The California State University
ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

GRADUATION INITIATIVE 2025

STUDENT SUCCESS SYMPOSIUM

The Freshmen Day of Service: Empowering Students, the Community and Impacting Student Retention

➢4:00 – 4:10 Welcome & introductions

➢4:10 – 4:20 The Freshmen Day of Service (overview)

➢4:20 – 4:30 Roots & Leaves – the importance of the Aha moment
    2-3 mins thoughtful time; 7-8 minutes large group (tree)

➢4:30 – 4:45 Guided Visioning Activity
    Discussing key elements; planning for your campus

➢4:45 – 4:55 Small Group Share Out

➢4:55 – 5:05 Student Impact
    What can we measure in a single day?

➢5:05 – 5:15   Closing and questions

Mary D'Alleva
Director
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CSU East Bay

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The Freshmen Day of Service

- A partnership with the General Studies Program as part of the Freshmen Year Experience course

- Multiple one-day service projects with local non-profit agencies

- Projects take place during first eight weeks (mostly Saturdays) of our spring quarter

- Planning with community partners begins during Fall quarter

- Projects are typically 4 hours long

Cultural (Cambodian New Year-Festival - Friends of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park)

Community Gardens (Great Plant Out - Project EAT)

Food/Hunger (Food Preparation and Serving - Open Heart Kitchen)

Habitat Restoration (Tule Ponds - MSN)

Healthy Living (Moving Day San Francisco - National Parkinson's Foundation)

Education (Tech Gadget Help - Hayward Public Library)

Recreational Events (Easter Egg Hunt and Pancake Breakfast - YMCA)

Trash Clean Ups (Cleanup - Keep Hayward Clean and Green Task Force)

Environmental Projects (Earth Day Clean-Up Friends of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park)

Why do it?

- Connects students to the local community & enhances identity as "Cal State East Bay" students(Retention)

- Introduces the concept of social responsibility (ILO)

- Connects to goals of GE/Freshmen Learning Communities: *to enhance student learning and success through a supportive network of faculty and peers; prepare students for success through explorations of personal and academic responsibility, majors, and community engagement. (Achievement/Retention)*

- Students see themselves as 'agents' of change and as contributors to and constructors of knowledge, not just passive recipients. (Achievement)

- Begins students on a path to self-efficacy and self-awareness, challenging them to step out of their comfort zones, extend their social networks, and broaden their perspectives. (Achievement)

- Coming at the end of what can often be an over-whelming first year, FDoS offers students an `aha' learning moment as they look ahead to sophomore year. (Retention)

How does it work?

The Center for Community Engagement…

- Coordinates projects with community partners

- Coordinates student registration

- Provides community partners with rosters of students and Project Leads

- Confirms freshmen participation with GS Faculty through the Liaison

- Communicates important dates and approaching deadlines to community partners & faculty

- Develops & disseminates resources & assessment tools

- Organizes, hires, & trains Project Leads (Pioneers for Change) who:
    - ✓ Check students in/out
    - ✓ Handle CSUEB rosters
    - ✓ Engage volunteers
    - ✓ Lead end of service reflection
    - ✓ Deliver classroom presentations
    - ✓ Staff tables for information, t-shirts

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Community Partners…

- Provide suitable one day, 4-hour projects

- Provide freshmen with orientation and instructions

- Ensure a safe working environment and communicate results to freshmen

- Establish a clear beginning/ending for the project

- Notify CCE of any emergency project cancellations or student incidents

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- Community partners receive Project Description Form in **October**

- Community partners attend Information Breakfast **in January**

- Project Description submissions due **end of Jan.**

- Student registration opens **mid-February**

- Student registration closes **early March**

- Projects begin **end of March**

- Projects end **mid-May**

- Community partners receive rosters the Tuesday prior to their service project

- Community partners receive a feedback survey upon project completion

- Students complete reflections within GS course

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FDoS is cyclical in work flow. From March to May the AAI is basically full-time on FDoS. Total ~$54,300

- .40 fte Administrative Analyst I Project Coordinator ($18,800)
- .25 fte Community Partnerships Coordinator ($15,000)
- GS Faculty Liaison (stipend $4500/AY)
- Project Leads (800+ hours; Pioneers for Change) ($10,000)
- FDoS T-shirts ($6,000)

What is the community impact?

