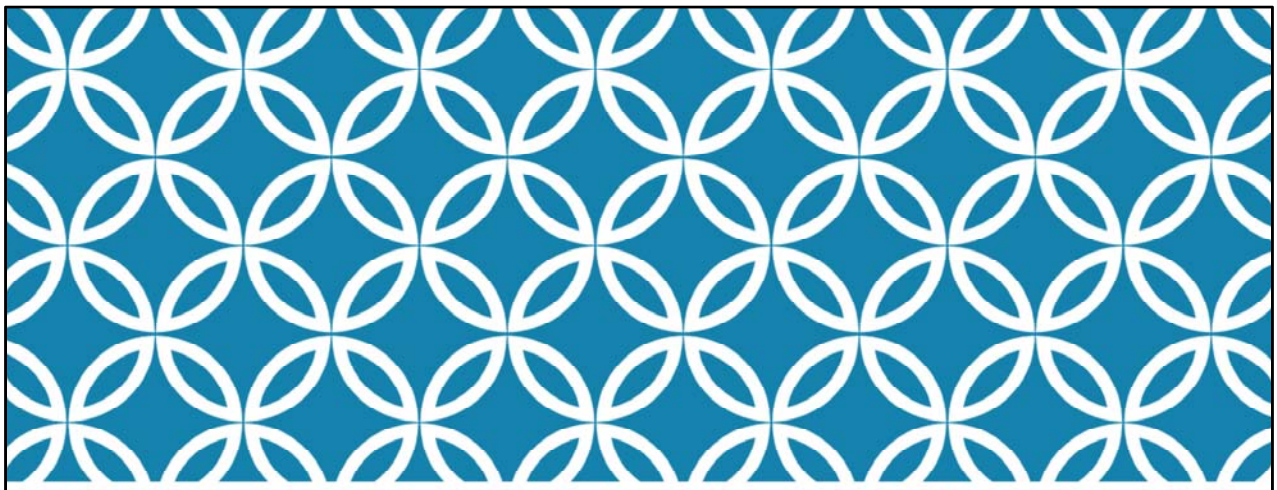


STUDENT AFFAIRS LEADERSHIP MEETING: 2014 NEW STUDENT SURVEY REPORT

Cinnamon L. Danube
Institutional Research & Decision Support
February 24, 2015

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

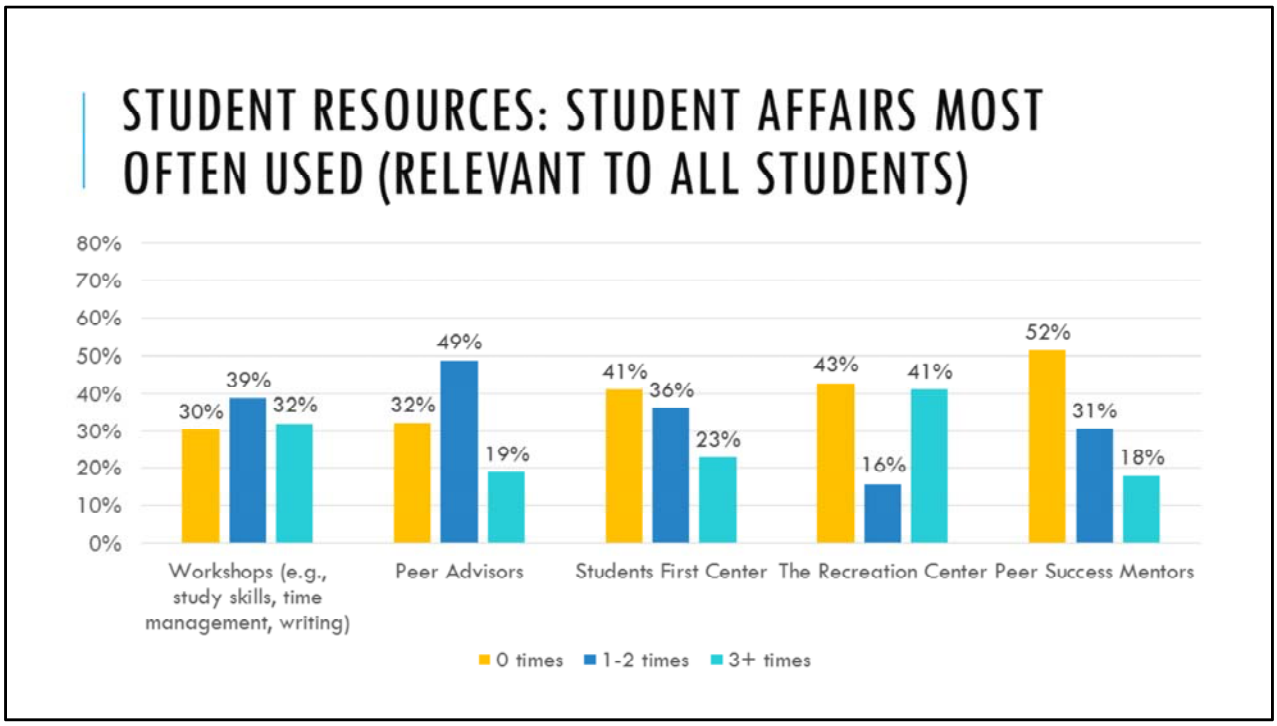
- Changes to 2014 New Student Survey
- 2014 response rate and respondent characteristics
- Student use of Student Affairs Resources
- Student attendance of Summer Orientation, ASCEND, and WOW Activities

CHANGES TO 2014 NEW STUDENT SURVEY

- Moved away from items aimed at assessing satisfaction
  - New goal: Understand factors that might predict persistence and retention such as:
    - Use of campus resources (frequency)
    - Perceived obstacles and barriers to academic success
    - Academic habits and expectations
    - Intentions to leave UCM
    - Attendance and perceived outcomes of: Summer Orientation, ASCEND, WOW activities
- Changed survey timing
  - Previous years: Prior to midterm grade reports
  - This year: After midterm grade reports; closed last week of classes
- Shortened the survey
  - Last year: 75% completed the survey in 35 minutes or less
  - This year: 75% completed the survey in 16 minutes or less

