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TOWARDS BELONGING…

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GI 2025 2022-2023 Equity Priorities Overview

- Proactive individualized advising
- Critical Course Redesign
- Expanding Credit Opportunities with Summer Session
- Building belonging with first-year connections and Peer Leaders

The Peer Leader Program: Spring 2023

Building Connections

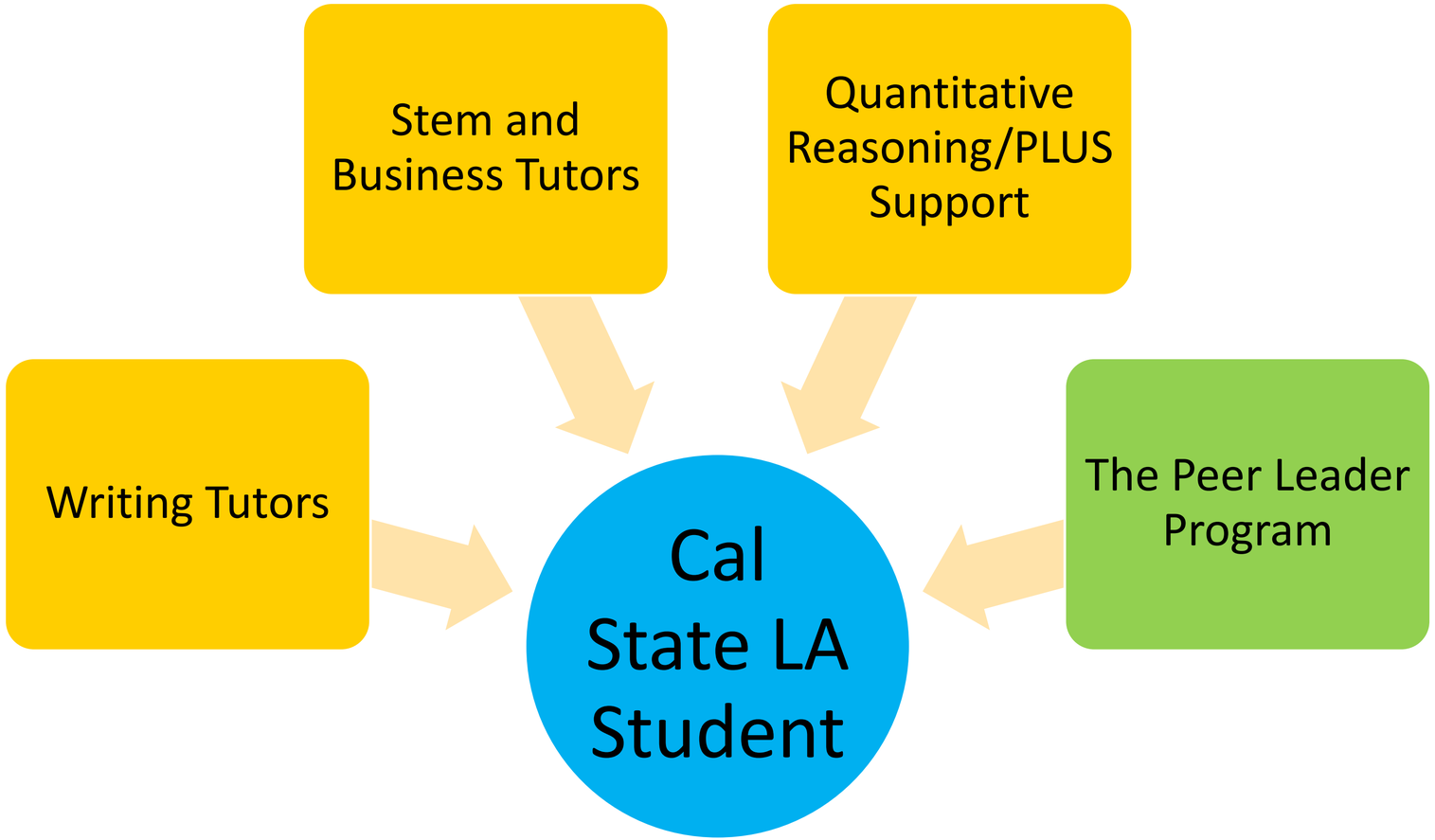
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The Peer Leader Program History

Since January 2021:

- The program supports GI 2025 goals, specifically closing equity gaps.
- Upper-division students connect with incoming students to help them succeed in their first-year.
- First-year students were chosen based on multiple measures indicating a need for additional academic support.
- Funding sources: *Éxito Building Student Support and Faculty Quality* DHSI Grant, Leonard Hill Charitable Trust, CSU Chancellor's Office, and Student Success Fees (SSF).