2016

- 1362 freshmen
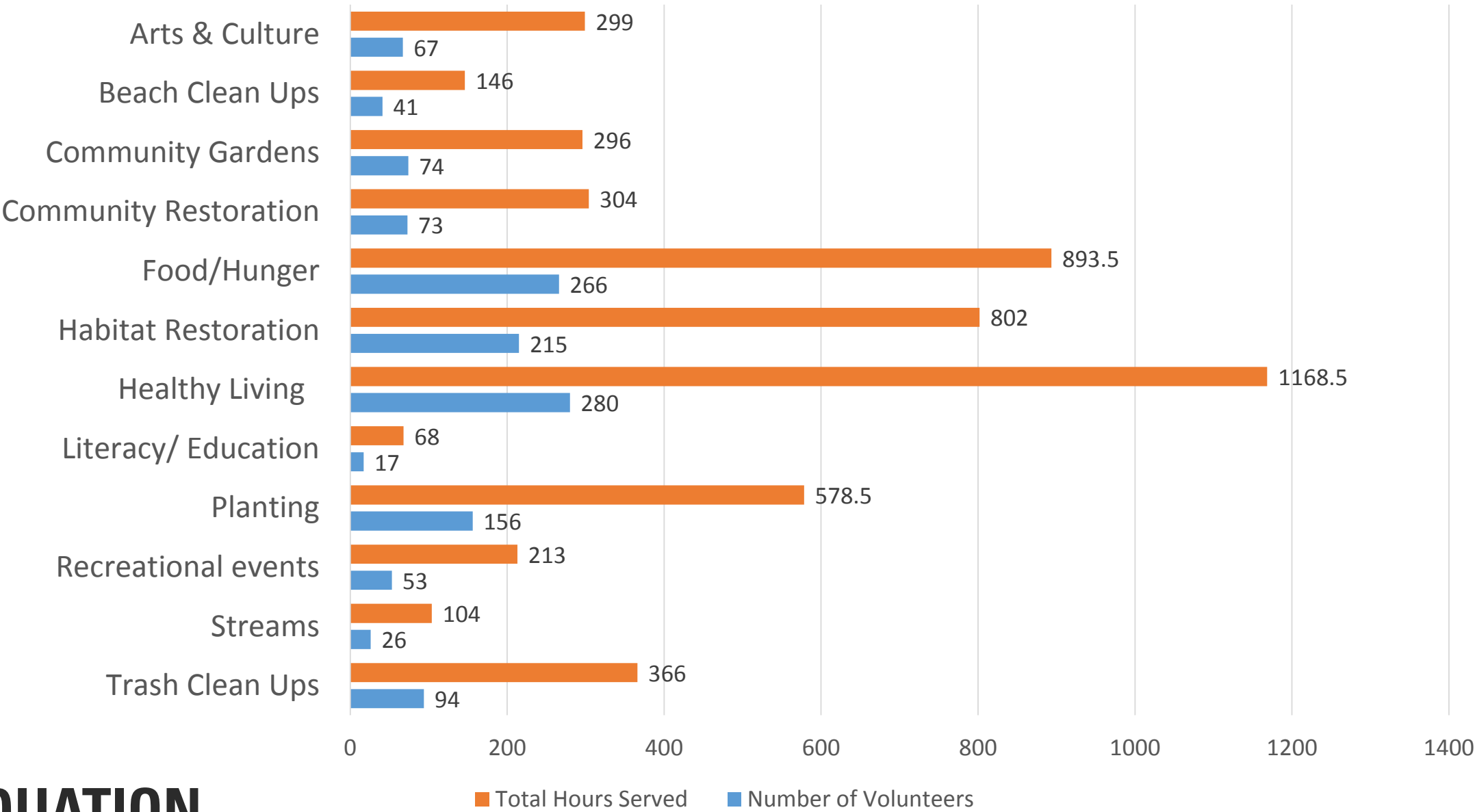- 5238 hours
- 132 projects (31 community partners)

Five Years

- 6,003 freshmen
- 19,347 hours
- 410 projects

Partnerships:

- 7 partners have been with us all 5 years
- 7 partners for 4 years
- 5 partners for 3 years

In surveys…

- 90% of partners indicate FDoS has a "high positive contribution towards the work of the agency."

