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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LOS ANGELES

# TOWARDS BELONGING...

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# GI 2025 2022-2023 Equity Priorities Overview

- Proactive individualized advising
- Critical Course Redesign
- Expanding Credit Opportunities with Summer Session
- Building belonging with first-year connections and Peer Leaders

# The Peer Leader Program: Spring 2023

*Building Connections*



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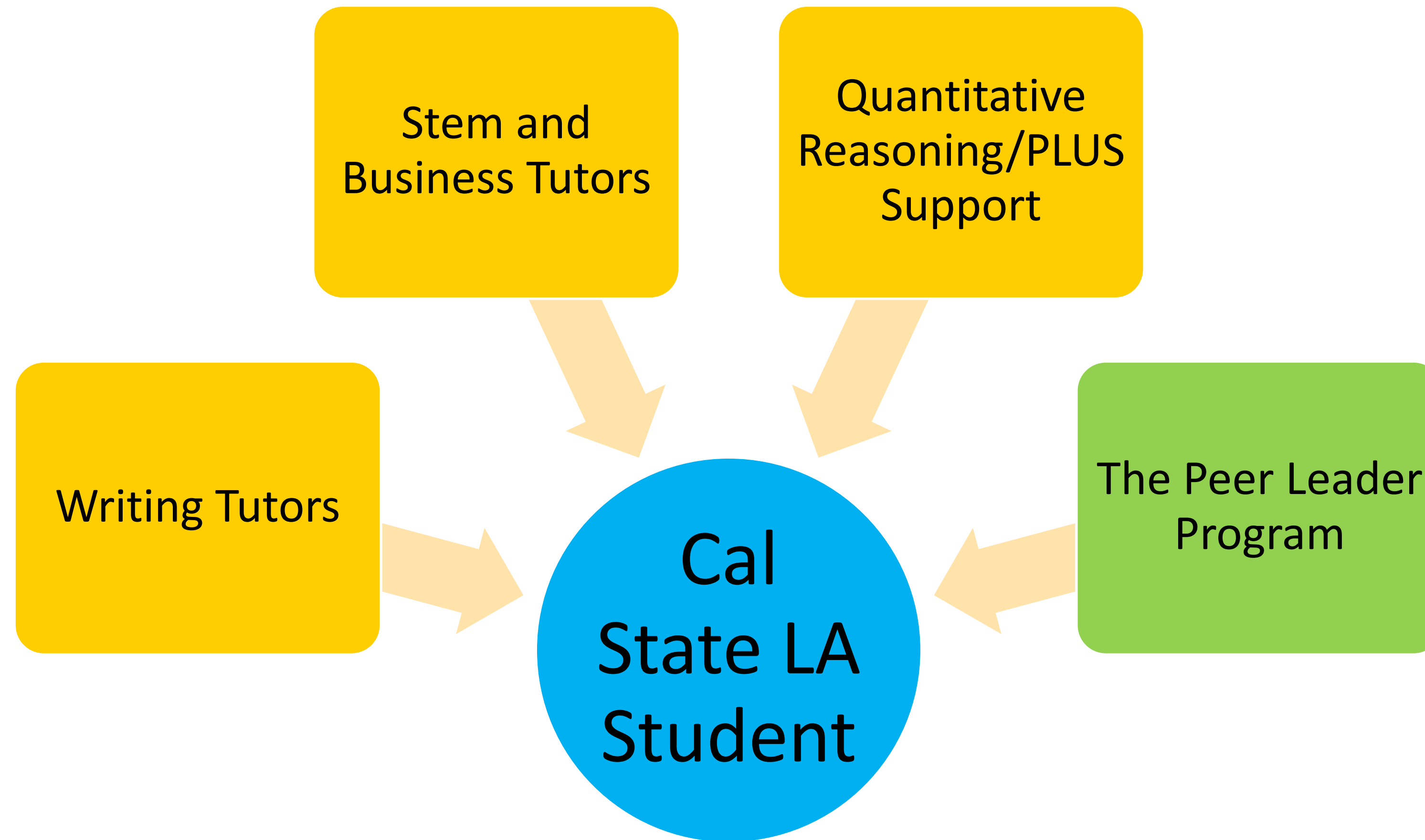
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# The Peer Leader Program History

