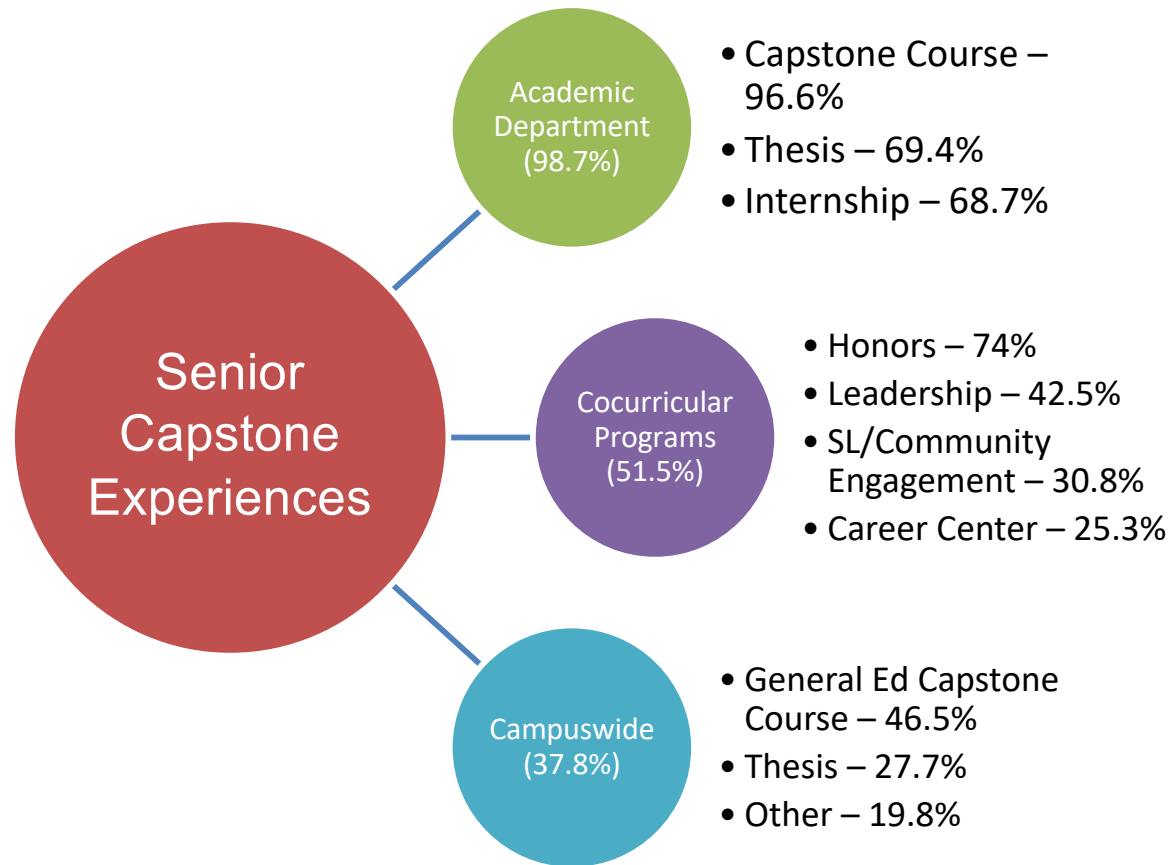UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Key Objectives for the Senior Year

- Career preparation (e.g., internships, co-ops) – 71.2%

- Employment or job placement – 62.6%

- Graduation – 61.1%

- Grad/professional school enrollment – 50.5%

- Critical-thinking skills – 43.3%

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Range of Capstone Experiences

Senior Capstone Experiences

Academic Department (98.7%)
- Capstone Course – 96.6%
- Thesis – 69.4%
- Internship – 68.7%

Cocurricular Programs (51.5%)
- Honors – 74%
- Leadership – 42.5%
- SL/Community Engagement – 30.8%
- Career Center – 25.3%

Campuswide (37.8%)
- General Ed Capstone Course – 46.5%
- Thesis – 27.7%
- Other – 19.8%

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Campuswide Capstones

Most Prominent

- General Education Capstone Course (28.7%)
- Other Capstone Course (13.9%)
- Senior Thesis (13.9%)
- Other (13.9%)

