



Transfer Students: Areas of Opportunity for Graduation Timing and Engagement

Audrey N. Beck
College of Arts and Letters

BACKGROUND

Project Aims: Examine barriers to four year graduation and engagement in high impact practices (HIPs) among CAL transfer students. Examine CAL patterns of engagement (NSSE). Investigate whether these barriers can be addressed through refining degree maps and/or advising practices.

Background: Our previous DC analyses found that all students faced obstacles in engaging in high impact practices. Advisor feedback suggests that transfer students face challenges to graduating in four years and engaging in HIPs, specifically a) students face scheduling challenges as they only hear about HIPs right before they enter junior year, compressing the time frame for engagement, b) probation and/or low major GPA may have a more proximate impact on graduation timing, c) the CAL requirement for three semesters of foreign language requires more strategic planning for those who transfer in. Ensuring that transfer students have the opportunity to engage in all the university has to offer while meeting their graduation goals is, at its core, an issue of equity.

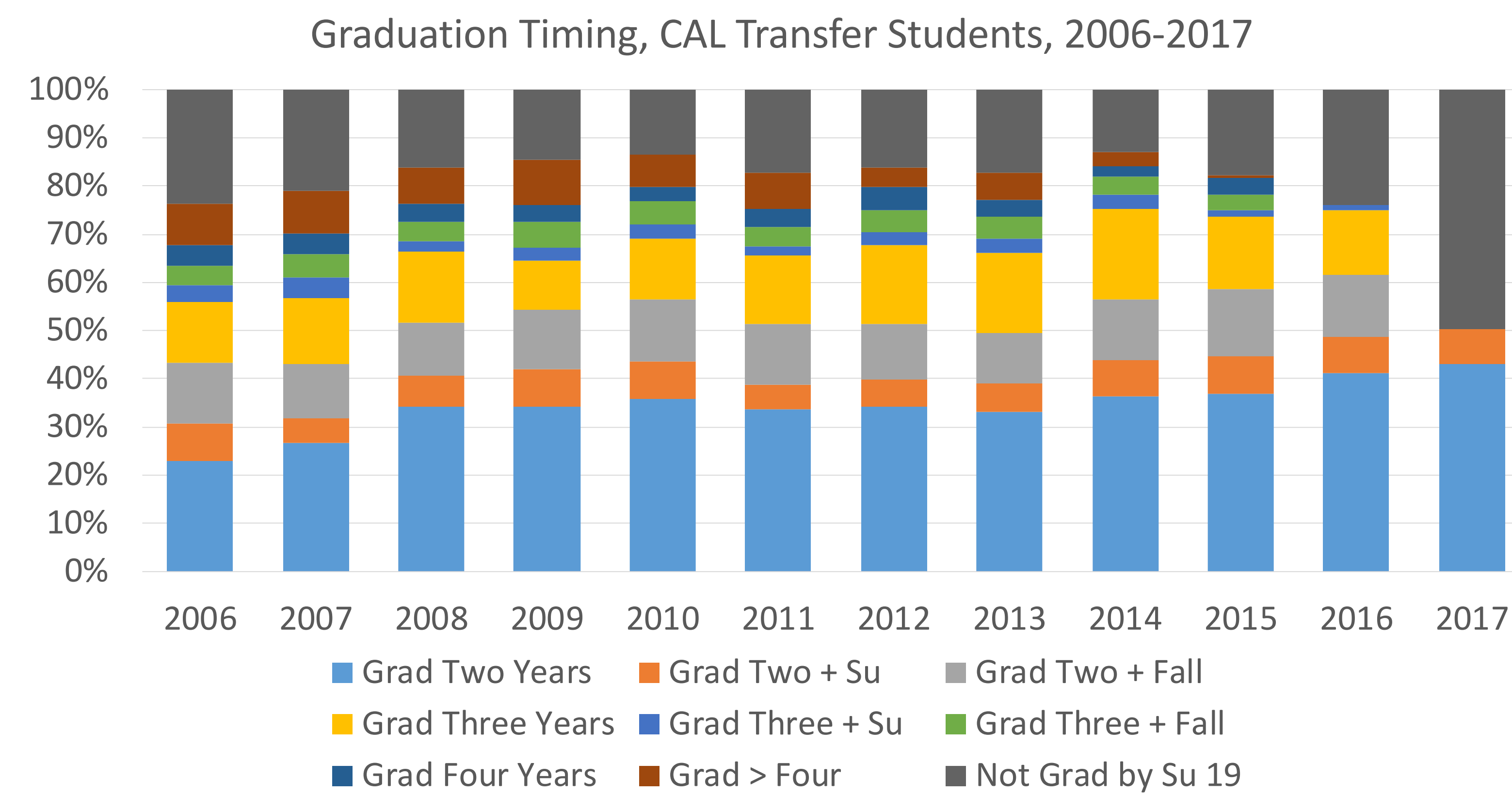
METHODS

To examine patterns of graduation and engagement among CAL transfer students, I employed the following methods:

-Discussion with CAL advisors regarding the unique challenges transfer students face.

-Secondary data analysis of ASIR data merged with NSSE. Descriptive statistics, chi-square tests and t-tests were employed to test the statistical significance of comparisons.

-Although many students ultimately change into CAL after transferring, the following analyses are restricted to CAL majors at fall entry.



Over time, we see a downward progression of graduation timing with near half of recent cohorts graduating within two years (plus one summer) of SDSU entry. An additional ten percent graduate by the fall (two years plus one fall and approximately 75% of recent cohorts have graduated by the spring of their third year. If past patterns persist, ultimately 85% of recent transfer cohorts will eventually graduate.

ACADEMIC ADVISOR DISCUSSION

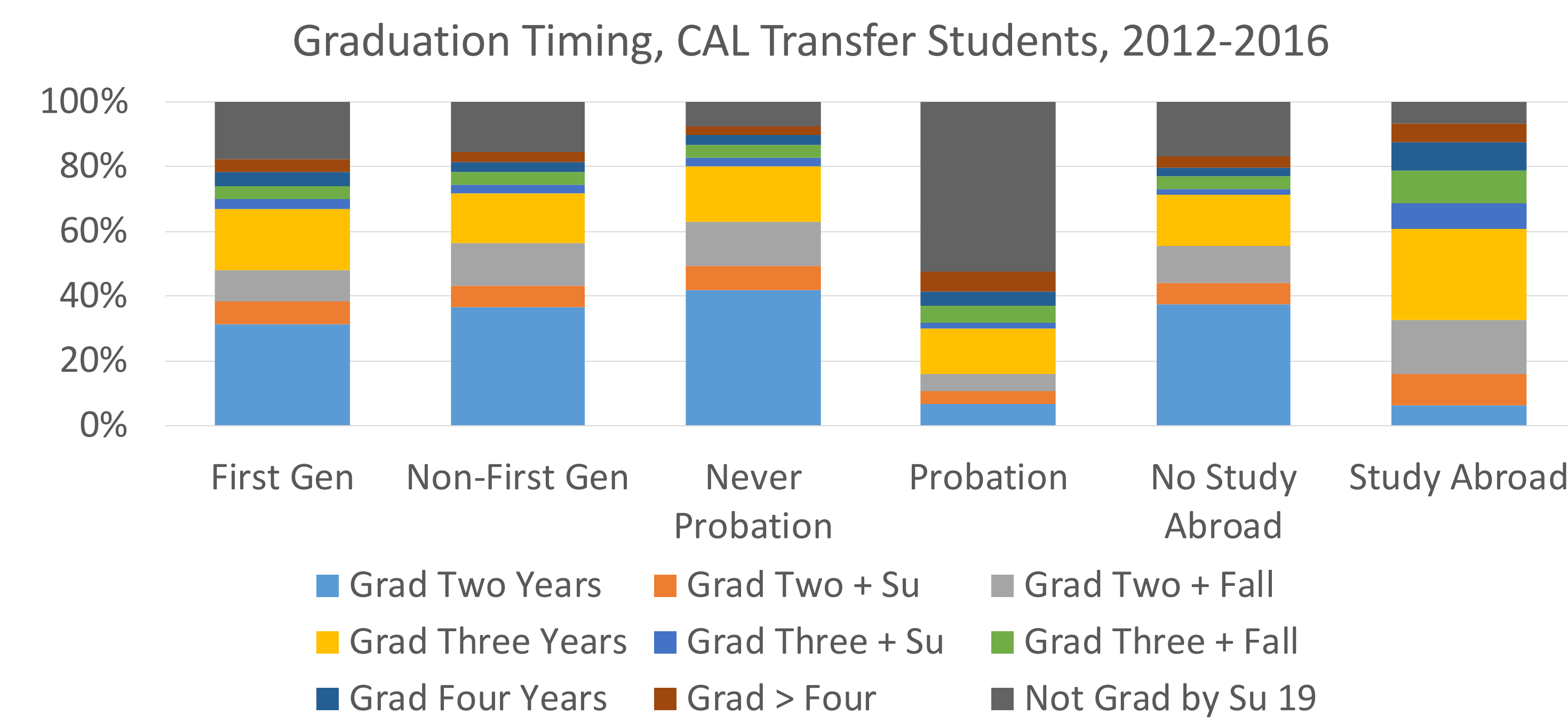
During Fall 2019, we discussed transfer-specific challenges with respect to timely graduation, academic engagement and high impact practices.