Since January 2021:

- The program supports GI 2025 goals, specifically closing equity gaps.
- Upper-division students connect with incoming students to help them succeed in their first-year.
- First-year students were chosen based on multiple measures indicating a need for additional academic support.
- Funding sources: *Éxito Building Student Support and Faculty Quality* DHSI Grant, Leonard Hill Charitable Trust, CSU Chancellor's Office, and Student Success Fees (SSF).

# The Peer Leader Program and a Student Support Ecosystem



The Center for Academic Success



# Peer Leader Program Curriculum: SOAR

The Peer Leader program connects first-year students to Cal State LA students who have successfully navigated their own college experiences. In culturally responsive ways, Peer Leaders help students find belonging and become engaged with the campus community.

- **S**trengthen Your Study Skills
- **O**wn Your Education
- **A**dvance Your Degree
- **R**ealize Your Future





# Peer Leaders Community Building



## Examples of Peer Talks and Activities Include

- Peer Talk: Friendship and Books
- Peer Talk: Academic Check-in – Adding, Dropping, Withdrawing
- Peer Talk: Sports and Games – Campus Life
- Peer Talk: A guide to your sophomore year
  
- Peer Leader Event: Scavenger Hunt
- Peer Leader Event: Movie, Snacks, and Trivia



# The Peer Leader Program – Who Benefits?

Positive Results were most impactful for the following student groups:

- First Generation students compared to students whose parents had attended or graduated from college
- Pell eligible compared to non-Pell eligible students
- Mentees attained higher academic performance even though they entered with lower HS GPAs

	HS GPA	Fall Term GPA	Fall to Spring Retention Rate	One Year Retention Rate: %
<b>All Invited</b>	3.08	2.44	88%	68%
<b>Participated</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>2.57</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>73%</b>
<b>Did not participate</b>	3.09	2.42	87%	67%
<b>Fall 2021 Cohort Total</b>	3.31	2.66	89%	72%

# The Peer Leader Program – Beyond the numbers

Connected  
with faculty  
and staff

Felt  
understood  
and cared for

Increased  
confidence

Made  
friends



Stronger time  
management

Better  
study  
habits

# Connection and Community Building

*Creating Culturally Responsive and Relevant Programming for  
Peer Leaders and Across Campus*



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# What does it mean to be "culturally relevant and responsive" at Cal State LA?

- **Culturally relevant:** Engaging students culturally and meeting them where they are
- **Sense of belonging:** Student feeling (and being made to feel) that they have a place within the larger population and visions of the university
- **Sense of mattering:** Individual sense of feeling we are a significant part of the world around us
- **Asset-based approach:** Recognize the strengths of students instead of using a deficit-based approach, which emphasizes what students lack



# Context for Peer Leader Support Programming

College students face many challenges today:

- College is perceived as more high stakes
- More demands due to financial and familial expectations
- Emotional labor

Peer Leaders' experiences as students are leveraged to contextualize the work Peer Leaders will be engaging in.

Five modules for Peer Leader programming:

- Introductory
- Counseling and Psychological Services
- Office for Students with Disabilities
- Project Rebound
- Veteran Resource Center

# Details about Peer Leader Support Programming

Delivered in fall 2022: Five modules presented on a biweekly schedule (10 weeks total)

50 Peer Leaders participated in the following for each of the five modules:

- Engaged self-paced presentation
- Reflected on their experiences
- Share out experiences through Jamboard every two weeks

Review the two mini-reflections you completed in the PowerPoint slides and share a personal quality that can help you connect with the diverse student population at Cal State LA. Post your response via a sticky note. What you contribute will guide your upcoming conversation with Elehna Austin, Maria Molina, and the other peer leaders.

