The Quality of Engagement: Using Data to Advance Student Learning and the Public Good

Engagement Scholarship Consortium – October 7, 2026



Dr. Jillian Kinzie

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)

Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research

NSSE national survey of student engagement

The Quality of Engagement: Using Data to Advance Student Learning and the Public Good

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My points of view: Higher education scholar of student development & success, assessment practice, quality improvement, and teaching & learning

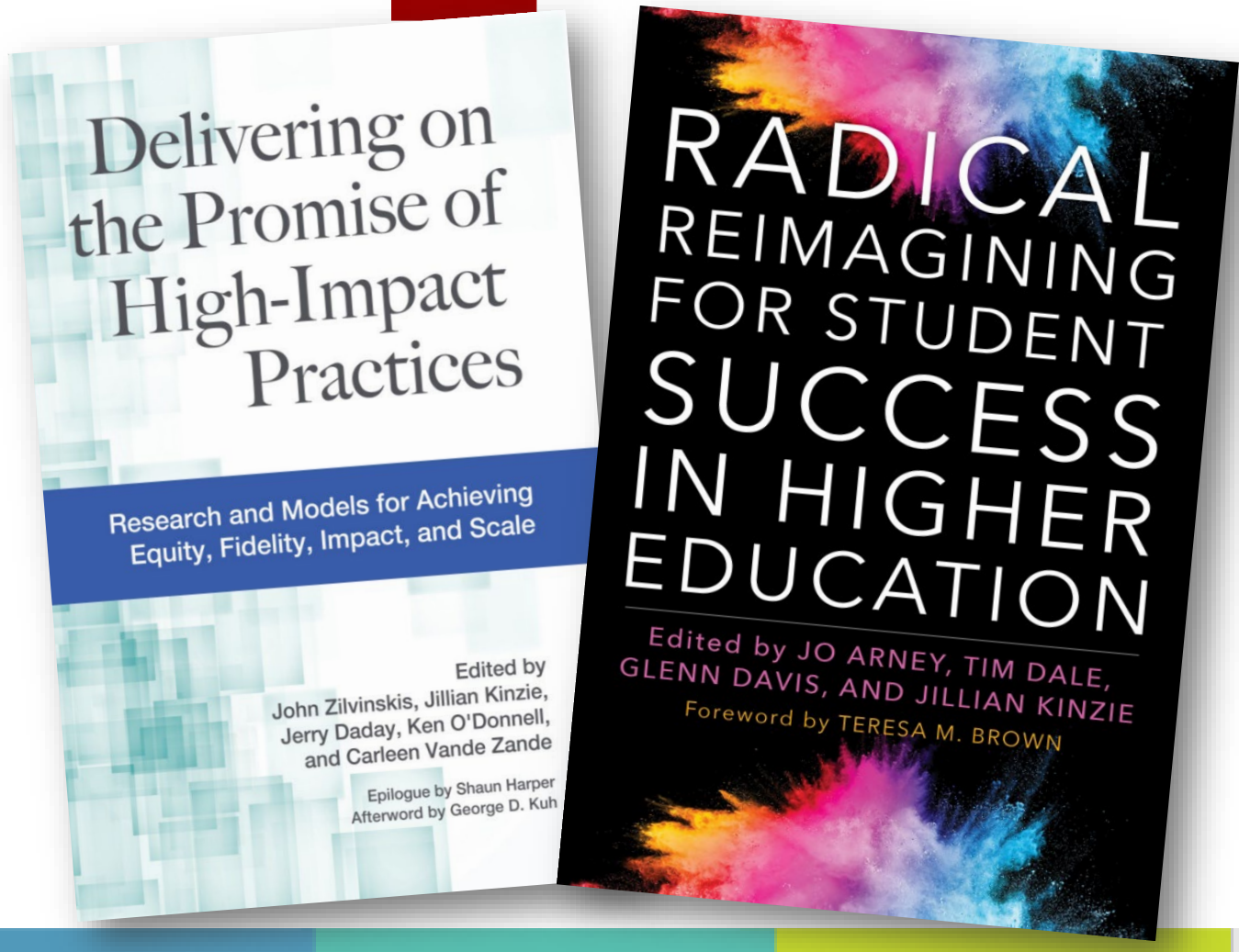
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NSSE national survey of student engagement

26 Year Survey Project

7 million students @

1,600 4 yr. institutions



NSSE asks students about their engagement in effective practices…

- effort in educationally purposeful activities
- being active, collaborative learners
- interacting at substantive levels with peers & faculty, supervisors
- participating in experiential learning… research, internships, service, real-world contexts
- reflecting on who they are becoming
- applying course learning to contexts
- developing rich relationships
- contributing to and benefiting from a supportive, inclusive environment

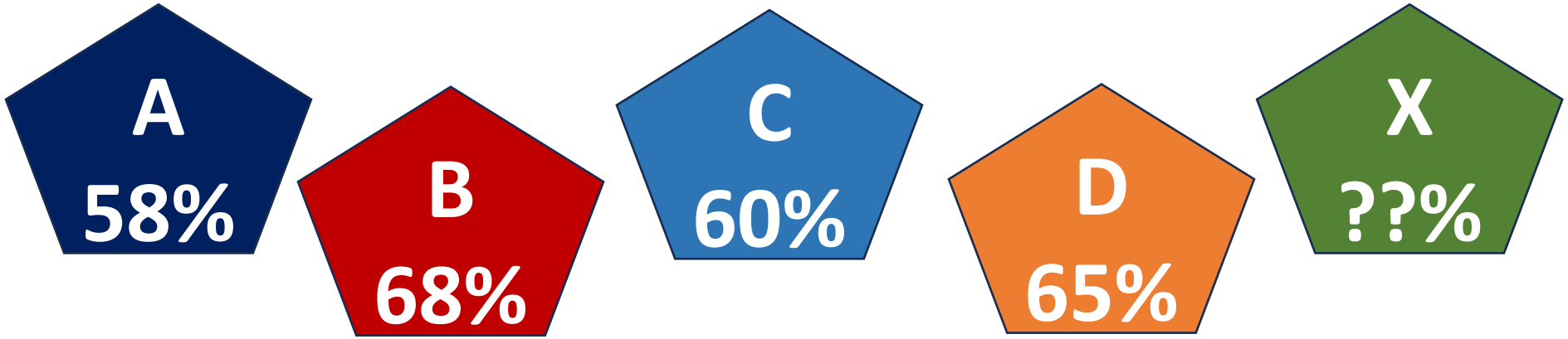


Student Data about Community-Engaged Learning – NSSE Integrated Learning

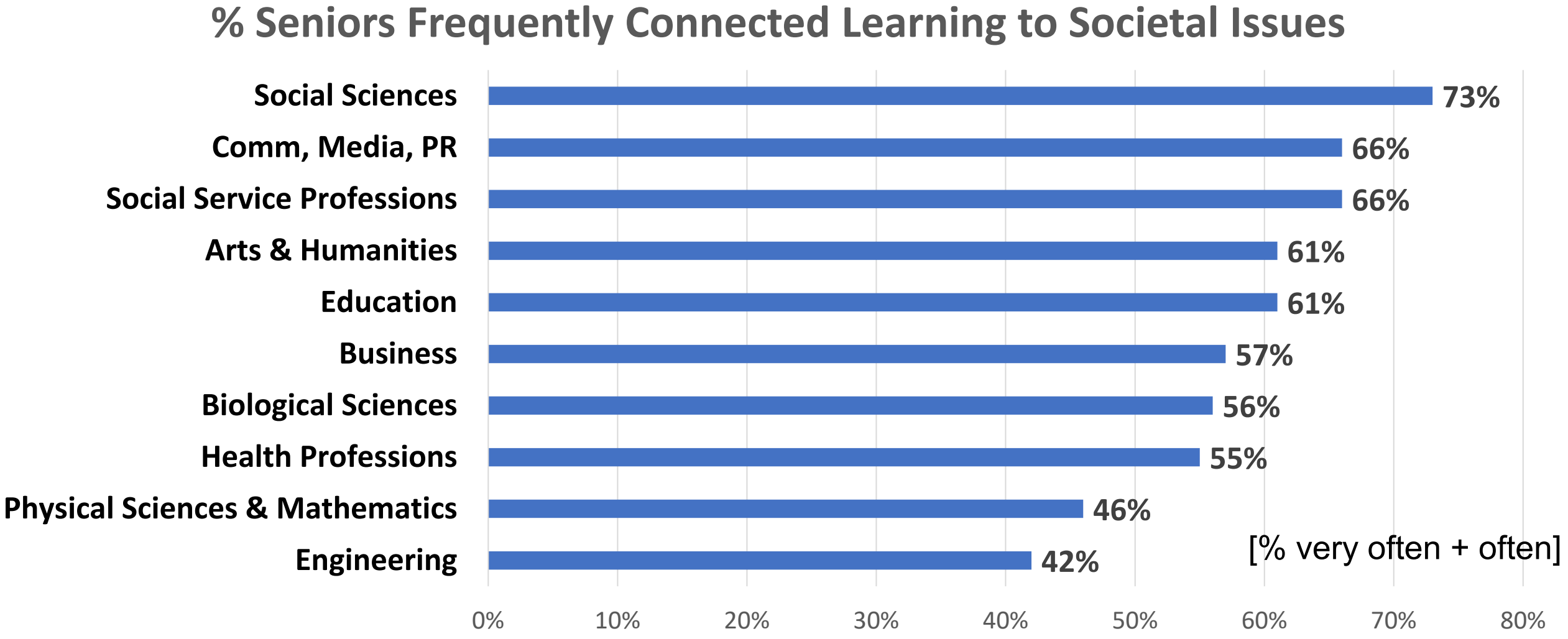
During their final year, what percentage of Seniors frequently ("very often" + "often") connected their learning to societal problems or issues?

