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FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
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The Big Picture

Institutional Priorities and Organizing Structures for the First-Year Experience

Dr. Tracy L. Skipper

2018 Gateway Course Experience Conference



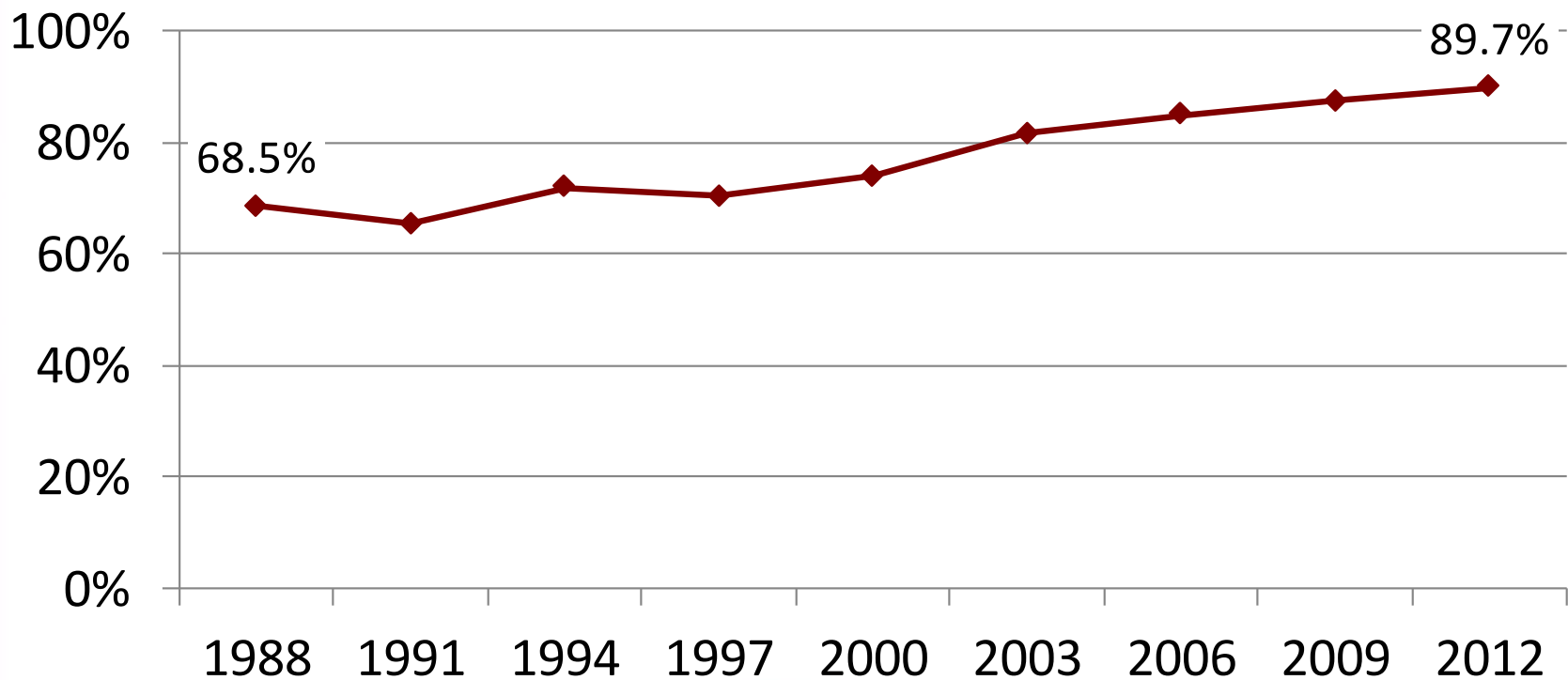
National Survey of First-Year Seminars

- Triennial national survey of the features of first-year seminars first launched in 1988
- The most comprehensive national picture of the practice related to curricular interventions to support students in the first college year



Why Continue to Study First-Year Seminars?

Institutions Offering a First-Year Seminar



Mixed Signals?

Does conducting and reporting on a survey on only one FYE program contradict the messages by thought leaders in FYE movement?

FYE: A Working Definition



“The first-year experience is not a single program or initiative, but rather an intentional combination of academic and co-curricular efforts within and across postsecondary institutions.”

(Koch & Gardner, 2006)

FYE: A Working Definition



“Because supporting first-year student success is a topic that is not easily localized or specific to one functional area, an effectual first-year experience (FYE) requires campus-wide coordination and cooperation.”

(Young & Keup, forthcoming)



“Excellent” FYE: A Working Definition

“Excellence [is] characterized by an approach to the first year that spans the curriculum and cocurriculum.

This approach is central and systemic rather than appended or patched to the core institutional mission.”

(Barefoot et al., 2005)



Time for a Change

- Reconsidered survey to include focus on FYS and on multiple FYE programs
- Similar to efforts previously undertaken by the Gardner Institute
 - Sought their partnership in this enterprise

2017 National Survey of First-Year Experiences

- Administered from March-July 2017
- 3,977 institutions were invited to participate
 - 4 waves: CAO, CEO, CSAO, 2012-13 NSFYS participants,
 - Institutions connected to Gardner Institute initiatives
- 537 campuses responded (13.5% response rate)
- All respondents reported offering at least one FYE program



2017 NSFYE Overview

- General information about institutional attention to the first year
- First-year seminars
- Pre-term orientation
- First-year academic advising
- First-year learning communities
- Residential programs/initiatives
- Early-alert systems
- Common reading programs



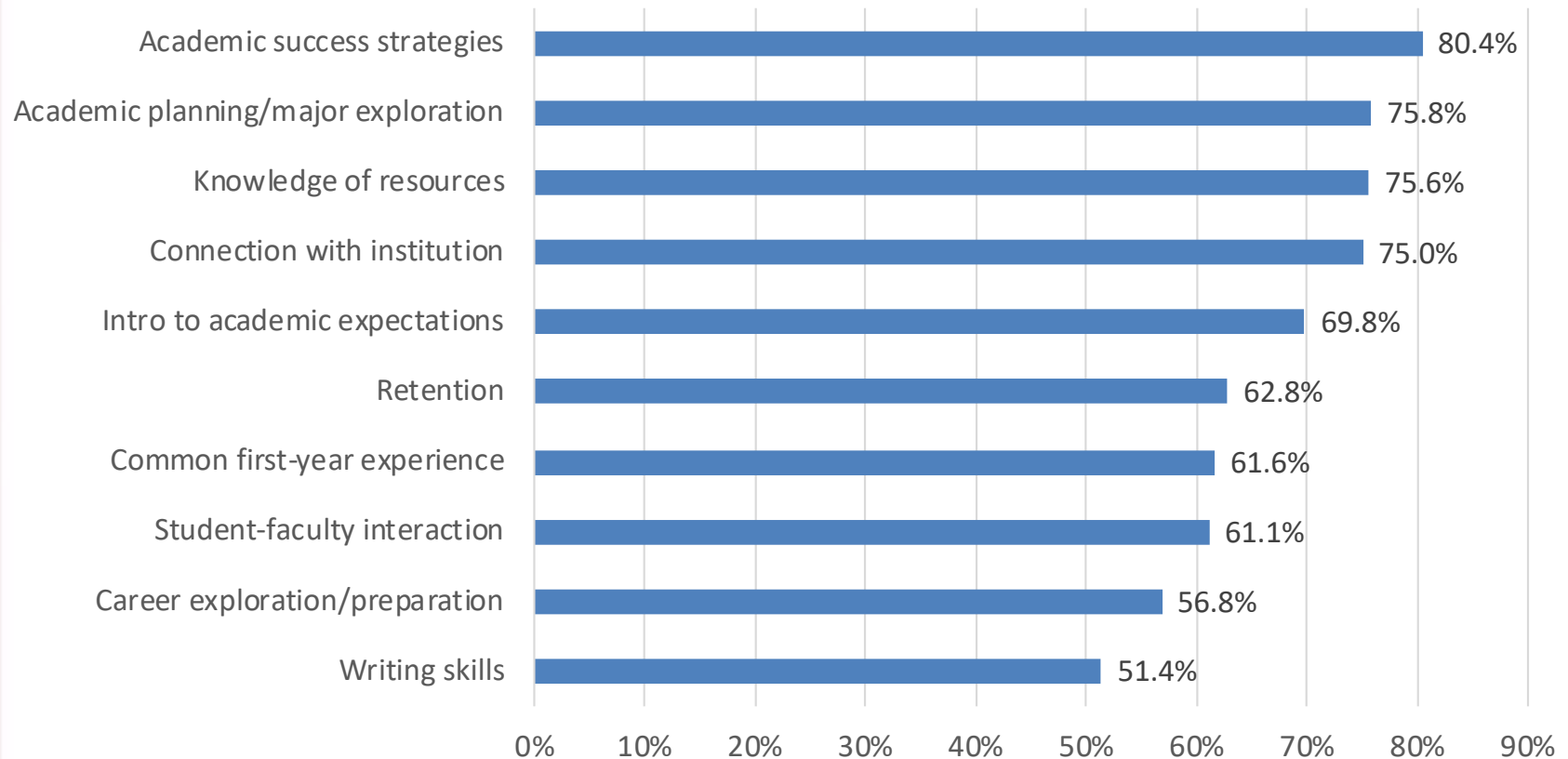
Presentation of Findings

- Institutional priorities and coordination of first-year experience
- Select first-year programs
 - Academic advising
 - Early-alert initiatives
 - First-year seminars
- Value of First-Year Programs

INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES & ORGANIZING STRUCTURES



Institutional Objectives for First Year



Institutional Objectives for First Year

Two-Year

1. Academic planning or major exploration
2. Academic success strategies
3. Knowledge of institution or campus resources and services
4. Connection with the institution or campus
5. Introduction to college-level academic expectations
6. Developmental education, remediation
7. Career exploration and/or preparation
8. Student-faculty interaction
9. Introduction to a major, discipline, or career
10. Common first-year experience

Four-Year

1. Academic success strategies
2. Connection with the institution or campus
3. Knowledge of institution or campus resources
4. Academic planning or major exploration
5. Introduction to college-level academic expectations
6. Retention or second-year return rates
7. Common first-year experience
8. Student-faculty interaction
9. Writing skills
10. Career exploration and/or preparation

Institutional Objectives for First Year

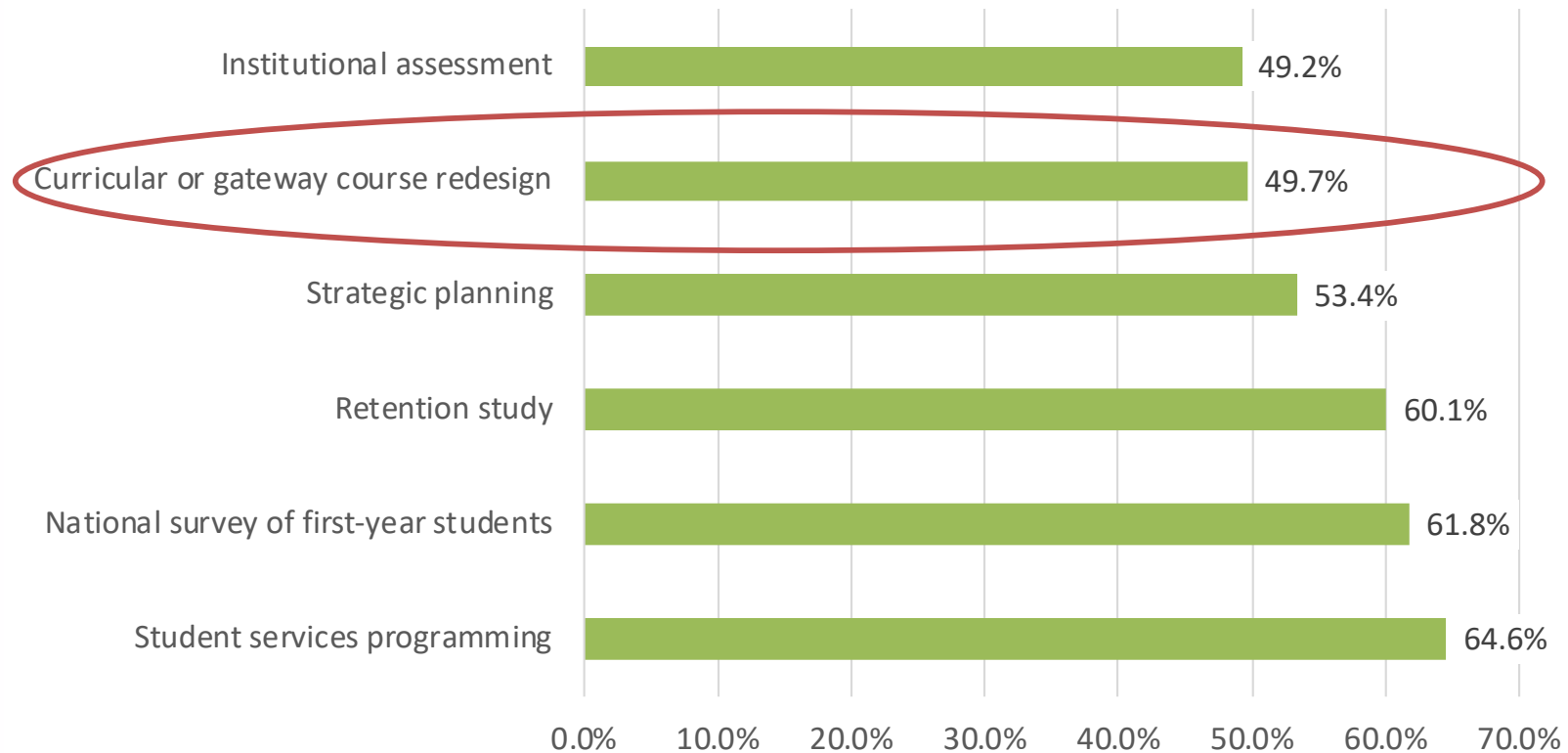
Public

1. Academic success strategies
2. Academic planning or major exploration
3. Knowledge of institution or campus resources and services
4. Connection with the institution or campus
5. Introduction to college-level academic expectations
6. Retention or second-year return rates
7. Career exploration and/or preparation
8. Student-faculty interaction
9. Common first-year experience
10. Introduction to a major, discipline, or career path

