

First-Year Seminars: Evidence of HIP Qualities and Outcomes

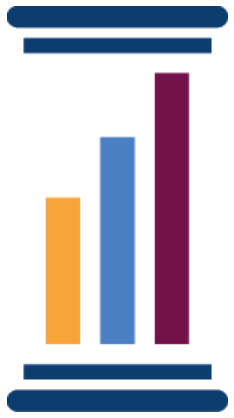


FYE 2022 – February 14, 2022

Jillian Kinzie and Kevin Wenger

Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research

National Survey of Student Engagement



What's your interest in this session?

Do you direct or lead a FY seminar?

Are you interested in HIPs?

Are you concerned about FYS outcomes?





Explosion of Enthusiasm for HIPS

- Recommendation that all students have at least 2 HIP experiences (in the first year and the major)
- Salutary benefits for underrepresented students
- Widespread emphasis on expanding HIP opportunities, embedding in curriculum
- Employers endorse HIPs
- Many institutions claiming importance of HIPs
- More scrutiny, critique, concern about investment



HIPs have many enthusiasts.

Hundreds of colleges and universities are scaling existing HIPs, adding more, and enhancing quality.

Yet, how do we know HIPs are done well and that we're ensuring access, quality and impact?

From AAC&U...“Many schools build into the curriculum **first-year seminars** that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies....”

The Impact of First Year Seminars (FYS)

- Helps smooth students' transition to college
- Connects students to the institution, peers, resources
- Positively associated with FY retention
- Positively associated with quality learning and academic success in the first year
- Site to introduce and set institutional expectations/culture
- Structured way to advise, build peer support, introduce to major





HIPs like FYS are Great!

But Quality and Implementation Matter

Maybe Not So 'High Impact'?

Researchers challenge conventional wisdom and past studies linking widely promoted educational experiences to timely college completion.

By [Marjorie Valbrun](#) // April 25, 2018

26 COMMENTS 

What Really Makes a 'High-Impact' Practice High Impact?

A recent study questioning the value of such practices mistakenly assumes that just making them available suffices. How they are implemented is crucial, George Kuh and Jillian Kinzie write.

By [George D. Kuh](#), [Jillian Kinzie](#)
// May 1, 2018

What Makes HIPS Effective:

*The name alone does
not make it a HIP*

1. High performance expectations
2. Significant investment of student time and effort over an extended period
3. Interactions with faculty and peers about substantive matters
4. Students are exposed to and must contend with people and circumstances that differ from those with which they are familiar
5. Frequent, timely, and constructive feedback
6. Periodic, structured opportunities to reflect and integrate learning
7. Opportunities to discover relevance of learning through real-world applications
8. Public demonstration of competence

Kuh, O'Donnell, & Reed (2013). *Ensuring quality and taking high-impact practices to scale*, Washington, DC: AAC&U.

<https://nsse.indiana.edu/research/special-projects/hip-quality/index.html#eightkey>

What do we know about these 8 elements in the First Year Seminar?

1. High expectations for performance
2. Demand time & effort
3. Substantive interactions w/faculty & peers
4. Students engage with differences
5. Students get rich feedback
6. Structured opportunities to reflect & integrate
7. Opportunities to test & apply in new situations
8. Public demonstrations of competence

How can elements be assessed?

- Exist in syllabi, assignments
- Observed
- Reported by students, including level of quality
- Seen in artifacts
- Documented by faculty

Ask Students in HIPs About Exposure to 8 Quality Dimensions and How Well its Done

Survey questions to explore HIP quality

(appended to NSSE 2019, and administered in standalone module in 2020; an optional module in 2022)

View HIP Quality Topical Module:

www.nsse.indiana.edu/nsse/survey-instruments/topical-modules/hip-quality.html

4. To what extent did [does] this experience challenge you to do your best work? (7=Very much, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1=Not at all)
5. About how many hours did [do] you spend in a typical 7-day week on this experience? (0=0, 1=1-5, 2=6-10, 3=11-15, 4=16-20, 5=21-25, 6=26-30, 7=More than 30 hours)
6. Compared to your typical learning experiences at this institution, about how much effort did [does] this experience require? (5=Much more effort, 4=More effort, 3=About as much effort, 2=Less effort, 1=Much less effort)
7. During this experience, about how often did [do] you receive helpful feedback from the following individuals? (4=Very often, 3=Often, 2=Sometimes, 1=Never, 9=Not applicable)
 - a. Faculty or staff member from this institution
 - b. Supervisor on site
 - c. Co-worker
 - d. Other student(s)
8. As part of this experience, about how often did [do] you find yourself in settings or circumstances that were [are] new or unfamiliar to you? (4=Very often, 3=Often, 2=Sometimes, 1=Never)
9. As part of this experience, about how often did [do] you interact with people from a different background or identity (racial/ethnic, economic, political, religious, etc.)? (4=Very often, 3=Often, 2=Sometimes, 1=Never)
10. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experience? (4=Strongly agree, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly disagree)
 - a. I feel [felt] comfortable being myself while participating in this experience.
 - b. I feel [felt] valued while participating in this experience.
 - c. I feel [felt] like part of a community while participating in this experience.
11. How much does [did] this experience emphasize the following? (4=Very much, 3=Quite a bit, 2=Some, 1=Very little, 0=Not at all)

Assessing Quality & Equity in HIPs (NSSE with support from Lumina)

- Findings from a *special NSSE research project* [Assessing Quality and Equity in High-Impact Practices \(HIPs\)](#), examined quality and equity in HIPs for over 20,000 students at 57 colleges and universities in 2019-2020
- Explored the extent to which HIP experiences incorporate 8 elements theorized to account for their educational benefits and who has access to “high-quality” HIPs
- Custom-designed item set



Comprehensive Report

A summary of initial project findings: *Assessing Quality and Equity in High-Impact Practices*.

