

SEE ExL Benchmark Survey Findings

Experiential Education (EE) and Experiential Learning (ExL) are happening all across higher education. In academic, co-curricular, student affairs, and student unions, ExL is the connective tissue between academic outcomes and career success. By participating in an ExL process in any discipline, field, work area, or professional setting, learners develop ownership, responsibility, and the ability to apply their knowledge to novel situations. We're confident that faculty, administrators, co-curricular educators, program staff, deans/directors are all working—in increasingly coordinated ways—to create access to ExL for more and more kinds of learners.

At the same time we know that there are challenges in growing the amount and types of experiential learning. Campus leaders know how important ExL is, but to tell the ExL story (your story) they need to respond to some key challenges:

- When ExL is tracked, it's often tracked in silos.
- Reflection practices, an important part of an individual's learning process, are inconsistent.
- Outcomes from ExL are measured unevenly.
- ExL is sometimes validated, but not consistently.
- ExL is often invisible to students who want to engage more deeply.
- ExL doesn't reach all students, creating inequity unless approached intentionally.

In response to these challenges, the Society for Experiential Education (SEE) is working to understand the nuances of campus practices. One thing EL leaders consistently tell us would help them is a benchmark of ExL practices. So we took an opportunity to learn about these practices together in the first ever Experiential Learning Benchmark Survey. These findings describe a sample of a growing number of ExL priorities.

We invite you to view these findings through the lens of a broader campus ecosystem, made up of interdependent parts: Academic, Career, and Experiential activities and outcomes. A healthy ecosystem depends on all three being present, aligned, and in communication. You might think of this system as a shared garden with three gateways—each representing Academic, Career, and Experiential learning. In this fertile space, many types of learning can thrive. But as any good gardener knows, the climate and conditions shape what grows best. Each campus must determine the right mix of experiential learning activities based on its own context and goals. A helpful model of this kind of ecosystem in practice is the [joint report from AAC&U, NACE, and SEE on faculty experiential education practices](#). The benchmark data in this report, which focuses on broad, campus-wide efforts, is designed to complement the work already happening in departments and courses.

This report is the first attempt/version of a benchmarking survey for experiential learning. We'd appreciate your feedback, suggestions, new questions, and ideas for future iterations.

Sincerely,

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SEE ExL Benchmark Survey

Summary of Findings
Society for Experiential Education
Summer 2025

Acknowledgements

We'd like to thank the following individuals and groups for their contributions to the creation, distribution, analysis, and usefulness of this project.

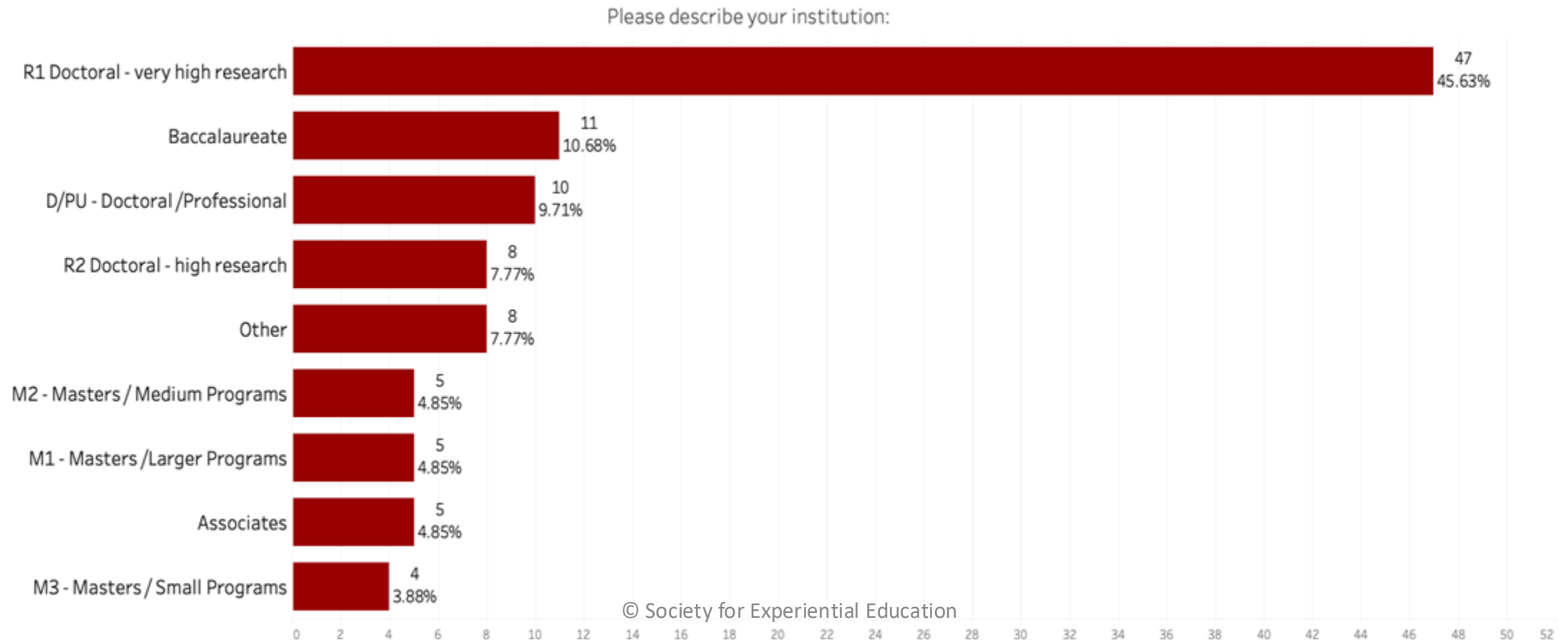
- Daniel Pitti, Sr. Data Analyst, Career Center, Stony Brook University
- Abby Baker, QEP Director, Clemson University
- The Campus Leaders Network of the Society for Experiential Education