65% **vs. 61% Research Univ.**

Compared to select ESC members:



Student Data about Community-Engaged Learning – Integrated Learning By Major Field





What's your reaction to this data point? Success story or missed opportunity?

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Not surprised
My field is excelling. I'm surprised that health professions is so low though. And engineering should be doing this well!
Curious about how students understood the question
Opportunity (for interdisciplinary social science needed to work with engineers)
Challenge
Wish it was better
Encouraged! Both
😳
Missed opportunity! We have work to do with faculty writ large.
🎉
Not surprising

Surprised
Aligns with service oriented fields
Disappointed in our STEM folks
Not surprised especially among engineers
Both. More room for work
Need more connection with society issues.
Surprising Unsurprising
More promising than expected
Success
Missed opportunity
SHOCKING
Both!
Lots of room for improvement
Missed opportunity

We're doing good, but we could be doing better
Success, but with opportunity!
Higher than I thought it would be!
Not surprised
Pleasantly surprised
👍
Shock Both
Promising
Both
Both!
Surprised
Mixed bag
HUGGGGGGGGGE success story

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Transformative, Experiential Learning, High-Impact Practices Matter

11 HIPs

est. 2008, 2016

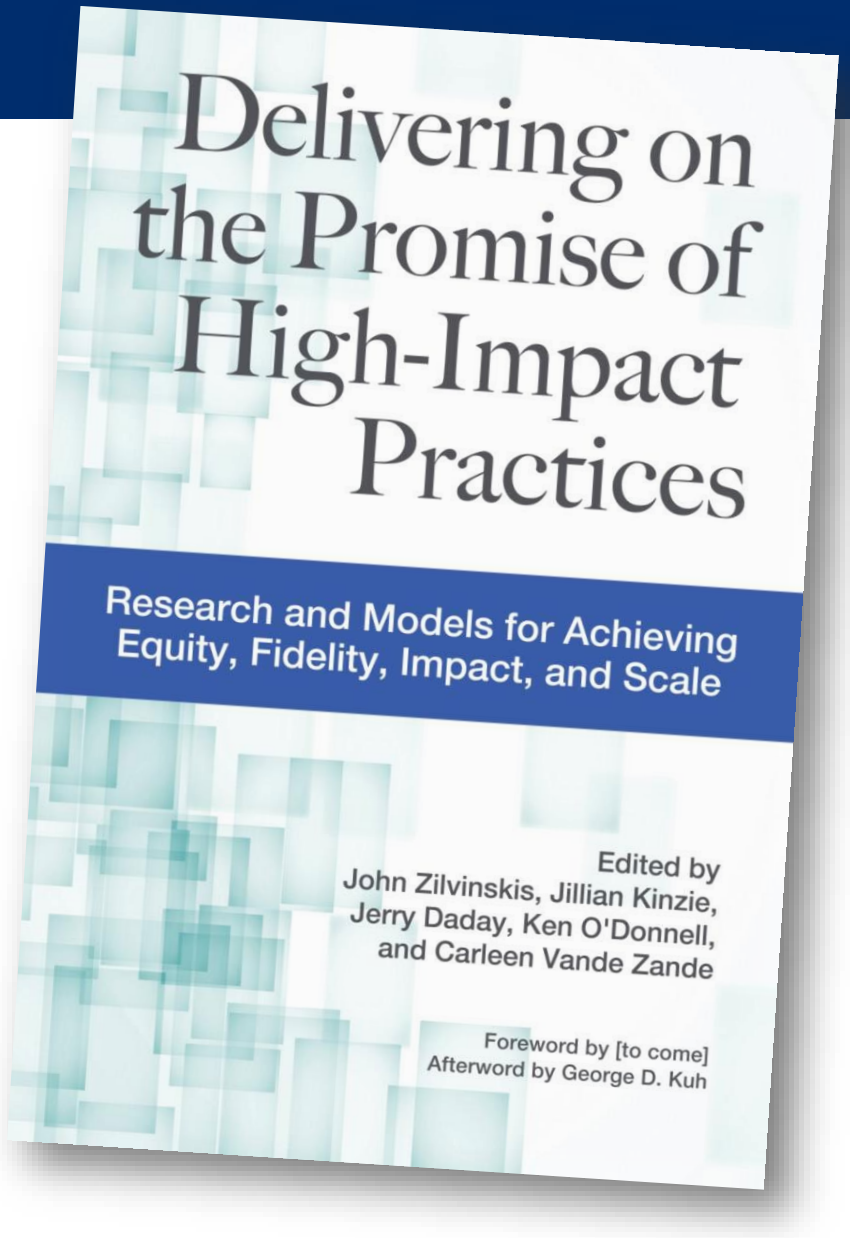
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AAC&U

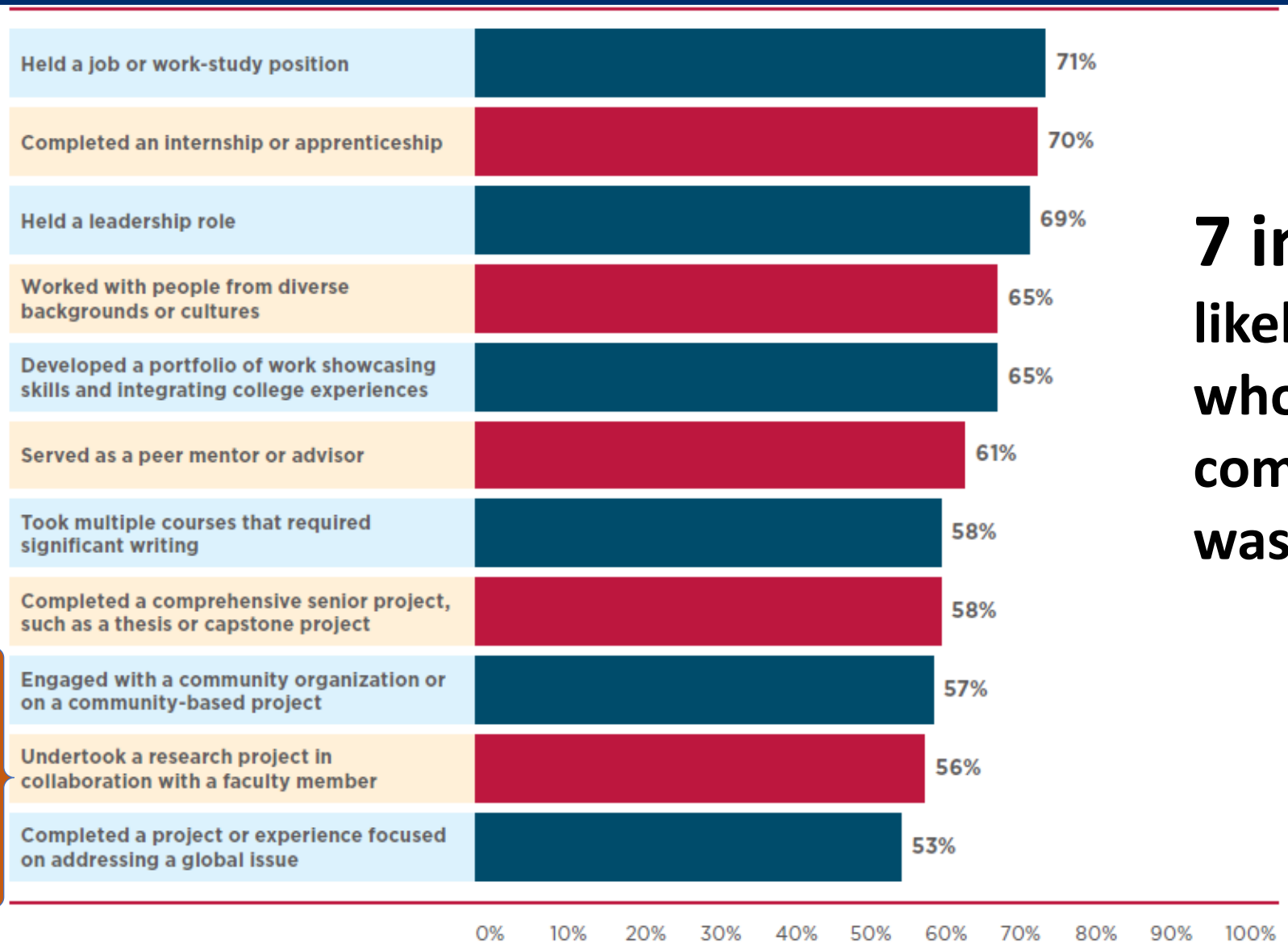


Solid Evidence of HIP Value

- Positive association with retention, graduation, engagement, career preparation & employment, graduate education, learning outcomes
- Salutary benefits for historically underrepresented students
- Faculty enjoy HIPs!
- Endorsed by employers
- Heavy investment, a fixture in high-quality education



Employers “much more” likely to consider a graduate with specific engagement experiences

