



NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

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

Elements of High-Impact Practices among Initiatives for Community College Sophomores

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Presenters

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The Sophomore Year

The sophomore year represents a critical transition for community college students, particularly as students prepare for transferring to a four-year school or entering the workforce. Sophomores face a variety of challenges, including:

- » Navigating and selecting academic major options
- » Exploring career options
- » Preparing for transfer to four-year institutions

Prior research has shown that as institutions shift their attention to incoming first-year students, sophomores often feel unsupported as they face increased academic challenges and explore major and career options. Sophomore dropout and disengagement has led administrators, faculty, and researchers to increase attention to their unique needs. In response, institutions have adopted and implemented high-impact practices (HIPs) into programming for students.

What are HIPs?

HIPs have dominated the discussion on student success since they were introduced by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) over a decade ago (Kuh, 2008). Subsequent research by the Center for Community College Student Engagement (2012) identified 13 promising high-impact practices specifically within community colleges, including: orientation; accelerated or fast-track developmental education; first-year experience; student success courses; learning communities; academic goal setting and planning; experiential learning beyond the classroom; tutoring; and supplemental instruction.

Study Purpose and Methods

The purpose of this study was to explore initiatives for sophomores and elements of HIPs in community colleges. To examine these, we gathered from the 2019 National Survey of Sophomore- Year Initiatives (NSSYI) conducted by the National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. All degree granting institutions in the U.S. were invited to complete the survey, and 308 institutions responded; of those, 50 were community colleges. Sections of the questionnaire included general institutional characteristics, institutional objectives in the second year, types of sophomore-year programs offered, and sections that asked about institutional practices related to sophomore programs, including residential programs, career-related services, and high-impact practices as well as a specific focus on academic advising in the sophomore year.

