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## Phelps Scholars Alumni Project

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## Phelps Scholars Alumni Project

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*Yolanda Vega, Program Director*

### Project Overview

The Phelps Scholars Program is in 20<sup>th</sup> year and has grown from 39 students at its inception to 90-100 students. While its commitment remains to provide first-year students with an intentional and diverse living and have learning experience focused on race, culture and community, there has not been a review of its impact on participants' lives over the years.

The primary goals of the project included:

- Exploring current best practices for living and learning communities for first-year students.
- Gaining an understanding of the breadth, width and depth of the Phelps Scholars experience on past participants in terms of life and career impact.
- Using the above information to influence the future direction or initiatives of the program.

### The Phelps Scholars Program

PSP is a unique combination of residential life, academic engagement and social activities that prepares students to be leaders in an increasingly global society. Phelps Scholars make a one-year commitment to live in community with others from a broad range of cultural backgrounds, and they explore together the issues of diversity that shape our world.

### Learning Communities

Learning Communities and First Year Seminar Courses help students:

- thrive
- compel faculty and staff to do their best work
- create opportunities for students to develop the dispositions, knowledge and skills to tackle complex real world issues
- become engaged citizens

George Kuh. 2008

### Methods

#### Alumni Years 2002 - 2018

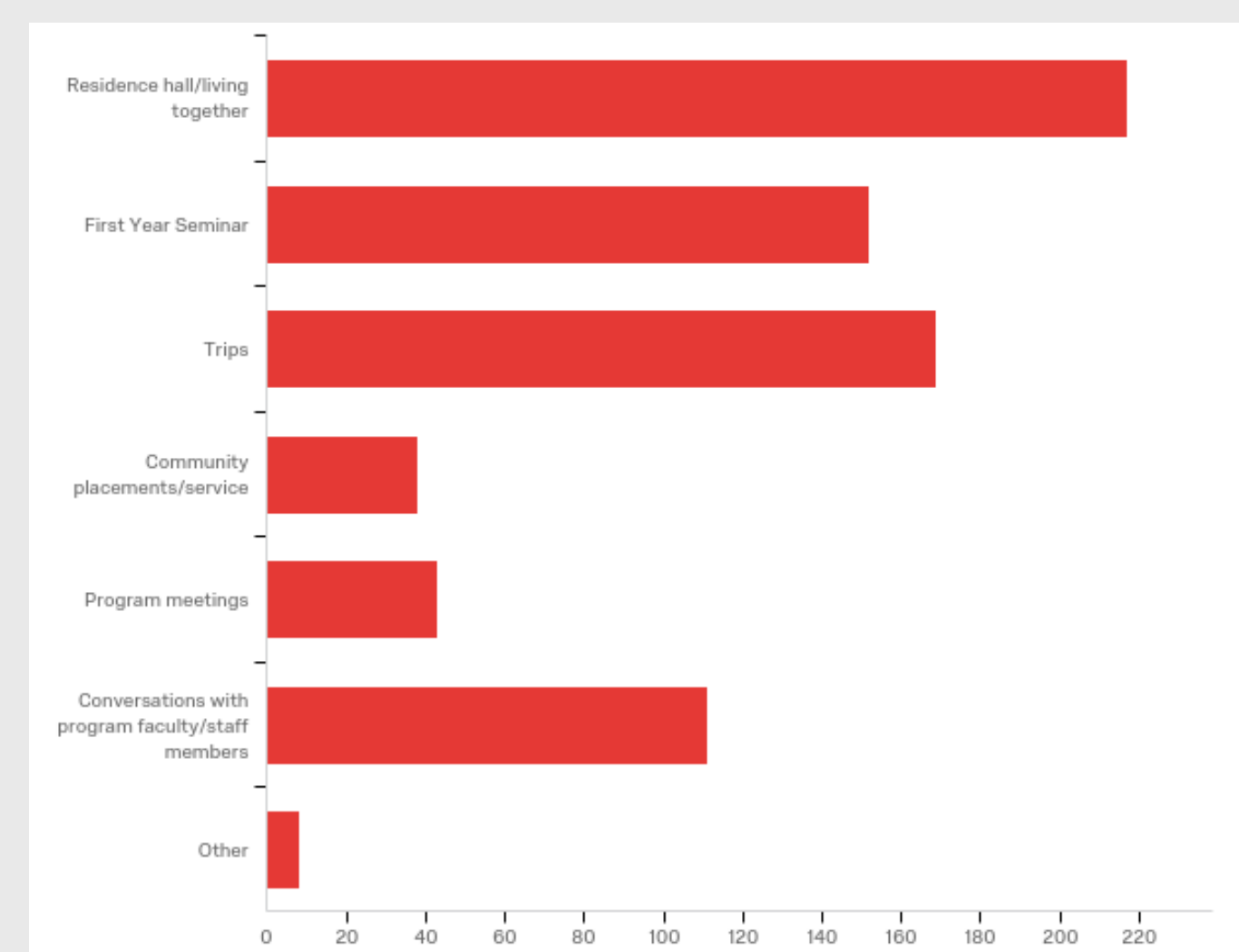
- 802 total surveys sent out
- 288 survey responses (30%)
- 20 personal interviews