- 95% of respondents indicate, "This experience has positively affected our agency's perception of the university."

Project EAT

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Eden Housing, MedShare, Open Heart Kitchen

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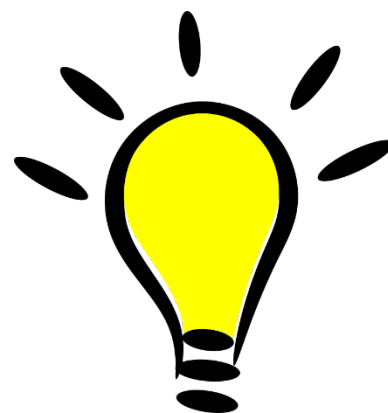Port of Oakland, Earth Day

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"Aha!"

Roots & Leaves—
Identify 2-3 of the following:

Roots– a learning experience that influenced you as a student

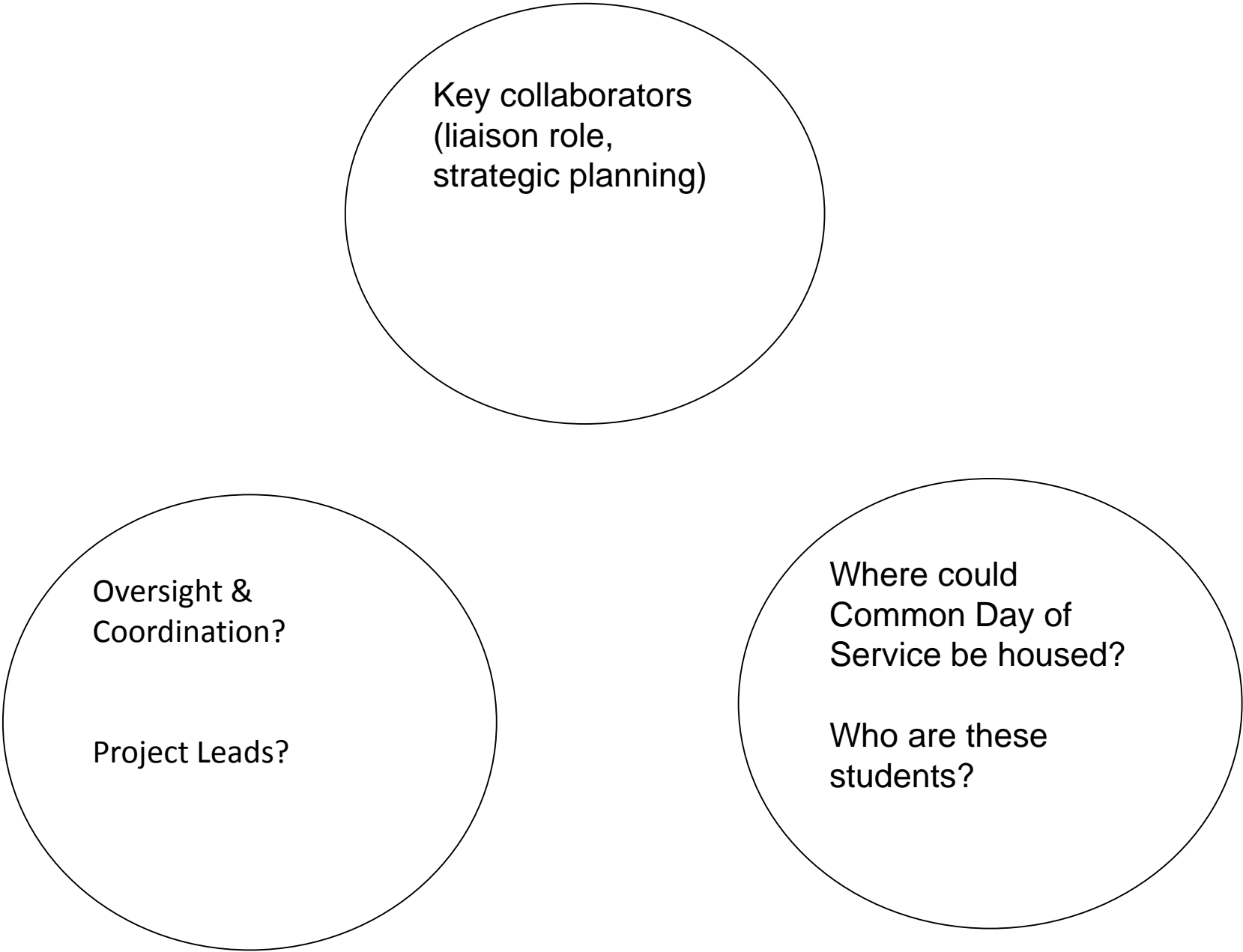*Leaves—what was the impact & what made this experience so impactful*