2014 NEW STUDENT SURVEY RESPONDENTS

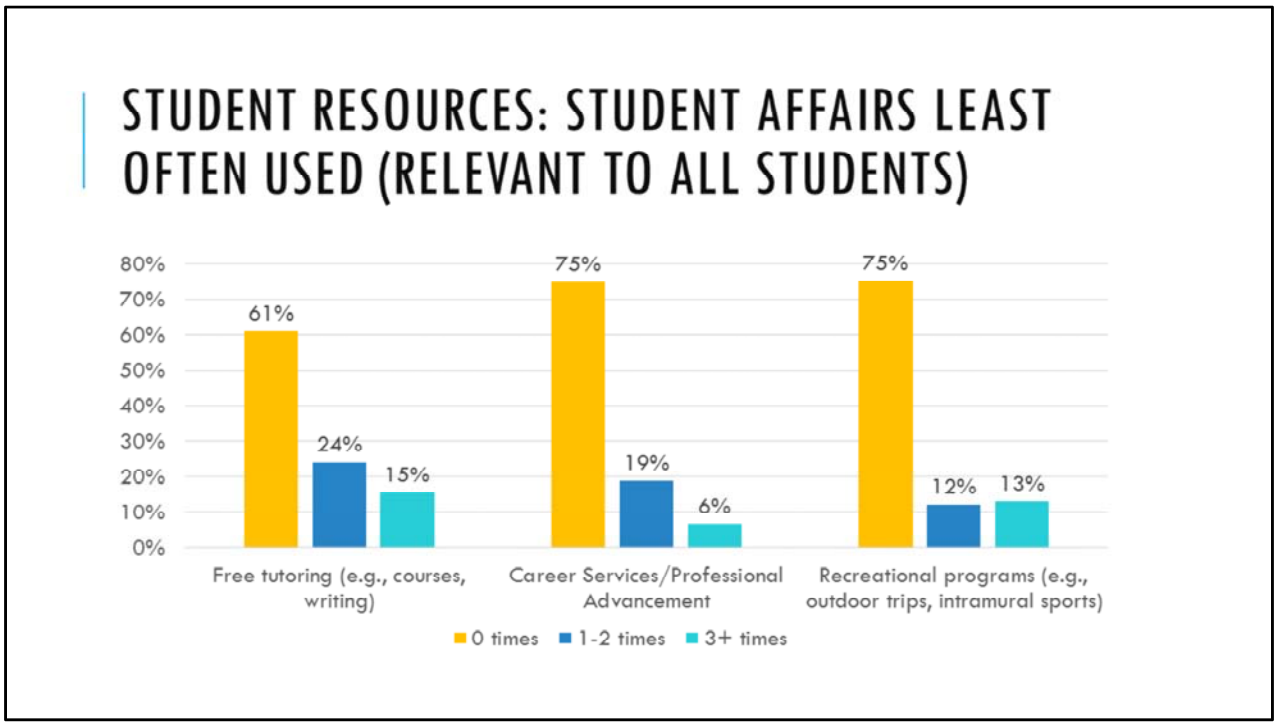
- 36% response rate (601 respondents of 1659 invitees)
- Sample was largely representative of the invitees with two exceptions:
  - Females had higher response rate than males
    - Females comprised 50% of invitees but 57% of respondents
    - Men comprised 49% of invitees but 42% of respondents
  - Transfer students had a higher response rate than Freshmen
    - Transfer students comprised 7% of invitees but 10% of respondents
    - Freshmen students comprised 93% of invitees but 90% of respondents



Next, I will move onto the resources that students reported using. We asked them to rate how often they used 17 campus resources. In this analysis I will focus on the resources that students said they used most frequently within Student Affairs that apply to all students. That is, to keep this presentation broadly applicable, I will not discuss resources that only apply to some students such as DARTs or Residence Life Staff and programs. Specifically, I'm not including the following resources in this presentation: DARTS, Disability services, CAPS, Health and Wellness Services, STEM resource center, Housing and Residence Life.

These are the resources for which around 50% of students or less reported using them 0 times. So you can get an idea of which resources first semester students are not using at all. Next we turn to resources that they reported using 1-2 times….and 3+ times.

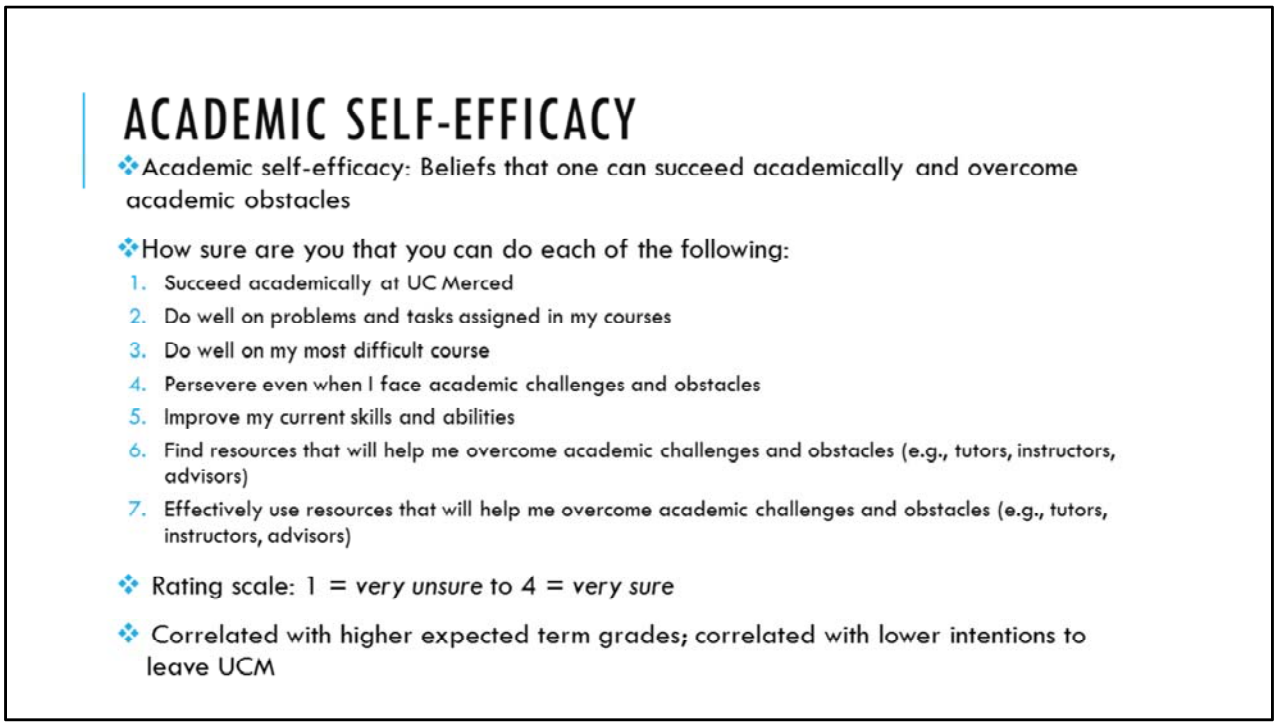
Of note, for workshops and peer advising resources, the majority of respondents used these resources 1-2 times. For the students first center, the Rec Center, and peer success mentors, many respondents said did not use these resources. However, more than ¼ used the students first center and peer success mentors 1-2 times, and 41% used the Rec Center 3+ times.



