

Meaningful Undergraduate Experiences and How They Matter Now For Daily Life

Jessie L. Moore, CJ Fleming, and Tim Peeples
Elon University



www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org

What you can expect...

- Overview of a national survey of recent college graduates
- Snapshots on
 - Work-integrated learning / internships
 - Mentoring
- Opportunities to
 - Consider interplay between high-impact educational practices (HIPs), key practices for engaged learning, and career readiness
 - Reflect on implications of the survey trends for your institutional context

Meaningful Undergraduate Experiences and How They Matter Now

- Online survey of U.S. residents who were 18-34 years old and graduates of two- or four-year higher education institutions (n=956)
- Conducted April 18-19, 2024
- Core questions
 - Participation in High-Impact Educational Practices
 - Experiences with Key Practices for Fostering Engaged Learning
 - Mentoring Relationships
 - Skills Used in Day-to-Day Life and Whether They Were Developed in College
- 2024 extra question set: Work-Integrated Learning

- My college experience prepared me well for the work I have done since graduating. 46% agree or strongly agree
- Overall, how would you rate your college experience?
80% somewhat or very rewarding
- Considering both the costs and benefits of your college experience, would you say attending college was "worth it" for you personally? 83% probably or definitely yes

High-Impact Educational Practices

	Yes	No
Capstone project or experience	41.7% (397)	58.3% (554)
ePortfolio	14.2% (135)	85.8% (816)
Internship	54.7% (520)	45.3% (431)
Service-learning or community-engaged learning course	27.3% (260)	72.7% (691)
Study away experience	13.9% (132)	86.1% (819)
Undergraduate research project	42.7% (406)	57.3% (545)

High-Impact Practices and Preparation for Work

Recent graduates who participated in either of the following HIPs were more likely to agree or strongly agree that their college experience prepared them well for the work they have done since graduating.

- Internships
- Service-learning or community-engaged learning





High-Impact Practices and College Experience

Recent graduates who participated in any of the following HIPs were more likely to identify their college experience as somewhat or very rewarding.

- Internships
- Service-learning or community-engaged learning
- Study away
- Undergraduate Research

Was College “Worth It”?

Recent graduates who participated in any of the following HIPs were more likely to consider attending college “worth it,” considering both the costs and benefits of their college experience.

- Internships
- Study away
- Undergraduate research



Reflective Moment

- Which of these practices does your campus support?
- Why do these practices...
 - Make graduates feel prepared for work?
 - Make college feel rewarding?
 - Make college “worth it”?