-Advisors reiterated our student survey findings from AY 17-18, and AY 18-19, that many students do not intend to graduate in two years after transferring often due to the many demands on their time.

-Advisors also highlighted the financial challenges that many students shared.

-Finally, we identified foreign language completion, low major GPA, and early probation as potential risk factors to explore for this analysis.

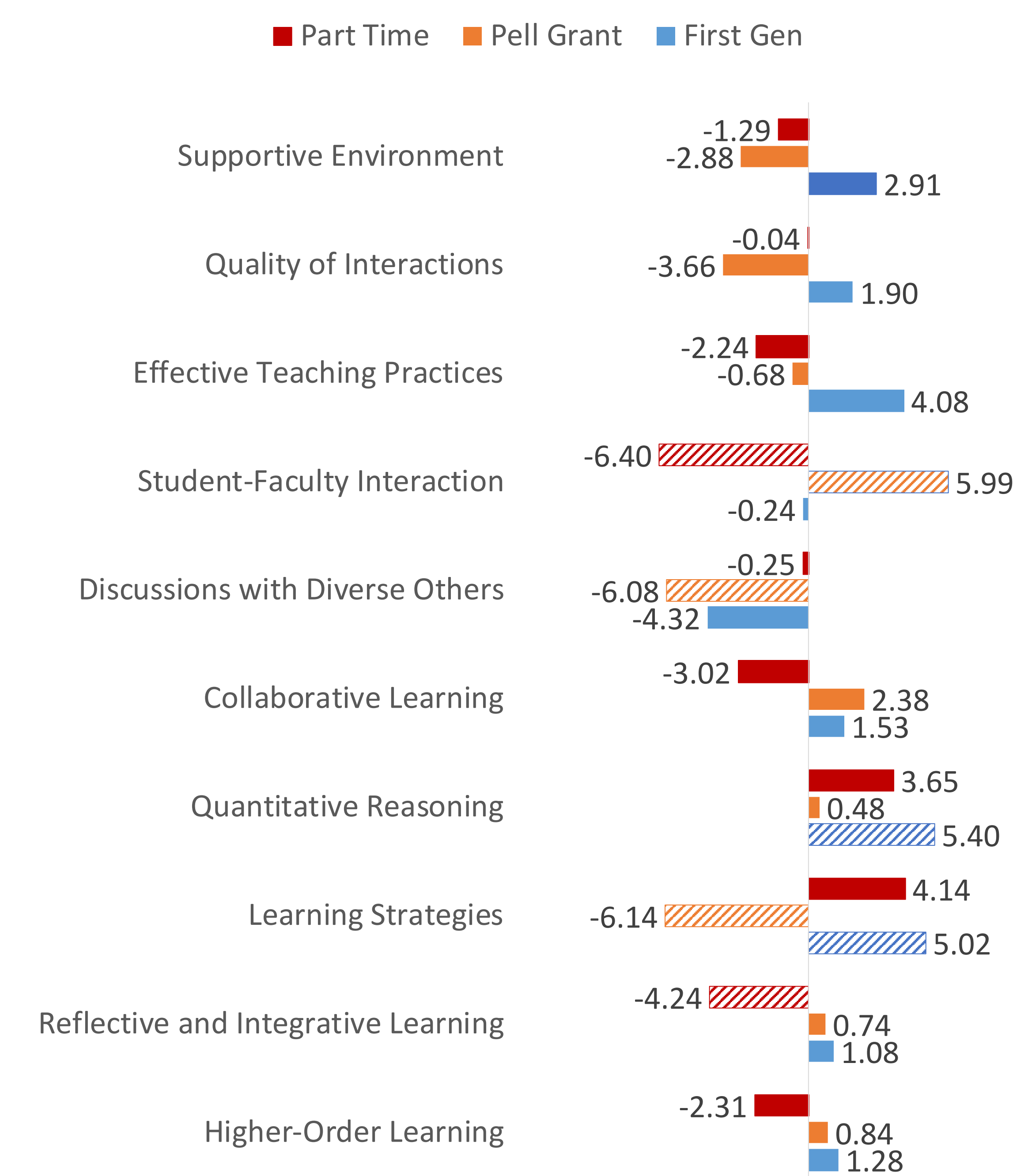
FINDINGS



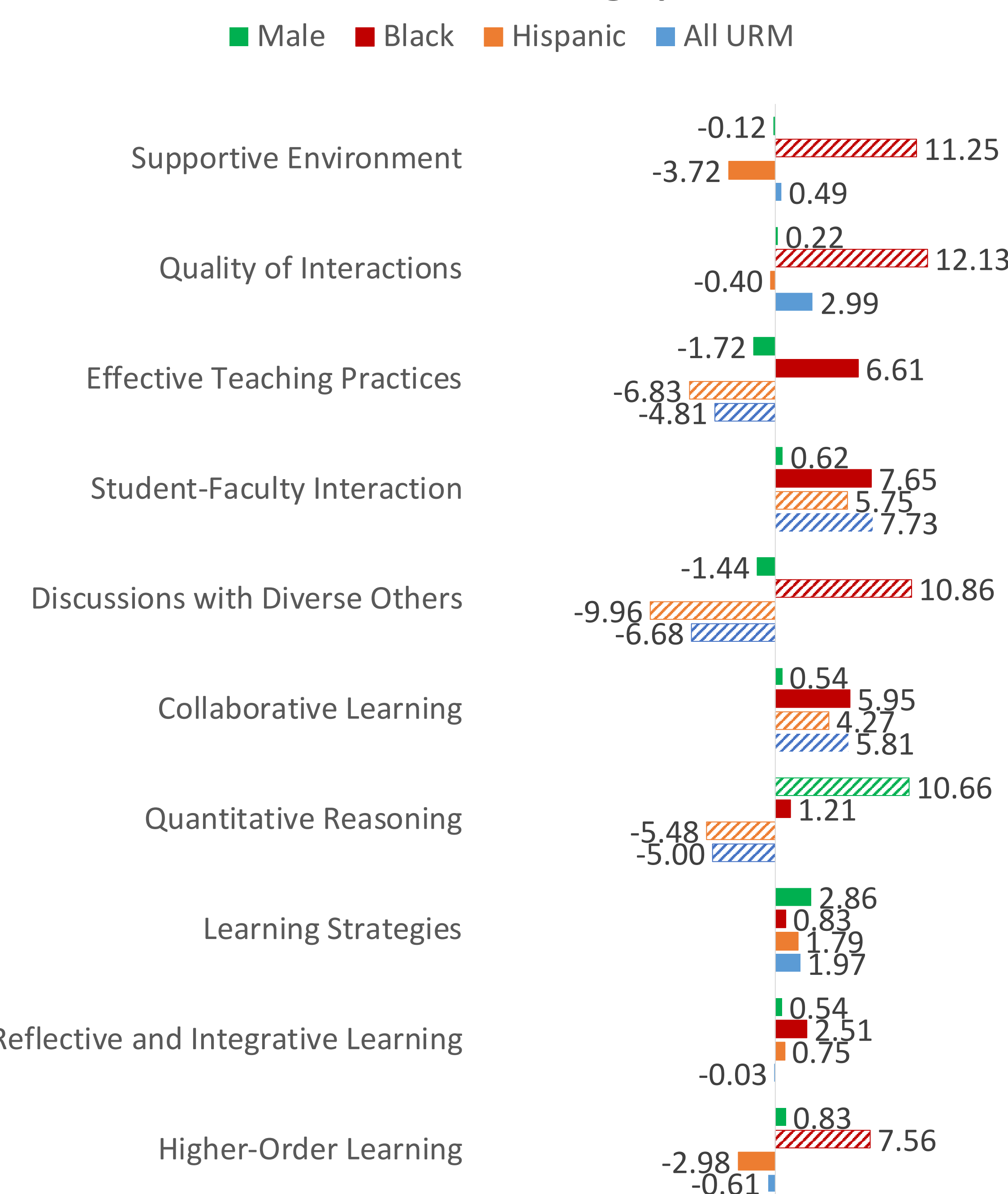
- Among recent CAL transfers, 38.4% of First Generation (FG) students graduate within Two + SU, compared to 43.2% of non-FG. There is a catch up pattern wherein graduation rates are similar by year three.
- Those ever on probation have the lowest rates of timely graduation and highest rates of never graduating.
- Study abroad students have more delayed graduation timing, but a lower percentage never graduate.
- 39.2% of all URM students graduate within Two + SU compared to 43.8% of non-URM, URM students also "catch up" by the end of the third AY. A similar pattern exists for Hispanic students specifically.
- Black students, however, did not catch up to the same extent, 21% had not graduated after four years of transferring, compared to only 16% of all other race-ethnic groups.
- There were no notable differences by Pell Grant receipt (PGR), or gender (male v. female).
- Among a more recent cohort where data was available, 33% of those who had fulfilled their foreign language requirement by entry graduated by summer of year 2, compared to 27.7% of those who had not fulfilled, and 24.1% of those who were in progress at entry.

NSSE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, CAL ENTRY TRANSFER STUDENTS

