

Does Personality Matter?

Examining the Interplay of Personality, Campus Involvement, Sense of Belonging, and Persistence

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Agenda

- Introduction and Rationale
- Literature Review
- Research Questions
- Methods
- Findings
- Implications

Introduction and Context

- **Positive Impacts of Extracurricular Involvement**
 - Contributes to overall college satisfaction (Kuh et al., 1991),
 - Enhances sense of belonging and community (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005)
 - Involvement in university-sponsored signature events supports retention (Kulp, Pascale, & Grandstaff, 2019)
- **Impact of Sense of Belonging**
 - Important factor for student retention and persistence (Strayhorn, 2018; Hoffman, et al., 2002)
 - extending to second- and third-year **retention** (Gopalan & Brady, 2020)
- **Supporting Student Integration and Belonging**
 - Colleges increasingly emphasize social integration and belonging as important factors for student success.
 - Programming often incorporate large social events that feature catering, giveaways, and entertainment

Rationale

- **Concerns and anecdotal student feedback**
 - Questions about whether our programming efforts (events) favor extraverted students, potentially limiting involvement for introverted students
- **Resource effectiveness**
 - With limited resources, it is crucial to determine what programming strategies drive student involvement, belonging, or retention and persistency
- **Purpose of the study**
 - Investigate whether college student's extracurricular involvement varies by their **level of extraversion** and whether extraverted students derive greater benefit from involvement, resulting in a stronger sense of belonging and higher likelihood of persistence.

Literature Review: Extraversion & Involvement

- **Extraversion and social preferences** (Furnham, 1981)
- **Extraversion and sense of belonging** (Malone et al., 2012; Harris et al., 2017; Stubblebine, et al., 2024)
- **Extraversion and extracurricular involvement**
 - quality of efforts put in personal and social activities (Bauer, 2003)
- **Personality-Driven Involvement Preferences** (Toma, 2015; Wipfli, 2022)
 - Extraverted: prefer social activities and large campus event.
 - Introverted: tend to choose engage in academic co-curricular activities; face challenges making connections at large campus events; felt less confident/successful in obtaining leadership opportunities
 - Providing insights into how personality affects choices of involvement

Research Questions

1. Does personality influence the relationship between initial involvement and pattern of participation over the first year, suggesting different patterns based on level of extraversion?
2. To what extent does students' involvement relates to persistence? If so, does this relationship vary based on student's level of extraversion?

Methods and Data

- **New student survey, Fall 2022 (n = 1102)**
 - Weeks of Welcome involvement
 - Early Sense of Belonging
 - Extraversion (Mini-IPIP, Big Five Personality Traits)
- **Pattern of Involvement over the 1st Year**
 - Event participation records extracted from the university's engagement tool, which allows departments and student organizations to manage events and track attendance
 - Total participation records extracted for 2022-2023: 58,593
 - Cumulative, consistency, and variety of involvement;
- **Retention after two years (institution enrollment records)**

Respondent Demographics

- Gender
 - 24% Cisgender Man/Man
 - 69% Cisgender Woman/Woman
 - 7% Gender Minority
- Underrepresented Minority (URM) → 33%
- First-gen → 27%
- Housing status → 43% On-campus ↑
- Working status → 45% Working
- Student level
 - 68% Undergraduate ↓
 - 32% Graduate/Professional ↑

