

Millennium
Scholarships



Les bourses
du millénaire

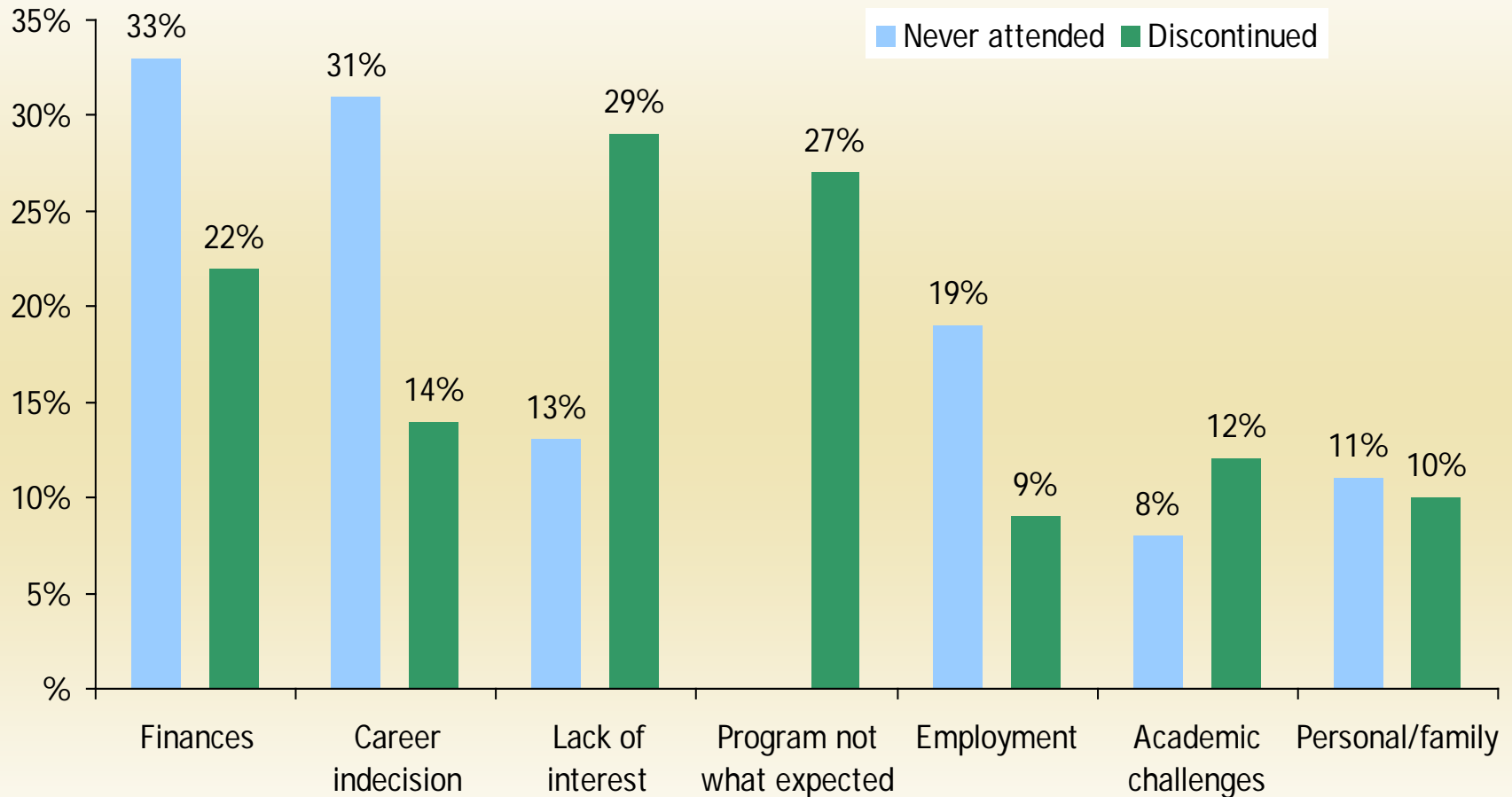
FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS

A Pilot Project Partnership Between:
Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation,
Confederation College, Mohawk College and Seneca College

Colleges Ontario Conference May 18, 2010

Presenters: Fiona Bain-Greenwood, Seneca College; Lynda Morgan
Murdoch, Mohawk College; John Kantola, Confederation College;
Karen Spiers, Seneca College

Barriers to Access and Persistence:



R.A. Malatest and Associates, *Class of 2003*. Montreal, Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation, 2007.

Factors Linked to Low Graduation Rates

Academic:

- Increasing numbers of students placing below college-level English and Math;

Financial:

- Sufficient funds a concern ; some have no money saved;

Family Support:

33% of college applicants are “first-generation students”; few applicants have discussed tuition costs with parents;

Career Development:

- Little time spent exploring job options after college training;
- High percentage of college applicants are concerned about what their career will be after college.