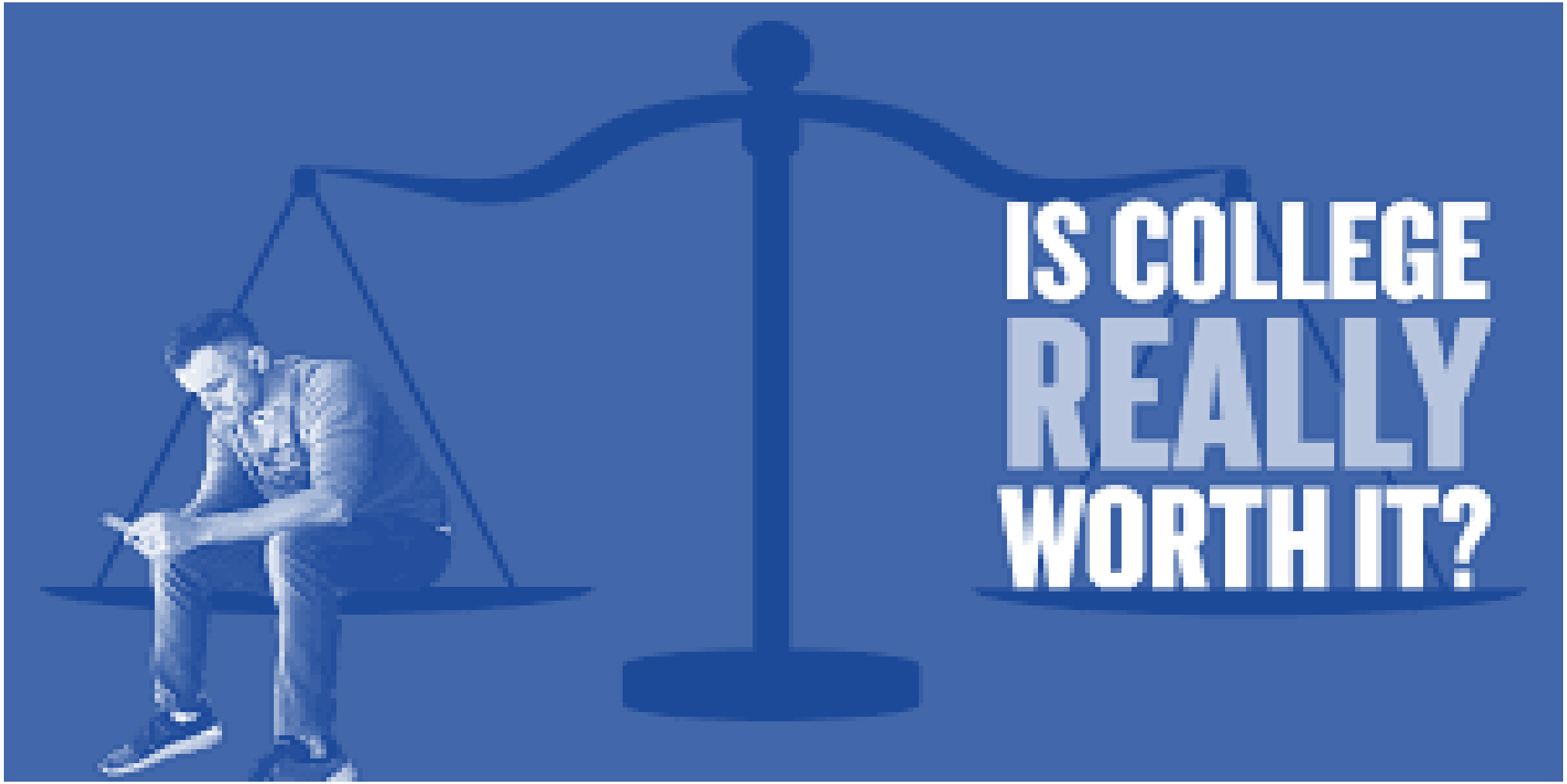


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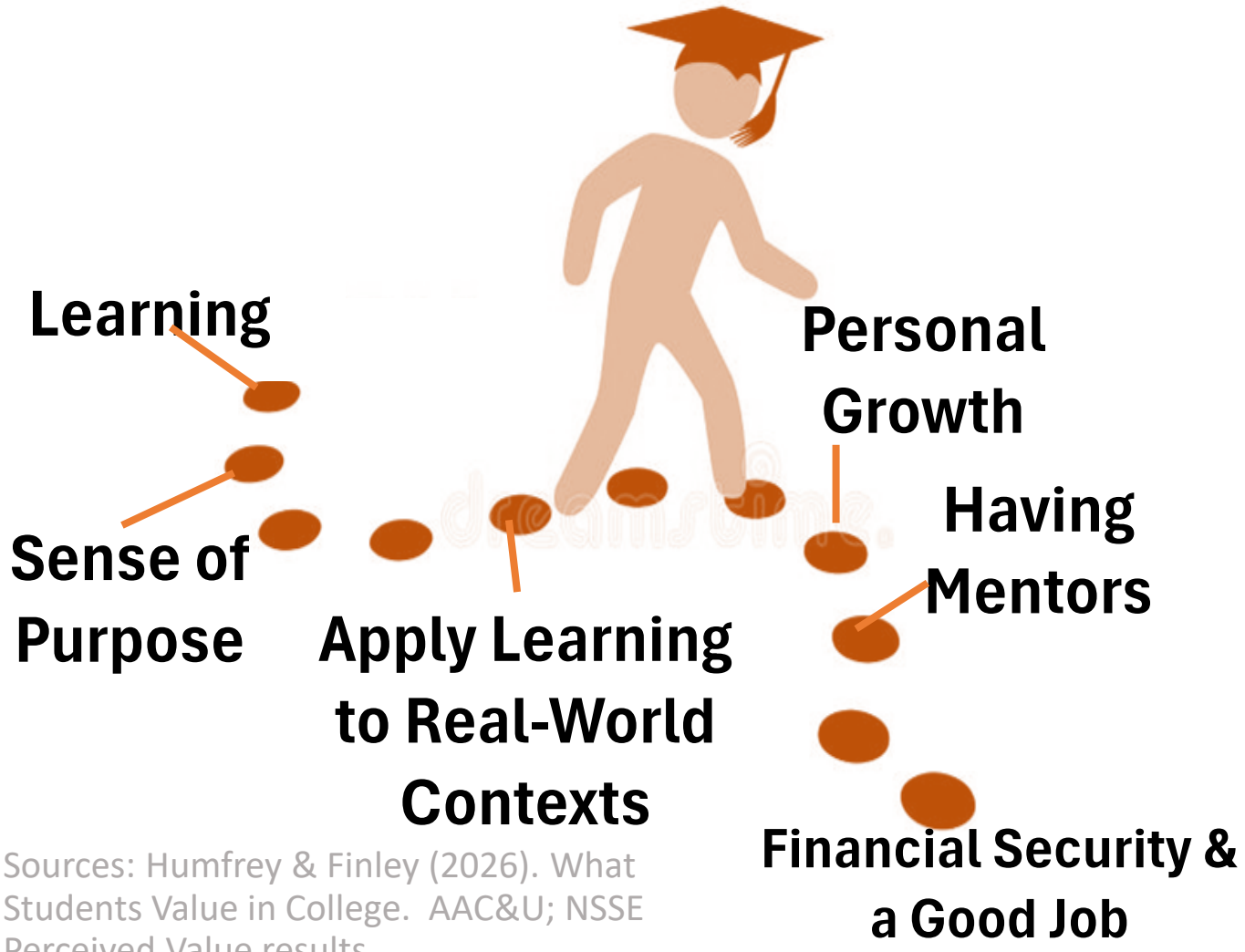
7 in 10 employers more likely to hire candidate who: held job/work-study; completed internship; or was in leadership role

Finley, A. (2023). The Career-Ready Graduate: What Employers Say about the Difference College Makes. AAC&U

Current Context of College Value



What do Students Say they Value about their College Education?



Sources: Humfrey & Finley (2026). What Students Value in College. AAC&U; NSSE Perceived Value results

Students placed the highest level of importance on their degree connecting them to a career that aligns with their values & interests – NSSE 2026

Spotlight on What Students Most Value



Mentorship & faculty relationships are key to students' experience of value

76% = mentorship was “very” or “extremely” valuable, but only half experienced mentoring.