These are the student affairs resources that students reported using the least often.

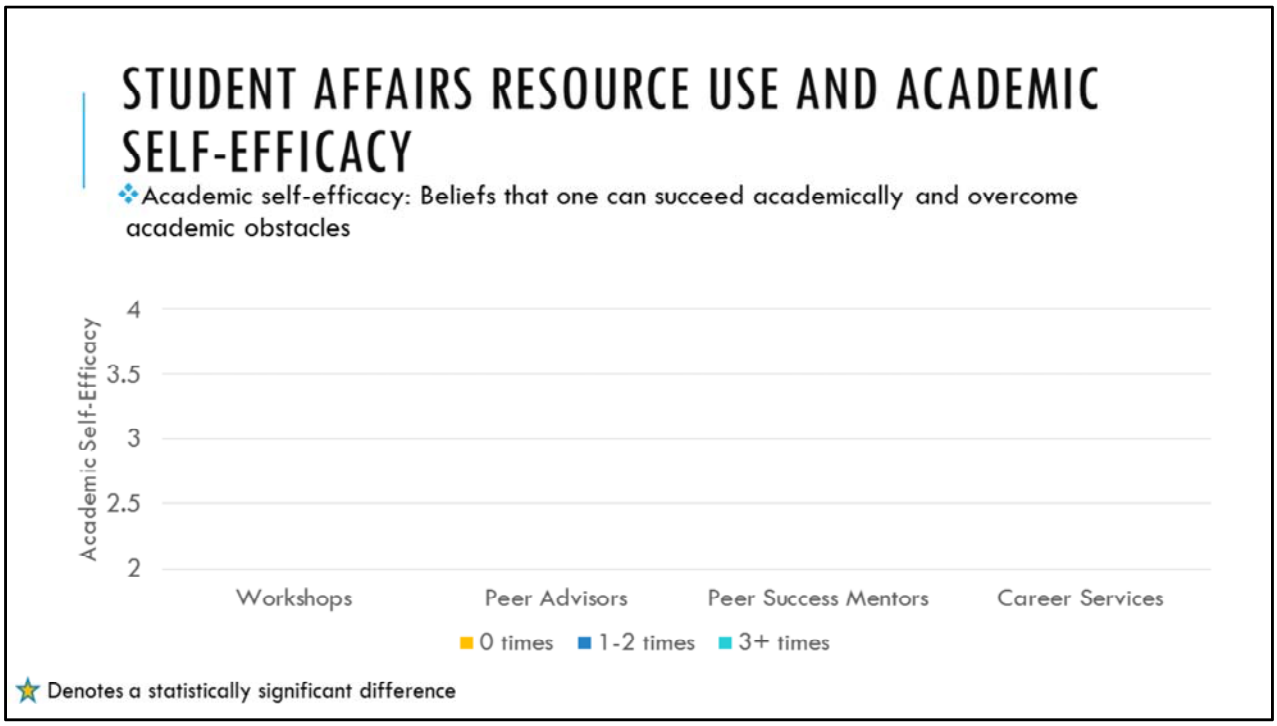
Of note is the fact that 75% of first year students reported that they did not use Career Services. Recently, a report by Noel Levitz indicated that FRESHMEN, who represented the majority of the sample, report that one of the resources they are most interested in is career advice. Given that most are not using it, this suggests a gap that is not being filled. Perhaps students do not know how to access this resource or are not sure what questions to ask such that they do not pursue it.

It might also be productive to think about barriers to student use of these resources and their importance given the low rates of use. For instance, I know from the 2014 Housing and Res Life survey that 60% of UCM students leave campus on the weekend once a month or more (with the majority reporting that this is due to family obligations, but the next highest percent reporting that there's nothing to do). Perhaps students are leaving campus and so are less likely to utilize recreational programs.

