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FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE® AND STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

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Promoting Transfer Student Success: A Guide to Creating an Integrated Network of Support

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

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Agenda

1. Overview of college student transition programs
2. Presentation of findings from NRC data sources
3. Critical discussion of common practices, trends, and innovations among first-, second-, and transfer-year programs and opportunities and obstacles associated with integration and longitudinal support



Why Attend to Transitions?

- Great attention given to the challenges of entering higher education (e.g. Yorke 1999, Tinto, 2000; Nutt et al 2005).
- Poor transition can lead to negative student experience, failing and withdrawing (Upcraft & Gardner et. al., 1989)
- Efforts to plug leaks in the academic pipeline began with an attention to the first-year of college



First-Year Transitions

- Students' first experience with higher education traditionally represents a shift
 - Socially as students leave home, previous academic institutions, enter new peer groups
 - Academically as students are faced with increased expectations, less structure, entering a new organizational environment
- What is a “first-year experience” for transfer students?



Focus on First-Year Transitions

- Increased institutional focus on the first-year experience
 - e.g., orientation, first-year seminars, bridge programs
- In turn, institutions have historically lessened or even discontinued the support for students during the second year (Barefoot, Griffin, & Koch, 2012; Pattengale & Schreiner, 2000).
- Is transfer student support sustained past the first-year?



Sophomore Transitions

- Emerging research and assessment on the second year of college
- Recognition that second-year students have needs and face challenges
- Evidence that sophomores are at times the least satisfied of all students
- What does the “sophomore-year experience” look like for transfer students?



Sophomore Year Matters

- When students have focus and a sense of direction, they are more likely to be motivated (Graunke and Woosley, 2005; Schreiner, 2010)
- Those who thrive in college are those who are actively engaged in their own learning process (Schreiner, 2010)
- Interactions with faculty are an important aspect of engagement
 - Student-faculty interaction found to be a significantly positive predicting factor of second-year GPA (Graunke and Woosley, 2005)



Transfer Transitions

- Transfer frequently involves movement from community colleges to four-year schools
 - Other forms of transfer present, including reverse transfer and swirl
 - Students entering at multiple points
- Transfer students face:
 - Transfer and applicability of credits
 - Social and academic connections
 - Navigating campus culture
 - Completion of academic goals



Transfer Transitions

- Common institutional strategies:
 - Supplemental instruction
 - Transfer orientation
 - Recruitment
 - Developmental education
 - Learning communities
 - Advising
 - Peer mentors
 - Assessment



Transfer Transitions

- Common systemic strategies associated with transfer:
 - Transfer centers
 - Articulation agreements
 - Partnerships
 - Course alignment
 - Dual, or concurrent, enrollment
 - Tuition guarantee



Taking Stock

1. What first-year initiatives do you have on your campus? What are the objectives for these programs?
2. What sophomore-year initiatives do you have on your campus? What are the objectives for these programs?
3. What transfer initiatives do you have on your campus? What are the objectives for these programs?
4. How are objectives for your first-year and sophomore students similar and/or different than those for transfer students?



How are your institution's policies, practices, and objectives for student success shaping transfer students' expectations and transitions?