[Read the report](#)

Ask Students in FYS About Exposure to 8 Quality Dimensions and How Well its Done

*Which of the following have you done or do you plan to do before you graduate? 4=Done or in progress, 3=Plan to do, 2=Do not plan to do, 1=Have not decided

“Participate in a course during your first year focused on a specific academic topic or major that teaches new students college success skills (goalsetting, study skills, campus resources, etc.”

****for the pilot, we targeted FY Sem courses***

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Extant Literature Evidence of HIP Elements

HIPS	High-Impact Practice Qualities							
	High expectations for performance	Demand time & effort	Substantive interaction w/faculty & peers	They help students engage across differences	They provide students with rich feedback	Structured opps. to reflect & integrate (who students are becoming)	Opportunity to apply & test learning in new situations	Public demonstration of competence
First-Year Seminars & Experiences	<p><i>What does HIP literature and research suggest regarding the emphasis on these 8 elements? Are all elements strongly emphasized in every HIP?</i></p>							
Learning Communities								
Undergraduate Research								
Study Abroad								
Service Learning, Community Based Learning								
Internships								
Senior Culminating Capstone courses & Projects								

HIP Matrix:

Denotes strength of evidence and evidence of qualities in literature by HIP

++ = Strong emphasis
 + = Moderate emphasis
 (blank) = Not emphasized

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	High expectations for performance	Demand time & effort	Substantive interaction w/faculty & peers	They help students engage across differences	They provide students with rich feedback	Structured opps. to reflect & integrate (who students are becoming)	Opportunity to apply & test learning in new situations	Public demonstration of competence
First-Year Seminars & Experiences	+	+	++	++	+++ / +	++		
Learning Communities		+	++	+		+	+	+
Undergraduate Research	++	++	++		+	+	++	++
Study Abroad	<p><i>Let's focus on FYS and 2 other first year HIPs</i></p>							
Service Learning, Community Based Learning								
Internships								
Senior Culminating Capstone courses & Projects								

HIP Quality Findings



- Are students experiencing HIP qualities in patterns consistent with what the HIP literature emphasizes?

In general, yes

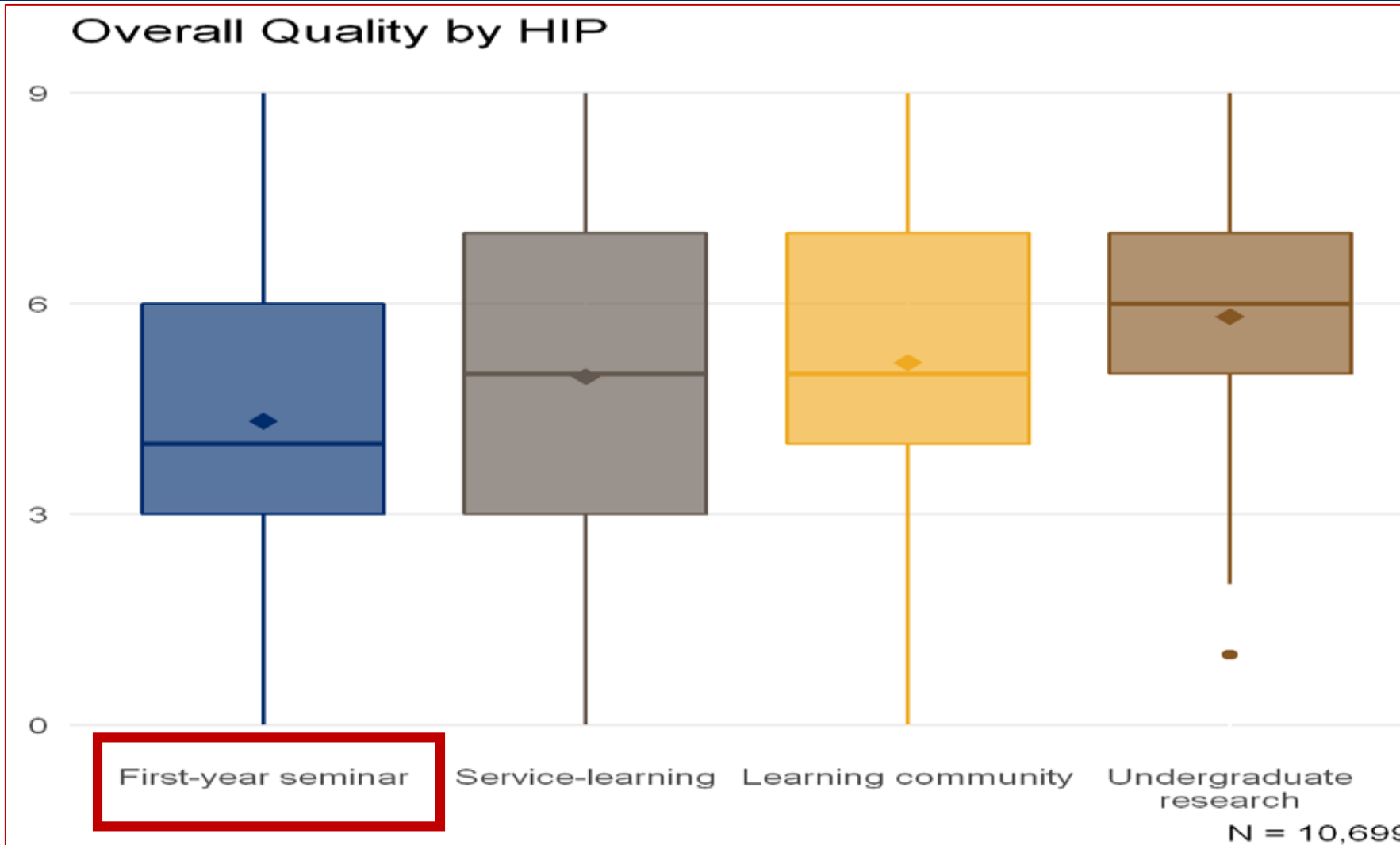
- Is there variability in the proportion of students who experience “high quality” on the key elements where they are emphasized in the literature?