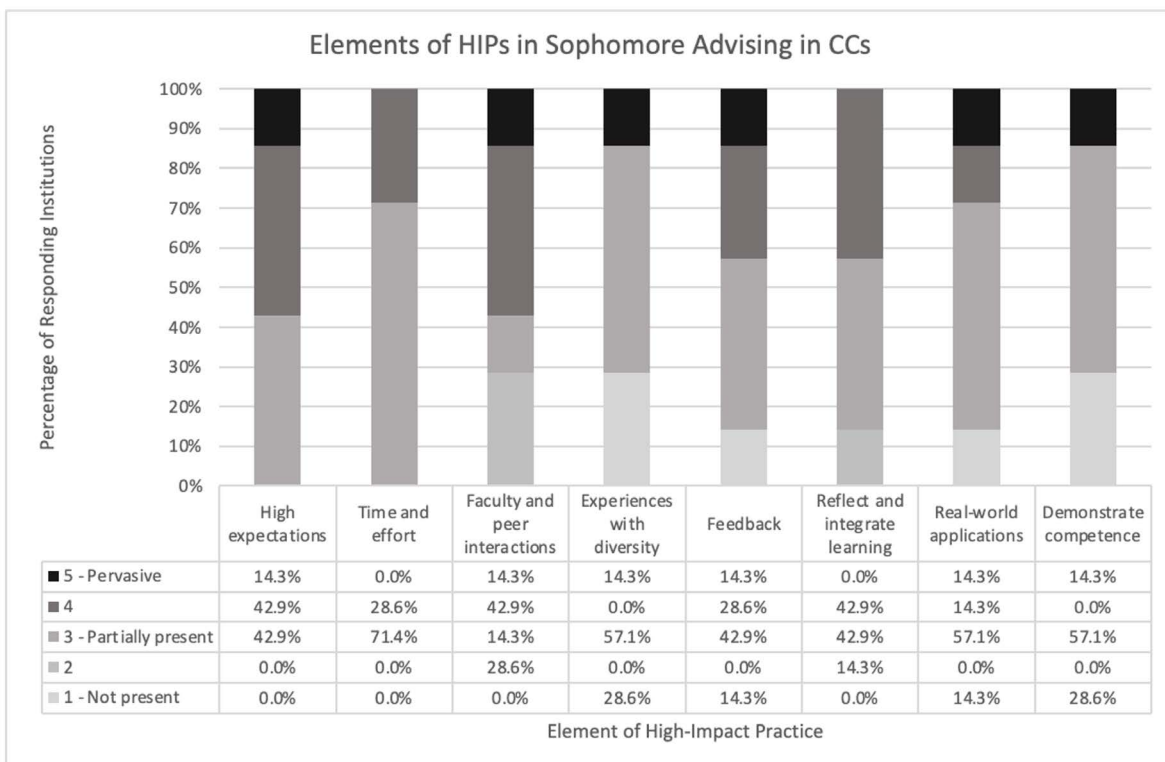
Findings

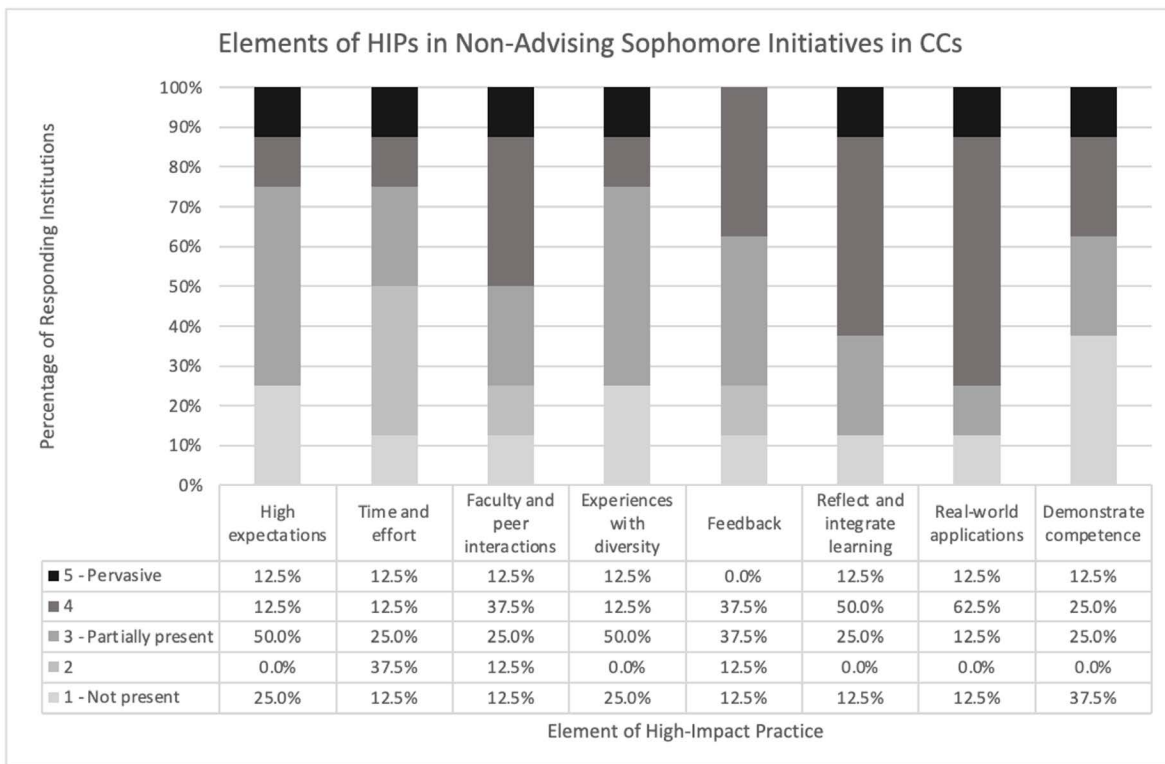
Most Frequently Reported Sophomore-Year Initiative in CCs (n=17)

Sophomore-Year Initiative	%
Academic advising	76.5
Career planning	70.6
Academic coaching or mentoring	47.1
Career exploration	47.1
Early alert systems	41.2
Internships or co-ops	35.3
Leadership development	35.3

Most Frequently Reported Campus-Wide Objectives for Sophomore-Year in CCs (n=50)

Sophomore-Year Objective	%
Our institution has not identified campus-wide objectives specifically for the sophomore year	42.0
Academic planning	40.0
Career exploration and/or preparation	36.0
Academic success strategies	22.0
Analytical, critical-thinking, or problem-solving skills	18.0
Persistence, retention, or third-year return rates	18.0





Questions and Points for Discussion

- » What initiatives does your institution have to support second-year students?
- » How does your institution define sophomores?
- » How do sophomore students engage in HIPs at your institution?
- » In your experience, what elements of HIPs do you see in advising practices?
- » In what ways do you see HIPs helping to facilitate alignment cross-functionally and cross-institutionally?

References

- Center for Community College Student Engagement. (2012). *A matter of degrees: Promising practices for community college student success* (a first look). The University of Texas at Austin, Community College Leadership Program.
- Hartman, C., & Young, D. G. (2021). *Sustaining support for sophomore students: Results from the 2019 National Survey of Sophomore-Year Initiatives* (Research Reports on College Transitions No. 11). University of South Carolina, National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.
- Kuh, G. D. (2008). *High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter*. Association of American Colleges & Universities.