The Peer Leader Program and a Student Support Ecosystem



The Center for Academic Success

Peer Leader Program Curriculum: SOAR

The Peer Leader program connects first-year students to Cal State LA students who have successfully navigated their own college experiences. In culturally responsive ways, Peer Leaders help students find belonging and become engaged with the campus community.

- **S**trengthen Your Study Skills
- **O**wn Your Education
- **A**dvance Your Degree
- **R**ealize Your Future





Peer Leaders Community Building



Examples of Peer Talks and Activities Include

- Peer Talk: Friendship and Books
- Peer Talk: Academic Check-in – Adding, Dropping, Withdrawing
- Peer Talk: Sports and Games – Campus Life
- Peer Talk: A guide to your sophomore year

- Peer Leader Event: Scavenger Hunt
- Peer Leader Event: Movie, Snacks, and Trivia

The Peer Leader Program – Who Benefits?

Positive Results were most impactful for the following student groups:

- First Generation students compared to students whose parents had attended or graduated from college
- Pell eligible compared to non-Pell eligible students
- Mentees attained higher academic performance even though they entered with lower HS GPAs

	HS GPA	Fall Term GPA	Fall to Spring Retention Rate	One Year Retention Rate: %
All Invited	3.08	2.44	88%	68%
Participated	3.06	2.57	92%	73%
Did not participate	3.09	2.42	87%	67%
Fall 2021 Cohort Total	3.31	2.66	89%	72%

The Peer Leader Program – Beyond the numbers

Connected with faculty and staff

Felt understood and cared for

Increased confidence



Stronger time management

Made friends

Better study habits

Connection and Community Building

Creating Culturally Responsive and Relevant Programming for Peer Leaders and Across Campus

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What does it mean to be "culturally relevant and responsive" at Cal State LA?

- **Culturally relevant**: Engaging students culturally and meeting them where they are
- **Sense of belonging**: Student feeling (and being made to feel) that they have a place within the larger population and visions of the university
- **Sense of mattering:** Individual sense of feeling we are a significant part of the world around us
- **Asset-based approach**: Recognize the strengths of students instead of using a deficit-based approach, which emphasizes what students lack

Context for **Peer Leader Support Programming**

College students face many challenges today:

- College is perceived as more high stakes
- More demands due to financial and familial expectations
- Emotional labor

Peer Leaders' experiences as students are leveraged to contextualize the work Peer Leaders will be engaging in.

Five modules for Peer Leader programming:

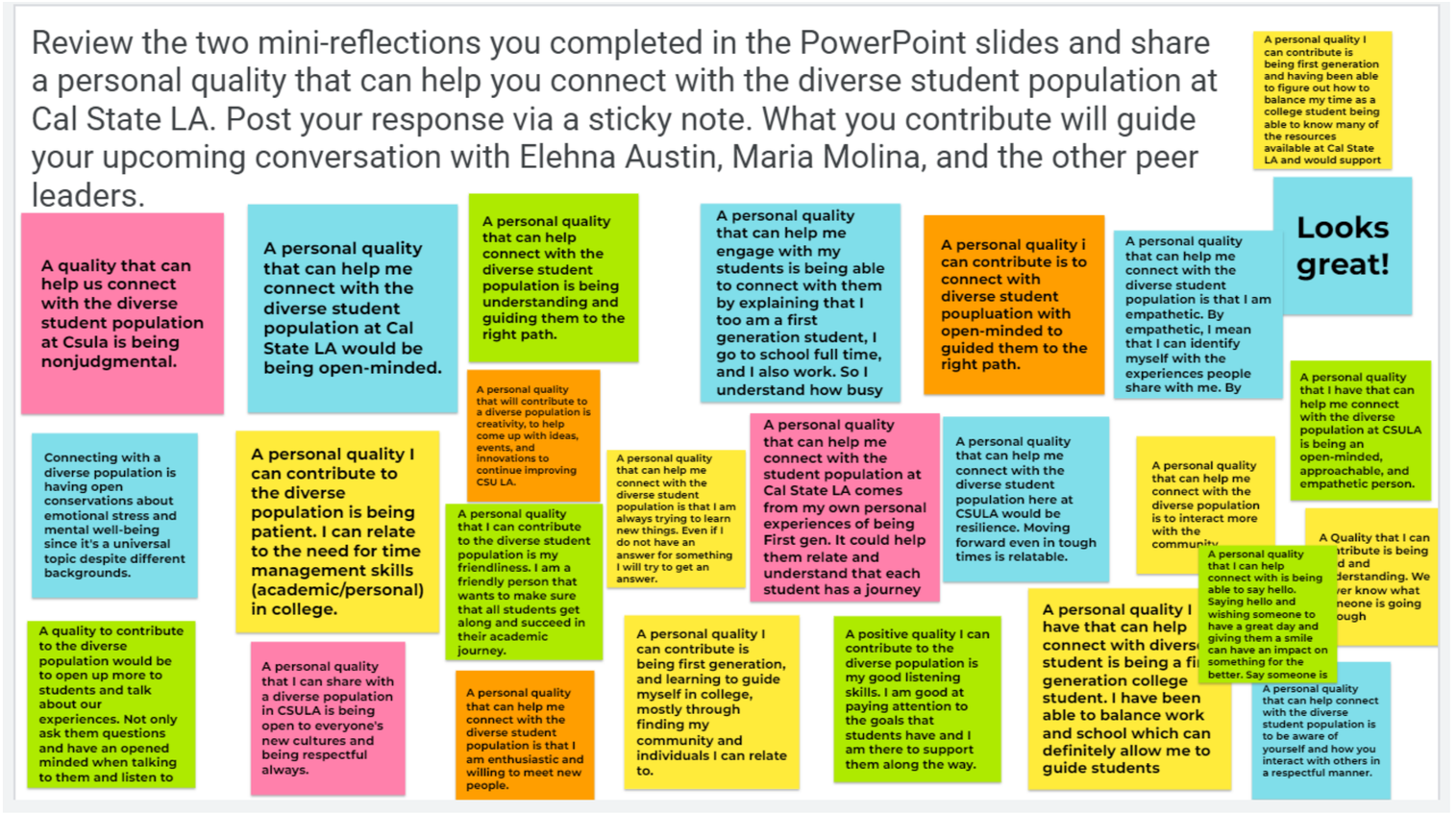
- Introductory
- Counseling and Psychological Services
- Office for Students with Disabilities
- Project Rebound
- Veteran Resource Center

Details about Peer Leader Support Programming

Delivered in fall 2022: Five modules presented on a biweekly schedule (10 weeks total)

50 Peer Leaders participated in the following for each of the five modules:

- Engaged self-paced presentation
- Reflected on their experiences
- Share out experiences through Jamboard every two weeks



Week 1-2 Jamboard for Module 1

Nervous System Hacks (Developed by Carrie Slick, LCSW)

NERVOUS SYSTEM HACKS



States of chronic stress and trauma and how to care for yourself

FLIGHT



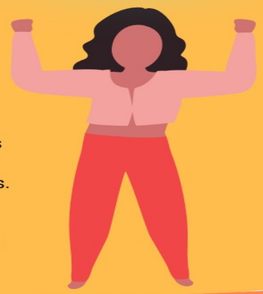
I MAY FEEL..

- hyperactive, fidgity
- manic, silly
- urge to escape or avoid
- body needs to keep moving
- feeling helpless
- anxious, stiffening up
- increased heart rate, labored breathing.
- a surge of adrenaline
- dizzy or shaky
- like I need to use the bathroom
- butterflies in my stomach

I CAN/NEED....

- breathe with a longer exhale
- breathe through the nose.
- Exhale making an "s" or "f" sound
- do a familiar and easy task
- eat crunchy foods
- Seek support from patient and reassuring others.
- Find a secure place to take a break.
- hold something soft or warm.
- use a weighted blanket
- hang from something or use hand weights or reisistance band.
- Take a walk or walk up and down the stairs; run in chair while sitting.
- exercise; skateboard, dance, swim, play a sport.

FIGHT



I MAY FEEL..

- physically hot
- easily agitated and defensive
- enraged
- hypervigilant-scanning for threat
- can lose memory or black out
- rigid and inflexible; a need for control
- body tenses up
- an urge to use violence to release my anger.
- anxious, stiffening up
- increased heart rate, rapid breathing.
- a surge of adrenaline
- sweaty

I CAN/NEED....