Nearly 60% of those offering campuswide capstone experiences report that between 90 – 100% of seniors participate.
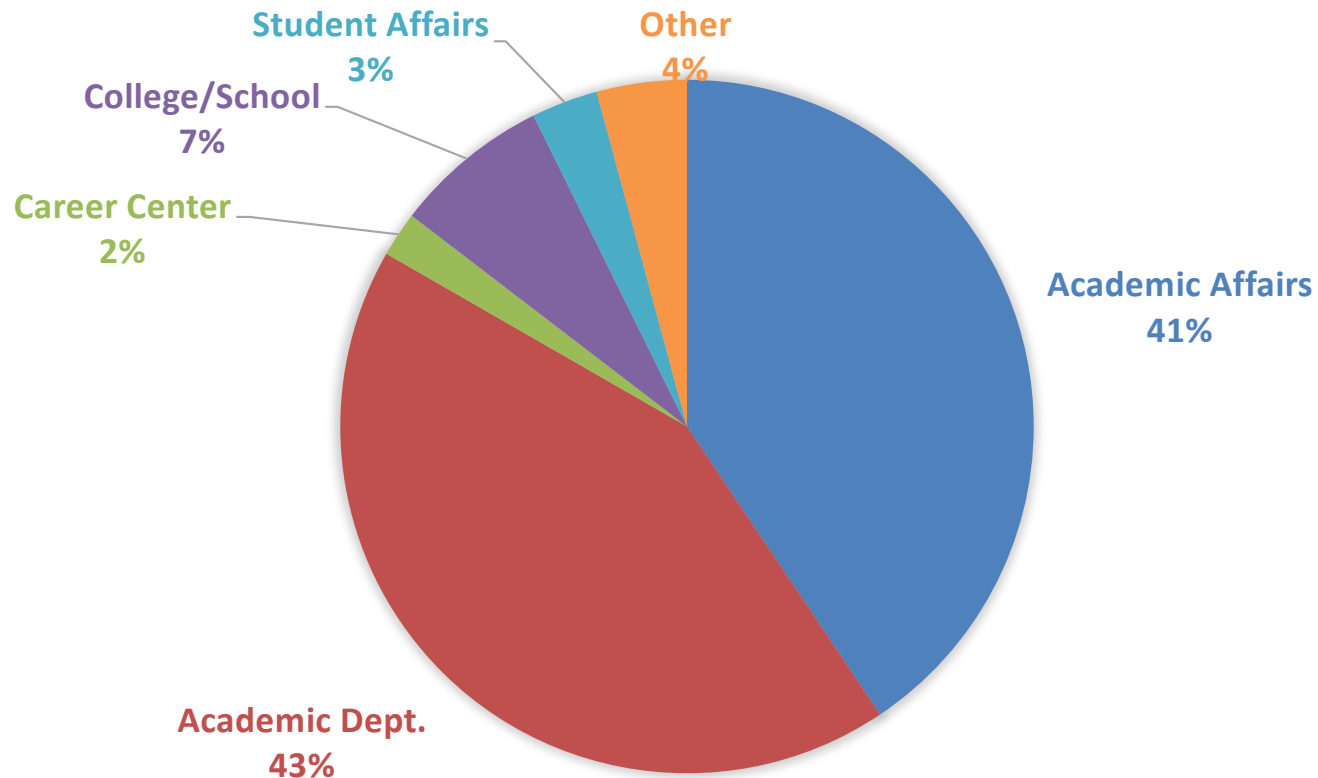
Primary Objectives

- Critical-thinking skills (43%)
- Integrative and applied learning (32.7%)
- Academic skills (19.6%)
- Career preparation (16.8%)
- Writing skills (16.8%)

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Administration of Capstone Experience

- Academic Affairs 41%
- Academic Dept. 43%
- Career Center 2%
- College/School 7%
- Student Affairs 3%
- Other 4%

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Administration of Capstone Experience