Private, Not-for-profit

1. Academic success strategies
2. Connection with the institution or campus
3. Knowledge of institution or campus resources and services
4. Common first-year experience
5. Academic planning or major exploration
6. Introduction to college-level academic expectations
7. Student-faculty interaction
8. Retention or second-year return rates
9. Writing skills
10. Social support networks (e.g., friendships)

Institutional Efforts Focused on the First Year



FIRST-YEAR PROGRAMS



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FY Programs/Initiatives

Most Common	Freq.	%
First-year academic advising (ADV)	422	80.4
Early alert systems (EA)	415	79.0
Pre-term orientation (OR)	396	75.4
First-year seminars (FYS)	386	73.5
Placement testing (PT)	346	65.9
Peer education (PE)	327	62.3
Student success center (SSC)	290	55.2
Developmental education (DEV)	286	54.5
General education (GE)	284	54.1
Convocation (CNV)	276	52.6

n = 525

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FY Programs/Initiatives

Less Common	Freq.	%
Residential programs (RES)	256	48.8
Learning communities (LC)	245	46.7
First-year gateway courses (GATE)	206	39.2
Common reading (CR)	201	38.3
Summer bridge (SB)	193	36.8
Leadership programs (LEAD)	186	35.4
Writing-intensive coursework (WR)	186	35.4
Service-learning (SL)	167	31.8
Mentor by campus professionals (MT)	166	31.6
Experiential learning or learning beyond the classroom (EXP)	163	31.0

n = 525

FY Programs/Initiatives

Least Common	Freq.	%
Undergraduate research (UGR)	111	21.1
Study abroad (SA)	102	19.4
Other (OTH)	24	4.6
None	0	0.0

$n = 525$

Common FYE Programs

Two-Year

- First-year academic advising
- Placement testing
- Developmental or remedial education
- Early alert systems
- First-year seminars
- Pre-term orientation
- Student success center
- Peer education
- General education
- Learning communities

Four-Year

- Early alert systems
- First-year academic advising
- Pre-term orientation
- First-year seminars
- Peer education
- Convocation
- Placement testing
- Residential programs or initiatives
- General education
- Student success center



Common FYE Programs

Public

- First-year academic advising
- Early alert systems
- Pre-term orientation
- First-year seminars
- Placement testing
- Developmental or remedial education
- Student success center
- Learning communities
- General education
- Peer education

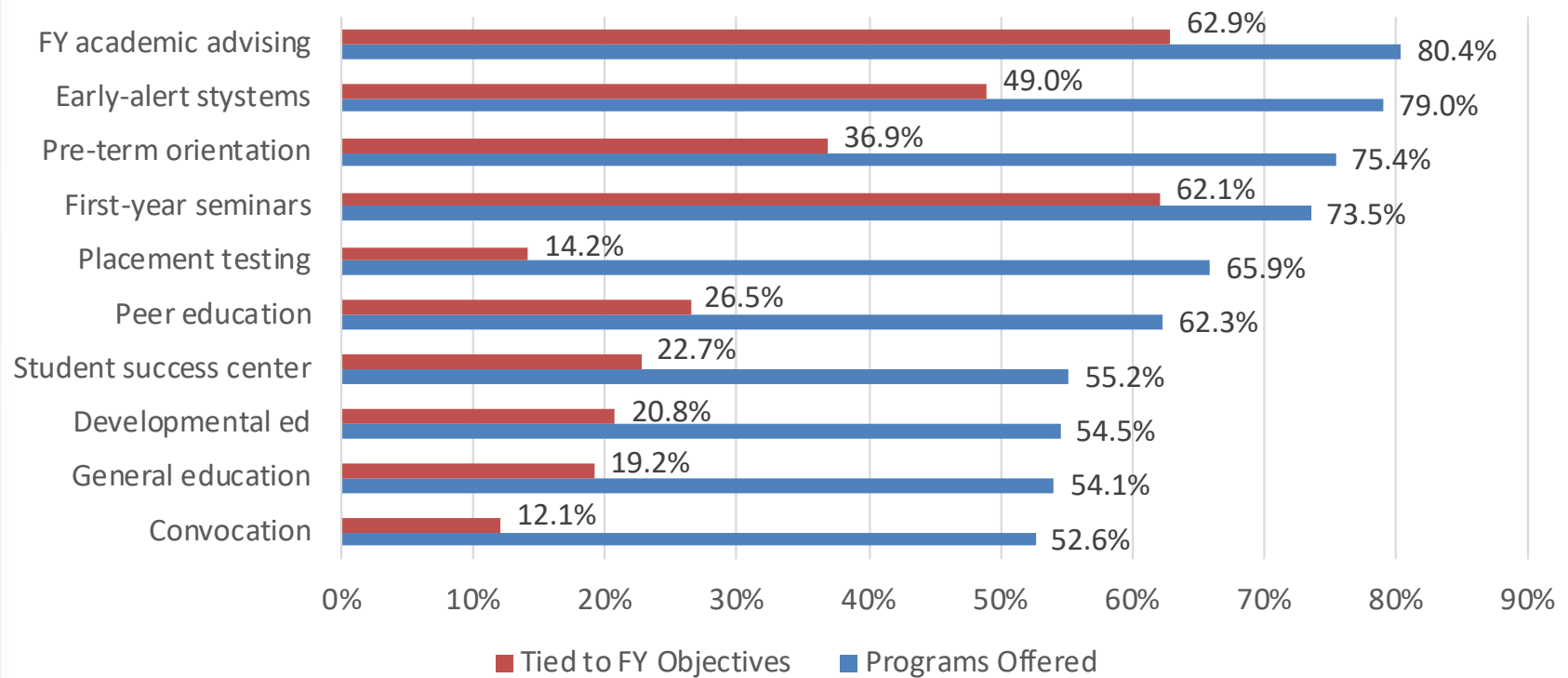
Private, Not-for-profit

- Peer education
- Early alert systems
- First-year academic advising
- Pre-term orientation
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- Convocation
- Placement testing
- Residential programs or initiatives
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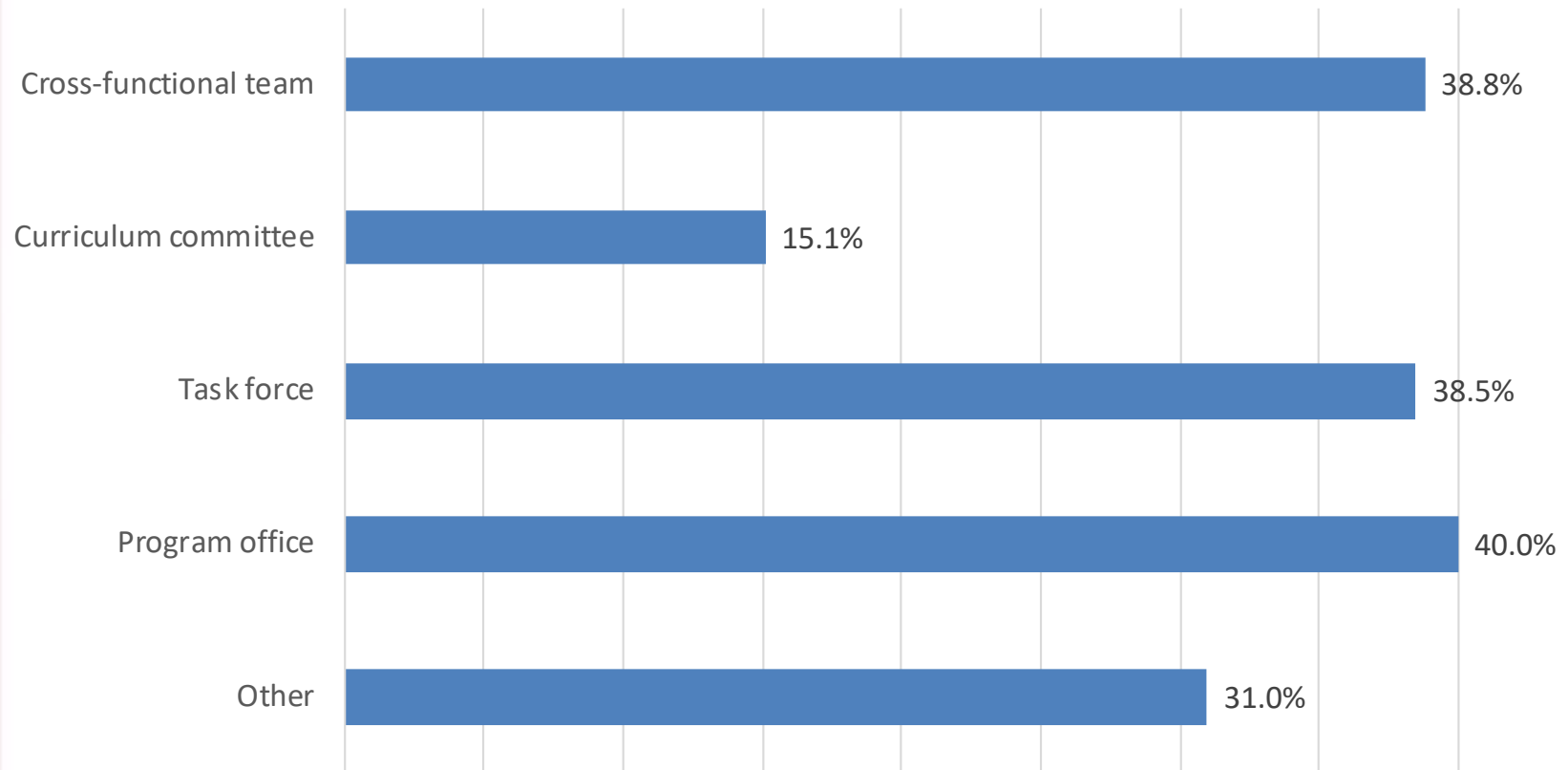