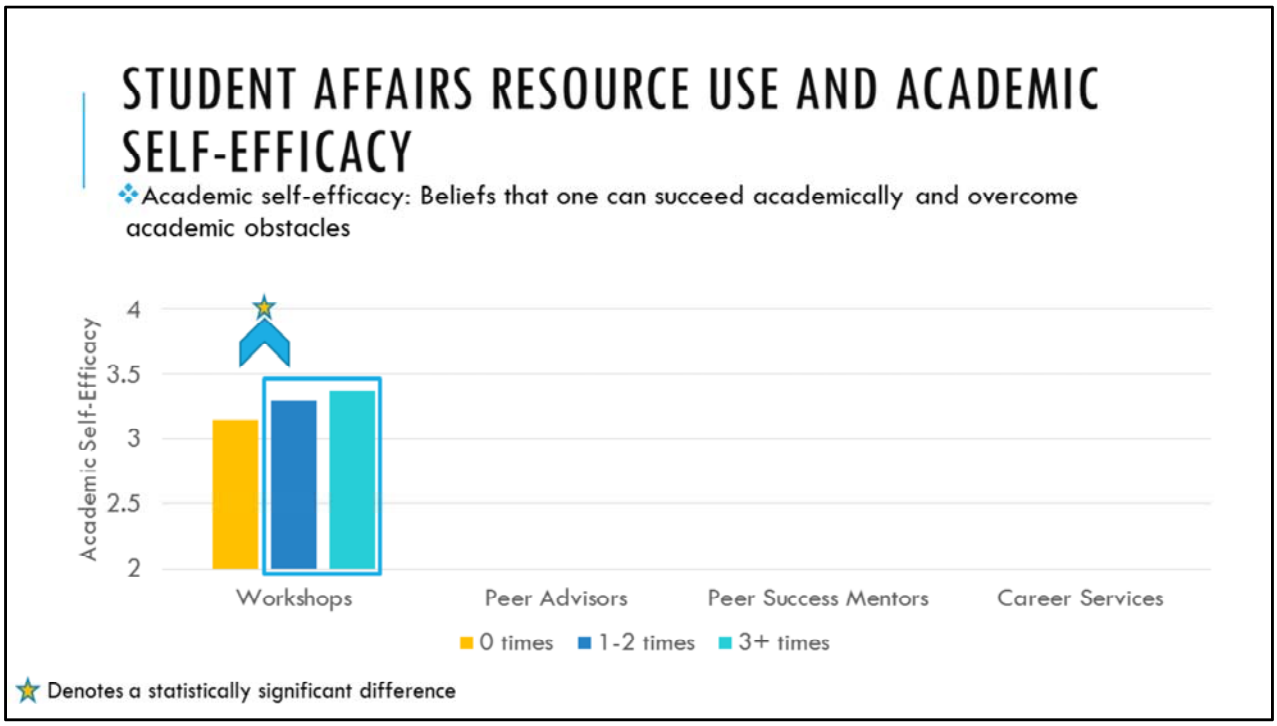


Academic Self-Efficacy (SE) is comprised of 7 items that were averaged (alpha = .90) such that higher scores mean higher/greater academic SE. The items were rated on a 4 point scale ranging from 1 = very unsure to 4 = very sure. A sample item is: How sure are you that you can succeed academically at UC Merced. High scores on the scale indicate that a student has higher academic self-efficacy, which is what we'd want to see.

Self-efficacy is a construct that is widely applicable to many types of outcomes and so is important to study. For instance, in this survey, student scores on academic self-efficacy were positively correlated with what they thought their final grades would be such that higher self-efficacy was associated with perceptions that ones final term grades would be higher, $r(578) = .36$, $p < .001$. It was also negatively correlated with student reports that they might leave UCM such that students with higher self-efficacy reported that they would be less likely to leave UCM, $r(578) = -.23$, $p < .001$. That is, for this sample, academic self-efficacy is related to indicators of student success and retention.



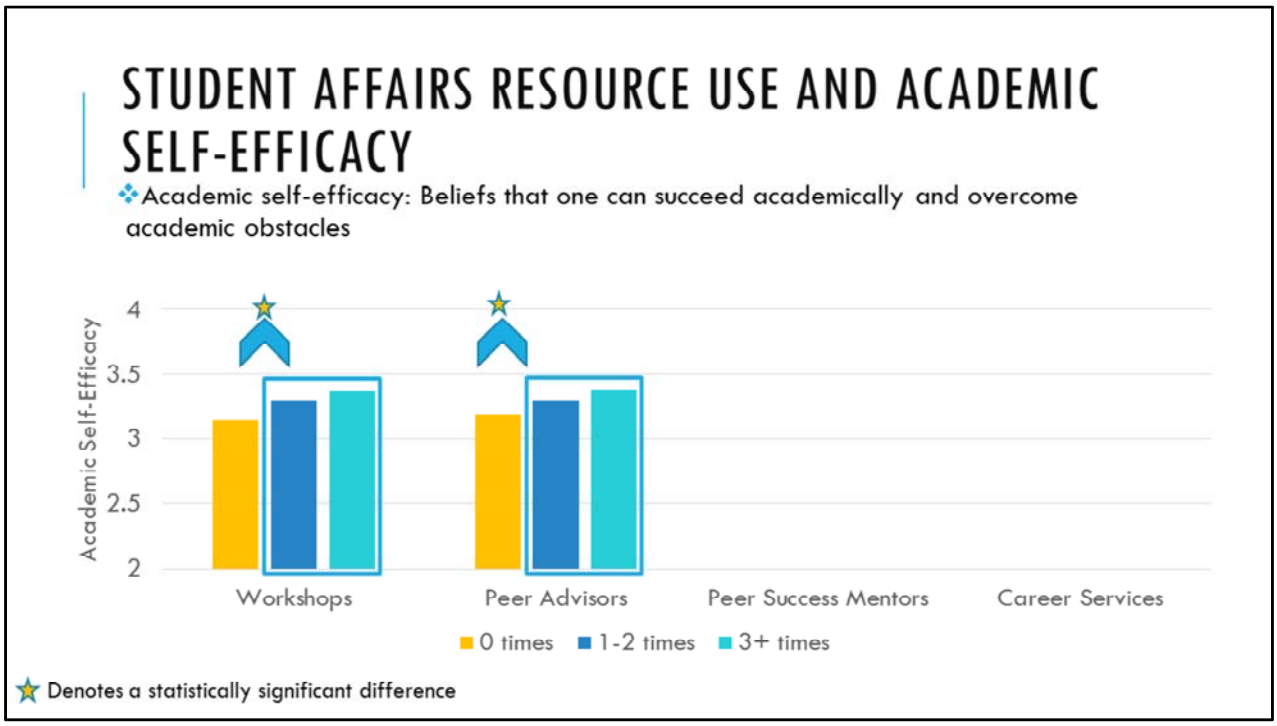
Orientation to graph. The x-axis indicates the type of resource (e.g., workshops). The y-axis indicates the average score on academic self-efficacy for students who used that resource. And I will differentiate these scores based on how many times students said they used the resource, either 0, 1-2, or 3+ times.