#### Interview Questions included:

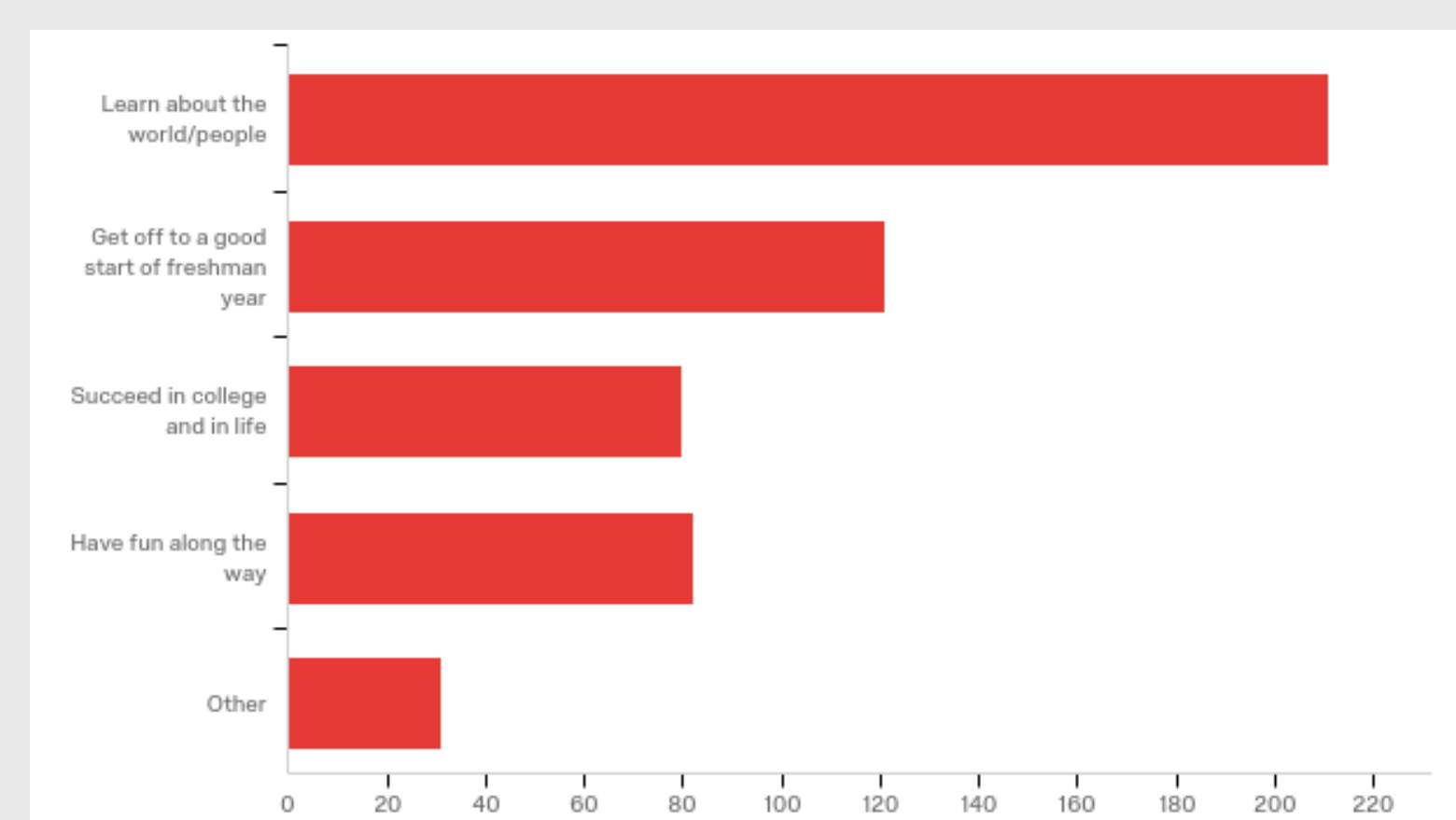
- Prior to program participation, what was your understanding of “global citizenship” and how did this change or evolve throughout your participation?
- In what ways did the friendships and experiences influence your Hope years and beyond (career, travel, etc.)?

