# NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

### FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION

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# Objectives for this Session

- As a result of participating in this session, participants will be able to:

- Understand key issues in conversations about the sophomore year
- Consider national data about institutional approaches to the sophomore year
- Describe how their campuses can work to improve support for sophomores

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# Sharing Statistics Showing How Schools Support Sophomore Student Success

Dallin George Young

National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition

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History and Context

# BACKGROUND ON THE SOPHOMORE YEAR

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Why?

# Changes During the Sophomore Year
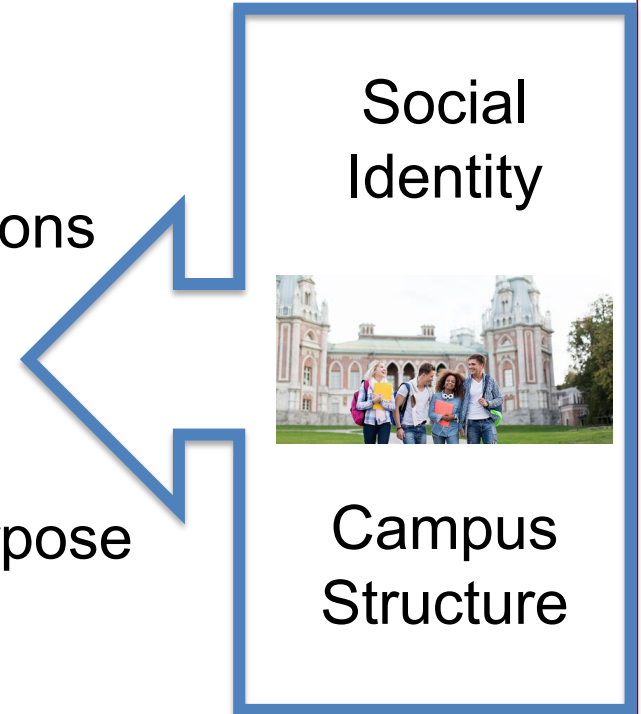
Academic Transitions

Relational Transitions

Identity/Personal Meaning and Purpose

Social Identity

Campus Structure

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**Existential Questioning**
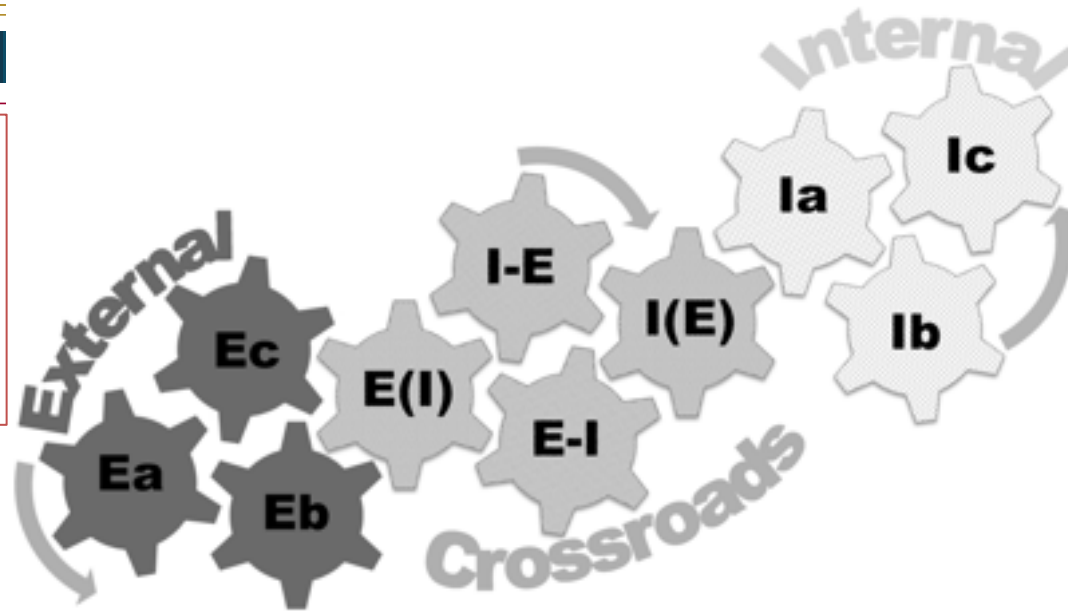
What is the purpose of my life?

Why am I taking all these classes?

**Practical Questioning**

What should I major in?

What career should I choose?

Findings from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education



**EXTERNAL**

**Ea:** Consistently and unquestioningly rely on external sources *without recognizing* possible shortcomings of this approach.

**Eb:** Consistently rely on external sources, but *experience tensions* in doing so, particularly if external sources conflict.

**Ec:** Continue to rely on external sources but *recognize shortcomings* of this approach.

**CROSSROADS**

**Predominantly External**

**E(I):** Continue to rely on external sources despite *awareness of the need* for an internal voice. Realize the dilemma of external meaning making, yet are unsure how to proceed.

**E-I:** Begin to *actively work on constructing* a new way of making meaning yet "lean back" to earlier external positions.

**Predominantly Internal**

**I-E:** Begin to *listen carefully* to internal voice, which now edges out external sources. External sources still strong, making it hard to maintain the internal voice consistently.

**I(E):** Actively work to *cultivate* the internal voice, which mediates most external sources. Consciously work to not slip back into former tendency to allow others' points of view to subsume own point of view.

**INTERNAL**

**Ia:** *Trust* the internal voice sufficiently to refine beliefs, values, identities and relationships. Use internal voice to shape reactions and manage external sources.

**Ib:** Trust internal voice sufficiently to craft commitments into a *philosophy of life* to guide how to react to external sources.

**Ic:** Solidify philosophy of life as the *core of one's being;* living it becomes second nature.
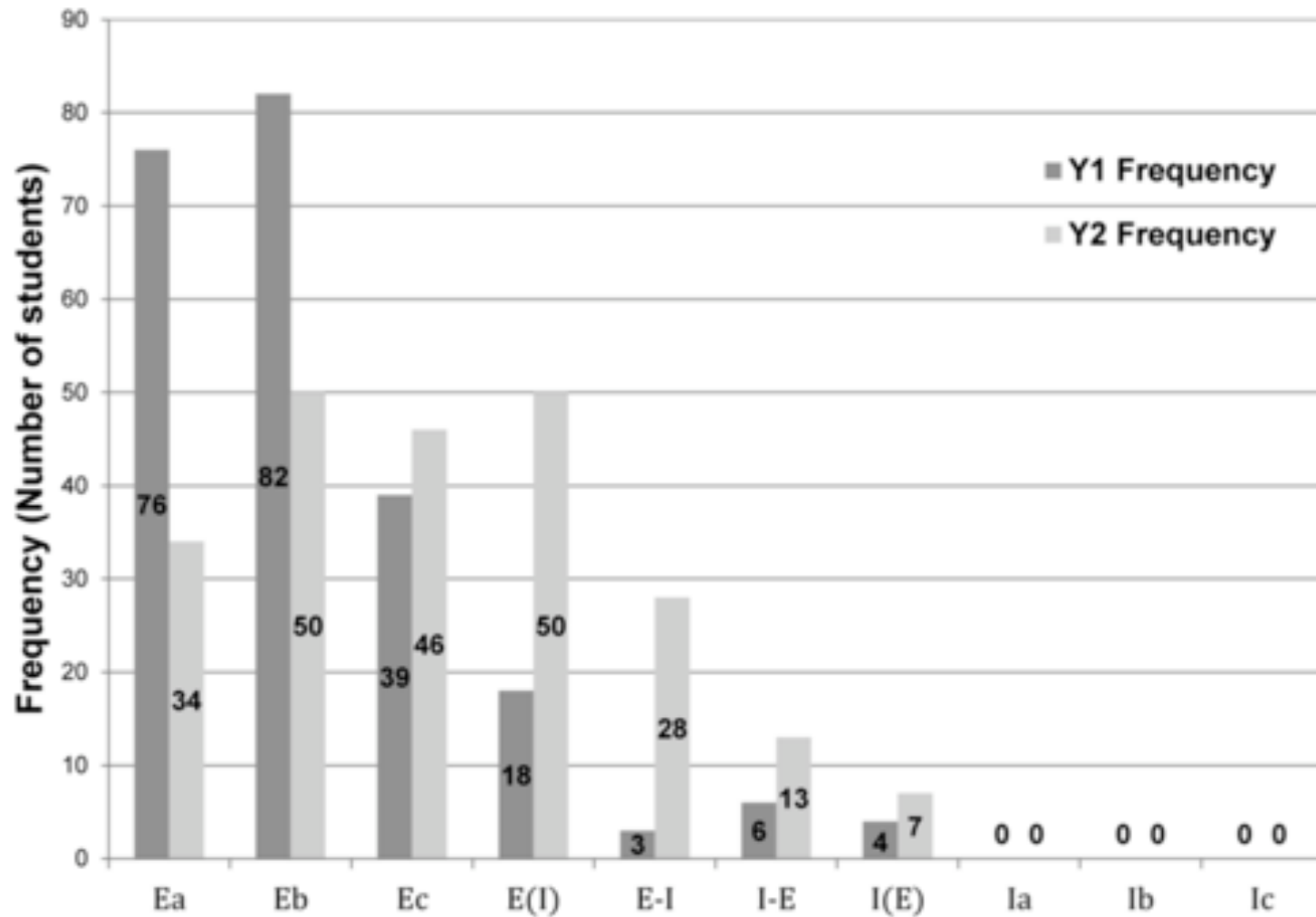
Baxter Magolda, King, Taylor, & Wakefield, 2012