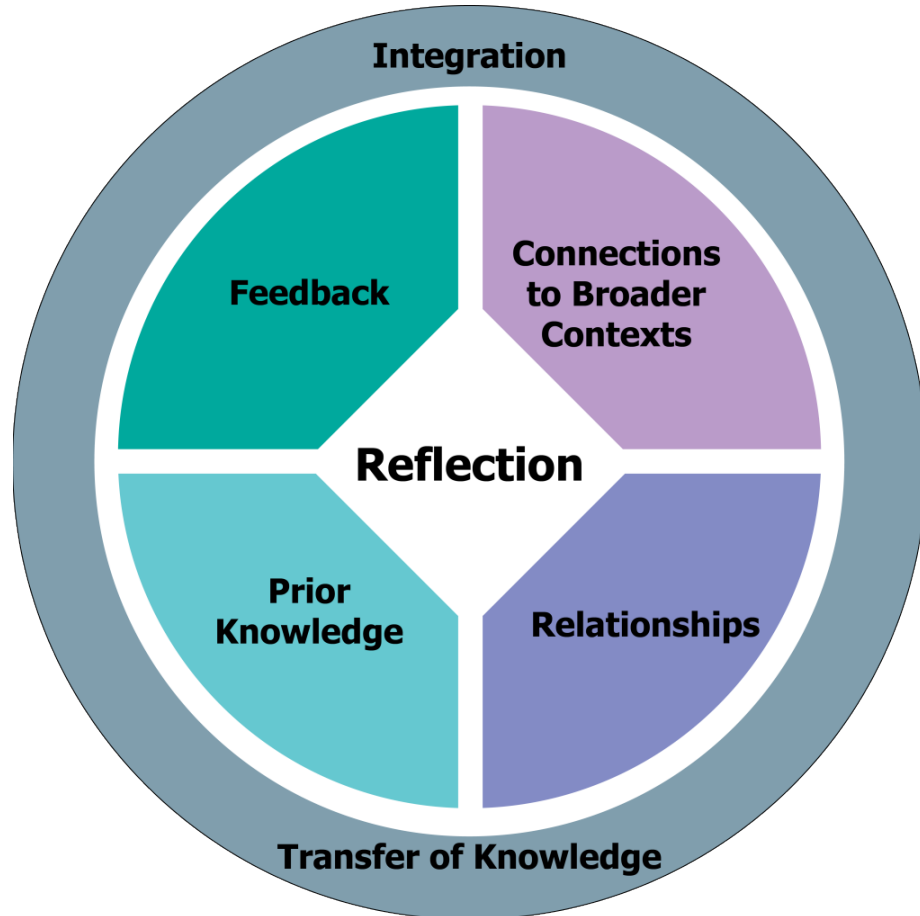
Internships

Service-learning or
community-engaged learning

Study away

Undergraduate Research

6 Key Practices for Fostering Engaged Learning



- Acknowledging and building on students' prior knowledge and experiences
- Facilitating relationships
- Offering feedback
- Framing connections to broader contexts
- Fostering reflection on learning and self
- Promoting integration and transfer of knowledge and skills

(Moore, 2023)

Key Practices for Fostering Engaged Learning

	Never	Once	Multiple Times
Faculty who asked you to draw on <i>prior experiences</i> when you learned new things	11.8% (113)	21.3% (204)	66.8% (639)
Meaningful <i>relationships</i> with <i>faculty or staff</i>	20.7% (198)	31.5% (457)	47.8% (457)
Meaningful <i>relationships</i> with <i>other students</i>	10.8% (103)	16.2% (155)	73.0% (698)

Key Practices for Fostering Engaged Learning

	Never	Once	Multiple Times
<i>Feedback from faculty/staff</i> on a submitted, <i>final project</i>	4.8% (46)	14.4% (138)	80.8% (772)
<i>Feedback from faculty/staff</i> to guide your work <i>before you submitted a final version</i>	7.8% (75)	21.8% (208)	70.4% (673)
<i>Feedback from peers</i> to guide your work before you submitted a final version	14.7% (141)	22.1% (211)	63.2% (604)

Key Practices for Fostering Engaged Learning

	Never	Once	Multiple Times
Practice with <i>real-world applications</i> of what you were learning	11.7% (112)	20.7% (198)	67.6% (646)
Opportunities to <i>reflect</i> on how the <i>different parts of your college experience fit together</i>	20.9% (200)	24.6% (235)	54.5% (521)
Opportunities to <i>reflect</i> on how what you were learning would <i>apply to your future</i>	12.1% (116)	20.3% (194)	67.6% (646)

Multiple Experiences with Key Practice...	Correlates with Skills Recent Graduates Indicate They Developed in College
<p>Faculty who asked you to draw on prior experiences when you learned new things</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying your existing skills to a new problem • Assessing your strengths and weaknesses • Giving feedback to others • Managing time • Meeting deadlines • Networking to build relationships with others • Persisting in the face of setbacks • Researching and understanding the answers to complex problems • Responding to needs based upon an understanding of situational context • Using and/or interpreting data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% Agree or Strongly Agree that college prepared them for work • 84% identify their college experience as somewhat or very rewarding • 86% identify college as probably or definitely “worth it” 	

Multiple Experiences with Key Practice...	Correlates with Skills Recent Graduates Indicate They Developed in College
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 51% Agree or Strongly Agree that college prepared them for work • 87% identify their college experience as somewhat or very rewarding • 86% identify college as probably or definitely “worth it” • very rewarding • 91% identify college as probably or definitely “worth it” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking persuasively • Using and/or interpreting data
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying your existing skills to a new problem • Assessing your strengths and weaknesses • Connecting with people from different cultural backgrounds • Making decisions on behalf of a team or organization • Making ethical choices • Networking to build relationships with others • Persisting in the face of setbacks • Researching and understanding the answers to complex problems • Responding to needs based upon an understanding of situational context • Working with a team to accomplish goals • Using technology effectively
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving feedback to others • Meeting deadlines