Overview

Purpose:

- To test whether case manager-facilitated access to a combination of academic support, career education, mentoring, and financial incentives will increase the likelihood that students, at-risk of dropping out of college, will persist and successfully complete their studies.

Rationale:

- ~ 35% of students do not graduate within allotted time:

Methodology:

- Random assignment of eligible students into three groups
- 12 hour participation threshold
- Student activity tracked

Innovative Features of the *Foundations for Success* Model

- Post-admissions testing where responses result in redirection to existing services
- Case management approach to advise identified at-risk students (one-on-one advisement)
- “Case managers” follow students’ progress for two-years. This involves encouragement, identification of students’ needs and challenges, and redirection to appropriate services.

Primary Research Questions

- Do case manager-mediated support services lead to an increased probability of completing a college program?
- Does a financial incentive in combination with case manager-mediated support services increase the probability of completing a college program?

Secondary Research Questions

- Does case manager-mediated access to services result in increased use of support services by at-risk students?
- Does the provision of a financial incentive to take part in service activities result in greater service use?

Research Tools

- OCAS data
- College Administrative data
- Fast-Track survey responses (PEI – used as baseline data; SEI)
- Interaction logs for all students in the mentoring and tutoring intervention
- Interaction logs for students in the Services and Plus groups for counselling services and case manager meetings
- Interim survey 10-months after recruitment
- Final survey 22 months after recruitment
- Key informant interviews (project staff)
- Focus groups with all participants

Participant Selection Process

New students in 2 year programs are invited to complete the Fast Track survey, language assessment and sign informed consent, making them eligible for the study

Students deemed at risk on at least one item

Students not deemed at risk
(no further involvement in project)

Random Assignment occurs

Program Group 1
SERVICES

Academic, mentorship
and career exploration
support

Program Group 2
PLUS

Academic, mentorship and
career exploration support
and financial incentives

Program Group 3
COMPARISON

Students were
deemed at risk
on at least one
item

Process to Determine At-Risk Factors

1) Remedial English/Communications:

- *Measure:* Post admission English Placement assessment results (slight variation within participating colleges)
- *Intervention:* students are either streamed to regular Communications or developmental course and are encouraged to undertake tutoring and related academic support

2) Mentoring:

- *Measure:* Fast-Track survey question on whether the student self-identified as someone who would benefit from a mentor.
- *Intervention:* Assignment of a mentor.

3) Career indecision:

- *Measure:* Four Fast-Track career clarity questions, with a cumulative score greater than 10 (i.e. neutral response to strongly agree/disagree).
- *Intervention:* two “Career Gear” workshops; Myers-Briggs; Strong-Campbell; one group debriefing; one one-on-one with counsellor (over 2 semesters)

Number of Participants per College

	SENECA	MOHAWK	CONFED	TOTAL
SERVICES	397	385	242	1039
PLUS	401	389	242	1041
COMPARISON	379	433	242	1062
PROJECT TOTAL	1177	1207	726	3110

Demographic Profile of Participants

	Seneca College	Mohawk College	Confederation College
Male (%)	34%	40%	52%
Age (<19; 19-21; >31)	28% 30% 11%	29% 40% 6%	28% 37% 13%
First-time PSE attendees	70%	71%	76%
English as first language learned	48%	82%	89%
Father with high school or less	41%	50%	46%
Mother with high school or less	47%	50%	45%

Participants, per Number of “at-risk” Factors

	One at-risk factor	Two at-risk factors	Three at-risk factors
Confederation College (n=726)	437 (60%)	233 (32%)	56 (8%)
Mohawk College (n=1207)	706 (58%)	397 (33%)	118 (10%)
Seneca College (n=1177)	448 (38.5%)	506 (43%)	223 (19%)

“At-risk” Factors by Intervention

At Risk Factors	Control	Services	Services Plus	Total
English	672	667	670	2009 (64.6%)
Mentoring	405	449	437	1291 (41.5%)
Career	615	588	596	1799 (57.8%)

Participation Agreement

Students in **SERVICES** and **SERVICES PLUS Groups** signed a Participation Agreement which outlined project participation expectations.