- 42.7% of campuswide capstones have a dean, director, or coordinator
- 78% of deans/directors/coordinators have another role on campus
  – Academic affairs administrator – 37.5%
  – Faculty member – 65.5%
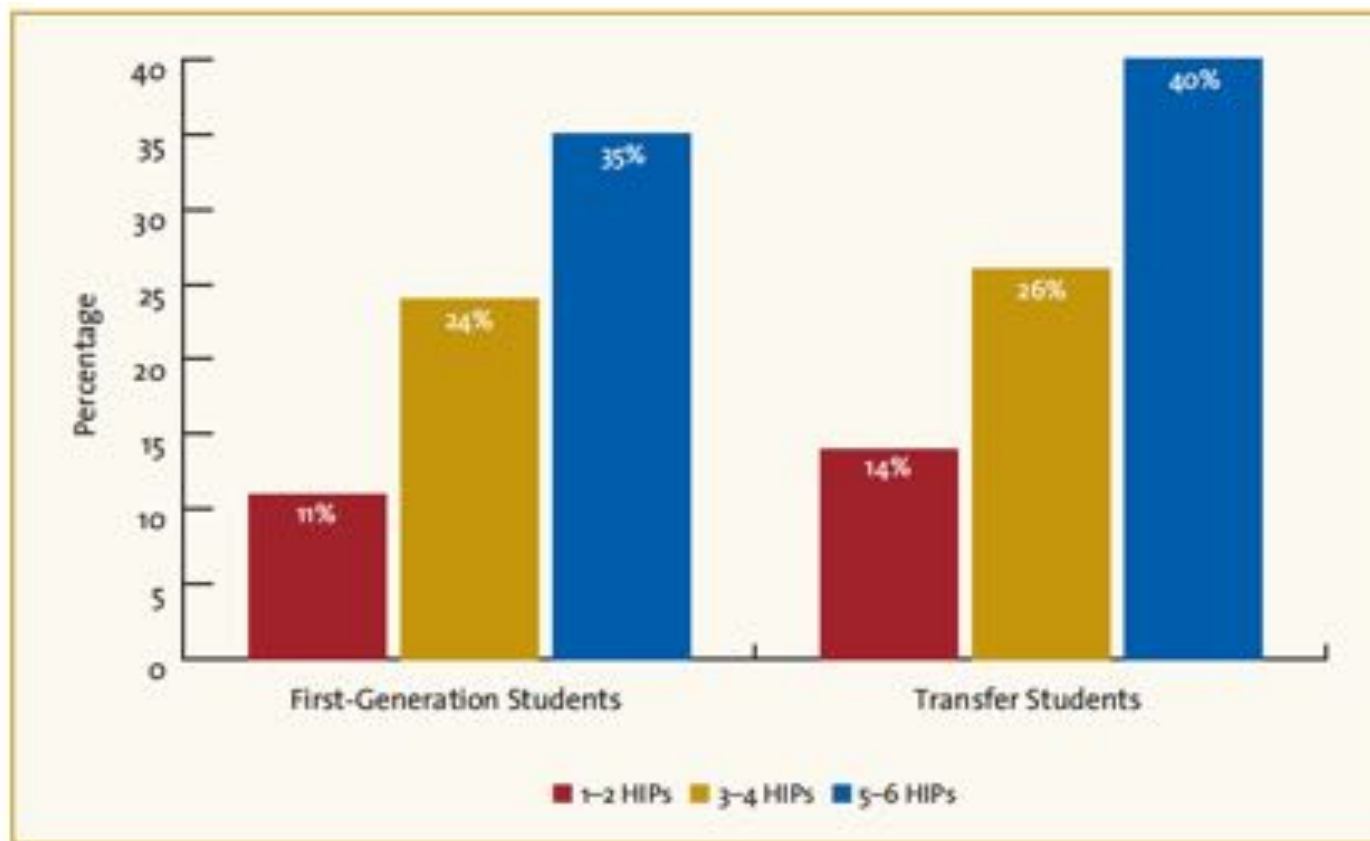 – Student affairs administrator – 6.3%
  – Other – 9.4%