FIGURE 2. Distribution of Self Authorship Ratings, Year 1 and Year 2 (N = 228)

Baxter Magolda, King, Taylor, & Wakefield, 2012

# Challenges Internal to Student

Academic Struggles

Lack Of Academic Motivation

Identity Confusion

Major And Career Indecision

Difficulty Selecting Meaningful Campus Engagement Connected To Interests

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# External/Campus-Level Challenges

Campus run-around and a lack of attention to service excellence that particularly impacts sophomores

Difficulty connecting to faculty in meaningful ways;

Inadequate academic advising to address meaning and purpose, which is the major developmental issue of the sophomore year;

Campus systems and policies that hinder thriving among marginalized students, as well as among sophomores in general

Removal of almost all forms of campus support from the first year

# KEEP CALM AND SURVIVE SOPHOMORE YEAR

# Issues in Sophomore Year

Intentional Design of Sophomore Programs

Advising

Defining Sophomore Student Success

Institutional Integrity

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# 4th Administration (2005, 2008, 2014, 2019)

# N = 335

# INTENTIONAL DESIGN OF THE SOPHOMORE YEAR

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"The sophomore year is too often described by what it is not: The sophomore year is not as exciting as the first year. It is not staffed and sup-ported in the same way as the first year on many campuses. It does not involve the small classes that are so typical in the first-year experience or in upper-division courses in the major. It does not include structured support for leadership development."
(Schaller, 2018)

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# Characterizations of Sophomores

- Forgotten, invisible, disillusioned, dispiriting

- Academy's middle children

- Time full of student inertia and confusion

- The "Sophomore Slump"

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

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# Possible Reasons for Former Sophomore-Year Programs

- Second-year programs tend to be discontinued because students lose interest or they too closely resemble first-year programs (Young, Schreiner, & McIntosh, 2015).

- This highlights an issue for the creation and implementation of sophomore-year programs: too few are built with the end in mind. **There is a lack of clarity on what outcomes institutions hope will occur in the sophomore year** (Young, 2018).

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# Beginning Intentional Design

- First steps in intentional design of sophomore programs:

    - Understand what the sophomore year is or should be

    - Understand who the sophomores are on your campus

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# Defining the Sophomore Year Experience

- **Complexity of student body**
  - Credit hours – AP/IB/Dual Credit
  - Community College students
  - Transfer students
  - Military/Service Year students
  - Gap Year students

- **Campus Definitions/Decisions**
  - Residentially based?
  - Rising sophomores vs. second year?
  - Third-year students with sophomore level credits?

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# Understanding Sophomore Needs

- Schaller (2018) recommends focusing on sophomore needs in:
  - Self-Authorship
  - Belongingness
  - Decision-making
  - Vocation and Discernment
  - Good Citizenship

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# How Are Campuses Responding to the Second Year?



Institutional Efforts with Focus on Sophomores

| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| None | 34.9% |
| Retention study | 32.7% |
| Student services programming | 27.0% |
| Institutional assessment | 23.2% |
| Strategic planning | 20.3% |
| Advising study | 19.7% |
| Curricular or gateway course redesign | 15.6% |

# How Are Campuses Responding to the Second Year?

**Institution Offers Sophomore Initiatives**

I don't know
5.1%

No
43.9%

Yes
51.0%

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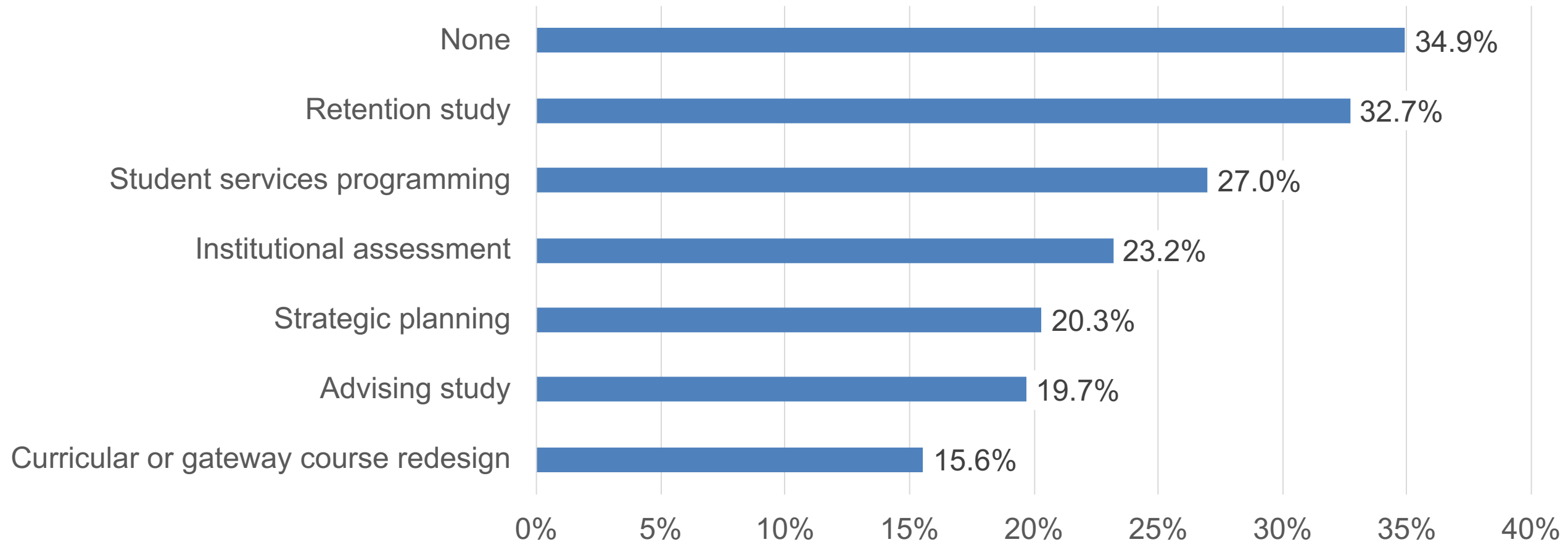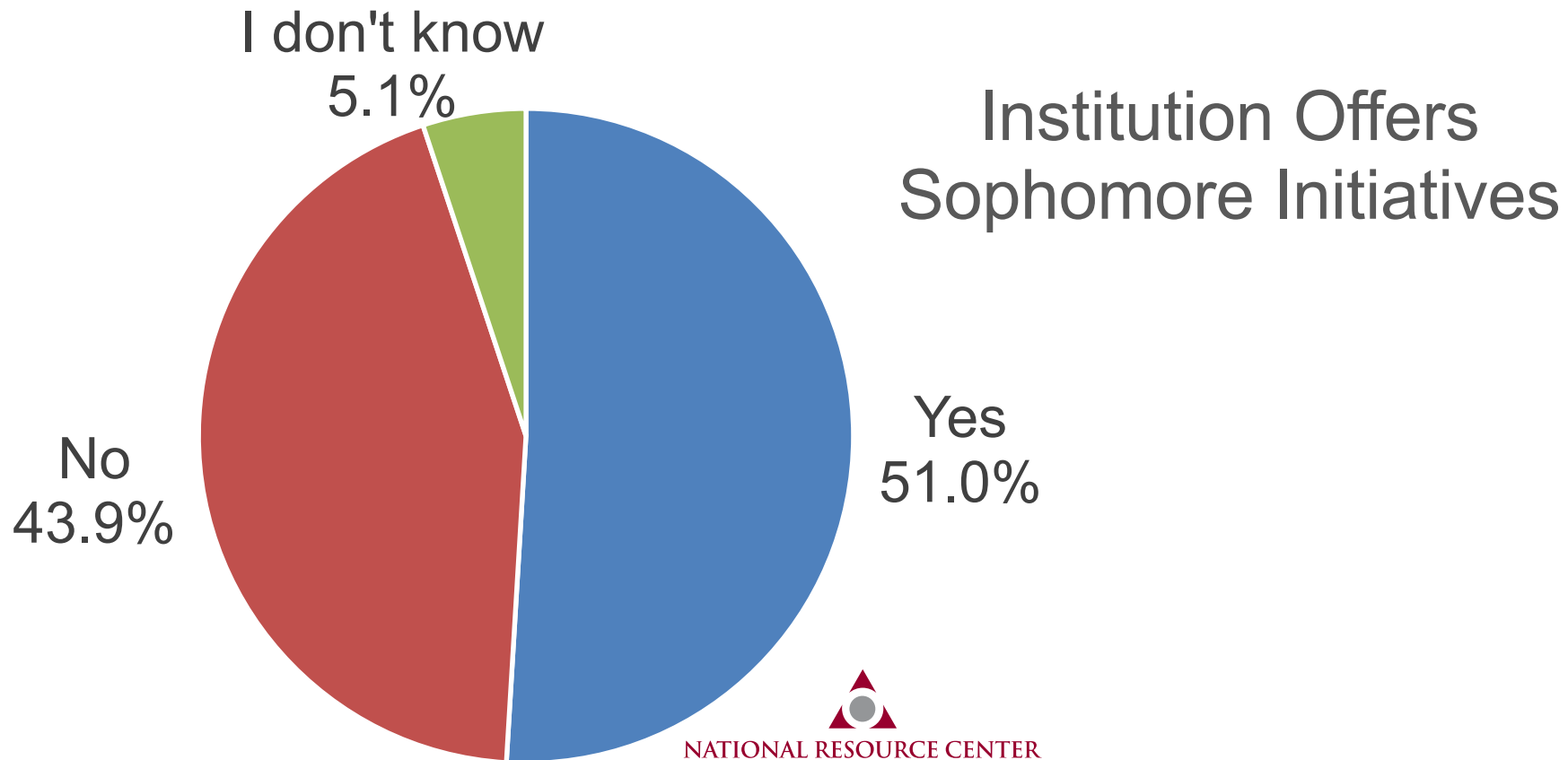
# What Sophomore Initiatives Are Frequently Offered?