Service Plus students who met the following criteria were eligible to receive a \$750 fellowship at the beginning of the subsequent semester:

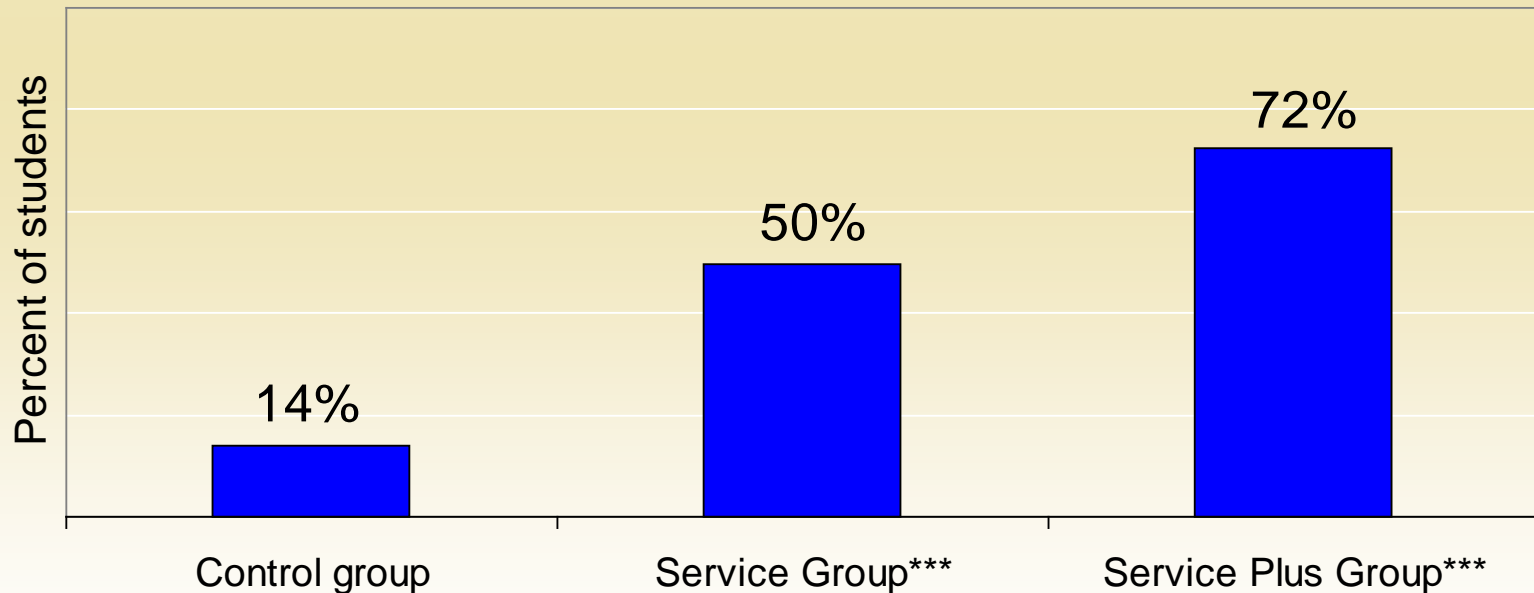
- maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA and;
- participate in a minimum of 12 hours of *Foundations for Success* identified activities and;
- be eligible to continue in a program of study.

However, if students did not meet the criteria, they were not excluded from continued participation in the project.

