

# Promising Practices & Organizational Structures: Promoting Community College Student Success

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# Session Agenda

- Overview of National Survey of Community College Structures for Student Success (SCCSSS)
- Promising Practices
- Survey Results
- Discussion & Questions
- Concluding Thoughts

# The Study of Community College Structures for Student Success (SCCSSS)

- The Collaboration
  - College Board
  - Project on Academic Success, Indiana University-Bloomington
  - Center for Enrollment Research, Policy, and Practice, University of Southern California
- The Study
  - National survey of community college structures and policies that enhance student *persistence, transfer* and *completion*
  - Grew out of an ongoing study of four-year institutions (Hossler et al., 2009)
  - Focused on the multiple roles and current and emerging research on community college student outcomes

# Focal Points of Our Inquiry: Actionable Implications

Guiding Question: How do community colleges work on increasing student persistence, transfer and completion?



- Understand the role of campus policies and organizational structures supporting community college student success
- Identify promising practices, structures and policies via research, practical literature and a new survey
- Provide national comparative data on the organizational structures and policies community colleges currently employ

# Framework

## Foundational Leadership & Organizational Structures

**Supporting Institutional Leadership & Intensity of Effort** (CCSSE, 2007; Hossler, 2006; Hossler, Ziskin & Gross, 2009)

**Cultivating a Positive Institutional Climate for Diversity** (Achieving the Dream, 2005; Williams, Berger, & McClendon, 2005)

**Fostering a Culture of Evidence** (Achieving the Dream, 2005; Bailey & Alfonso, 2005; CCSSE, 2007)

## Adapted Policy Levers

**Facilitating Access to Financial Aid**  
(Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004)

**Developing Excellence & Coordination in Student Support Services**  
(Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004; Purnell & Blank, 2004)

**Providing Curricular Structure, Organization, & Focus**  
(Calcagno, Crosta, Baily & Jenkins, 2006; Matus-Grossman & Gooden, 2002; Moore, Shulock, & Offenstein, 2009)

**How Community Colleges Organize to Support Student Success**

# SCCSSS

- Web-based administration
  - 1,050 colleges surveyed
  - Response rate of 22% (ca. 236 responding institutions)
- Sample
  - Nationally representative sample (FT/PT student retention, cohort graduation, Pell, enrollment aged 25-64, etc.)
  - Median revenue (Total revenue/FTE: \$9,958; Core revenues: \$42,861,790)
  - Enrollment size (39%: 1,000-4,999; 27% : 5,000-9,999; 82% : below 20,000)
- Administrators closely involved with success initiatives
  - Identified through professional lists, web searches and referrals from the college presidents
- Questions were based on the framework

# Matrix of Promising Practices

- Tool for discussion as well as reference for research
- Identification of institutional practices and organizational structures that have potential to support community college student success
- Organized by SCCSSS framework, with two major sections:
  - 1) Foundational leadership and organizational structures
    - Includes institutional leadership, positive climate for diversity, and culture of evidence
  - 2) Policy levers
    - Includes access to financial aid, improvements to student support services, and curricular structure and focus

# Institutional Leadership & Intensity of Effort

## Clearly delineate roles and responsibilities

- Designate individual to coordinate retention/diversity efforts
- Committee to oversee retention/diversity efforts

