

2

Student Outcomes

2021-22 academic year evaluation measured student outcomes across six domains of student development.





Overview

The Kessler Scholars Collaborative has identified six core areas of student development that inform programming. The goal of the program is for participating students to develop competencies in these areas.

The findings presented relate to the 2021-22 academic year and are drawn from analysis of surveys conducted at the beginning of the 2021 Fall Semester and end of the 2022 Spring Semester, as well as twelve student focus groups conducted in February and March 2022.



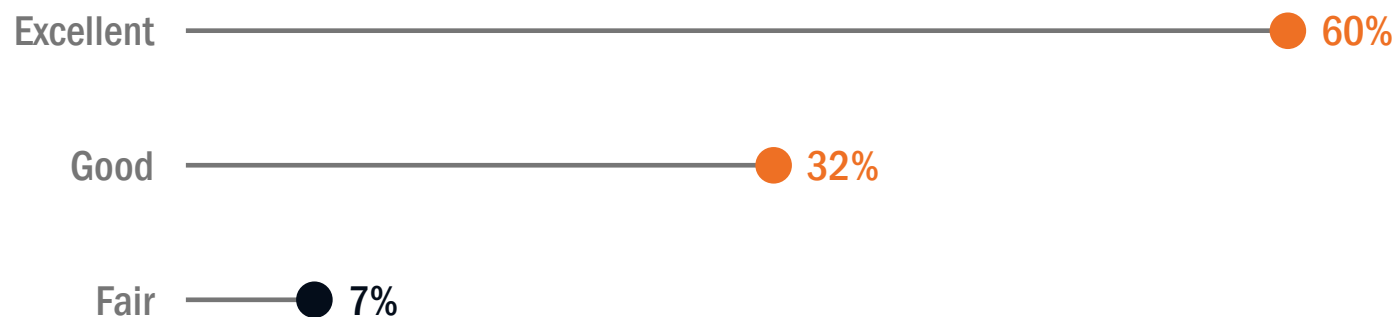
Student Experience

Students' general experience in the Kessler Scholars Program underpins their ability to achieve outcomes in the six program domains.

When discussing student experience, we describe the general quality of experience—including how positive or negative it has been—as well as students' sense of belonging and mattering within their institution and the program.

PROGRAM SATISFACTION

In total, **92%** of Kessler Scholars rated their experience as **good or excellent**. (n=255)



Scholars who participated in focus groups described the **Kessler Scholars Program** as...



“a **security** blanket”

“people you can **rely** on”

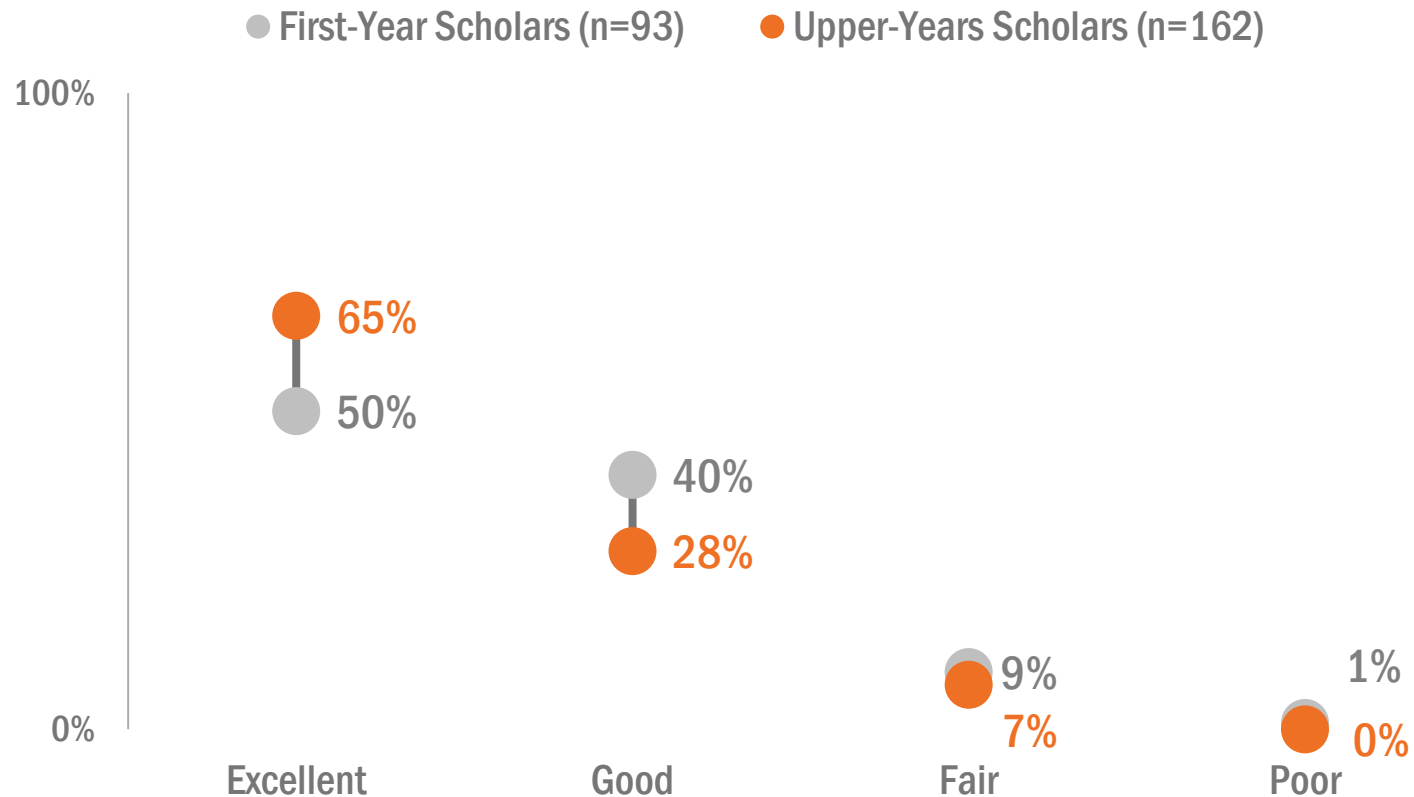
“a **support** group”

“a **family**”

Student Experience

PROGRAM SATISFACTION

A greater percentage of **upper-years Scholars** rated their experience with the program as **excellent** compared with first-year Scholars.



Student Experience

SENSE OF BELONGING & COMMUNITY

Scholars who participated in focus groups in February and March 2022 frequently said that the Kessler Scholars Program provides them with a community. The community of other Kessler Scholars, Kessler Scholars staff, peer mentors, and Kessler Scholars alumni is interconnected with other student outcomes. Students described how the community makes them feel supported and like they belong on campus. Additionally, Scholars described how the community helps them navigate college, connects them to resources, including mental health and academic support, and provides a chance to develop leadership skills.



That community is really what makes Kessler Program so amazing. I personally don't think I would've found that **community** and that family-like atmosphere if it wasn't for that program...and it helped to **motivate me to keep going**.

- QUEENS COLLEGE SCHOLAR

For me, I feel like my entire experience at St. Francis College would've been completely different if I never was a part of the McGuire family. The very first person I met was [McGuire Scholars staff], and I've known him ever since. I think it really means a lot to me that someone who's been around the entire time has reminded me that **I'm not alone** during my difficult times here.

- ST. FRANCIS COLLEGE SCHOLAR



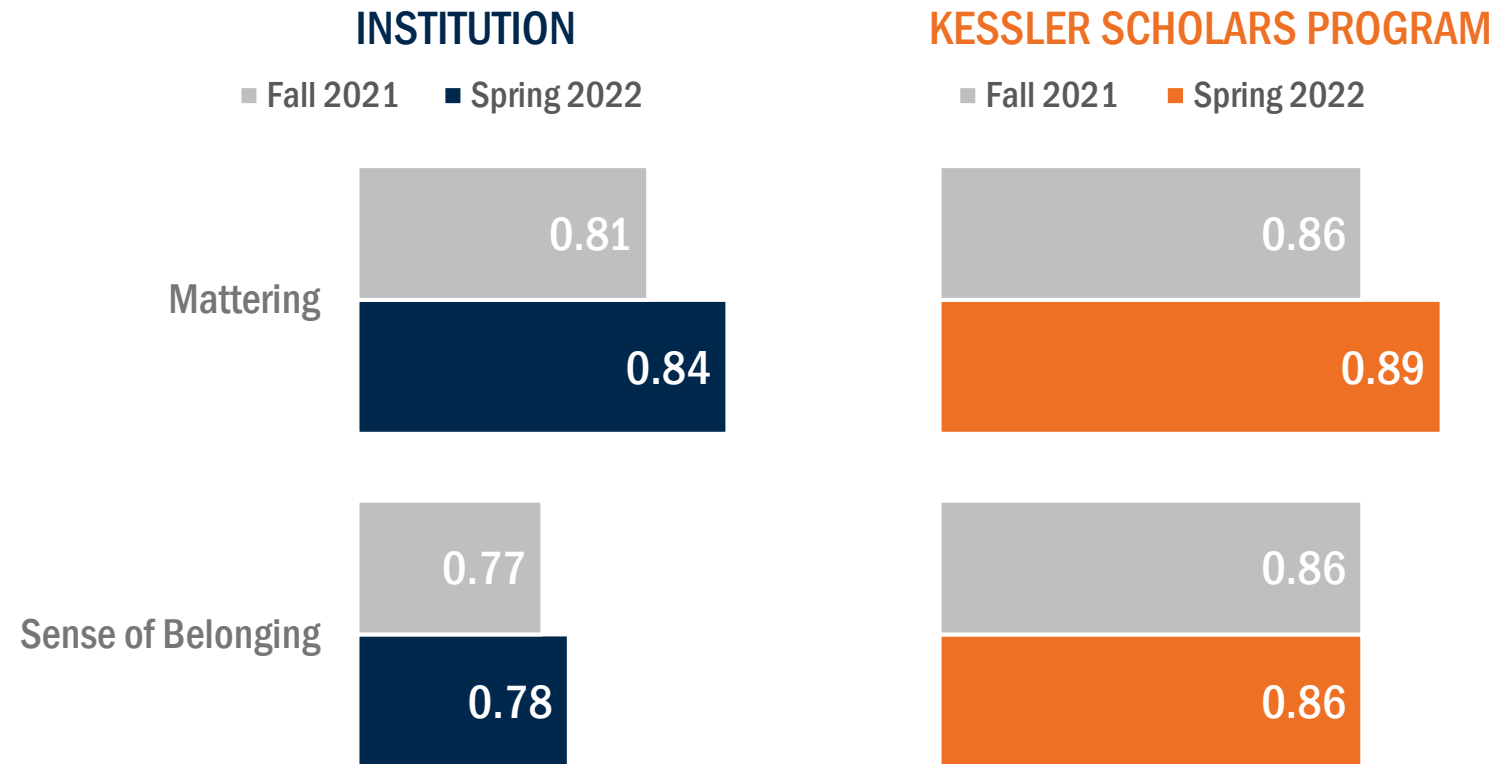
I come from a low socioeconomic background, which I find that a lot of the other Kessler Scholars also share that identity with me. It was nice to have a community where I felt like I could look to my left and right and I knew at least **somebody would share a similar experience**. Sometimes when I am on campus and interacting with some of the more wealthy students, there's just a disconnect in understanding of how you interact with the world. So having that community of people that were more **in tune with my identity** and my personal experience was really helpful.”

- UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SCHOLAR

Student Experience

SENSE OF BELONGING & MATTERING

Scholars' average sense of belonging and mattering to their institution **increased** from the fall 2021 to the spring 2022 surveys. (n = 227)



“

With the community that you build with the Kessler Program, and obviously with your mentors and Kessler staff, you get a **sense of a small family**.

- SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY SCHOLAR

”

1 College Navigation and Academic Skill Development

The Kessler Scholars Program aims to improve students' ability to navigate collegiate structures and processes and manage academic demands. The findings below represent a qualitative analysis of 2022 Scholar focus group and survey responses.

● First-Year Experience

Kessler Scholars described the ways the Kessler Scholars Program supported their first-year college transition by providing a supportive community, connecting them to resources on campus, introducing them to other first-generation, low-income students.

“ It let me know I'm not alone in this. It gave me great friends and even better **people to lean on** when trouble comes or when I truly need help.

- SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY SCHOLAR

● College Navigation

Consistently across all institutions, students described how the program helped them navigate college and supported their transition to college in their freshman year. Much of this was associated with the support of their Kessler Scholars staff and peers as well as connections to resources across campus.

“ The Kessler Scholars Program was helpful in giving me support and resources regarding my major choice and future plans. Kessler Scholars also provided me with a lot of **information on campus resources** and support that are available to me.

- JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY SCHOLAR

● Academic Skill Development

Discussion of academic skill development varied within and across institutions. Some students said they gained academic skills through participating in the program, while others did not report experiencing academic growth as a result of participating in the program.

“ I don't think there's much they can do for us academically [other] than just **point us in the right direction**, which they've done. There are so many resources, and I've used a lot of them, so I've done pretty well school-wise because of that.

- UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SCHOLAR

1 College Navigation and Academic Skill Development



[The first-year seminar] really helped **build up my confidence** for participation in class, because it made me realize that whatever I had to say was important. Those discussions really did help bring out my ideas and the things I had to say and made me realize that **my voice matters.**

- QUEENS COLLEGE SCHOLAR

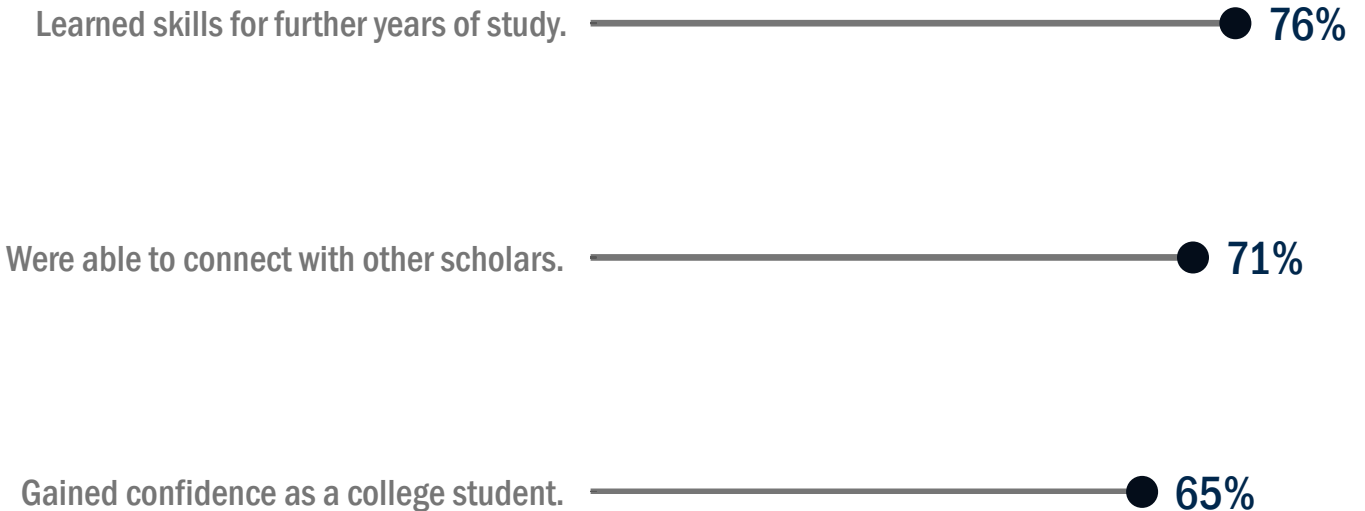


The Kessler Scholars Program supports first-year students in their transition to college, with peer mentoring offered to first-years at all institutions, and a first-year seminar offered at three institutions.

FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR

Most Scholars who participated in a first-year seminar agreed that it was a **valuable experience.** (n=62)

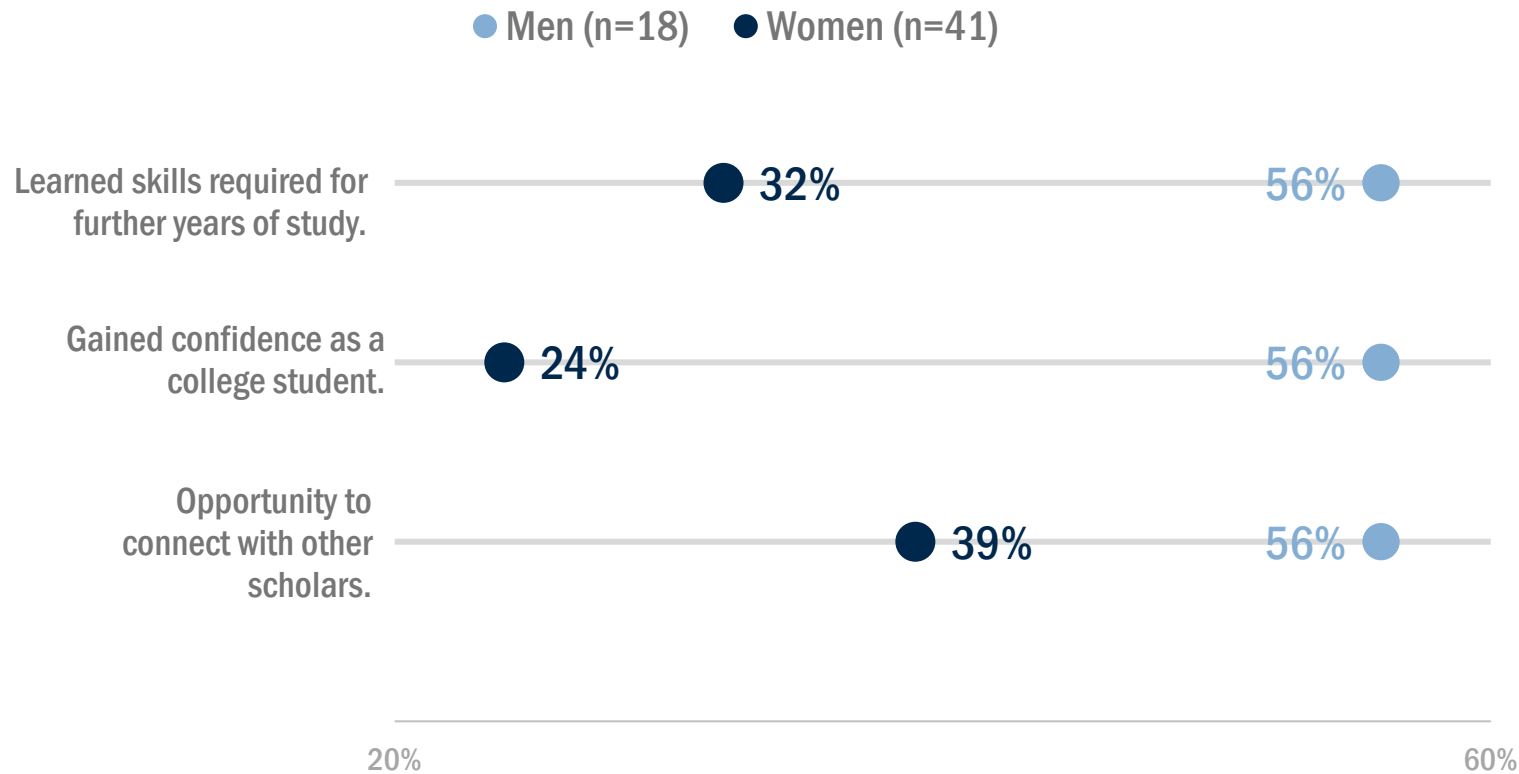
SCHOLARS REPORTED THAT AS A RESULT OF THE FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR THEY...



1 College Navigation and Academic Skill Development

FIRST-YEAR SEMINAR

Proportionally **more men** than women reported that, where offered, the first-year seminar was a **valuable experience**.