**Looks great!**

A personal quality I can contribute is being first generation and having been able to figure out how to balance my time as a college student being able to know many of the resources available at Cal State LA and would support

A quality that can help us connect with the diverse student population at Csula is being nonjudgmental.

A personal quality that can help me connect with the diverse student population at Cal State LA would be being open-minded.

A personal quality that can help connect with the diverse student population is being understanding and guiding them to the right path.

A personal quality that can help me engage with my students is being able to connect with them by explaining that I too am a first generation student, I go to school full time, and I also work. So I understand how busy

A personal quality i can contribute is to connect with diverse student poupluation with open-minded to guided them to the right path.

A personal quality that can help me connect with the diverse student population is that I am empathetic. By empathetic, I mean that I can identify myself with the experiences people share with me. By

A personal quality that I have that can help me connect with the diverse population at CSULA is being an open-minded, approachable, and empathetic person.

Connecting with a diverse population is having open conservations about emotional stress and mental well-being since it's a universal topic despite different backgrounds.

A personal quality I can contribute to the diverse population is being patient. I can relate to the need for time management skills (academic/personal) in college.

A personal quality that will contribute to a diverse population is creativity, to help come up with ideas, events, and innovations to continue improving CSU LA.

A personal quality that can help me connect with the diverse student population is that I am always trying to learn new things. Even if I do not have an answer for something I will try to get an answer.

A personal quality that can help me connect with the diverse student population is my friendliness. I am a friendly person that wants to make sure that all students get along and succeed in their academic journey.

A personal quality that can help me connect with the diverse student population is being first generation, and learning to guide myself in college, mostly through finding my community and individuals I can relate to.

A personal quality that can help me connect with the diverse student population is being open to everyone's new cultures and being respectful always.

A personal quality that can help me connect with the diverse student population is that I am enthusiastic and willing to meet new people.

A positive quality I can contribute to the diverse population is my good listening skills. I am good at paying attention to the goals that students have and I am there to support them along the way.

A personal quality I have that can help connect with diverse student is being a first generation college student. I have been able to balance work and school which can definitely allow me to guide students

A personal quality that can help connect with the diverse student population is to be aware of yourself and how you interact with others in a respectful manner.

A personal quality that can help me connect with the diverse population is to interact more with the community.

A personal quality that I can help connect with is being able to say hello. Saying hello and wishing someone to have a great day and giving them a smile can have an impact on something for the better. Say someone is

A Quality that I can contribute is being understanding. We never know what someone is going through

A personal quality that can help me connect with the diverse population here at CSULA would be resilience. Moving forward even in tough times is relatable.

A personal quality that can help me connect with the diverse population is to interact more with the community.

A personal quality that can help me connect with the diverse student population at Cal State LA comes from my own personal experiences of being First gen. It could help them relate and understand that each student has a journey

A personal quality I can contribute to the diverse population would be to open up more to students and talk about our experiences. Not only ask them questions and have an opened minded when talking to them and listen to

A personal quality that can help me connect with the diverse student population is being understanding and guiding them to the right path.

Week 1-2 Jamboard for Module 1



# Nervous System Hacks

(Developed by Carrie Slick, LCSW)



## NERVOUS SYSTEM HACKS



States of chronic stress and trauma and how to care for yourself

## FIGHT



### I MAY FEEL..

- physically hot
- easily agitated and defensive
- enraged
- hypervigilant-scanning for threat
- can lose memory or black out
- rigid and inflexible; a need for control
- body tenses up
- an urge to use violence to release my anger.
- anxious, stiffening up
- increased heart rate, rapid breathing.
- a surge of adrenaline
- sweaty

### I CAN/NEED....

- breathe with a longer exhale
- breathe through the nose.
- use a fidget, stress ball or putty
- eat crunchy foods
- Seek support from patient and reassuring others.
- Find a secure place to take a break.
- hold something soft or warm.
- use a weighted blanket
- hang from something or use hand weights or resistance band.
- Take a walk or walk up and down the stairs.
- exercise; skateboard, dance, swim, play a sport.
- Lay on your back and rest your calves and feel on a chair (lowers hear rate)
- push hands against a wall, while on the balls of your feet.