Participation Results

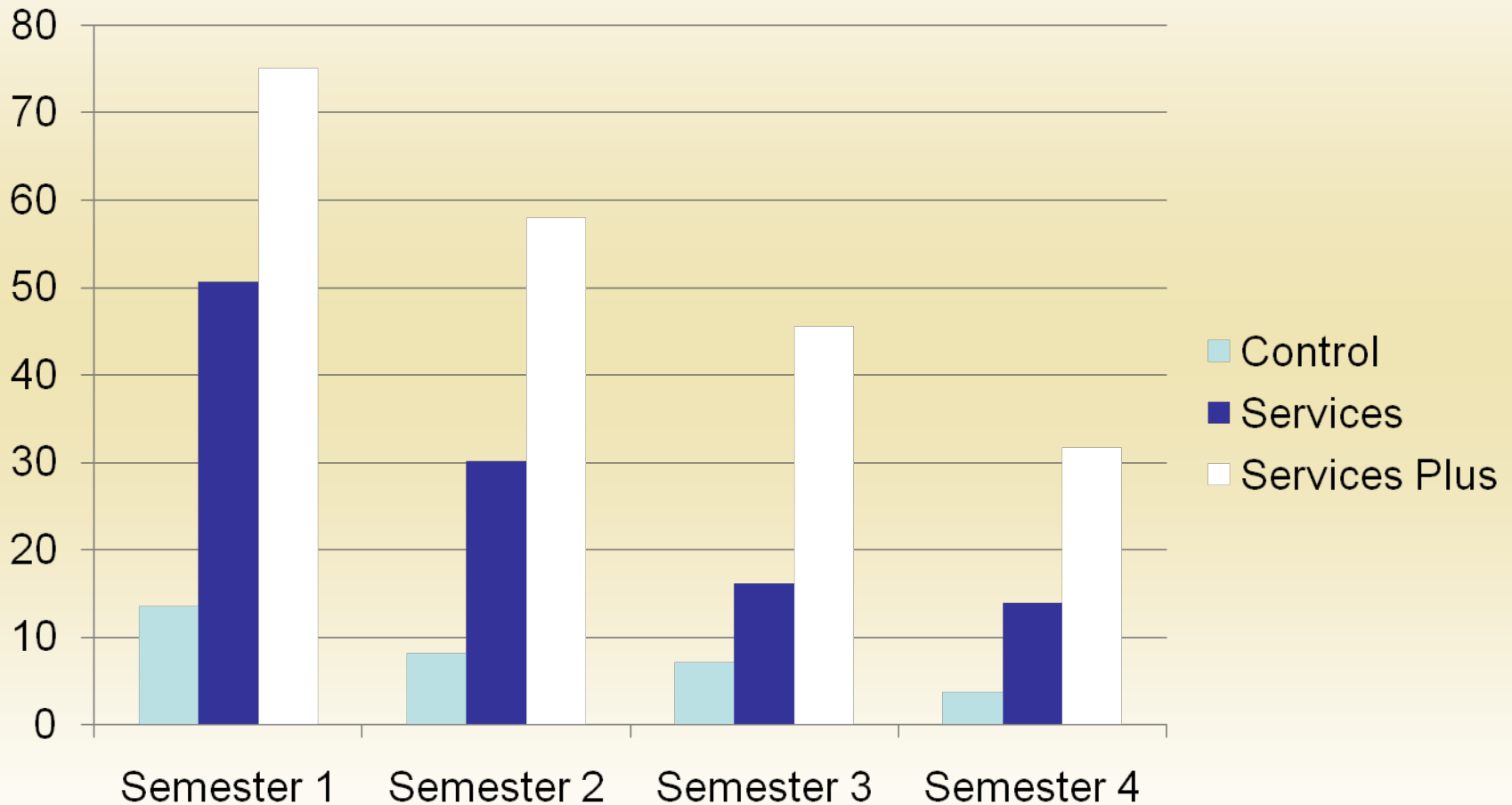
Participation in Identified Activities – 1st semester

- Service group significantly more likely to participate in any FFS activities compared to Control group
- Service Plus group significantly more likely than Service group to participate in any FFS activities

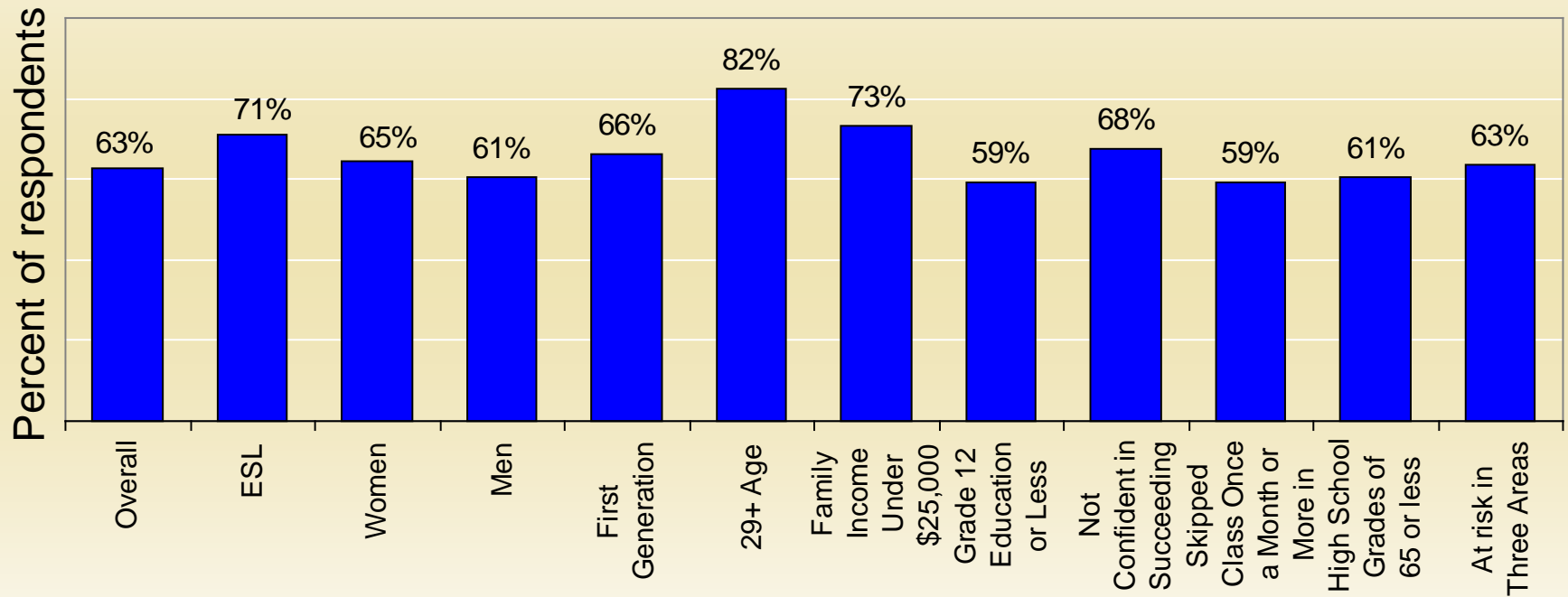


Source: 2008 College Administration Data, n=2,008.

