Utilizing Attendance Data to Assess the Impact of Programs and Services on Student Success

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IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Overview

- Learning outcomes
- Campus involvement and student success
- Campus context
- Collecting attendance data
- Developing and refining survey
- Snapshot of findings
- How to start on your campus
- Questions?

Learning Outcomes

1. Attendees will recognize the connection between participation in campus activities and student success.

2. Attendees will understand how to collect attendance data for their events and programs utilizing card scanners, registrations, and other methods.

3. Attendees will consider ways in which they could assess the impact of their programs and services on student success.

Campus Involvement & Student Success

- Student Involvement Theory (Astin, 1984)
  - A student's development is directly proportional to the extent to which they are involved co-curricularly
  - Academic performance is correlated with student involvement

- Model of Student Departure (Tinto, 1992)
  - Persistence requires student integration into
    - Formal academic systems (academic performance)
    - Informal academic systems (faculty/staff interactions)
    - Formal social systems (co-curricular activities)
    - Informal social systems (peer-group interactions)

Campus Involvement & Student Success

- Belonging is key to success in college (Strayhorn, 2019)
  - Sense of belonging is a basic human need and is a motivator for behavior
  - Particularly important at certain times such as early adulthood
  - Leads to positive outcomes for students including academic success, wellbeing, and persistence

- Key influences on belonging in college (Vacarro & Newman, 2022)
  - Campus environment
  - Relationships with peers and educators
  - Involvement opportunities
  - Academic success

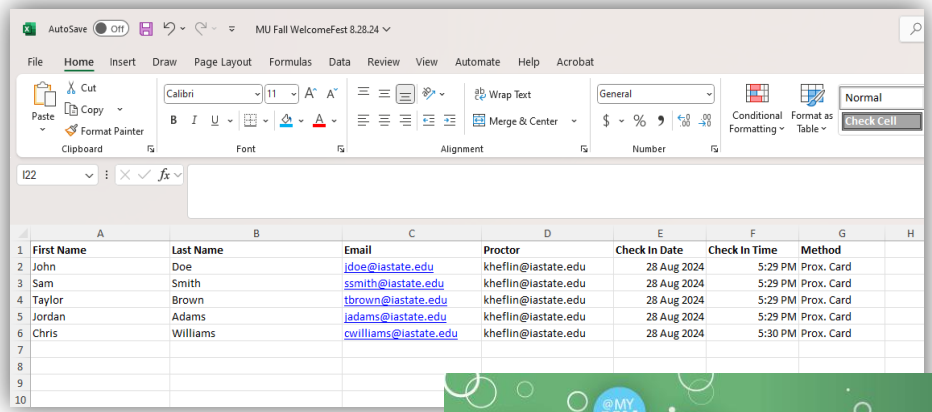
Campus Context: Iowa State University

- Public, land grant, research university
- 30,432 students
  - 84% undergraduate
  - 84% white
  - 53% Iowa residents
  - 9.5% international students
  - 60.6% STEM majors
  - 16% Pell-eligible

Campus Context: Student Engagement

- Situated within the Memorial Union
- Reports up through Campus Life (MU, Housing, Dining)
- 10 full time staff members, 2 graduate assistants
- Programs, services, and spaces include:
  - 800 student organizations
    - Student Government, Election Commission, Student Union Board, Dance Marathon, AfterDark, First-Year Council, Campus Service Council, WinterFest
  - Leadership and service programs
  - Maintenance Shop
  - CyBowl & Billiards
  - Workspace
  - MU Art Gallery

Collecting Attendance Data



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	First Name	Last Name	Email	Proctor	Check In Date	Check In Time	Method	
2	John	Doe	jdoe@iastate.edu	kheflin@iastate.edu	28 Aug 2024	5:29 PM	Prox. Card	
3	Sam	Smith	ssmith@iastate.edu	kheflin@iastate.edu	28 Aug 2024	5:29 PM	Prox. Card	
4	Taylor	Brown	tbrown@iastate.edu	kheflin@iastate.edu	28 Aug 2024	5:29 PM	Prox. Card	
5	Jordan	Adams	jadams@iastate.edu	kheflin@iastate.edu	28 Aug 2024	5:29 PM	Prox. Card	
6	Chris	Williams	cwilliams@iastate.edu	kheflin@iastate.edu	28 Aug 2024	5:30 PM	Prox. Card	
7								
8								
9								
10								





- Card swipes
- Event registrations
- Ticket sales & point of sale data
- Surveys
- Other
  - Waiver signatures
  - Bingo prize winners
  - Bowling semester passes

Attendance Data: All

Event	Number	Percentage of Total
Cyclone Cinema- Fall	1388	5.9%
Cyclone Cinema- Spring	805	3.4%
Workspace-Fall	1404	5.9%
Workspace-Spring	839	3.6%
M-Shop - Fall	416	1.8%
M-Shop - Spring	543	2.3%
MoJos - Fall	172	0.7%
MoJos - Spring	114	0.5%
Open Mic - Fall	182	0.8%
Open Mic - Spring	94	0.4%
Leadership Events	266	1.1%
Service Events	69	0.3%
Other SUB Events	582	2.5%

Event	Number	Percentage of Total
Fall WelcomeFest	2342	9.9%
Fall Clubfest	5121	21.7%
Fall Housing Fair	545	2.3%
Spring WelcomeFest	578	2.4%
Spring ClubFest	2209	9.4%
Spring Housing Fair	115	0.5%
Dance Marathon	225	1%
Winterfest	668	2.8%
AfterDark - Fall	1956	8.3%
AfterDark - Spring	2930	12.4%
CyBowl Passes	44	0.2%

First Survey Iteration – Spring 2023

- Survey sent in April 2023
  - 11,480 unique students who participated in at least one MU event or program
- Asked participants about
  - Connections to campus community
  - Relevance of events to academic interests or major
  - Satisfaction with MU events
- 273 responses

First Survey Iteration – Spring 2023

Q1 Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I lead a purposeful and meaningful life (1)	○	○	○	○	○
My social relationships are supportive and rewarding (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I am engaged and interested in my daily activities (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others (4)	○	○	○	○	○
I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me (5)	○	○	○	○	○
I am a good person and live a good life (6)	○	○	○	○	○
I am optimistic about my future (7)	○	○	○	○	○
People respect me (8)	○	○	○	○	○

Flourishing Scale, Diener (2010)

Q3 Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I feel like I belong at Iowa State (1)	○	○	○	○	○
It is hard for me to fit in here (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I feel connected to Iowa State (3)	○	○	○	○	○
I feel welcome at Iowa State (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Iowa State is definitely the right school for me (5)	○	○	○	○	○
I am glad I cam to Iowa State (6)	○	○	○	○	○

First Survey Iteration – Spring 2023

Q2 Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I have developed connections with other students by attending MU sponsored programs (1)	○	○	○	○	○
I have interacted with staff and faculty at MU sponsored programs (2)	○	○	○	○	○
I have attended events at the MU that specifically relate to my academic interests or major (3)	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: Social & Academic Integration

Q9 Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Somewhat disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Somewhat agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
The programs offered by the MU help me to feel more connected to the campus community (1)	○	○	○	○	○
The programs offered through the MU provide me with opportunities to meet and interact with new people (2)	○	○	○	○	○
The programs offered through the MU are relevant to my interests and needs (3)	○	○	○	○	○
The programs offered through the MU are well-organized (4)	○	○	○	○	○
The programs offered through the MU are effectively communicated to students (5)	○	○	○	○	○
The programs offered through the MU are inclusive and accessible to students of all backgrounds and identities. (6)	○	○	○	○	○
I would recommend the programs offered through the MU to other students (7)	○	○	○	○	○
Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of programs offered through the MU (8)	○	○	○	○	○

First Survey Iteration – Spring 2023

Q11 The Memorial Union offers a number of different types of programs that students can attend or participate in. How interested would you be in attending or participating in the following types of programs/events at the Memorial Union?

	Not at all interested (1)	Slightly interested (2)	Moderately interested (3)	Very interested (4)	Extremely interested (5)	Already attend/participate in this (7)
Events at the Maintenance Shop (live music, open mic nights, etc.) (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Workshops at the Workspace (pottery, arts and crafts projects) (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○
ISU AfterDark (games and performers) (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Cyclone Cinema (movies) (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○
CyBowl (bowling) (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Leadership seminars (ISLE, WeLead) (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○
Student Organization leadership position (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q12 What are some reasons that you did not attend more programs and events at the Memorial Union this year? (check any that apply)

- ☐ The events I was interested in were too expensive to attend (1)
- ☐ I didn't know when events or programs were offered (2)
- ☐ I'm not interested in attending any programs or events at the Memorial Union (3)
- ☐ I didn't have time to attend anything (4)
- ☐ I didn't like the event(s) I did attend (5)
- ☐ Other (please specify) (6) _____

Q10 What other feedback do you have about the programs or events available to students at the Memorial Union?