Multiple Experiences with Key Practice...	Correlates with Skills Recent Graduates Indicate They Developed in College
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 50% Agree or Strongly Agree that college prepared them for work• 84% identify their college experience as somewhat or very rewarding• 86% identify college as probably or definitely “worth it” <p>experience as somewhat or very rewarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 85% identify college as probably or definitely “worth it”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Connecting with people from different cultural backgrounds• Meeting deadlines
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessing your strengths and weaknesses• Giving feedback to others• Making ethical choices• Networking to build relationships with others• Persisting in the face of setbacks• Researching and understanding the answers to complex problems• Responding to needs based upon an understanding of situational context
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making decisions on behalf of a team or organization• Speaking persuasively• Using and/or interpreting data• Using technology effectively• Working with a team to accomplish goals• Writing effectively

Multiple Experiences with Key Practice...	Correlates with Skills Recent Graduates Indicate They Developed in College
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 50% Agree or Strongly Agree that college prepared them for work• 85% identify their college experience as somewhat or very rewarding• 88% identify college as probably or definitely “worth it”• 87% identify their college experience as somewhat or very rewarding• 86% identify college as probably or definitely “worth it”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Writing effectively
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessing your strengths and weaknesses• Giving feedback to others• Making decisions on behalf of a team or organization• Making ethical choices• Networking to build relationships with others• Persisting in the face of setbacks• Researching and understanding the answers to complex problems
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responding to needs based upon an understanding of situational context• Speaking persuasively• Using and/or interpreting data• Using technology effectively• Working with a team to accomplish goals
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applying your existing skills to a new problem• Connecting with people from different cultural backgrounds

Multiple Experiences with Key Practice...	Correlates with Skills Recent Graduates Indicate They Developed in College
<p>Practice with <i>real-world applications</i> of what you were learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 54% Agree or Strongly Agree that college prepared them for work • 86% identify their college experience as somewhat or very rewarding • 88% identify college as probably or definitely “worth it” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying your existing skills to a new problem • Assessing your strengths and weaknesses • Giving feedback to others • Making decisions on behalf of a team or organization • Making ethical choices • Networking to build relationships with others • Persisting in the face of setbacks • Researching and understanding the answers to complex problems • Responding to needs based upon an understanding of situational context • Speaking persuasively • Using and/or interpreting data • Using technology effectively • Working with a team to accomplish goals

Multiple Experiences with Key Practice...

Opportunities to **reflect** on how the **different parts of your college experience fit together**

- 54% Agree or Strongly Agree that college prepared them for work
- 89% identify their college experience as somewhat or very rewarding
- 88% identify college as probably or definitely “worth it”

Correlates with Skills Recent Graduates Indicate They Developed in College

- Applying your existing skills to a new problem
- Assessing your strengths and weaknesses
- Connecting with people from different cultural backgrounds
- Giving feedback to others
- Making decisions on behalf of a team or organization
- Making ethical choices
- Managing time
- Networking to build relationships with others
- Persisting in the face of setbacks
- Researching and understanding the answers to complex problems
- Responding to needs based upon an understanding of situational context
- Speaking persuasively
- Using and/or interpreting data
- Using technology effectively
- Working with a team to accomplish goals
- Writing effectively

