

## NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND  
STUDENTS IN TRANSITION

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

# Examining the National Picture of Assessment of First-Year Experience Programs

Dallin George Young  
Assistant Director for Research, Grants, and Assessment  
National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience  
and Students in Transition

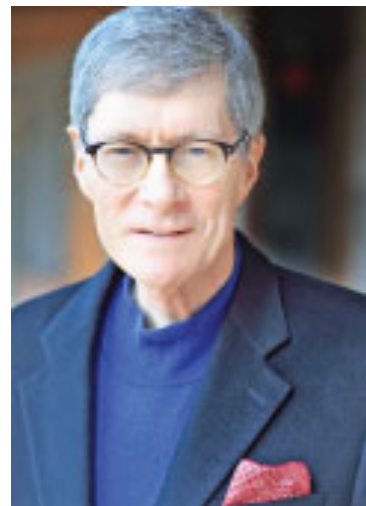
2018  
**Assessment** Institute  
in Indianapolis



# Objectives

- To present recent evidence that describes prevalence, methods, outcomes, and important findings for how first-year programs are being assessed in the US.
- To present recent data about the connection and coordination of first-year programs.
- To engage in a conversation and dialogue around measuring and defining those institutional activities and how they can connect to demonstrated evidence of improved student outcomes.

# 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)*



# “High-Impact” FYE: A Working Definition

**“High-impact practices...combine and concentrate other empirically validated pedagogical approaches into a single multidimensional activity....**

**“Only when they are implemented well and continually evaluated...will we realize their considerable potential.”**

*(Kuh, 2008)*





# FYE: Common Definitional Elements

- Intentional
- Coordinated
- Assessed





# National Resource Center Surveys on the First-Year

- Since 1988, the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition has triennially conducted a national survey of the features of first-year seminars
- Has provided the most comprehensive national picture of the practice related to curricular interventions to support students in the first college year



# Time for a Change

- Reconsidered survey to include focus on FYS and on multiple FYE programs
- Similar to efforts previously undertaken by JNGI
  - 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,
  - JNGI Process participants
- 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

- Overall Attention to the First-Year
  - Objectives
  - Prevalence of First-Year Programs
- Assessment of First-Year Programs
  - How much?
  - How?
  - What? (Aligning with Objectives?)
- Coordination of First-Year Programs
  - Implications for assessment

2017 NSFYE Findings

# INTENTION AND DIRECTION OF THE FIRST YEAR





# Institutional Objectives for the First Year:

## Most Frequent

Institutional Objective	Freq.	%
Academic success strategies	432	80.4%
Academic planning or major exploration	407	75.8%
Knowledge of institution or campus resources and services	406	75.6%
Connection with the institution or campus	403	75.0%
Introduction to college-level academic expectations	375	69.8%
Retention or second-year return rates	337	62.8%
Common first-year experience	331	61.6%
Student-faculty interaction	328	61.1%
Career exploration and/or preparation	305	56.8%
Writing skills	276	51.4%

# Institutional Objectives for the First Year: Less Frequent

Institutional Objective	Freq.	%
Introduction to a major, discipline, or career path	265	49.3%
Analytical, critical-thinking, or problem-solving skills	264	49.2%
Personal exploration or development	264	49.2%
Social support networks	262	48.8%
Intercultural competence, diversity, or engaging w/ difference	254	47.3%
Developmental education, remediation and/or review	235	43.8%
Health and wellness	218	40.6%
Information literacy	218	40.6%
Introduction to the liberal arts	201	37.4%
Oral communication skills	182	33.9%

# Institutional Objectives for the First Year: Least Frequent

Institutional Objective	Freq.	%
Civic engagement	178	33.1%
Integrative and applied learning	132	24.6%
Discipline-specific knowledge	122	22.7%
Project planning, teamwork, or management skills	120	22.3%
Digital literacy	113	21.0%
Other, please specify	59	11.0%
Graduate or professional school preparation	42	7.8%
Our institution has not identified campuswide objectives specifically for the first year	23	4.3%

# Institutional Objectives for the 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 Objectives for the 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

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

Notes: n = 525.