## FREEZE



### I MAY FEEL..

- frozen, trapped or stuck
- skin goes pale
- like I see/notice everything
- doom or dread, like something bad is going to happen
- breathing might be rapid, shallow or you may hold your breath.
- feeling helpless
- anxious, stiffening up
- like I can't focus or concentrate

### I CAN/NEED....

- massage hands or head
- orient to or look around the room to see you're safe.
- pull on your ears and open/move jaw to release
- pat legs or arms with fingertips
- Sit with someone and play a game or watch a movie.
- rocking, swinging, swaying, bouncing
- hold something soft or warm.
- use a weighted blanket
- Do something repetitive like coloring.
- Dig in sand or mud; playdough, clay.
- interlace hands on top of head and breathe into your belly
- 5-4-3-2-1 grounding

## FLIGHT

### I MAY FEEL..

- hyperactive, fidgety
- manic, silly
- urge to escape or avoid
- body needs to keep moving
- feeling helpless
- anxious, stiffening up
- increased heart rate, labored breathing.
- a surge of adrenaline
- dizzy or shaky
- like I need to use the bathroom
- butterflies in my stomach

### I CAN/NEED....

- breathe with a longer exhale
- breathe through the nose.
- Exhale making an "s" or "f" sound
- do a familiar and easy task
- eat crunchy foods
- Seek support from patient and reassuring others.
- Find a secure place to take a break.
- hold something soft or warm.
- use a weighted blanket
- hang from something or use hand weights or resistance band.
- Take a walk or walk up and down the stairs; run in chair while sitting.
- exercise; skateboard, dance, swim, play a sport.



### I MAY FEEL..

- numb or disconnected from my physical body, feelings or thoughts.
- in a fog or like I'm dreaming.
- empty
- hopeless
- lack of energy
- alone/disconnected from others

### I CAN/NEED....

- massage hands or head
- orient to or look around the room to see you're safe.
- pull on your ears and open/move jaw to release
- pat legs or arms with fingertips
- Sit with someone supportive and calm and play a game or watch a movie.
- rocking, swinging, swaying, bouncing
- squeeze something soft
- Ask someone to do an activity with you
- Do something repetitive like coloring.
- Dig in sand or mud; playdough, clay.
- interlace hands on top of head and breathe into your belly