_____

End of Block: General Feedback for Programming

First Survey Iteration – Spring 2023

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Cyclone Cinema (movies) (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○
CyBowl (bowling) (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○
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Student Organization leadership position (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○

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- ☐ Other (please specify) (6) _____

Q10 What other feedback do you have about the programs or events available to students at the Memorial Union?

_____

End of Block: General Feedback for Programming

First Survey Iteration – Spring 2023

- Originally planned to survey students who attended 3 or more MU programs or events but data showed that most students attended only one or two.
- 24% of students attended only fall WelcomeFest or ClubFest but were not asked about their experiences until April
- 25% of students surveyed only involvement was as a student organization officer
  - Separated out for future assessments
- Flourishing Scale
  - In general, participants scored pretty highly
  - No difference for those that attended multiple events
  - Not as useful as we had anticipated

Second Survey Iteration – Spring 2024

- Continued to focus on and expand attendance tracking
- Survey sent in April 2024
  - 7,047 unique students who participated in at least one MU event or program
- Removed Flourishing Scale section
- Added additional questions about
    - General sense of belonging
    - Interest in various types of events
    - Reasons for attending/not attending
    - Welcoming within the Memorial Union
- 204 responses

Second Survey Iteration – Spring 2024

What types of programming would you like to see more of at the Memorial Union? (check any that apply and provide specific suggestions for types of programs if you have them)

- ☐ Leadership programming
- ☐ Social connection programming
- ☐ Community service programming
- ☐ Cultural events
- ☐ Entertainment events
- ☐ Other (please specify)

What are some reasons you attended programs and events at the Memorial Union this year? (check any that apply)

- ☐ Friends were going
- ☐ To meet new people
- ☐ Program provided needed information
- ☐ Program/event looked interesting
- ☐ Good alternative to drinking
- ☐ Relevant to academic/career interests
- ☐ Other (please specify)

What is one place within the Memorial Union that makes you feel welcome? Why does this place feel welcoming?

What is one place within the Memorial Union that makes you feel unwelcome? Why does this place feel unwelcoming?

Second Survey Iteration – Spring 2024

- Response rate still relatively low
- Late spring survey timing means long delay for participants who attended early fall events
- Ability to gather data about specific programs or services is limited
- Some attendees receive multiple surveys related to the same program

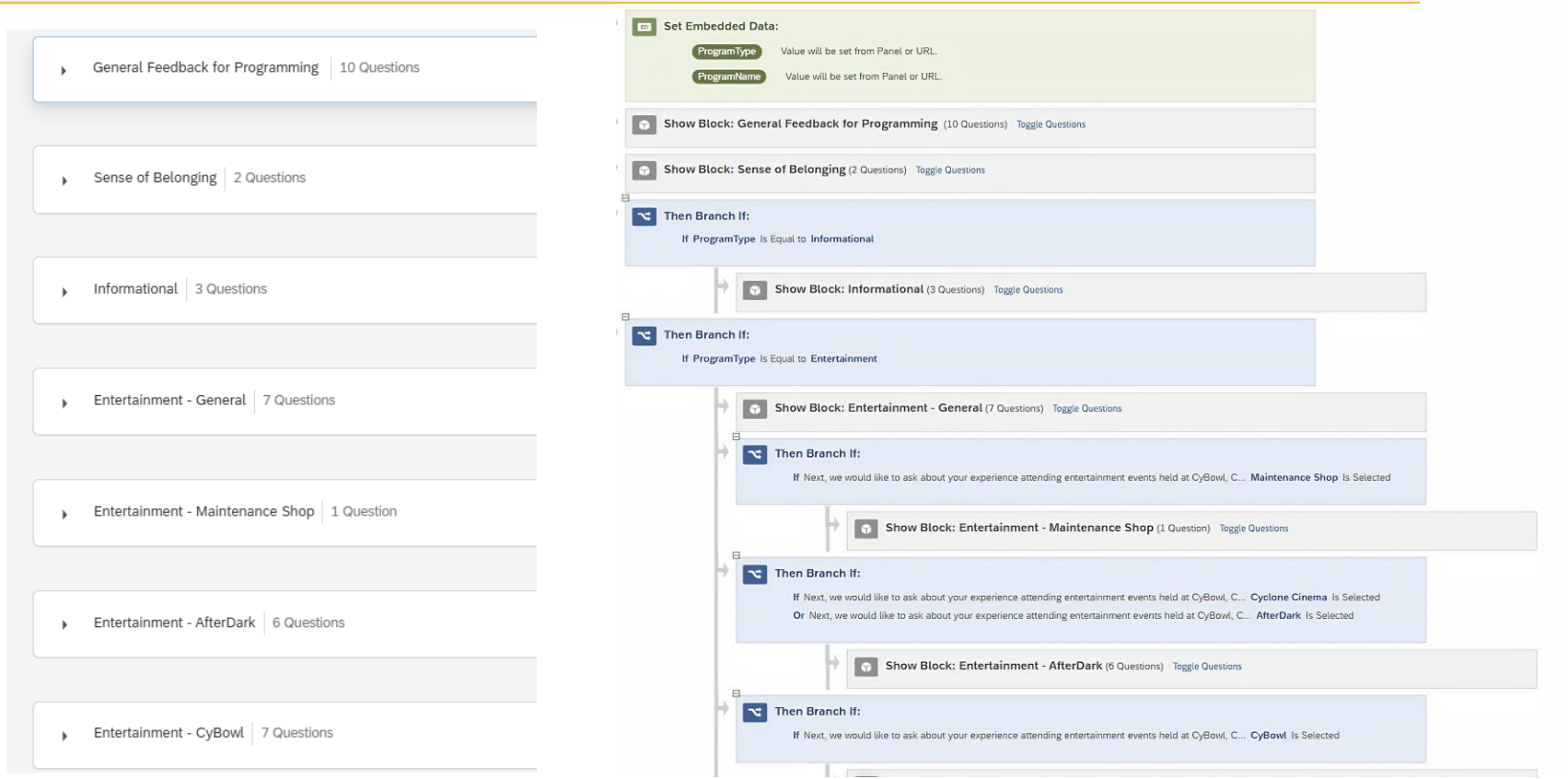
Third Survey Iteration – Spring 2025

- Developed new survey that could be shared by all staff members with branching logic for program types:
  - Informational
  - General Entertainment
    - Maintenance Shop
    - AfterDark
    - CyBowl
    - Dance Marathon
    - Student Union Board
  - Art Programs
  - Leadership
  - Service Learning

Third Survey Iteration – Spring 2025

- All recipients received questions about
  - General feedback
  - Sense of belonging
- Allowed for community members to receive different questions from students, depending on program
- Survey sent following each individual program and/or in monthly groups
  - 9,540 surveys sent to 6,143 unique emails
  - 426 total responses
  - 91% received survey once or twice

Third Survey Iteration – Spring 2025



Third Survey Iteration – Spring 2025

Send survey through contacts list in Qualtrics with data embedded

FirstName	LastName	Email	ProgramType	ProgramName
Erin	McCollum	erinmcc@iastate.edu	Informational	ACUIPresentation
Kristine	Heflin	kheflin@iastate.edu	Informational	ACUIPresentation
Billy	Joel	pianoman@iastate.edu	Informational	ACUIPresentation
Elton	John	rocketman@iastate.edu	Informational	ACUIPresentation
Miley	Cyrus	hmontana@iastate.edu	Informational	ACUIPresentation

Embed data in link or QR code

https://iastate.qualtrics.com/SuRvEYurl?ProgramType=Informational&ProgramName=ACUIPresentation

Third Survey Iteration – Spring 2025

General Feedback Block

Q91

I am a:

- Current Iowa State student
- Current Iowa State faculty or staff member
- Other (community member, ISU alum, former staff member, etc.)

Q41

Where did you hear about this event?