<b>Less Common FYE Programs/Initiatives</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>
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

Notes: n = 525.

<b>Least Common FYE Programs/Initiatives</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>
Undergraduate research (UGR)	111	21.1
Study abroad (SA)	102	19.4
Other (OTH)	24	4.6
None	0	0.0

Notes: n = 525.

# 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
- First-year seminars
- Convocation
- Placement testing
- Residential programs or initiatives
- General education
- Student success center

# 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

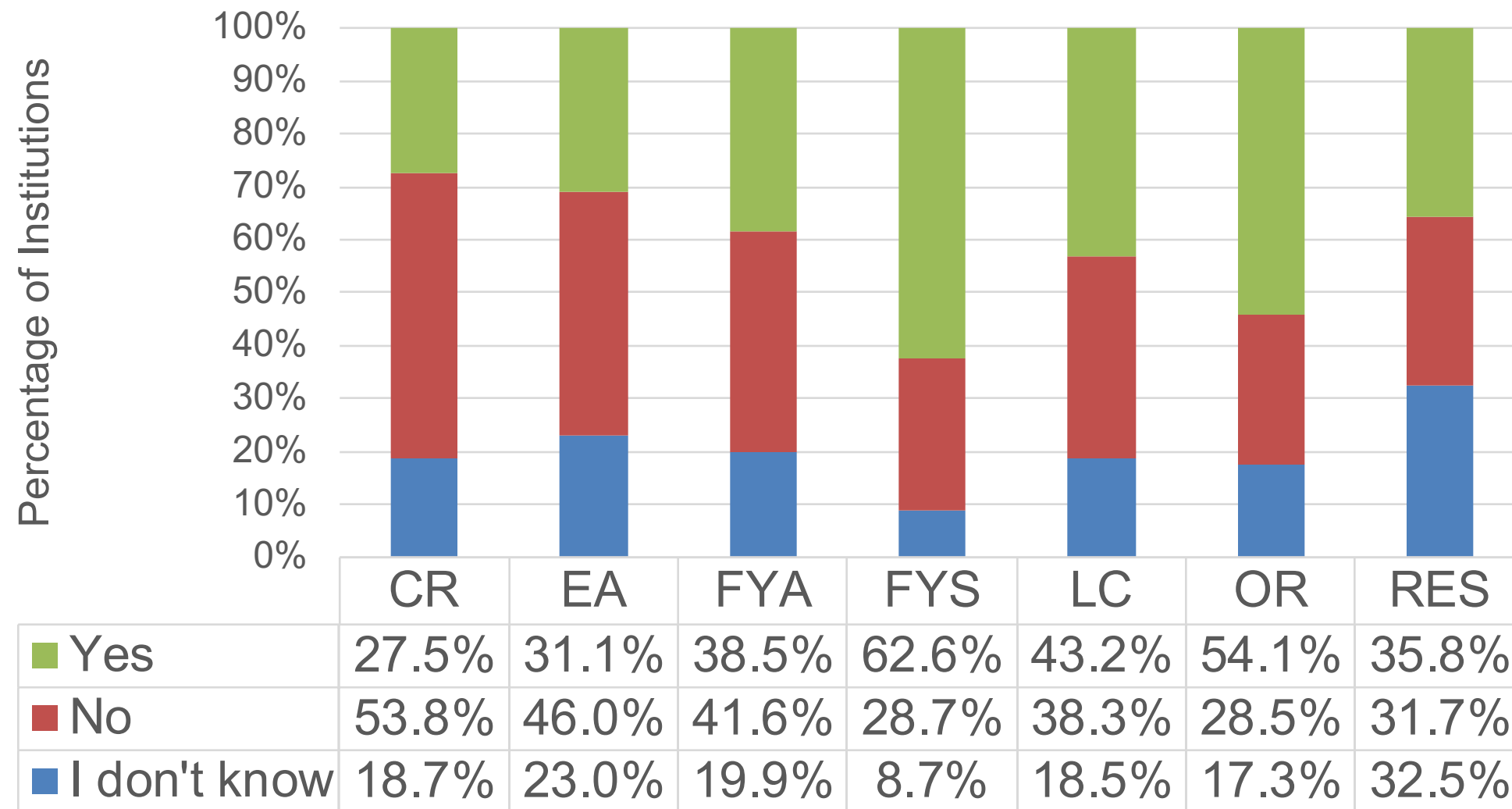
- Early alert systems
- First-year academic advising
- Pre-term orientation
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- Placement testing
- Residential programs or initiatives
- General education
- Student success center