Considerable variability in some qualities

- Is there variation by race-ethnicity?

Not really;
Found high satisfaction

Distribution of Overall Quality Scores by 4 HIPs typical in the First Year



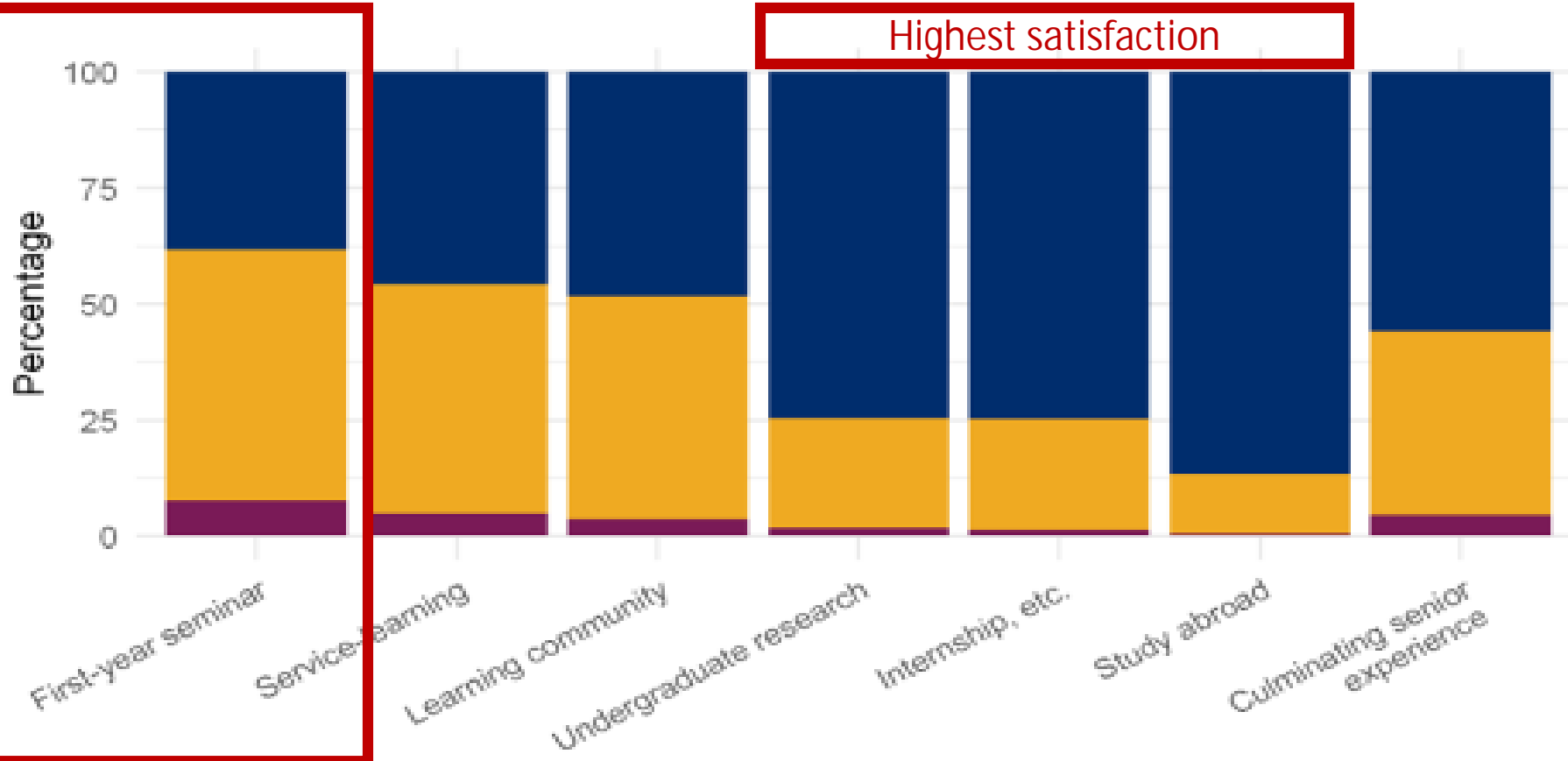
Overall Quality Score

Diamond represents mean values, horizontal lines, median.