Participation Results by Semester

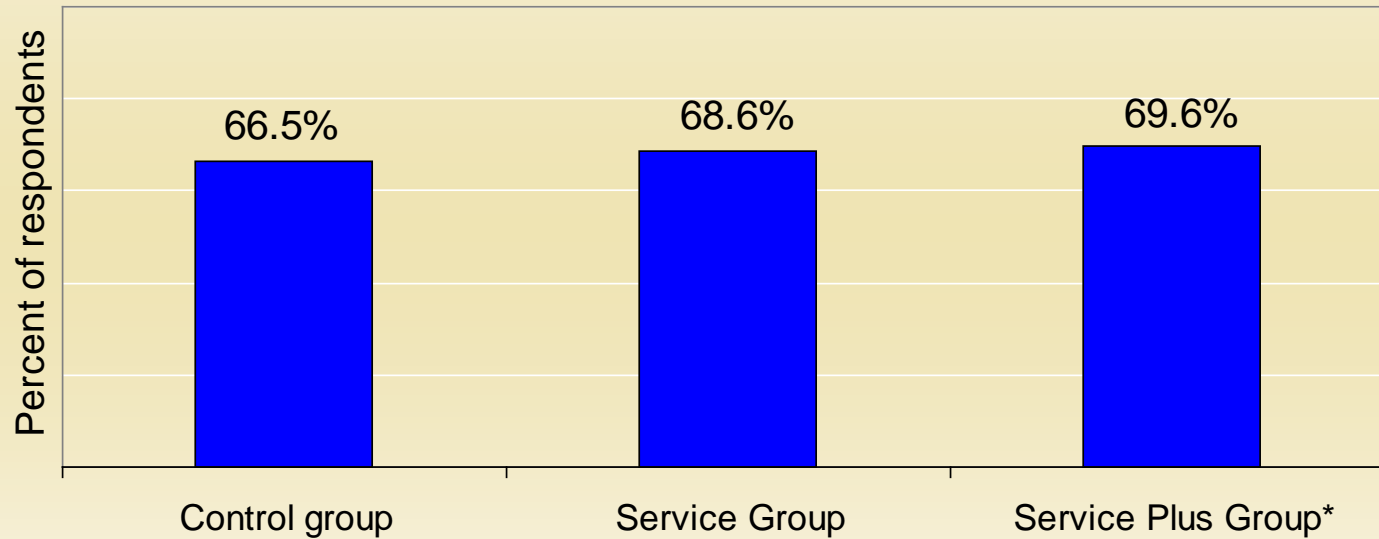


Participation – Sub-group Analysis



Source: 2008 and 2009 College Administration Data and PEI data, n=2,056, Service and Service Plus students only.