Higher representation ↑

Lower representation ↓

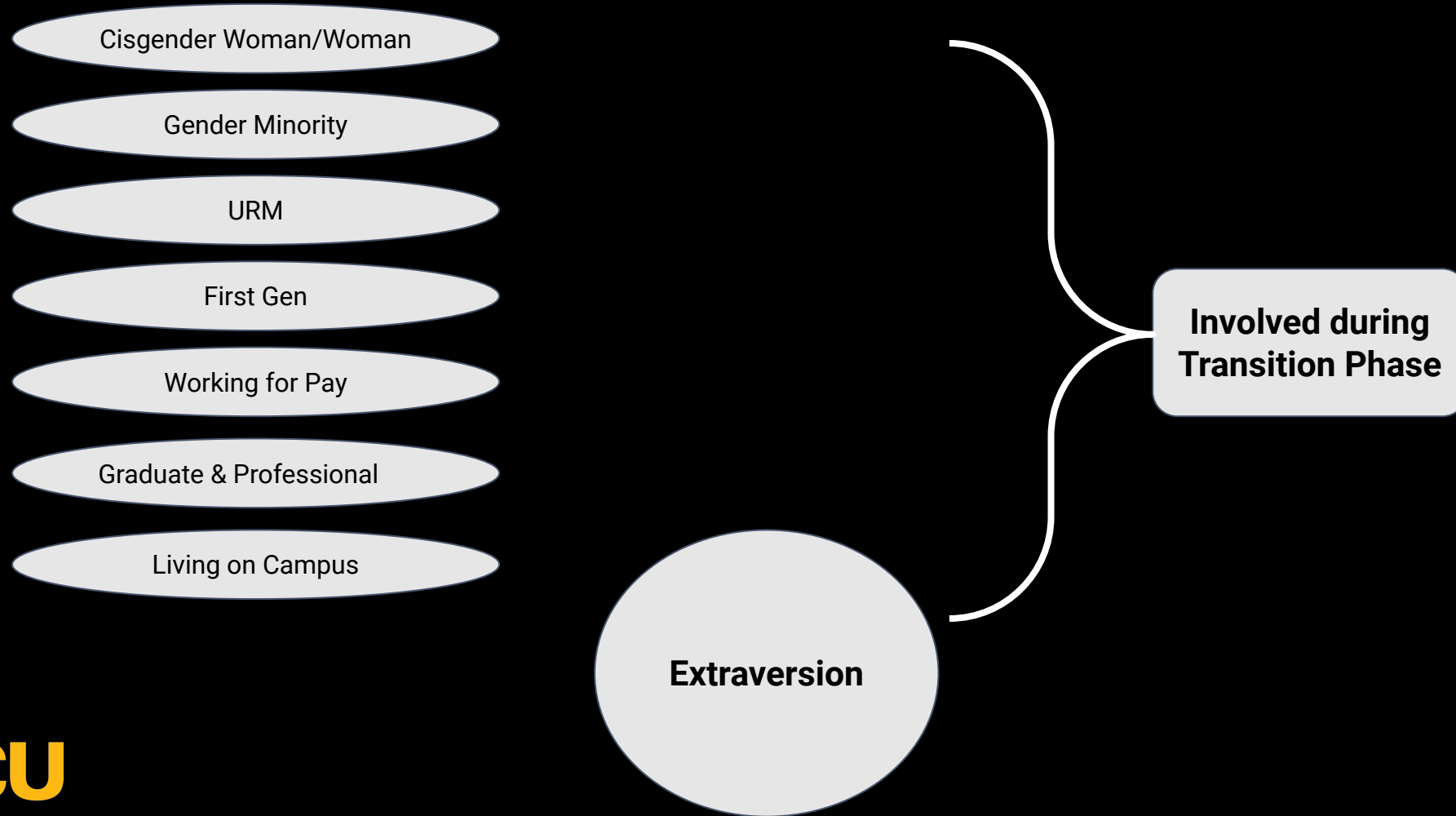
Descriptive Results

- Extraversion - sum score ranging from 4 to 24.
 - Average sum score = **13.32** → **slightly less extraverted!**
- Sense of Belonging - sum score across five items.
Average sum score = **15.98** out of 20.
 - I feel that I belong at VCU.
 - I tend to associate myself with VCU.
 - I have developed personal relationships with other students at VCU.
 - I know at least one faculty or staff at VCU who cares about my success.
 - I have found a social circle at VCU where I truly fit in.
- Transition Involvement → **83% of respondents participated**

