



Proactive Academic Coaching:

Supporting First-Year College Students and Addressing
Barriers to Student Success

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Overview

- Purpose of our assessment: evaluate the perception and effectiveness of Bears First and what barriers students are experiencing
- Phases: assessments of suspension appeals and exit surveys followed by qualitative survey of current Bears First students
- Key takeaways



Bears First

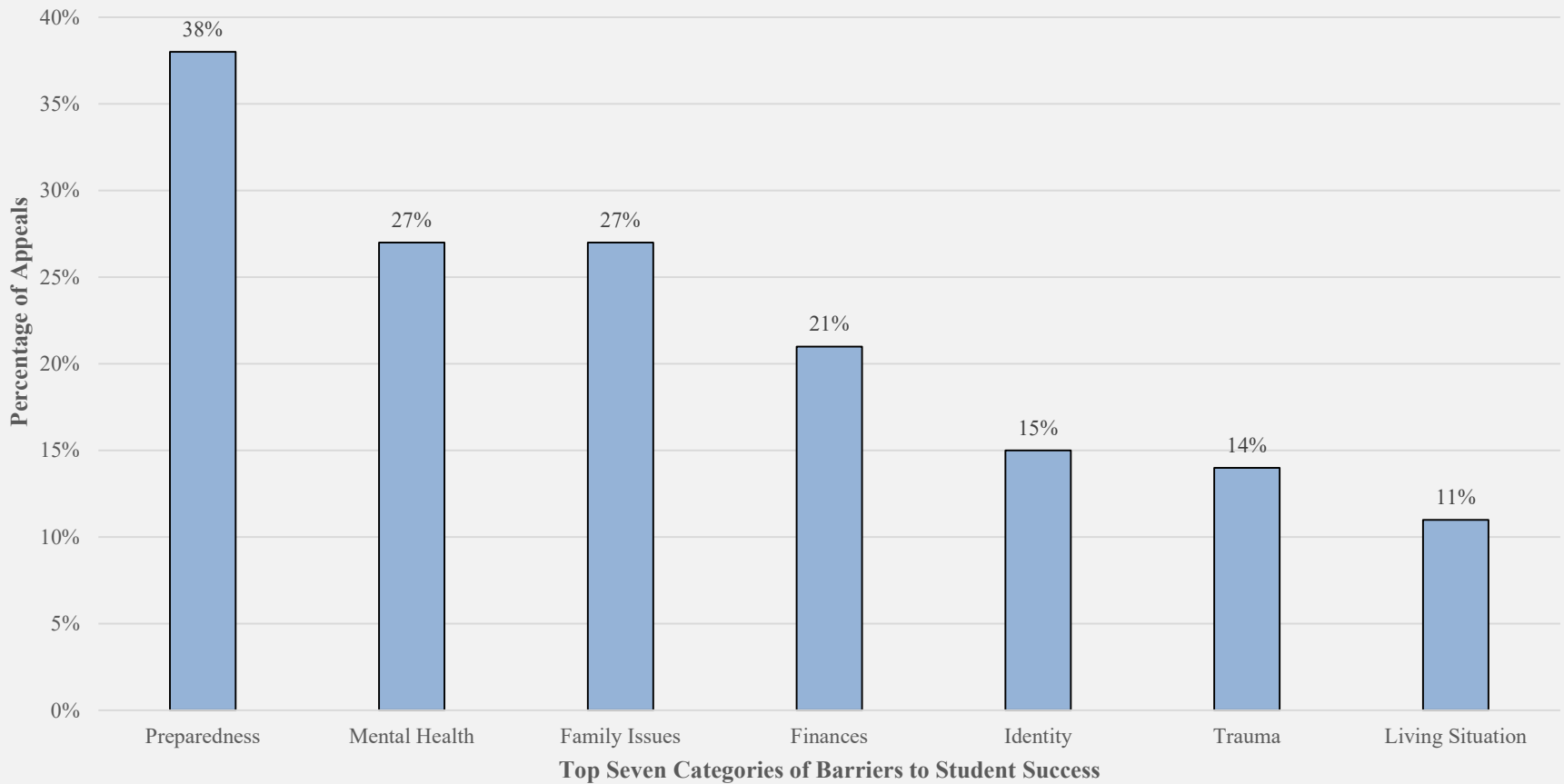
- Started in 2019
- The population
- Support and retention program
- Barriers within the program