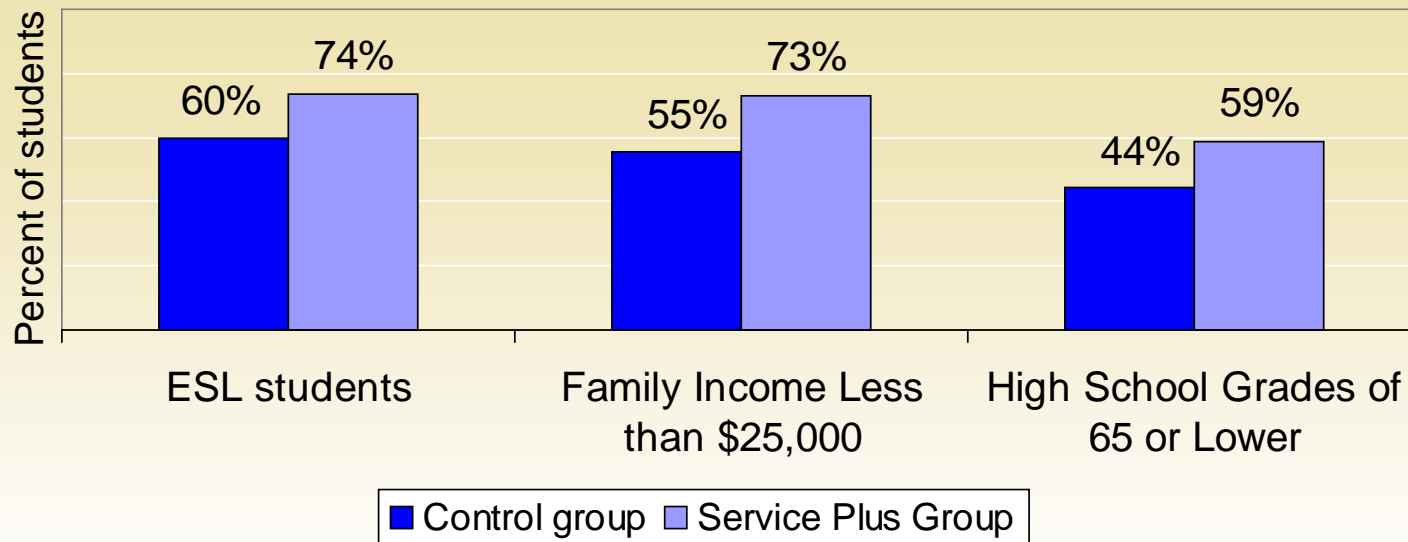
Student Retention as of Winter 2009



Source: 2008 and 2009 College Administration Data, n=2,813

Sub-Group Analysis of Retention Rates

Retention: Service Plus ESL students, low-income students, and students with high school grades of 65 or lower show significantly higher retention rates than similar students in the Control group.



Source: 2008 College Administration Data, n=1,711

Additional Findings

GPA:

- Service Plus and Service students have significantly higher GPAs compared to the Control group by second, third and fourth semester.

Language Success:

- Pass rates are significantly higher in Service Plus students than those in the Control group.

Mandatory Withdrawal Rates:

- Significantly lower in Service Plus group than in the Control group.
- Students in treatment groups had lower Mandatory Withdrawal rates overall.

Financial Incentive:

- The availability of a financial incentive to encourage participation is effective at increasing participation levels in college support services.