- Posters
- Word of mouth
- Social media (Instagram, Facebook, etc.)
- Email
- Website
- Other (please specify)

Q9

Display this question

If I am a: Current Iowa State student Is Selected

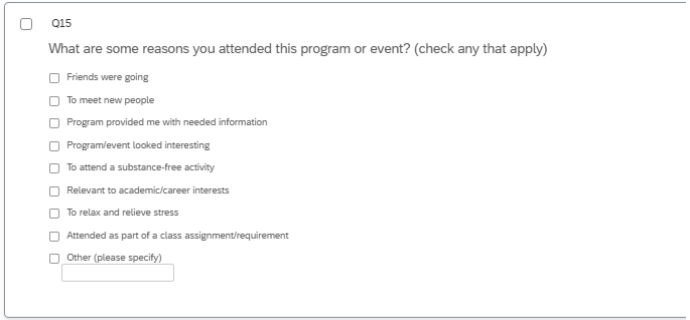
Or I am a: Current Iowa State faculty or staff member Is Selected

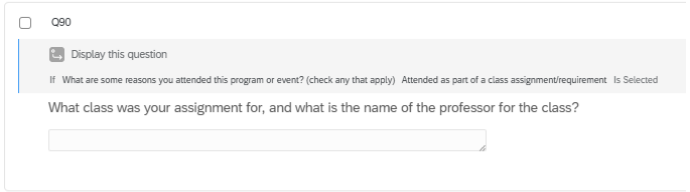
Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

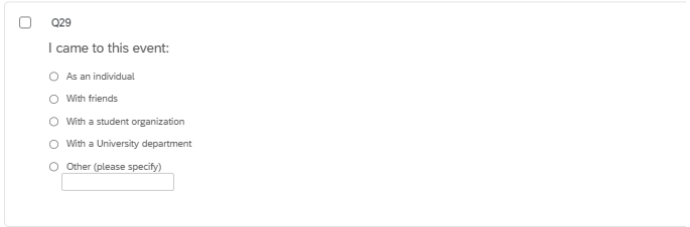
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Attending programs at the MU helps me to feel more connected to the campus community					
Attending programs at the MU provides me with opportunities to meet and interact with new people					
The programs at the MU are relevant to my interests and needs					
The programs I attended at the MU are well-organized					
The programs at the MU are effectively communicated to students					
The programs at the MU are inclusive and accessible to students of all backgrounds and identities.					
I would recommend the programs at the MU to other students					
Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of programs at the MU					

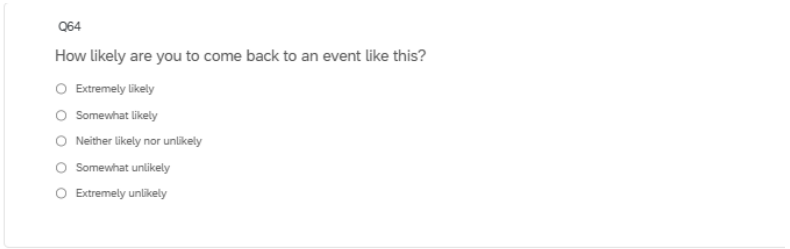
Third Survey Iteration – Spring 2025

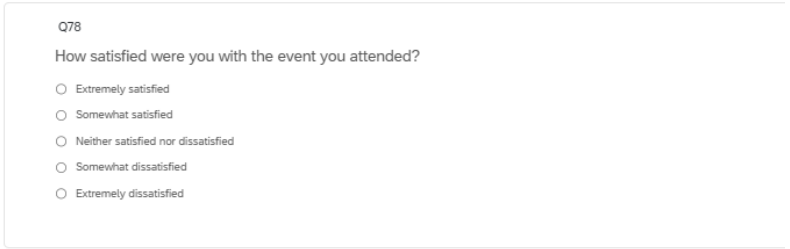
General Feedback Block (cont.)

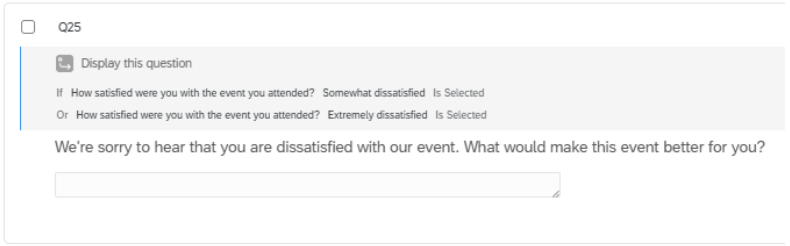












Third Survey Iteration – Spring 2025

Sense of Belonging Block

Q3

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I feel like I belong at Iowa State	○	○	○	○	○
It is hard for me to fit in here	○	○	○	○	○
I feel connected to Iowa State	○	○	○	○	○
I feel welcome at Iowa State	○	○	○	○	○
Iowa State is definitely the right school for me	○	○	○	○	○
I am glad I came to Iowa State	○	○	○	○	○

Q2

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I have developed connections with other students by attending events and activities at the MU	○	○	○	○	○
I have interacted with staff and/or faculty at events and activities at the MU	○	○	○	○	○
I have attended programs or events at the MU that specifically relate to my academic interests or major	○	○	○	○	○

Third Survey Iteration – Spring 2025

Informational Block

Q80

What was your motivation for attending this informational event? Select all that apply.

- Find information about resources on campus
- Find information about clubs/organizations on campus
- Find information about how to get involved in the community
- Find information about local businesses
- Find information about local employment opportunities
- Other (please specify)

Q22

Did you find the information you sought from this event?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Q23

Display this question

If Did you find the information you sought from this event? No Is Selected

Or Did you find the information you sought from this event? Unsure Is Selected

What information were you looking for that you could not find?

Closing Block

Q97

Is there anything else you'd like to share with us about your experiences attending events at the Memorial Union?

Q98

Thank you for completing this short survey. We greatly appreciate your feedback. Please click "submit" to submit your responses.

Third Survey Iteration – Spring 2025

Example of individual program report using responses to general questions and to program-specific asks

Drop-in Crafts and Paint Your Own Pottery

Anyone who checks in at the Workspace for a drop-in craft of paint your own pottery is emailed a survey. In the Spring semester, the Student Engagement office transitioned to an office-wide survey, so we implemented that for this purpose. While the new survey and our old survey were similar, there are some questions that are only on the newly developed survey and, therefore, have fewer responses than other questions. Those will be indicated with the words "New survey only" in parentheses. We think the data is still valuable, but likely not as full of a picture as our larger survey efforts.

We had a total of 148 survey responses, 55 from the new Student Engagement survey and 93 from our original Workspace survey tool. Here's a snapshot of what we learned from Likert scale questions on the surveys:

93.62% of respondents were somewhat or very likely to come back to a similar event to their Paint Your Own Pottery or Drop-in Craft experience.

71.70% of respondents felt less stressed after leaving the Workspace. (New survey only)
86.79% of respondents feel comfortable in the Workspace. (New survey only)

For 84.91% of respondents, Workspace events serve as a creative outlet for them. (New survey only)

92.03% of survey respondents feel welcome in the Workspace.

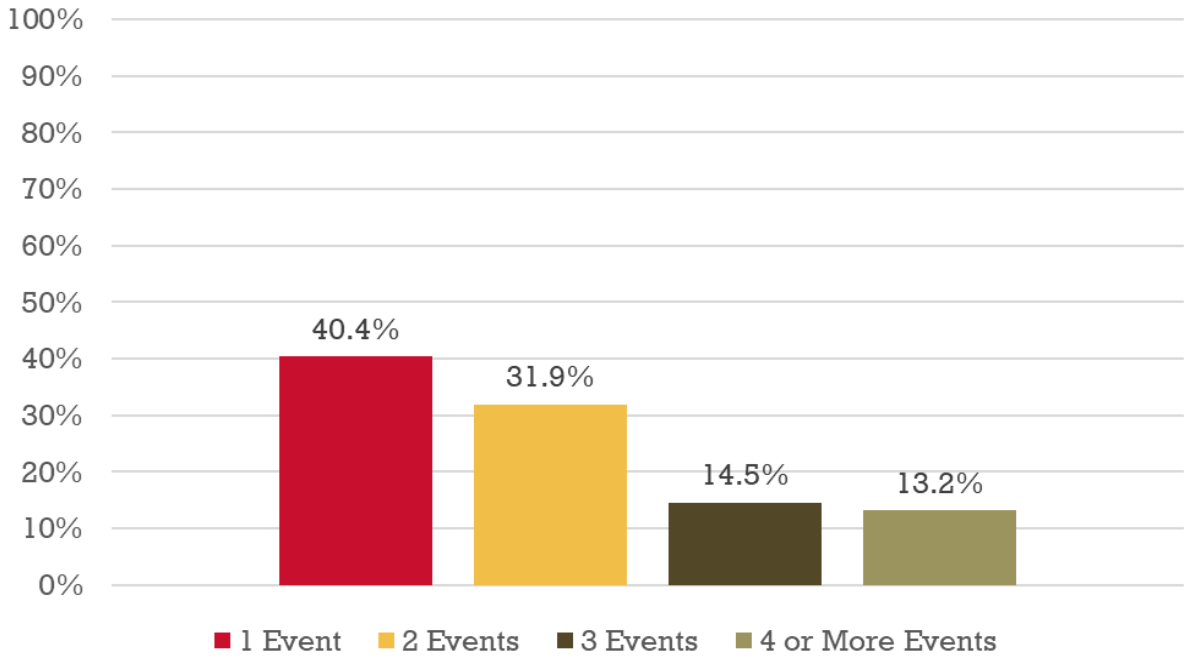
These results align with our goals to engage our customers in creative activities, relieve stress, and make them feel welcome. We're looking forward to getting a full year's worth of this data in fiscal year 2026.