HIP Quality Findings: Satisfaction



Satisfaction ■ High satisfaction ■ Moderate satisfaction ■ Low satisfaction



- Overall, students were pretty satisfied
- Satisfaction by racial identity was relatively consistent across groups



HIP Quality Findings for FYS

- Overall, FYS had lower proportions of students experiencing high-quality elements compared to other typical FY HIPs (LC, S-L, and UR)
- Some variability in quality FYS across students in institutions
- Considerable variability within and relatively low proportions of students who experience high quality on the key elements highly emphasized in the FYS literature:
 - Substantive Interaction with fac, peers = 42%
 - Engagement Across Difference = 11%
 - Provides Rich Feedback = 63%
 - Opportunities to Reflect = 43%
 - Opportunities to Integrate = 34%



FYS HIP Quality Summary



Low proportions of students experience high quality on the key elements highly emphasized in the FYS literature:

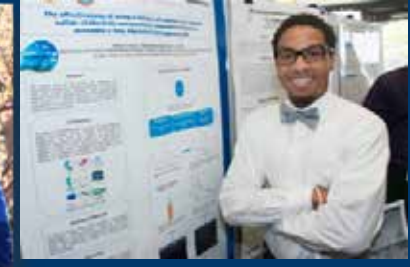
- Substantive Interaction with fac, peers = 42%
- Engagement Across Difference = 11%
- Provides Rich Feedback = 63%
- Opportunities to Reflect = 43%
- Opportunities to Integrate = 34%

- *Is this sufficient?*
- *Are we intentionally designing FYS with these qualities in mind?*
- *Can we do better for our FY students?*

Considering HIP Qualities in FYS... reflect on the extent to which your FYS does the following well

How well does your FYS do the following?

- 1. Set and sustain high-expectations for student performance?*
- 2. Enhance time on purposeful tasks?*
- 3. Add meaningful interaction between faculty, students & among students?*
- 4. Increase interaction with diverse individuals & approaches (challenge students ways of thinking, gain new perspectives)?*
- 5. Increase frequency of feedback?*
- 6. Enhance opportunities for reflection & integration?*
- 7. Add a real world, application experience?*
- 8. Increase public demonstration of competence & reflections on who students are becoming?*



Exploring the Influence of the First Year Seminar on Engagement, Sense of Belonging and Intent to Return



First Year Seminars & NSSE



Item added to “First Year Experiences & Senior Transitions” Topical Module on NSSE 2021

- 12,780 respondents
- 53 Institutions

4. During the current school year, have you participated in a first-year seminar or other course that introduces students to expectations of the academic community and college success skills (goalsetting, study skills, campus resources, etc.)?
- Yes
 - No
 - Unsure

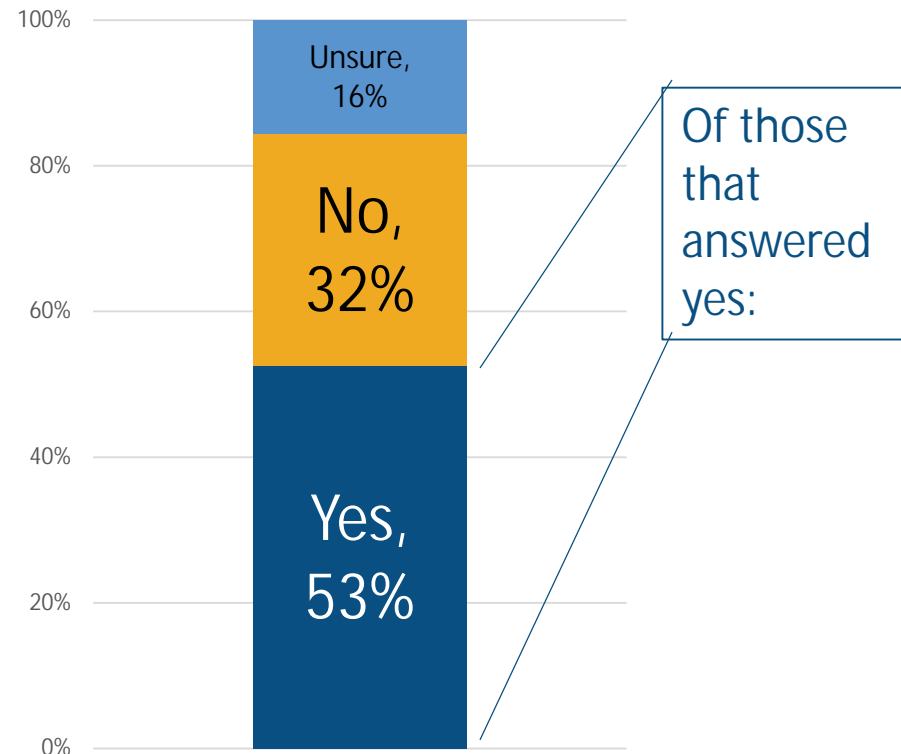


FYS Participation



What does NSSE data tell us about participation in a first-year seminar?