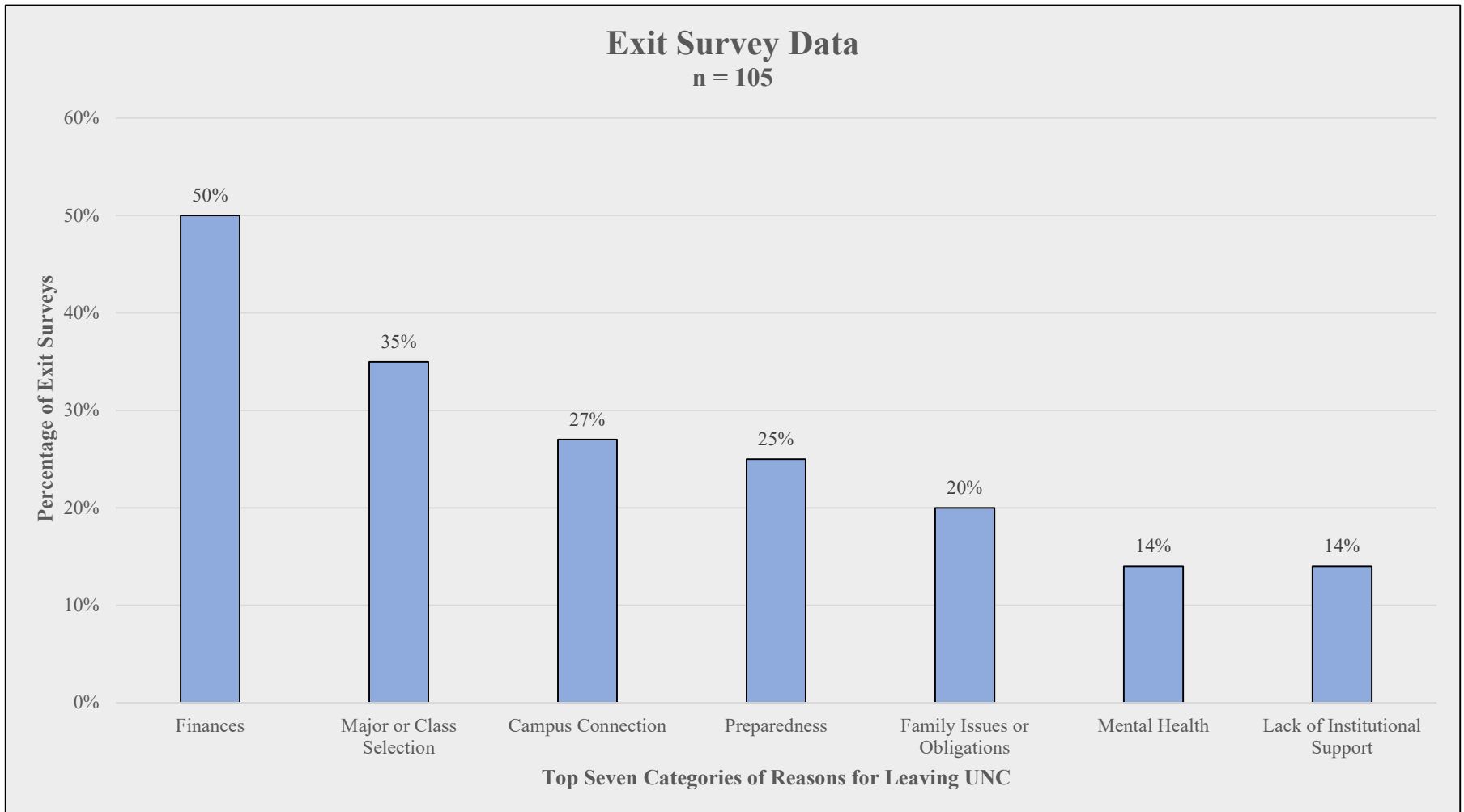
The Assessment- Part One

Suspension Appeals Data
n = 100





The Assessment- Part One





The Assessment- Part Two

- Qualitative survey
- Used the common themes from part one of the assessment to form our questions
- Sent to 476 students who were eligible for Bears First. 269 of those students participated in the program.
- 61 students participated in the survey



The Respondents



- 32 respondents attended 3+ appointments
- 12 attended 2 or less appointments
- 17 did not attend any appointments
- Of the respondents who attended at least one appointment, 56% were “very satisfied” and 21% were “satisfied”