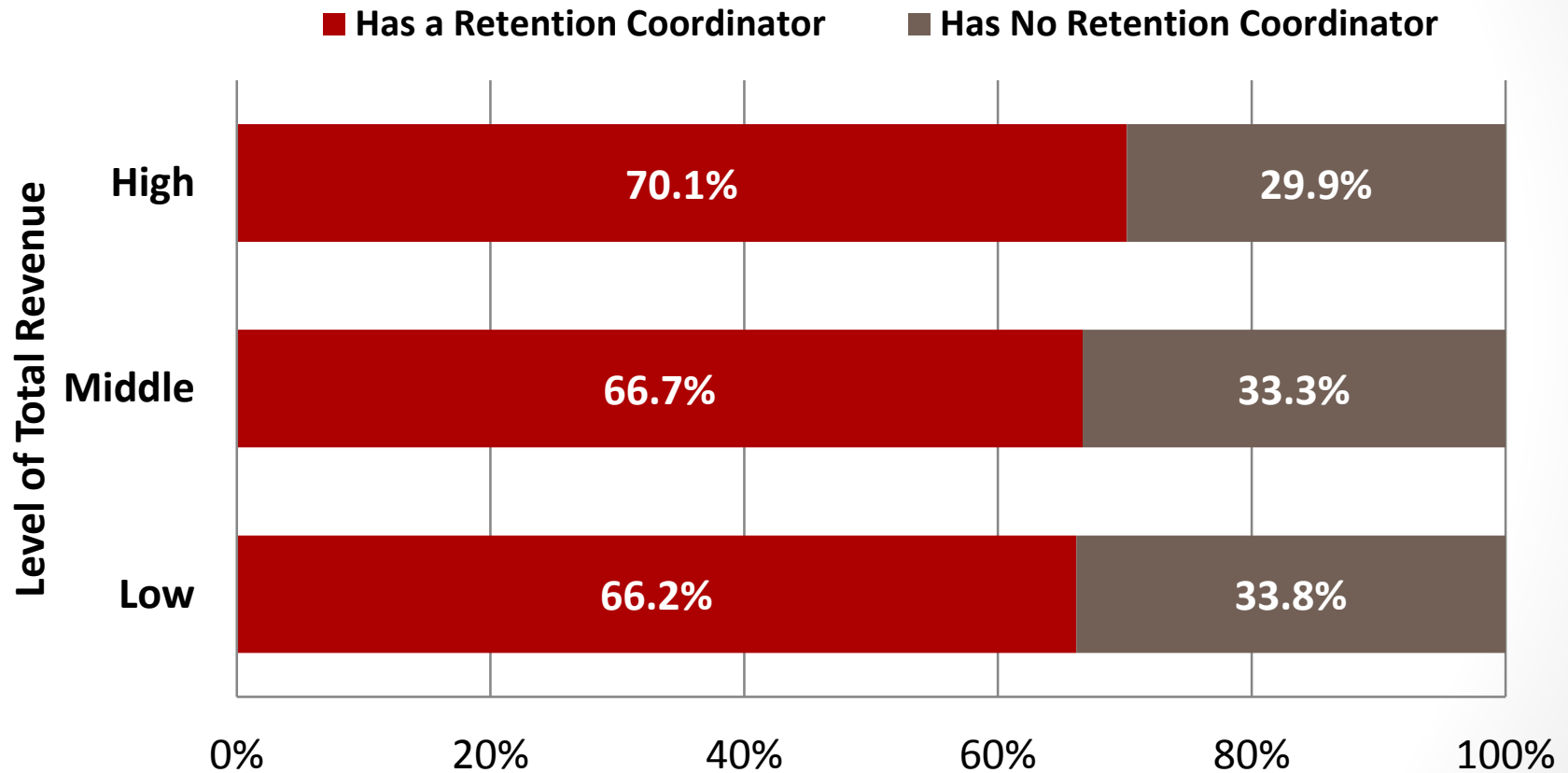
## Integrate retention/diversity efforts across campus