TRANSFER PARTICIPATION IN SENIOR CAPSTONE EXPERIENCES

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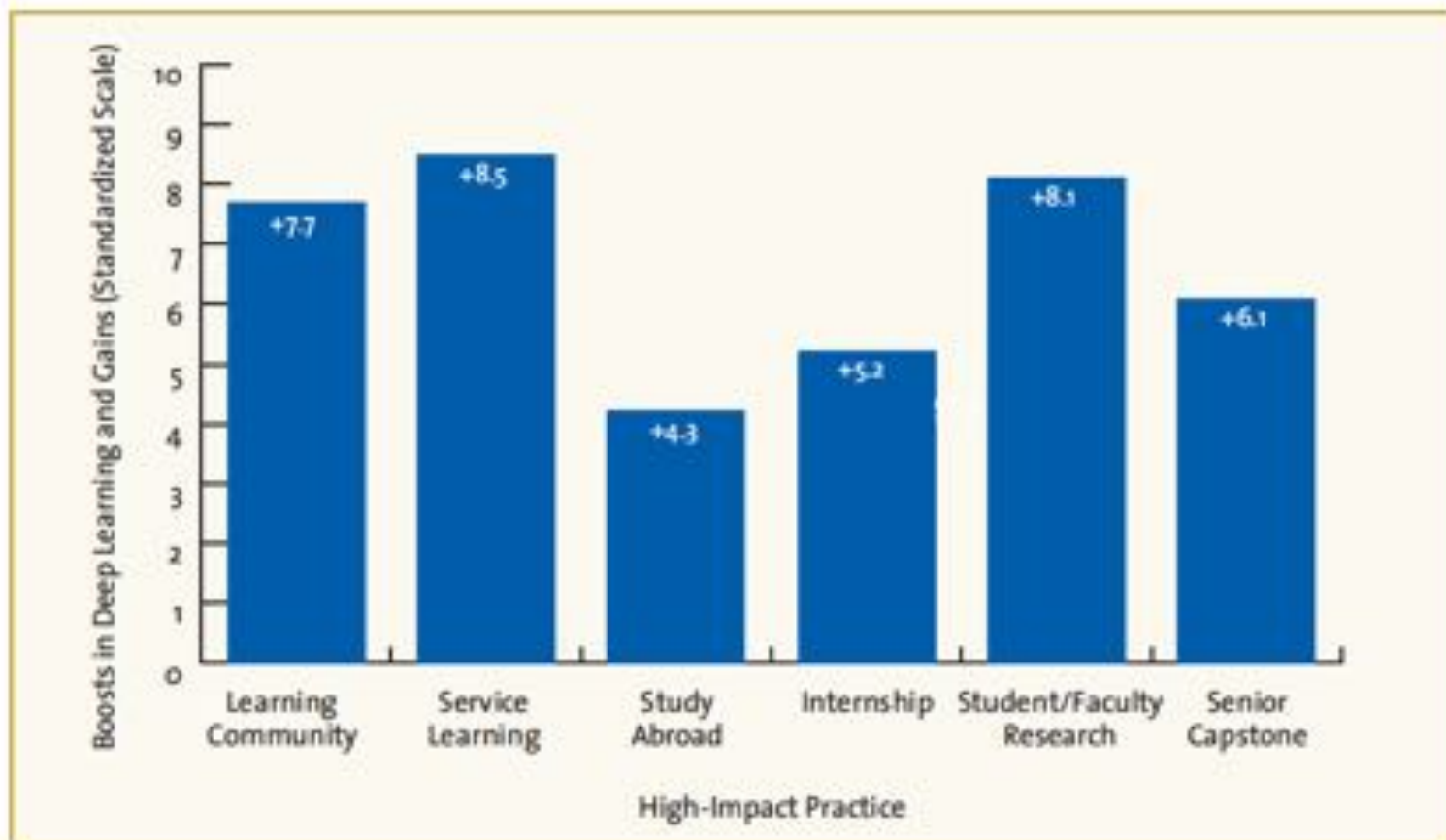
Boost to Learning

Self-Reported Gains & Deep Learning

(Finley & McNair, 2013, p. 12)

Self-Reported Gains & Deep Learning

	0 HIPs	1–2 HIPs	3–4 HIPs	5–6 HIPs
Deep Learning				
Transfer Students	56.40	62.75	69.21	75.01
Non-Transfer Students	53.67	60.15	66.93	74.60
(Difference)	(2.73)	(2.60)	(2.28)	(0.41)
Gains in General Education				
Transfer Students	64.92	70.24	74.92	78.29
Non-Transfer Students	65.93	70.33	76.73	80.83
(Difference)	(-1.01)	(-0.09)	(-1.81)	(-2.54)
Gains in Practical Competence				
Transfer Students	59.20	66.56	71.89	77.63
Non-Transfer Students	58.90	65.97	73.22	78.54
(Difference)	(0.30)	(0.59)	(-1.33)	(-0.91)
Gains in Personal and Social Development				
Transfer Students	40.90	47.54	53.97	64.89
Non-Transfer Students	46.80	52.77	57.38	66.33
(Difference)	(-5.90)	(-5.23)	(-3.41)	(-1.44)

Numbers reflect deep learning and gains as calculated according to a one-hundred-point scale.