We also asked 2 open-ended questions to get input on what the Workspace does well and where we can improve. Below are themes and quotes we found in the responses.

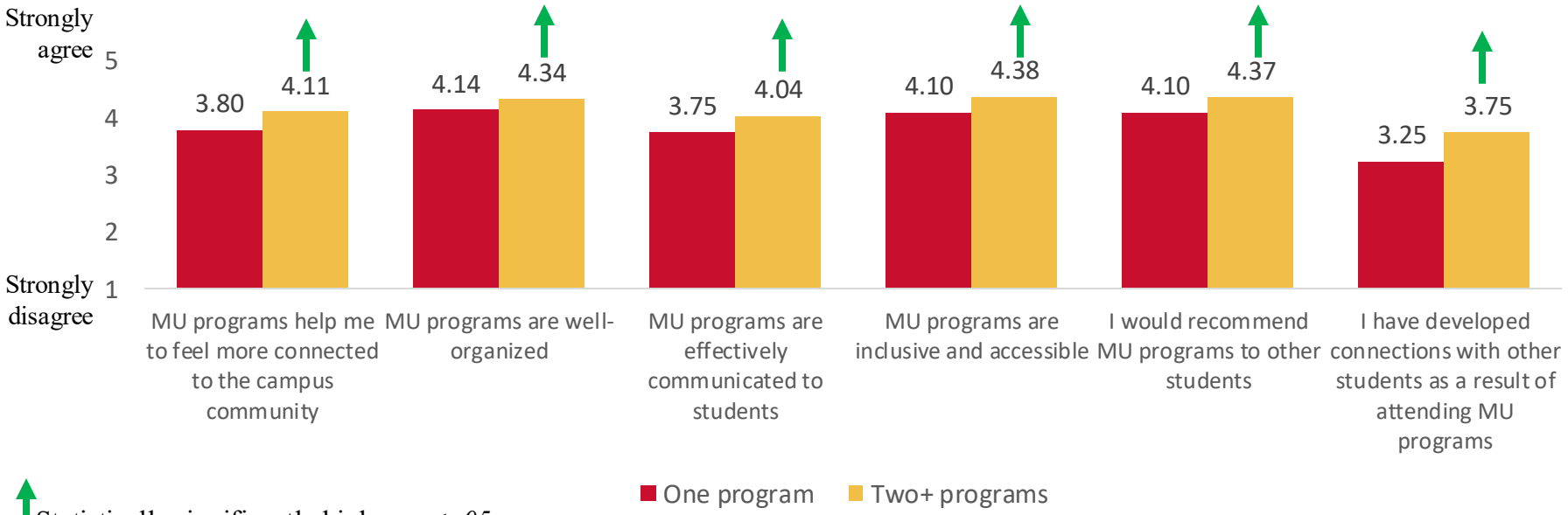
Third Survey Iteration – Spring 2025

- Due to timeline for survey development, survey only looked at spring semester
- Learning curve for staff accessing and sending out survey
- Emails sent from Qualtrics end up in "other" mailbox in Outlook
- Limited ability to assess programs where we are not collecting attendance data
- Adjustment to new workflow of sending survey soon after programs

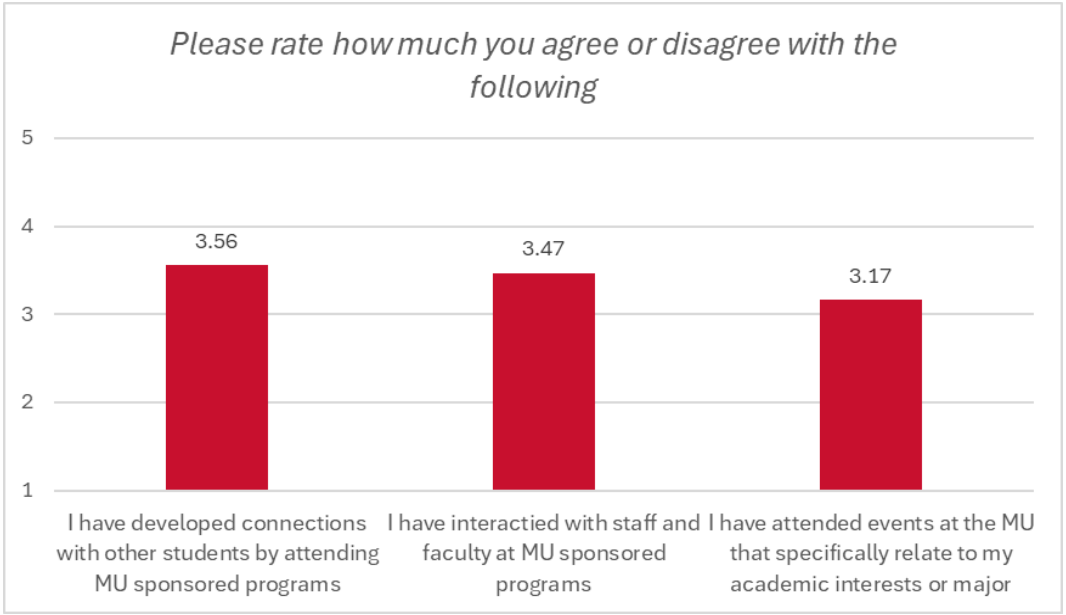
Most students only attend one or two programs put on through the MU



Students who attend more than one event are significantly more likely to have made connections to other students and the campus community as a result of attending



Generally, 50%-60% of students felt they had developed connections with other students and had attended events specifically related to their academic interests