Have you participated in a First-year seminar?



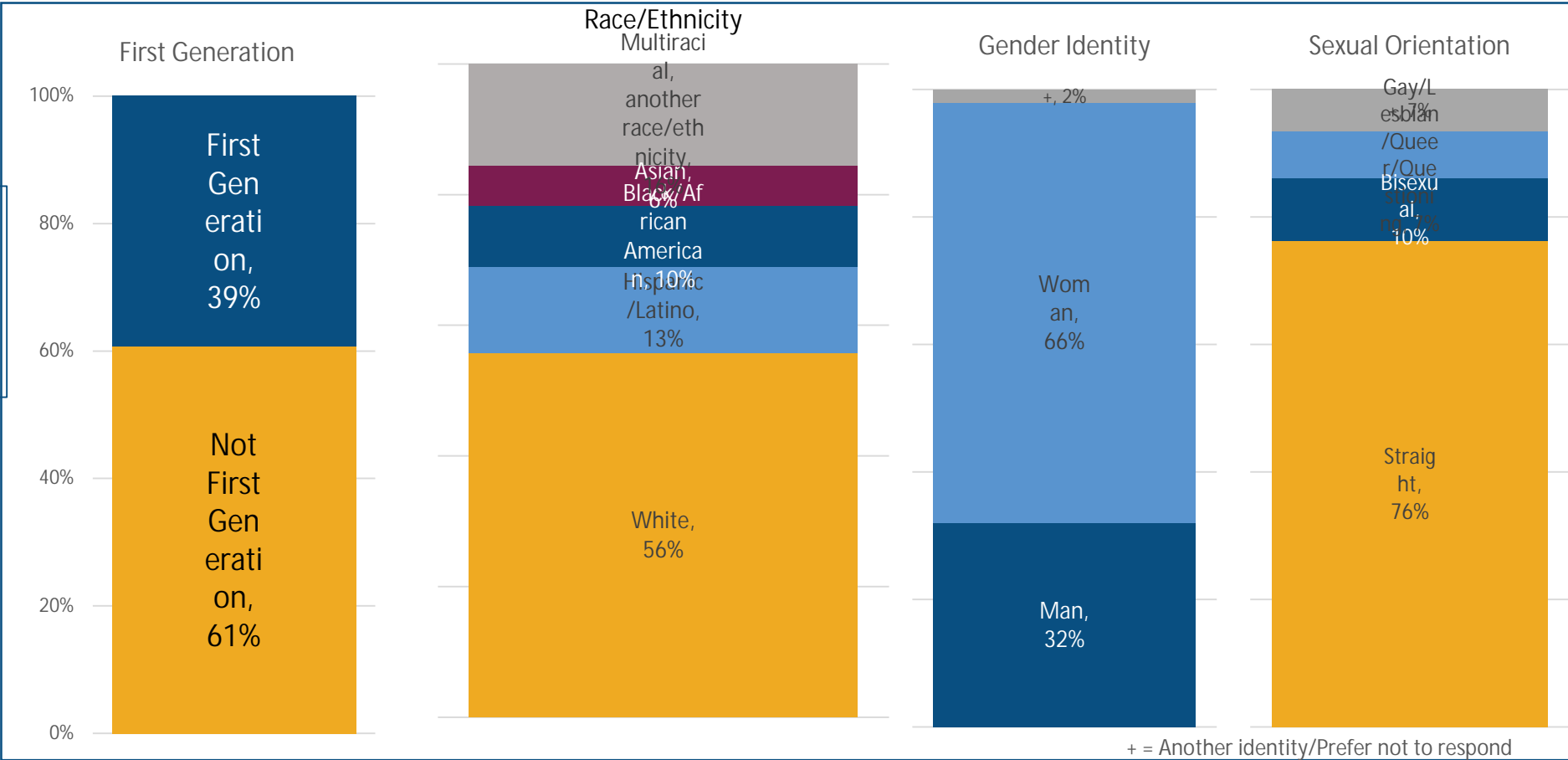
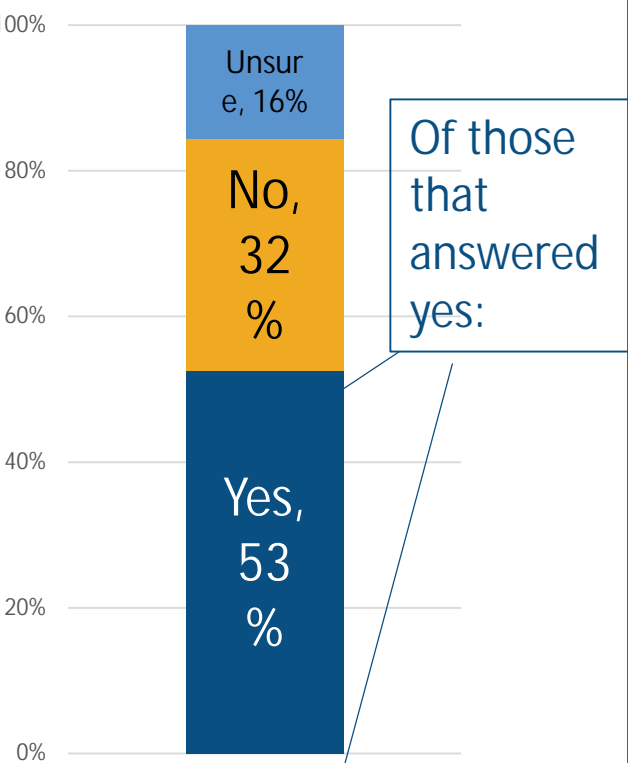
+ = Another identity/Prefer not to respond

FYS Participation



What does NSSE data tell us about participation in a first-year seminar?