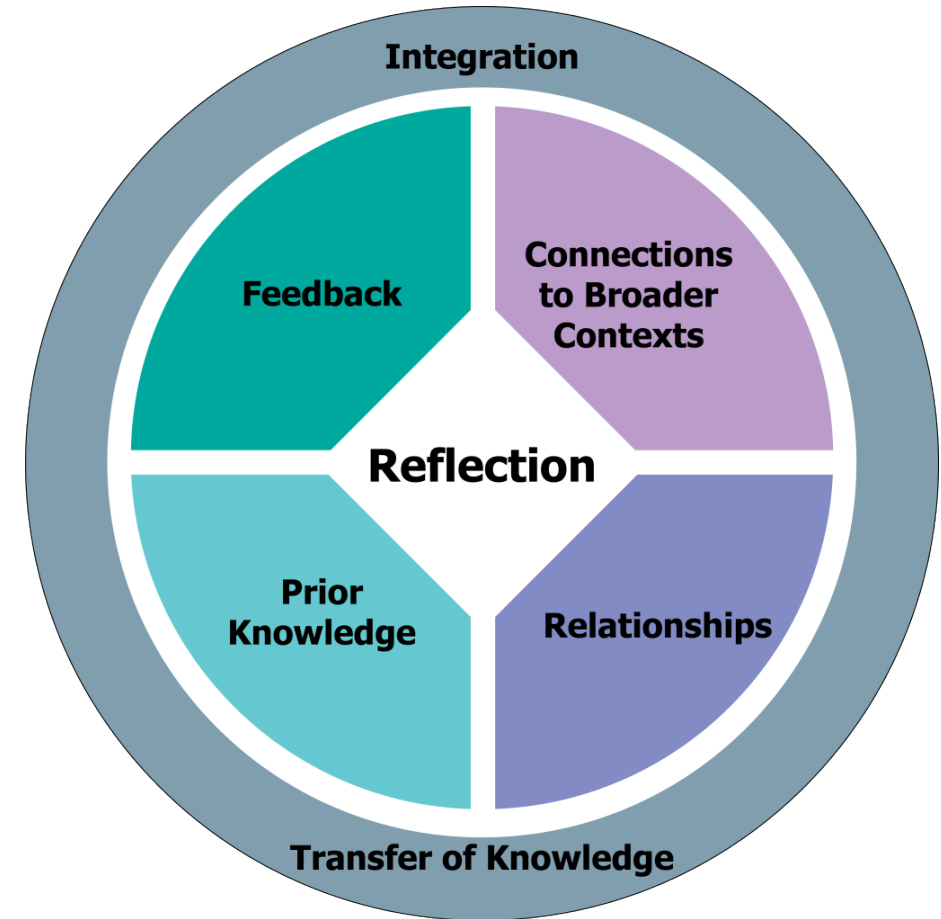
Multiple Experiences with Key Practice...	Correlates with Skills Recent Graduates Indicate They Developed in College
<p>Opportunities to reflect on how what you were learning would apply to your future</p> <p>(Knowledge transfer)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55% Agree or Strongly Agree that college prepared them for work • 86% identify their college experience as somewhat or very rewarding • 88% identify college as probably or definitely “worth it” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying your existing skills to a new problem • Assessing your strengths and weaknesses • Connecting with people from different cultural backgrounds • Giving feedback to others • Making decisions on behalf of a team or organization • Making ethical choices • Managing time • Meeting deadlines • Networking to build relationships with others • Persisting in the face of setbacks • Researching and understanding the answers to complex problems • Responding to needs based upon an understanding of situational context • Speaking persuasively • Using and/or interpreting data • Using technology effectively • Working with a team to accomplish goals • Writing effectively

Reflective Moment

If multiple experiences with the key practices for fostering engaged learning...

- Make graduates feel prepared for work
- Make college feel rewarding
- Make college “worth it”

Where does/can your campus intentionally integrate the key practices into student experiences?



(Moore, 2023)

Internships

- If respondents indicated they had participated in an internship, survey logic displayed up to seven questions about:
 - Internship compensation
 - Internship experiences
 - Internship mode
 - Internship and identity
 - Internship satisfaction

Internship Overview

54% of respondents did an internship

Of those who did:

- 56% of interns were paid, 67% received academic credit
- 92% were in person
- Rates of participation consistent across groups (athletes, honors, Greek life; 66%)

Internship overview

Of those who did not,
47% wanted to

Reasons for not:

- Internship site too far (18.7%)
- Cost too high (19.7%)
- Internship unpaid or underpaid (45.8%)
- Could not find one (43.8%)
- Applied but did not get one (40.9%)
- Did not fit into schedule (31%)