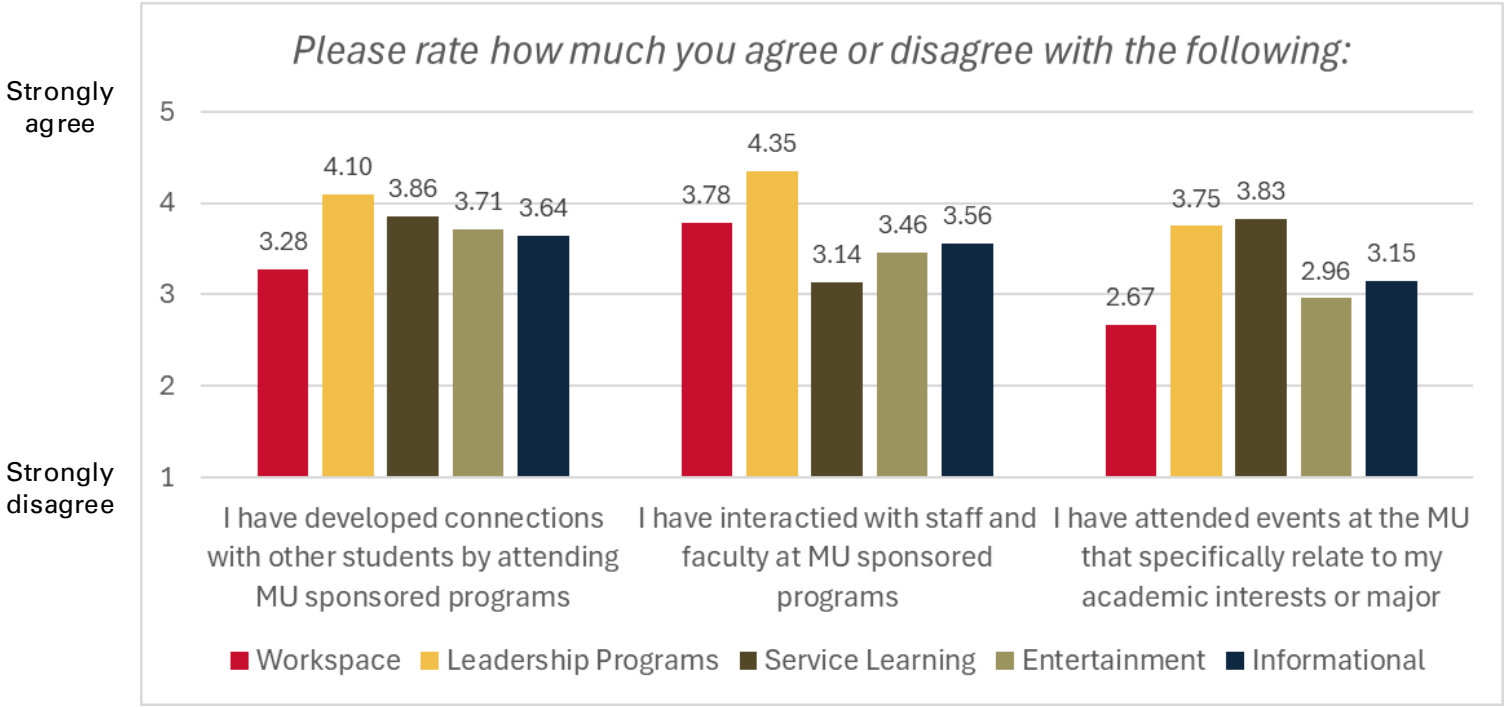
91%

Of students somewhat/strongly agree that they would recommend programs offered through the MU to other students (*mean=4.45*)

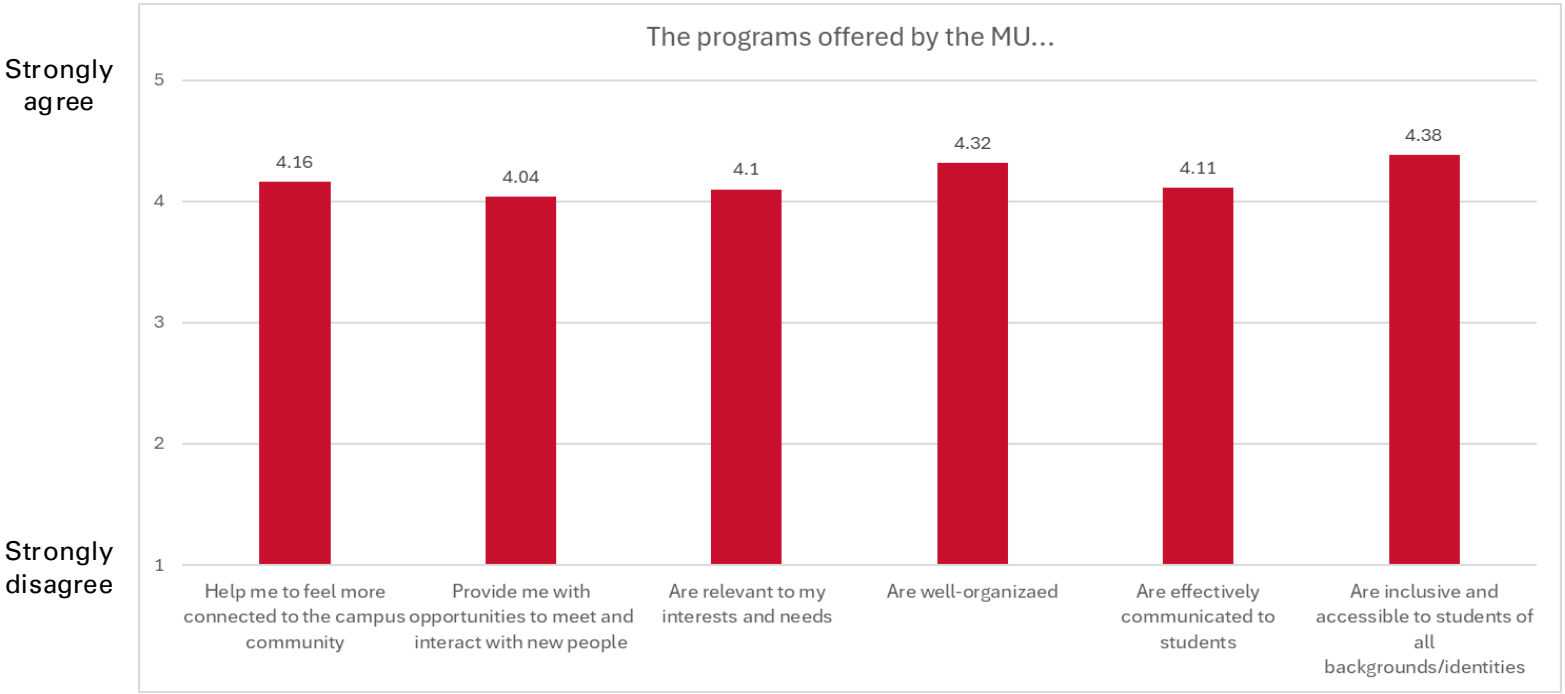
91%

Of students somewhat/strongly agree that they are satisfied with the quality of the programs offered through the MU (*mean=4.50*)

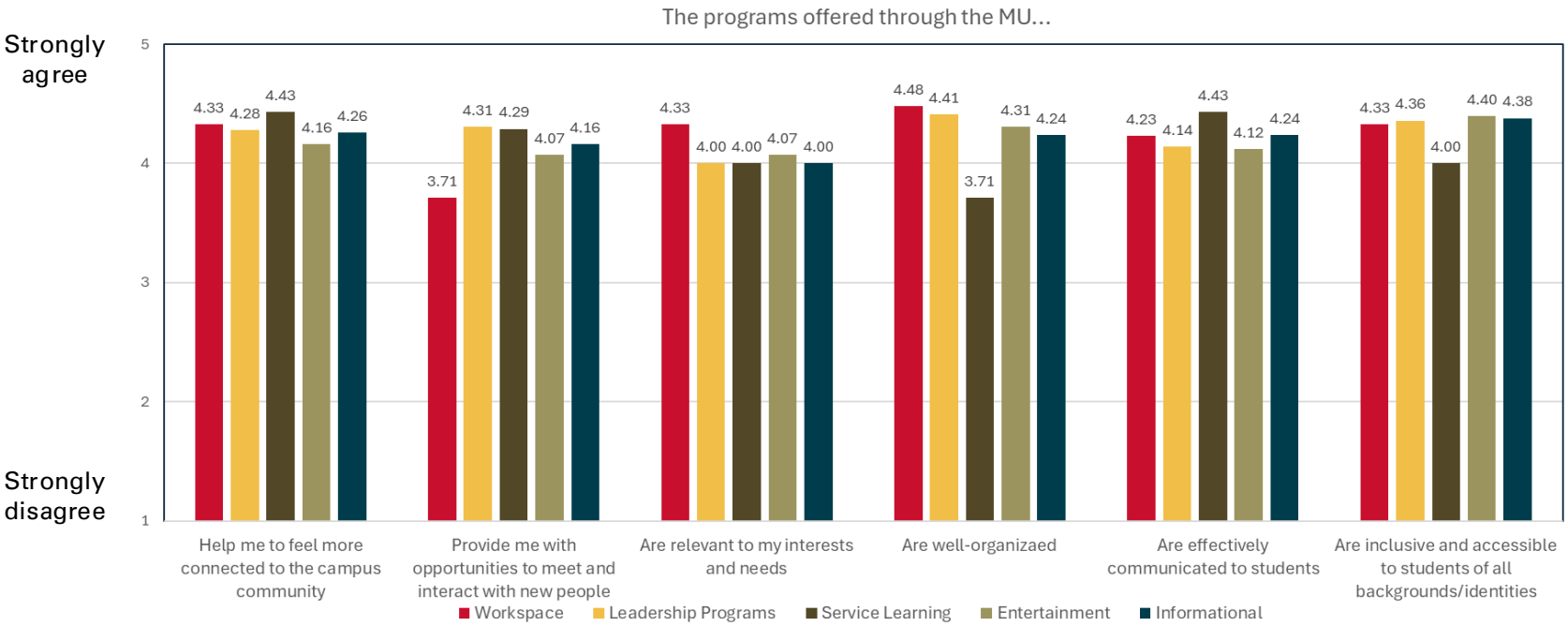
With new survey we can compare this information across program types