## Show visible institutional commitment to student success

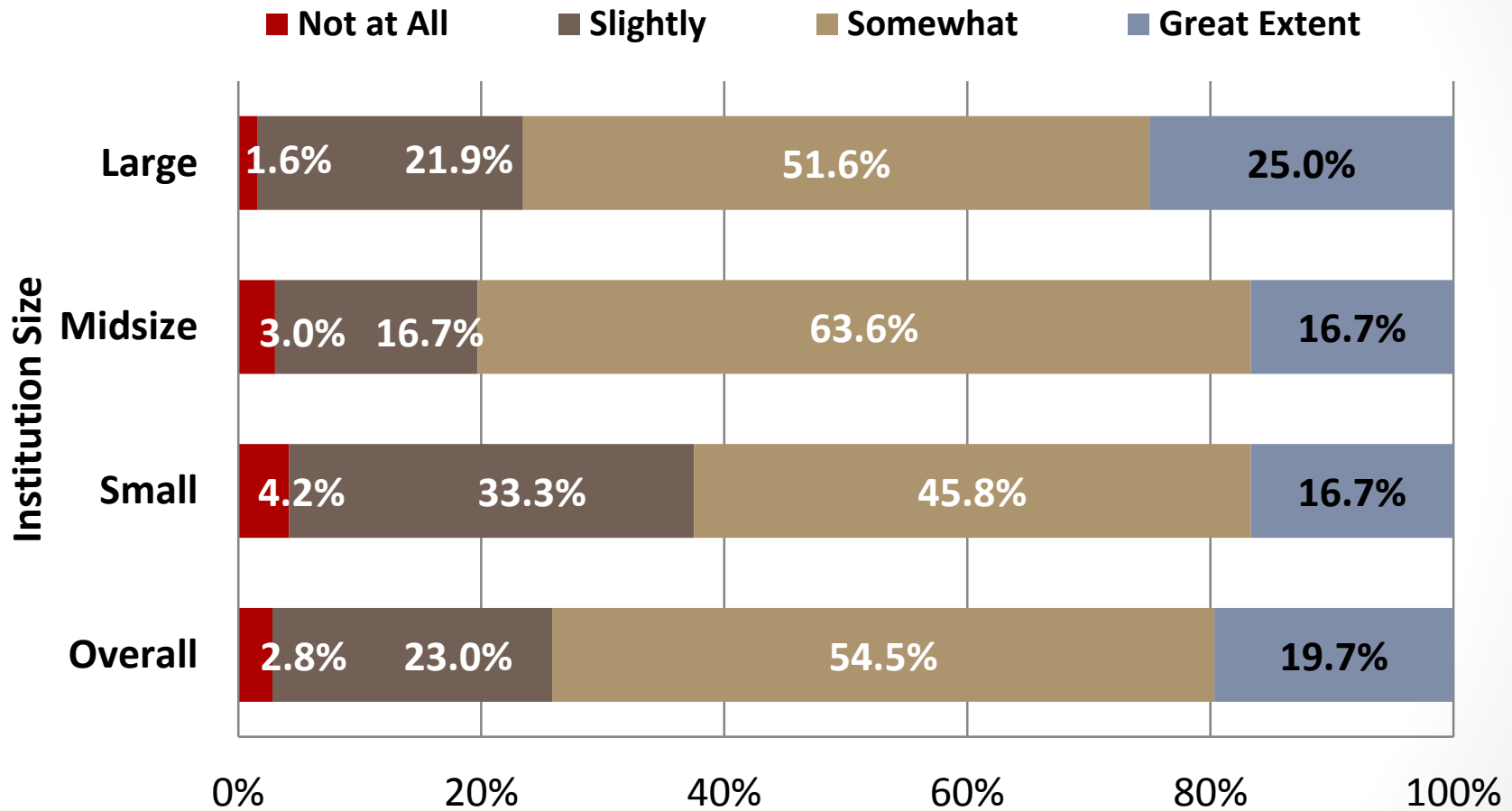
- Communicate mission and vision with focus on student success
- Formally adopt written retention/diversity plan



# Presence of Retention Coordinator by Total Revenue (per FTE)



# Extent of Coordination of Student Success Efforts by Institution Size



# Positive Climate for Diversity

## Create welcoming and nondiscriminatory environment

- Formal plan for racial and cultural diversity
- Clear antidiscrimination policies and practices
- Assessment of student perceptions of campus climate
- Training of personnel in racial and cultural diversity

## Support academic transition into community college for diverse populations

- Identify student academic needs
- Disaggregate data based on race/ethnicity, language, gender, etc.
- Use early warning systems

## Develop curriculum that incorporates diversity-related issues

# Structures for Cultivating a Positive Climate for Diversity

- **46%** had a campus committee charged with **assessing campus climate** for racial and cultural diversity
- **49%** of responding institutions indicated they had **conducted a formal assessment of campus climate** for racial and cultural diversity
- **49%** offered **faculty development programming** focused on racial and cultural diversity on campus



# Foster Culture of Evidence

## Build culture of evidence

- Foster institutional culture that discusses institutional performance regarding student persistence, learning and attainment
- Use student and institutional assessments to inform decisions on strategic priorities, resource allocation, and faculty and staff

## Systematically collect, analyze, and report data

- Collect data on student characteristics and outcomes
- Disaggregate and report data
- Analyze student progress through milestones and key enrollment patterns (Moore & Schulock, 2010)

# Access to Financial Aid

## Minimize financial barriers to student success

- Provide access to various types of aid available (grants, campus-based work-study, federal and state loans, scholarships)
- Link financial aid with other college processes like course registration

## Communicate info about financial aid

- Disseminate through multiple methods that are culturally and linguistically appropriate
- Partner with local organizations to disseminate financial aid info
- Improve financial aid counseling