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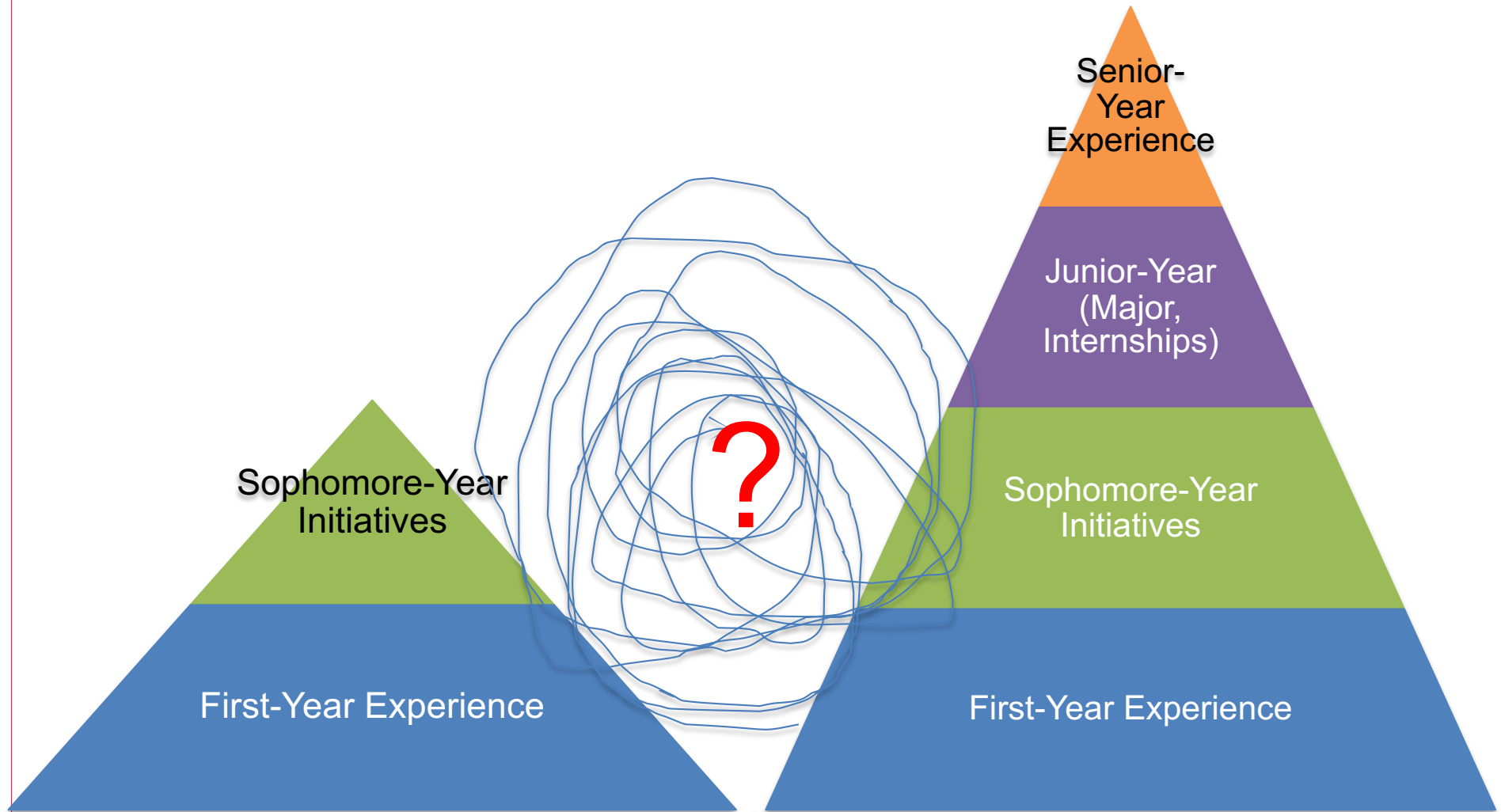
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Sustained Support

- Vertical alignment: What students learn in one lesson or course prepares them for the next lesson or course
- Educational experiences are purposefully structured and logically sequenced so that students gain the knowledge and skills to progressively prepare them for more challenging, higher-level work



Sustained Support and Transfer



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How do we serve transfer students whose prior experiences may or may not align with the first- or sophomore-year experiences at the receiving institution?