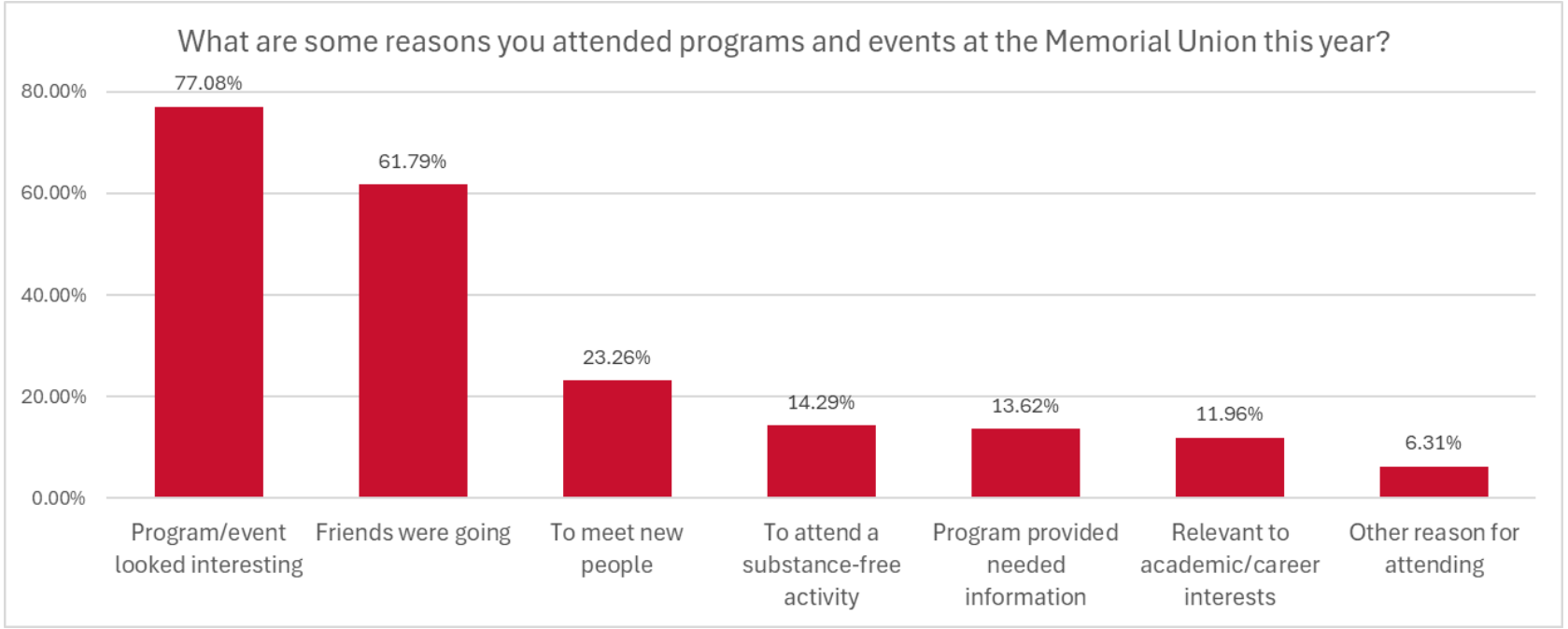
MU programs score highest on being accessible and inclusive and being well-organized



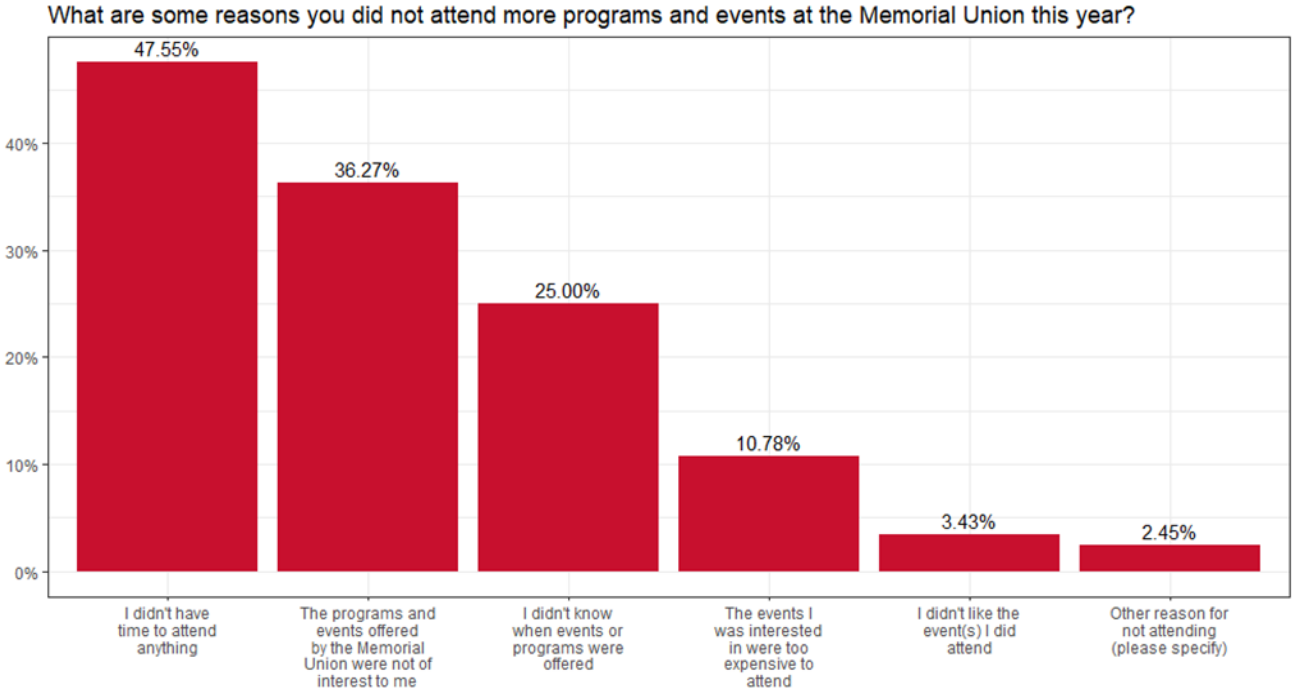
With the new survey we are able to identify strengths and growth areas for each program type



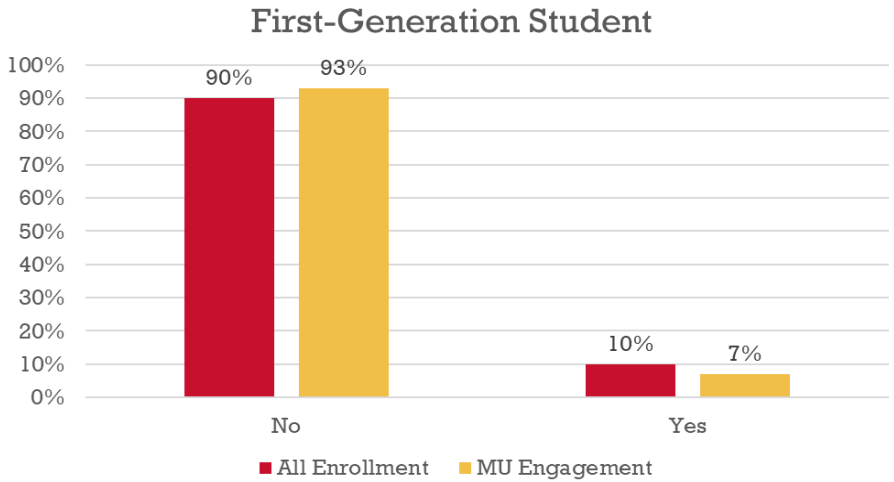
Respondents attended events they thought looked interesting and when they knew others who attended

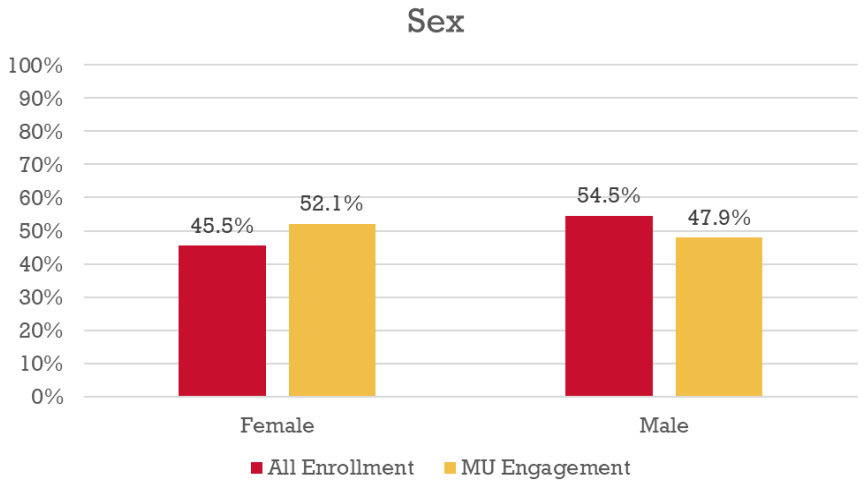


Respondents did not attend because they did not have time or the events did not seem interesting