2017 NSFYE Findings

# ASSESSMENT OF FIRST-YEAR PROGRAMS



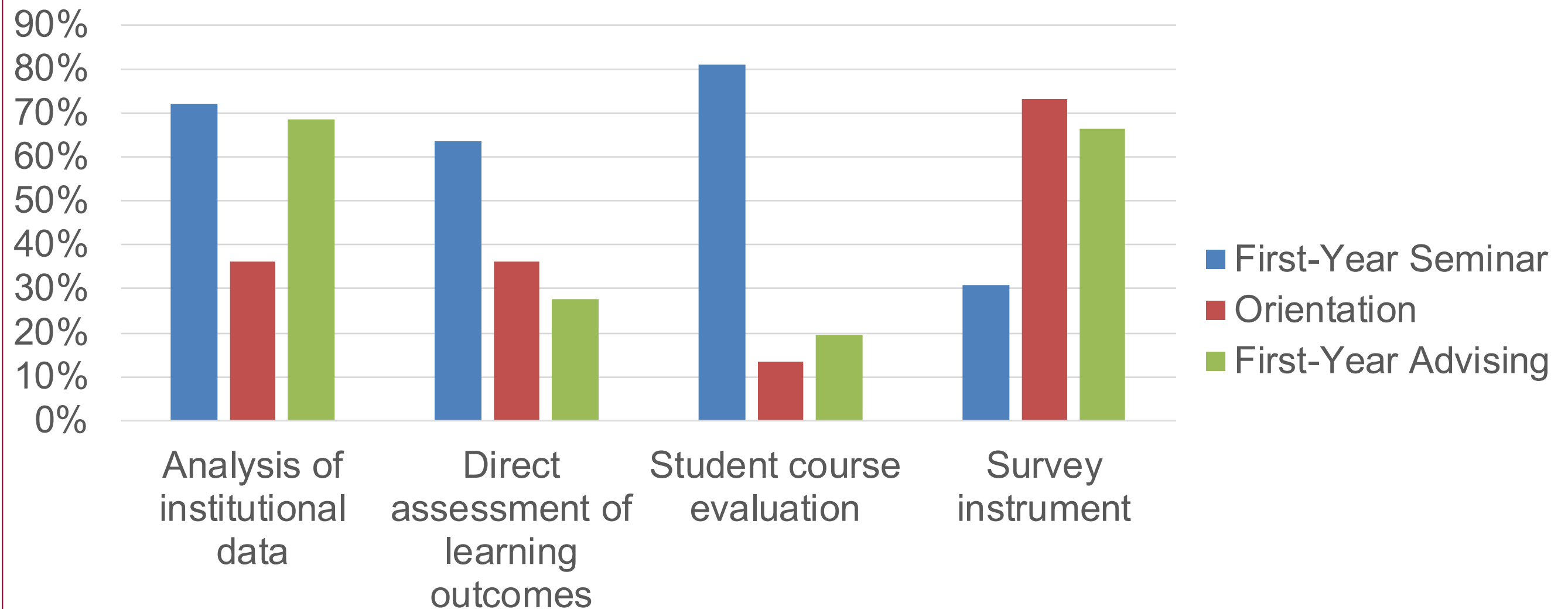
# Recent Assessment of First-Year Program?