Applied, Real World Learning



Students identified internships, service-learning, employment experiences & other forms of applied learning…Yet many report limited access to these opportunities (AAC&U 2026)

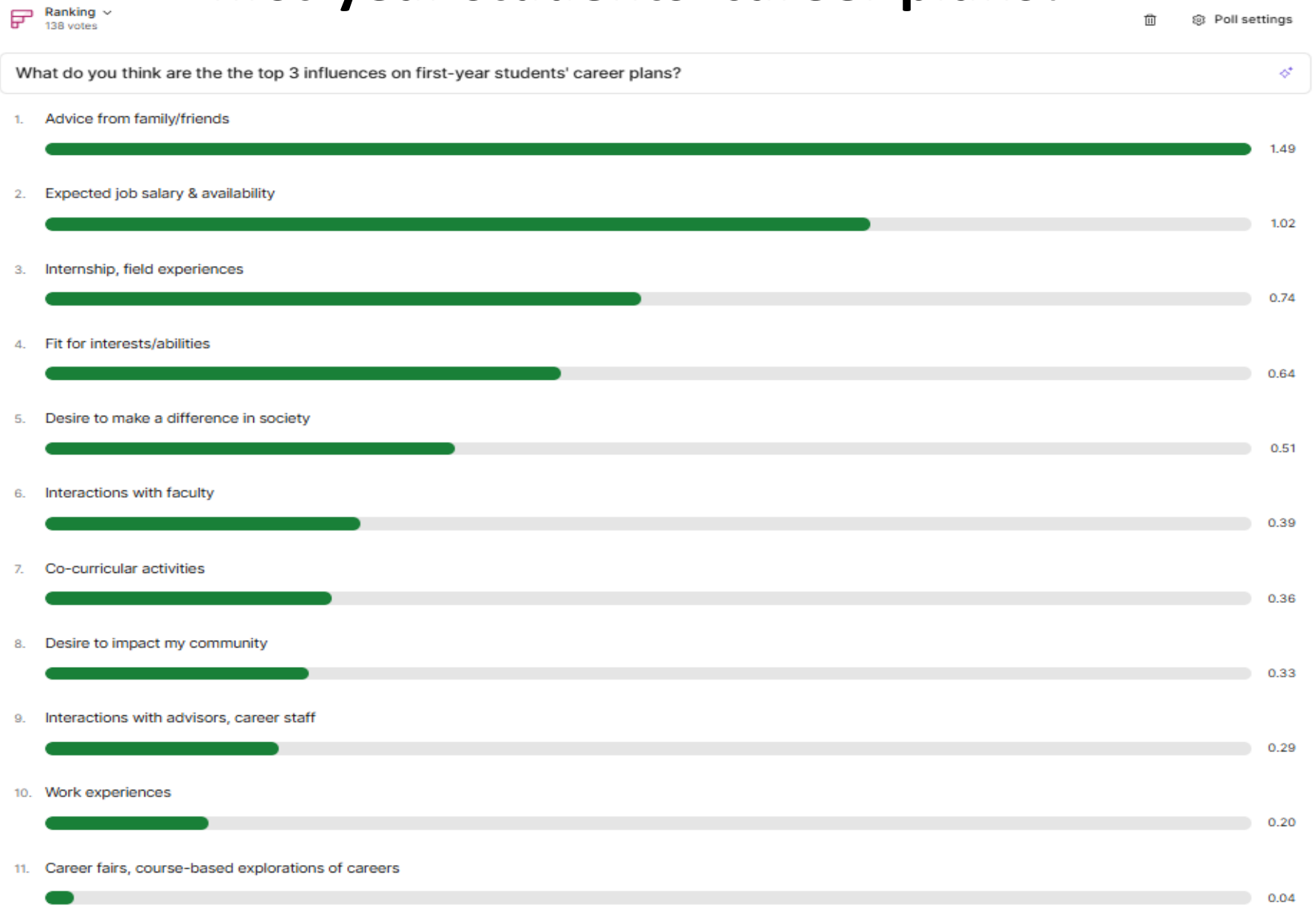
What do First-Year Students Say are the Top 3 Influences on their Career Plans?

1. Advice from family/friends
2. Interactions with faculty
3. Interactions with advisors, career services staff, coaches
4. Co-curricular activities
5. Internship, field experience
6. Work experiences
7. Career fairs, course-based explorations of career
8. Expected job salary & availability
9. Fit for interests/abilities
10. Desire to impact my community
11. Desire to make a difference in society

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What do you think are the top 3 influences on first-year students' career plans?

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Students' Top Influences (NSSE 2024-25)

First Year Students	ITEMS: To what extent…influenced your career plans? (ranked 1-5, "% very much + quite a bit")	Seniors
4	1. Advice from family/friends	
	2. Interactions w/ faculty	
	3. Interactions w/ advisors, career staff, coaches	
	4. Co-curricular activities	
	5. Internship, field experience	5
	6. Work experiences	4
	7. Career fairs, course-based explorations of career	
5	8. Expected job salary & availability	
1	9. Fit for interests/abilities	1
2	10. Desire to impact my community	2
3	11. Desire to make a difference in society	3

NSSE 24-25; N=165 schools)

Need More Community Engaged, HIP, Experiential Learning

Higher Education Undone:

An Argument for More Experiential Learning

By Jerry Daday, Ken O'Donnell, Carleen Vande Zande, Jillian Kinzie, and John Zilvinskis



Jerry Daday is a Professor of Sociology and the Executive Associate Dean of the Institute for Engaged Learning at Indiana University Indianapolis.



Ken O'Donnell is the Vice Provost at California State University Dominguez Hills.



Carleen Vande Zande is the Chief Academic Officer at the National Association of Higher Education Systems.



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John Zilvinskis is an Associate Professor at Binghamton University, State University of New York.

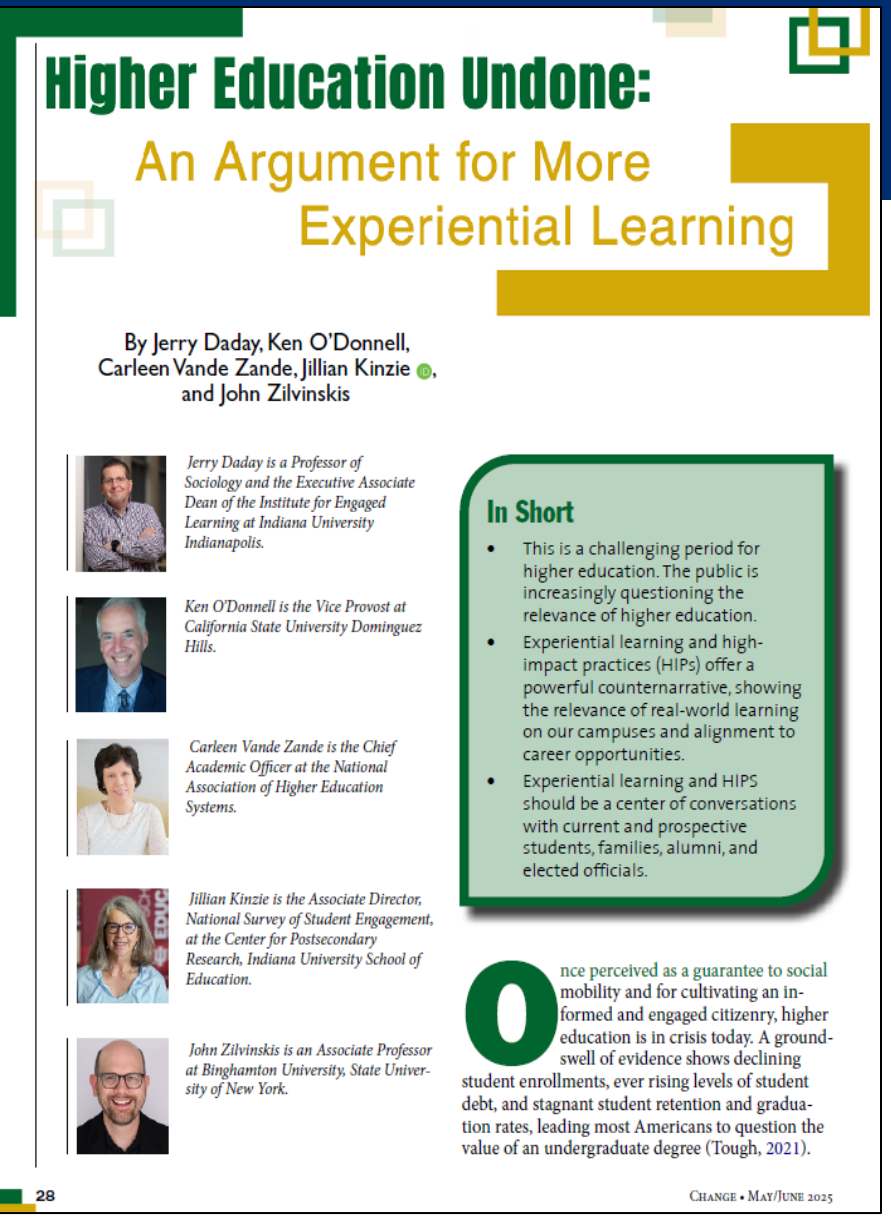
In Short

- This is a challenging period for higher education. The public is increasingly questioning the relevance of higher education.
- Experiential learning and high-impact practices (HIPs) offer a powerful counternarrative, showing the relevance of real-world learning on our campuses and alignment to career opportunities.
- Experiential learning and HIPS should be a center of conversations with current and prospective students, families, alumni, and elected officials.

Once perceived as a guarantee to social mobility and for cultivating an informed and engaged citizenry, higher education is in crisis today. A groundswell of evidence shows declining student enrollments, ever rising levels of student debt, and stagnant student retention and graduation rates, leading most Americans to question the value of an undergraduate degree (Tough, 2021).



Why Community Engaged, HIP, Experiential Learning Now?