Please cite this report as:

Carpenter, E., Savoca, M., & Heinrich, B. (2025). *SEE ExL Benchmark Survey*. Society for Experiential Education. <https://nsee.memberclicks.net/exl-benchmark-survey>

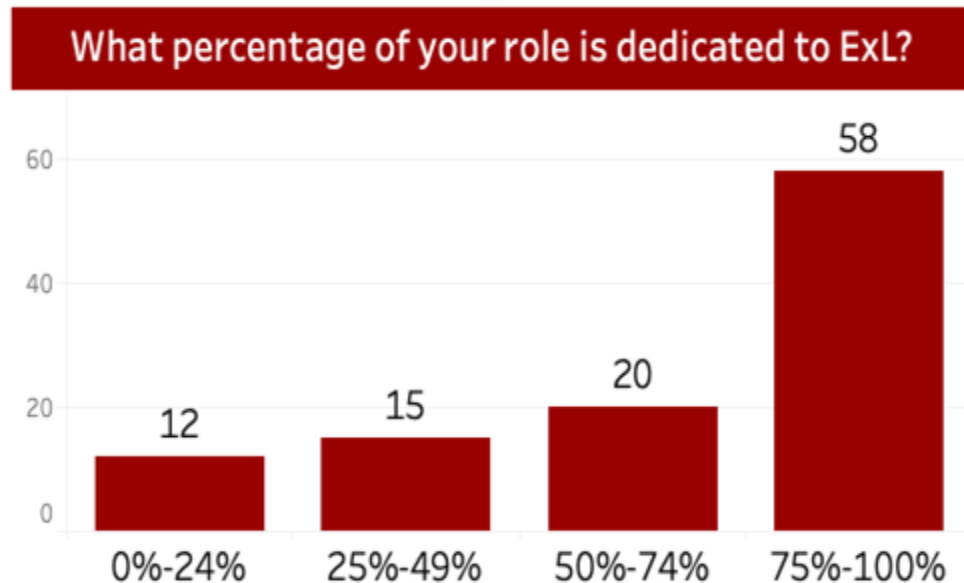
Responses and Institutional Types

- Distributed through SEE channels (and Campus Leaders Network listserv) along with LinkedIn shares by several SEE board members from 5/8/25 to 6/1/25.
- Instructions were to have one person from the institution complete the survey (providing a more institutional-level view).
- Received 119 responses; 105 were “useable” with a large response rate from R1 institutions; 24 international institutions