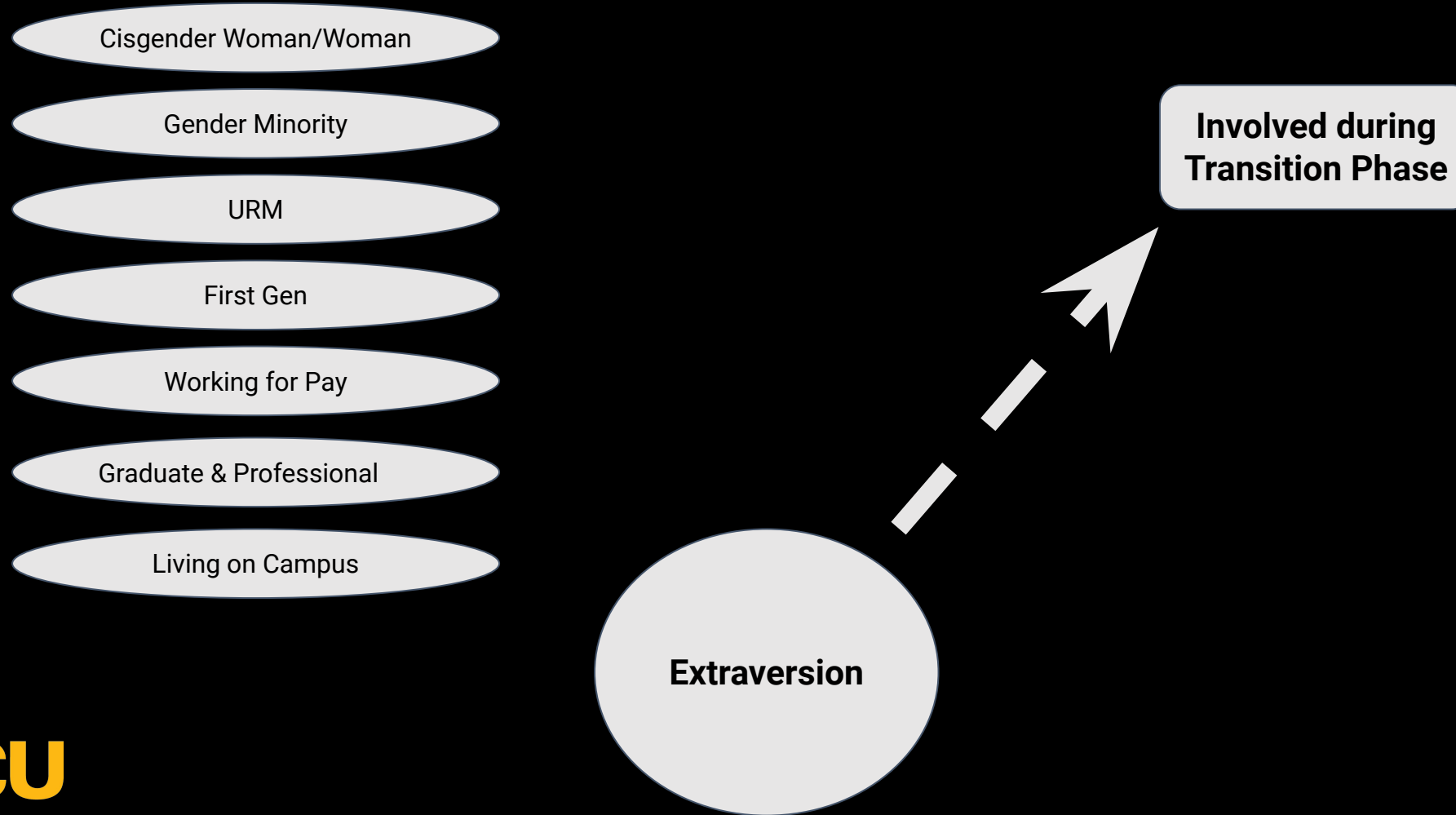
Descriptive Results (cont.)

- **Pattern of Involvement:**
 - **Cumulative:** total event RSVPs/Check-ins
 - Average total RSVPs = 6.5
 - **Consistency:** index score based on monthly indicator.
 - Average consistent involvement = 2.4
 - **Variety:** The number of different event types engaged with over the course of the year.
 - Average = 1.75
 - Social (66%), informational (39%), training/lecture (23%), community service (19%)
- **Retention rate**
 - Second-year retention rate (persist to third year) = 70%