## Institutional Initiatives on Sophomores

| Initiative | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Career exploration | 59.7% |
| Academic advising | 57.9% |
| Career planning | 52.2% |
| Academic coaching or mentoring | 38.4% |
| Leadership development | 34.6% |
| Major exploration and selection | 34.0% |
| Campus-based event | 32.7% |
| Early alert systems | 30.2% |
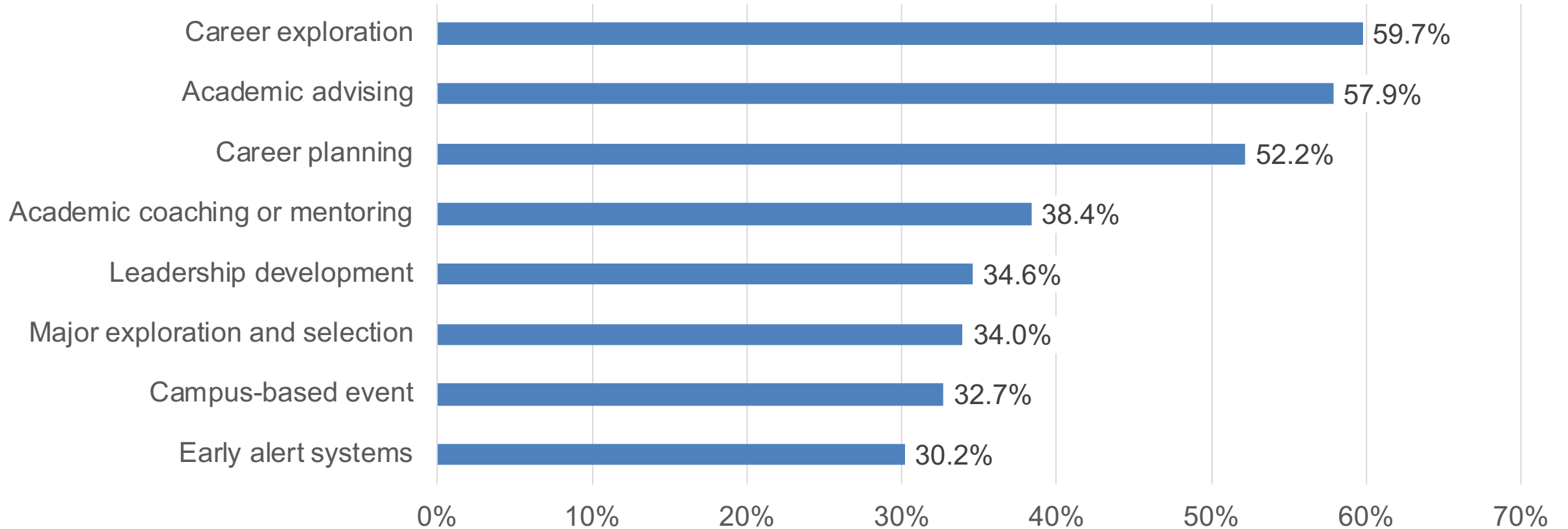
# ADVISING IN THE SOPHOMORE YEAR

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# Sophomores' satisfaction with advising significantly predicts:

- ✓ Their overall satisfaction with their college experience
- ✓ Their satisfaction with faculty
- ✓ Their perception of tuition as a worthwhile investment



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Source: Sophomore Experiences Survey: Schreiner, 2014

# Sophomore Initiatives: Advising

## HOW OFTEN DID YOU MEET WITH YOUR ACADEMIC ADVISOR THIS YEAR?
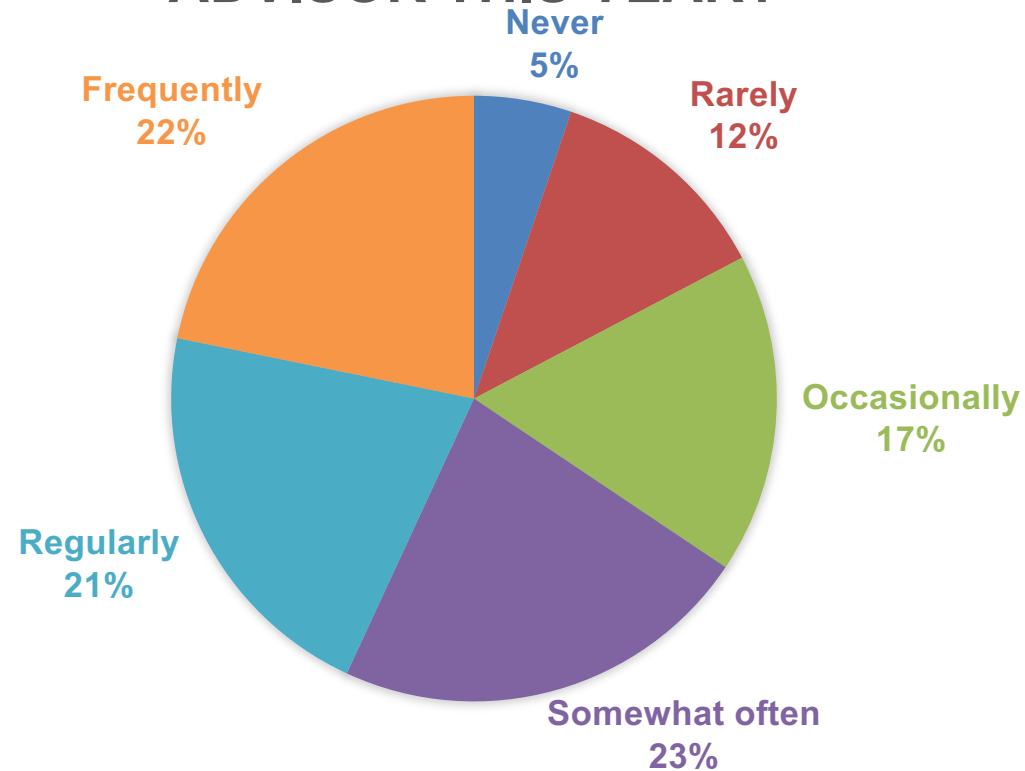


- Never 5%
- Rarely 12%
- Occasionally 17%
- Somewhat often 23%
- Regularly 21%
- Frequently 22%

Source: Sophomore Experiences Survey: Schreiner, 2014

# How Satisfied are Sophomores with Advising?



Source: Sophomore Experiences Survey: Schreiner, 2014

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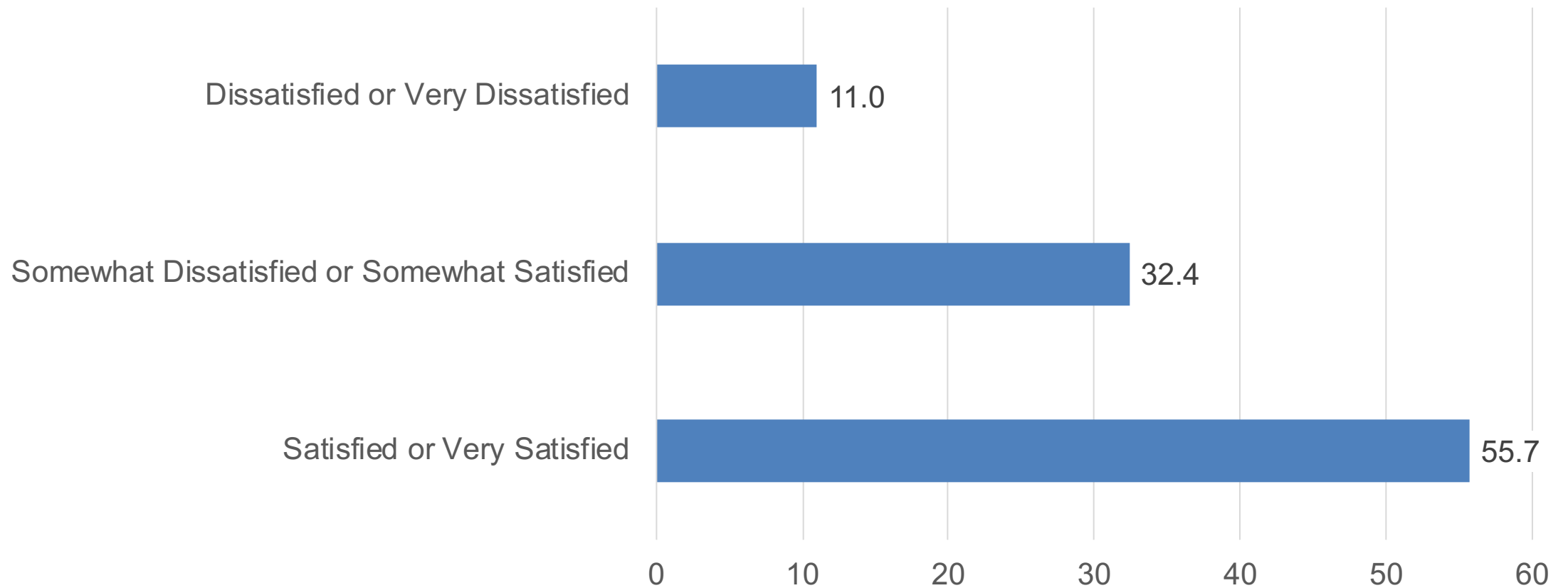
# How Satisfied are Sophomores with Advising

Somewhat

"In the two decades of data collected nationally on sophomores, the campus experience with which sophomores are least satisfied is advising."