1 College Navigation and Academic Skill Development

EXPERIENCE WITH PEER MENTORS

Scholars who participated in focus groups described positive experiences with the peer mentoring component of the Kessler Scholars Program. Students described how their peer mentors helped them navigate college, connect to resources, and provided advice about navigating the college experience, both socially and academically. Some Scholars formed friendships with their peer mentors.

Scholars described the importance of having someone who understands their experience and discussed connecting with peer mentors over shared identities and interests, including being first-generation, low-income students or sharing similar academic majors.

Experiences with peer mentoring varied, with a couple of students expressing they did not feel as close to their peer mentor as compared to other students in their cohort.

“ I had a mentor, and it was really helpful just in terms of having conversations about specific similar struggles that you were going through [...] Knowing that **somebody else has had this experience** and they were able to get through it, and they can offer me resources and advice on how to do the same things.

- CORNELL UNIVERSITY SCHOLAR

The most valuable aspect of the peer mentoring program was being able to **ask for advice** from a student with more experience than you and gaining insight into their knowledge.

- JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY SCHOLAR



1 College Navigation and Academic Skill Development



My peer mentor has helped guide me a lot, tell me about things I didn't know, and just give me advice. And so that has made a big impact on my experience, and it's helped me a lot.

- UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SCHOLAR

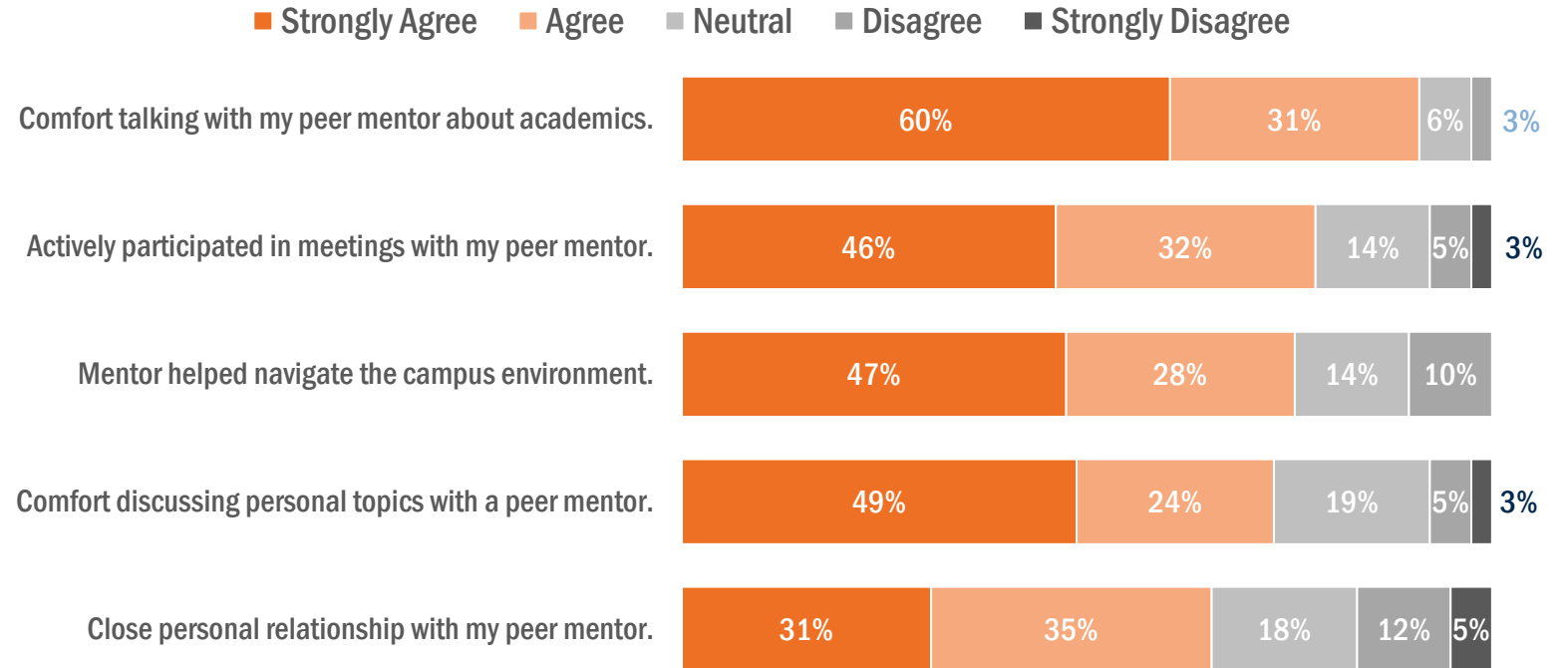


All six partner institutions offered peer mentorship opportunities for first-year Scholars.

EXPERIENCE WITH PEER MENTORS

Mentees reported forming **close relationships** with and receiving **high levels of support** from their mentors. (n=24)

SCHOLARS RATED THEIR LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING:

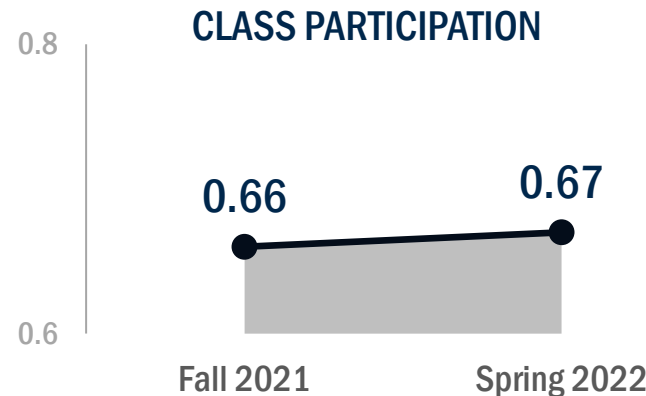
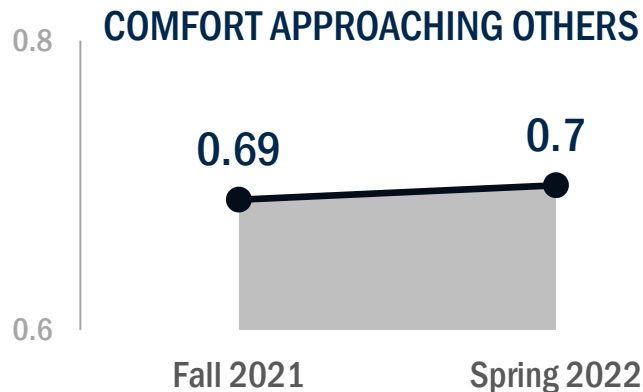
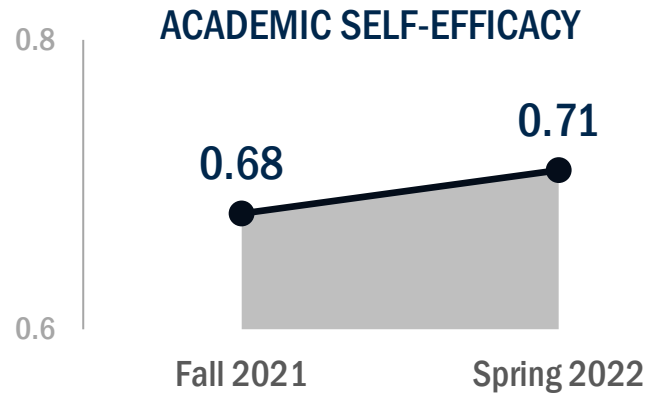


1 College Navigation and Academic Skill Development

Academic self-efficacy refers to a person's belief that they can successfully complete certain tasks. The fall 2021 and spring 2022 surveys asked Scholars to rate their perception of self-efficacy in certain school-based tasks at the beginning and end of the academic year.

ACADEMIC & SOCIAL SELF-EFFICACY

Scholars reported a **small increase** across all measured areas of self-efficacy. (n=227)



“

As an individual, I am a very isolated person. But with the McGuire Scholarship Program, I feel like it has pushed me to ask for help and to **not hesitate to reach out** whenever I need help or connect with other [St. Francis College Scholars] or speak to them. So it's been really helpful in helping me **come out of my comfort zone** and getting to know people and feel connected to them.

- ST. FRANCIS COLLEGE SCHOLAR

”

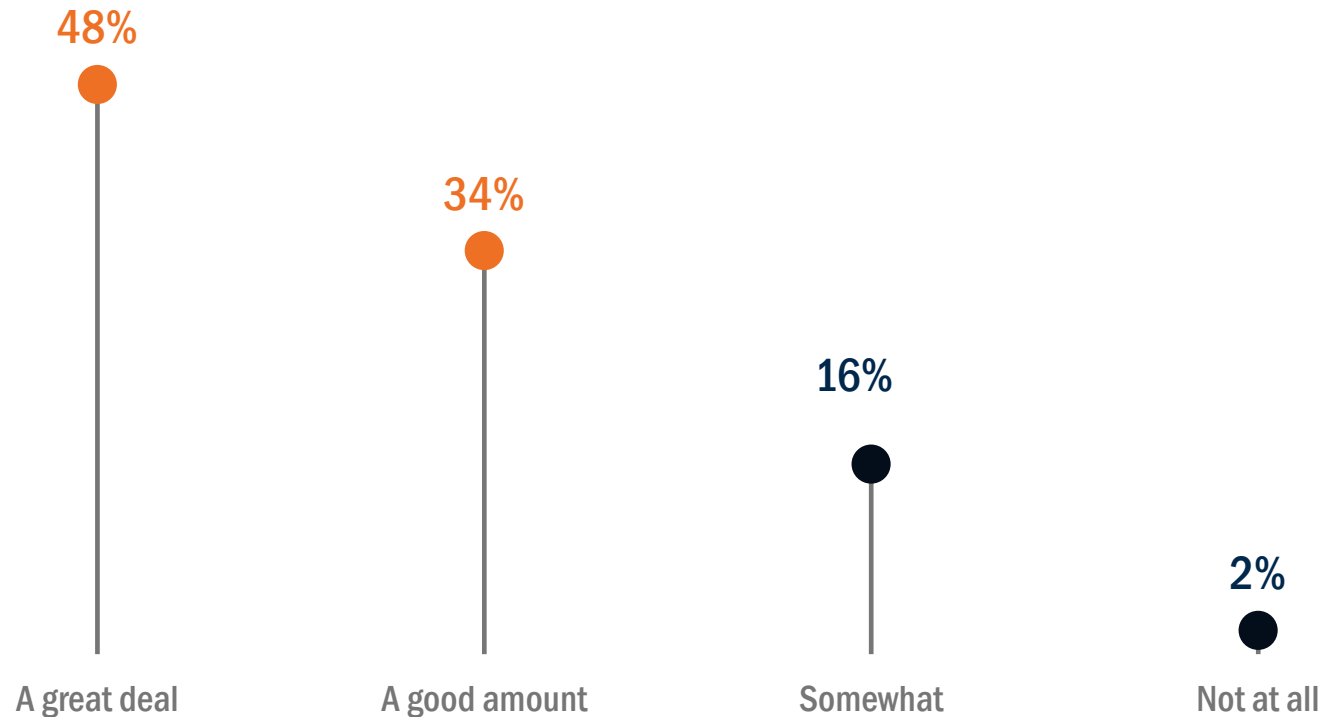
2 Wellness and Social Emotional Development

The Kessler Scholars Program provides programming focused on increasing students' physical and emotional well-being and forming and maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships.