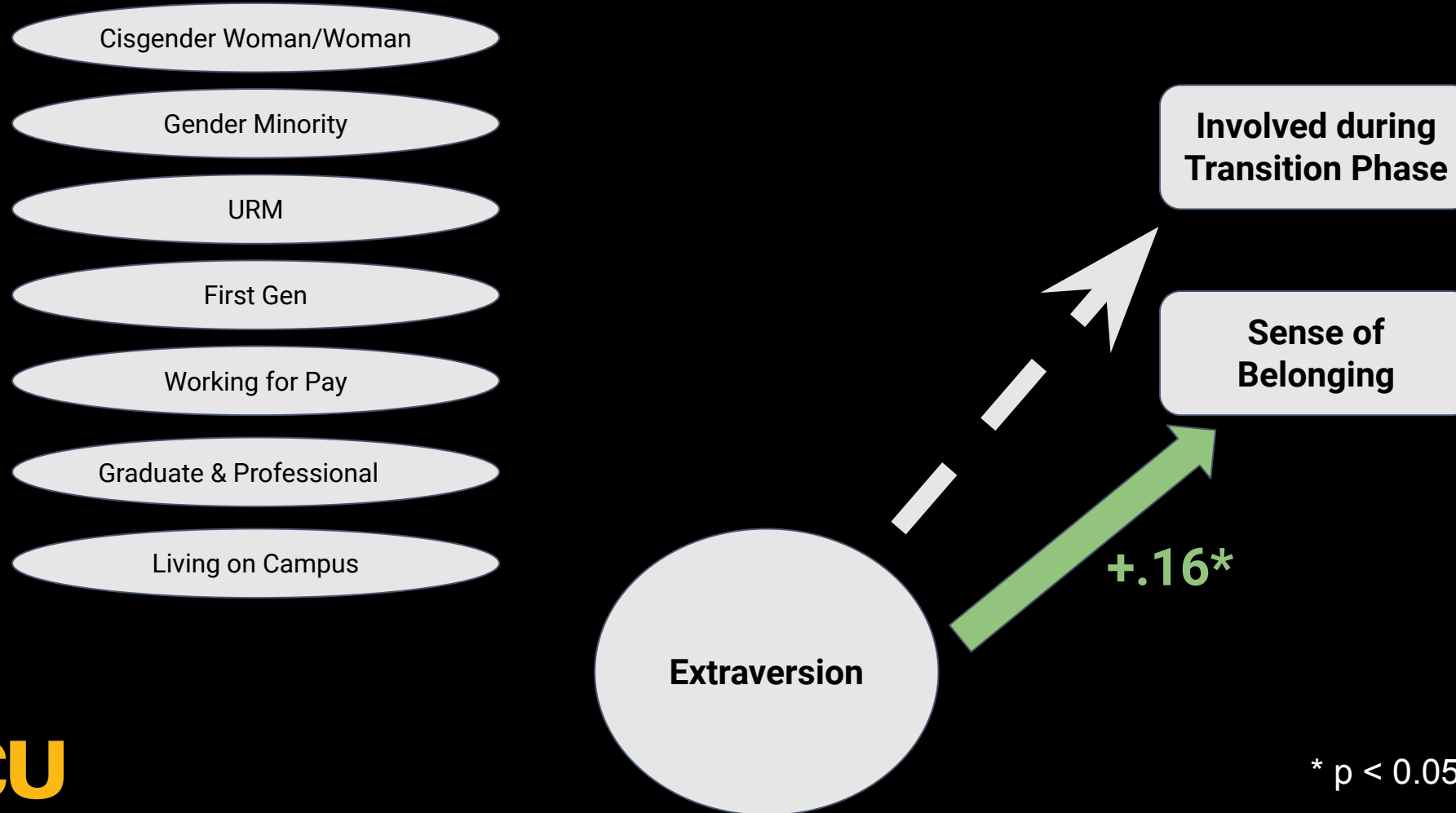
Results (Transition Phase)