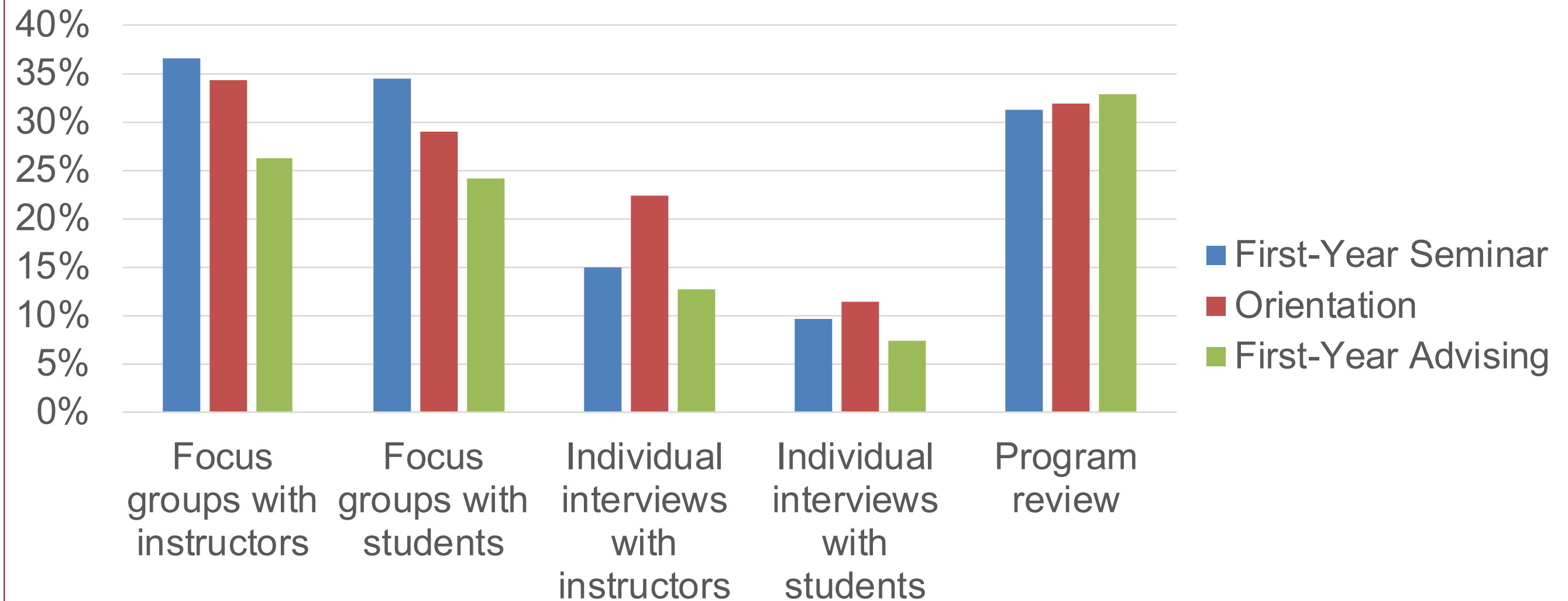
CR = Common reading  
 EA = Early alert systems  
 FYA = First-year advising  
 FYS = First-year seminars  
 LC = Learning communities  
 OR = Orientation  
 RES = Residential programs