The two blue bars, which represent the average academic self-efficacy scores of students who attended workshops either 1-2 times or 3+ times, did not differ statistically, which is why I drew the blue box around them. However, both of the blue bars were significantly greater than the yellow bar, which represents the average academic self-efficacy score of students who did not attend workshops at all. So students who attended workshops 0 times had lower academic self-efficacy scores than students who attend workshops either 1-2 times or 3+ times. This indicates that that use of workshops at least once was related to higher academic SE relative to not using that resource.

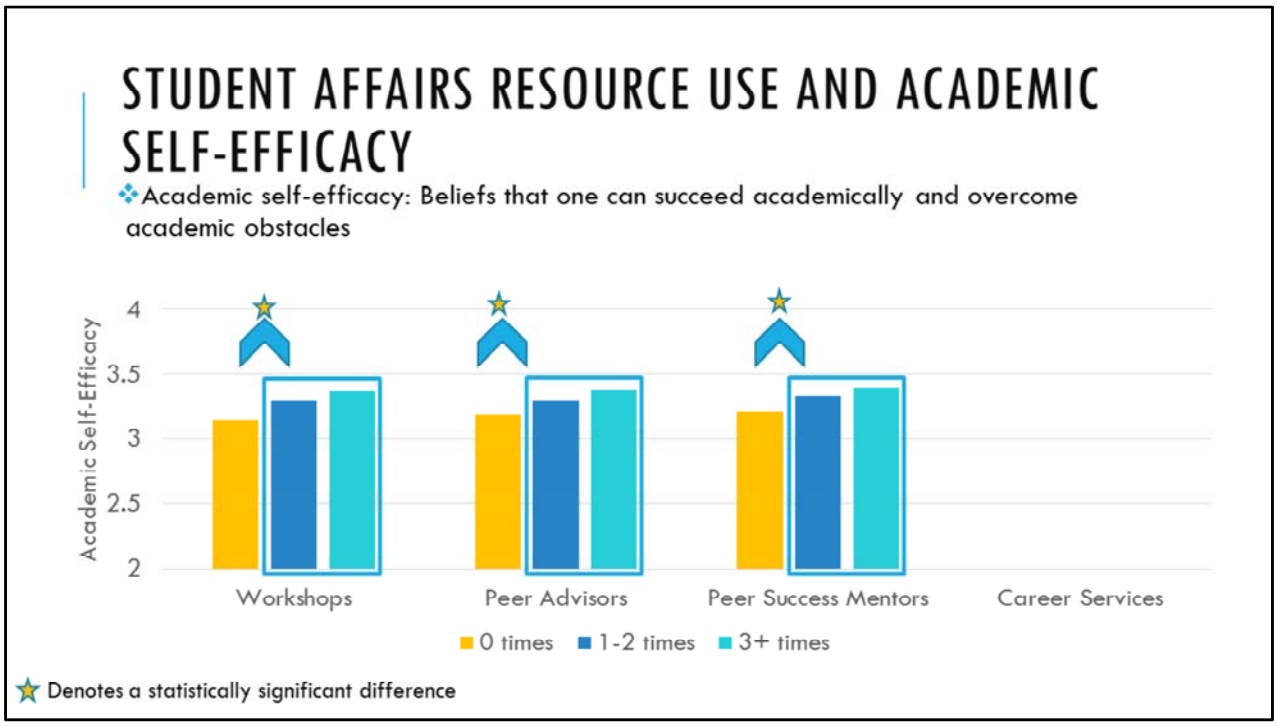
Importantly, we don't know whether using the resources causes higher SE or whether students with higher SE use more resources. All we know is that they are associated. So, given the way I've been describing this relationship, I've implied that using resources leads to higher academic self-efficacy. In contrast, it could be that students who have low academic self-efficacy decided that they didn't need to attend workshops, but students with higher academic self-efficacy thought that it would be a good idea to attend workshops. The first interpretation might make a bit more sense because one might assume that students with low academic self-efficacy would be MORE likely to think they should attend workshops, and so would be more likely to attend those workshops relative to students with high academic self-efficacy. However, it could also be the case that students who are low in academic SE feel so uncertain about their academic skills that they

“check out” and distance themselves from their academics, meaning that they would be less likely to attend workshops. Similarly, this suggests that students who feel confident about their academic skills are more likely to seek out resources. This interpretation would suggest that, though challenging, it is important to find a way to get students with low self-efficacy to pursue resources that might help them be academically successful, though they may not be motivated to do so.