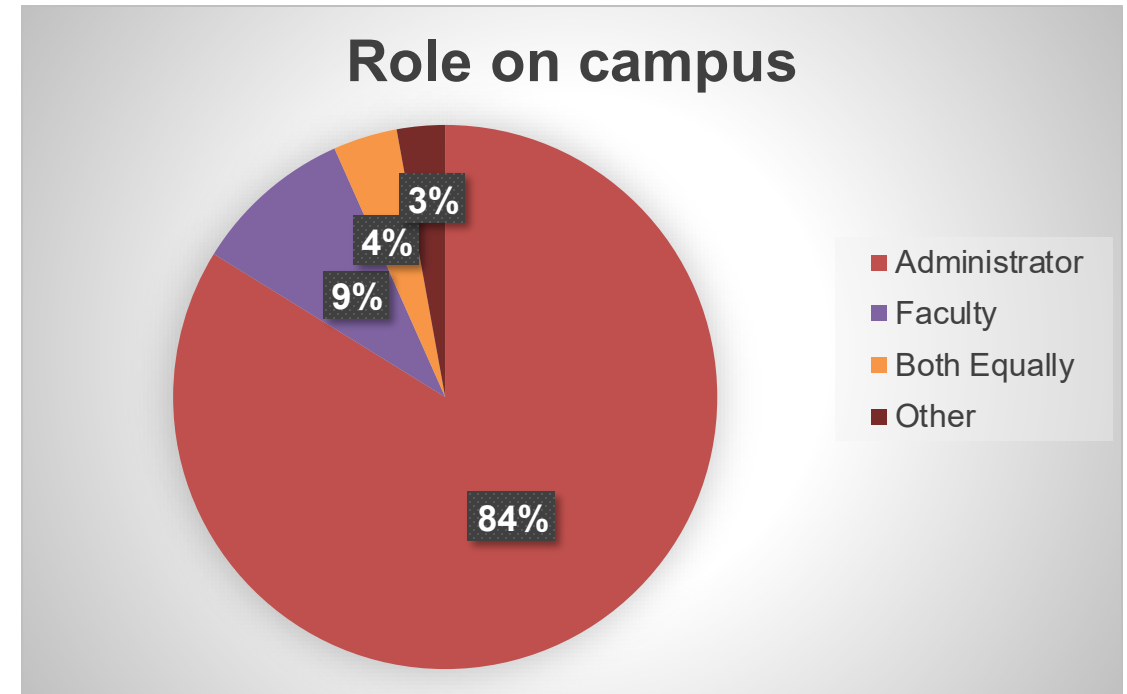


Institutional Structures & Roles

- Most responses came from U.S institutions, with some international (20 Canadian responses) and associate-level colleges
- Most ExL leaders fall into the “administrator” role indicating (at least for our respondents) that the work has moved beyond purely academic