# Excellence & Coordination in Student Support Services

Require orientation for all incoming students

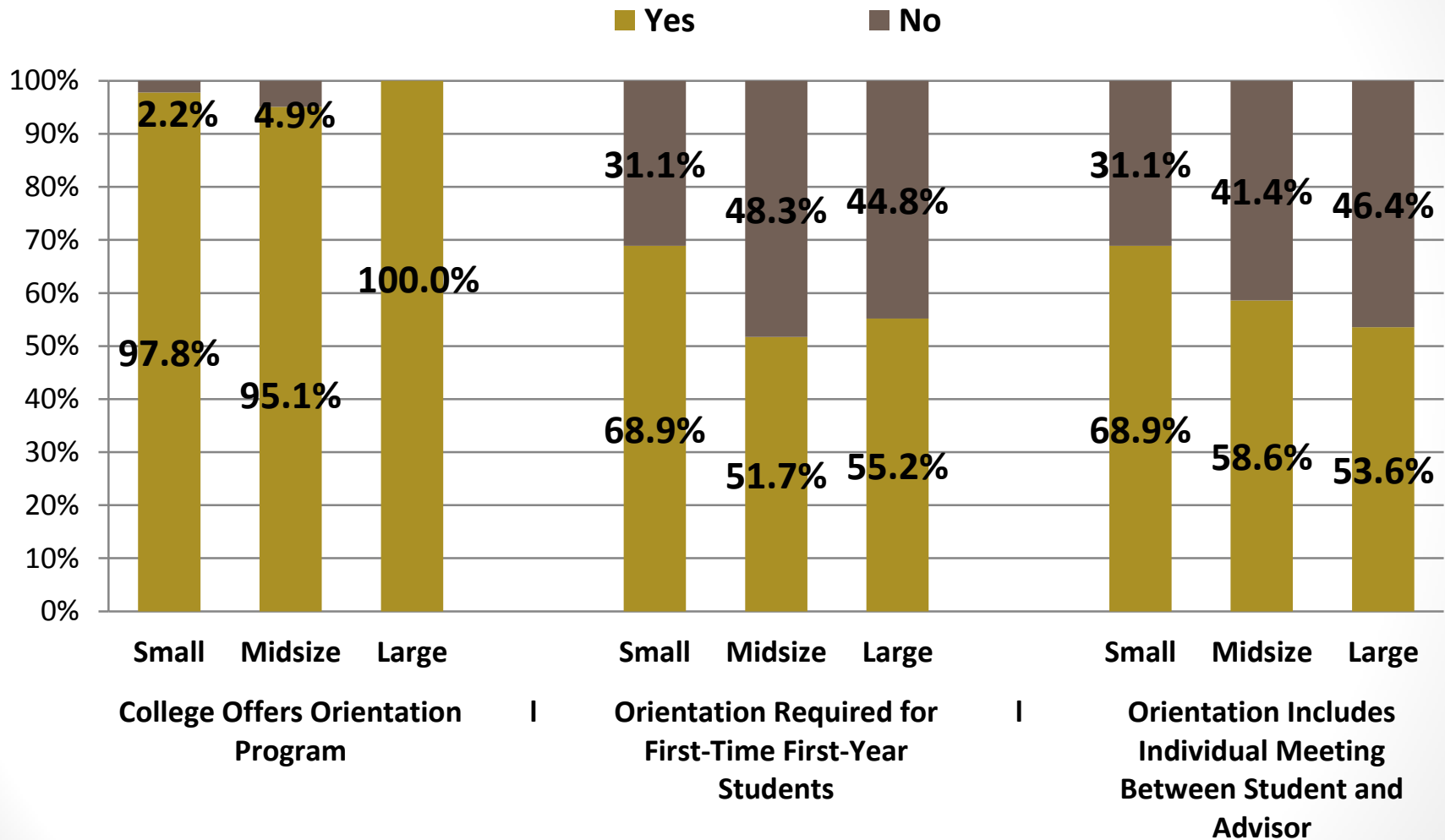
Ensure advising and counseling accessible to students

Proactively monitor students and have early warning systems to alert on excessive absences or low grades

Provide academic support through student success courses, supplemental instruction, and tutoring