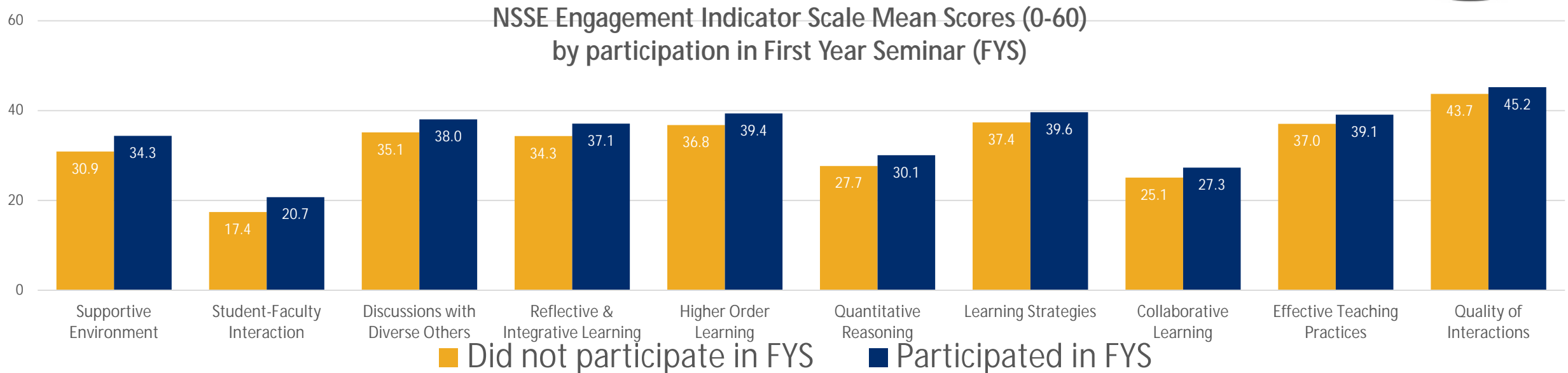
Have you participated in a First-year seminar?



FYS and Outcomes



What does NSSE data tell us about participation in a first-year seminar? Engagement Indicator Scale scores improve when comparing those that **participated in a FY seminar (in blue)** compared to those that **did not participate (in yellow)**.



FYS and Outcomes



What does NSSE data tell us about participation in a first-year seminar?

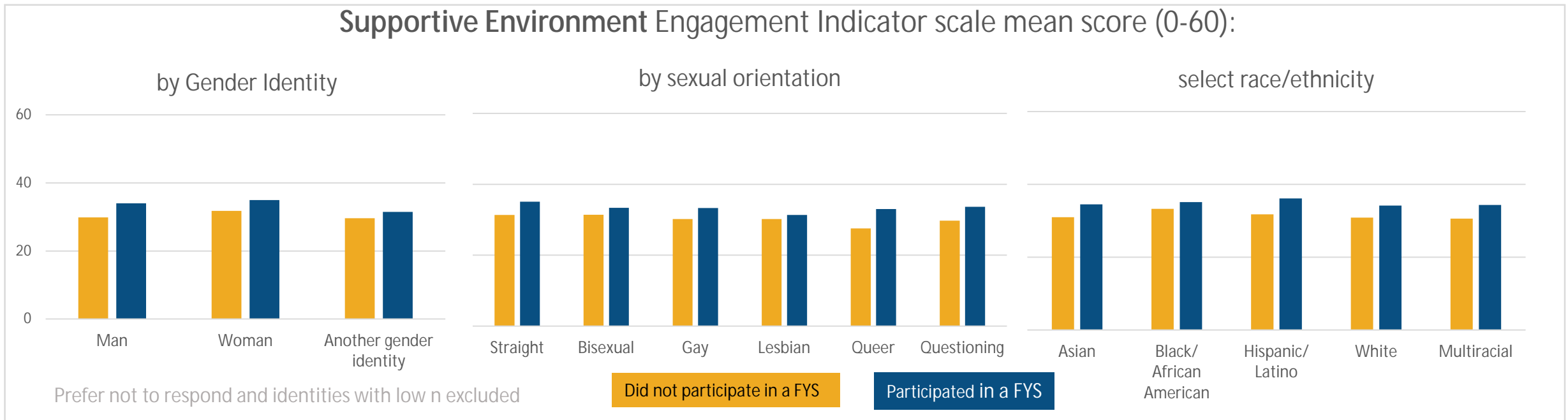
- There is a statistically significant, positive Correlation between FYS participation and the engagement indicators. However, the effect of participation is small.
- The engagement indicators with the highest effect:
 - **Supportive Environment ($r^2 = .123$)**
Driven by connection to campus resources and learning support, and institutional support for campus events that address important issues
 - **Student-faculty Interaction ($r^2 = .116$)**
Driven by more frequent discussions about academic performance and career
 - **Reflective & Integrative Learning ($r^2 = .115$)**
FYS participants more frequently include diverse perspectives in course work, connect learning to societal issues, and combine ideas from different courses

FYS and Outcomes



What does NSSE data tell us about participation in a first-year seminar?