## COLLAPSE





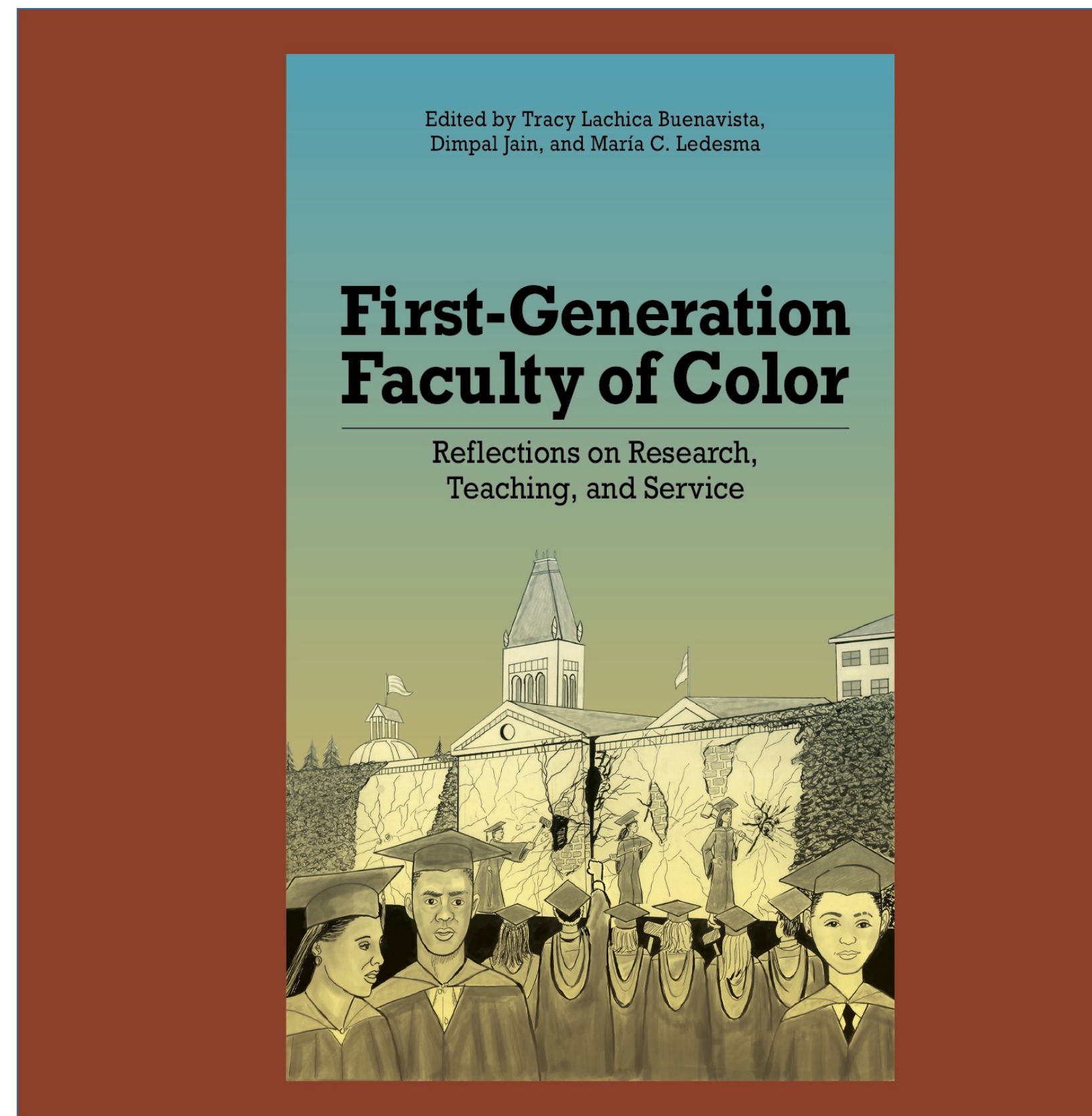
# Building Connections Across Campus: Cultivating a Culture of Care

Developed and delivered workshops and trainings

- Early Start Faculty – Summer 2022
- New Faculty Orientation – Fall 2022
- Center for Academic Success Student workers – Spring 2023
- Academic Advisors from all units – Spring 2023



# Leveraging the Experiences of Academic Advisors: Culturally Responsive Student Support



A study conducted by the Harvard Business Review on First-Generation Professionals (FGPs) found that 23.7% of FGPs obtained their jobs through work-study programs in college vs. just 7.6% of non-FGPs

Many FGPs also reported being shocked and disappointed that their hard work and results were notably less important to their careers than knowing how to communicate in a certain way and build networks. One explained: “At first I thought, oh...just as long as I’m a great worker, right? You know, I do what I need to do, I’ll get promoted fast. That’s not the case. What it *really* is, is your contacts. Building that network.”