Aligning Objectives & FY Programs

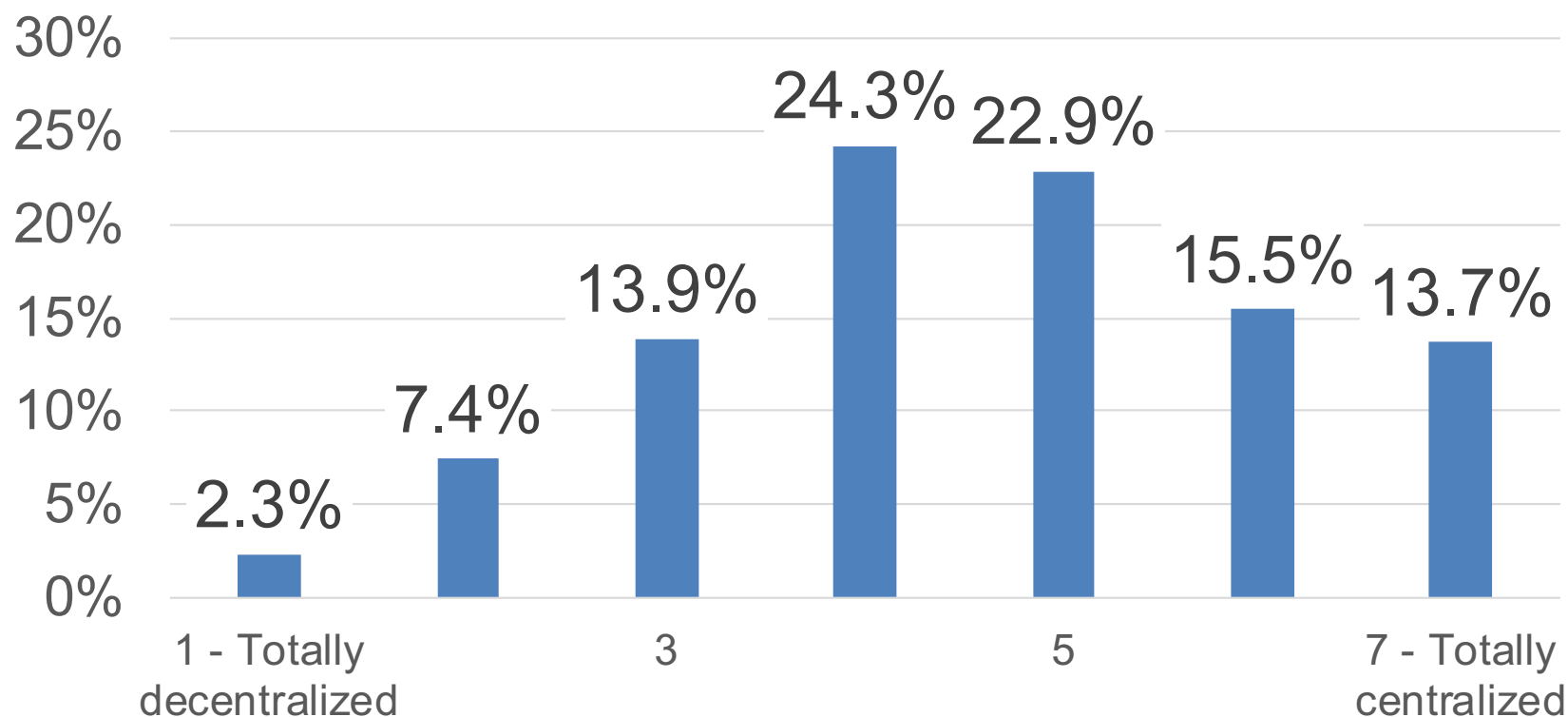
First-Year Programs



FY Organizing Structures



Coordination of FYE Programs



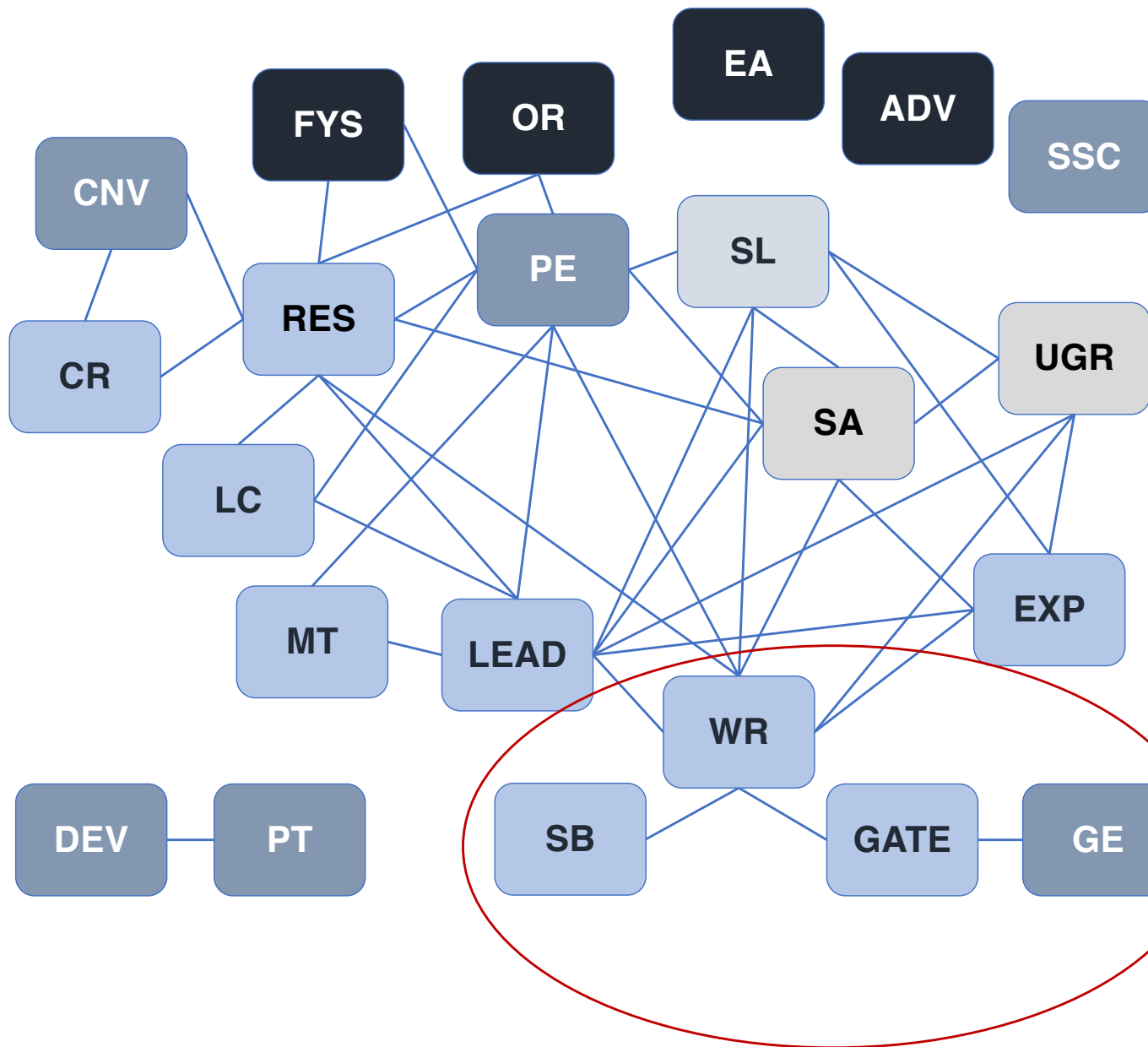
Coordination of FYE Programs

“A true first-year experience includes more than just one ‘star’ program and, instead, represents a constellation of support programs.”

(Greenfield, Keup, & Gardner, 2013)



A Constellation of FYE Programs



Legend:

- Lines represent correlations $\phi > .25$
- Colors of boxes represent percentage of institutions reporting FYE program offered.

Dark Blue = > 70%

Royal Blue = 50-69%

Light Blue = 30-49%

Gray = < 30%

ACADEMIC ADVISING



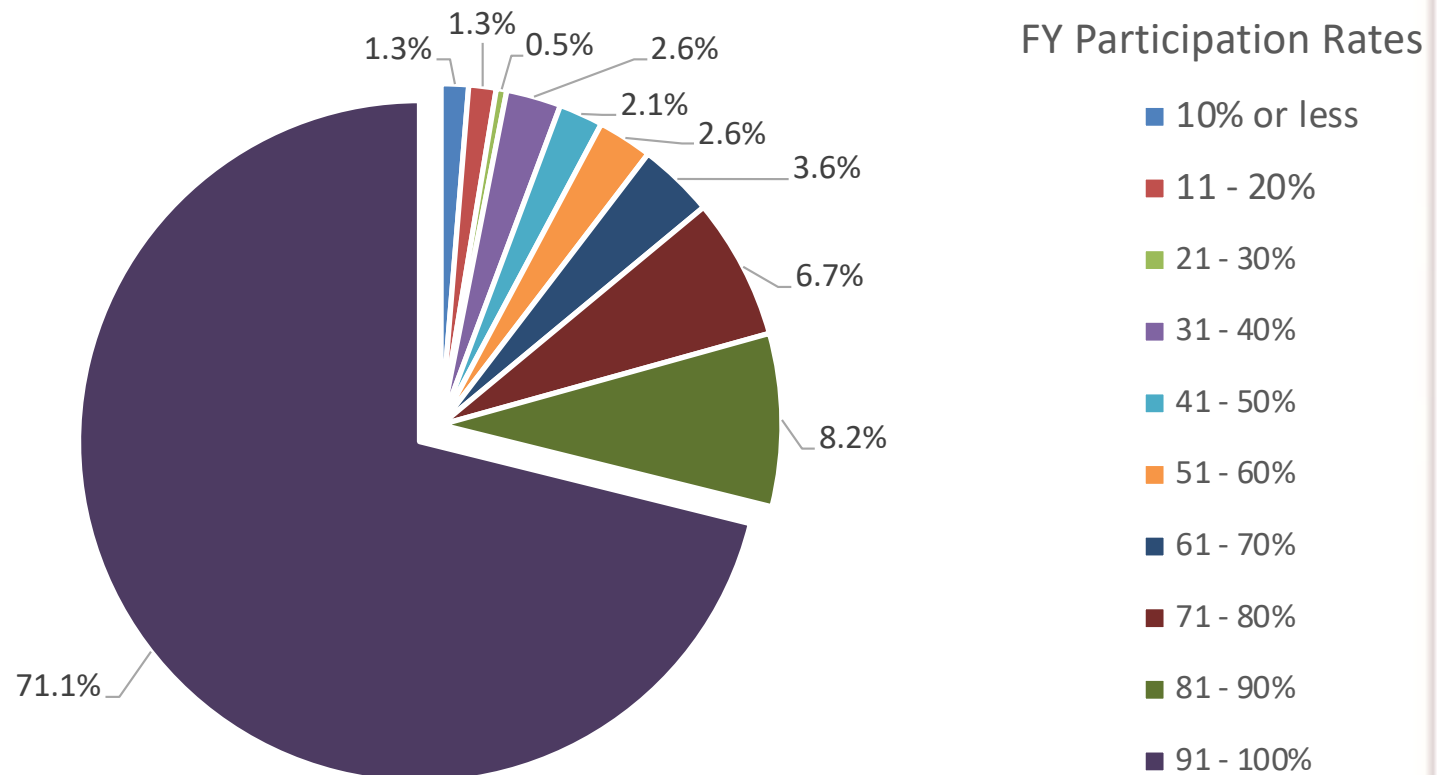
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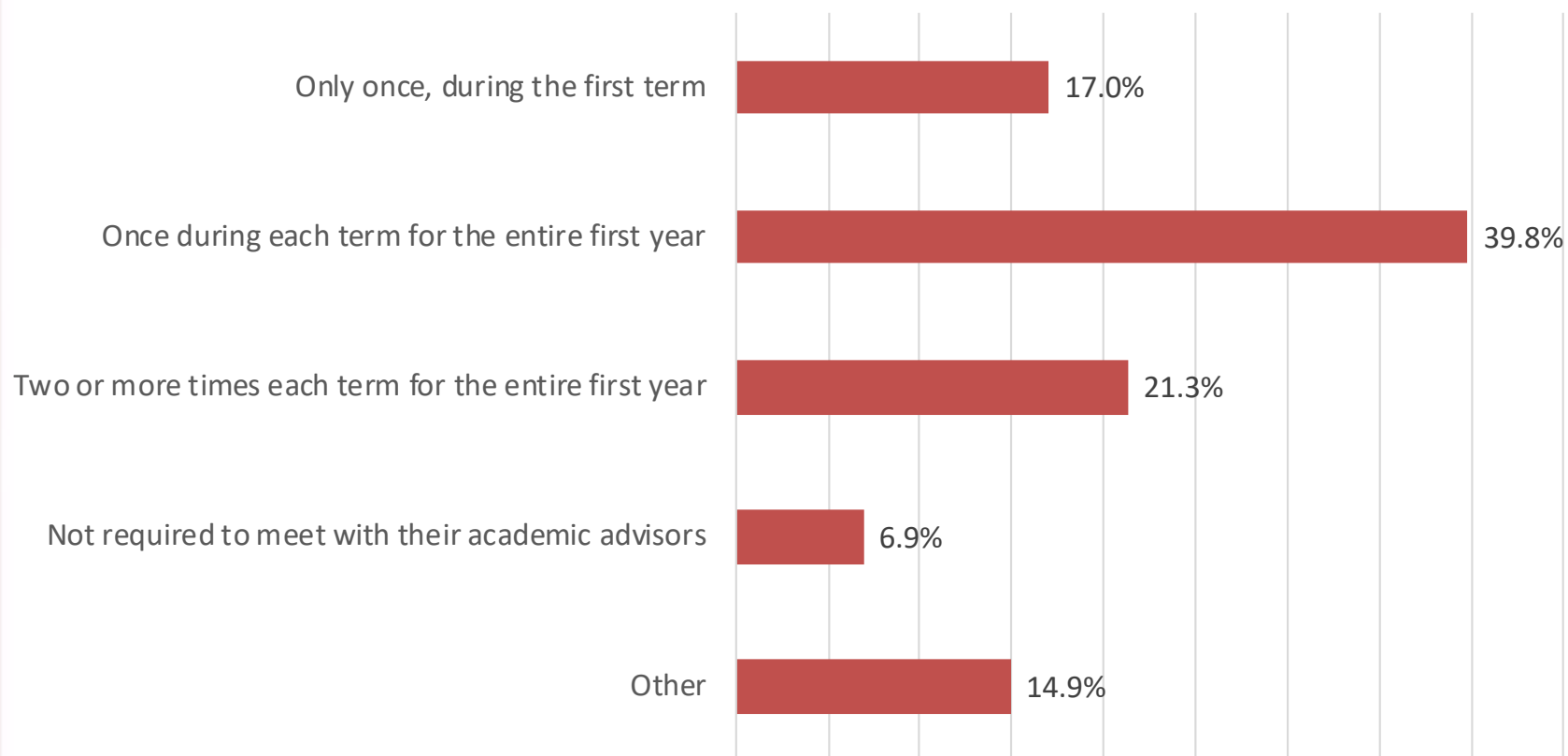
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Access to Academic Advising