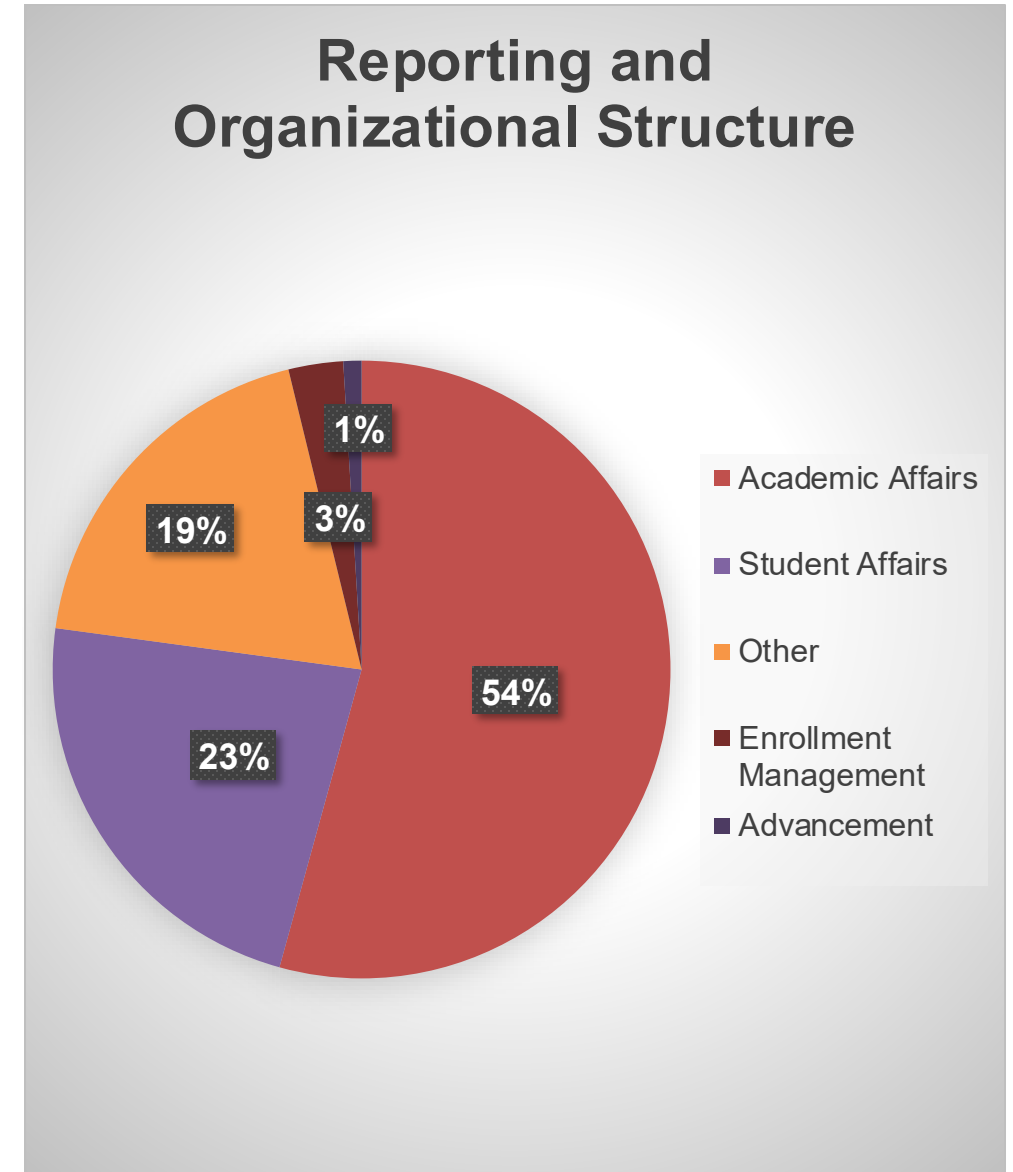


- Most roles are permanent appointments (90%) - suggesting that ExL has moved beyond pilot/temporary status at most institutions, but not all ExL leaders are “just” doing ExL in their roles



Organizational Reporting & Placement

- Most ExL leaders in our survey report through Academic Affairs
- 8 institutions have senior leadership titles (e.g., Associate Provost or Associate VP)
- "Director of Experiential Learning" is the most common title (15 institutions) followed by "Executive Director" (8 institutions)
- R1 universities show most diversity in title structure and seniority levels



ExL Graduation Requirements

- 37% of survey respondents have an ExL requirement
- Among those that do, ExL is often embedded in the core curriculum, major programs, or a general education requirement.

Is ExL an across-the-board requirement for all undergraduates?

Yes	39	37.14%
No	66	62.86%

What Counts as ExL?

Common (both for ExL and for academic credit):

Clinicals/Internships/Student Teaching (almost universally counted as ExL), Service Learning/Community Engaged Learning, Research, Study Abroad, Capstones, Performance (Art/Music)

Sometimes counted as ExL, but often not for credit: Student Employment, Leadership, Case Competitions

Less likely to be offered and/or not counted: Outdoor Adventure, Micro-internships, E-portfolios