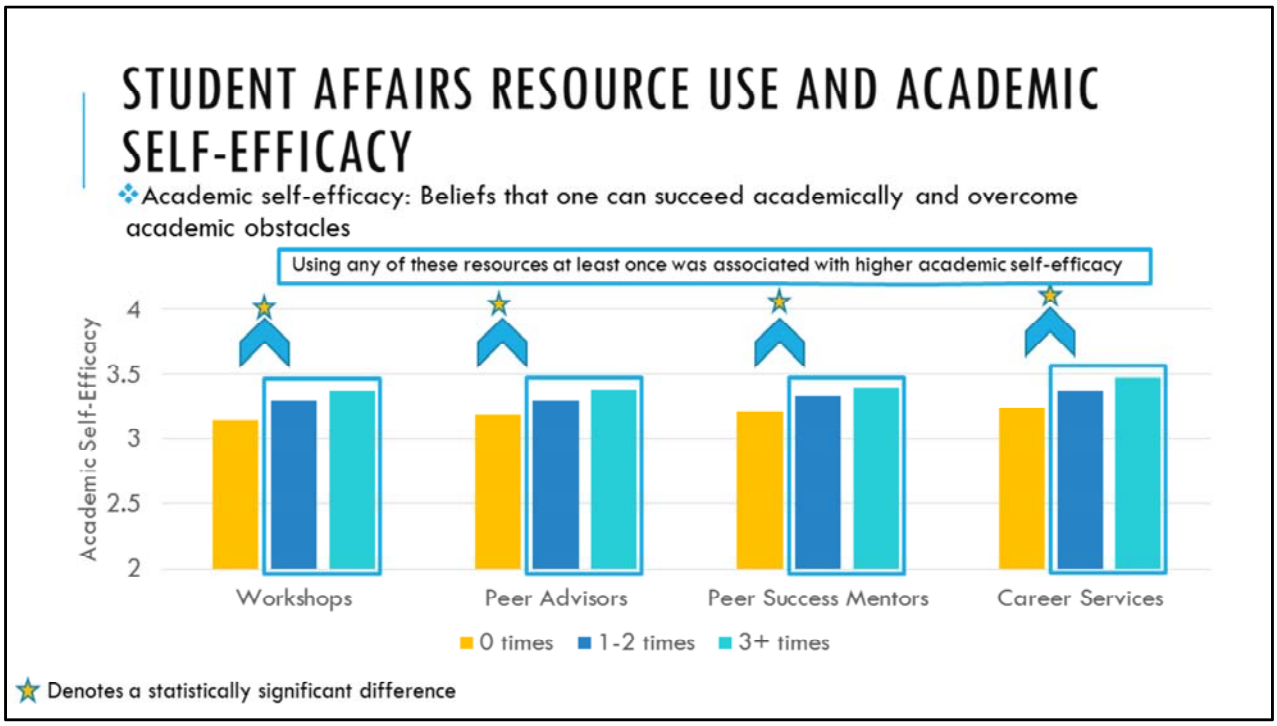
The pattern was the same for peer advisors. There were no differences in academic SE between those who used a given resource 1-2 times or 3+ times indicating that use of the resource at all, no matter how much, is related to higher academic SE relative to not using a given resource.

As before, we don't know whether using the resources causes higher SE or whether students with higher SE use more resources. All we know is that they are associated.



The pattern was the same for peer success mentors. There were no differences in academic SE between those who used a given resource 1-2 times or 3+ times indicating that use of the resource at all, no matter how much, is related to higher academic SE relative to not using a given resource.

Again, we don't know whether using the resources causes higher SE or whether students with higher SE use more resources. All we know is that they are associated.



Finally, the pattern was the same for Career Services. There were no differences in academic SE between those who used a given resource 1-2 times or 3+ times indicating that use of the resource at all, no matter how much, is related to higher academic SE relative to not using a given resource.

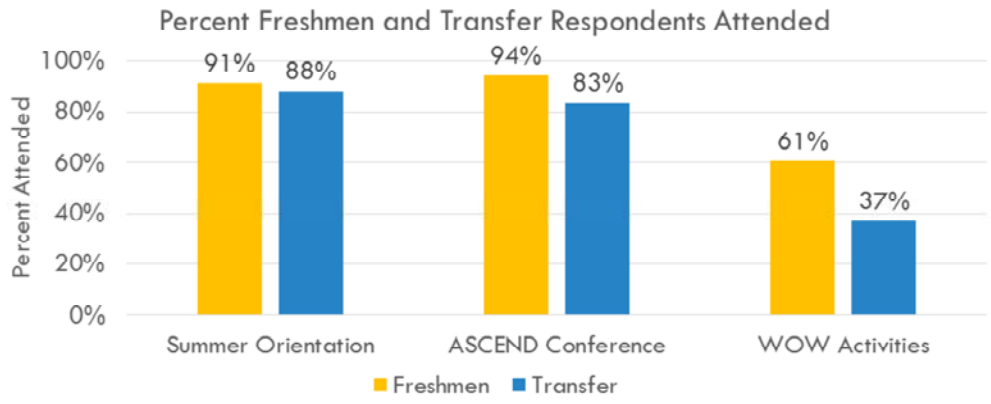
Again, we don't know whether using the resources causes higher SE or whether students with higher SE use more resources. All we know is that they are associated.

Frequency of use of other student affairs resources was not related to academic SE. These included: free tutoring, the Students First Center, Recreational Programs, the Recreation Center. It is not surprising that use of Recreational programs and the Rec Center was not associated with academic self-efficacy, for one would not expect that using these resources would be related to academic outcomes. However, one could have predicted that free tutoring at least would be associated with academic self-efficacy, so the failure to find a significant association is a bit surprising.

An effect size is one way to measure of the strength of the relationship between two variables, in this case between resource use (e.g., workshop attendance) and academic self-efficacy. The effect sizes for each of these analyses (called partial eta-squared values, denoted by η^2_p) are as follows: workshops $\eta^2_p = .022$, peer advisors $\eta^2_p = .015$, peer success

mentors η^2_p = .017, and career services η^2_p = .016. Typically, .01 is interpreted as a small effect size, .09 as a medium effect size, and .25 as a large effect size. Clearly these are all small effect sizes, which indicates that while there is a statistically significant relationship between these variables (i.e., resource use and academic self-efficacy), it is a small relationship.