(Schreiner, 2018, p. 17)

55.7

10    20    30    40    50    60

Source: Sophomore Experiences Survey: Schreiner, 2014

# Prevalence of Advising as a Sophomore-Year Initiative

## Institutional Initiatives on Sophomores

| Initiative | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Career exploration | 59.7% |
| Academic advising | 57.9% |
| Career planning | 52.2% |
| Academic coaching or mentoring | 38.4% |
| Leadership development | 34.6% |
| Major exploration and selection | 34.0% |
| Campus-based event | 32.7% |
| Early alert systems | 30.2% |
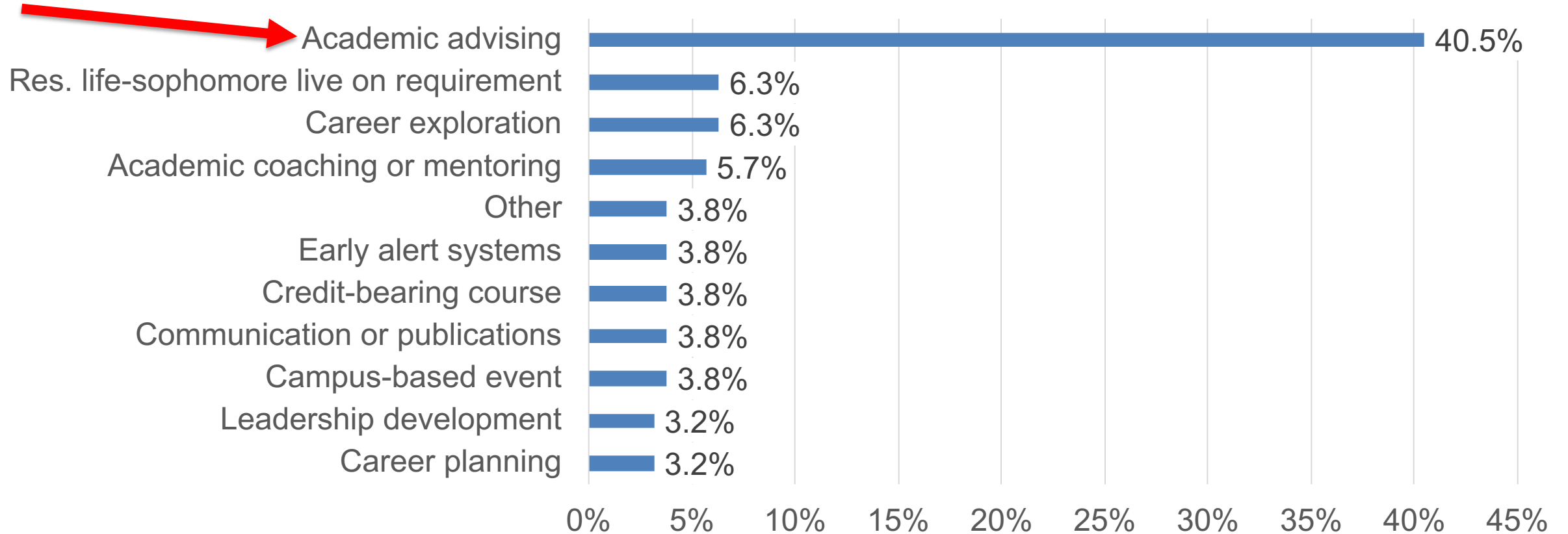
# Advising Reaching High Proportion of Sophomores

Percentage of Sophomores Reached by Advising
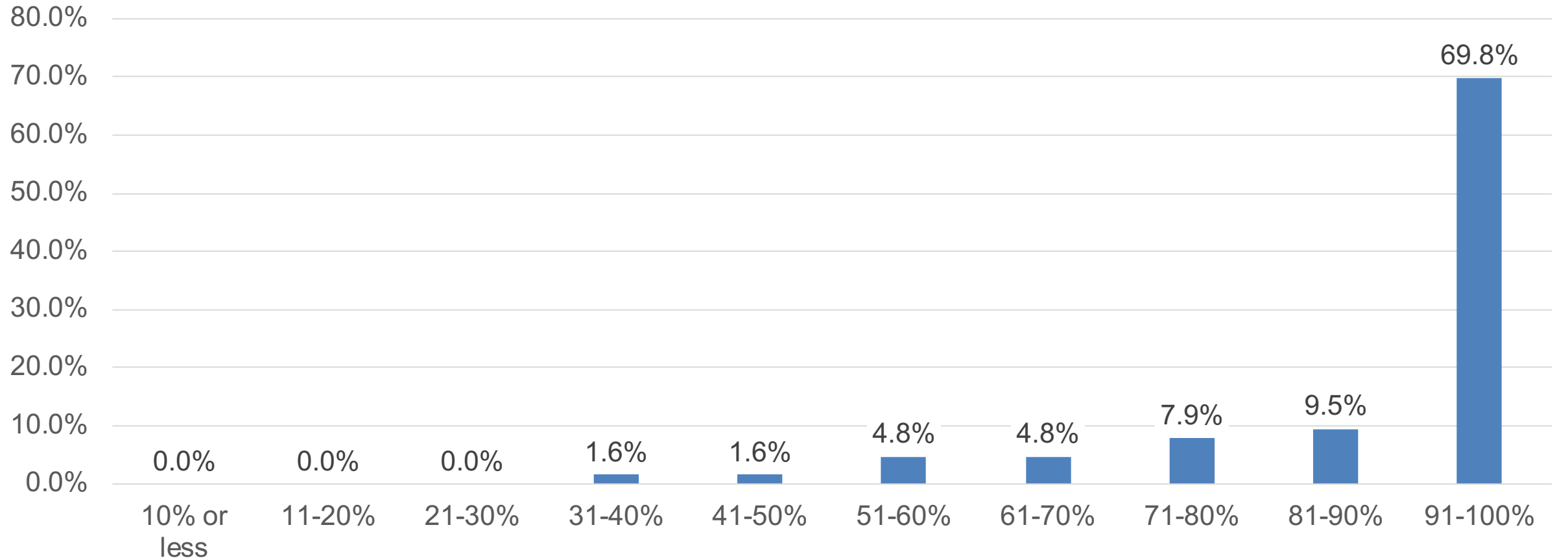
# Advising Reaching High Proportion of Sophomores



Percentage of Sophomores Required to Participate in Advising
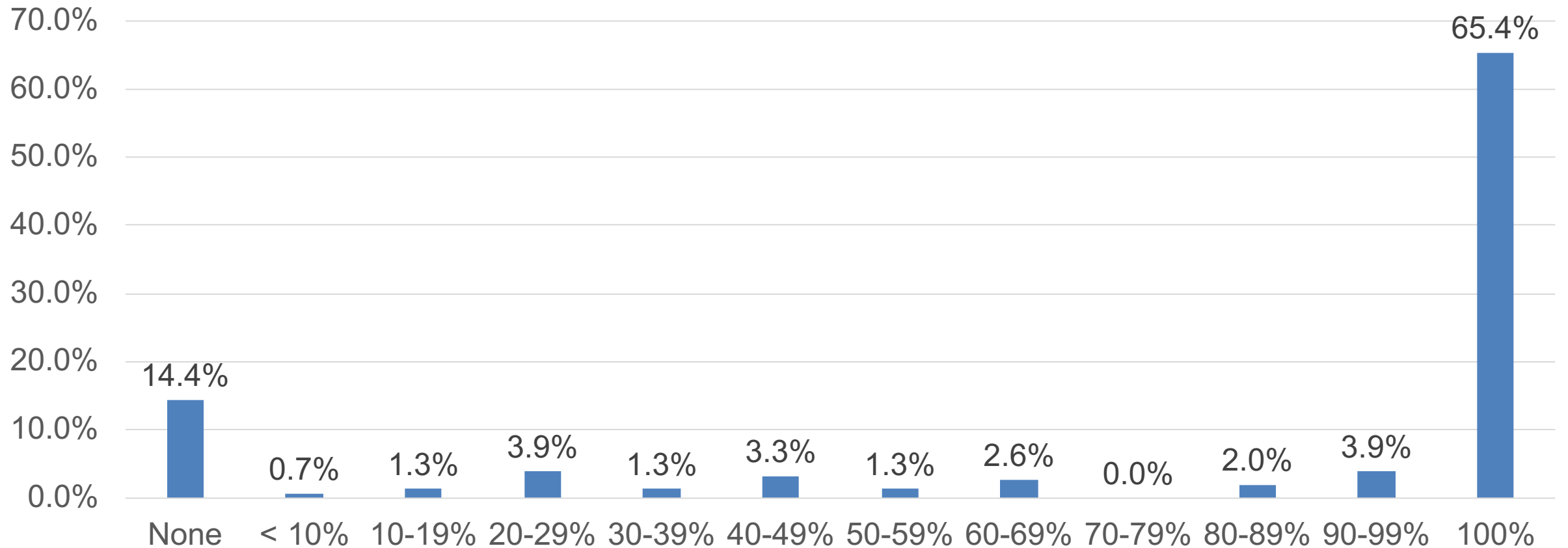
# Advising - Key Tool for Meeting Sophomore Objectives