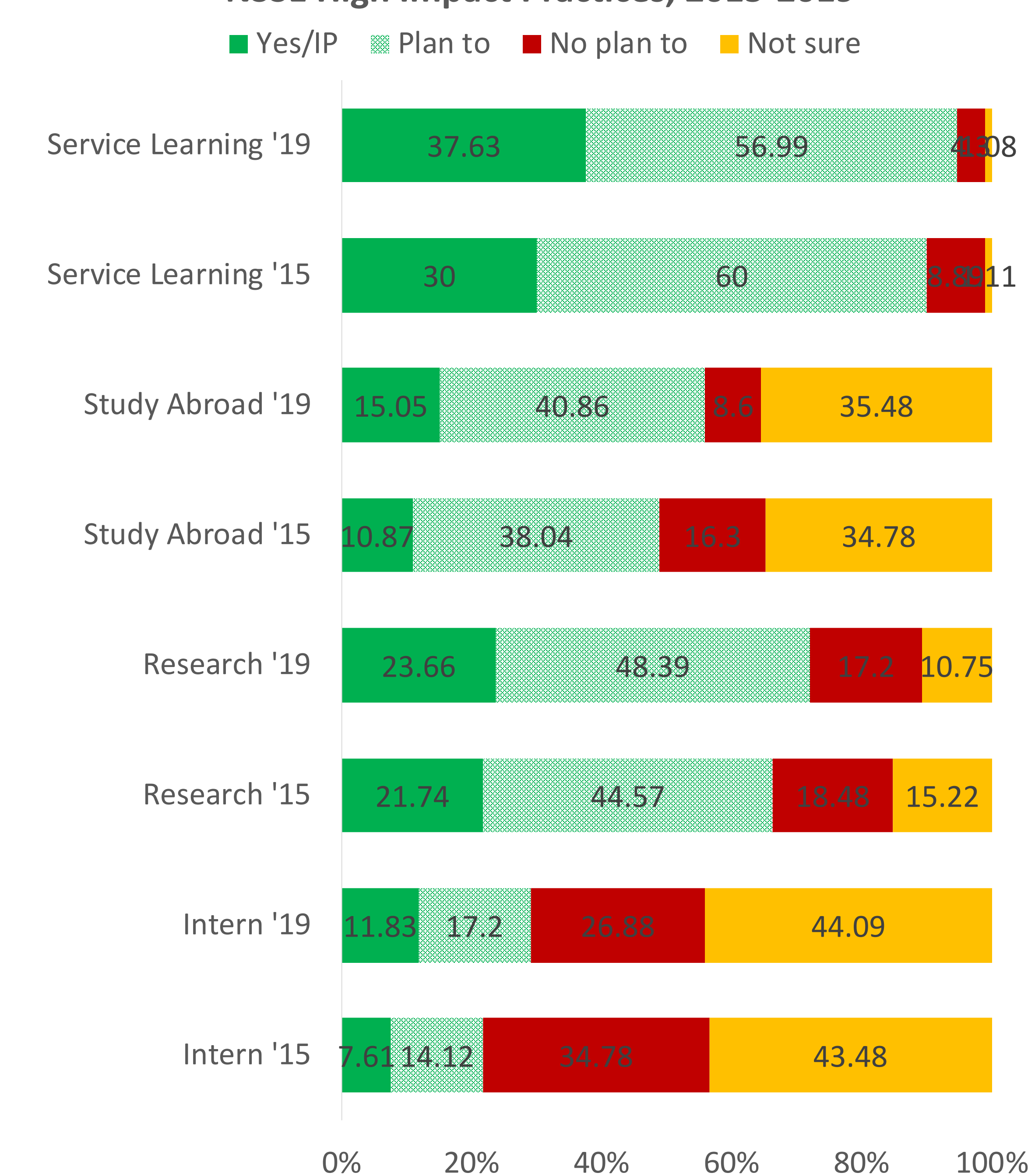
NSSE Differences 2019, Socioeconomic Indicators



NSSE Differences 2019, Demographic Indicators



NSSE High Impact Practices, 2015-2019



DISCUSSION

-NSSE results should be interpreted with caution given small sample sizes (diagonal lines indicate difference is statistically significant at $p < 0.10$). That said, a few general patterns emerge:

+Few differences emerge between First Generation and non-FG, though some evidence FGS utilize quantitative reasoning and basic learning strategies more often.

+Ever Part-Time students appear more disadvantaged in terms of faculty-student interaction whereas Pell Grant recipients (PGR) report higher F-S interaction.

+Some evidence that PGR, and to a lesser extent FGS, interact less with diverse others; future work should investigate the extent to which economic circumstances may inhibit opportunities for diverse interaction.

+URM students tend to rate F-S interaction and collaborative learning higher, but differences emerge by race-ethnicity with respect to discussions with diverse others, and assessments of teaching effectiveness and supportive environments (note: very small number of Black students in NSSE).

-CAL transfers are increasingly engaged in HIP practices, but Study Abroad and Internships remain less attainable. Last year's DC project indicated this was due to financial considerations, including conflicting work obligations.

Recommendations:

- Continue to target students at-risk for probation for additional advising.
- Reach out to part-time students via advising; encourage faculty to diversify office hours and opportunities to interact to account for P-T students' schedule limitations.
- Increase financial opportunities and advising to encourage more transfer students to engage in HIPs.
- Target students in progress with their FL at entry with advising to ensure it does not delay graduation.
- Revisit degree maps and advising materials with advisors in AY 20-21 to encourage HIPs.

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