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Brainstorming: A Common Day of Service (handout)

Notes:

Key collaborators
(liaison role,
strategic planning)

Oversight &
Coordination?

Project Leads?

Where could
Common Day of
Service be housed?

Who are these
students?

Notes:

Key Element: Housing Entity

- A unit on campus that is the conduit to students—that houses a "community" of students

- Does not need to be the coordinating unit

> - First Year Experience
> - Student Support or Success Programs
> - Campus Housing
> - Academic Departments or Colleges

Think:

- Who has direct connection with a commonly organized group of students?

- Who has the ability to communicate regularly with these students?

- Who has the ability to run reflections with these students?

Key Element: Coordinating Entity

Potential ways to fill this role:

- Faculty on release time
- Staff allocated PT from likely over-sight units: an academic programs office, student affairs office
- Service Learning or Community Engagement Program (staffing varies widely within the CSU)
- Graduate Student/s (would need supervision)

Responsibilities:

- Plan & coordinate processes
- Collaborate with community partners
- Review projects
- Coordinate student registration
- Over-see implementation; trouble shoot cancellations, etc.
- Collaborate with Project Leads & Liaison
- Disseminate necessary resources

Key Element: Project Leads

Potential ways to fill this role:

- Academic courses (Recreation & Community Services; Communications; Sociology)
- Student assistants
- Scholarships
- Federal Work Study Students

Project Leads need:

- Training & Orientation
- Organization & Coordination (assigning projects, picking up rosters)
- Supervision

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Liaison: Between coordinating entity and faculty/staff of housing entity

Responsibilities:

• Share & explain processes

• Troubleshoot & communicate regarding issues

• Share rosters

Strategic Planning…Name Names!

• staff in previously identified departments

• your campus' community engagement or service learning program

• faculty in relevant departments

Share out...

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- Weather (outdoor projects)—have partners submit rain protocol; have a weekend point person

- Project cancellations—when planning ask partners if they accept 'drop in' registrations (not actually students dropping in, but staff adding students to a project that hold additional students as needed)

- Lost Project Leads—weekend point person

- Students behaving badly—Project Leads diffuse situations & communicate with staff

- Student Risk—waivers; let your Risk Management folks know about the initiative. (Your SL/CE Director can help!)

- Students unable to participate—alternative assignment.