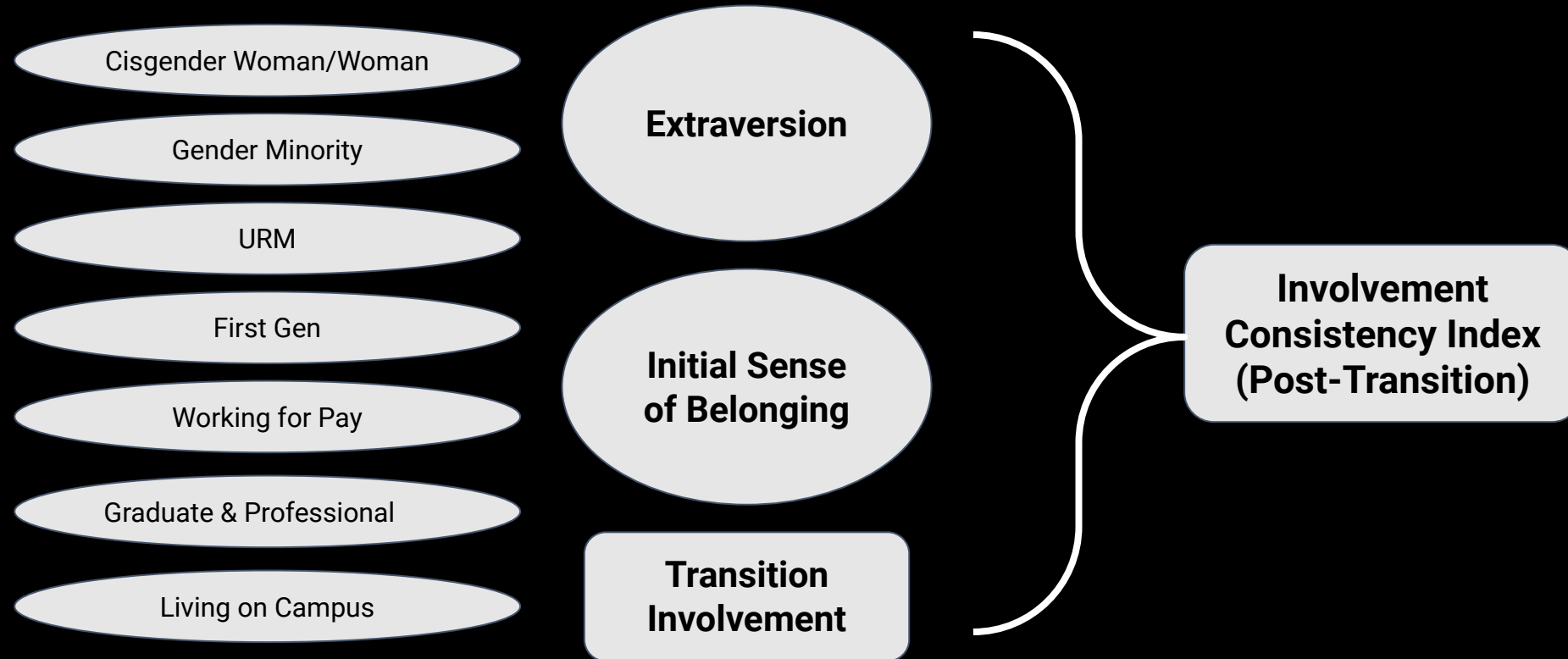
Results (Transition Phase)



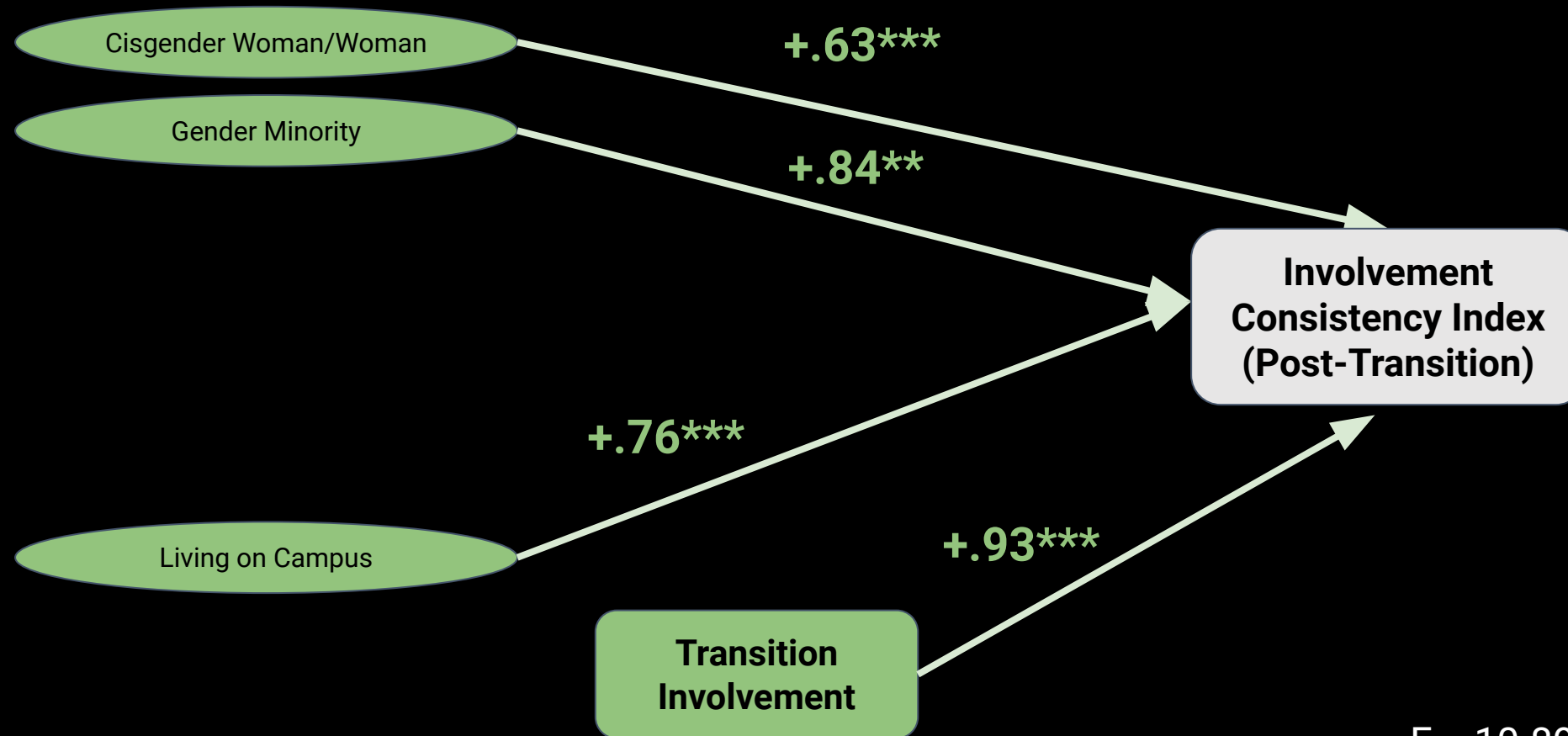
Results (Transition Phase)