Internships and Skills Developed in College

Skill	Internship (n=513)	No Internship (n=428)	Significance
Making decisions on behalf of a team or organization	57.7%	42.3%	$X^2 (1, N = 941) = 5.024, p < .05$
Making ethical choices	58.1%	41.9%	$X^2 (1, N = 941) = 6.634, p < .01$
Networking to build relationships with others	57.9%	42.1%	$X^2 (1, N = 941) = 10.516, p < .001$
Speaking persuasively	57.9%	42.1%	$X^2 (1, N = 941) = 7.599, p < .01$
Using technology effectively	56.8%	43.2%	$X^2 (1, N = 941) = 5.276, p < .05$

Internships and the Value of College

Variable	Did Internship (<i>N</i> = 510)		No Internship (<i>N</i> = 423)		<i>t</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
My college experience prepared me well for the work I have done since graduating.	2.80	1.50	3.25	1.63	4.41***
Considering both the costs and benefits of your college experience, would you say attending college was "worth it" for you personally?	1.63	.80	1.89	.90	4.76***
Meaningful relationships with faculty or staff	2.34	.77	2.20	.79	-2.66*
Meaningful relationships with other students	2.71	.60	2.52	.74	-4.24***
Practice with real- world applications of what you were learning	2.65	.61	2.46	.77	-4.24***

Correlation between Specific Internship Experiences and Internship Satisfaction

I developed skills and competencies that will benefit me in my future career	I expanded my professional network	My internship helped me to clarify my career path	My internship allowed me to experience my academic work in the real world	My supervisor supported my growth as a professional	I felt supported by my supervisor as a person
.61***	.52***	.45***	.42***	.64***	.63***

Reflective Moment

- What does this data prompt you to ask about **student participation** in internships on your own campus?
- What are the **strengths and challenges** associated with participation in internships on your campus?

CEL Open Access Resources on Internships

Elon Statement on
WIL

- <https://www.centerforengagedlearning.org/publications/elon-statements/elon-statement-on-work-integrated-learning/>

WIL resource page

- <https://www.centerforengagedlearning.org/resources/work-integrated-learning/>

Internship resource
page

- <https://www.centerforengagedlearning.org/resources/internships/>

Blog series

- <https://www.centerforengagedlearning.org/category/wil/>

Mentoring Relationships Overview

- **Core question:** What do we know about mentoring relationships, and their relationship to development and preparedness?
- **Definition:** Mentoring relationships promote learning and development, evolve over time, become more mutually beneficial, and are individualized, attending to one's strengths, needs, and identities.



Mentoring Relationship Findings

Based on the definition, how many mentors did you have in college?

27.3%	2 or more
42.6%	1
30.1%	0

Mentoring Relationship Findings

Who were your mentors?

Faculty/professors	79%
Peers	33%
Staff	29%
Alumni	14%
Family	12%
Community	10%

Mentoring Relationship Development

How were these relationships developed?

59%	Informally over time
40%	I sought out my mentors
31%	Mentor was assigned to me

Mentoring Relationship Impact

Mentoring Relationship Impact

College prepared me for work

Strongly agree/agree
46%

2 or more mentors
63%

Mentoring Relationship Impact

College prepared me for work	Strongly agree/agree 46%	2 or more mentors 63%
Satisfaction w/college experience	Very/somewhat rewarding 80%	2 or more mentors 92%

Mentoring Relationship Impact

College prepared me for work	Strongly agree/agree 46%	2 or more mentors 63%
Satisfaction w/college experience	Very/somewhat rewarding 80%	2 or more mentors 92%
College was worth it	Definitely/probably yes 83%	2 or more mentors 92%

Mentoring Relationship Impact

Ranking of skills that are very important to day-to-day life

Managing time

Meeting deadlines

Persisting in the face of setbacks

Using technology effectively

Working with a team to accomplish goals

Using/interpreting data

Responding to needs based on understanding situational context

Writing effectively

Making ethical choices

Researching and understanding answers to complex questions

Mentoring Relationship Impact

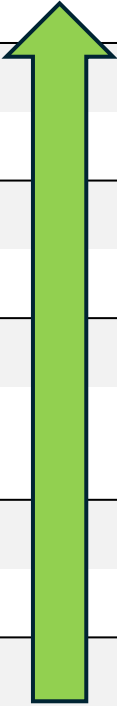
Ranking of skills that are very important to day-to-day life