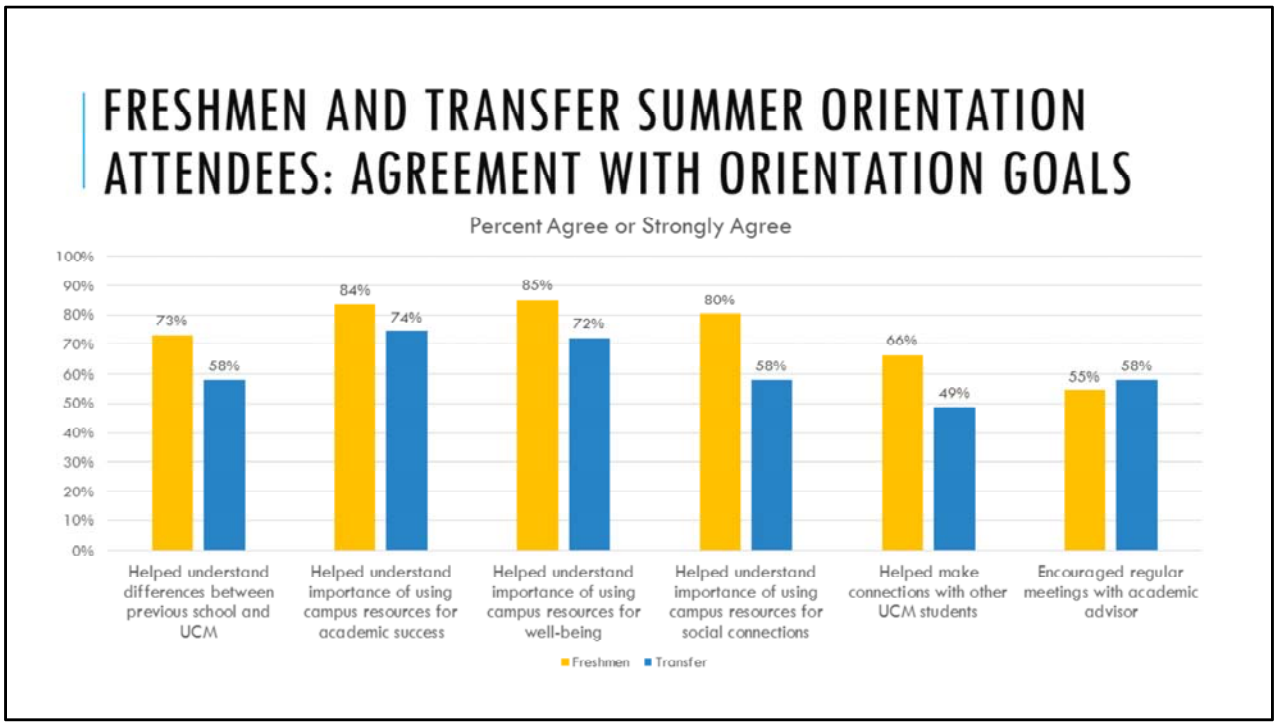
SUMMER ORIENTATION, ASCEND, & WOW ACTIVITY ATTENDANCE



Next, I will move on to Freshman and Transfer student attendance of Student Affairs programs for new students. I did not conduct any statistical comparisons because there were only n = 57 respondents in the transfer student group compared to n = 544 in the freshman group. To clarify, regarding WOW activities, students were asked whether they attended *any* WOW activities, so this group includes students who attended 1 or more activities.

Both Summer Orientation and ASCEND are required for new students, which can account for the fact that they were highly attended by new students. It is clear that WOW activities are less well attended than both Summer Orientation and ASCEND in general and that Freshmen are more likely to attend WOW activities compared to transfer students.

Next, for students who said they did participate in these activities, I examined the extent to which the students reported that their experience was consistent with the goals of each program.



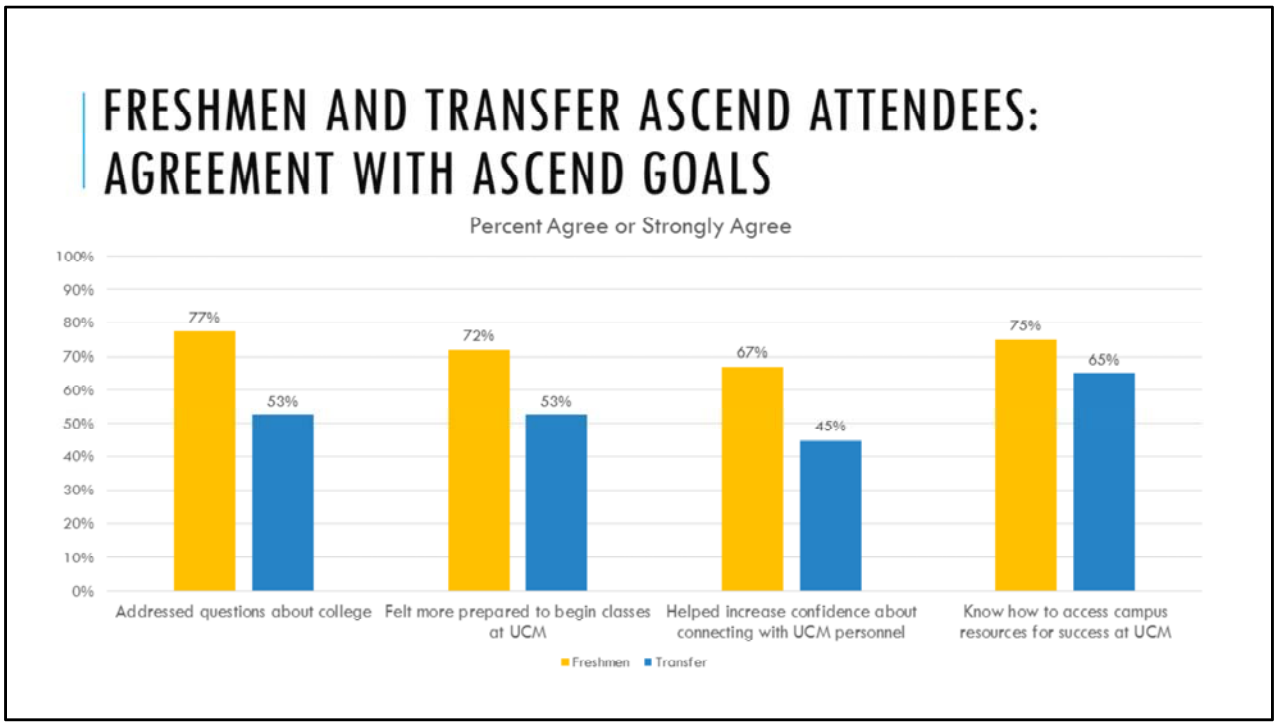
Respondents who attended summer orientation were asked to rate the extent to which attending helped them do/understand several things. Here I report the percentage of attendees who agreed or strongly agreed with each of the (paraphrased) statements about the goals of summer orientation. I've separated the responses of freshmen and transfer students.