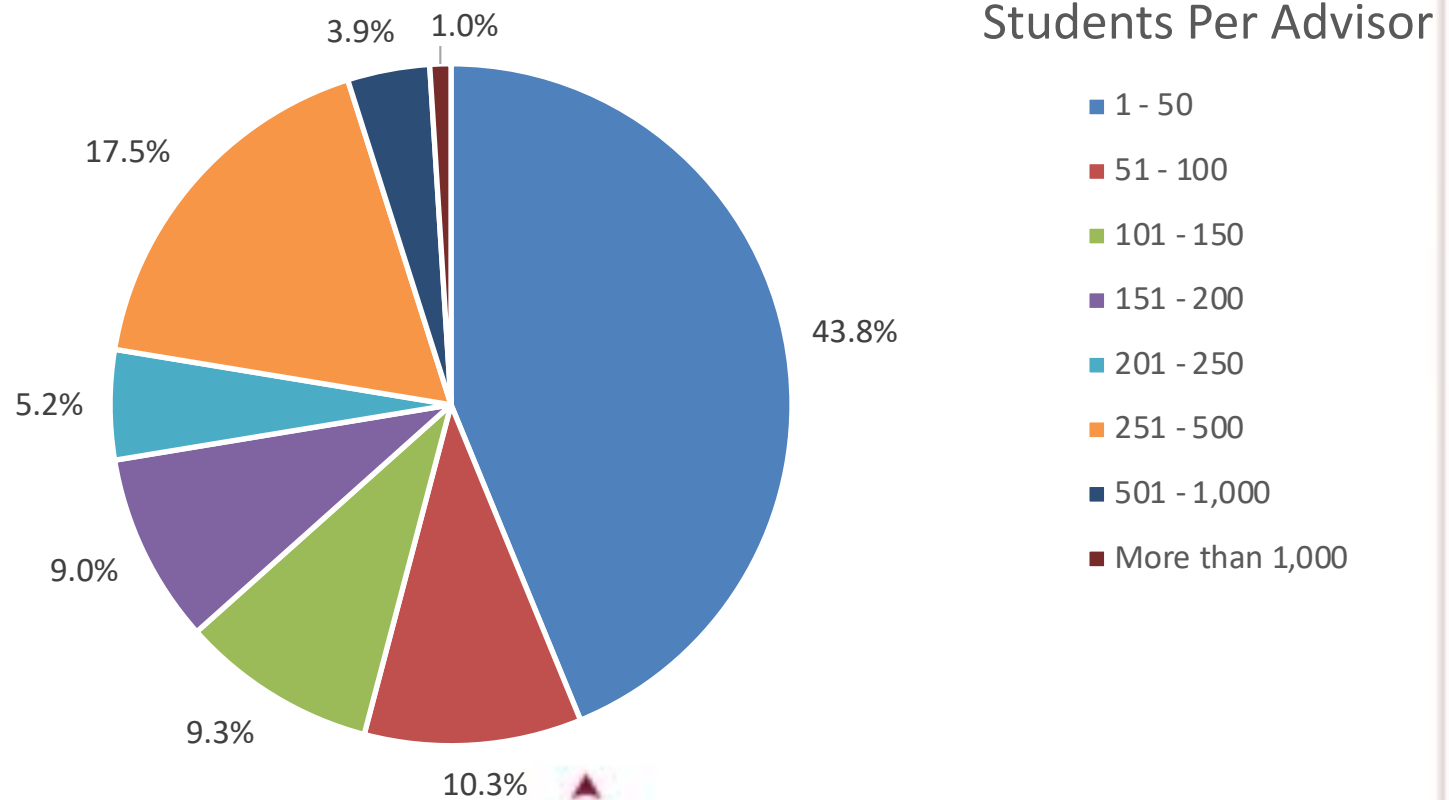
80.4% of responding institutions offer first-year academic advising