	Developed in college
Managing time	81%
Meeting deadlines	84%
Persisting in the face of setbacks	71%
Using technology effectively	73%
Working with a team to accomplish goals	78%
Using/interpreting data	82%
Responding to needs based on understanding situational context	73%
Writing effectively	82%
Making ethical choices	58%
Researching and understanding answers to complex questions	84%

Mentoring Relationship Impact

Ranking of skills that are very important to day-to-day life

	Developed in college	Dev. in college + 2 or more mentors
Managing time	81%	83%
Meeting deadlines	84%	86%
Persisting in the face of setbacks	71%	73%
Using technology effectively	73%	78%
Working with a team to accomplish goals	78%	83%
Using/interpreting data	82%	86%
Responding to needs based on understanding situational context	73%	81%
Writing effectively	82%	86%
Making ethical choices	58%	65%
Researching and understanding answers to complex questions	84%	90%



Mentoring Relationships:

Most meaningful attributes

Faculty			
Academic development	1		
Cultural development			
Purpose	3		
Social connections			
Life after college	2		
Emotional support			
Identity development			

Mentoring Relationships:

Most meaningful attributes

	Faculty	Peers	
Academic development	1	2	
Cultural development			
Purpose	3	3	
Social connections		1	
Life after college	2		
Emotional support			
Identity development			

Mentoring Relationships:

Most meaningful attributes

	Faculty	Peers	Staff	
Academic development	1	2	1	
Cultural development				
Purpose	3	3	3	
Social connections		1		
Life after college	2		2	
Emotional support				
Identity development				

Mentoring Relationships:

Most meaningful attributes

	Faculty	Peers	Staff	Alumni
Academic development	1	2	1	
Cultural development				
Purpose	3	3	3	3
Social connections		1		2
Life after college	2		2	1
Emotional support				
Identity development				

Mentoring Relationships:

Most meaningful attributes

	Faculty	Peers	Staff	Alumni	Family
Academic development	1	2	1		
Cultural development					
Purpose	3	3	3	3	3
Social connections		1		2	3
Life after college	2		2	1	2
Emotional support					1
Identity development					

Mentoring Relationships:

Most meaningful attributes

	Faculty	Peers	Staff	Alumni	Family	Community
Academic development	1	2	1			
Cultural development						
Purpose	3	3	3	3	3	
Social connections		1		2	3	1
Life after college	2		2	1	2	2
Emotional support					1	
Identity development						3

Mentoring Relationships: Most meaningful Attributes

A Venn diagram with two overlapping circles. The left circle encompasses the 'Faculty', 'Peers', and 'Staff' columns. The right circle encompasses the 'Alumni', 'Family', and 'Community' columns. The intersection of the two circles covers the 'Purpose', 'Social connections', and 'Life after college' rows.

	Faculty	Peers	Staff	Alumni	Family	Community
Academic development	1	2	1			
Cultural development						
Purpose	3	3	3	3	3	
Social connections		1		2	3	1
Life after college	2		2	1	2	2
Emotional support					1	
Identity development						3