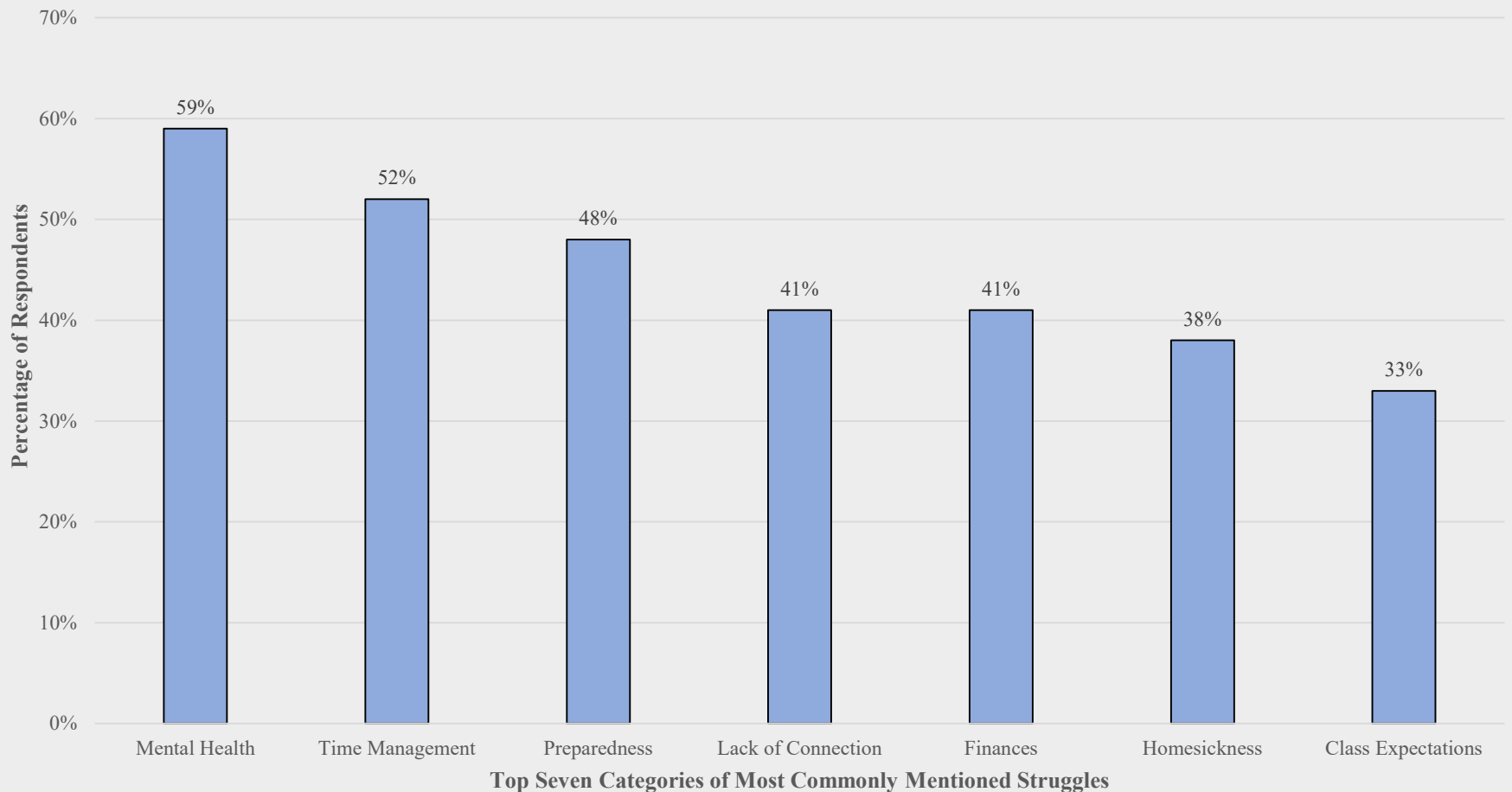
How did you come to the decision to use or not use the Bears First program?

- “In my opinion I think that it would be not very smart to not use the help that someone is giving you. I know lots of kids in campus are shy and instead of asking questions they struggle to find answers. Being vulnerable is something that everyone struggles with in their life. Bears first program allowed me to be vulnerable and ask questions.”
- “I do not know what the Bears First program is.”
- “I haven't utilized the program because my overall confidence level has remained high through the semester. But I know that the support is there should I need it.”