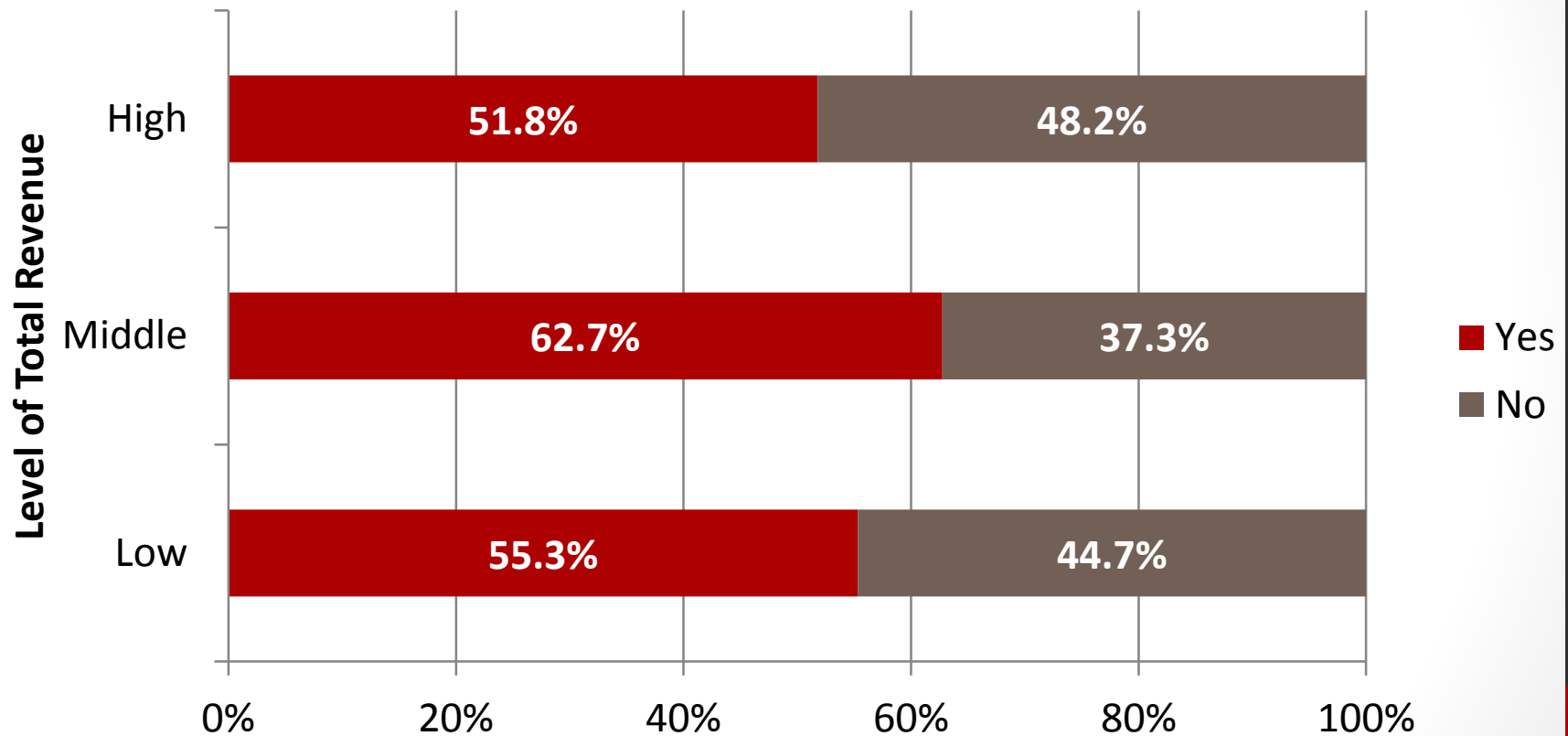
Create multiservice student support programs/one-stop centers

# Orientation Offerings by Institution Size





# Supplemental Instruction Offerings by Total Revenue



# Curricular Structures, Opportunities & Focus

Require completion of gateway courses, including first-year English composition and entry college-level mathematics

Provide quality developmental/remediation courses

Encourage credit accumulation through adequate course offerings

Encourage full-time enrollment, which promotes degree completion

Create learning communities, especially for first-year students, linking courses and creating cohorts

Offer experiential or real-world learning opportunities

# Summing Up

- Community colleges are actively organizing for student success. However, ...
  - Results reflect **variation in community colleges' structures and use of policy levers** - Differences in structures across enrollment size
  - **Resources** (e.g. FTE, funding and programming authority) devoted to the enterprise **may not address all concerns**
  - Colleges are **engaged unevenly** in cultivating a **positive climate for diversity**
  - Many community colleges are **engaging with data systematically** and are **cultivating a culture of evidence** in this way