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Be sure to…

- Have students sign waivers.
- Have emergency contact info on waivers.
- Have student emails for last-minute project cancels.
- Prepare a process for student project changes.
- Get site (day of service) supervisor cell phone.
- Send reminder emails to students with location, project information, special instructions, rain protocol.
- Send reminder email to partners with rosters and Project Lead.
- Have students signed in and out.
- Check with Project Leads regularly for feedback.
- Designate a place students can go to ask questions; prepare for traffic (designate an email or phone as well…).
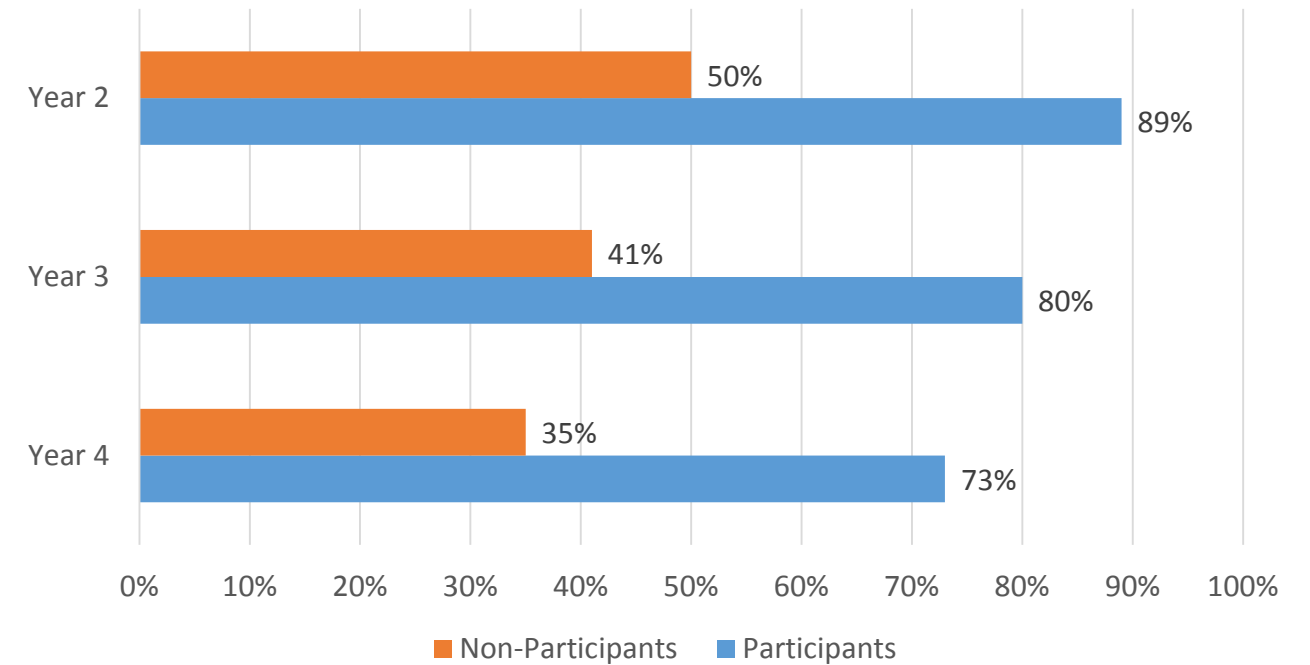- Have students reflect on the experience!
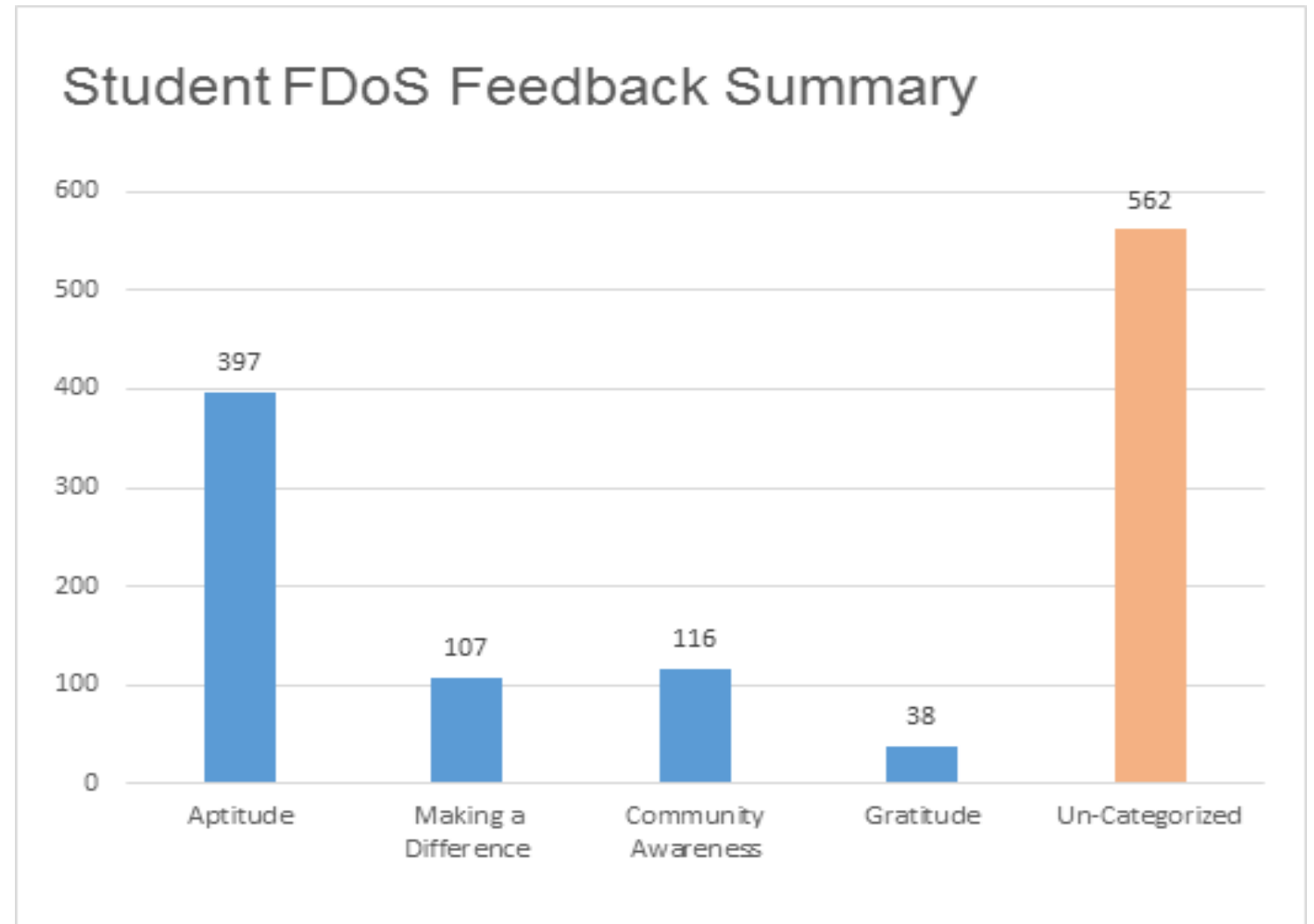
Retention