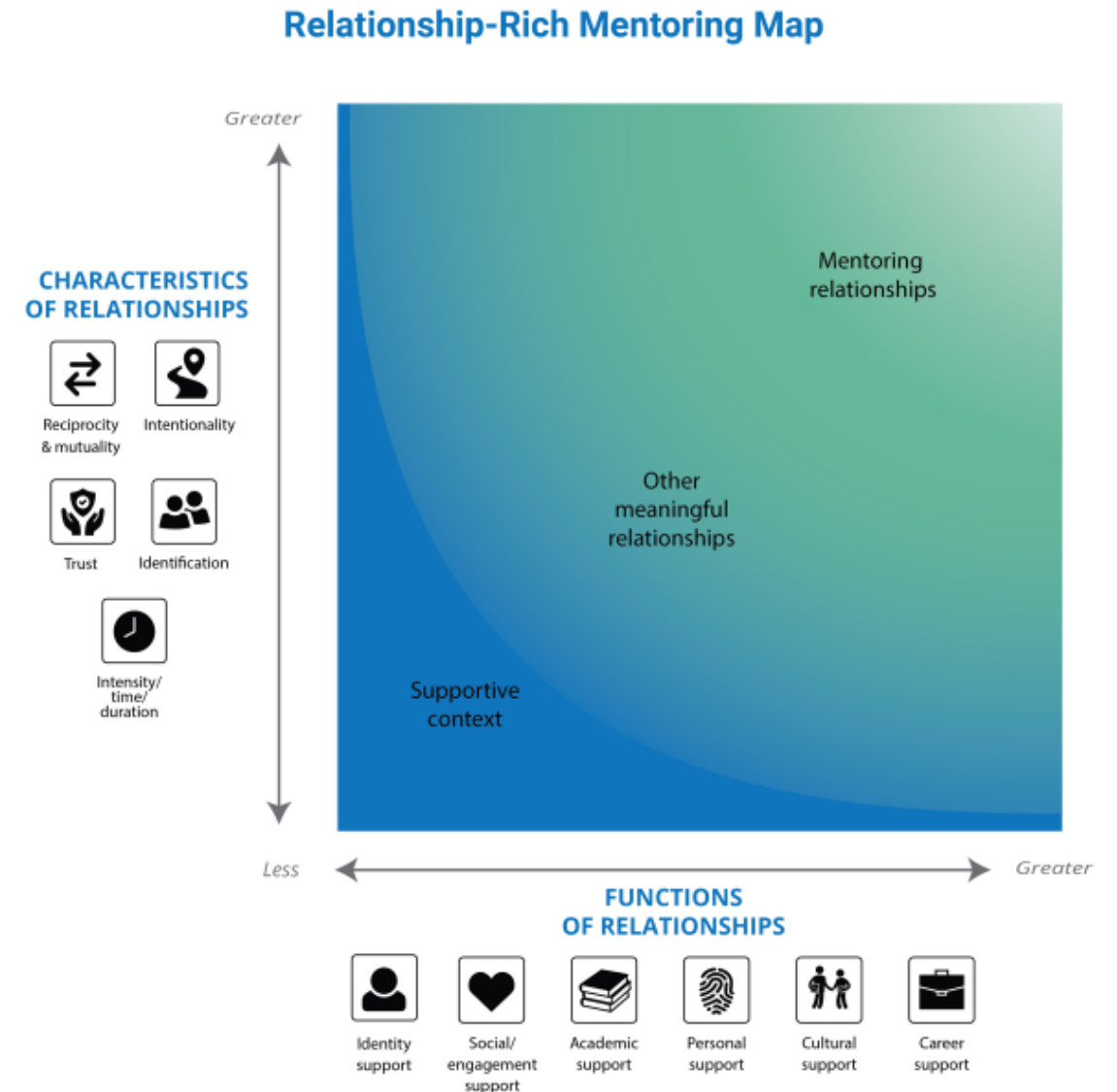
Mentoring Relationship Development

How well prepared did you feel to develop mentoring relationships?

21%	Not well
25%	Slightly well
29%	Moderately well
17%	Very well
8%	Extremely well