Nothing about the differences between transfer and freshmen respondents is particularly surprising. For instance, for transfer students who have already attended some college, we would not expect them to need much of a better understanding of how UCM and their previous school differed. That is, perhaps some of the goals here are most relevant for new freshmen relative to transfer students. The one potentially surprising finding is that transfer students were on par with freshmen regarding their rating that orientation encouraged them to have regular meetings with their academic advisor, and for both the percentages were quite low.

However, this pattern of results does suggest that some of the messaging around encouragement to meet with an academic advisor could be strengthened given that the percentages were only around 50% and that this is such an important step for making good academic progress. I know that the advisors have recently begun a Jump Start program, where they require all sophomore level students to develop an academic plan and meet

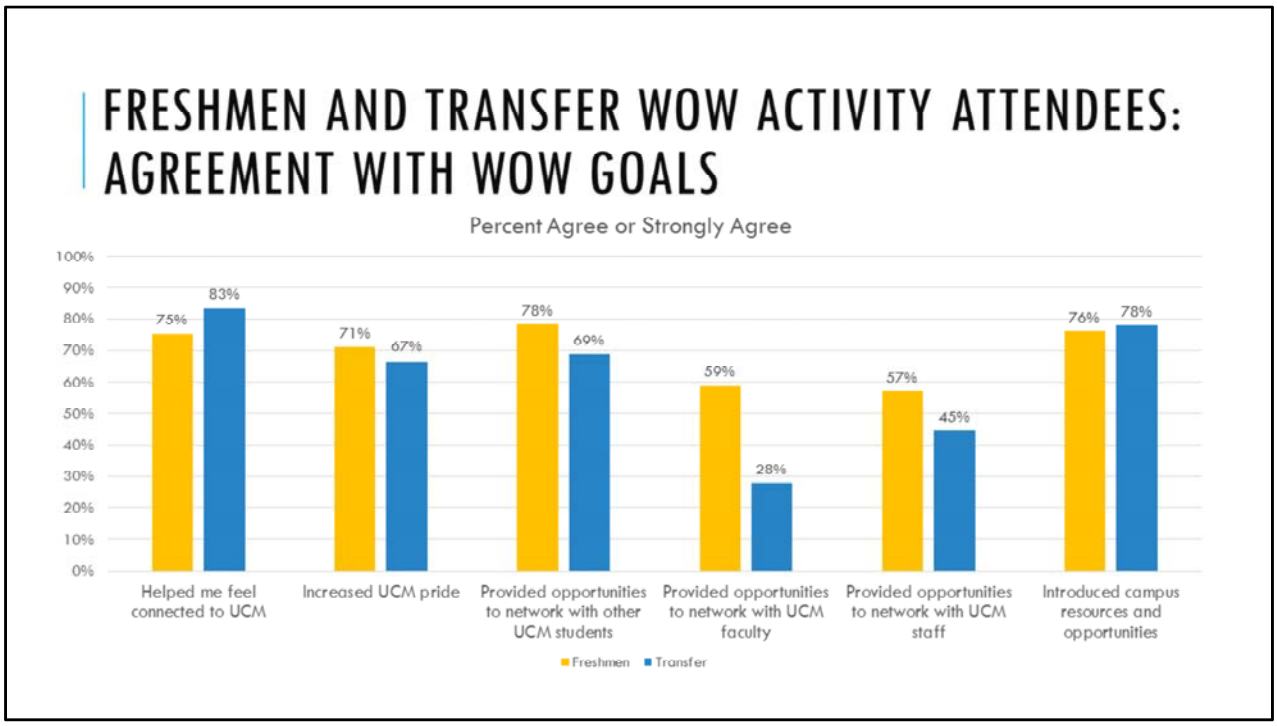
with an advisor to review that plan. So given the newness of this program, it may be a good idea to let Freshmen students know that they will be asked to produce and discuss a plan with an academic advisor by the Spring of their Sophomore year.

It is also interesting that one of the other lowest areas in terms of percentages was regarding summer orientation's help with facilitating connections between UCM students. Assuming this is a key goal, the group might also consider ways to increase interactions/connections between UCM students at Summer Orientation, particularly for transfer students.



Respondents who attended ASCEND were asked to rate the extent to which attending helped them do/understand several things. Here I report the percentage of attendees who agreed or strongly agreed with each of the (paraphrased) statements about the goals of ASCEND. I've separated the responses of freshmen and transfer students.

The majority of the attendees endorsed agreement with these statements. However, ¼ of Freshmen did not agree that ASCEND helped them do/understand these things, which seems notable. Additionally, given the lower percentages for transfer students, there is a question as to whether ASCEND serves their needs. As a supplement to the numeric data, in my preliminary review of the open-ended comments, several transfer students commented that they didn't think they should have been required to attend ASCEND because it was targeted towards Freshmen and didn't seem to fit their needs.



Students who attended Weeks of Welcome Activities were asked to rate the extent to which attending helped them do/understand several things. Here I report the percentage of attendees who agreed or strongly agreed with each of the (paraphrased) statements about the goals of WOW. I've separated the responses of freshmen and transfer students.

The majority of respondents endorsed many of these WOW goals. Two of the goals were endorsed at particularly low levels by both freshmen and transfer students, but particularly transfer students. Those were regarding opportunities to network with UCM faculty and UCM staff. Given the range of WOW activities, these low percentages of agreement could reflect that the students who responded to the NSS didn't attend activities that were focused on these goals. Alternatively, it may be that more focus should be placed on these outcomes for future WOW activities.

TO ACCESS THE FULL REPORT

IRDS website link:

- Survey results: http://ipa.ucmerced.edu/new%20student%20survey.html
- Full survey instrument/questionnaire: http://ipa.ucmerced.edu/docs/survey/New%20Student%20Survey%20Page/New_Student_Survey_2014%20Instrument.pdf

The A-team also has access to the data and report via Qualtrics and so can conduct follow up filtering and analysis