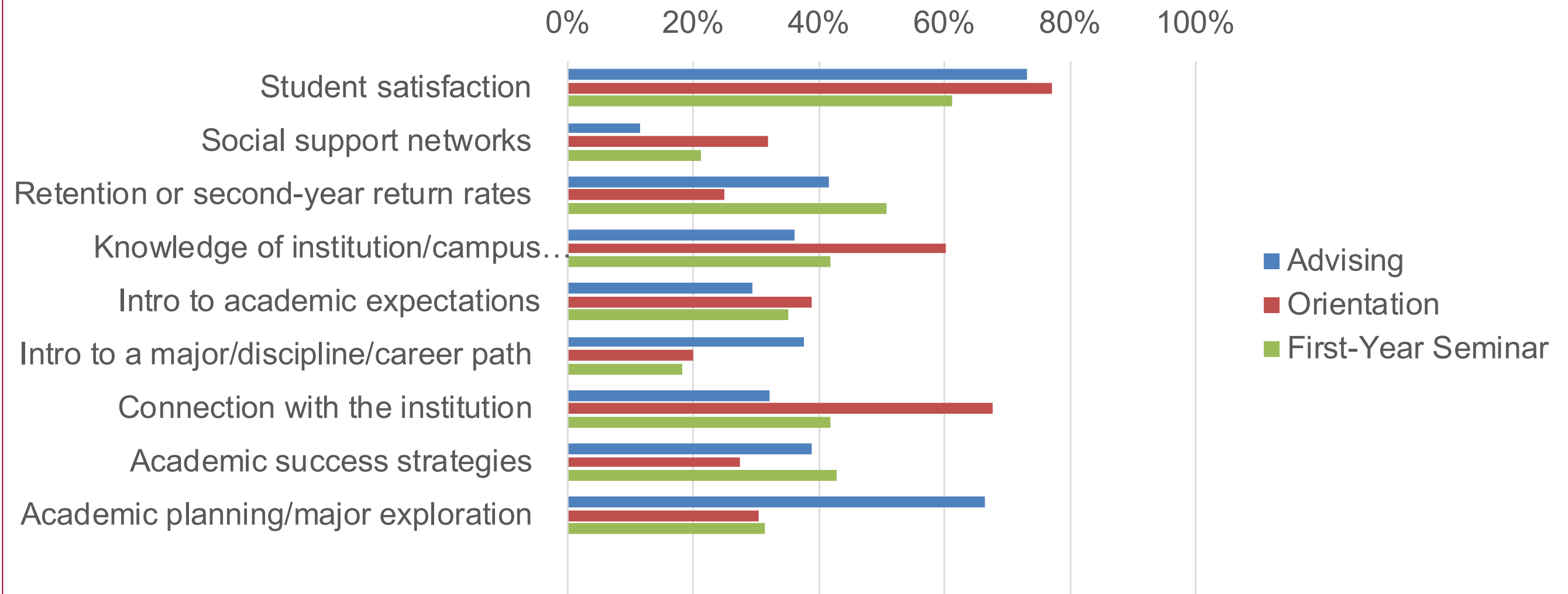
# Assessment Formats - Differences



# Assessment Formats - Similarities



# Assessed Outcomes – Selected Programs



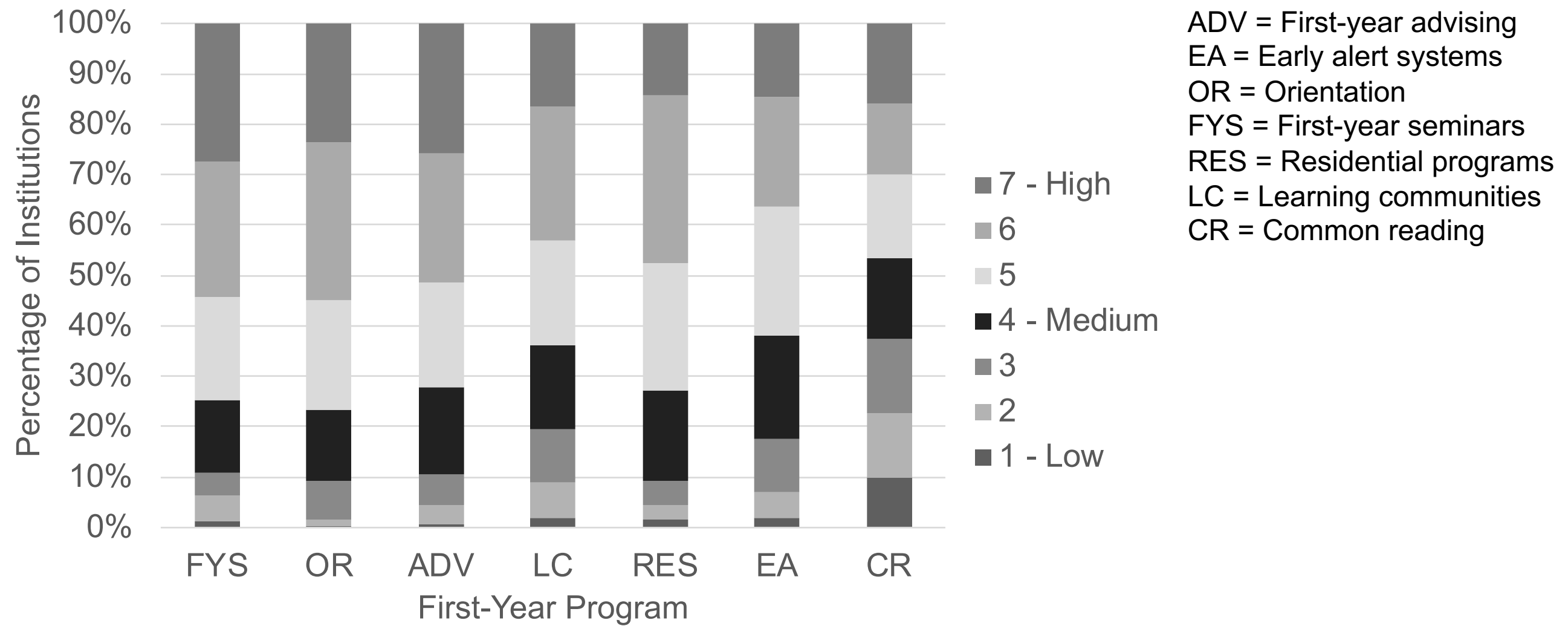
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# Institutional Objectives for the First Year:

## Most Frequent

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# Return on Investment?



2017 NSFYE Findings

# COORDINATION OF FIRST-YEAR PROGRAMS

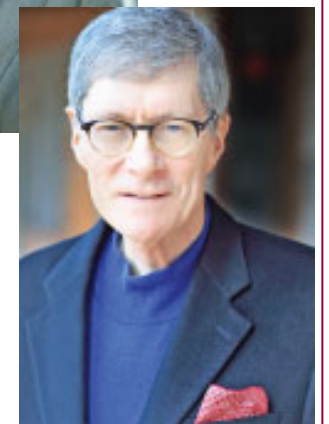
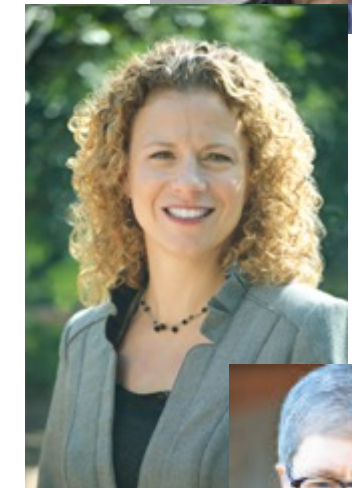
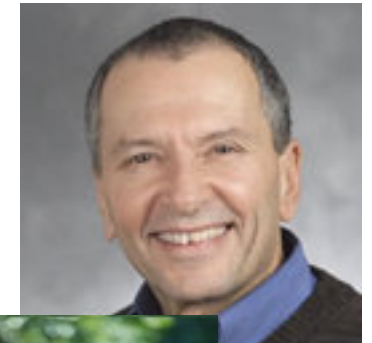




# Coordination of FYE Programs

**“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

First-year academic advising (ADV)

Early alert systems (EA)

Pre-term orientation (OR)

First-year seminars (FYS)

Placement testing (PT)

Peer education (PE)

Student success center (SSC)

Developmental education (DEV)

General education (GE)

Convocation (CNV)

Residential programs (RES)

Learning communities (LC)

First-year gateway courses (GATE)

Common reading (CR)

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Leadership programs (LEAD)

Writing-intensive coursework (WR)