### Sophomore Initiatives Used to Reach Campuswide Objectives for Sophomores

| Initiative | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Academic advising | 60.3% |
| Career exploration | 37.8% |
| Career planning | 23.1% |
| Major exploration and selection | 21.8% |
| Leadership development | 19.2% |
| Academic coaching or mentoring | 18.6% |
| Campus-based event | 16.7% |
| Early alert systems | 14.7% |
| Res. life-sophomore live on requirement | 13.5% |
| Communication or publications | 12.8% |
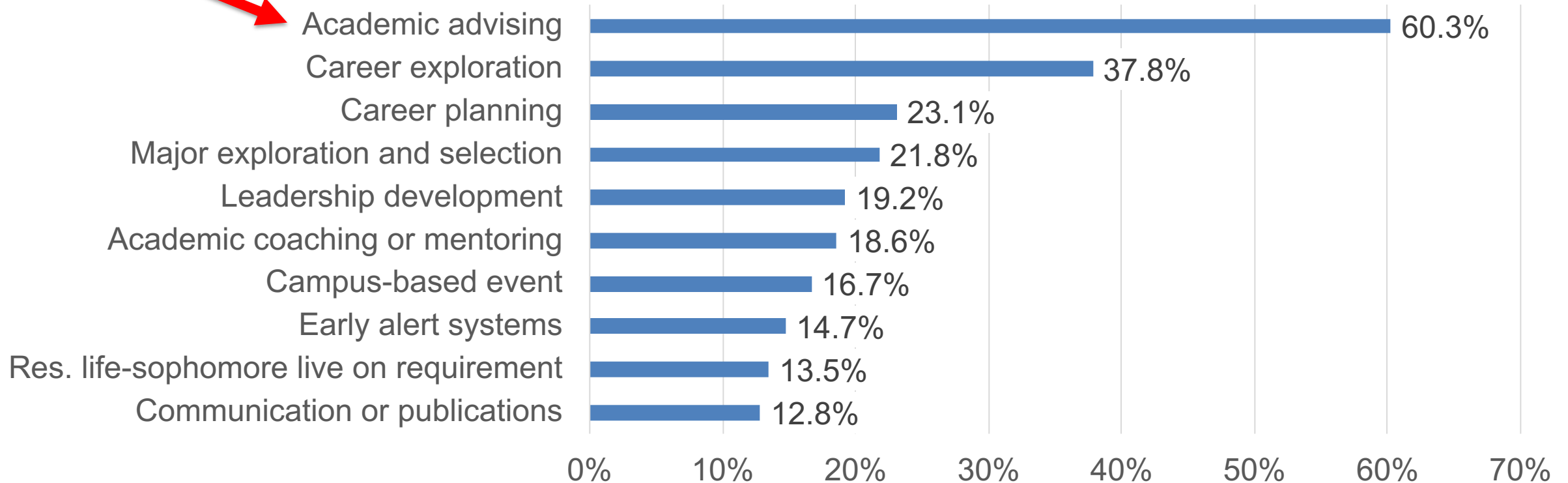
# Overall Sophomore Objectives

Campus-wide Objectives for Sophomores

| Objective | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|
| Career exploration and/or preparation | 48.3% |
| Academic planning | 41.6% |
| Academic success strategies | 35.6% |
| None | 32.4% |
| Persistence, retention, or third-year return rates | 30.5% |
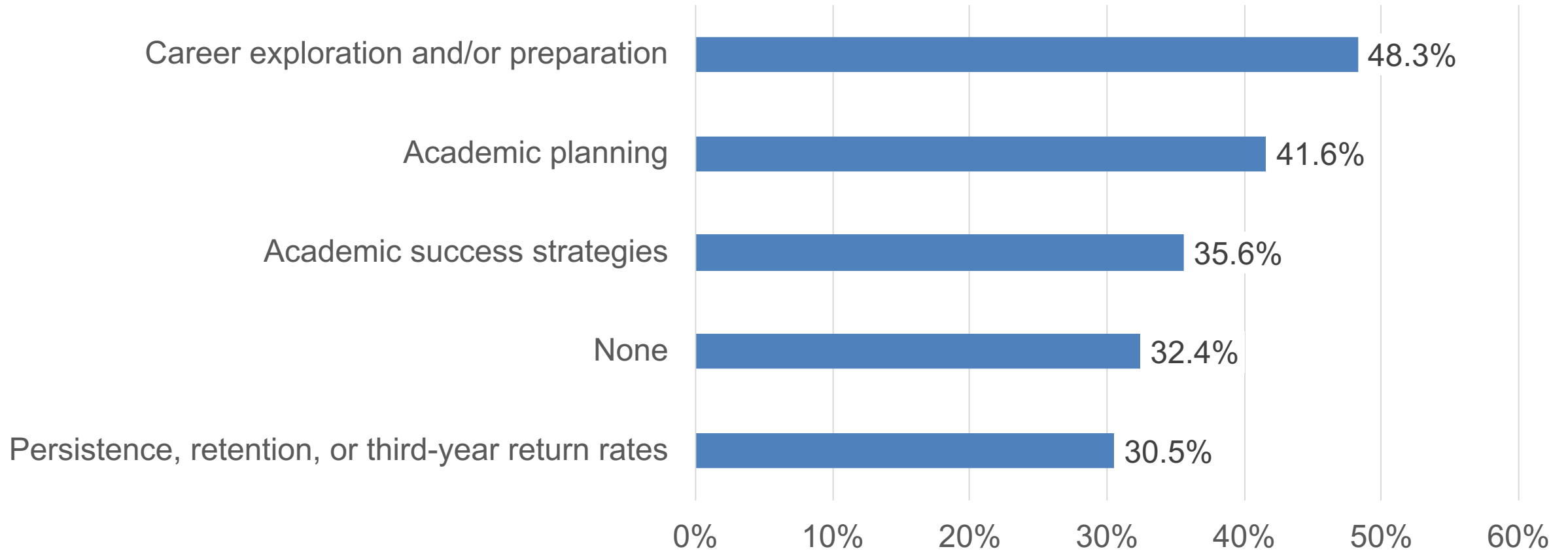
# Objectives of Sophomore Advising

Objectives for Academic Advising in Sophomore Year

| Objective | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|
| Academic planning | 88.9% |
| Career exploration and/or preparation | 34.9% |
| Major exploration | 30.2% |
| Academic success strategies | 30.2% |
| Introduction to a major, discipline, or career path | 27.0% |
| Persistence, retention, or third-year return rates | 17.5% |
| Discipline-specific knowledge | 15.9% |
| Knowledge of institution or campus resources and… | 12.7% |