Contact with Advisors



Advising Load

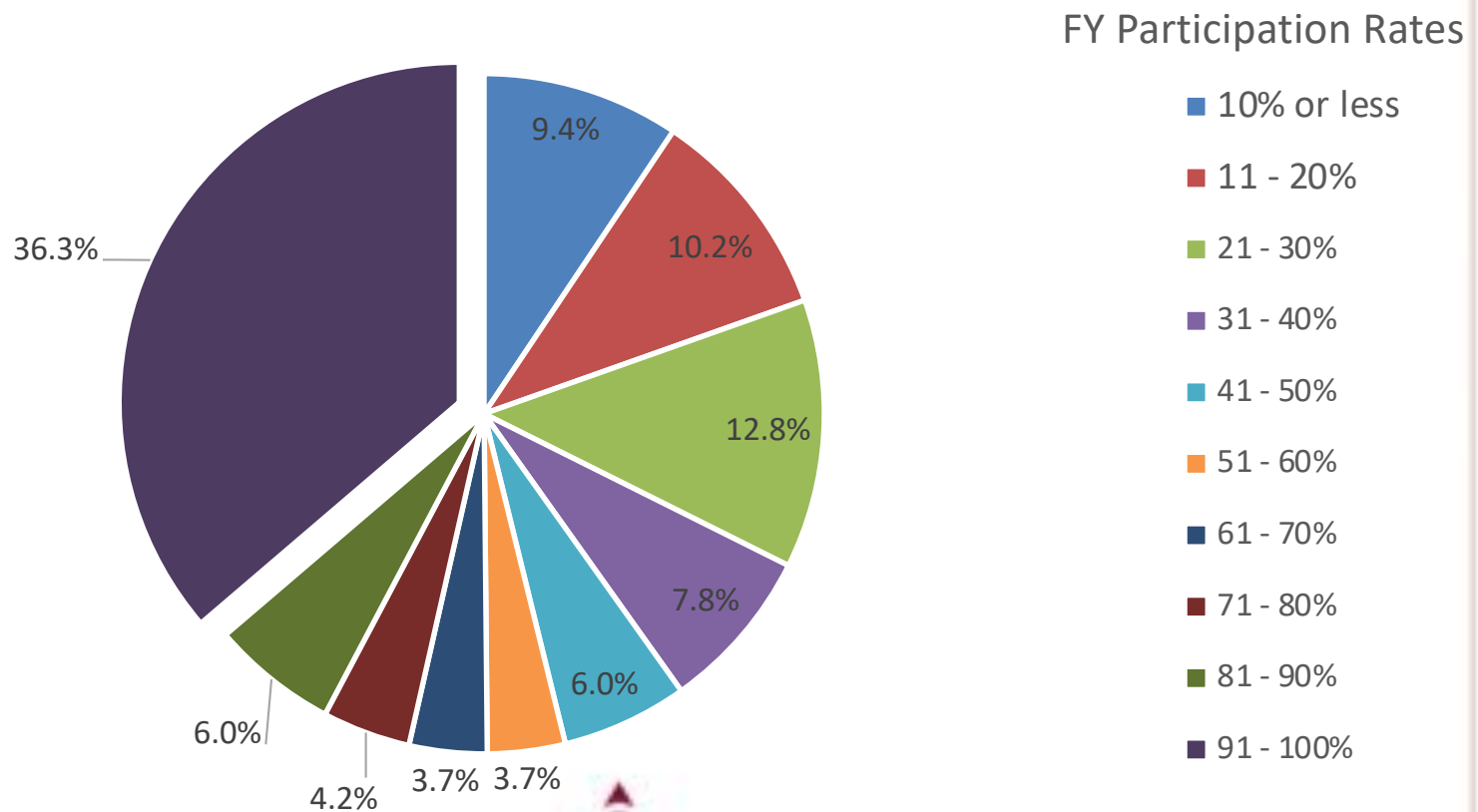


EARLY WARNING/EARLY ALERT SYSTEMS



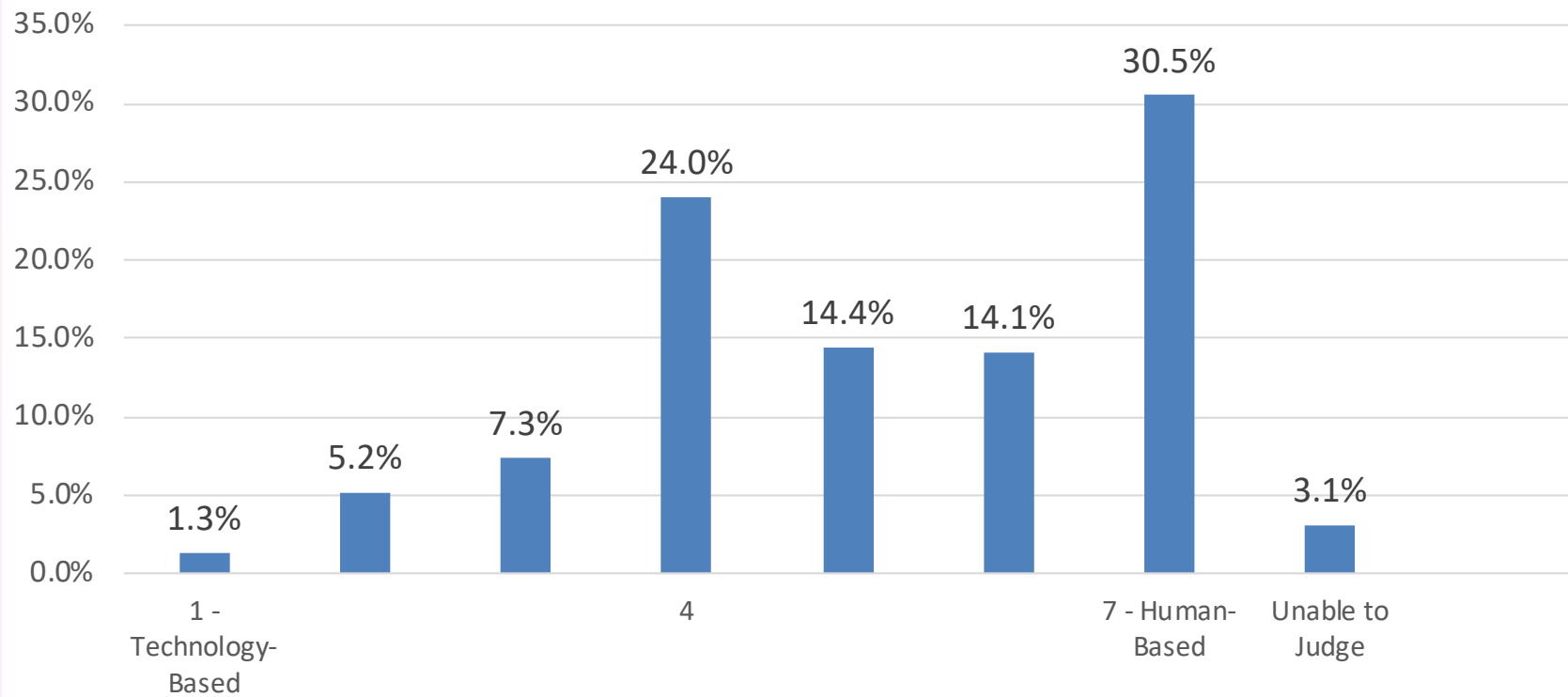
Access to Early Alert

79.0% of responding institutions offer early-alert systems

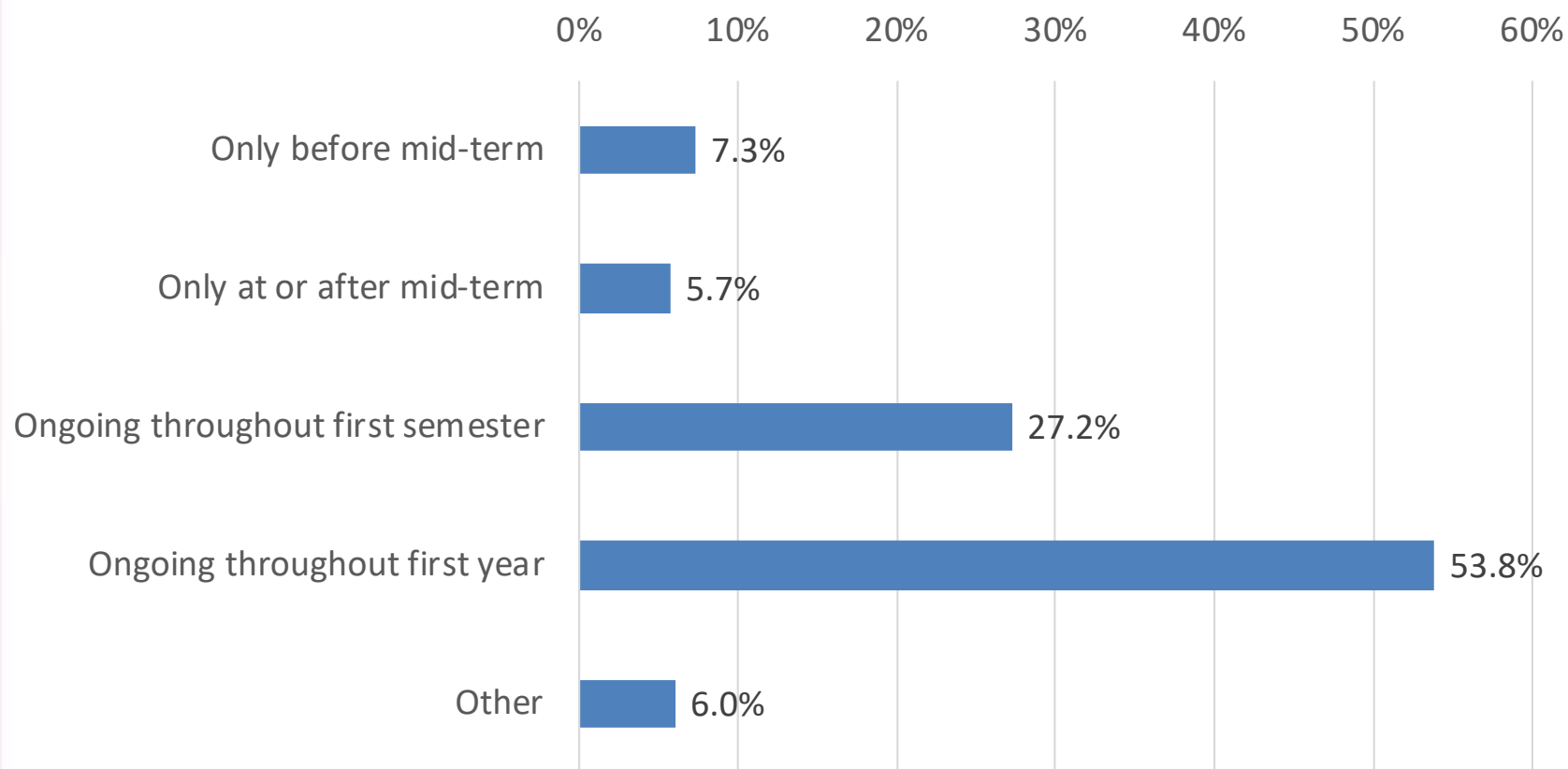


Structure of Alert System

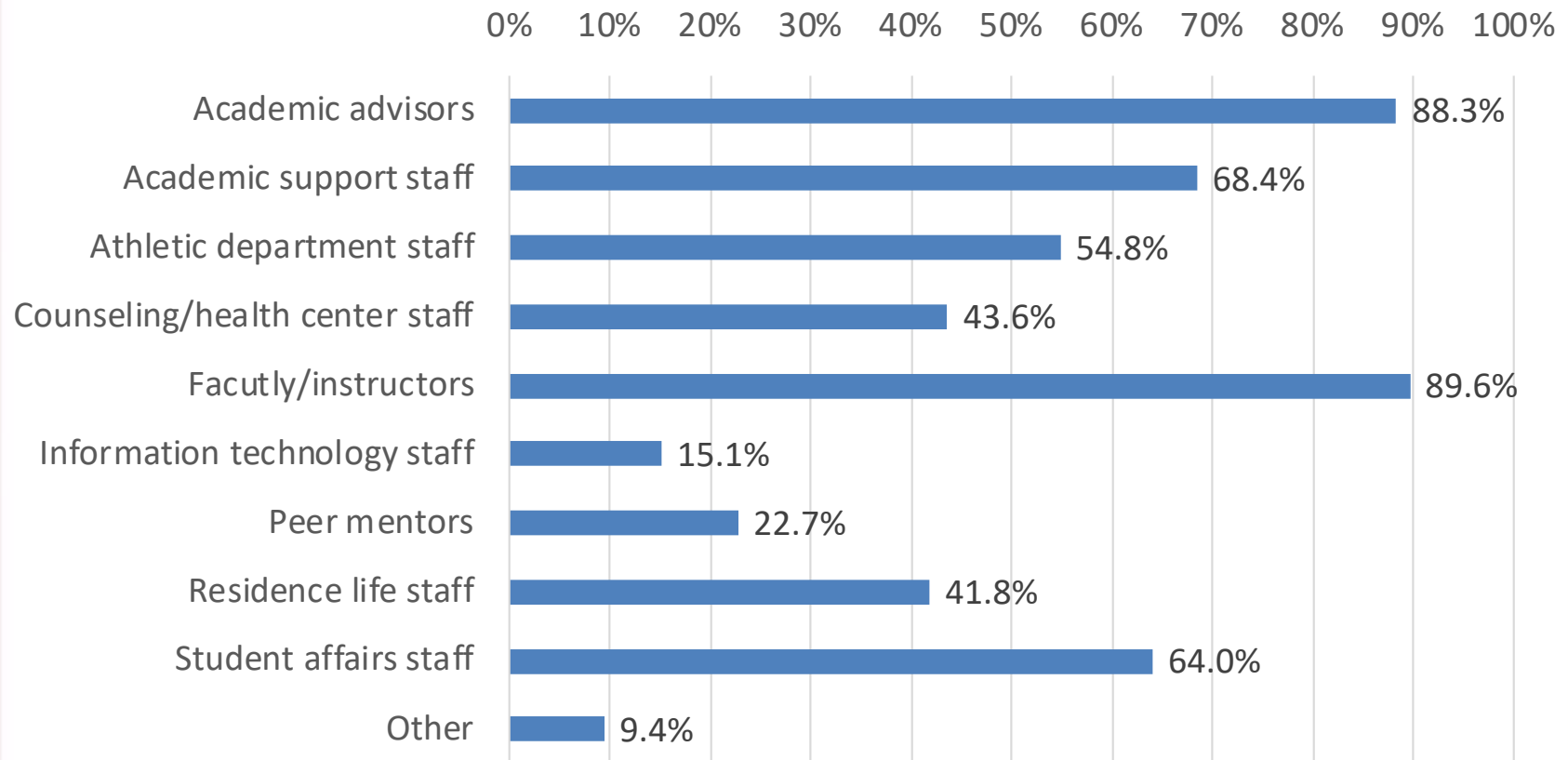
Source of Alerts



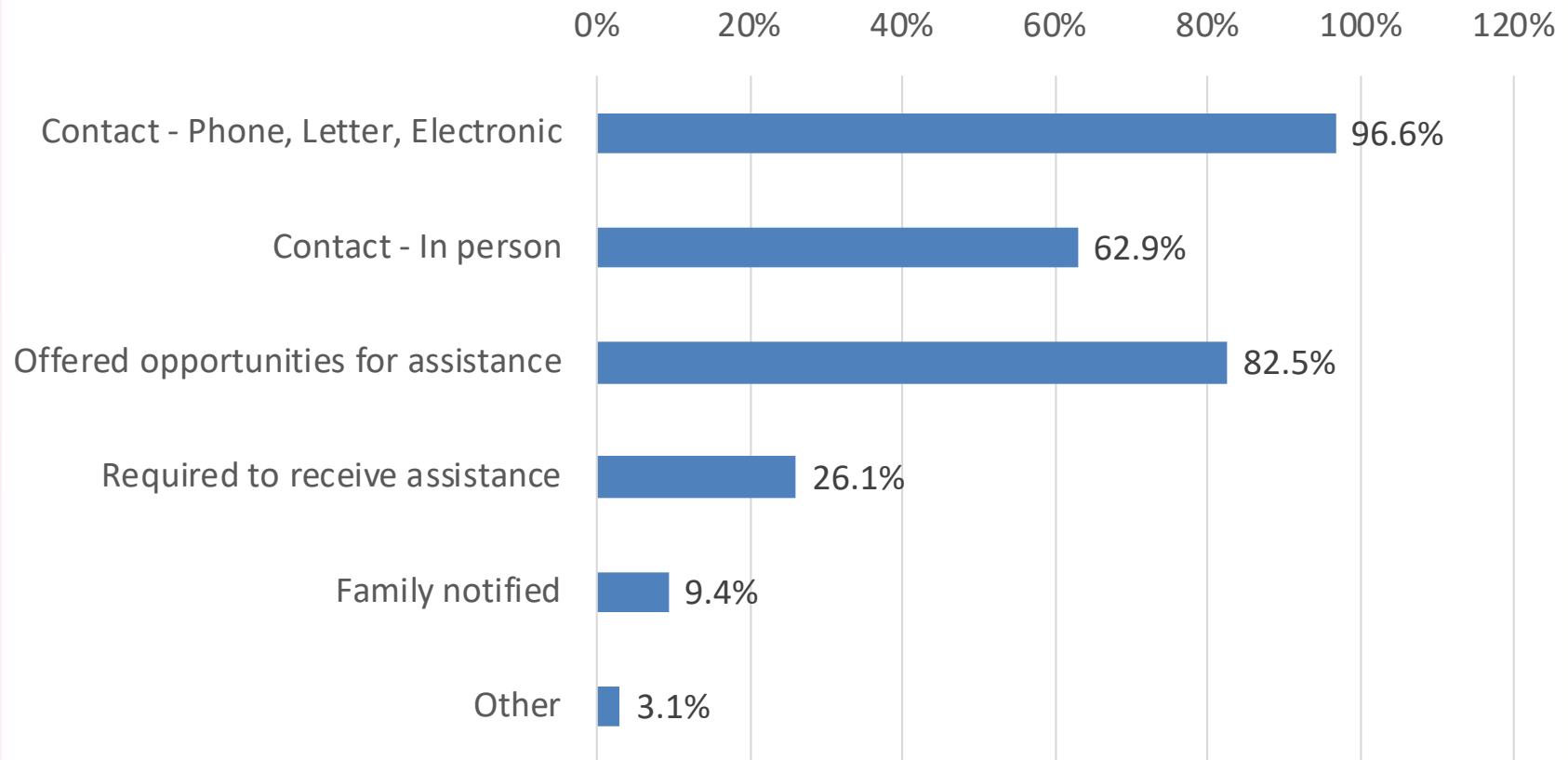
Timing of Monitoring/Response



Staff Involved



Interventions



FIRST-YEAR SEMINARS

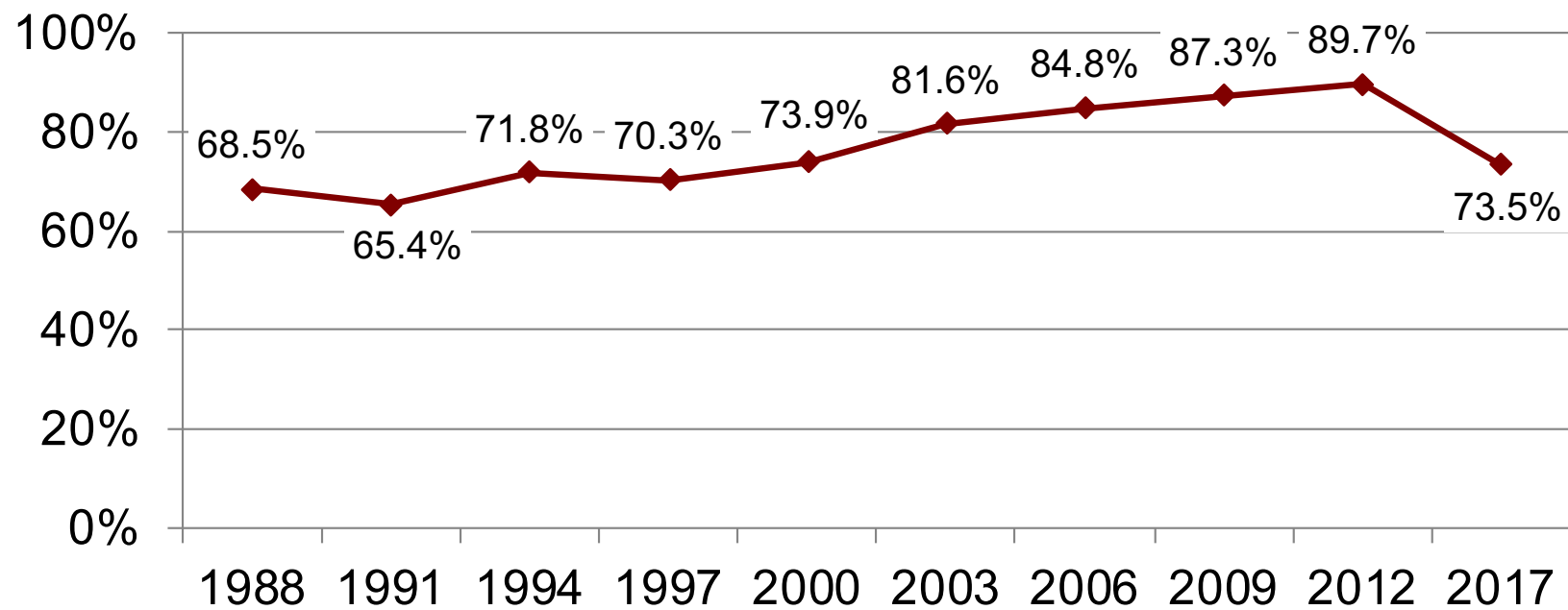


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First-Year Seminar Prevalence