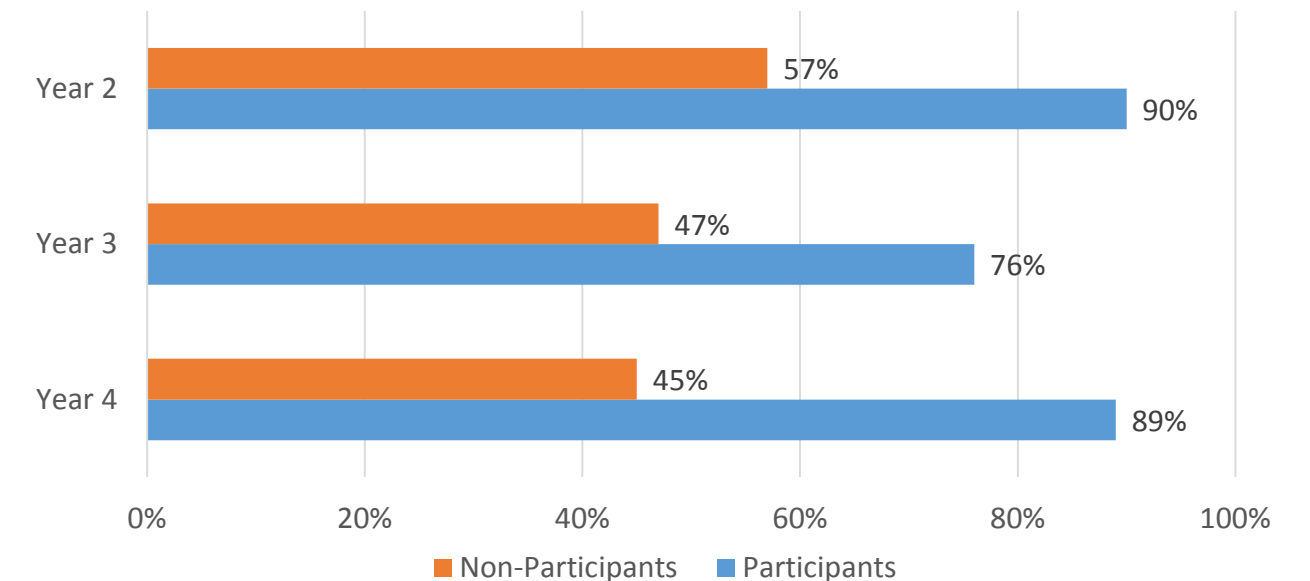Evidence of increased retention rates for participants to sophomore year and after.