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2017 National Survey on the First-Year Experience (NSFYE)

- Institution-/program-level survey
- Online instrument
 - General info about institutional attention to the first year
 - Extended modules on first-year seminars, pre-term orientation, and first-year academic advising
 - Other modules on first-year learning communities, residential programs/initiatives, early-alert systems, and common reading programs

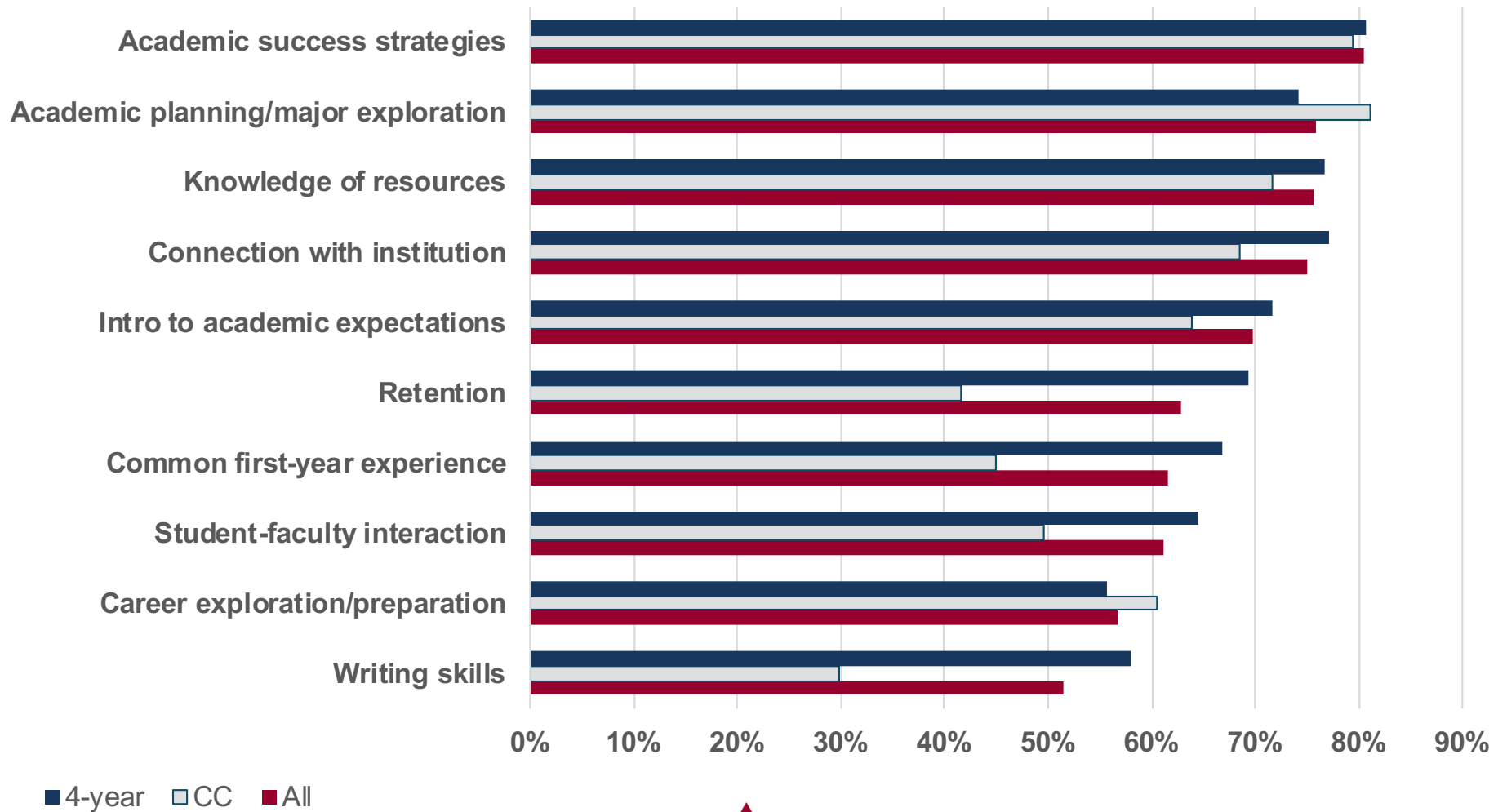


Overview of the 2017 NSFYE: Sample

- 537 campuses participated, including 410 4-year institutions and 127 community colleges
 - Community colleges institutions underrepresented
 - Public institutions overrepresented
 - Very small institutions (≤ 500 first-year students) seem to be underrepresented
- 525 institutions reported offering at least one FYE program