First-Year Seminars

- 73.5% of respondents reported offering a first-year seminar
- Possible explanations:
 - Measurement/Researcher error
 - Previous overestimation from self-selection
 - Actual drop in prevalence

First-Year Seminars

- 2009 NSFYS: 87.5%
 - 2009 NSFYS Respondents to 2017 NSFYE: 75.3%
- 2012 NSFYS: 89.7%
 - 2012 NSFYS Respondents to 2017 NSFYE: 79.8%
- 2017 NSFYE: 73.5%
 - Respondents to all three: 77.5%



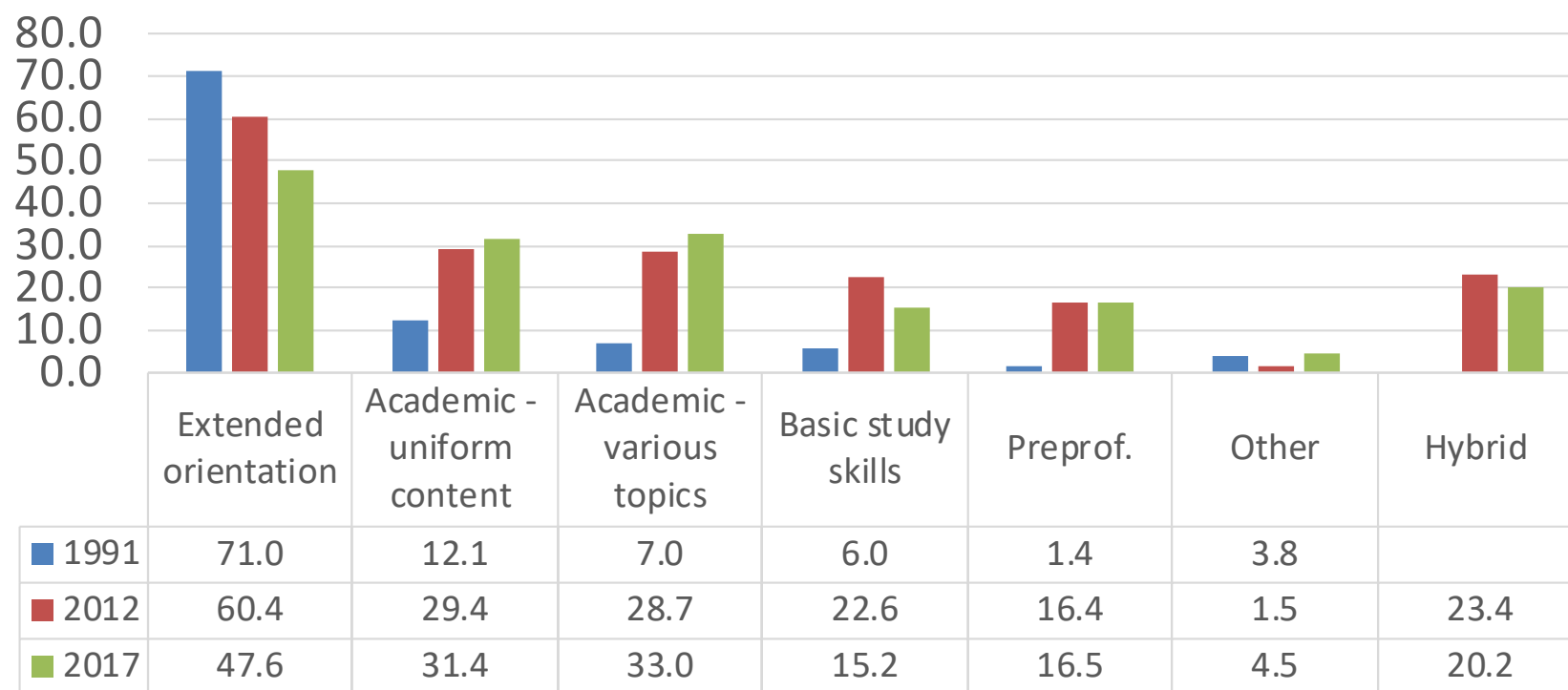
Reasons for Decline?

- 74% is still a lot!
- Less replacement of FYS?
- FYE efforts more diverse and widespread
- Assessment showing FYS doesn't have the impact it once did (on certain campuses)?
- Decrease in certain seminar types... (spoiler alert)
- Others?

First-Year Seminar Prevalence

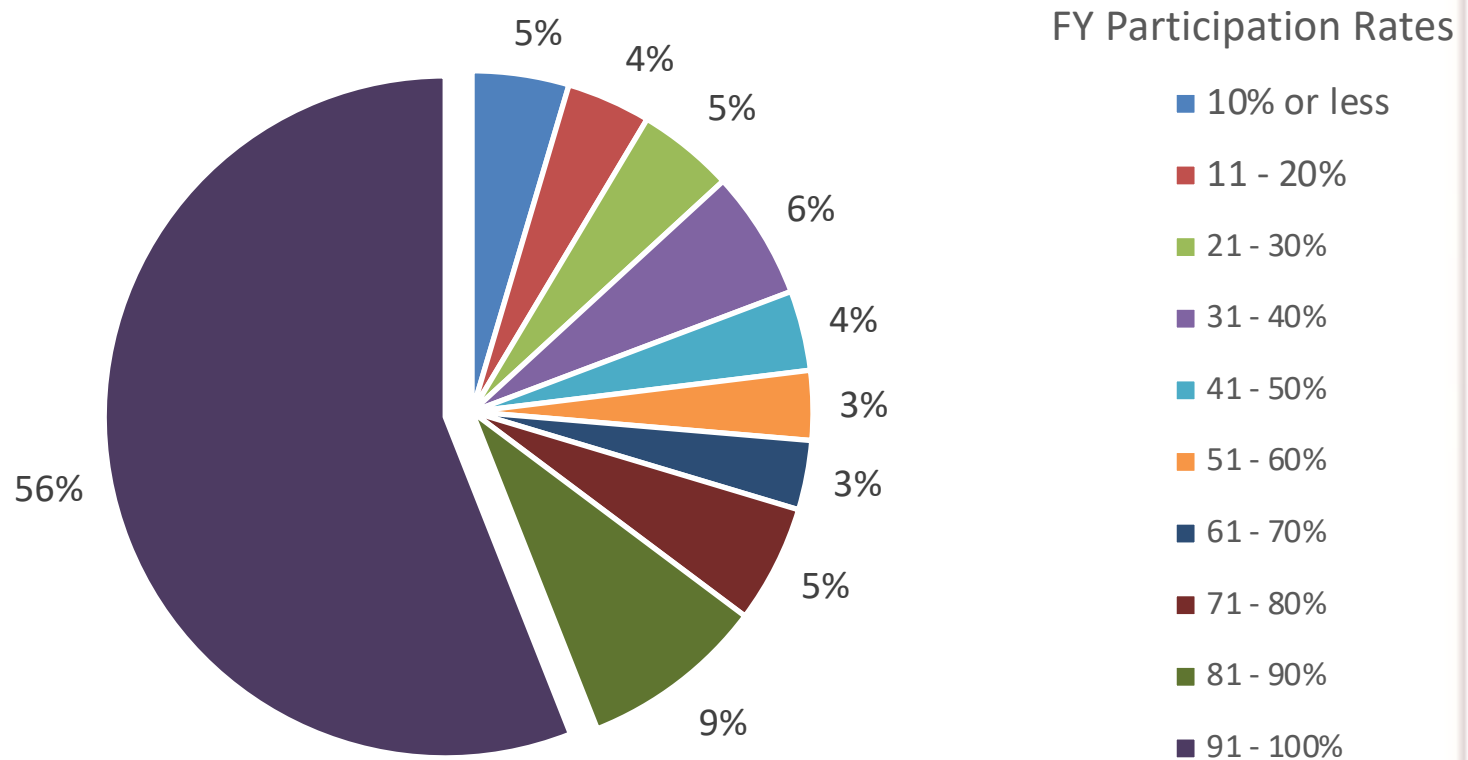
Survey	Two-Year	Four-Year	Public	Private, Not-for-profit
2012-13 NSFYS	86.2%	91.0%	90.3%	89.1%
2017 NSFYE	58.5%	78.1%	73.9%	73.7%