In student focus groups, discussion of wellness and social emotional development varied across institutions. Some Scholars described how wellness programming and connections to mental health resources helped them focus on their mental health and wellness. Other students said that programming where they gained practical tools were particularly valuable.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

82% of Scholars reported that the program encouraged developing a **healthy lifestyle** for overall personal **wellness**. (n=254)



3 Self-Awareness and Identity Development

The Kessler Scholars Program provides programming aimed at fostering personal growth and students' abilities to articulate their values, beliefs, and strengths. The findings below represent a qualitative analysis of focus group and survey responses.

Increased Confidence and Asking for Help

Across all institutions, students described how the Kessler Scholars Program increased their confidence, their ability to speak up for themselves, and their comfort in asking for help.

“ I'm really shy, but then [the program] really helped me to get **out of my comfort zone**.

- QUEENS COLLEGE SCHOLAR

Personally, I feel **more confident** after joining Kessler.

- QUEENS COLLEGE SCHOLAR

Developing a First-Generation Identity

Some students shared that being a part of the program increased their pride in their first-generation identity, while others said that their participation did not change the way they viewed their identity.

“ I hold that identity really, really close to my heart. And I'm really, really **proud to be a first-gen student**. And I think most of us in Kessler are. I think Kessler has definitely shown us how to be proud if we weren't already proud of it.

- UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SCHOLAR

Shared Identities for Stronger Community

Students described how shared experiences and backgrounds, as well as a culture that supports vulnerability, allows them to connect with others in the program and build a strong community.

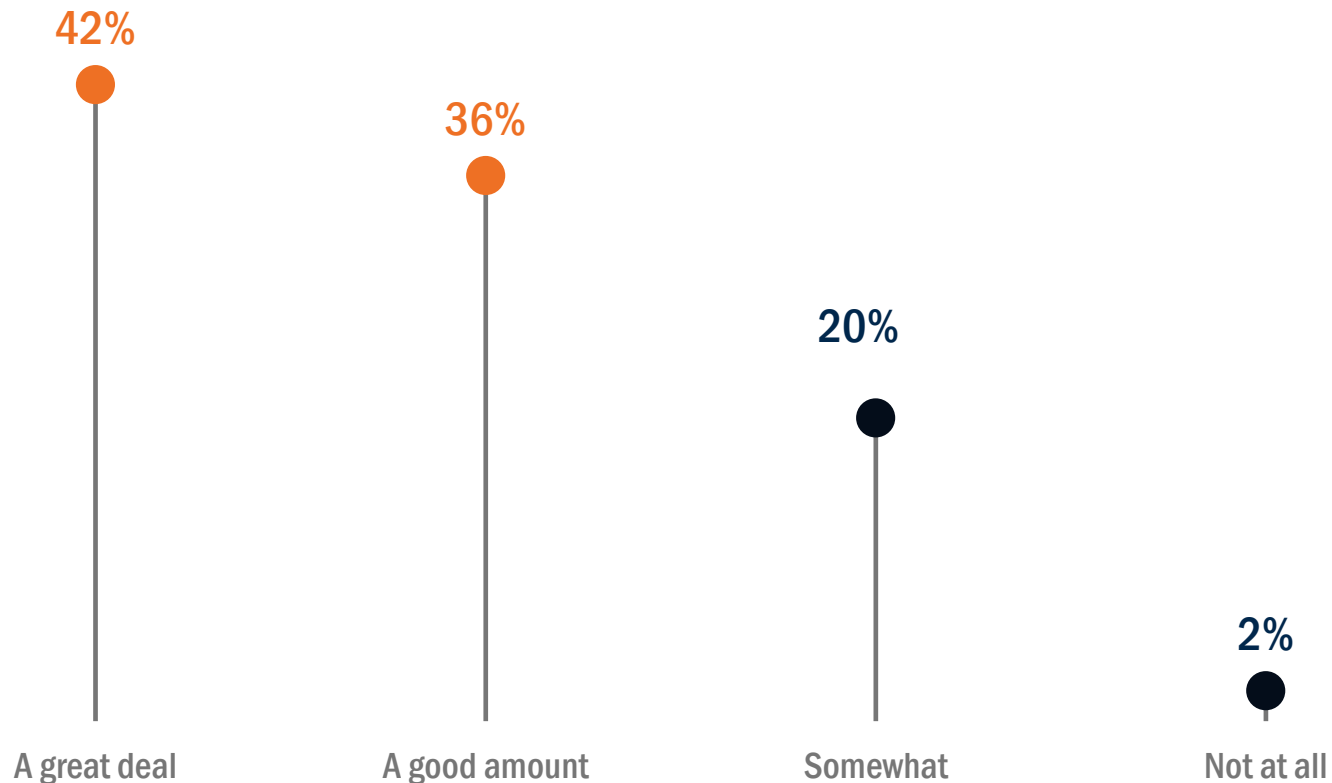
“ I feel like outside of the Kessler Scholars Program, I don't really know anyone from a similar background. It's really nice knowing that there's a **group of other students** here at Cornell who are also first-generation college students.

- CORNELL UNIVERSITY SCHOLAR

3 Self-Awareness and Identity Development

SELF-EXPLORATION & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

78% of Scholars reported that the program helped facilitate their **self-exploration and personal development**. (n=253)



I'm someone who I don't know what I want do or what's my favorite subject, and I feel like having Kessler and all the mentors...they assure me, they're like, "Oh, it's okay. You can explore." And somebody to just **instill that confidence** in you that everything is okay and **you're still figuring it out**, I feel like I take that with me to different aspects of my life and I have a lot more confidence.

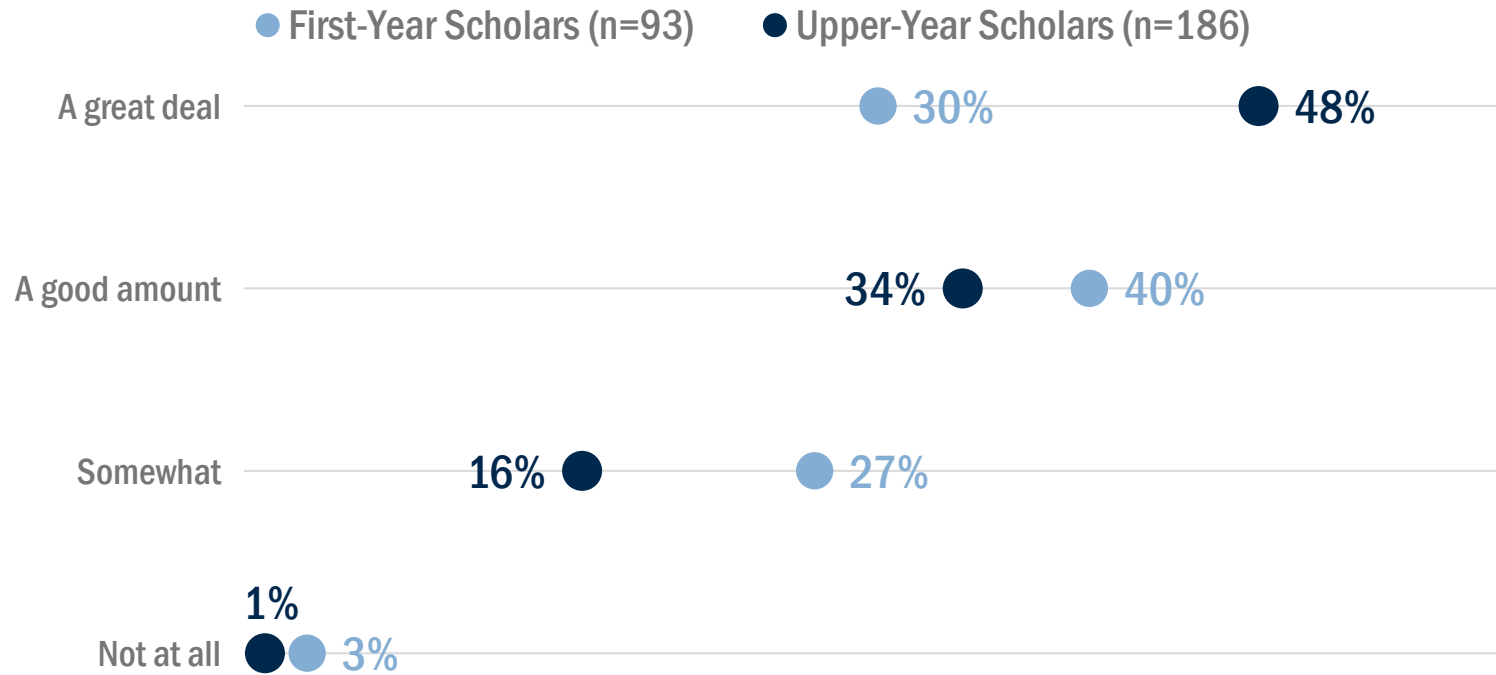
- QUEENS COLLEGE SCHOLAR



3 Self-Awareness and Identity Development

PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

A **greater proportion of upper-year Scholars** than first-year Scholars reported that the program facilitated their self-exploration and personal development **a great deal**.