Campus-wide Objectives for FYE



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Most Common FYE Initiatives

FYE Initiatives	CC	4-Year	Overall %
First-year academic advising (ADV)	78.0	81.1	78.7
Pre-term orientation (OR)	58.5	80.6	74.0
Early alert systems (EA)	64.2	83.6	72.3
First-year seminars (FYS)	58.5	78.1	71.6
Placement testing (PT)	70.7	64.4	65.0
Peer education (PE)	40.7	68.9	59.9
Developmental/remedial education (DEV)	68.3	50.2	54.8
Student success center (SSC)	52.0	56.2	54.4
General education (GE)	38.2	59.0	52.8
Convocation (CNV)	11.4	65.2	52.3

FYE Initiatives and Transfer

FYE Initiatives	CC	4-Year	Overall %
Institution offers success programs geared toward transfer	20.0	38.3	34.1
Transfers required to participate in first-year seminar	10.5	6.3	7.5
Transfers required to participate in first-year academic advising	2.3	0.7	1.0
Transfers monitored through early warning/alert	0.0	0.6	0.5
Transfers participate in a common reading program	0.0	0.6	0.5
Transfers required to participate in pre-term orientation	0.0	0.0	0.0
Transfers required to live on campus	0.0	0.0	0.0
Transfers required to participate in first-year learning communities	0.0	0.0	0.0

2018 National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives (NSSYI)

- Institution-/program-level survey
- Online instrument
 - General info about institutional attention to the sophomore year
 - Initiatives and objectives specifically for sophomores
 - Assessment and evaluation practices