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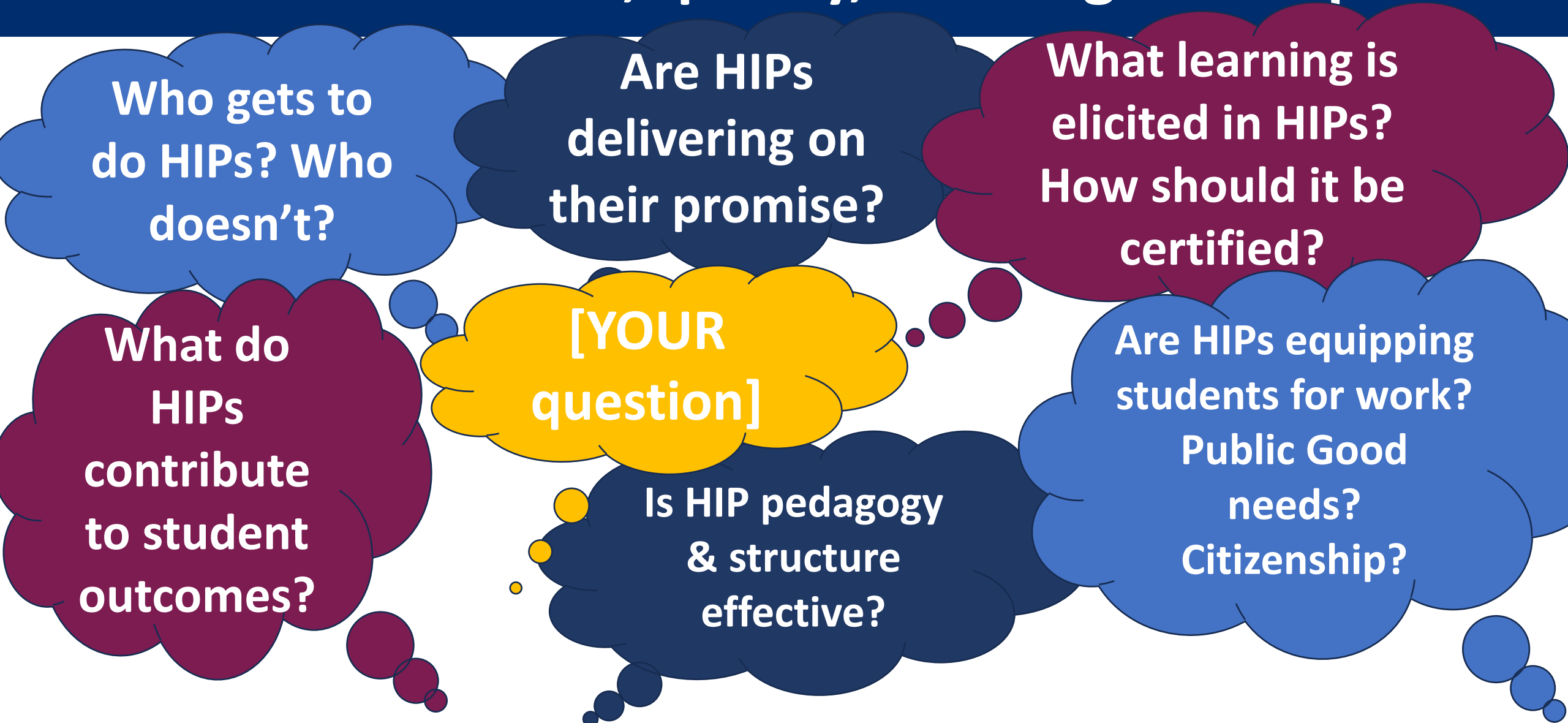
Community-Engaged, Experiential learning (HIPs) offers **counternarrative to question of value**, showing relevance of real-world learning on campus & alignment to career

Even more essential with GenAI – providing authentic experiences and learning that cannot be found in GenAI platforms and tools

Rests on **long tradition of effective**, active pedagogy that faculty enjoy, students benefit & learning sticks

Offers a **(re)humanizing opportunity** for education

As universities seek to add more HIPs, questions arise about access, quality, learning and impact



Rising Need for Data and Assessment



- **Questions of public trust, value and accountability call on institutions to lead with purpose and transparency**
- **Engagement scholarship is anchored in accountability and evidentiary criteria**
- **Value assessment as the systematic collection and analysis of data to support educational decision-making *and improve student learning***

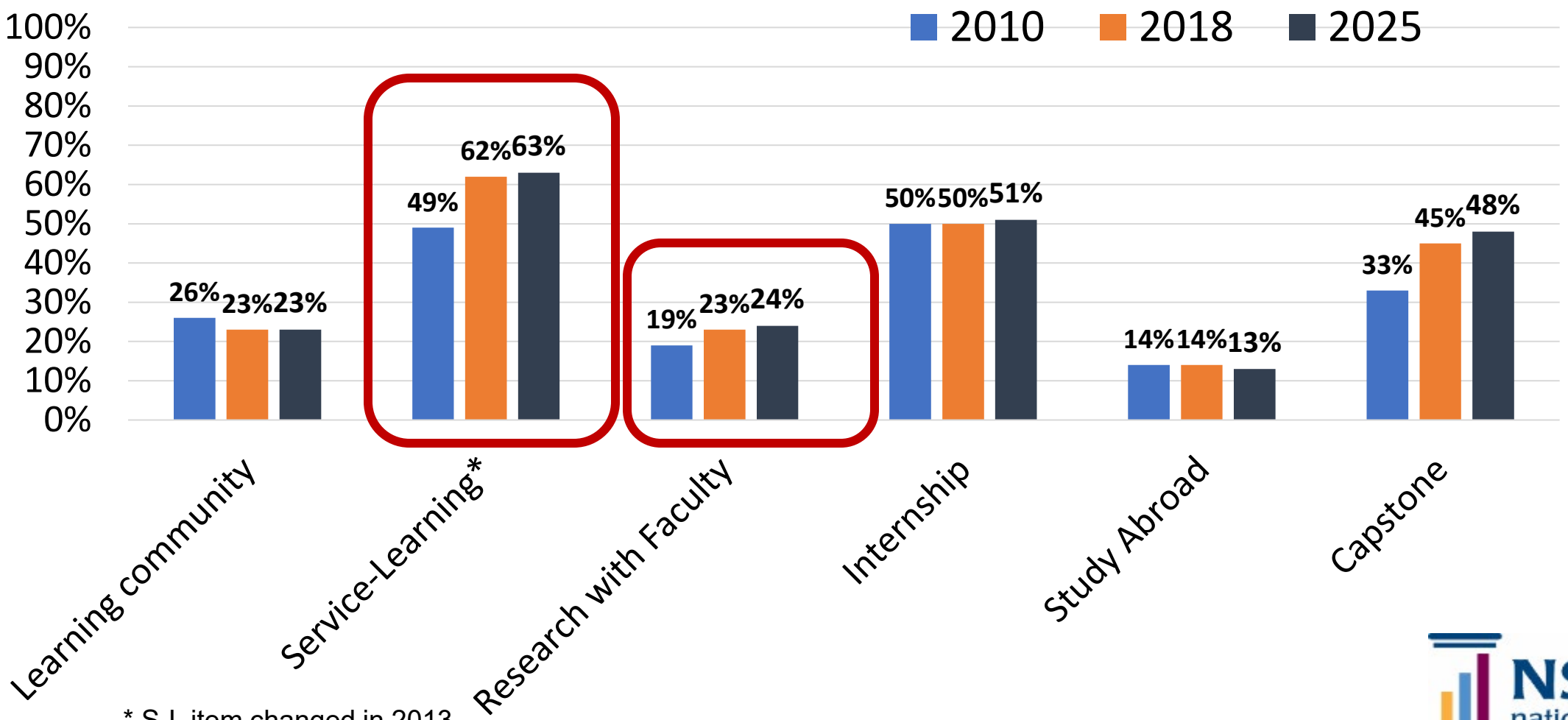
Assessment and the HIP Context: 4 Significant Themes



What do you know about these themes in your community engaged learning?