## Implications for Institutions

- Report documents the prevalence of organizational structures and promising practices in community colleges
  - Matrix is a reference resource and tool for campus discussion
  - Survey provides comparative data on peers

# Audience Questions and Discussion





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**SUPPLEMENTAL SLIDES**

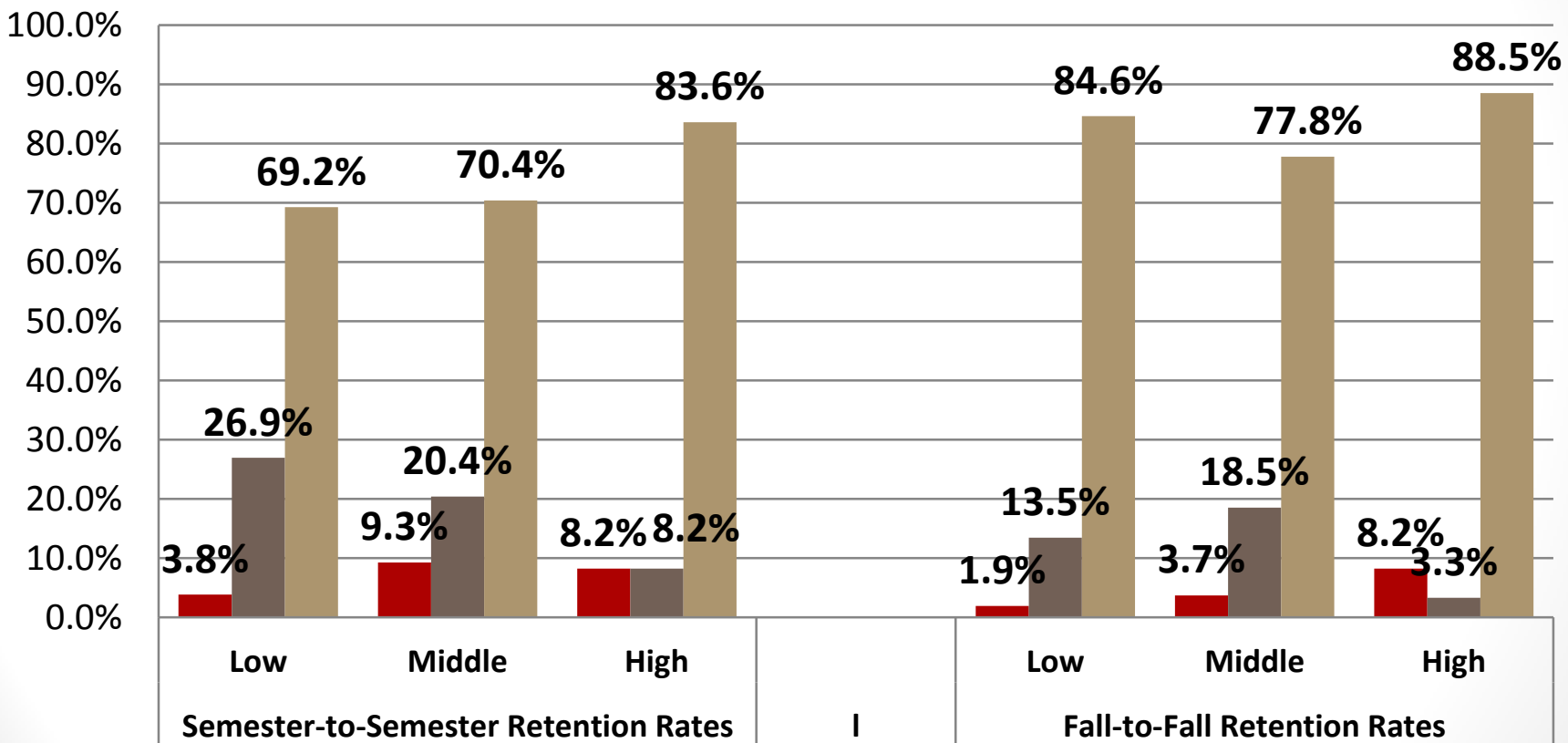
# Campus-wide Discussions: Fostering a Culture of Evidence