- Comparing FYS participation across select identity groups, the benefits of FYS participation are consistent.



- First-generation students see some stronger benefits when participating in a FYS...

FYS and Outcomes



First-Gen Students and First-year Seminars

- Comparing participation/non-participation in a FYS, **first gen students show stronger engagement** indicator scores in:
 - **Supportive Environment**, particularly driven by perception of institutional support for:
 - overall well-being,
 - attending events that address social/economic/political issues,
 - opportunities to be involved socially
 - **Student-Faculty Interaction**, First-Gen students appear to discuss their career ambitions and their academic performance with faculty more
 - **Discussions with Diverse Others**: more discussions with those of different religious backgrounds, followed by those with different economic backgrounds
- **First Generation status has a slightly negative correlation with all engagement indicators, except those that participate in a FYS**

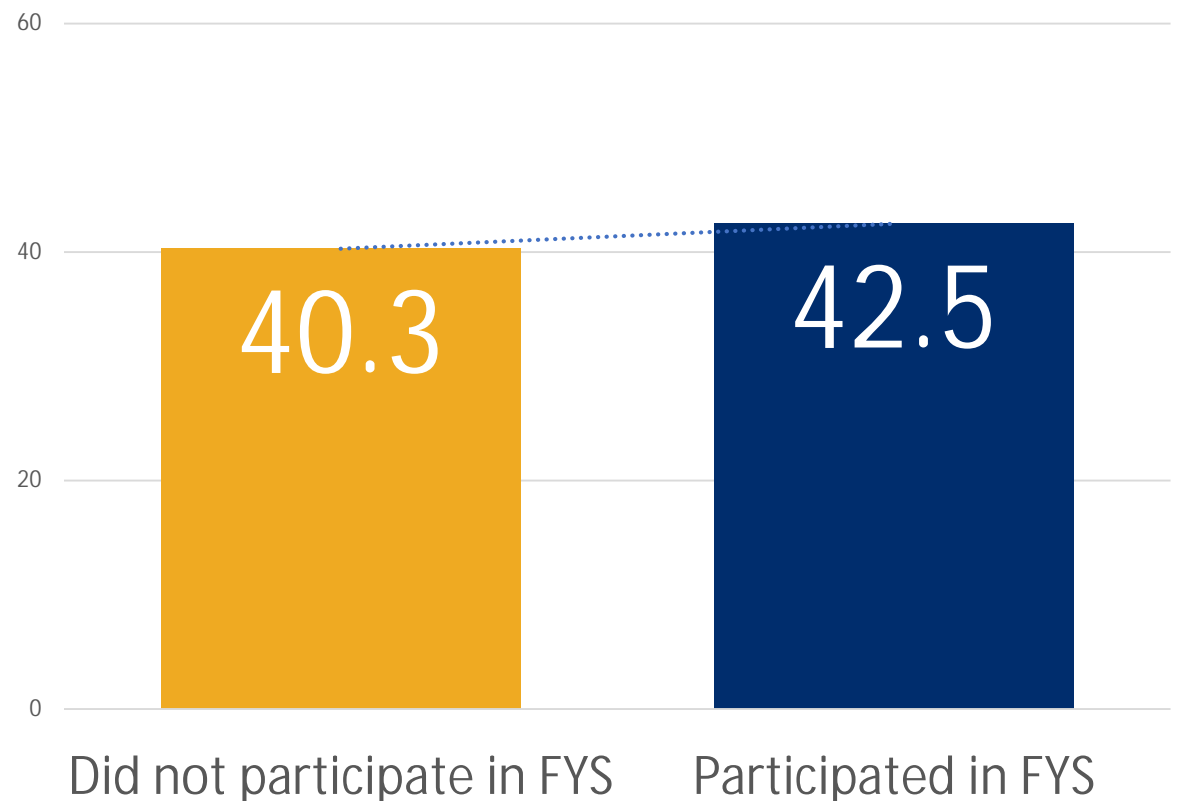
FYS and Outcomes: Belonging



Sense of Belonging and FYS

- Participation in a FYS **increases sense of belonging** at their institution for all students
- Participation in a FYS **appears to help students of underserved identities** develop a sense of belonging slightly more.