# Moving Forward

Inviting faculty to think of themselves as sites of support on campus rather than content-deliverers

Supporting faculty, especially new faculty, by demystifying/informing them about:

- Letter of recommendation
  - Mentoring practices
  - Connections to student support
  - Campus events
- 
- In-campus First-Year Connections Summer 23

# First-Year Connections

*Cal State LA Preview Day Update*

*Early Connections with Incoming Students*



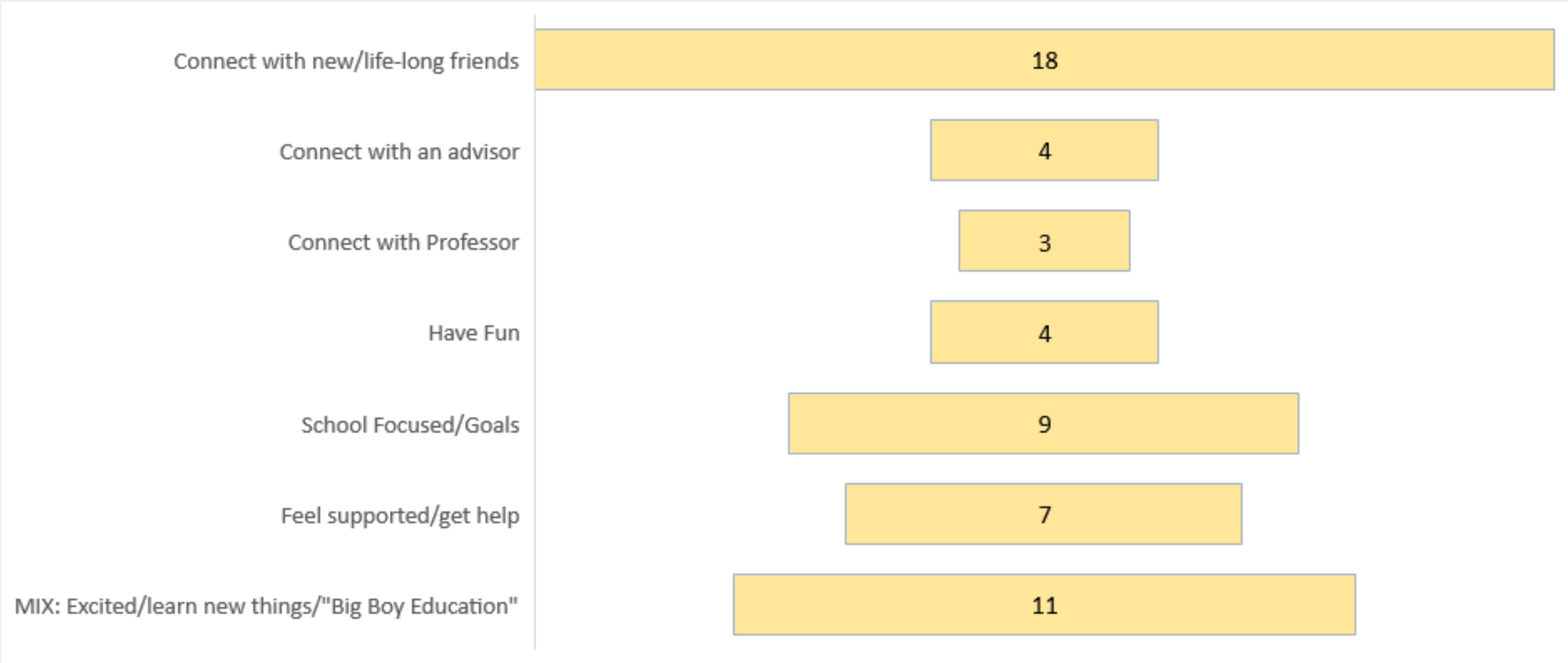
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# First-Year Connections

Welcomed future Golden Eagles to Cal State LA

56 students responded: What are your expectations in your first-year at Cal State LA?



Theme of building community and making connections



# Questions



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# Contact Us

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