4 Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility

The Kessler Scholars Program provides programming that cultivates students' civic, social, and empathic values, and commitment to service with and for others.

In focus groups, Scholars did not discuss civic engagement as often as other programming, though some students described how a volunteering requirement increased their commitment to serving the surrounding community. Between the fall 2021 and spring 2022 surveys there were no overall changes in reported civic engagement.



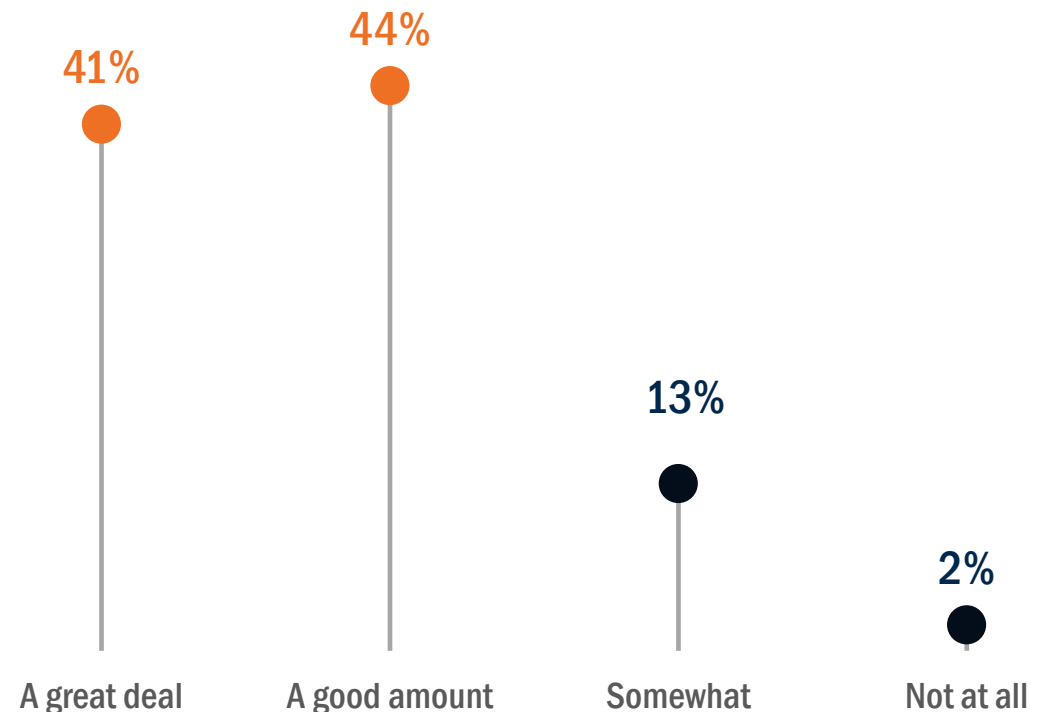
Pandemic Impact

Due to safety-related limitations to in-person programming that continued into the 2021-22 academic year, participating institutions were limited in their ability to offer civic engagement programming.

In focus groups, some students discussed how the pandemic made it difficult to find a location to fulfill their community service requirement.

CULTURAL & SOCIAL DIVERSITY

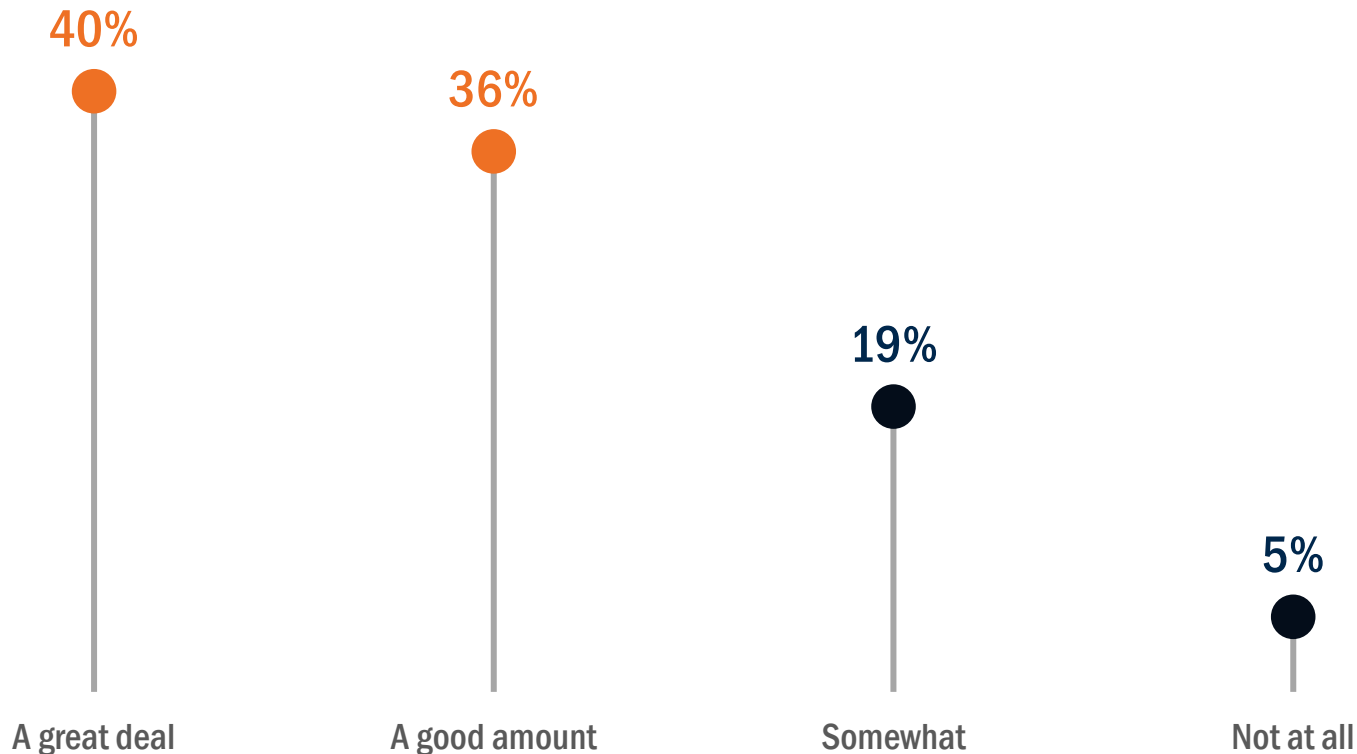
Nearly all Scholars reported that the program helped them have a **greater understanding** of cultural or social diversity. (n=253)



4 Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility

DISCUSSING SOCIAL ISSUES

76% of Scholars reported that the program helped them have **honest discussions** on racial and social issues. (n=255)



“

And we would also talk about current events, like Black Lives Matter and climate change and everything. And I feel like it really allowed us to **express our feelings** and talk about how we feel about these current issues.

- QUEENS COLLEGE SCHOLAR,
in reference to first-year seminar

”

5 Leadership Development

The Kessler Scholars Program provides programming that enables students to cultivate leadership skills and apply leadership practices through student-led activities. The findings below represent a qualitative analysis of focus group and survey responses.

Within the program

All institutions offer opportunities for students to serve as peer mentors to first-year students. During the 2021-22 academic year, three institutions also convened student advisory boards to provide greater student voice in program decisions.

Within and across institutions, Kessler Scholars provided mixed responses as to whether the program supported their leadership development. When students described leadership development, it was often through serving as a peer mentor or on an advisory board. Some students did not think the program had helped them develop leadership skills.

Leaders in their Families

Across institutions, students described being role models in their families for siblings, cousins, or nieces and nephews and being a resource for those pursuing college.

Beyond the program

The evaluation explored which leadership opportunities Scholars engaged in beyond the scope of Kessler Scholars programming.

Scholars described engagement in a range of leadership opportunities beyond the Kessler Scholars Program.