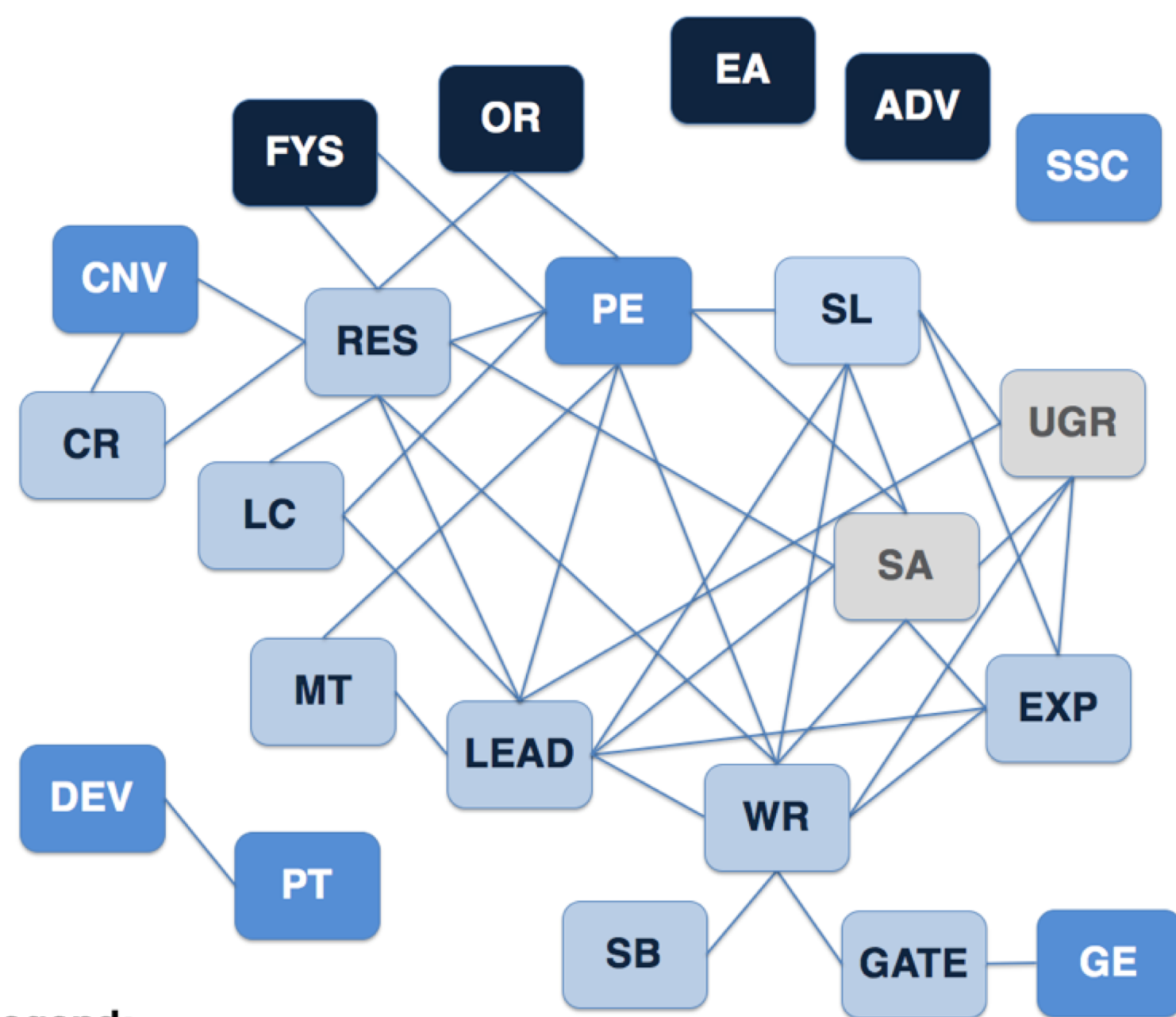
Service-learning (SL)

Mentor by campus professionals (MT)

Experiential learning or learning beyond the classroom (EXP)

Undergraduate research (UGR)

Study abroad (SA)



## Legend:

Lines represent correlations  $\phi > .25$

Colors of boxes represent percentage of institutions reporting FYE program offered.