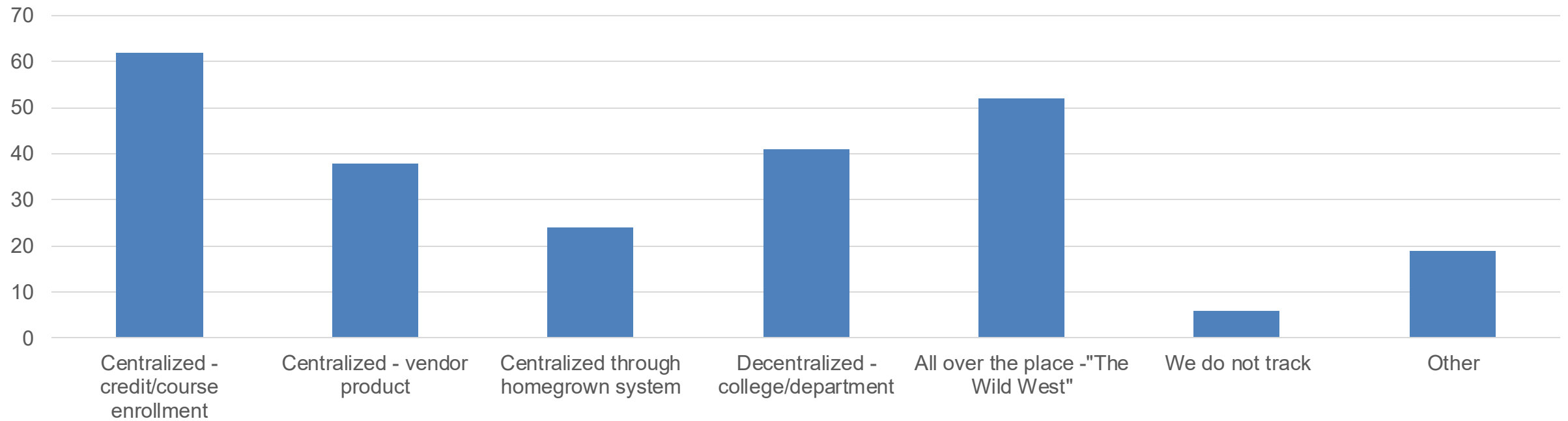
Wide variability in definitions across institutions

What Types of Experiences count as ExL at your institution?

Types of Experiences	We do not offer	We offer, but do not count as ExL	Counted as ExL but not for credit	Counted as ExL for credit	Counted - could be both credit and non-credit
Capstone projects	6	16	3	55	19
Case Competitions	22	27	17	9	22
Clinical Placement	14	4	4	60	16
Co-op	36	4	6	34	19
e-Portfolio	39	28	6	12	13
Global Experience / Study Abroad	4	9	9	34	46
Internship	3	1	7	42	49
Leadership	11	28	26	6	26
Micro-Internships	41	13	16	6	21
Other	3		1	7	5
Outdoor Adventure	47	19	10	5	15
Performance / Art / Music	12	21	7	16	41
Project Based Learning /Capstone Project		18	4	51	30
Research	4	10	5	28	54
Service Learning/Community Engaged Learning	3	4	17	35	44
Student Employment /Work Based Learning	2	30	35	7	25
Teacher /Education Placement	25	5	3	52	13