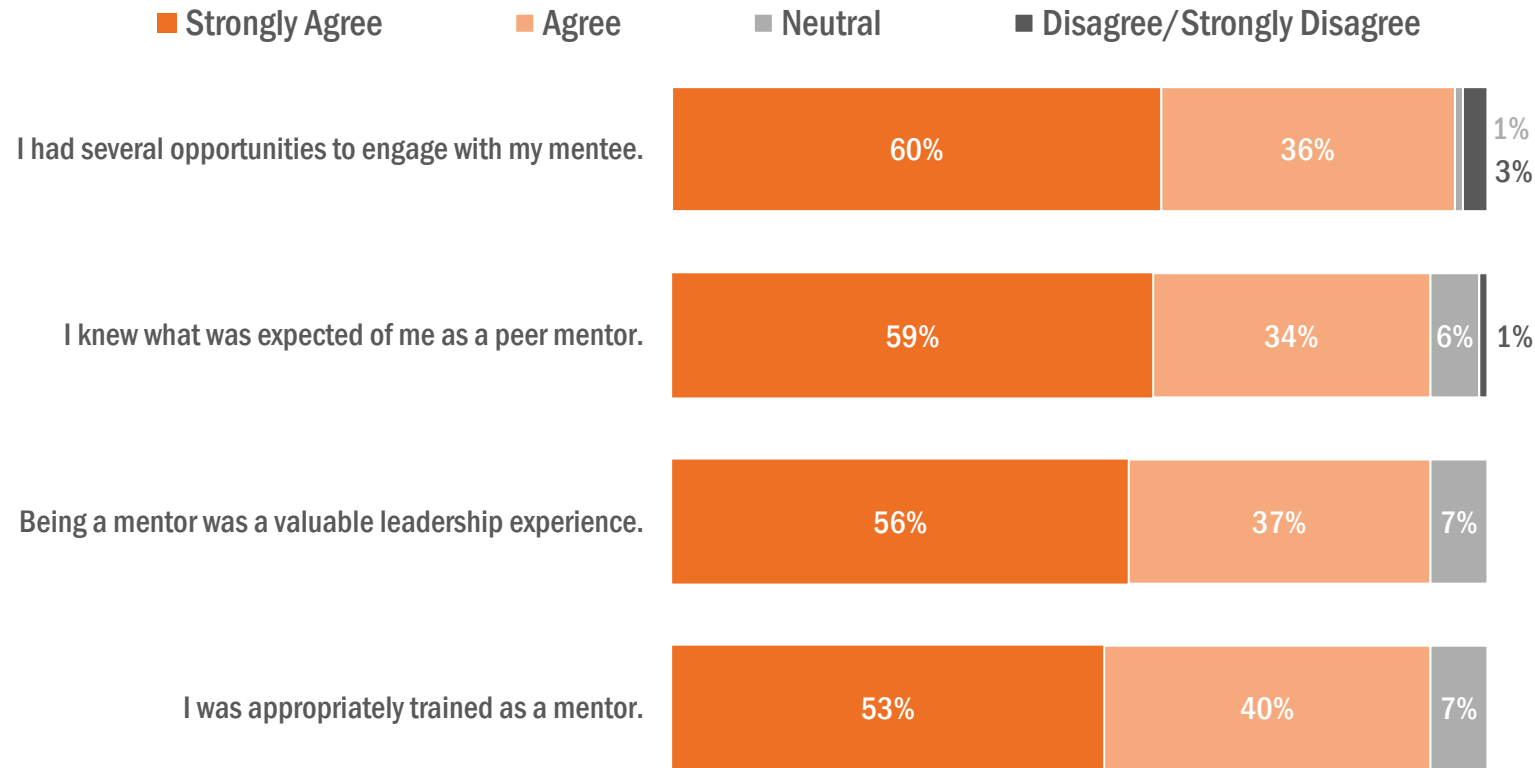
Examples

- Academic organizations, honor societies, and pre-professional organizations
- Multicultural organizations
- Service or advocacy organizations
- Creative and performing arts organizations
- Sports and recreation organizations

5 Leadership Development

PEER MENTOR EXPERIENCE

Nearly all peer mentors agreed that they were **well prepared** and had a **valuable experience**. (n=68)



“

Both having a mentor, but also **being a mentor** has been a really **rewarding experience** for me and something that I've really loved to do.

- CORNELL UNIVERSITY SCHOLAR

”

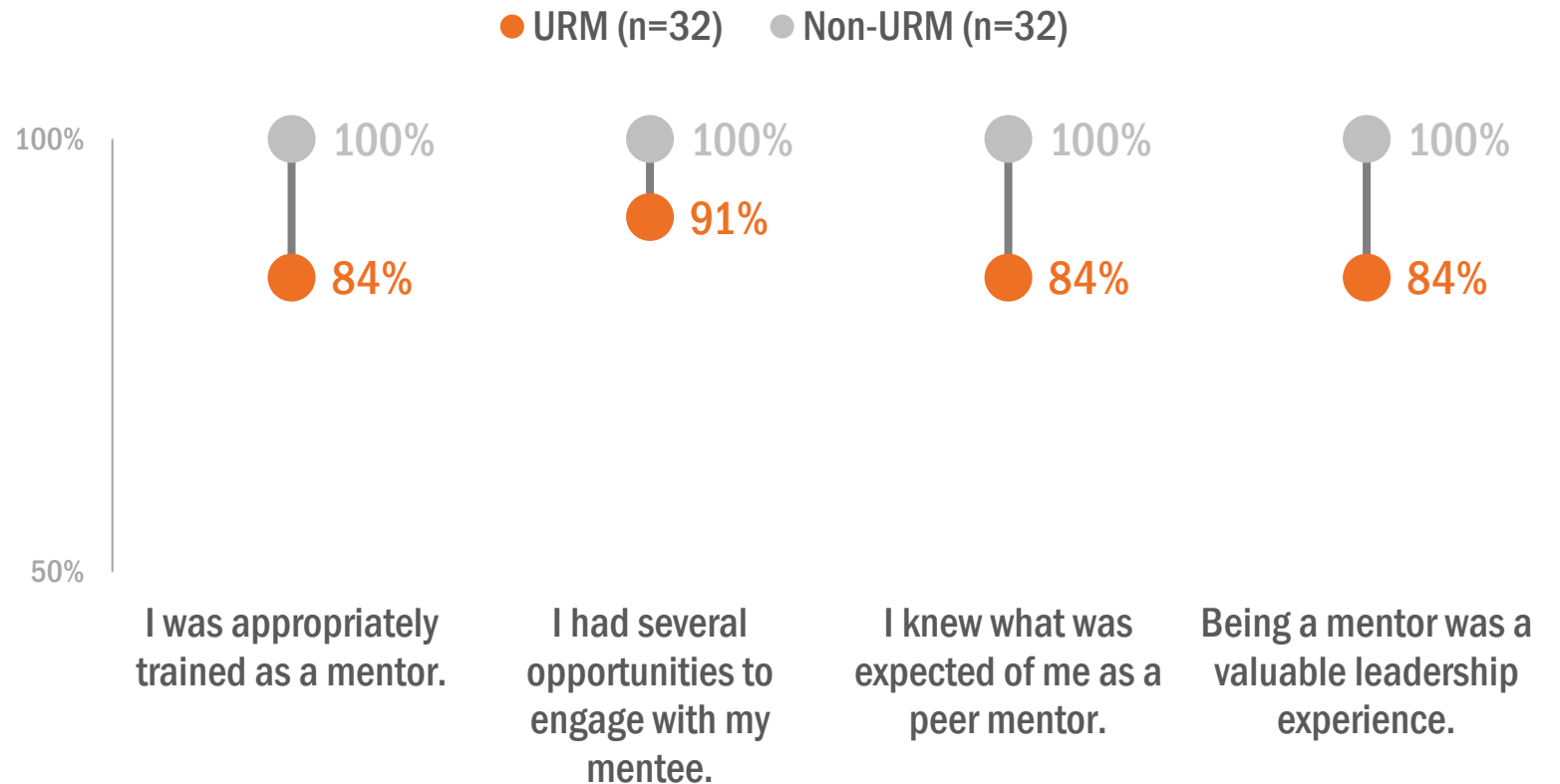
5 Leadership Development



PEER MENTOR EXPERIENCE

A **smaller percentage of URM*** peer mentors agreed that they were appropriately trained and had a positive experience as a peer mentor.

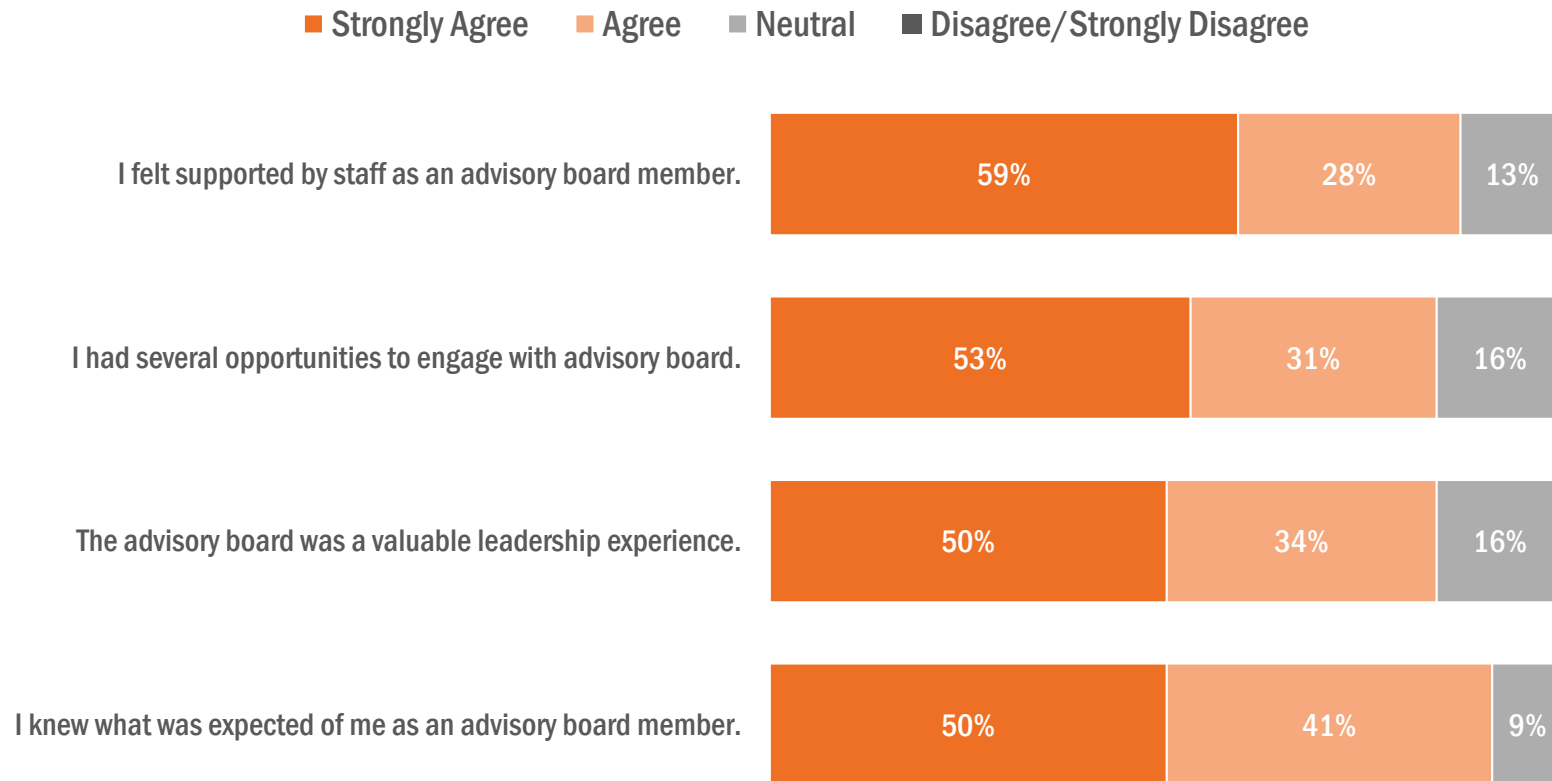
*URM stands for underrepresented minority¹



5 Leadership Development

ADVISORY BOARD EXPERIENCE

Advisory board members tended to **strongly agree** that that they were **well prepared** and had a **valuable experience**. (n=32)



That board itself has helped produce different **leadership and professional abilities** in myself that I plan to carry with me in my career, from presenting to event coordination to directly working with my own peers in my cohort and Kessler Scholars at large.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
SCHOLAR



6 Career and Professional Development

The Kessler Scholars Program provides programming that aims to cultivate skills and experiences that promote students' career aspirations and professional development.