Seminar Type Distribution

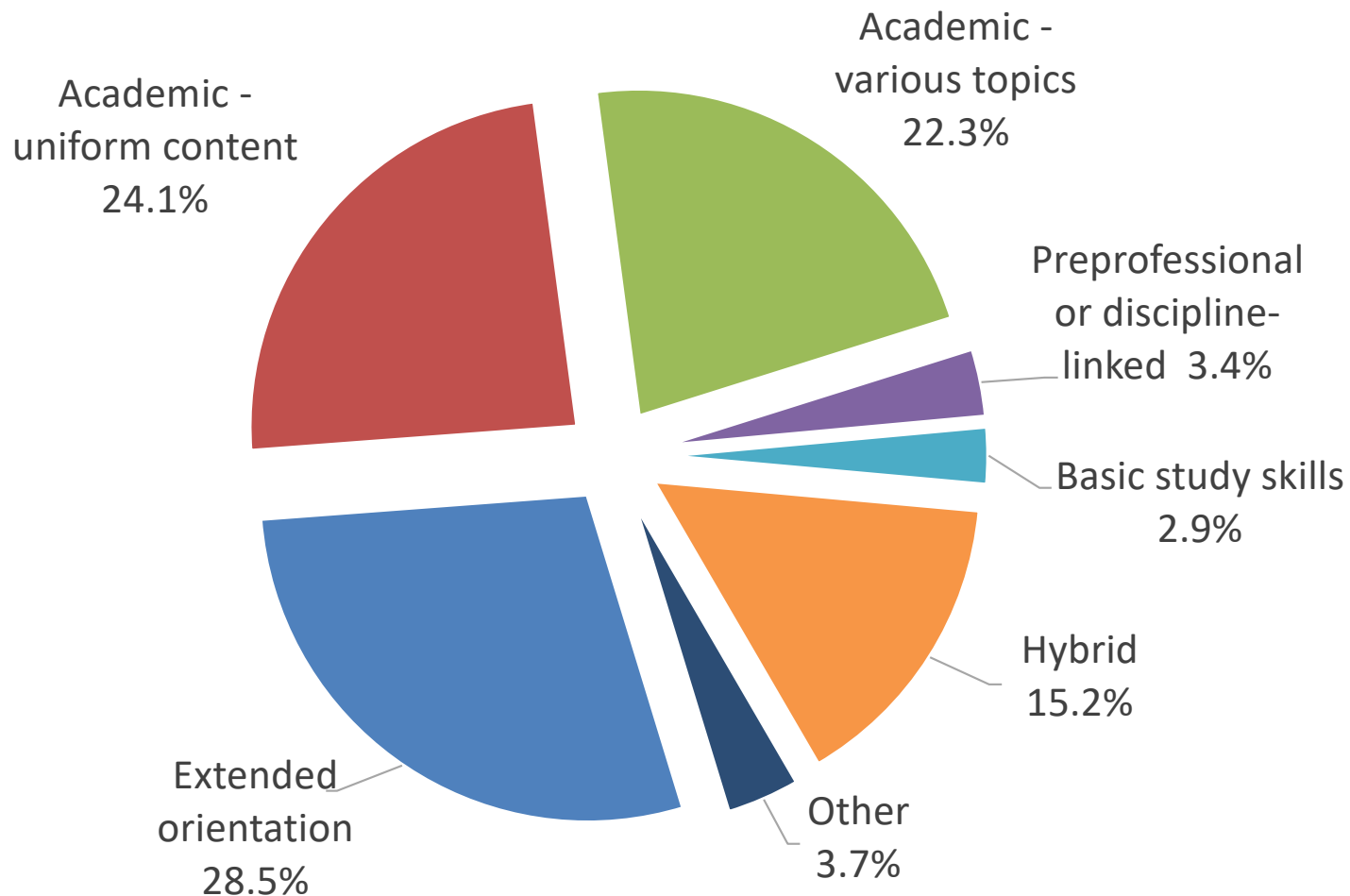


Access to First-Year Seminars

73.5% of responding institutions offer first-year seminars



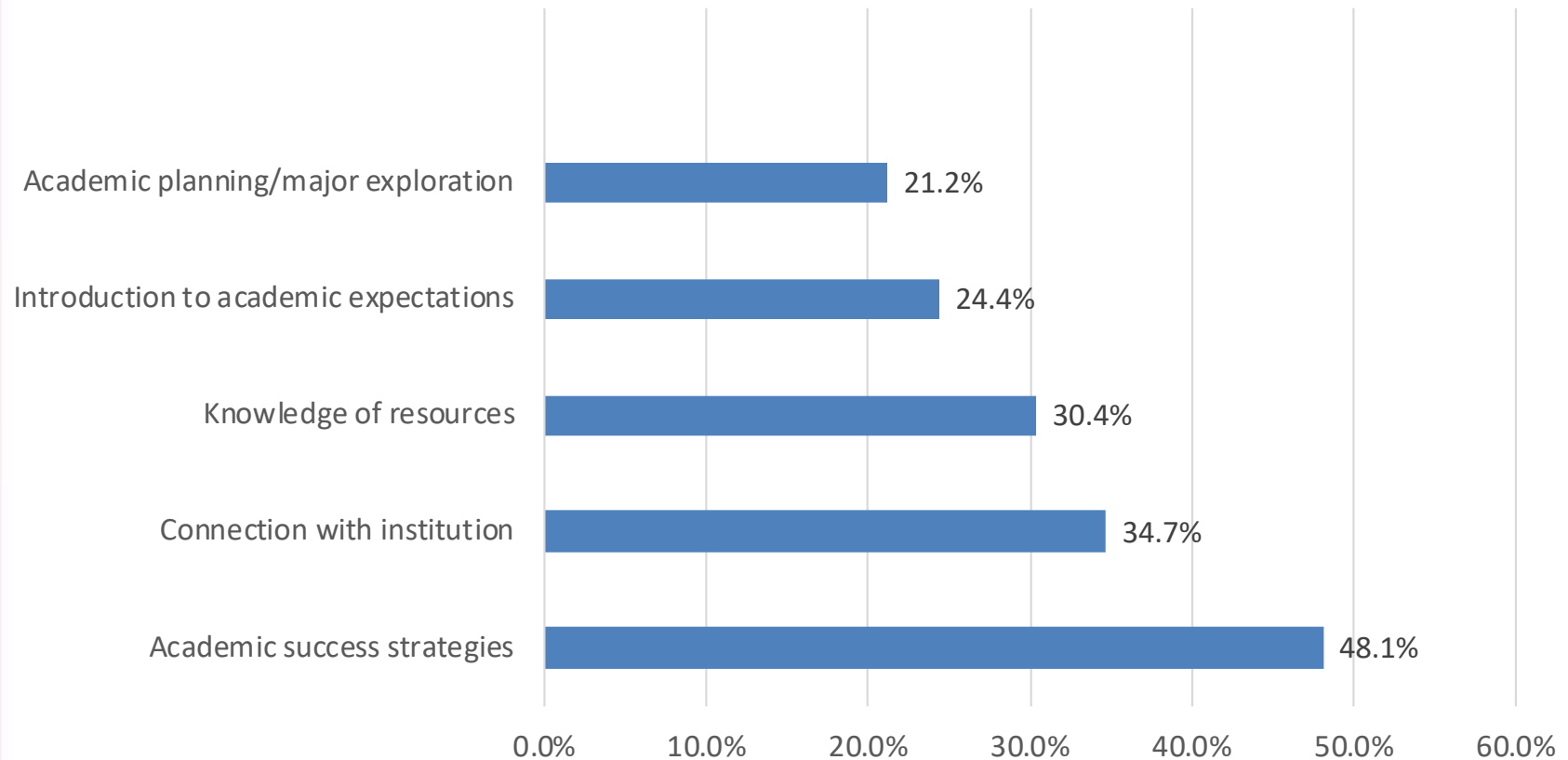
Primary FYS



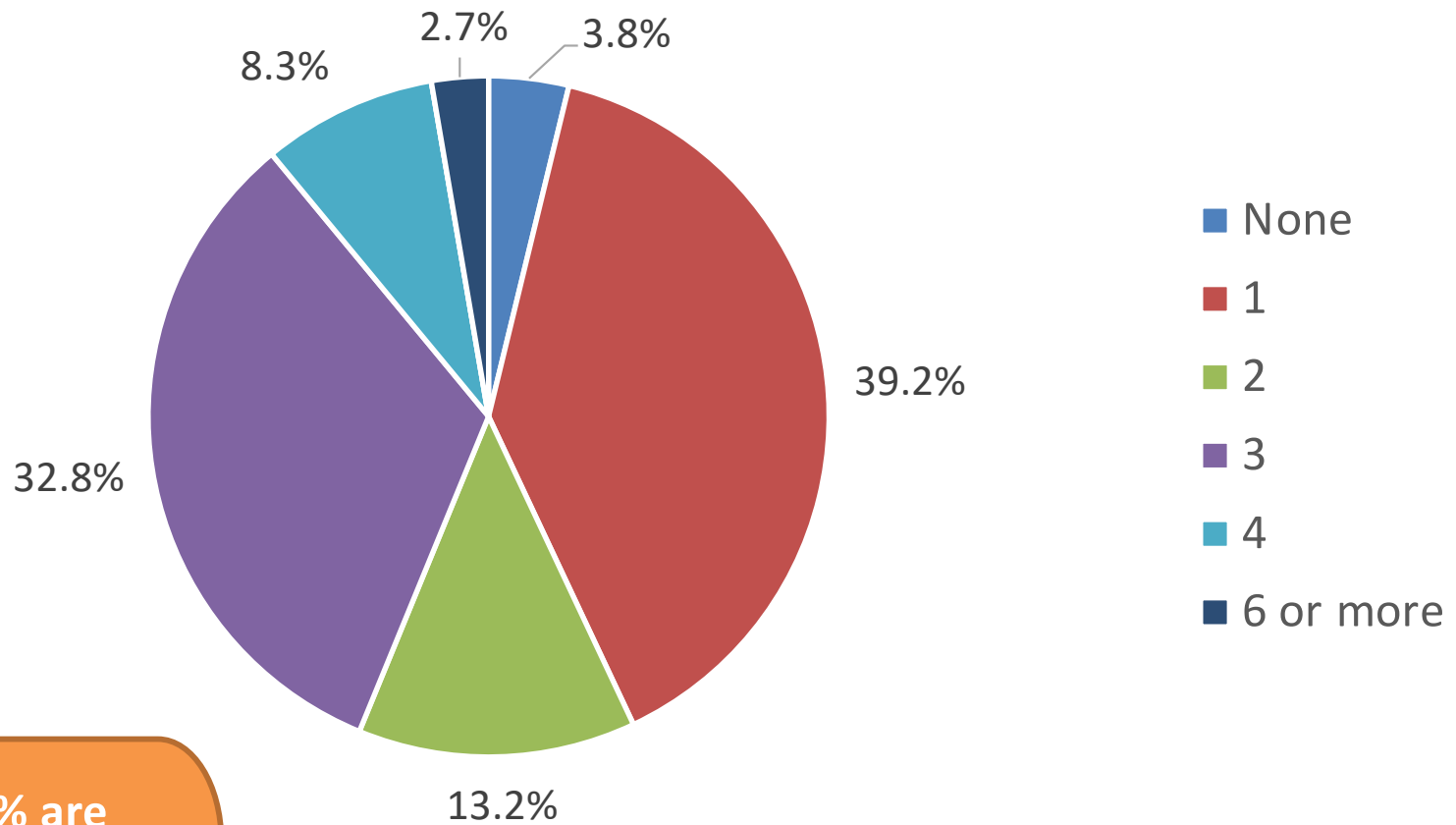
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FY Seminar Objectives

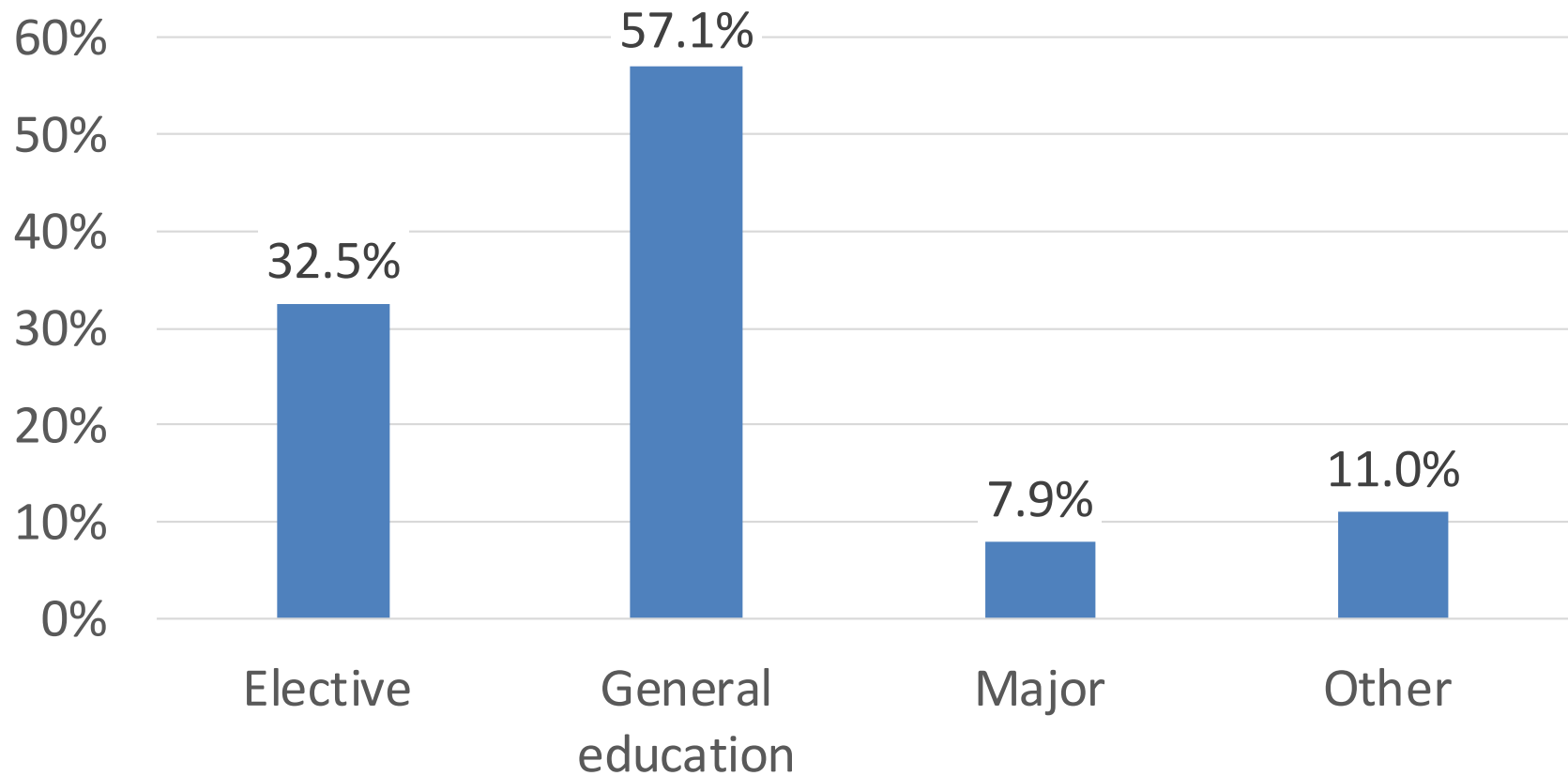


How Many Credits Does FYS Carry?

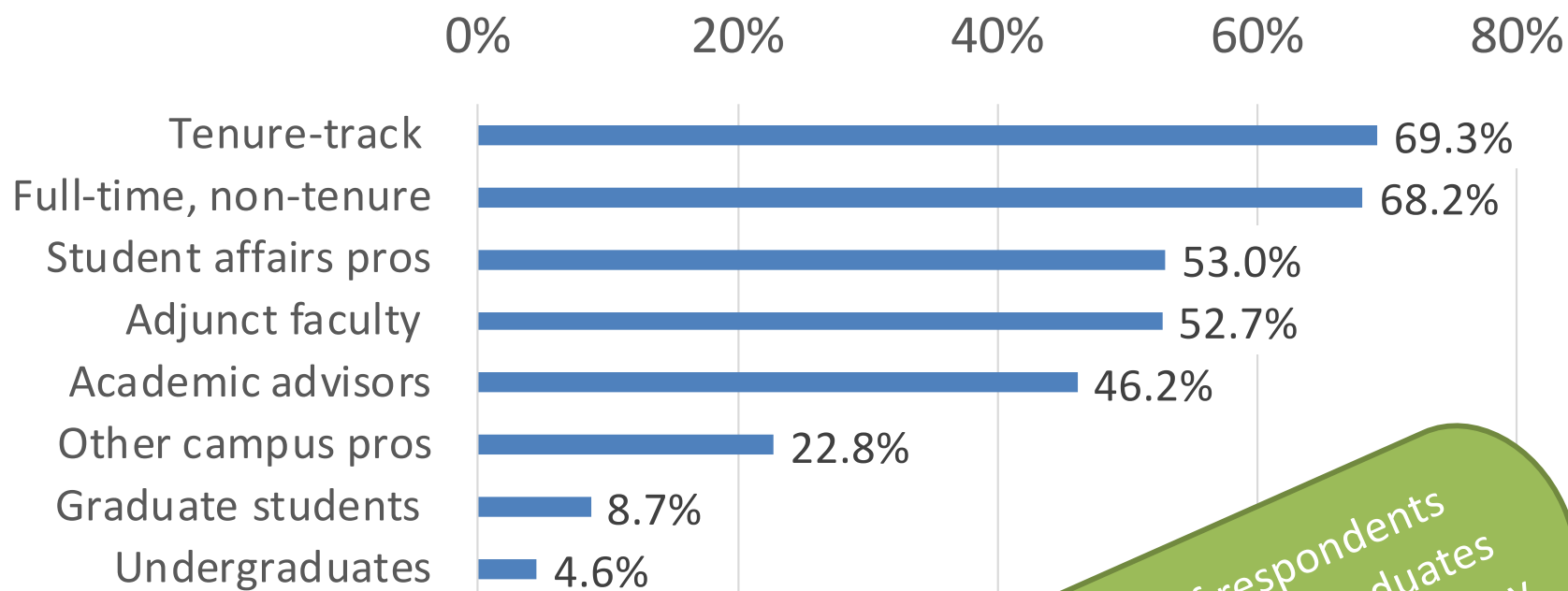


86% are
Letter-graded

How Are Credits Applied?