Results (Post Transition)



Results (Post-Transition)

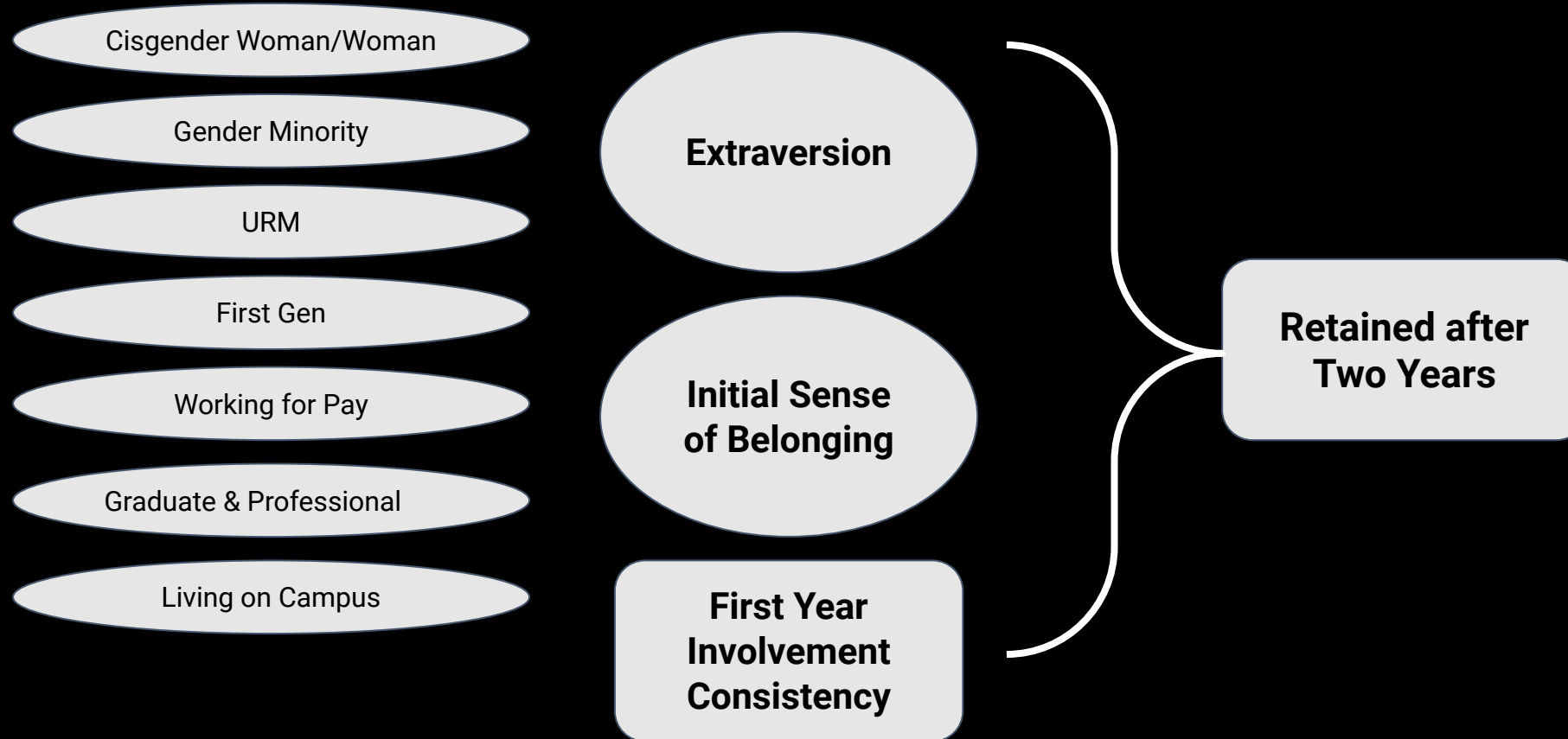


Model Summary

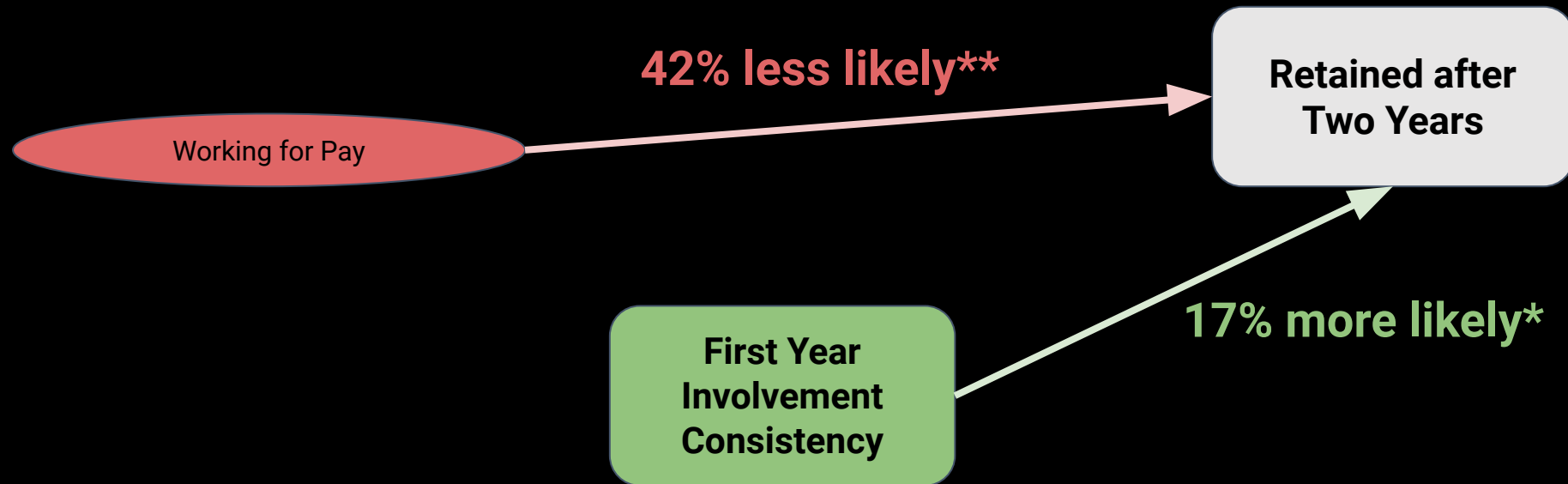
F = 10.89 (df = 600), $p < .01$

Adjusted $R^2 = .14$

Results (Second Year Retention)



Results (Second Year Retention)



Implications and Limitations

Implications

- Positive relationship with sense of belonging but not with involvement
 - Potential measurement bias in subjective assessment of sense of belonging for extraverted students
- Positive impact justify investment in involvement efforts
 - Early involvement matters for subsequent involvement
 - Consistent involvement in first year contribute positively to later retention
 - Variety of involvement was not related to later retention. What types of involvement works best for what outcome?
- Challenge in Measuring Extracurricular Involvement
 - Self-reported time and effort (subjective) vs. recorded participation (objective)
 - A need to distinguish involvement facilitated by university-sponsored activities and those driven by students personal initiatives

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Limitations

- Incomplete involvement records
 - Programming in resident halls
 - Physical exercises and sports
 - Student organization membership
- Did not capture academic involvement in the retention model

Questions??

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WE ARE THE UNCOMMON.

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