During focus groups, Scholars at all institutions described career and professional development outcomes. The type of outcome varied by institution. Examples include writing resumes, being connected to mentors in their career fields, or learning about new opportunities related to their interests. Students also described feeling more confident in exploring and pursuing career aspirations.



I would not have thought to think ahead past my first-year for my future plans and career goals. Going to college, there is a lot to take in, so **having an extra advisor** making sure I am on the right track was super **wonderful**.

- JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY SCHOLAR

[The Kessler Scholars staff] put me in contact with a woman who is also African American, just like me. So, I felt it was very comforting too to talk to her about "what struggles did she go along with in her career path?" I feel it **really helped me to not feel alone**.

- SCHOLAR, school not named to avoid identifying student

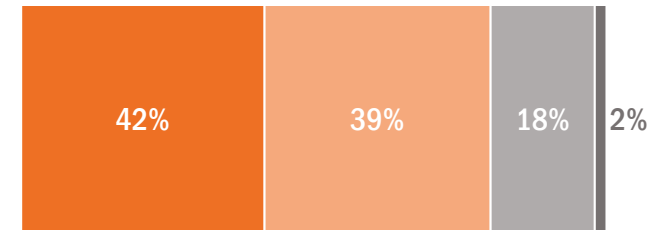
PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

Nearly all Scholars reported that the program facilitated their **academic and career planning**.

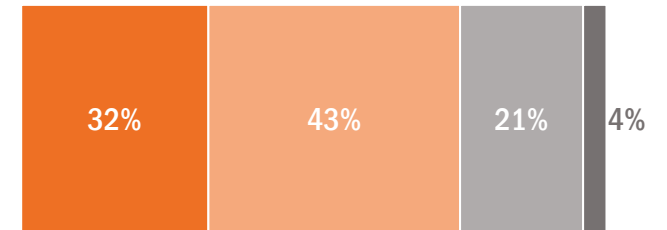
■ A great deal ■ A good amount ■ Somewhat ■ Not at all

To what extent did the program..

Help facilitate academic exploration and planning (n=254)



Help facilitate career exploration and planning (n=252)



6 Career and Professional Development



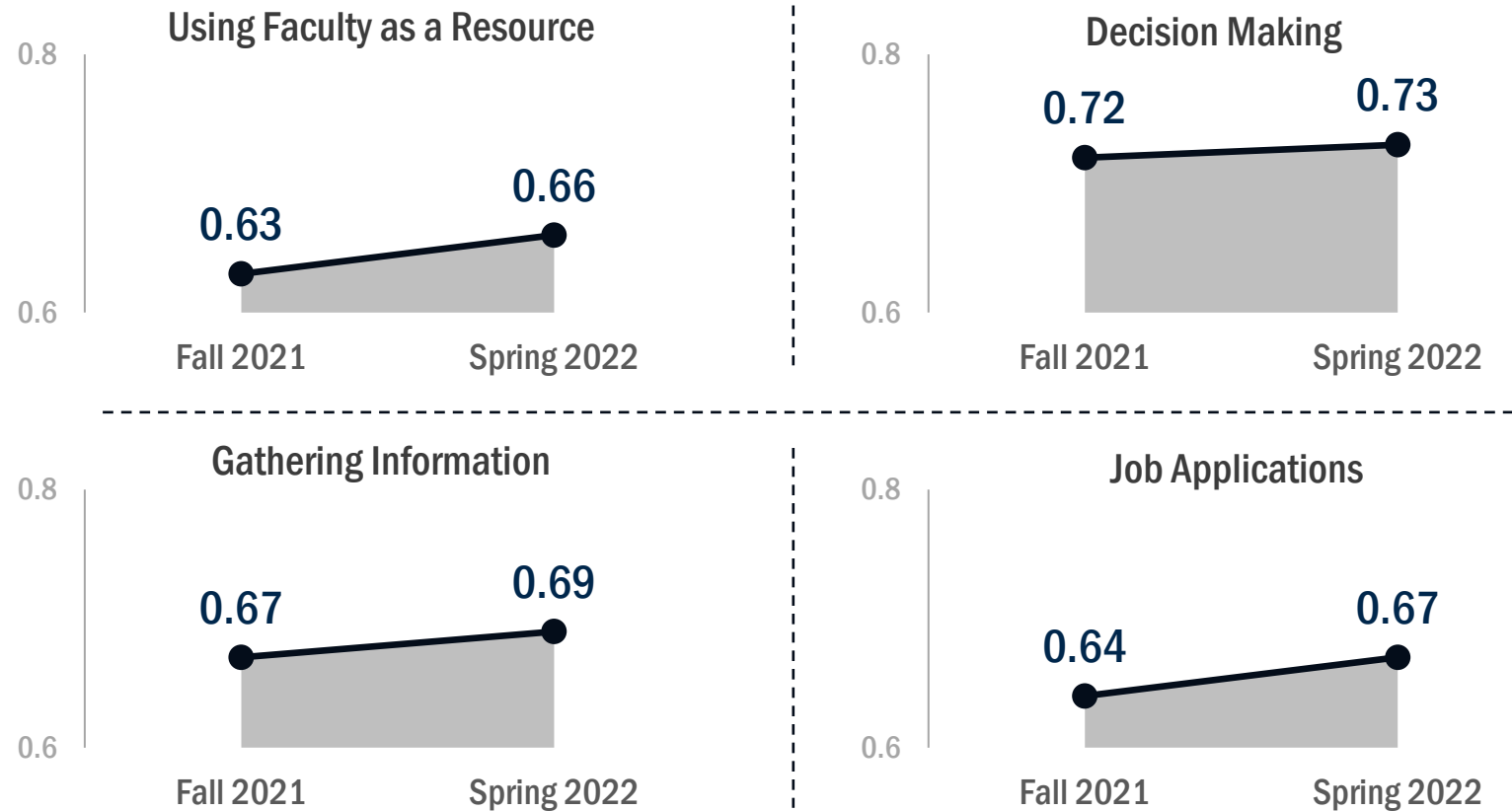
I usually don't take opportunities to apply for internships because I always get discouraged. But then [the Kessler Scholars staff] really helped me to **set up my resume** and my recommendation letter, and really helped me to **practice my interviewing skills**. So that really changed so much for me.

- QUEENS COLLEGE SCHOLAR



CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

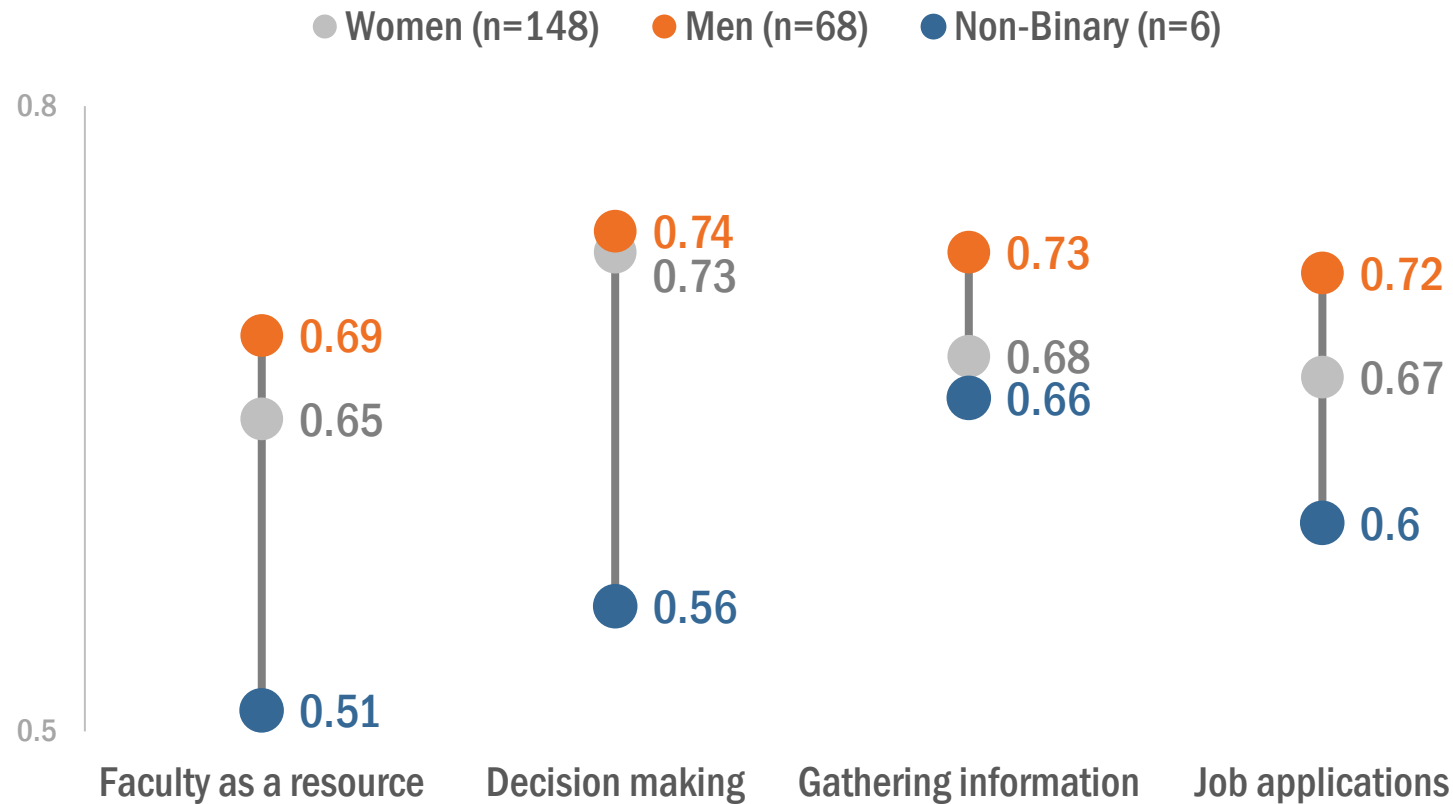
Scholars reported a **small increase** in all measured areas of **career and professional development** between the fall 2021 and spring 2022 surveys. (n=227)



6 Career and Professional Development

CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Men reported the **highest levels of confidence** across all measured areas of career and professional development.