## HIP Elements in Sophomore Advising
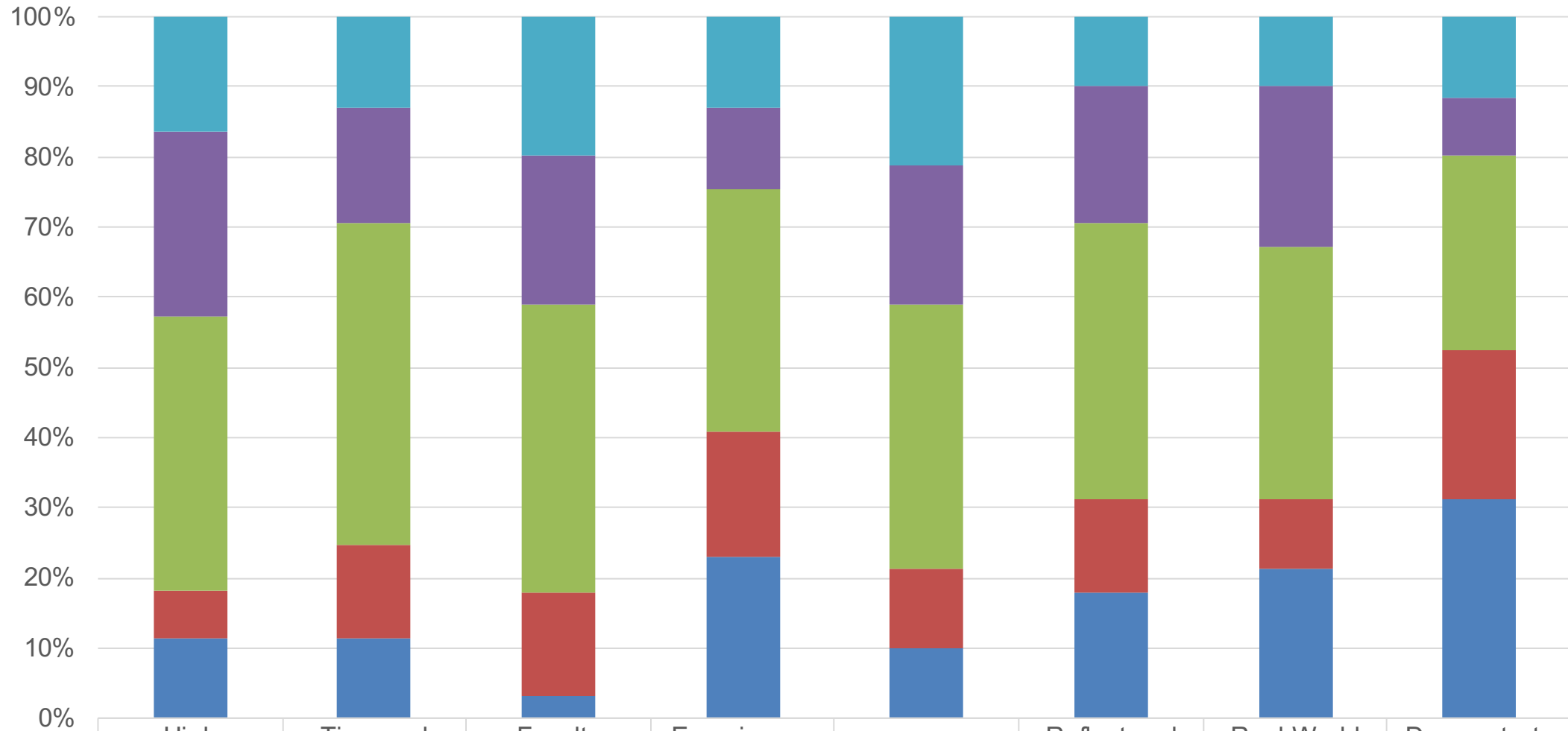
| | High Expectations | Time and effort | Faculty Interactions | Experiences with Diversity | Feedback | Reflect and Integrate | Real-World Applications | Demonstrate Competence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Element is pervasive - 5 | 16.4% | 13.1% | 19.7% | 13.1% | 21.3% | 9.8% | 9.8% | 11.5% |
| 4 | 26.2% | 16.4% | 21.3% | 11.5% | 19.7% | 19.7% | 23.0% | 8.2% |
| Element is partially present - 3 | 39.3% | 45.9% | 41.0% | 34.4% | 37.7% | 39.3% | 36.1% | 27.9% |
| 2 | 6.6% | 13.1% | 14.8% | 18.0% | 11.5% | 13.1% | 9.8% | 21.3% |
| Element is not present - 1 | 11.5% | 11.5% | 3.3% | 23.0% | 9.8% | 18.0% | 21.3% | 31.2% |

# DEFINING SOPHOMORE STUDENT SUCCESS

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# 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

RETENTION

## TABLE 2: SECOND-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE TERM-TO-TERM PERSISTENCE RATE BENCHMARKS
(BASED ON 2015-16 SECOND-YEAR COHORT)

| Persistence Ratios | | FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE | | | FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC | TWO-YEAR PUBLIC |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | ALL | INSTITUTIONS WITH LOWER SELECTIVITY | INSTITUTIONS WITH HIGHER SELECTIVITY | ALL | ALL |
| Persistence from term one to term two, 2015-16 academic year | 25th Percentile | 91.0% | 89.5% | 94.0% | 91.0% | 84.0% |
| | **Median** | **94.0%** | **92.0%** | **96.0%** | **94.0%** | **86.5%** |
| | 75th Percentile | 96.0% | 95.0% | 97.0% | 95.0% | 89.8% |
| Persistence from term two of the 2015-16 academic year to term three (the beginning of the 2016-17 academic year, i.e., the students' third year) | 25th Percentile | 87.0% | 85.0% | 92.8% | 90.0% | 56.0% |
| | **Median** | **91.0%** | **89.0%** | **94.0%** | **92.0%** | **63.0%** |
| | 75th Percentile | 94.0% | 93.0% | 96.3% | 94.0% | 77.0% |

# Attitudes of Second-Year College Students

Top 5 Requests for Assistance in Sophomore Year:
- Identify work experiences or internships related to my major
- Define goals suited to my major or career interest(s)
- Explore advantages and disadvantages of my career choice
- Figure out the impact of grades on my desired major
- Prepare a written academic plan for graduation

(all above 50% in second year, all below 40% in first year in 4 year private institutions)

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(Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2015)

# Major Pathways to Sophomore Thriving

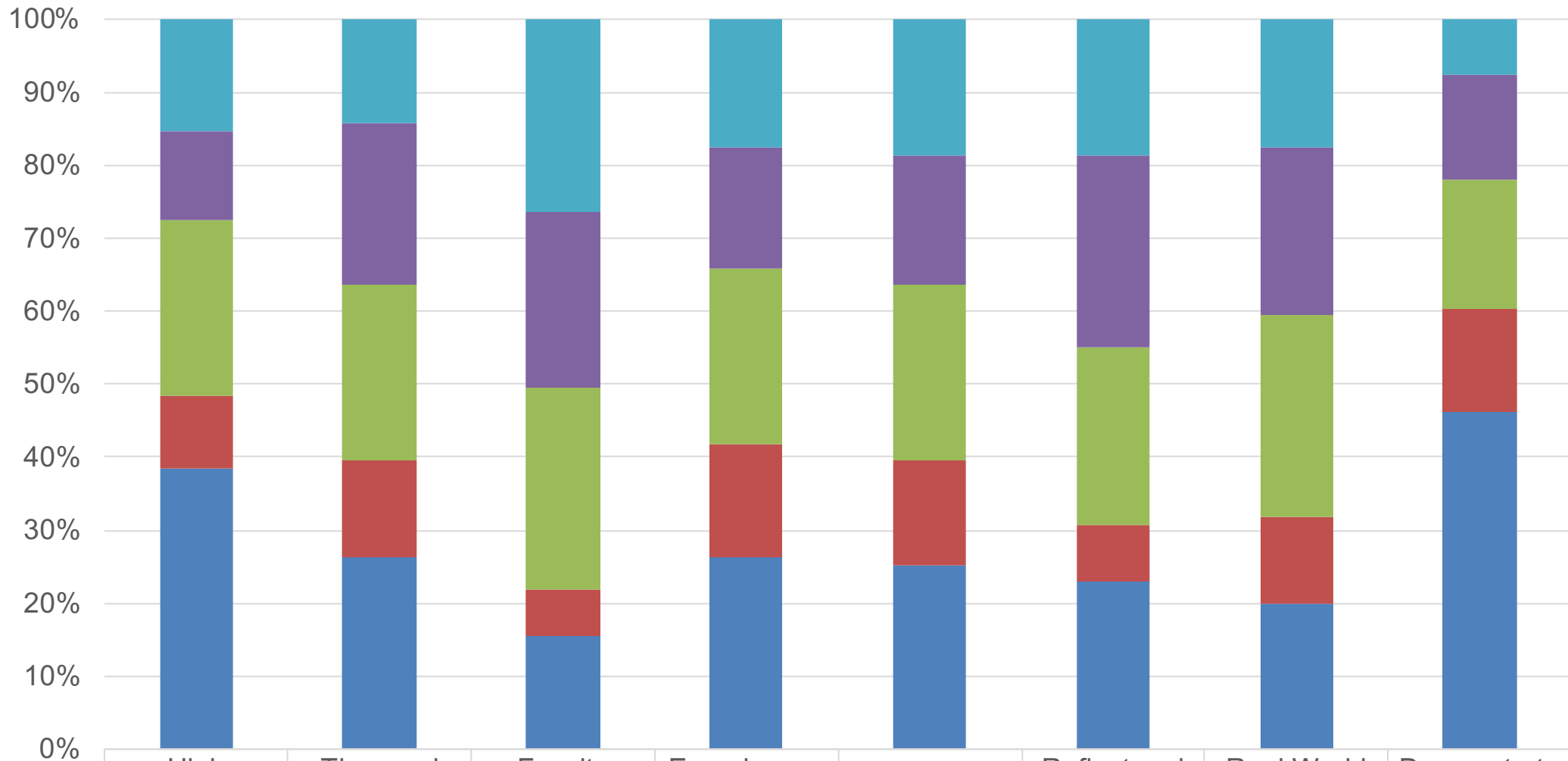| Major Certainty | Campus Involvement | Student-Faculty Interaction | Spirituality | Institutional Integrity | Sense of Community on Campus |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Significant for White and Latinx sophomores<br>▪ Not a significant pathway among African-American and Asian-American sophomores | • Mostly for White students<br>• Significant for African American students in leadership roles | • Only specific campus experience that predicted thriving and every other positive outcome<br>• Students experience this interaction differently based on race and ethnicity | • Important for everyone<br>• Doubly important for students of color, especially African American Sophomores | | • #2 predictor for African American sophomores; #1 for everyone else<br>• White students more likely to report strong sense of community on campus |

Schreiner, 2018

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# Descriptions of Sophomore Success: Program Objectives

## Objectives for Sophomore Initiatives

| Objective | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Connection with the institution or campus | 34.1% |
| Career exploration and/or preparation | 30.8% |
| Persistence, retention, or third-year return rates | 28.6% |
| Common sophomore-year experience | 24.2% |
| Academic success strategies | 24.2% |
| Academic planning | 23.1% |
| Major exploration | 15.4% |
| Personal exploration or development | 14.3% |
| Knowledge of institution or campus resources and… | 12.1% |