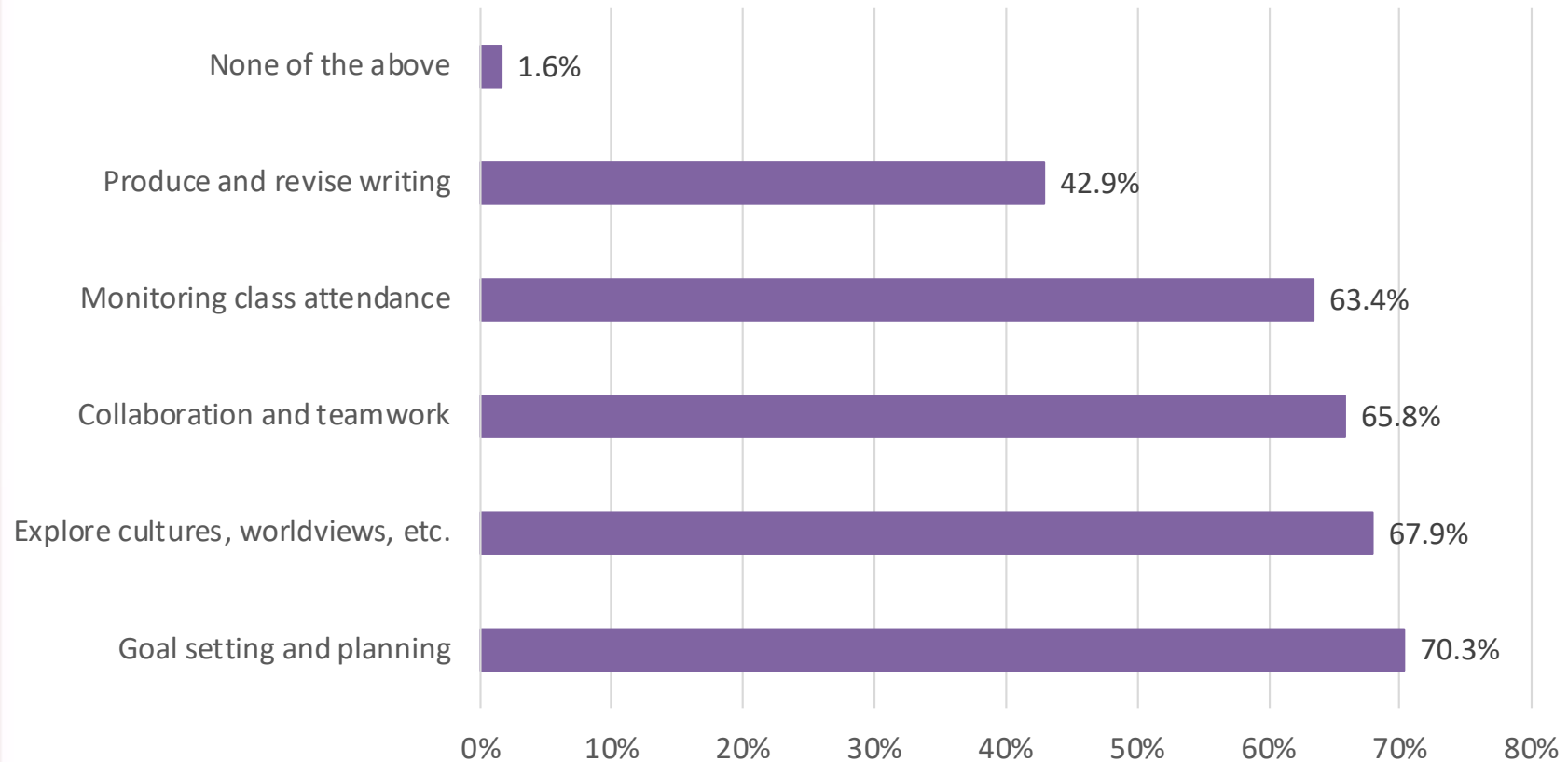


Who Teaches the FYS?



61% of respondents
report undergraduates
assist in FYS in some way.

Pedagogical Approaches in the FYS



VALUE OF FIRST-YEAR PROGRAMS



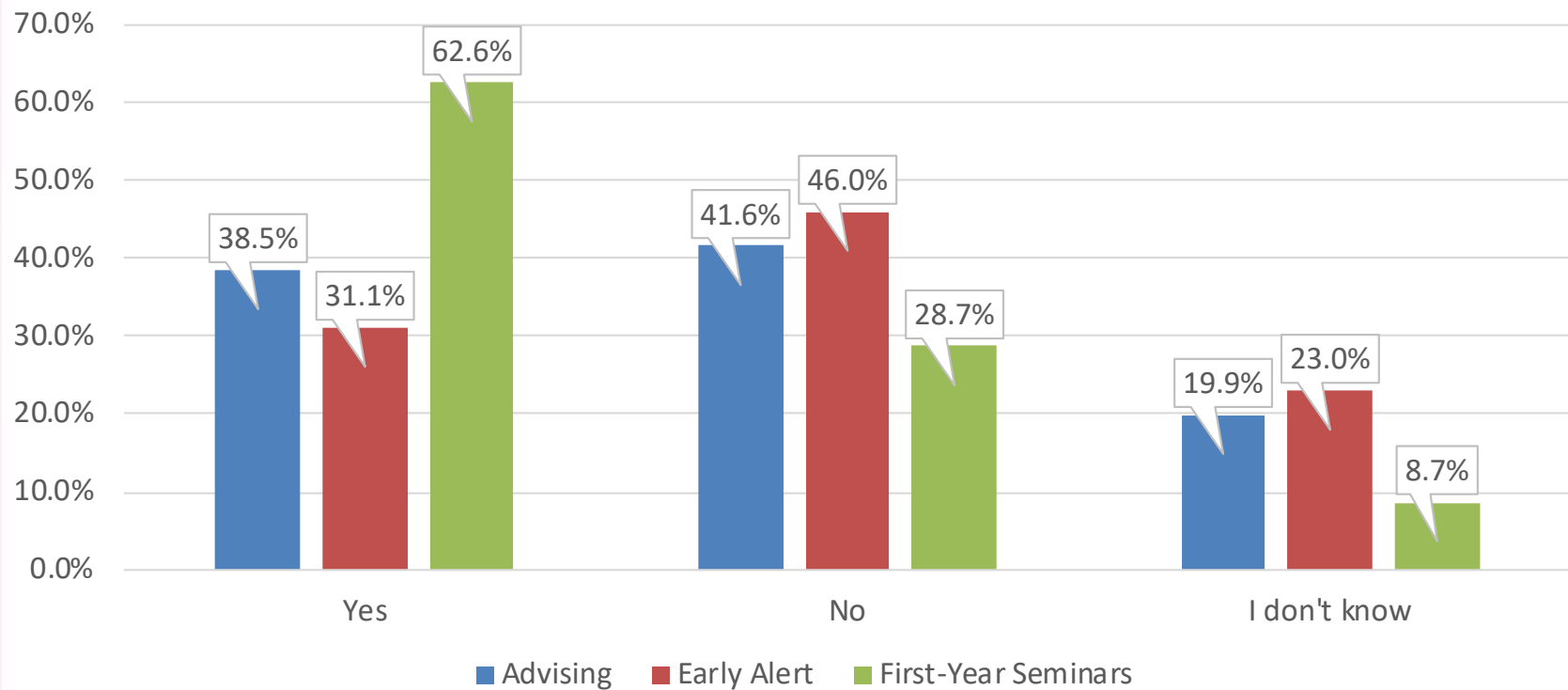
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Assessment of FY Programs

Has the program been assessed in past 4 years?



Assessed Outcomes

Academic Advising

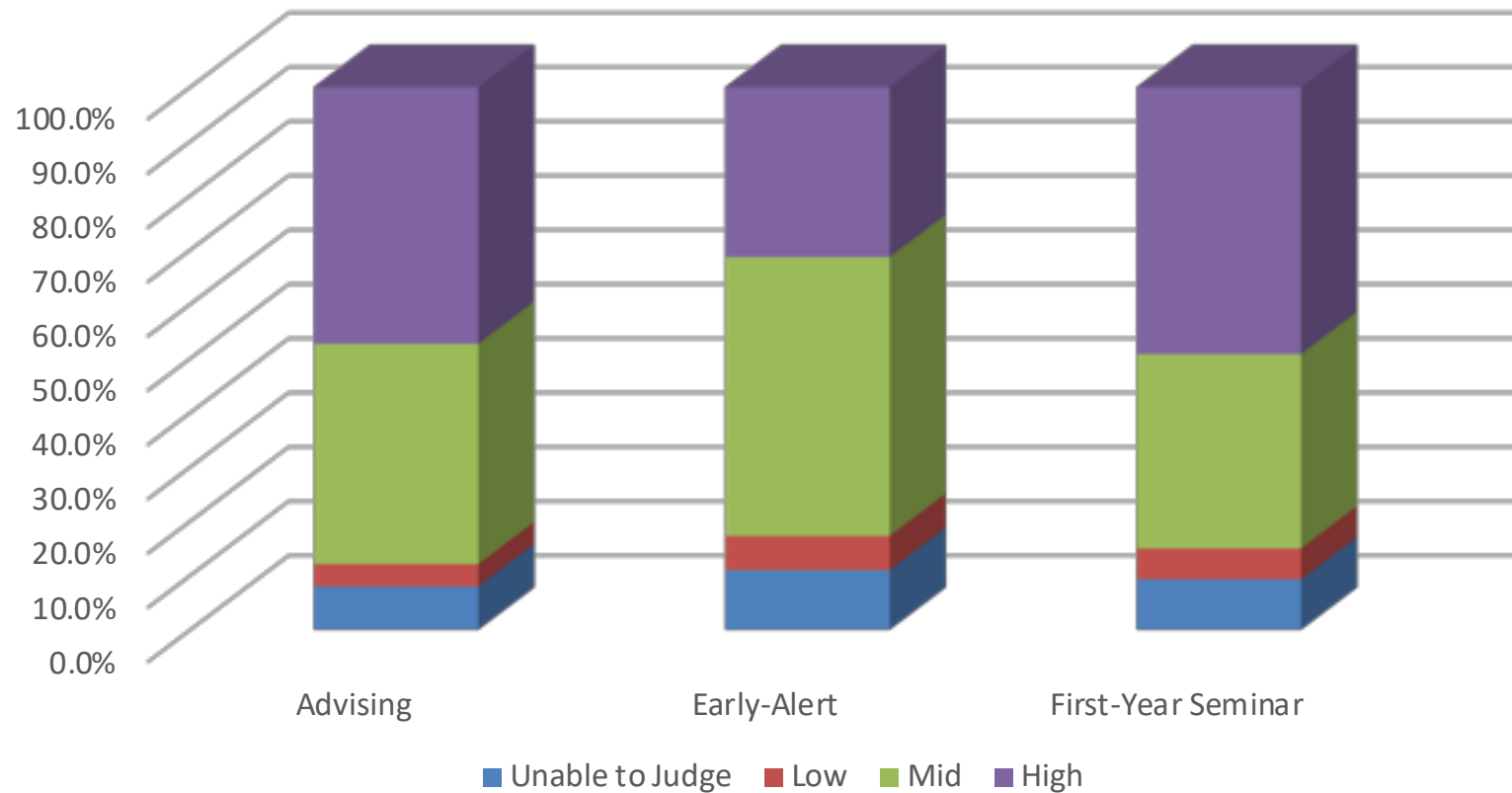
- Student satisfaction
- Academic planning/major exploration
- Retention/second-year return rate
- Academic success strategies
- Intro to major, discipline, or career path
- Career exploration and/or preparation

First-Year Seminars

- Student satisfaction
- Retention/second-year return rate
- Academic success strategies
- Connection with institution/campus
- Knowledge of institution/campus resources
- Student-faculty interaction



Return on Investment



Thank You!

Questions? Comments?

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