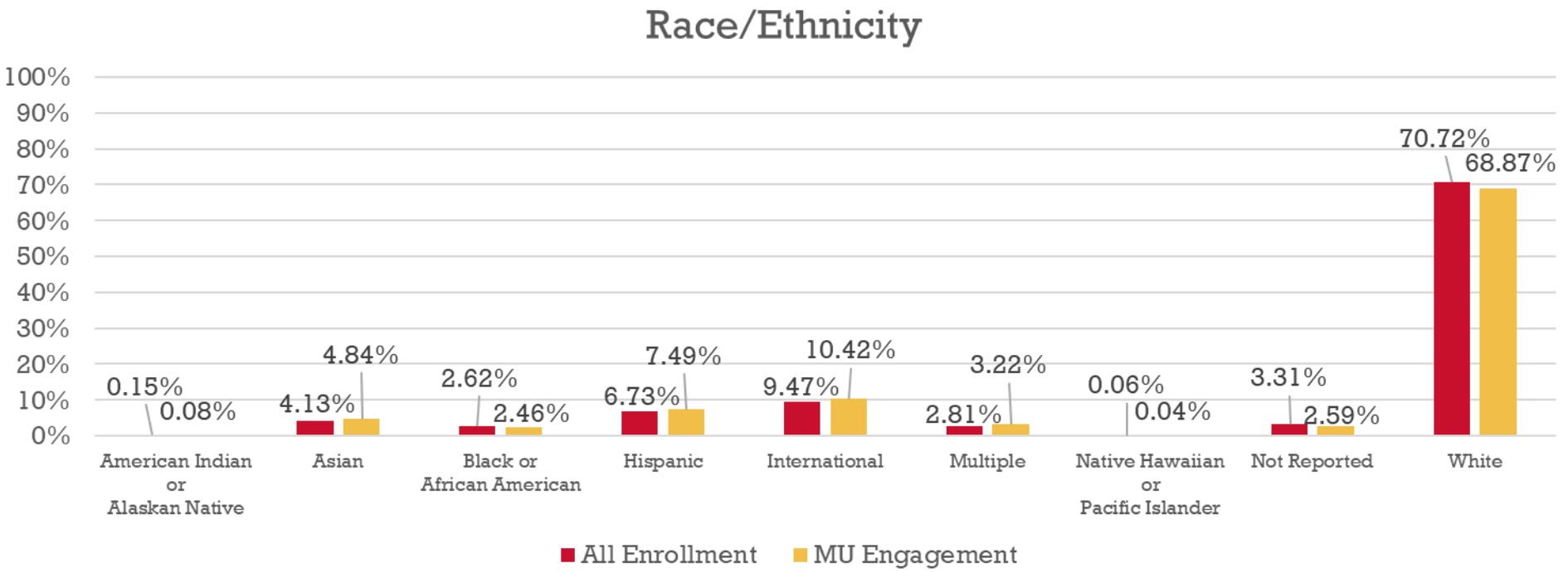


Student demographics vs. program attendee demographics

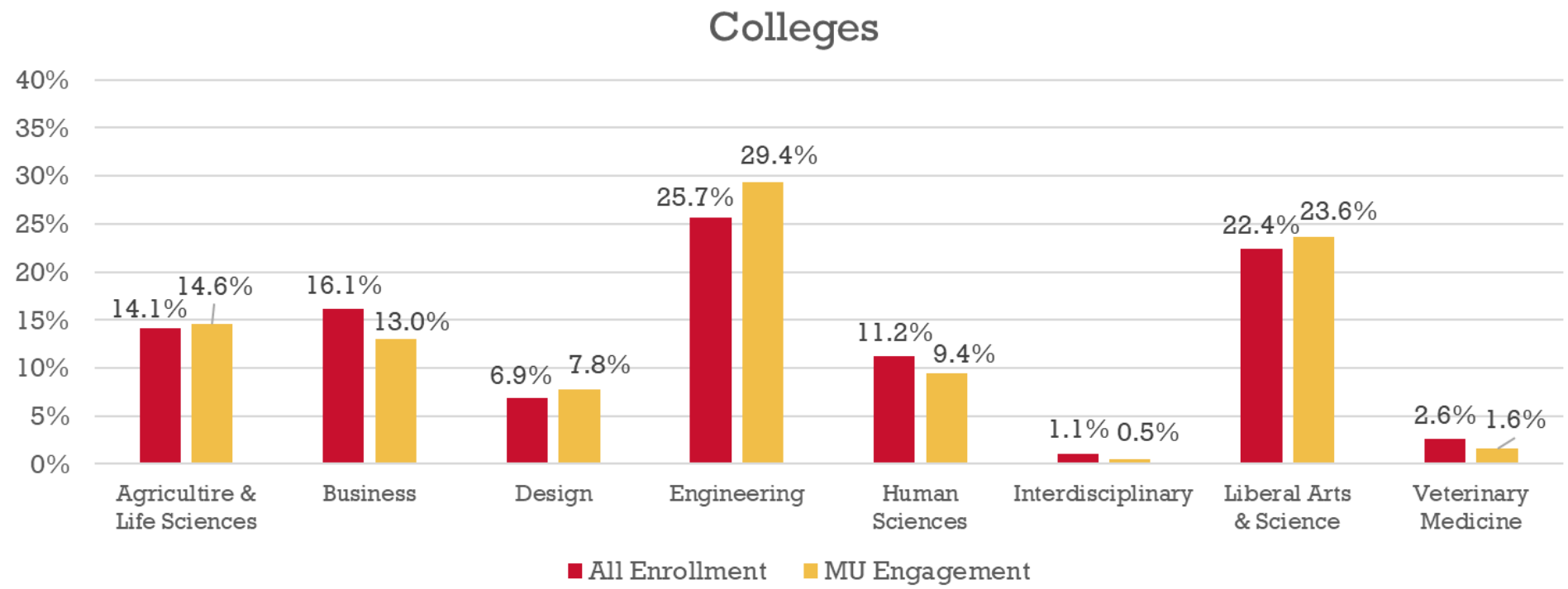




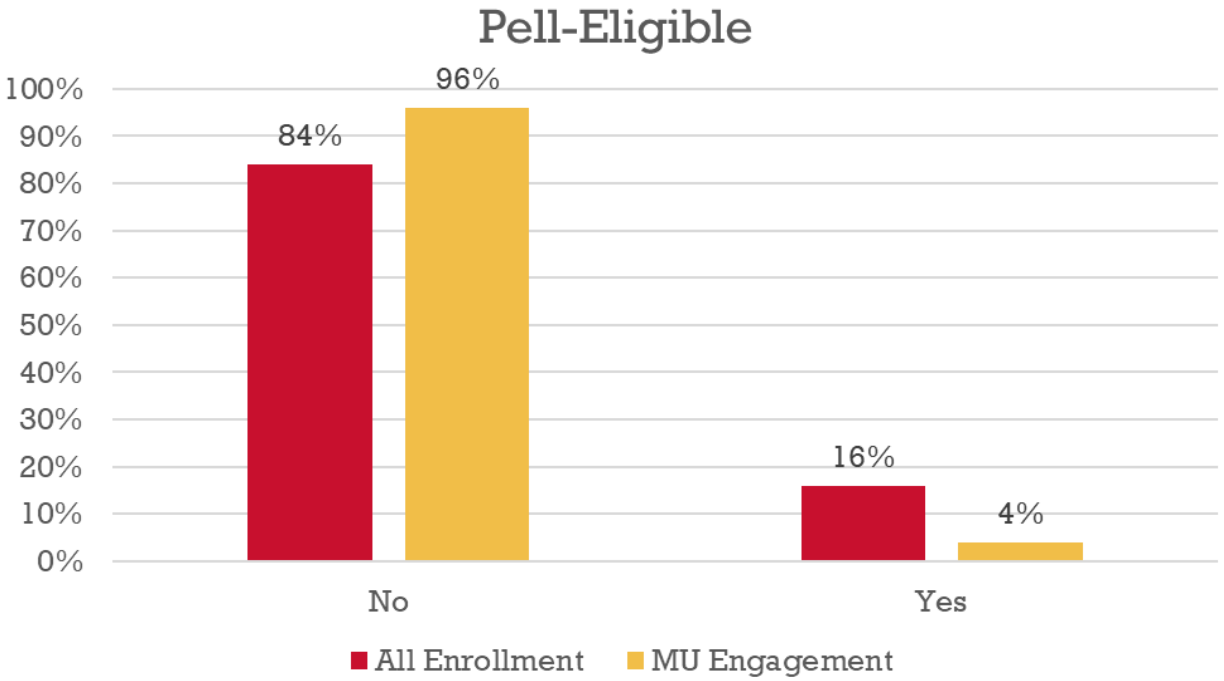
Student demographics vs. program attendee demographics