➢ The fall 2012 cohort of freshmen (FDoS Spring 2013) were retained into year 2 at 89% for participants versus 50% for non-participants; 80% versus 41% into year 3; and 73% versus 35% into year 4.

➢ The fall 2013 cohort (FDoS 2014) were retained into year 2 at 90% versus 57%; into year 3 at 76% versus 47%. And, so far, the fall 2014 cohort retention into year 2 is 89% versus 45%.

2012 Freshmen Cohort Retention Rates
FDoS Spring 2013

	Non-Participants (orange)	Participants (blue)
Year 2	50%	89%
Year 3	41%	80%
Year 4	35%	73%

2013 Freshmen Cohort Retention Rates
FDoS Spring 2014

	Non-Participants (orange)	Participants (blue)
Year 2	57%	90%
Year 3	47%	76%
Year 4	45%	89%

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Within retention data, we are not analyzing other variables in these numbers that might also impact retention.

- previous community service experience

- family/cultural value of service

- the service projects (outdoor/indoor/weather/difficulty/tangible outcome)

- faculty/classroom experience

Other multiple variables that might affect retention such as advising.

Written Reflections

- Students often write these reflections within a narrative timeline--as in, "When I first heard about the assignment, I felt..."

- Narratives include such concluding statements as: "The service learning day made me think and do things that I didn't think I could do."

- Within both the written reflections and the surveys, student word choice and syntax are a telling indicator of transformation and impact. "I can" versus the "I should" or "I will." Also, many students lead into the reflections with "I never realized."

- Within student writing is a rich area for further investigation and assessment surrounding the impact of the initiative and the language surrounding self-efficacy.

Assessment in progress...

We are using survey data from this year to assist with the development of a pre and post survey.

Pre Questions

- I have participated in community service as a part of a school or organization (like clubs or Scouts) requirement.
  ☐ Yes   ☐ No

- I have independently participated in service (because I wanted to, not because I was required).   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

- **To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement**

Community service is valued in my home or local community.

1   2   3   4   5

Pre/Post Survey

- Everyone should find the time to contribute to his/her community through service.

- I am aware of the needs and problems facing our society.

- I can contribute to the solutions of community problems is my responsibility.

- I can have a positive impact on my community.

- I can help others, because I have enough resources to help myself.

- I have a good understanding of my personal strengths and weaknesses.