**Each survey included 27 questions. Here are some examples of the results:**



In considering the four goals for the program, what prompted your decision to participate?

Top three program components that were most beneficial:



### Alumni Perspectives

“I realized that there were many issues both locally and abroad that I was not aware of. After learning about them, I initially thought hey, someone should do something about that. Later, that thought changed into, wait, I can do something about that.”  
-2015



**Special thanks to the following alumni for their time and insight during the interview process:**

Levi Adrianson, Mathew Boote, Clarisa Chavez, Rosemary Daly, Tonisha Gordon, Jessica Irvin, Paulena Khorn, Kaan Kurtulus, Paola Munoz, Stephan Murphy, Harry Walter Nelson, Gaby Olaguibel, Xavier Ortiz, Samantha Poon, Bianca Reyes, Evelyn Ritter, Jesus Romero, Shubham Sapkota, Leslie Stuitfbergen, and Brandon Wolliston

### Results

#### Life Areas Most Influenced by Program Experience -349 responses

1	Expanding world view	16.33%	57
2	Personal / Professional Development	14.90%	52
3	Career Path	13.75%	48
4	Interactions with/ Understanding others	13.18%	46
5	Travel / Study abroad	12.32%	43

#### Most Beneficial/Significant About Experience -403 responses

1	Residence Hall/ Community	13.90%	56
2	Friendships	13.15%	53
3	Experiencing diversity	8.93%	36
4	Personal/ Professional Development	8.93%	36
5	Difficult Conversation	7.69%	31

#### Suggestions For Program Enhancement -193 responses

1	Expand Teaching Topics/Techniques (across campus)	16.06%	31
2	Connecting with Alumni/Mentor Program	14.51%	28
3	More Campus/Dorms Involvement	11.92%	23
4	Not applicable	11.92%	23
5	More Social Events/Trips	8.81%	17
6	More Publicization	5.70%	11

### Summary

The findings affirm our thesis that living and learning communities are beneficial and significant to first year students. This was true during their time in the program as well as throughout the rest of college and beyond, personally and professionally.



2018  
“More Than a Reunion” Event

Jessica Guillaume, ‘18  
Jordan Hill, ‘16  
Jesus Romero, ‘16

#### Sources:

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Hope College Frost Center

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