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(Finley & McNair, 2013, p. 12)

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Transfer Participation in HIPs

Chart legend: ■ Transfer ■ Non-Transfer

HIP	Transfer	Non-Transfer
Learning Community	19%	31%
Service Learning	60%	67%
Undergrad Research	17%	32%
Internship	40%	63%
Study Abroad	7%	22%
Capstone	38%	57%

(NSSE, 2016)

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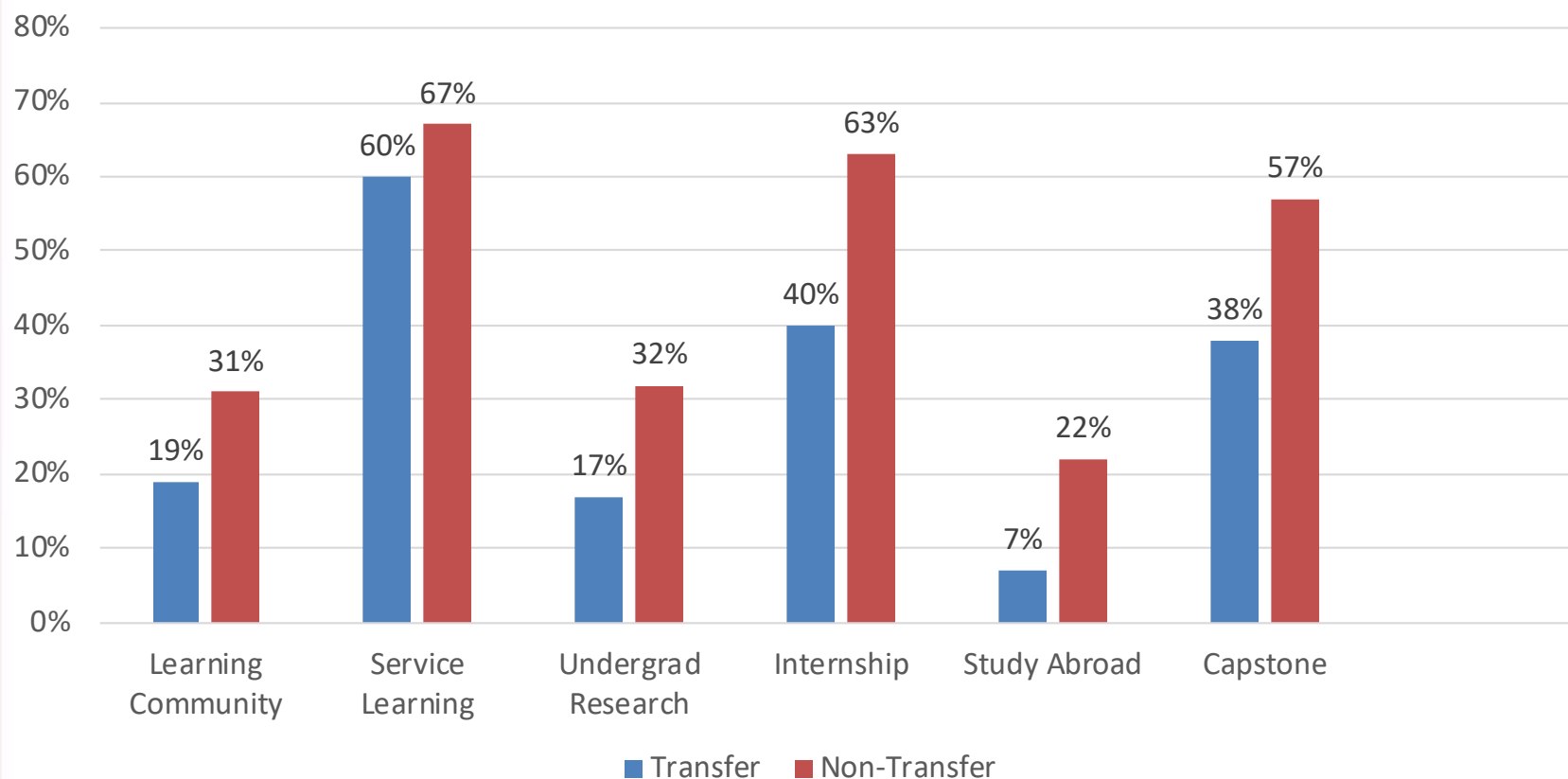
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Reflecting on

TRANSFER PARTICIPATION IN SENIOR CAPSTONES

Thank You!

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