# HIP Elements in Primary Sophomore Initiative

| | High Expectations | Time and effort | Faculty Interactions | Experiences with Diversity | Feedback | Reflect and Integrate | Real-World Applications | Demonstrate Competence |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Element is pervasive - 5 | 15.4% | 14.3% | 26.4% | 17.6% | 18.7% | 18.7% | 17.6% | 7.7% |
| 4 | 12.1% | 22.0% | 24.2% | 16.5% | 17.6% | 26.4% | 23.1% | 14.3% |
| Element is partially present - 3 | 24.2% | 24.2% | 27.5% | 24.2% | 24.2% | 24.2% | 27.5% | 17.6% |
| 2 | 9.9% | 13.2% | 6.6% | 15.4% | 14.3% | 7.7% | 12.1% | 14.3% |
| Element is not present - 1 | 38.5% | 26.4% | 15.4% | 26.4% | 25.3% | 23.1% | 19.8% | 46.2% |

# INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY
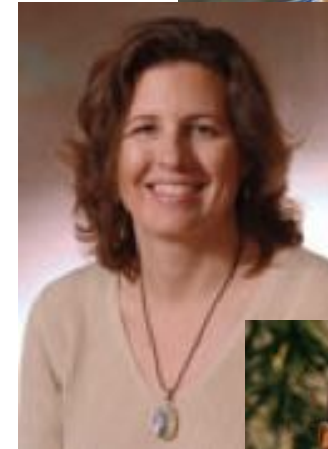
# Benefits of Delivering on Outcomes

- Sense of community

- Learning

- Continued transition into college

- Institutional integrity

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# A Word about Institutional Integrity

Institutional integrity refers to the degree to which students perceive that the institution was accurately portrayed during the admissions process, that their expectations have been met, and that "the actions of a college or university's administrators, faculty, and staff are compatible with the mission and goals proclaimed by a given college or university"
Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004

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# Benefits of Delivering on Promises

**Increased:**

Overall Thriving

Satisfaction
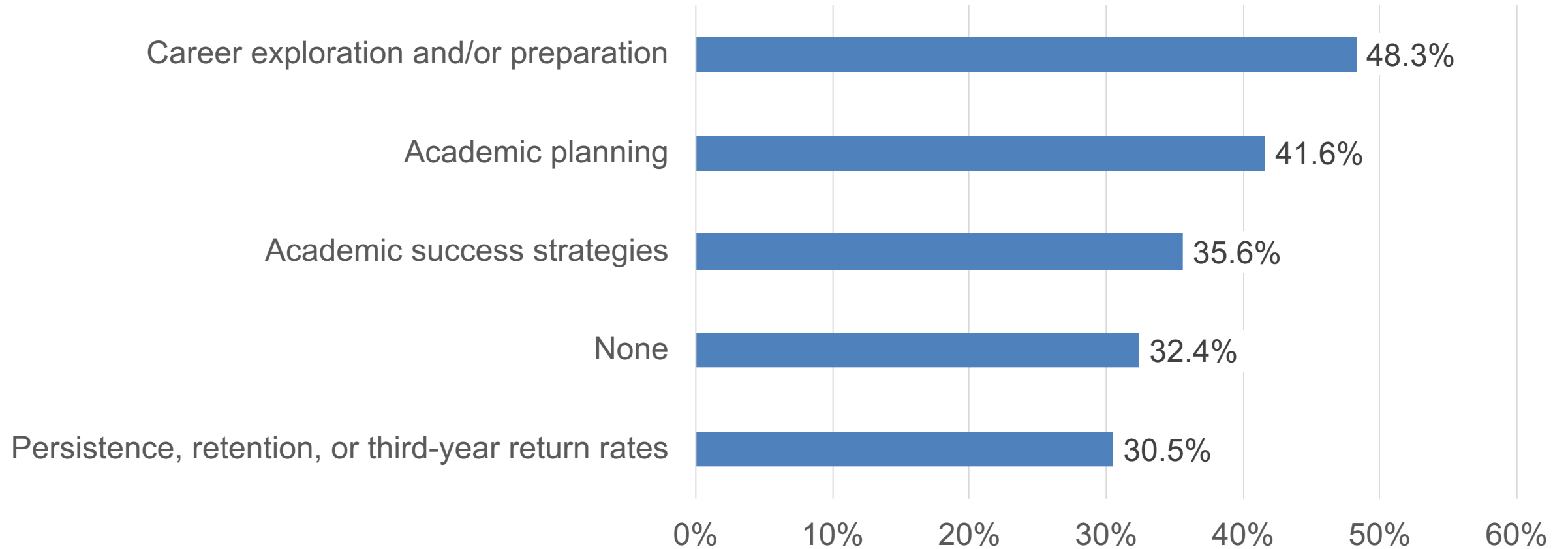
Student perception of institutional fit

Perception that tuition was a worthwhile investment

Intent to graduate

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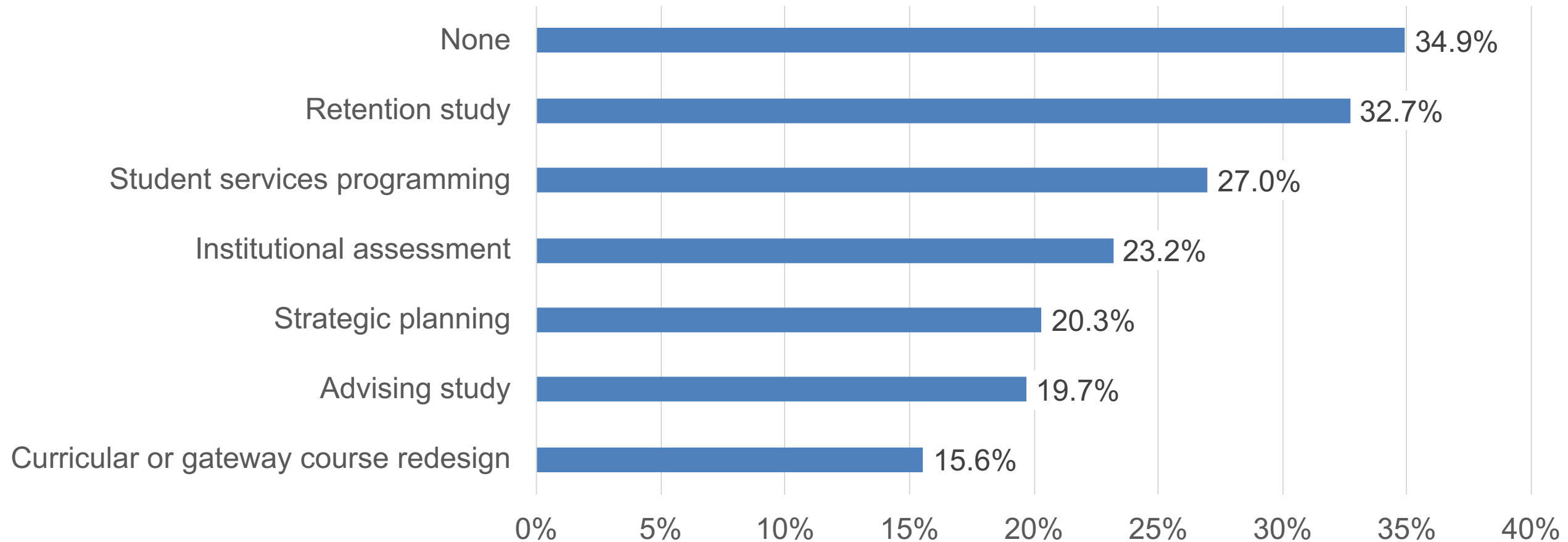UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

# Institutional Integrity: Implicit and Explicit Aims of Sophomore Year



Campus-wide Objectives for Sophomores

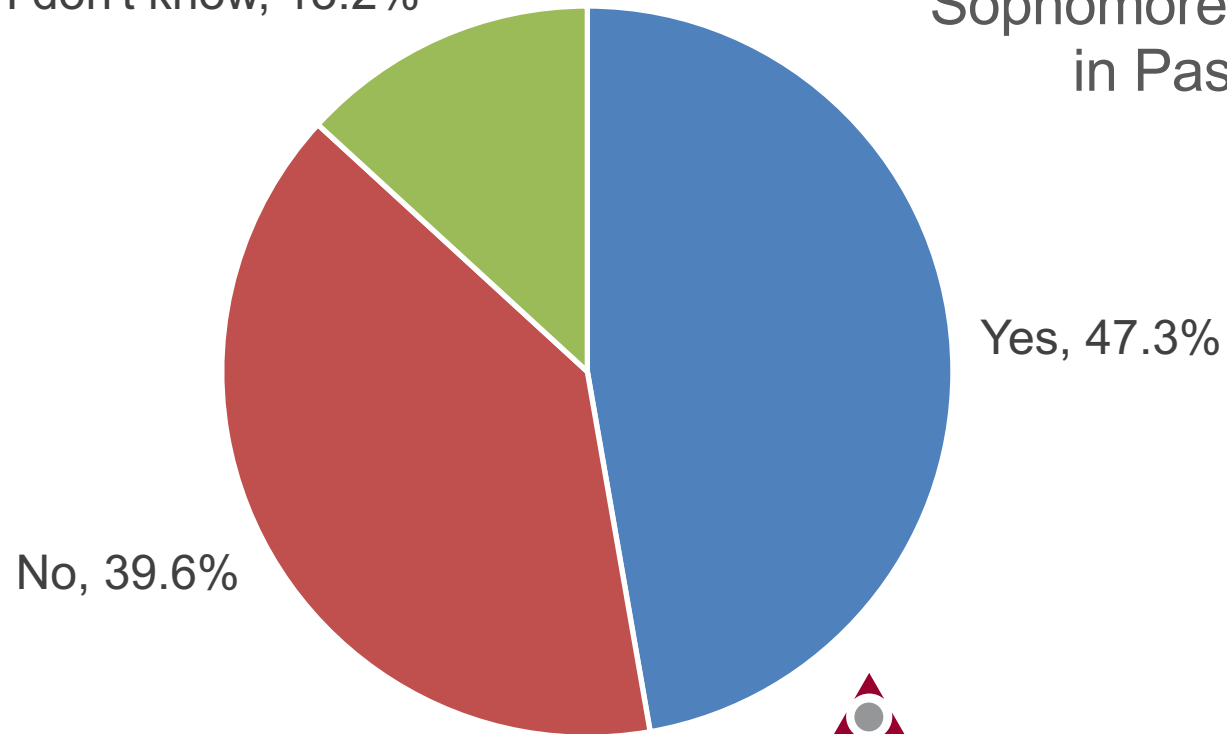# Efforts toward Delivering on Promise of the Sophomore Year