Most Common Struggles

Bears First Survey Data
n = 61 Respondents, 23% Response Rate





How did you deal with the struggle(s) your first semester?

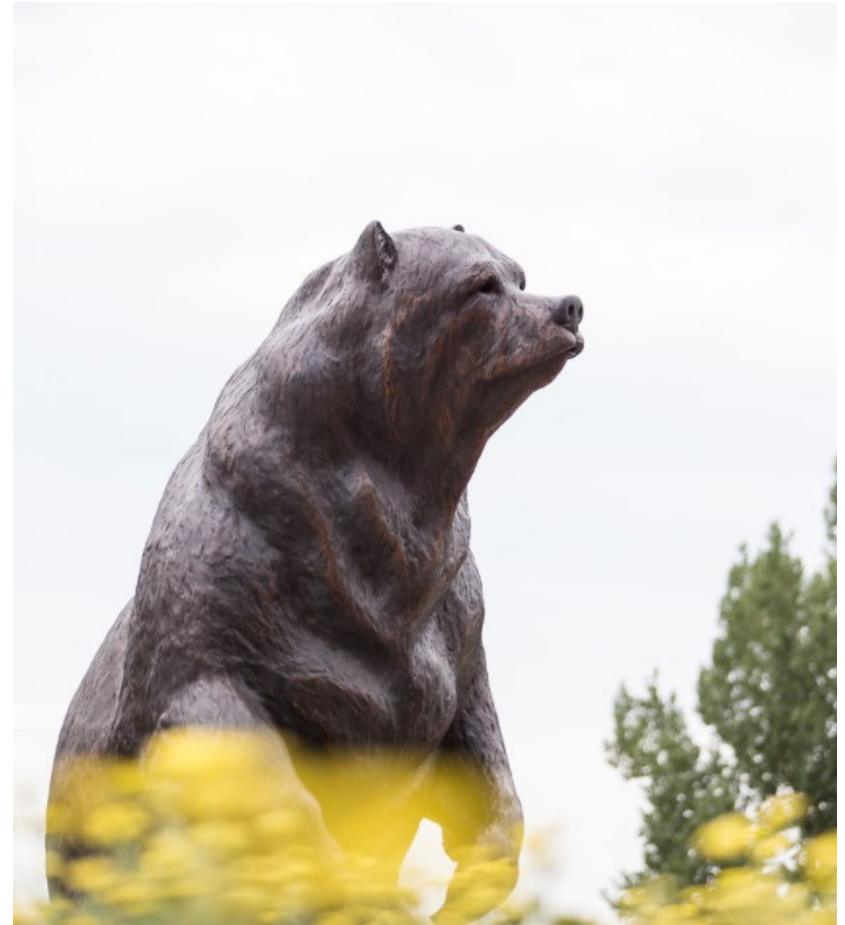


- “I reached out to clubs on campus while also building new friendships to feel like home and also speaking to [success coach] to learn how the education system works here.”
- “I tried to be social, attending the activities on campus for example, but I slowly stopped trying. I did not handle my struggles well, nor did I attempt to fix anything after a while.”



“Was there a time that you needed help but did not ask? If so, what kept you from asking?”

- “I’ve felt uncomfortable with my professors. I have tried communicating to them but I only felt judgment.”
- “Almost every time I needed help with something, I did not ask. This is mostly because of my anxiety, and I was too scared to do so. I especially needed to use the counseling centers, but I could not bring myself to do it.”
- “I definitely needed help with my grades first semester. My pride got in my way from asking for help, because I thought since we’re all in college, everyone just “gets it” or understands the material, but that’s not really the case at all.”





Key Takeaways



- The majority of students who participated in Bears First found the program to be valuable
- The barriers students self-identified in the survey mirrored the data from the exit surveys and suspension appeals
- **Low help-seeking behavior was still an issue even with being provided with a success coach**



Post-Assessment

- Included information about Bears First in admissions letters
- Strengthened outreach to students before the start of the semester
- Extended the program through students' second year
- Added all Exploring (undeclared) students to the success coaching program regardless of GPA
- Continued outreach to non-responding students
- Additional professional development for success coaches



Questions?

Email samantha.black@unco.edu if you would like more information on Bears First or our assessment. You can also visit





THANK YOU!

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