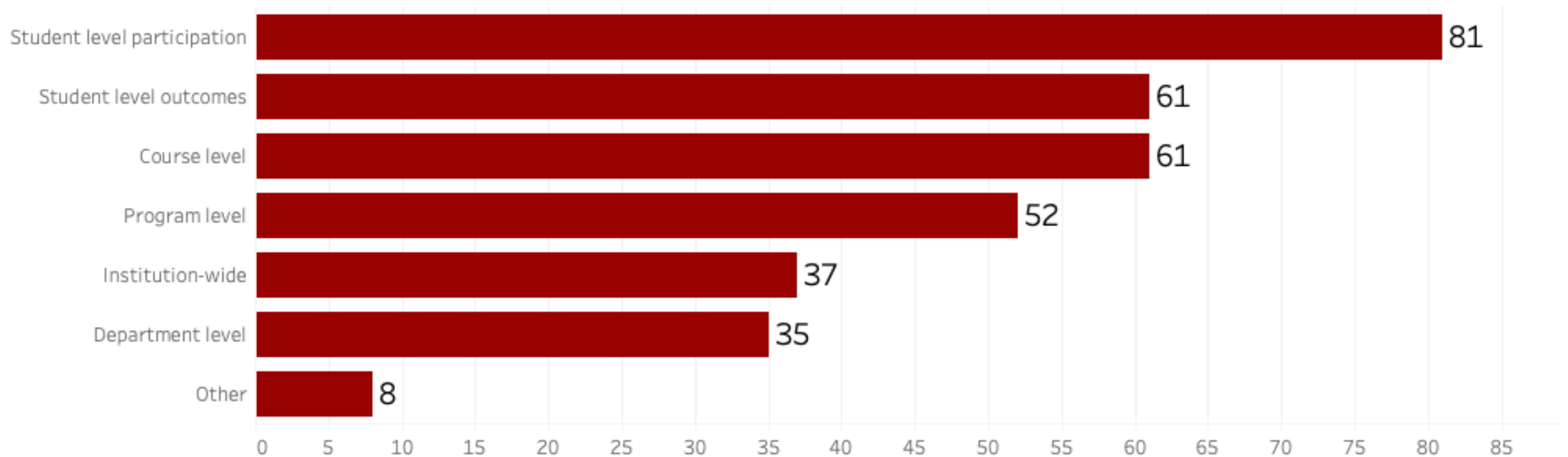
Tracking ExL

How is ExL Tracked at your Institution?



(could select more than one response)

How is ExL assessed at your institution?



(could select more than one response)

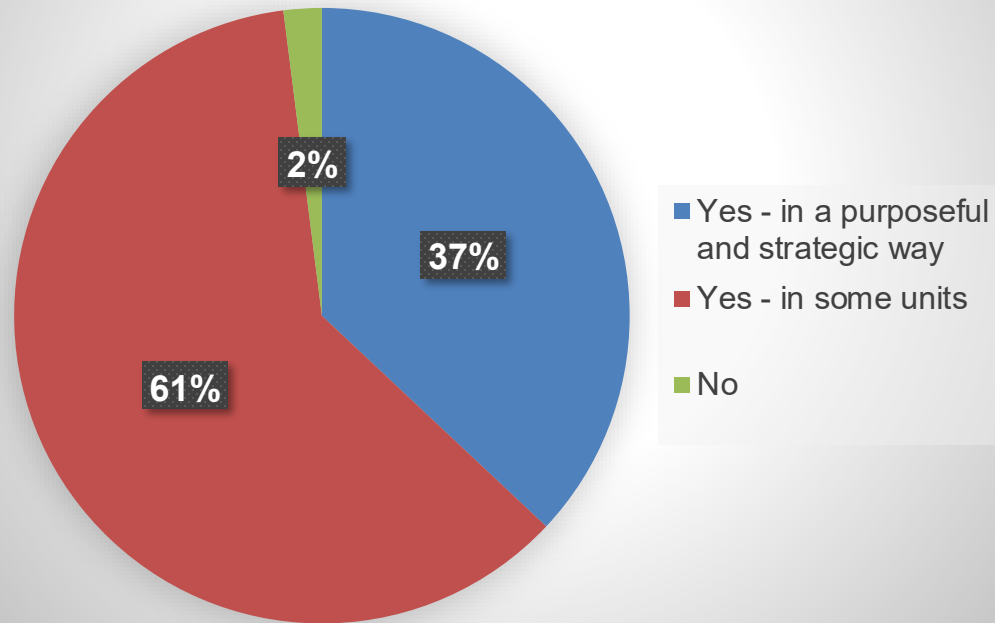
Assessment Trends

Most institutions focus on student participation, student-level outcomes, and course-level outcomes tracking. Few respondents report centralized, comprehensive approaches

40% of respondents describe “pockets of excellence” in assessment, while 32% say they have “much to improve”, only 5% say “we do this very well”

ExL and Career Readiness

Is ExL connected to career readiness at your institution?



- **Integration with Career Competencies**
Many institutions align ExL with NACE career readiness competencies (e.g., embedding reflection and skill articulation exercises into ExL activities to help students connect their experiences with key competencies).
- **Academic and Co-Curricular Pathways**
ExL is frequently embedded in both curricular and co-curricular experiences, which are intentionally linked to career development goals.
- **Campus-wide and Departmental Strategies**
Some institutions have created centralized frameworks or endorsements (e.g., badges or certificates) to validate participation in ExL with career readiness outcomes.
- **Focus on Reflection and Skill Development**
Reflective practices are commonly used to help students identify and articulate skills gained through ExL. This includes portfolio development, written reflections, and advisor- or instructor-led debriefs.