- Respondents described **campus discussions** regarding specific student success outcomes
  - *Retention and Degree or Certificate Completion*: **83%** said their **administration** prompted campus discussions **several times or more** per year
  - *Transfer*: **63%** reported these campus discussions occurring **several times or more** per year
- **52%** of respondents characterized these campus discussions as **including data “to a great extent”**



# Analysis of Student Retention Outcome Data, by Total Revenue

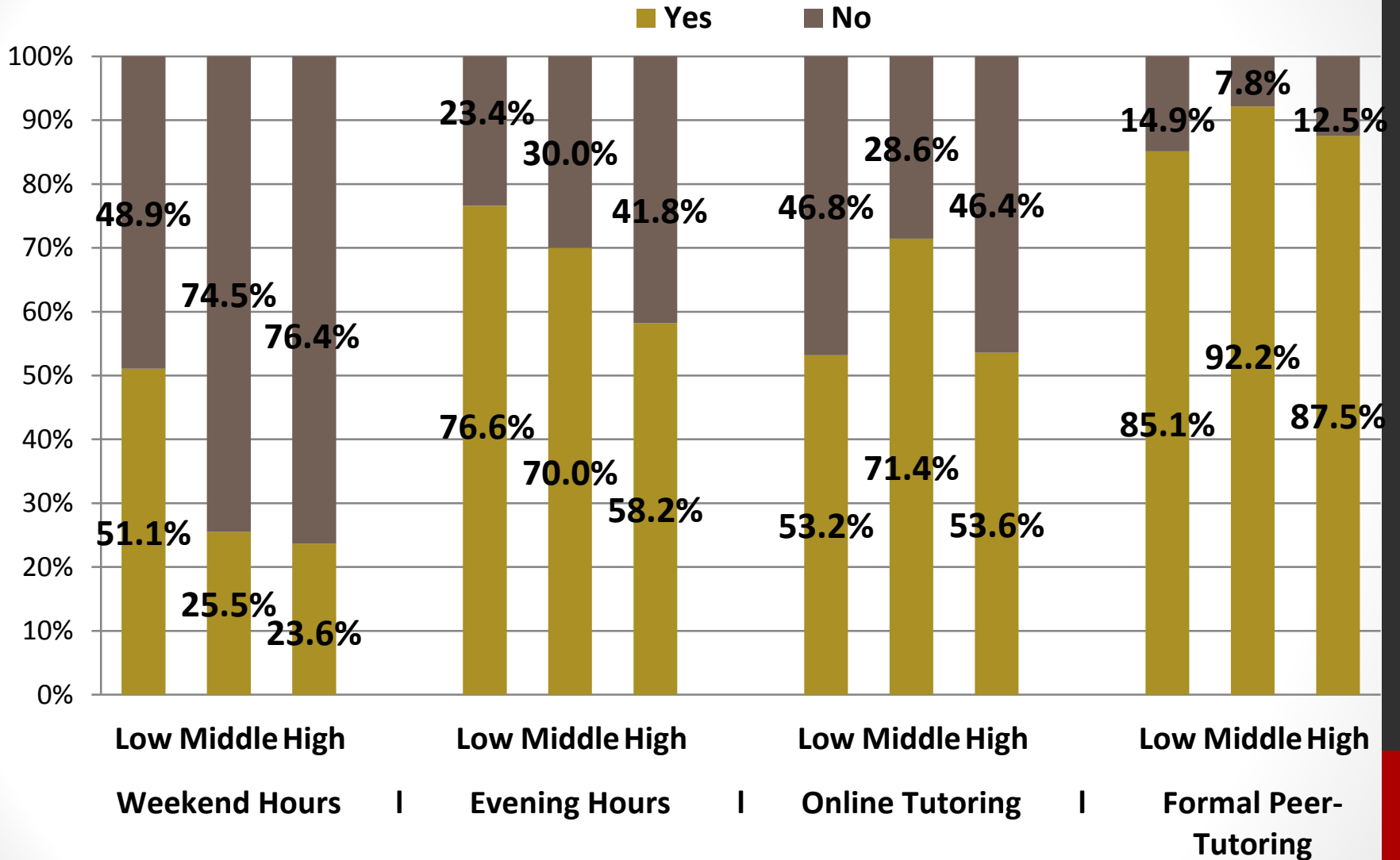
■ Less than Once Every Five Years  
 ■ Once Every Two to Five Years  
 ■ Once a Year or More