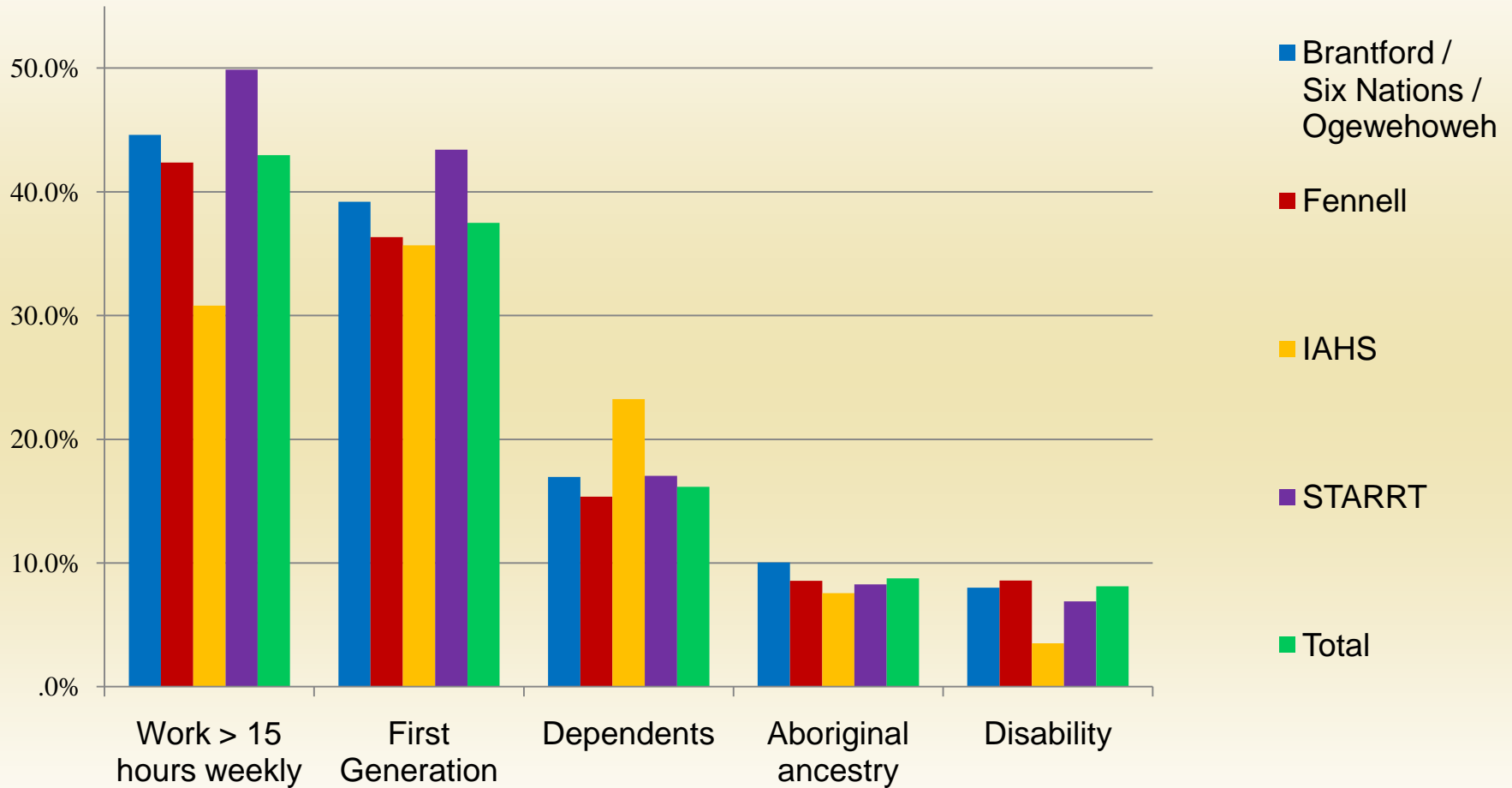
Conclusions

- Directed advisement works. Targeted outreach to and advising of “at-risk” students can make a significant difference in student retention rates.
- Directed advisement is best offered within a framework of specified guiding principles and consistent application of best practices.
- Consistent data collection is essential to ensure and improve quality of services to students.
- Evidence based results are increasingly important to support resource planning and allocation.