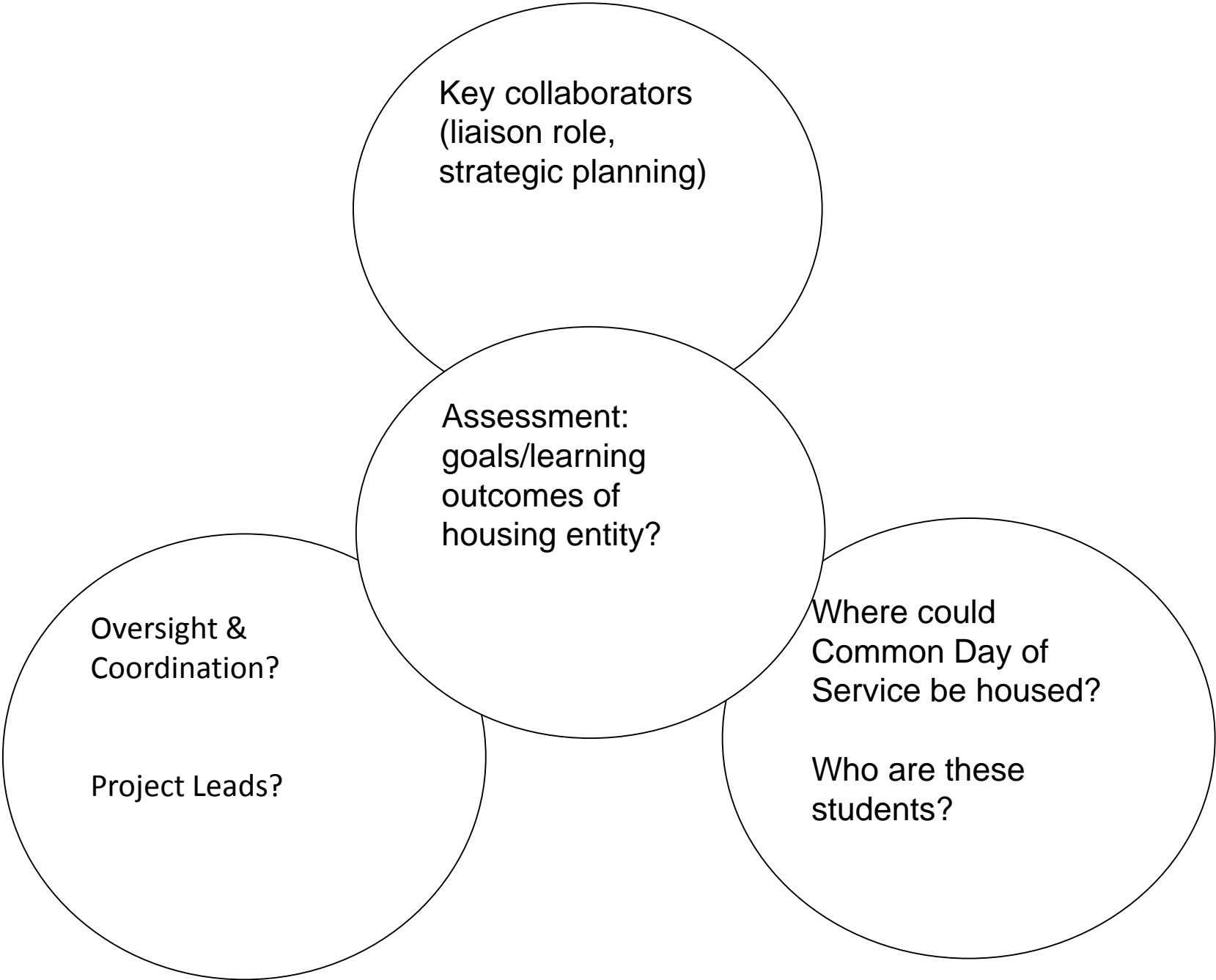- My education feels relevant to my life outside school.

- I am self-motivated.

- I am open-minded.

- I can motivate others.

- I treat others with respect.

- I work well with others.

- I communicate well with others.

- I can achieve the goals I set for myself.

- I can handle most of the challenges that come my way.

- I am good at completing tasks.

- I can solve difficult problems when I put my mind to it.

Brainstorming: A Common Day of Service (handout)

Notes:

Notes:

Key collaborators (liaison role, strategic planning)

Assessment: goals/learning outcomes of housing entity?

Oversight & Coordination?

Project Leads?

Where could Common Day of Service be housed?

Who are these students?

Next steps....

- Have a conversation with your Service Learning/Community Engagement Director! http://calstate.edu/cce/campus-contacts/community_service_directors.shtml

- (Even if they don't have capacity to house the program—they are the resource for community partnerships and student placement procedures.)

- Convene a meeting of key collaborators, including your SL/CE Director.

- Determine an appropriate pilot, with a select group of students and partners.