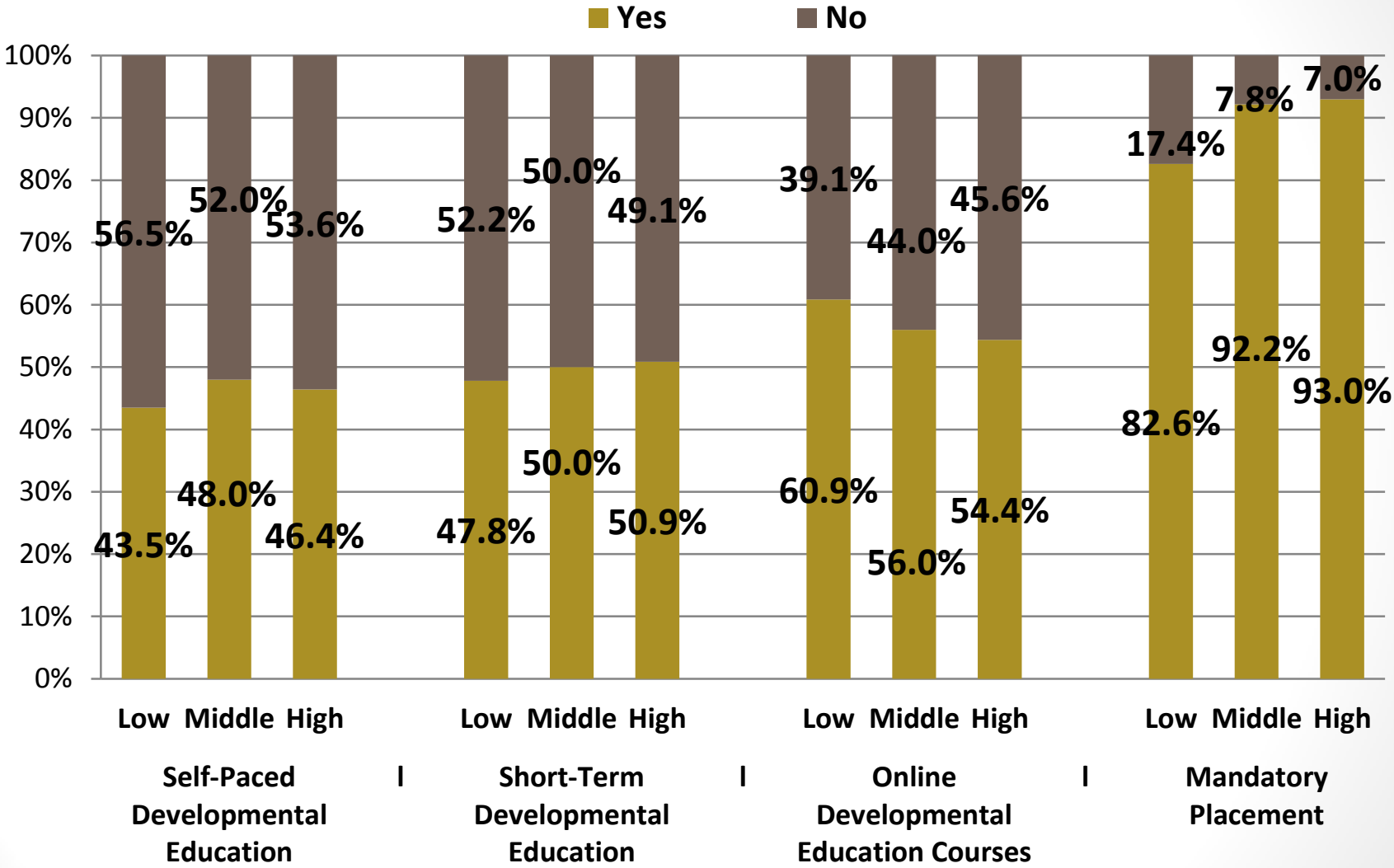
# Developing Excellence and Coordination in Student Support Services: Academic Advising

- Advising Structure
  - **21%** require first-year students to **meet with an academic advisor** at least once per term
  - **36%** reported having **advisors who specialized in transfer**
- Advising Roles
  - **38%** estimate that a **majority of their first-year students** were **advised by faculty advisors**
  - **42%** estimated that a **majority of first-year students** were **advised by professional advisors/counselors**

# Tutoring Services by Total Revenue



# Developmental Education Services by Institutional Level of Total Revenue



# Practices for Cultural and Racial Diversity, by Institution Size