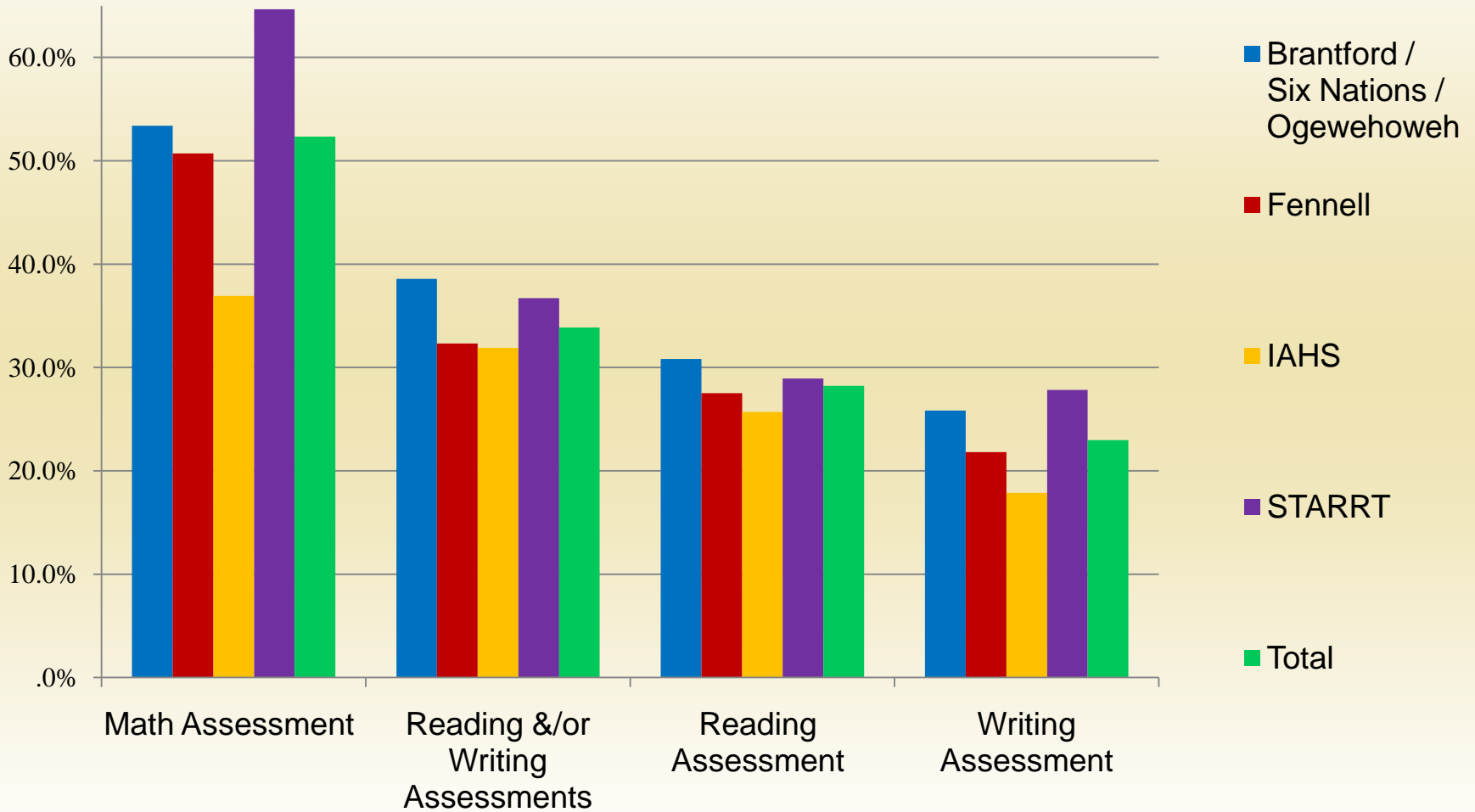
Positive Outcomes

- Opportunity to collaborate with sister colleges;
- Share collective wisdom in solving common challenges;
- Identification of best practices to address common issues;
- Recognition of benefits of support services;
- Impetus to formally implement new or augment existing support services;
- Generated great interest in research on a broad scale;
- Built institutional capacity;
- Appreciate differences and build on similarities.

Mohawk Demographic Risk Profile: Fall '09



Mohawk Academic Risk Profile: Fall '09



Mohawk College Initiatives

- Post-admission Assessments for Success
 - Reading / Writing
 - Mathematics based on program
 - Student Entrance Survey
- Integrated Advisement Model
- Access Initiative

Foundations for Success Legacy at Mohawk

- Individual “at-risk profiles” for new students
- Proactive outreach by Student Success Advisors
- Communications Course Placement
- Continued tracking/research to inform decisions

Confederation College Initiatives

- Form collaborations within our college to implement best practices learned from Foundations for Success (FFS)
- FFS project connected many dept's together
- Currently seeking funding for case-management supports for targeted audiences
 - i.e. 2nd career advisor



Confederation College Initiatives



- Recruiting aboriginal staff for retention strategies
 - Focus on Mentoring & Career Clarification Approach
 - “Aboriginal Student Advisor “ position to assist aboriginal learners

Confederation College Initiatives



- Establishment of a downtown drop-in centre
 - “The Learning Café”
 - Originally designed for pre-admission interventions
 - Offers preparatory academic skills programs including Flex Academic Upgrading
 - Quiet study area for college students including education partners
 - Focuses on retention strategies

Seneca College

Post Research Activities @ Seneca

- Implementation of modified *Foundations for Success* model
 - Available to all students at main campus
 - Academic risk factors – English/Math
 - No FastTrack/PEI
- Continuation and strengthening of collaborative network of partnerships
 - Program, faculty and service areas
- Provision of career exploration activities
 - Career Gear Workshops

Seneca College

Foundations for Success – “The Sequel”

- Provide directed advisement to students targeting those who place below expected level of proficiency in English and/or Math
 - No. of students contacted /communicated with = **1736***
 - No. of students who regularly meet with FFS advisors = **421**
 - Average number of meetings with each student = **3****
 - Average length of meetings **30-60 minutes** depending on needs of student**

*As of June 2009-present

**Students with special needs may require additional time/meetings

FFS Recruitment & Tracking: Recruitment Process:

- Letter and call campaigns
- Class Visits
- Orientation
- Faculty and Service area referrals
- Website information
- Word of mouth

Tracking/Data Management Best Practices:

- Ongoing detailed tracking of student data
- Assessment results, progression to college level proficiency, mandatory/voluntary withdrawals, re-enrolment ,etc.

Seneca College

Time Matters!

- Student are unintentionally overloaded with information
 - Lack of awareness of the supports available
 - May be concerned about stigma
 - Special needs students may require more time to digest information
- Mature Learners - may require additional assistance due to little or no PSE experience
 - Direction to academic, social and emotional support services
- Students with language barriers require more time and patience when communicating with college departments
 - FFS Advisors assist these students as they try to navigate their way through different areas in the college i.e. Financial Aid – OSAP issues, academic help, etc.

Next Steps @ all Partner Colleges

- Continue to support “research culture” and build institutional capacity
- Investigate areas of interest as a result of research findings
- Continue to longitudinally track FFS students until 2012
- Use results to inform strategic plan and resource allocation vis-à-vis advisement
- Highlight importance of advisement for all students
- Disseminate results of FFS project – Final Report expected late May 2010.

The last word ...

- *Foundations for Success has been very beneficial - I received the best guidance possible and was provided with valuable information about services. Now, I can concentrate on my studies confidently with less to worry about!*
- *"I just want to say a big thank you for all your guidance and motivation during the first semester. Thank you for motivating me when my spirits were low and I thought that I wouldn't make it.*
- *"My experience with Foundations for Success has been very satisfying. I got the best advice available for me, which led me into choosing the right career path and most of all getting accommodations that are helping me get through my program."*

**For information on Foundations for
Success contact:**

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