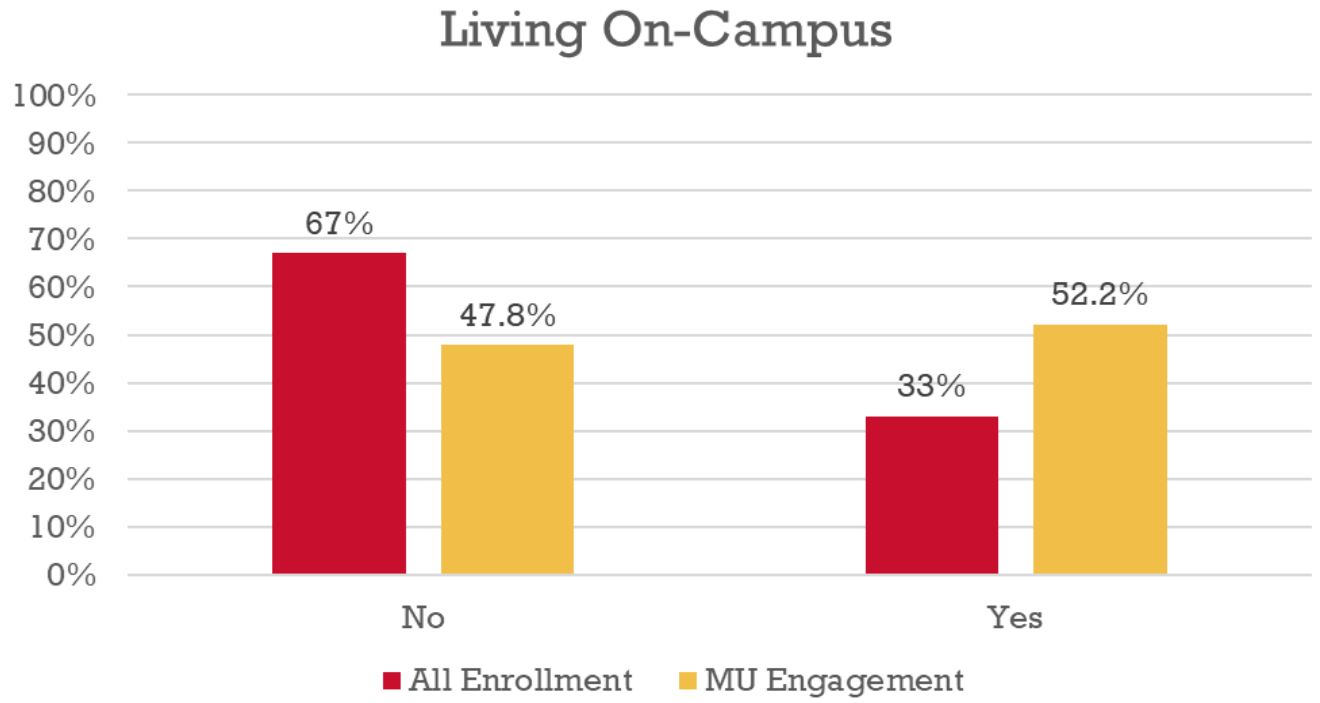
Student demographics vs. program attendee demographics



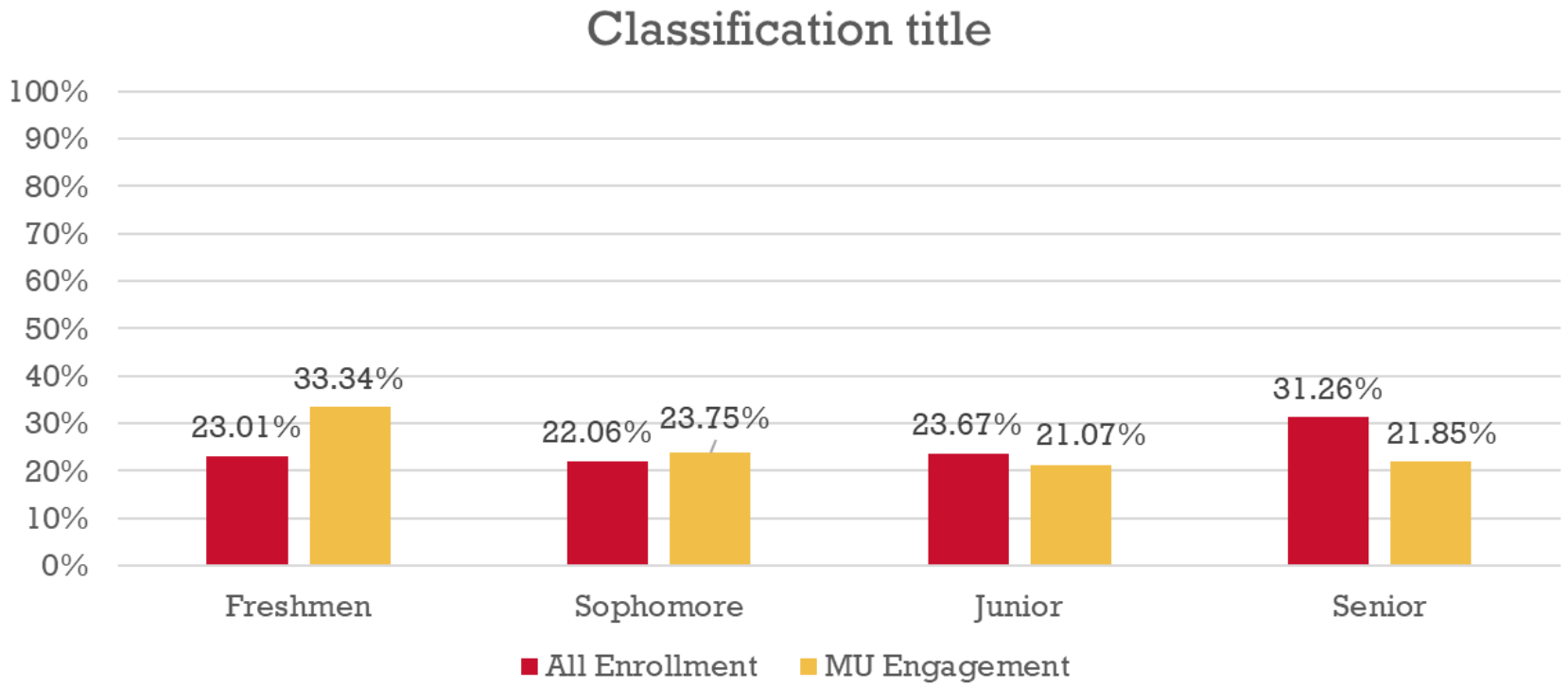
Student demographics vs. program attendee demographics



Student demographics vs. program attendee demographics



Student demographics vs. program attendee demographics



Retention

93%

Of first year students (Cohort Year 2022) who attended 1+ MU events were retained to the second year.
(statistically significant, p<.01)

93%

Of second year students (Cohort Year 2021) who attended 1+ MU events were retained to the third year.
(statistically significant, p<.01)

81%

Of first year students (Cohort Year 2022) who did not attend any MU events were retained to the second year.
(statistically significant, p<.01)

82%

Of second year students (Cohort Year 2021) who did not attend any MU events were retained to the third year.
(statistically significant, p<.01)

Conclusions

- The impact of MU events and programs on sense of belonging appears to be generally positive
- Attendance tracking is important and helps us understand who is and is not accessing our programs and services
- Using embedded data where possible helps keep surveys short and data more accurate
- The ability to compare results across program types and individual programs is useful for:
  - Identifying strengths and areas for growth
  - Promoting learning outcomes and student experiences
  - Making data-driven decisions about where to invest time and resources
  - Showcasing the impact of programs and services on student success

Utilizing Attendance Data on Your Campus

- Make a comprehensive list of programs and services
  - Organize into buckets
  - Map any institutional goals or learning outcomes
  - Review any existing assessment tools

- Create a plan for collecting attendance data
  - Investigate systems or technology already in place on your campus
  - Determine who is responsible and where data will be stored

- Talk with campus partners

- Start small – don't get overwhelmed



Questions?

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Shared Resource Folder