- breathe with a longer exhale
- breathe through the nose.
- use a fidgit, stress ball or putty
- eat crunchy foods
- Seek support from patient and reassuring others.
- Find a secure place to take a break.
- hold something soft or warm.
- use a weighted blanket
- hang from something or use hand weights or reisistance band.
- Take a walk or walk up and down the stairs.
- exercise; skateboard, dance, swim, play a sport.
- Lay on your back and rest your calves and feel on a chair (lowers hear rate)
- push hands against a wall, while on the balls of your feet.

FREEZE



I MAY FEEL..

- frozen, trapped or stuck
- skin goes pale
- like I see/notice everything
- doom or dread, like something bad is going to happen
- breathing might be rapid, shallow or you may hold your breath.
- feeling helpless
- anxious, stiffening up
- like I can't focus or concentrate

I CAN/NEED....

- massage hands or head
- orient to or look around the room to see youre safe.
- pull on your ears and open/move jaw to release
- pat legs or arms with fingertips
- Sit with someone and play a game or watch a movie.
- rocking, swinging, swaying, bouncing
- hold something soft or warm.
- use a weighted blanket
- Do something repetative like coloring.
- Dig in sand or mud; playdough, clay.
- interlace hands on top of head and breathe into your belly
- 5-4-3-2-1 grounding

COLLAPSE



I MAY FEEL..

- numb or disconnected from my physical body, feelings or thoughts.
- in a fog or like I'm dreaming.
- empty
- hopeless
- lack of energy
- alone/disconnected from others

I CAN/NEED....

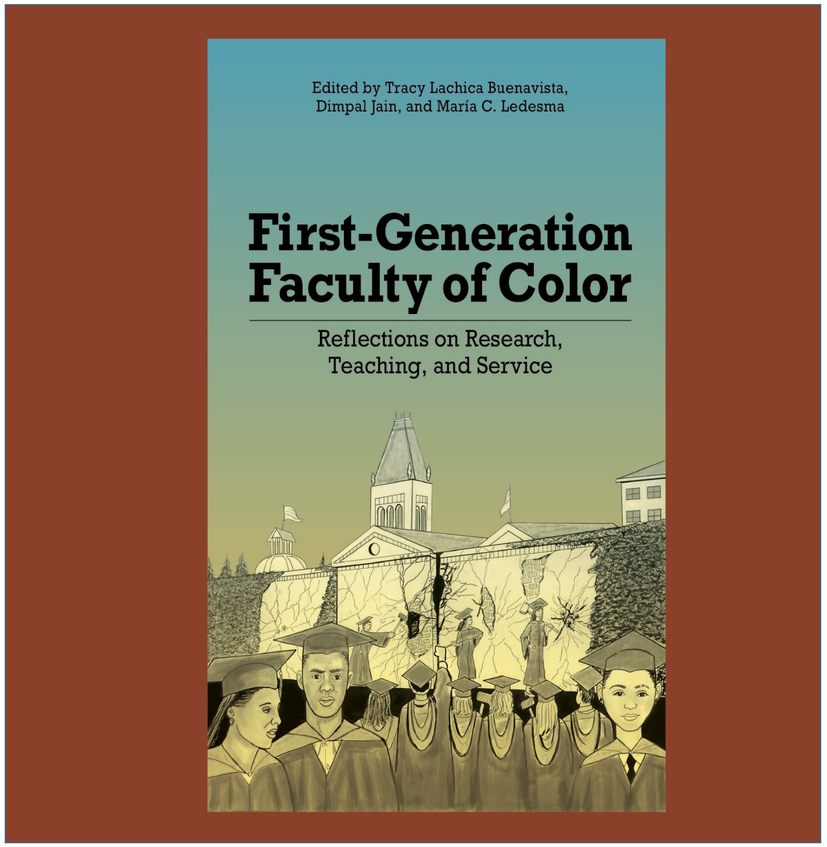
- massage hands or head
- orient to or look around the room to see youre safe.
- pull on your ears and open/move jaw to release
- pat legs or arms with fingertips
- Sit with someone supportive and calm and play a game or watch a movie.
- rocking, swinging, swaying, bouncing
- squeeze something soft
- Ask someone to do an activity with you
- Do something repetative like coloring.
- Dig in sand or mud; playdough, clay.
- interlace hands on top of head and breathe into your belly

Building Connections Across Campus: Cultivating a Culture of Care

Developed and delivered workshops and trainings

- Early Start Faculty – Summer 2022
- New Faculty Orientation – Fall 2022
- Center for Academic Success Student workers – Spring 2023
- Academic Advisors from all units – Spring 2023

Leveraging the Experiences of Academic Advisors: Culturally Responsive Student Support



A study conducted by the Harvard Business Review on First-Generation Professionals (FGPs) found that 23.7% of FGPs obtained their jobs through work-study programs in college vs. just 7.6% of non-FGPs

Many FGPs also reported being shocked and disappointed that their hard work and results were notably less important to their careers than knowing how to communicate in a certain way and build networks. One explained: "At first I thought, oh...just as long as I'm a great worker, right? You know, I do what I need to do, I'll get promoted fast. That's not the case. What it *really* is, is your contacts. Building that network."