Sense of Belonging Scale Mean Score (0-60) by participation in FYS



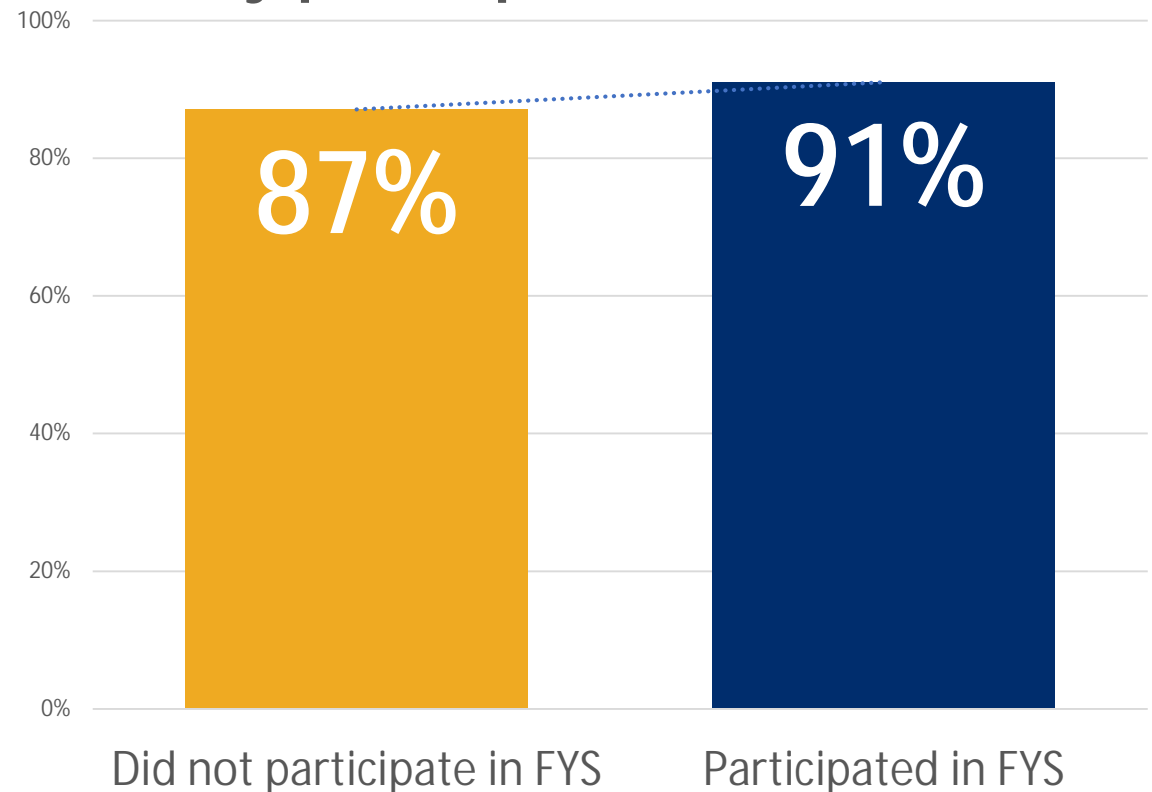
FYS and Outcomes: Retention



Likelihood to Return

- Students who participate in a FYS indicate they are more likely to return to their institution

Likely to Return Mean Score (0-1)
by participation in FYS



FYS and Outcomes: Overall



- Overall, participation in a FYS appears to help across various aspects of the engagement during the first-year experience.
- Yet, while statistically significant, these benefits are **generally fairly small** in quantitative measures, warranting further research.
- **Results evaluating seminar type** (learning support/academic seminar) and required/elective seminars are inconclusive, more research is needed.
- The FYS question has been updated for NSSE 2022 – *slight change to increase comprehension*

4. During the current school year, did you take a course intended for first-year students as described below?

- Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
- a. A course that introduces students to college and helps develop success skills (study skills, goal setting, time management, etc.)
 - b. A first-year seminar or other course focused on a specialized topic or academic subject that emphasizes discussion and analysis

Your Reflections on NSSE FYS Results



- Is participation what we expected? Are we reaching students who could benefit?
- Are the associations between FYS participation and Engagement Indicators what we desire? What explains low correlations?
- Are student populations we want to support benefiting from FYS?
- Does FYS participation help foster sense of belonging and retention in ways we intend? What might strengthen these connections?



Studying the Impact of FYS

Challenges:

- Developing an item to ask about FY Seminars that students understand and that reflects variety in seminars across institutions
- Capturing and honoring customized FYS design
- Getting away from general impact, to assessing influence for minoritized student populations, and to support the students who stand to benefit
- Employing better analyses to isolate the influence of FYS for ROI

- *What are you exploring at your institution?*
- *What questions do you have about your FYS?*
- *What evidence do you rely on to assess value?*

Reflecting on FYS

- What ideas are you taking away today about designing FYS for HIP quality?
- What more should we explore to assess FYS quality and impact?
- Check out NSSE FY & Senior Transition Topical Module (*available to append to NSSE or licensed as a standalone tool*)

DON'T WAIT!

Experience at least 3 HIP courses before you graduate



TALK TO YOUR ADVISOR

TODAY!

THANK YOU!

Check out the “HIP Quality & Equity” Project and NSSE’s FYS Module



Comprehensive Report

A summary of initial project findings: *Assessing Quality and Equity in High-Impact Practices.*

[Read the report](#)

Getting Beyond the Label: Three Takes on Quality in High-Impact Practices

Liberal Education **BLOG**



First-Year Experiences and Senior Transitions Topical Module (2022)

First-Year Experiences

1. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?

Response options: Very often, Often, Sometimes, Never

a. Studied when there were other interesting things to do

4. During the current school year, did you take a course intended for first-year students as described below?

Response options: Yes, No, Unsure

a. A course that introduces students to college and helps develop success skills (study skills, goal setting, time management, etc.)

b. A first-year seminar or other course focused on a specialized topic or academic subject that emphasizes discussion and analysis

<https://nsse.indiana.edu/nsse/survey-instruments/topical-modules/fy-experiences-sr-transitions.html>