Participation

Participation in High-Impact Practice (HIPs) 2010, 2018, 2025



* S-L item changed in 2013, but is roughly approximate

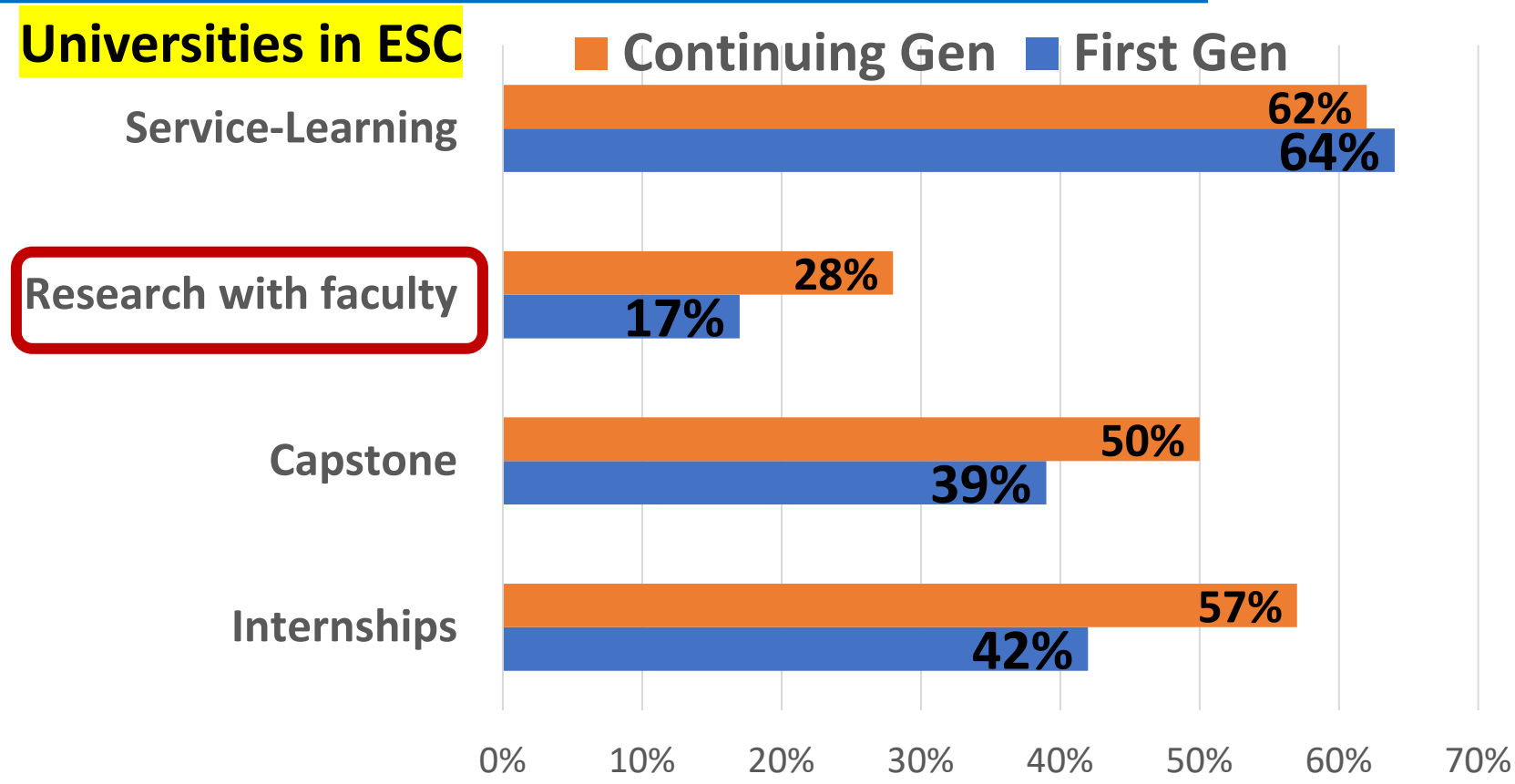
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Equity

One measure of HIP equity is "all access"

% Seniors "No HIP" (NSSE 2026) = 13%

Some groups of historically underserved students do HIPs less—those *first in their families* to attend college & *African-American students* in particular



Quality

8 HIP Qualities



To be a HIP, the experience must feature these elements
(Kuh & O'Donnell, 2013)

- High Performance Expectations
- Time & Effort
- Substantive Interactions
- Exposure to Difference
- Frequent, Constructive Feedback
- Reflection & Integration
- Real-World Application
- Public Demonstration of Competence

Quality

HIP Quality Assessment Findings



Comprehensive Report

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

Read the report

- 8 quality dimensions vary by HIP
- Students in undergraduate research, study abroad, & internships/field experiences consistently had the *most* high-quality experiences
- High expectations, Demonstrating competence, most consistently represented qualities; with reflection and exposure to difference the most variable
- Students are satisfied with HIPs!

Quality

Student Voice in HIP Quality

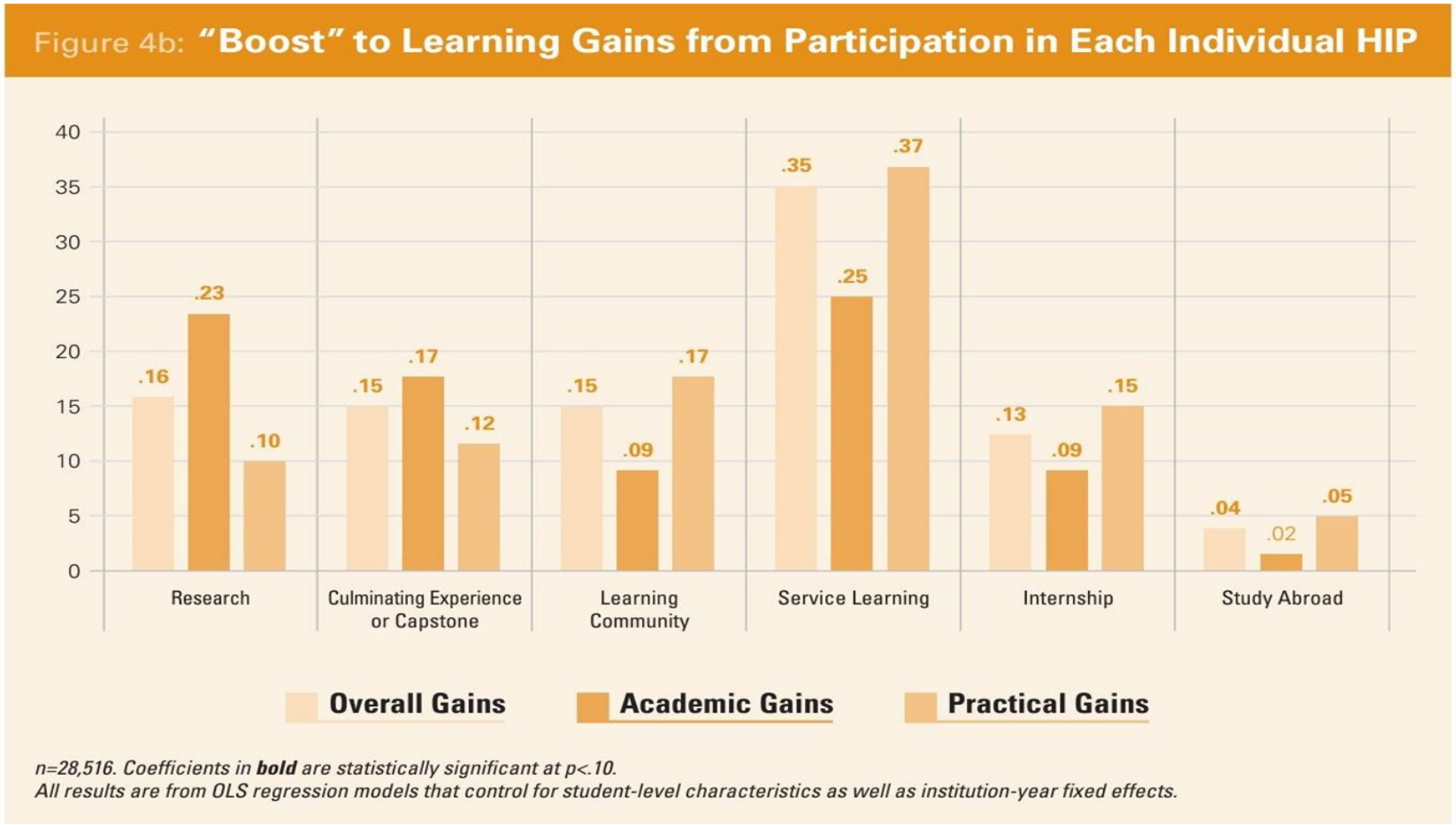
It gave me a chance to help the community and interact with local government officials.

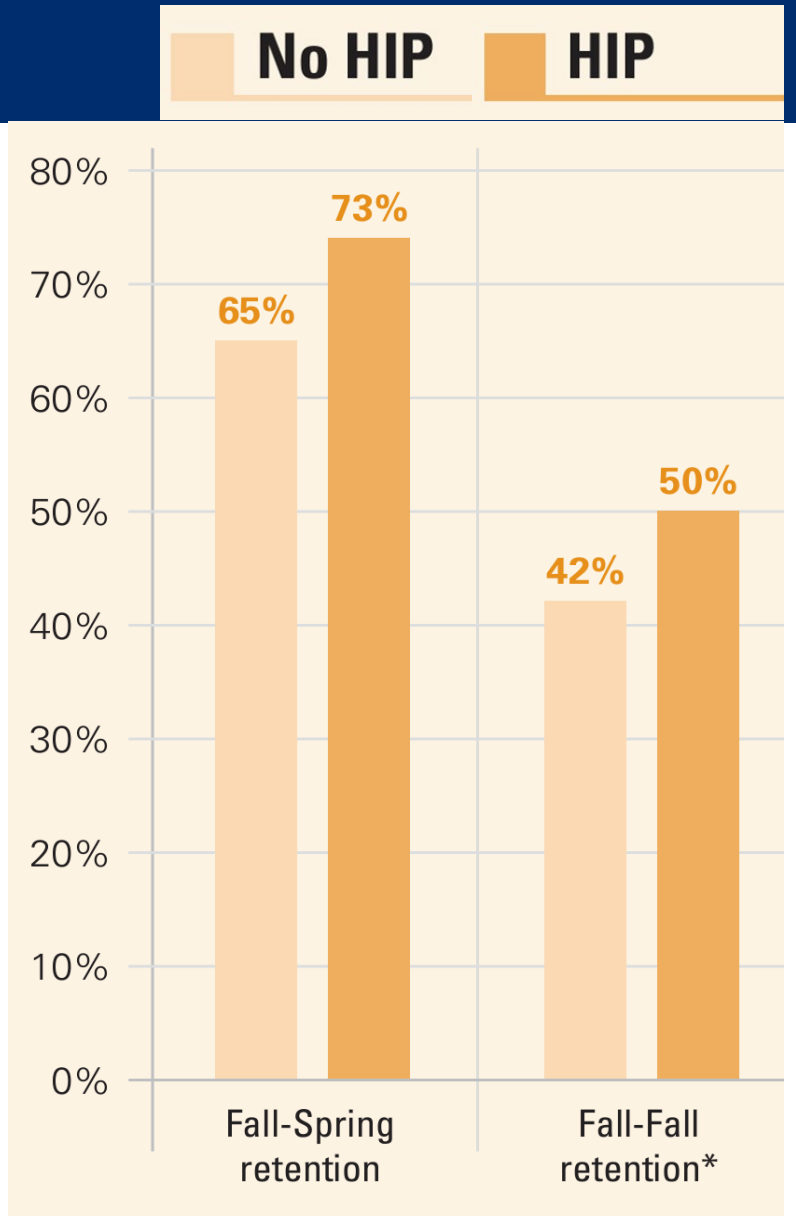
This service-learning experience really impacted me emotionally and opened my eyes up to how important policy and advocacy is in this city. It makes me really want to do more in my community for marginalized groups..