Funding & Access

Funding for Students:

- Many institutions report some funding availability for students (e.g., for stipends, travel, or course materials).
- However, access is often inconsistent (“it’s hit or miss” reported by 31% or “not in any substantial way” by 29%).
- 13% of respondents believe they are “doing this well and covering most needs”

Transportation Support:

- Very few institutions have a strong model (only 6% have a model they are proud of; 22% say “sort of”; 73% say “no or not yet”)
- Most either do not yet provide support or are experimenting with informal solutions.

Overall Observations

There appears to be momentum toward formalizing and centralizing ExL efforts (at least within our responding institutions).

Institutions are wrestling with resource limitations, both for operational support and equitable student access.

There is high interest in benchmarking organizational structures, funding models, and student outcomes.

Q20: Top Priorities for 2025–2026



Infrastructure and Operations

Improve data tracking and centralization of ExL activities

Strengthen internal operations and risk management systems

Build out ExL participation databases and software integration

Exploring appropriate technologies



Faculty and Curriculum Integration

Encourage greater incorporation of ExL into academic courses

Support faculty adoption of experiential strategies

Increase programmatic offerings and integration across the institution



Student Access and Engagement

Expand student engagement and participation

Increase access to funding for ExL

Prioritize paid and career-connected experiences



Strategic Alignment and Institutional Priorities

Maintain focus on ExL during institutional restructuring

Align ExL more intentionally with career readiness frameworks

Q21: What Respondents Want to Know



Structures, Staffing, and Funding Models

Comparative organizational structures, particularly at large institutions

Funding sources, budgeting models, and staffing benchmarks

Clarification on credit vs. non-credit approaches



Best Practices and Program Design

Effective methods for engaging students and faculty

Models of reflective practice and deeper learning outcomes

Next-generation High-Impact Practices (HIPs) beyond traditional ExL



Data Disaggregation and Institutional Context

Benchmarks by institutional type (e.g., community colleges, R1s)

Regional comparisons (e.g., Canadian provinces)

Use of technology and software for tracking outcomes



Community and Industry Engagement

Partner engagement models and timelines

Strategies for building sustainable external partnerships

Participating Institutions

Abilene Christian University
Acadia University
American School Foundation of Monterrey
Athens State University
Augusta University
Augustana College
Babson College
Bethune-Cookman University
Binghamton University (SUNY)
Boise State University
Boston University
Bow Valley College
Brenau University
Brigham Young University
Carleton University
Carnegie Mellon University
Carthage College
Clemson University
College of DuPage
Concordia University
Cornell University
Delaware Valley University
Denison University
Dominica State College
Durham College
Fanshawe College
Florida State University
Hamilton College
Harrisburg University of Science and Technology
Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy

Jacksonville State University
Johns Hopkins University
Kansas State University
Lehigh University
Loyola University - Chicago
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
McGill University
McMaster University
Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design
Mississippi State University
Mount Allison University
Nazareth University
New Jersey Institute of Technology
New York Institute of Technology
North Carolina State University
Northeastern University
Northeastern University - Vancouver Campus (not the main Boston Campus)
Northern Kentucky University
Northwestern Michigan College
Nova Southeastern University
Pearl Academy
Penn West University
Polyvagal Equine Institute
Presbyterian College
Purdue University
Quinnipiac University
Royal Roads University
RRC Polytech
Saint Mary's University

Seneca Polytechnic
Sheridan College
Simpson Academy for Young Women
Southern New Hampshire University
St. Johns River State College
Stonehill College
Stony Brook University - SUNY
Suffolk University
SUNY Brockport
SUNY College at Cortland
SUNY Oswego
Temple University
Texas A&M University-San Antonio
Texas State University
The College of New Jersey
The Ohio State University
The University of Alabama
The University of Oklahoma
Thompson River University
Trinity Western University
UC Davis
UNC Charlotte
University of California San Diego
Universidad de La Sabana
Universidad EAFIT
University at Alberta
University of Buffalo
University of Calgary

University of Dayton
University of Delaware
University of Georgia
University of Idaho
University of Lethbridge
University of Manitoba
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University of Rochester
University of Texas School of Public Health San Antonio
University of Victoria
University of Wisconsin-Parkside
Utah Valley University
Valencia College
Wellesley College
William & Mary
Xavier University
Yavapai College