Dark Blue = > 70%

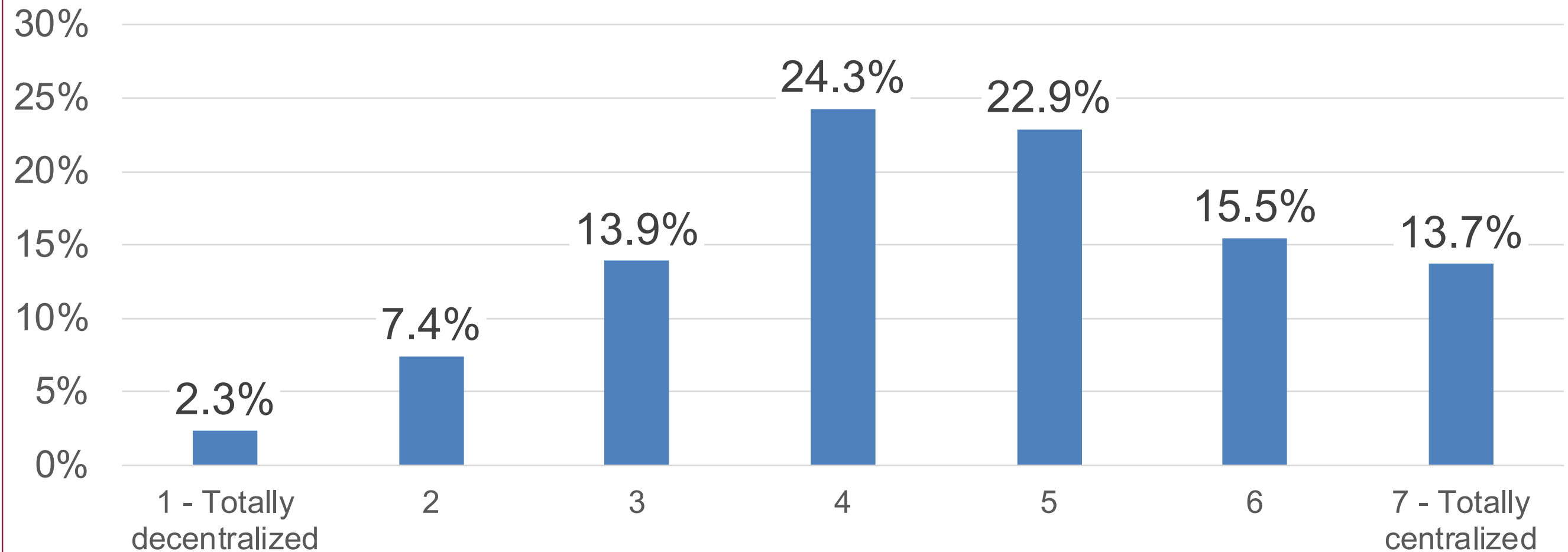
Light Blue = 30-49%

Royal Blue = 50-69%

Gray = < 30%

# Coordination of FYE Programs

How Coordinated are first-year programs on your campus?



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# Coordination of FYE Programs

Does your institution have any of the following formal organizational structures to coordinate the first-year experience?	Freq.	%
First-year program office	164	40.0%
Cross-functional first-year team (e.g., team inclusive of curriculum and co-curriculum)	159	38.8%
First-year program committee, task force, or advisory board	158	38.5%
Other campuswide FYE coordination	127	31.0%
First-year curriculum committee	62	15.1%

# The Charge from CAS to the National Resource Center

Develop standards and guidelines for a **Cross-Functional Framework** outlining “**an approach for addressing emerging, evolving, and on-going issues or topics from a multi- and interdisciplinary perspective through teams of higher education professionals from different fields or functional areas**” for the development, delivery, and assessment of a high-quality first-year experience.



# The Organizational Approach

- Introduction
- **Why?** The Charge & Operating Principles
- **Who?** Team Organization and Leadership
- **How?** Strategy, Approach, and Process
- **What?** Practices, Initiatives, and Strategies
- **With whom?** Internal & External Communications
- **So what?** Assessment



# Cross-Functional FYE Assessment

- Assessment Planning
- Identifying Existing Data
  - “Individuals and teams equate assessment with data gathering effort without paying attention to the manifold sources of data that are currently available.”
- Data Collection
- Interpreting & Reporting Effectiveness of Outcomes
- Interpreting & Reporting Effectiveness of Cross-Functional Team
- Effecting Change Based on Assessment Results

# Questions and Conclusion



# Thank You!

Dallin George Young

[YOUNGDAL@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:YOUNGDAL@mailbox.sc.edu)