This experience introduced me to new cultures and worldviews. It was very community and land-based, so we got to be outside and work in the environment with local organizations and non-profits. Additionally, we were able to learn about a lot of the behind-the-scenes work that goes into running these organizations and listen to the experiences of the employees and other volunteers from the groups.

Outcomes

HIP Associated Retention & Learning Outcomes



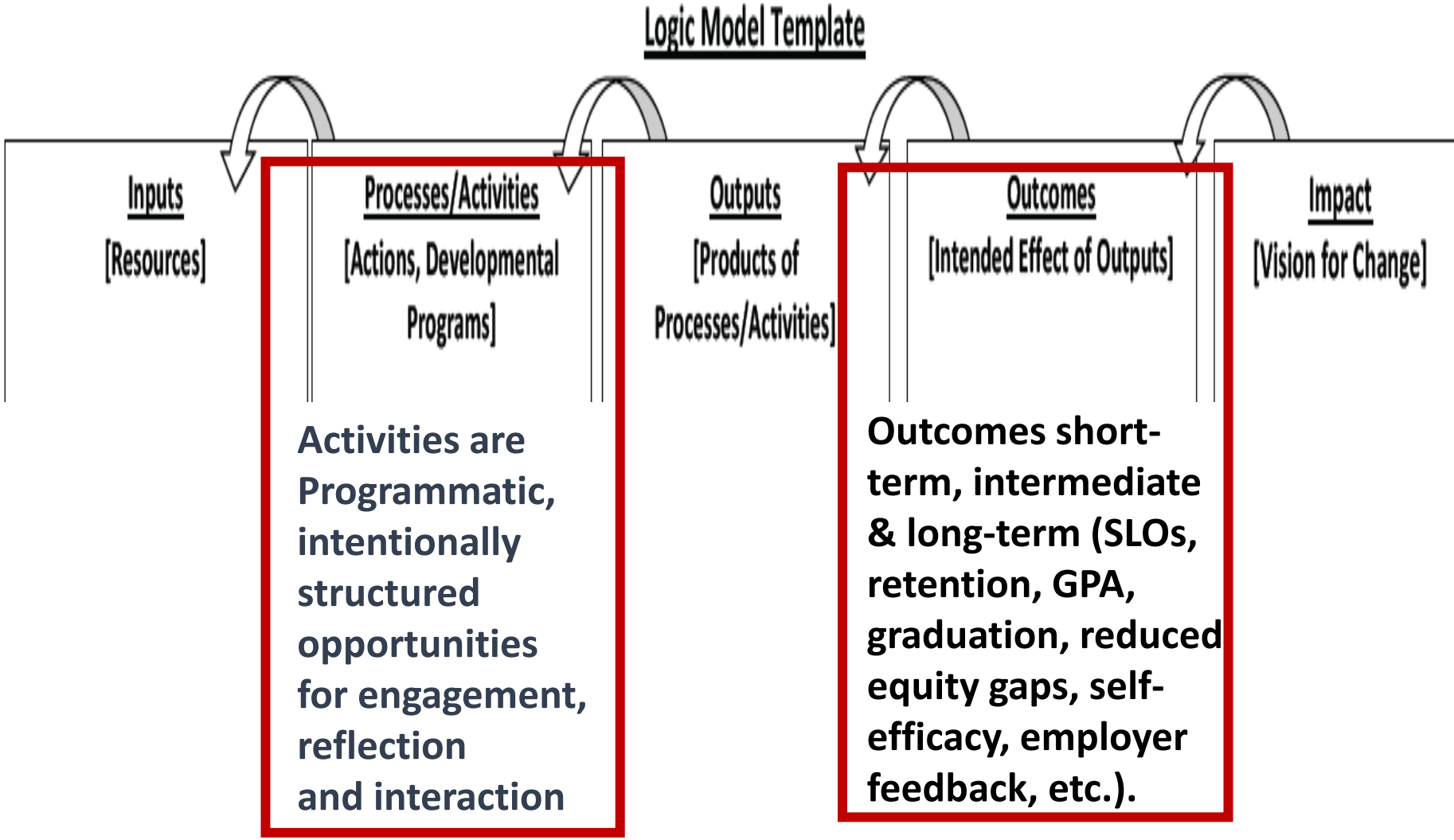


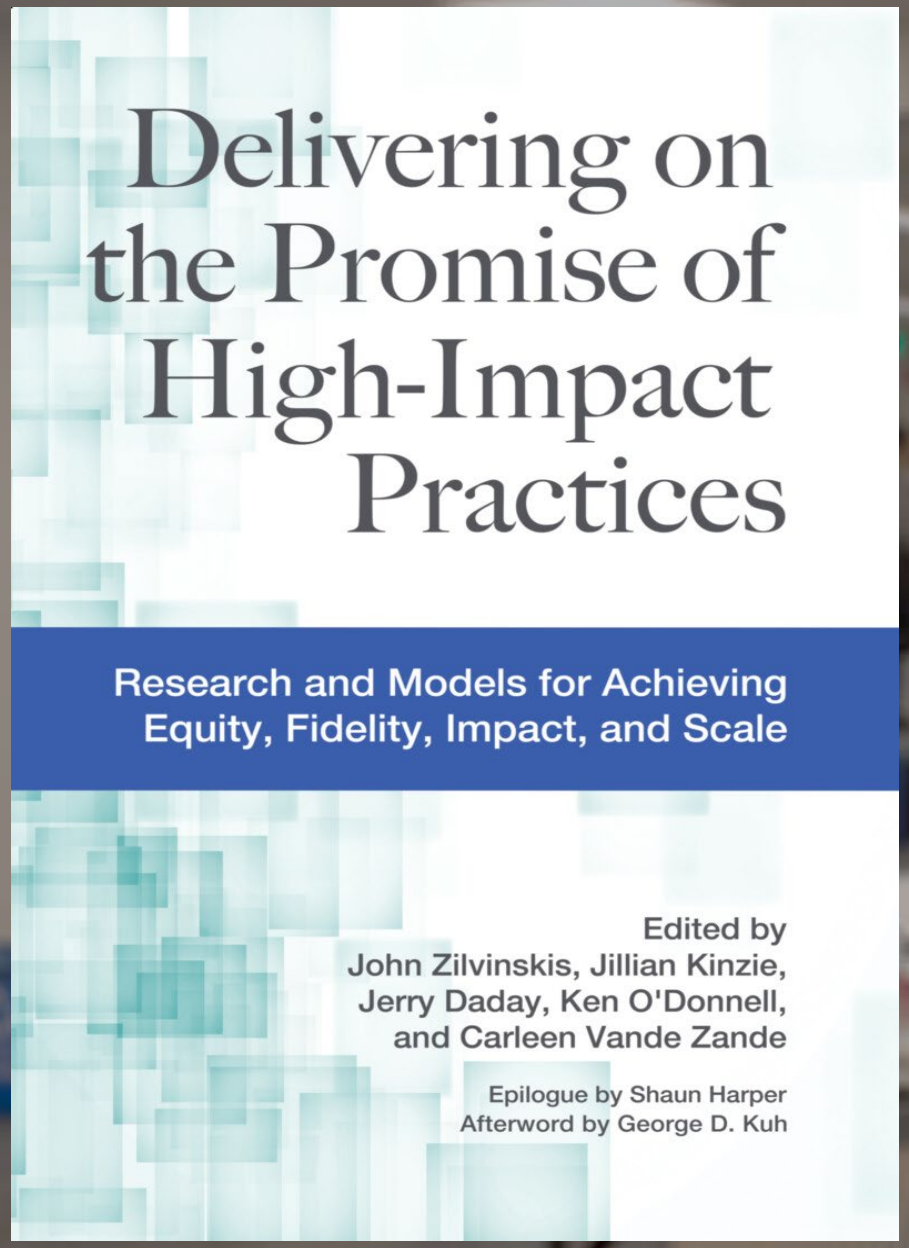
Sources: Valentine, J., Price, D., & Yang, H. (2021). High-impact practices and gains in student learning: Evidence from Georgia, Montana, and Wisconsin. *Lumina Foundation.*

Outcomes

Ashley Finley's *A Comprehensive Approach to Assessment of HIPs*: Logic Model for HIP assessment

Evidence of HIP effect requires assessing more than outcomes alone…includes implementation processes, activities,




Delivering on the Promise of High-Impact Practices
Research and Models for Achieving Equity, Fidelity, Impact, and Scale
Edited by
John Zilvinskis, Jillian Kinzie, Jerry Daday, Ken O'Donnell, and Carleen Vande Zande
Epilogue by Shaun Harper
Afterword by George D. Kuh


Assuring Fidelity
Advancing Equity
Assessing Outcomes
Achieving Scale

Racially Minoritized Students HIPs



FOCUS ON...HIPs

Centering Racially Minoritized Student Voices in High-Impact Practices

By Jillian Kinzie, Samantha Silberstein, Alexander C. McCormick, Robert M. Gonyea, and Brendan Dugan

Jillian Kinzie is Associate Director, Center for Postsecondary Research, Indiana University Bloomington, and Senior Scholar with the National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment.