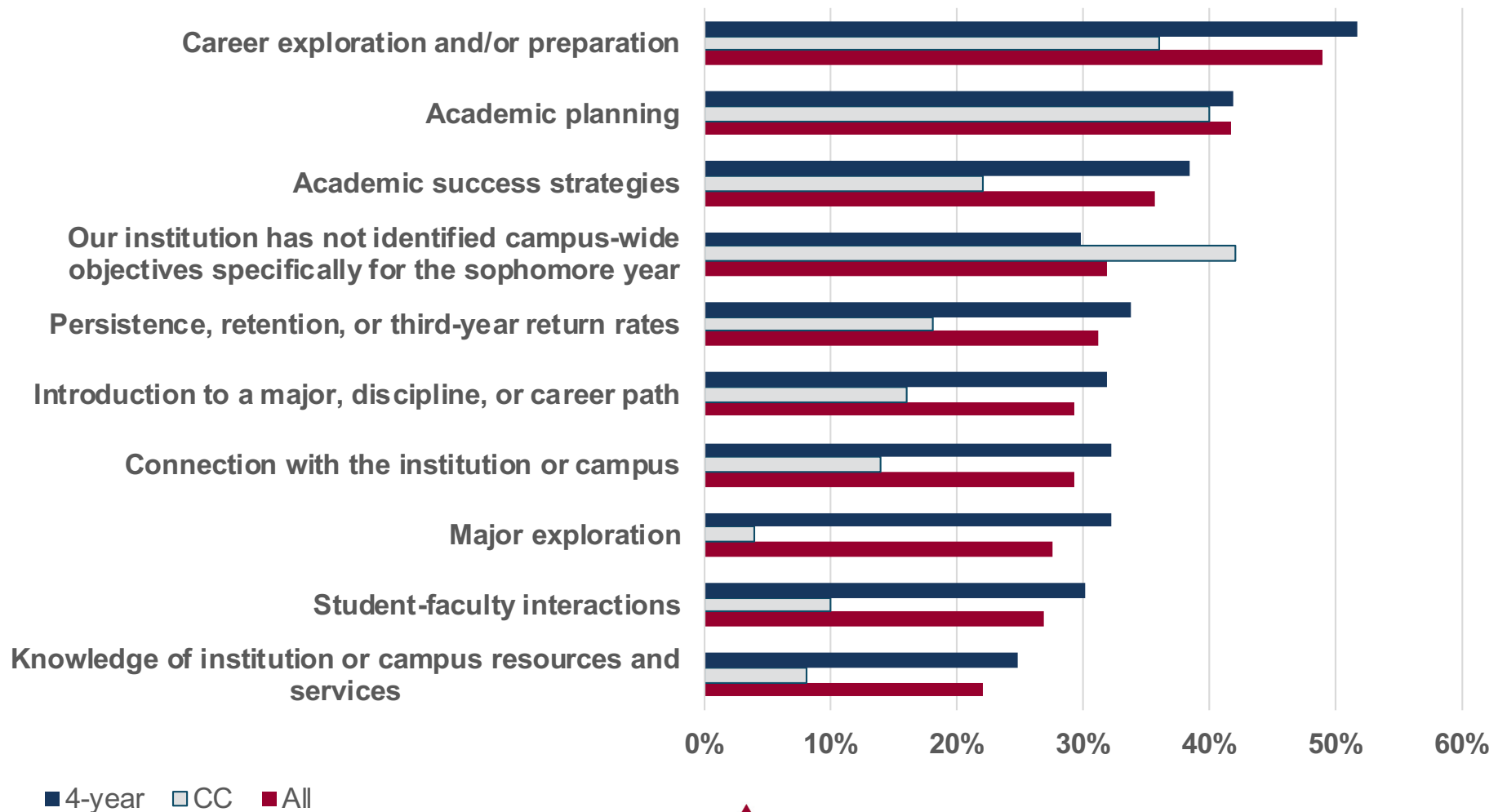


Overview of the 2018 NSSYI: Sample

- 308 institutions participated, including 258 4-year schools and 50 community colleges
 - Community colleges are underrepresented
 - Survey does not ask questions related to initiatives and objectives specifically for transfer students
- 157 (51.1%) institutions reported offering at least one sophomore-specific initiative (34.0% of community colleges, 54.5% of 4-year schools)



Campus-wide Objectives for Sophomore-Year



Most Common Sophomore-Year Initiatives

Initiatives	CC	4-Year	Overall %
Career exploration	16.0	33.3	30.5
Academic advising	26.0	30.2	29.5
Career planning	24.0	27.1	26.6
Academic coaching or mentoring	16.0	20.5	19.8
Leadership development	12.0	18.6	17.5
Major exploration and selection	4.0	20.2	17.5
Campus-based event	4.0	19.0	16.6
Early alert systems	14.0	15.9	15.6
Back-to-school events (e.g., common reading, dinners, fairs)	2.0	15.9	13.6
Peer mentoring by sophomores	6.0	15.1	13.6

Objectives and Outcomes

- Consider the national data and your own institution's objectives and initiatives (as discussed earlier). Do you see trends? Does anything resonate for you and your institution?
 - How are your program objectives and initiatives assessed?
- Consider the overlap and/or difference between first- and sophomore-year experiences and transfer experiences discussed earlier.
 - Do you see sustained support for transfer students through initiatives and objectives, including pre-transfer, during the transition, and after transfer?
 - Is this fragmented? If so, are there opportunities available to align support?



Creating Integrated and Sustained Support

1. How can we take advantage of existing transition support structures to support transfer students?
 - What obstacles do these programs present?
2. What are the opportunities for leveraging first- and second-year programs to facilitate transfer transitions and support?
 - Regional partnerships? Cross-institution partnerships?
 - Which parties and/or offices on campus are involved?
3. How can we achieve (or approximate) sustained support for transfer students?



Questions?

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