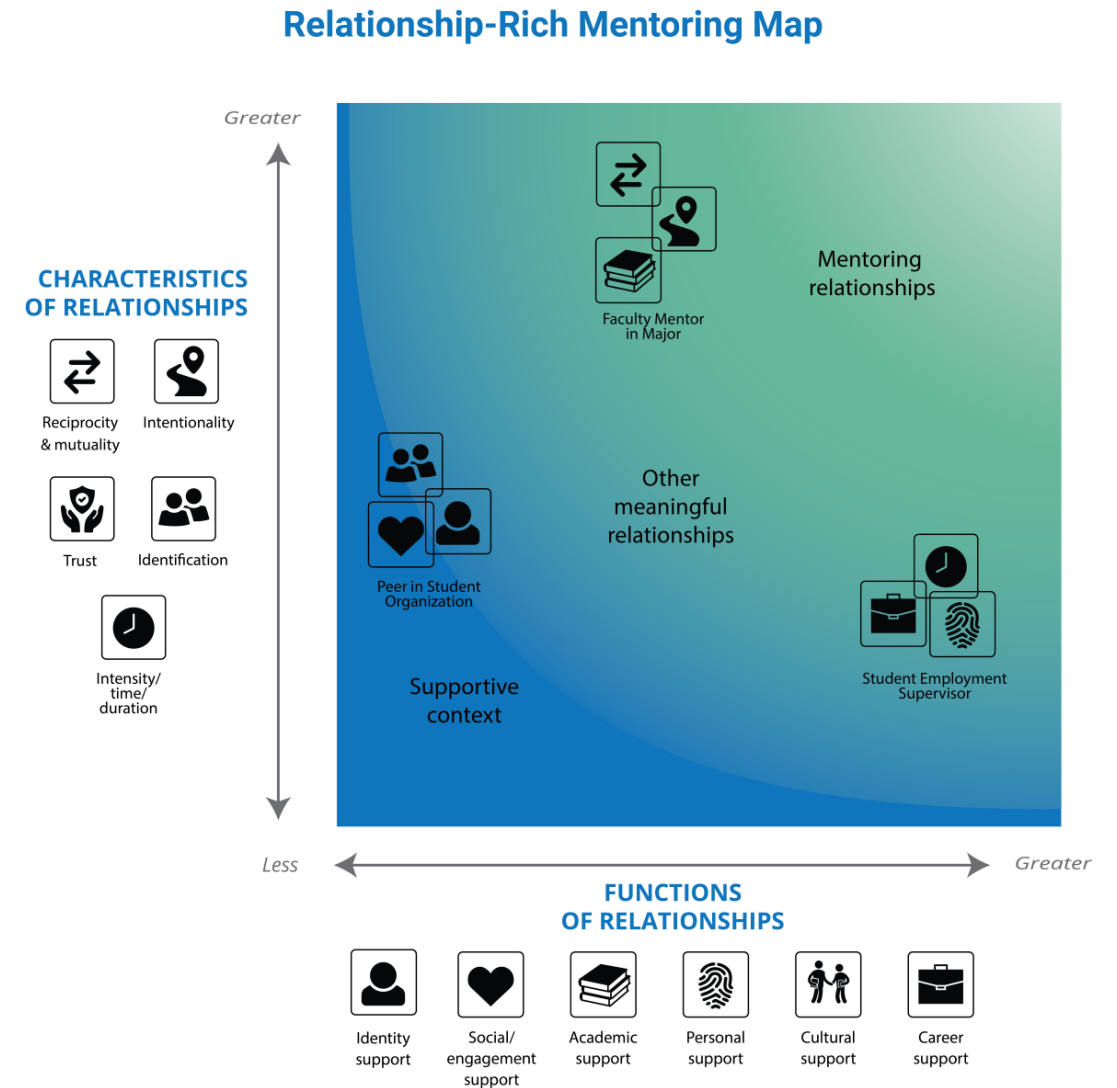
Mapping Mentoring Relationships and Constellations Activity

- Relational Functions: which ones and how strong?
- Relational Characteristics: which ones and how strong?
- Place on map where lines intersect (see *next slide*)



Mapping Mentoring Relationships and Constellations Activity

- Relational Functions: which ones and how strong?
- Relational Characteristics: which ones and how strong?
- Place on map where lines intersect (see *next slide*)



CEL Open Access Resources on Mentoring

Mentoring Matters:

<https://www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org/mentoring-matters/>

Blog posts:

<https://www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org/category/mentoring-relationships/>

Reflecting together...

- What questions does this national survey data inspire you to ask about **meaningful student experiences** and **mentoring relationships** on your campus?
- What questions does this data prompt you to ask for future research about engaged learning in higher education?
- What questions do you have for us?

Skills ***Not*** Developed in College

	Important to Day-to-Day Life?		
	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not particularly Important
Engaging in anti-racist practices	46.3%	30.5%	23.2%
Keeping up with the news	33.7%	45.6%	20.7%