Samantha Silberstein is Research Project Associate for the National Survey of Student Engagement and a doctoral candidate in the Higher Education program at Indiana University Bloomington.

Alexander C. McCormick is Associate Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies and Director of the National Survey of Student Engagement, Indiana University Bloomington.

Robert M. Gonyea is Associate Director, Center for Postsecondary Research, Indiana University Bloomington, where he coordinates research and reporting for the National Survey of Student Engagement and related projects.

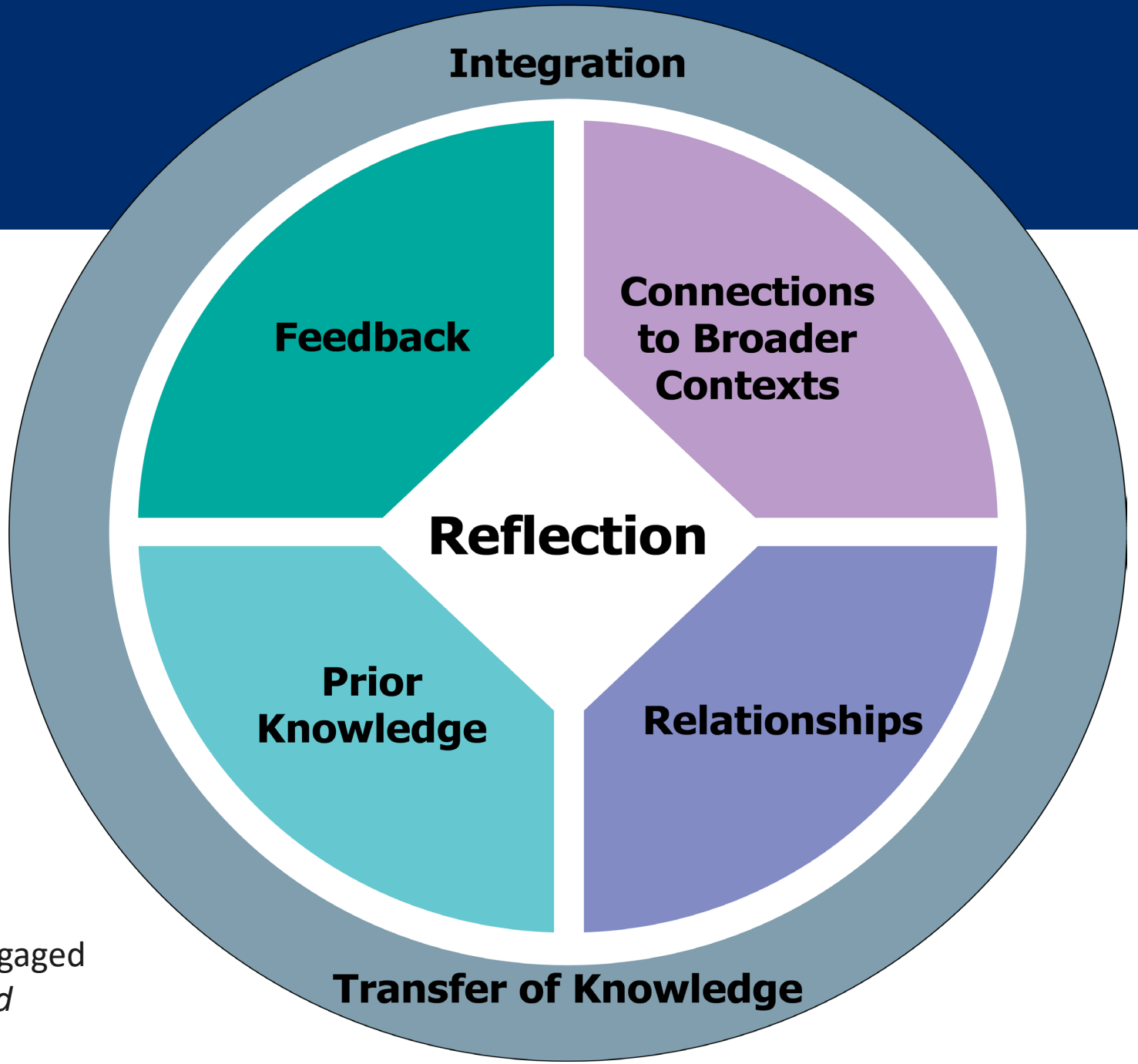
Brendan Dugan is Research Analyst, Center for Postsecondary Research, Indiana University Bloomington.

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Racially minoritized students:

- **Seek opportunities and spaces where they feel a sense of belonging**
- **Value HIPs/transformative experiences that enable them to make a difference for others and develop agency -- *centered in racially minoritized students' experiential knowledge***

Key Pedagogical Practices for Fostering High-Quality Engaged Learning in Higher Education



Moore, J.L. 2023. "Key Practices for Fostering Engaged Learning." In, *Key Practices for Fostering Engaged Learning: A Guide for Faculty and Staff*. Stylus.

Bringing HIPs to Scale…

- make HIPs visible, explicit
- tag in curriculum, recognize in degrees
- credit-bearing
- integrate into academic programs
- require or make universal
- fund (i.e., paid internships)
- sequence
- coordinate on campus
- collaboration with student life
- recognize for faculty workload
- reciprocal partnership with community



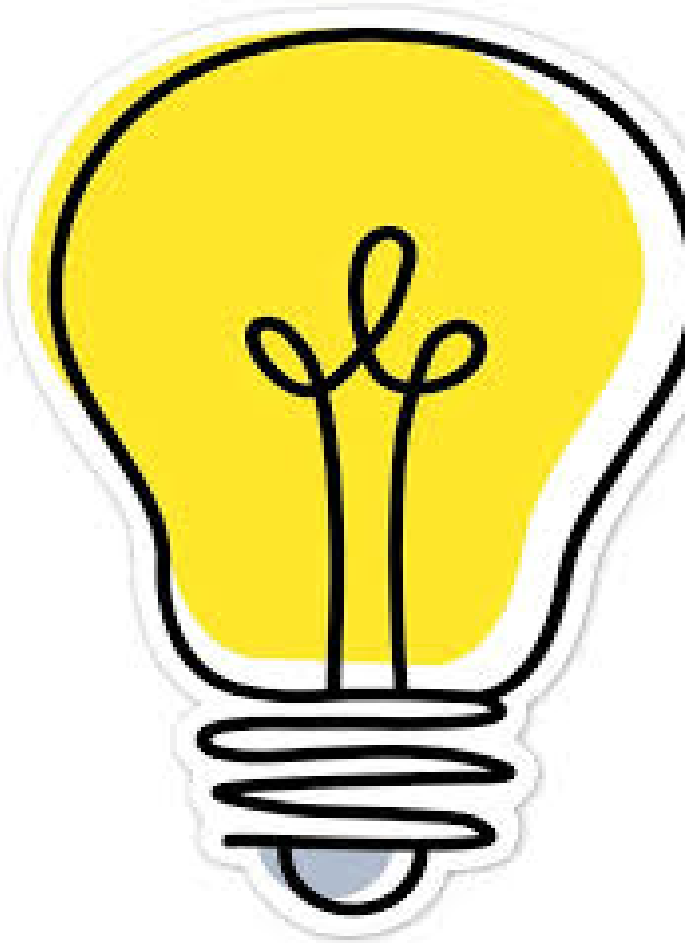
Assessing HIP Outcomes



HIP outcome assessments:

- Authentic performance in real or simulated environments
- Reflection and meaning-making after the experience
- Application of theory to practice
- Growth in skills, attitudes, & professional behaviors
- SoTL inquiry

What can you do to strengthen community engaged, and HIP learning, and leverage data for purposeful improvement?



Access & Equity

Quality & Fidelity

Scale & Scaffolding

Recognizing

Assessing Impact

Thank you!



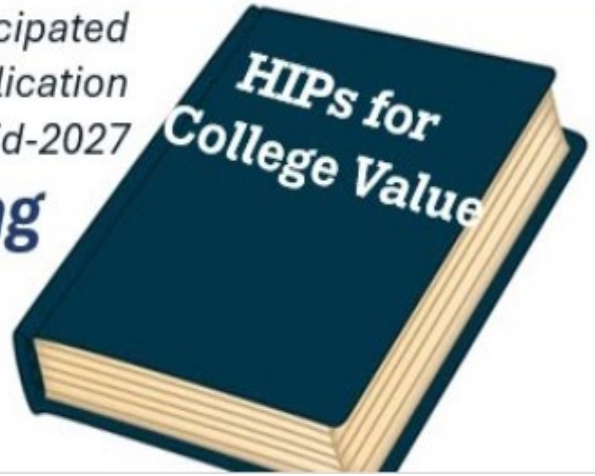
Share your HIP work

High-Impact Practice in Higher Education: Promoting College Value Through Experiential Learning

or, "HIPs for College Value"

By: Jerry Daday, Jillian Kinzie, John Zilvinskis

Anticipated publication mid-2027



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