Institutional Efforts with Focus on Sophomores



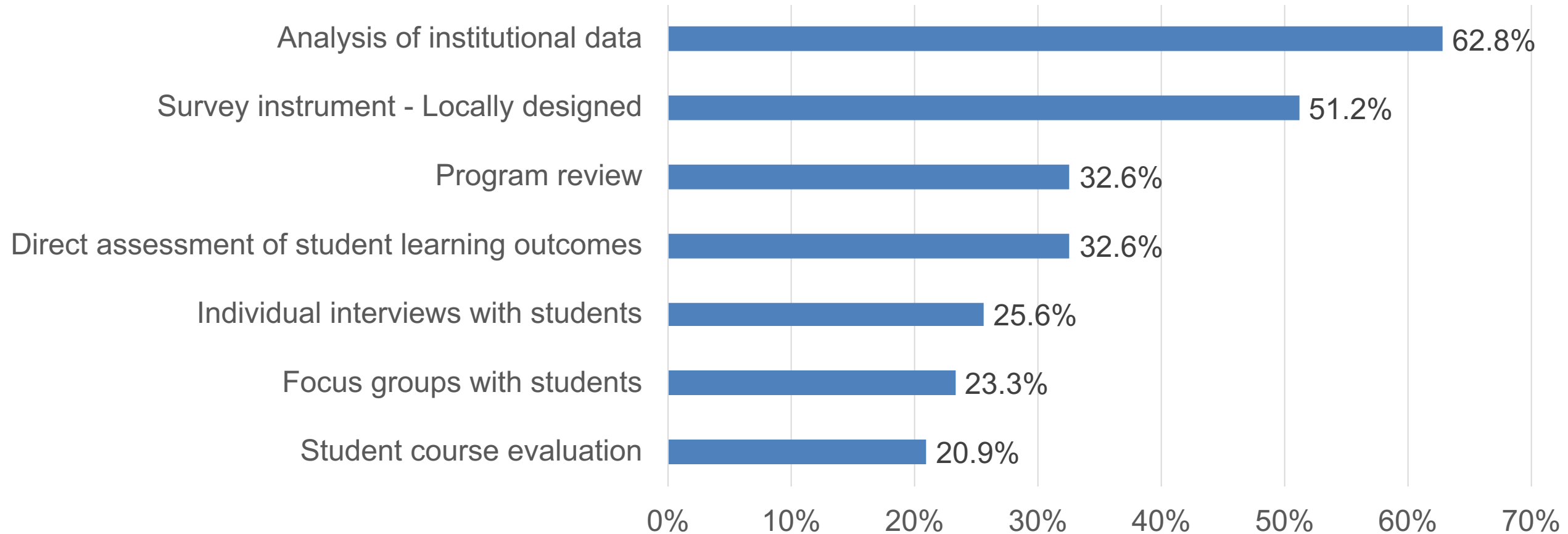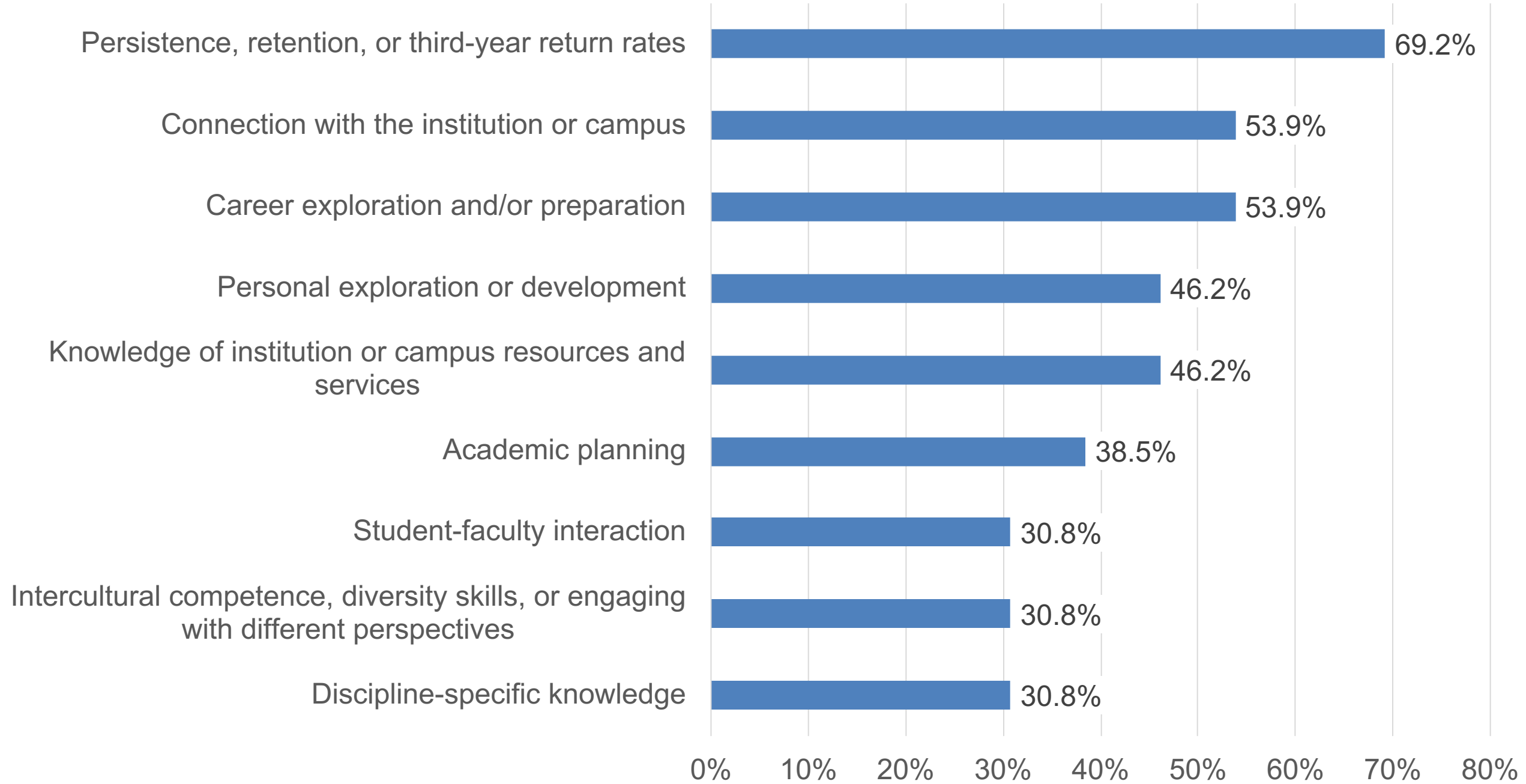| Category | Percent |
|---|---|
| None | 34.9% |
| Retention study | 32.7% |
| Student services programming | 27.0% |
| Institutional assessment | 23.2% |
| Strategic planning | 20.3% |
| Advising study | 19.7% |
| Curricular or gateway course redesign | 15.6% |

# Delivering on the Promises:
# How are we Assessing It?

Types of Assessment of Sophomore Programs

# Outcomes Measured - Assessment of Sophomore Initiatives



| Outcome | Percent |
|---|---|
| Persistence, retention, or third-year return rates | 69.2% |
| Connection with the institution or campus | 53.9% |
| Career exploration and/or preparation | 53.9% |
| Personal exploration or development | 46.2% |
| Knowledge of institution or campus resources and services | 46.2% |
| Academic planning | 38.5% |
| Student-faculty interaction | 30.8% |
| Intercultural competence, diversity skills, or engaging with different perspectives | 30.8% |
| Discipline-specific knowledge | 30.8% |

# Key Considerations

- What are institutions around the US trying to achieve with their sophomores?

- What are YOU trying to achieve with your sophomores?

- Which services are offered to the student population at large? How might you leverage them to have a sophomore-specific focus?

- How might the current sophomore programs, services, and initiatives be better coordinated across campus?

- How do we know that what we're doing to support sophomore student success works?

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