Moving Forward

Inviting faculty to think of themselves as sites of support on campus rather than content-deliverers

Supporting faculty, especially new faculty, by demystifying/informing them about:

- Letter of recommendation
- Mentoring practices
- Connections to student support
- Campus events

- In-campus First-Year Connections Summer 23

First-Year Connections

Cal State LA Preview Day Update

Early Connections with Incoming Students

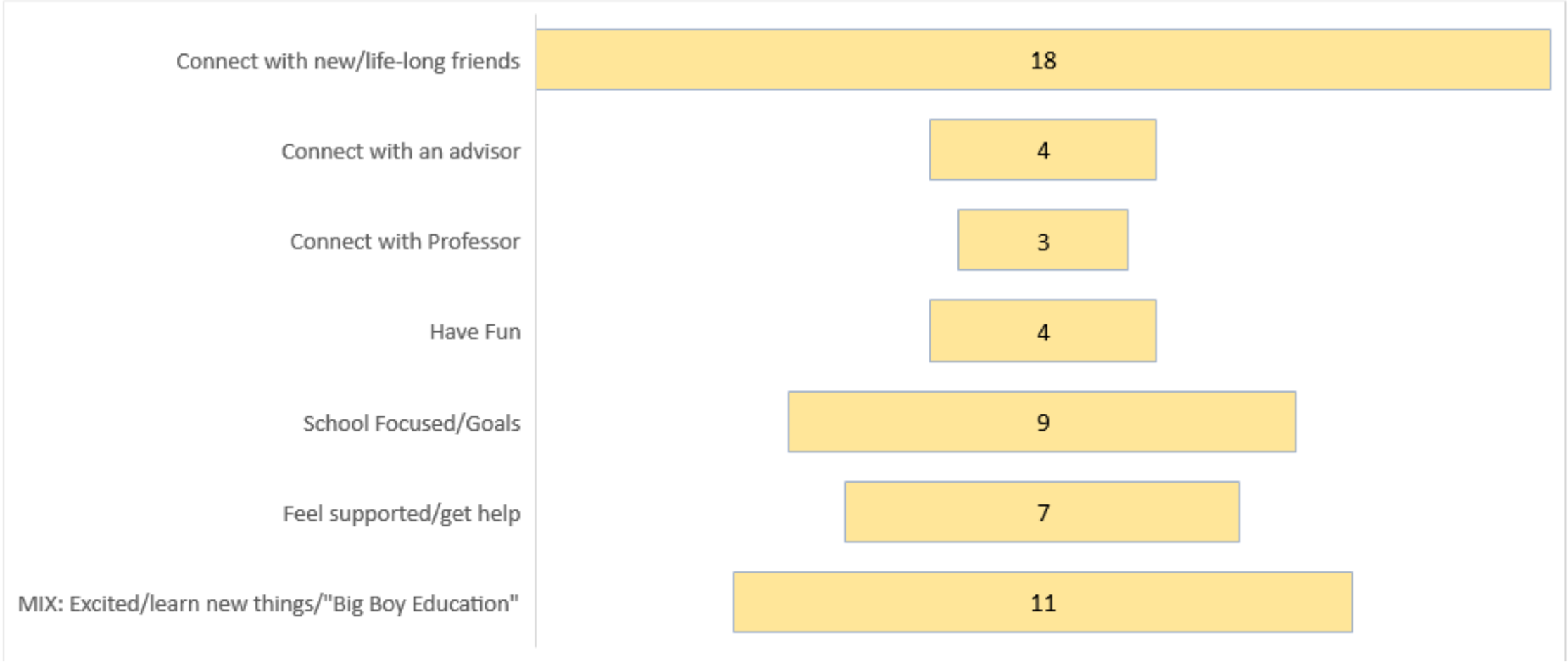
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First-Year Connections

Welcomed future Golden Eagles to Cal State LA

56 students responded: What are your expectations in your first-year at Cal State LA?



Theme of building community and making connections

Questions



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