6 Career and Professional Development

GRADUATING SENIORS

In the 2021-22 academic year, two institutions have graduating seniors: the University of Michigan and St. Francis College. In the spring 2022 survey, graduating seniors described how the Kessler Scholars Program prepared them for post-college plans by helping them

- Develop **confidence** in themselves and their career paths,
- Strengthen their **leadership** and **professional skills**, and
- Provide tangible support with **graduate program applications** or **resumes**.

Some graduating seniors said that they would like more opportunities to connect with alumni in their career fields of interest or more workshops to learn about post-graduation pathways, such as graduate school or less traditional pathways.

“ The Kessler Scholars Program has **been there for me along my entire journey through college**, giving me limitless opportunities and support to reach the goals I set for myself and being there to inspire my own passions for mentorship and leadership. In my decision to pursue my plans after graduating, the Kessler Scholars Program has been there to help me when I questioned my own interests and doubted my abilities to succeed in what I was doing. I took the lessons I learned and advice I received about my identity as a first-generation college student pursuing **goals my family and I never before thought were possible** and made the most of the opportunities thrown my way.

- UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SCHOLAR

6 Career and Professional Development



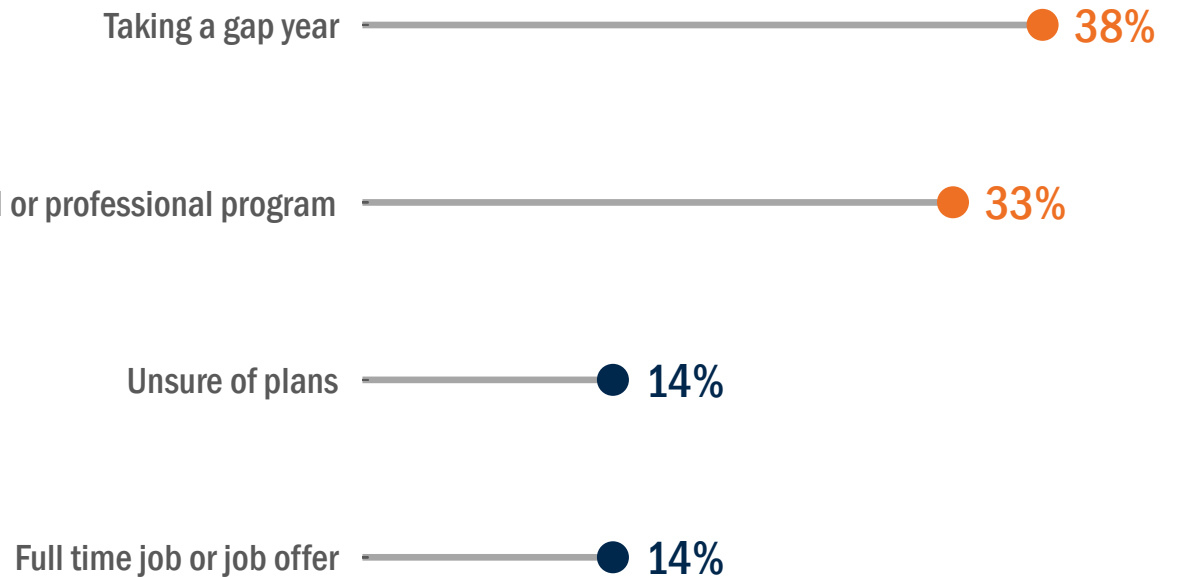
I feel the program has prepared me with **leadership skills** that I can implement into my future plans. It has also provided me with the **confidence to do what I want to do** with my career and life.

- ST. FRANCIS COLLEGE SCHOLAR



POST-GRADUATION PLANS

38% of graduating seniors plan to take a **gap year** upon graduating, and **33%** plan on continuing their **formal education**. (n=21)



High-Impact Practices

The Kessler Scholars Program has set a target for ninety percent of Scholars to complete at least one High-Impact Practice² before they graduate.

All Scholars were asked about their participation or intent to participate in High-Impact Practices in the spring 2022 survey.

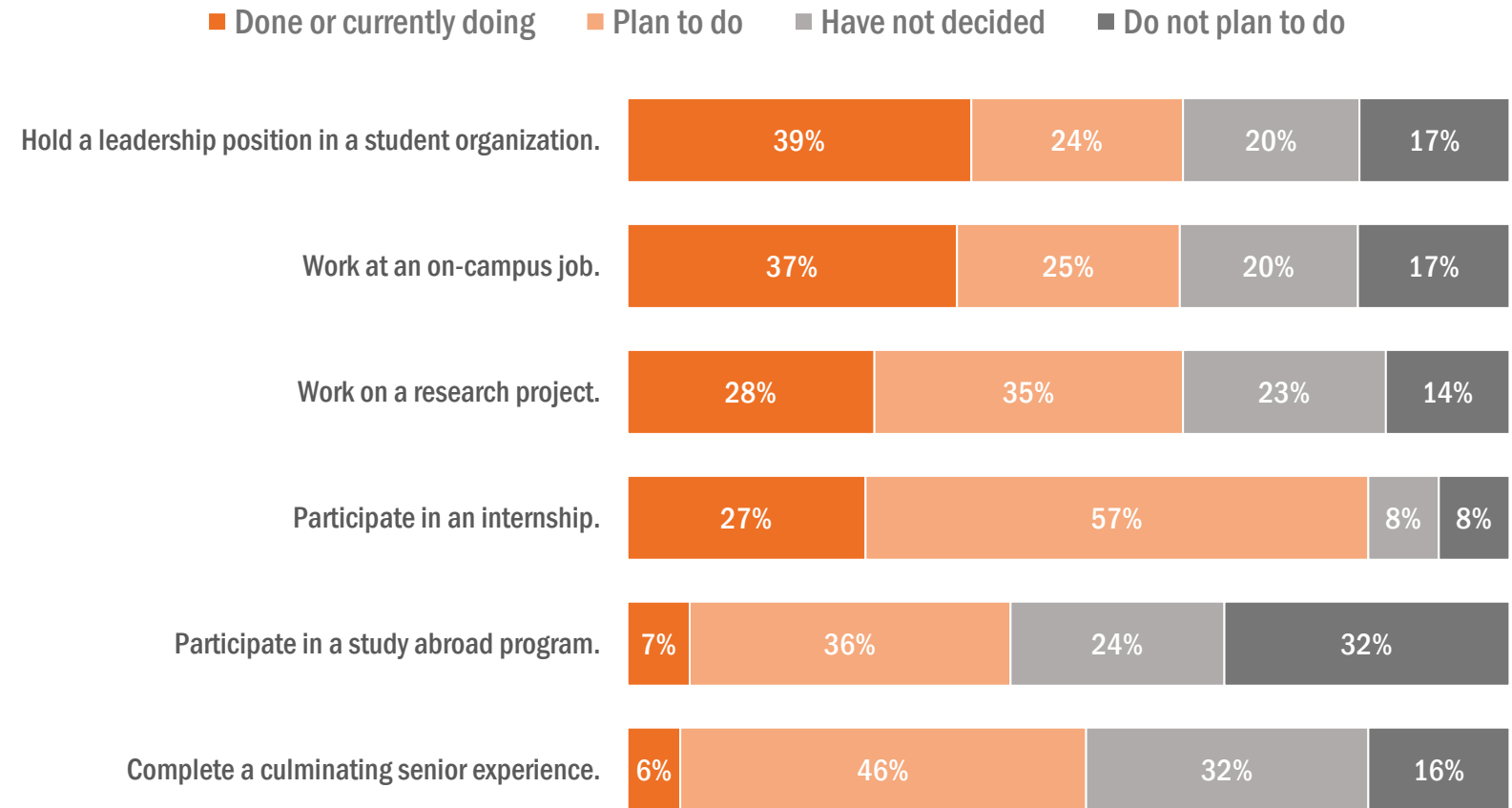


High-Impact Practices?

High-Impact Practices are teaching and learning practices associated with significant educational benefits for participants, especially for historically underserved students.

These practices cut across the Kessler Scholars Collaborative domains of programming.

The **most common** High-Impact Practice that Scholars participated in was holding a **leadership position at a student organization.** (n=254)



Endnotes

¹ The CEDER team adopts the University of San Francisco's working definition of an underrepresented minority (URM) as someone whose racial or ethnic makeup is from one of the following:

- African American / Black
- Asian: Filipino, Hmong, or Vietnamese only
- Hispanic / Latinx
- Native American / Alaskan Native
- Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander
- Two or more races, when one or more are from the preceding racial and ethnic categories in this list.

University of San Fransisco. (n.d.). Underrepresented Minority Definition. Retrieved June 27, 2022, from <https://diversity.ucsf.edu/programs-resources/urm-definition>.

² Kuh, G. D. (2008). High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities.