



WEEK OF WELCOME (2014) WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Week of Welcome (WOW) is administered by New Student Programs to help students transition into the new school year. In 2014 WOW took a new approach to use intentional themed days to target specific needs of the student population.

"It was really fun and helped me get adjusted and meet new people."

WOW supports students' transition to and retention at WSU by:

- Assisting in the development of an identity and a relationship with the university, specific colleges and departments, peers, staff and community.
- Promoting awareness of educational and co-curricular opportunities and laying the foundation for scholastic and civic engagement throughout college.
- Creating an atmosphere that minimizes anxiety, promotes positive attitudes, and stimulates an environment for learning.
- Providing healthy, active and engaging events for students as they adjust to college life in Pullman.

Based on recommendations from the 2013 Week of Welcome evaluation the 2014 evaluation:

- Created and used a logic model (see Appendix A)
- Assessed constructs aligned with WOW mission and goals including student wellbeing (positive and negative affect), academic integration, institutional and goal commitment, social integration, belonging, and academic self-efficacy.

Participants: A total of 775 students completed the WOW 2014 post survey. Although 144 students completed the pre survey few students completed both a pre and a post WOW evaluation, therefore, the following report focuses on the post data only.

Results: Students who reported attending each category of events were compared to those who did not attend on the measured outcomes. Overall, the findings suggest that participation in WOW activities of all types was associated with positive outcomes for students that reflect overall wellbeing, academic integration /commitment /efficacy, and social connections. Attenders were higher on these outcomes compared to those that did not attend.

WOW Goals	Results Supporting Each Goal
<i>developing relationships with university, college/department, peer, staff, and community</i>	Social integration and belonging were higher for those who participated in each type of WOW event
<i>laying the foundation for scholastic and civic engagement throughout college</i>	Academic integration and institutional goals and commitment were higher for those who participated in Cougar connection, college/department events, and academic success events
<i>promoting positive attitudes, and stimulating an environment for learning</i>	Positive affect (wellbeing) was higher for those participating across all types of WOW events (except Convocation). Students overwhelmingly agreed that Convocation was educational, engaging, and inspiring
<i>providing healthy, active and engaging events for students as they adjust to college life in Pullman.</i>	The intentional structure of the 2014 WOW events into thematic days represented academic skills, social identity, interpersonal relationships, personal development, and integrating colleges and departments

Recommendations are to use different methods to increase baseline survey participation in order to better establish evidence of the effects of WOW by documenting change. Future steps include conducting a follow-up assessment at the end of Fall and Spring semester. Efforts could aim to increase attendance to academic and other voluntary personal development activities. The intentional and focused structure of WOW activities should be continued.

EVALUATION

WOW activities took place August 16th to August 24th. WOW workshops and events represented four different categories including cougar connections open house and introduction events; cougar connections carnival, wsYOU Conference, and other/Independent. The goal of the intentional programming was to contribute to student wellbeing, identity, connection to others and to the campus. The events targeted new and incoming students. The structure of WOW activities included Academic Success Activities (Monday); College / Department Activities (Tuesday); Cougar Connections Open House (Tuesday); wsYOU Conference (Wednesday/Thursday); Social Events on campus and in the community (throughout the week); Unorganized / Informal Activities (throughout the week).

In order to address recommendations from the 2013 Week of Welcome report we conducted both a baseline and a post assessment through online surveys. The baseline assessment was collected between August 16th and August 18th and was promoted through social media (e.g., Facebook and WOW website). A total of 144 students participated in the baseline assessment. Due to low participation we focus on the post results only. A post survey was conducted between September 5th and September 15th. To increase participation from the initial baseline assessment rates, New Student Programs sent an email to all new students. Residence halls also helped promote the survey to incoming students. A reminder email was sent on September 12th.

The survey instrument included questions regarding WOW attendance, wellbeing (e.g., positive and negative affect), academic integration, social integration, belonging, institutional and academic goal commitment, and academic self-efficacy and general demographic data. Post survey participants also completed measures rating their use of the guidebook app, how much they felt WOW contributed to their social and academic connections, and their participation in the different types of WOW events and activities. The WOW outcomes were measured using valid and reliable instruments. All measured outcomes were adequately reliable in the post evaluation ($\alpha > .70$). See Table 1 for a brief description of each outcome and sample items used to measure each.

Table 1. WOW Outcomes Description and Sample Items

WOW Outcome	Scale	Sample Items
Wellbeing: overall psychological health reflected in positive and negative affect	1-5	<i>Indicate to what extent you have felt this way in the last few weeks . . . nervous, jittery etc. (negative affect) . . . enthusiastic, inspired etc. (positive affect).</i>
Academic Integration: feeling of academic and intellectual development at WSU	1-5	<i>I am satisfied with my academic experience at this University. My interest in ideas and intellectual matters has increased since starting classes.</i>
Social Integration: feeling of social integration with peers at WSU	1-5	<i>Most students at this University have values and attitudes similar to mine. The student friendships I have developed have been personally satisfying.</i>
Belonging: feelings of general social connection at WSU	1 - 4	<i>WSU is a place where I feel like I belong. WSU is a place where I feel lonely. (reverse scored)</i>
Institutional and Goal Commitment: importance and confidence in being successful at WSU	1-5	<i>It is important to me to graduate from college. It is important to me to graduate from this University.</i>
Academic Self-Efficacy – Courses: confidence in ability to perform behaviors related to course work	1 - 10	<i>Manage time effectively. Keep up to date with your schoolwork.</i>
Academic Self-Efficacy- Social: confidence in ability to socially interact in courses	1 - 10	<i>Participate in class discussions. Ask a professor a question.</i>
Peer Self-Efficacy: confidence in ability to interact with peers	1 - 10	<i>Make new friends at college. Join a student organization.</i>

Who participated in the WOW evaluation?

There were 775 students who completed the post survey. The participants generally represented the new WSU student population. We removed 35 outliers with extreme scores on measured outcomes resulting in a sample of 740 students. See Figure 1 for descriptive information about the participating students.

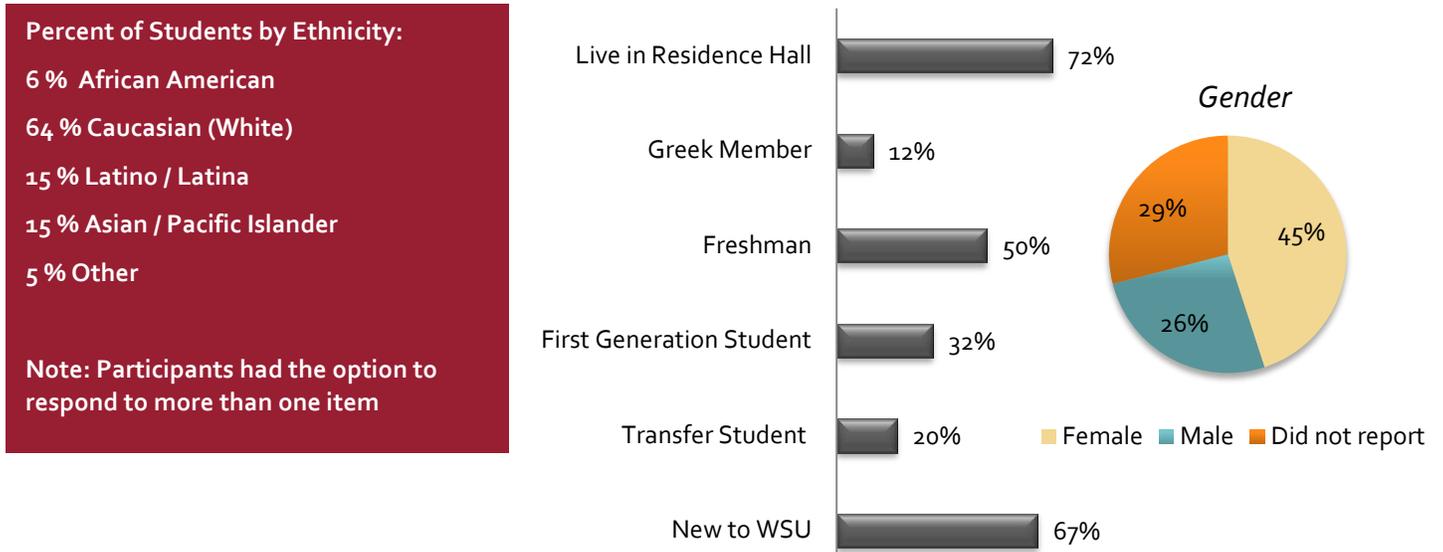


Figure 1. Participant Demographics

EVALUATION FINDINGS

What was the attendance for different types of WOW events?

The reported attendance in WOW events indicates that the most attended events were social events on campus. See Figure 2. The least attended events were the wsYOU conference events.

Between 3 and 17% of students reported not knowing about different types of WOW events (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. WOW Activity Attendance

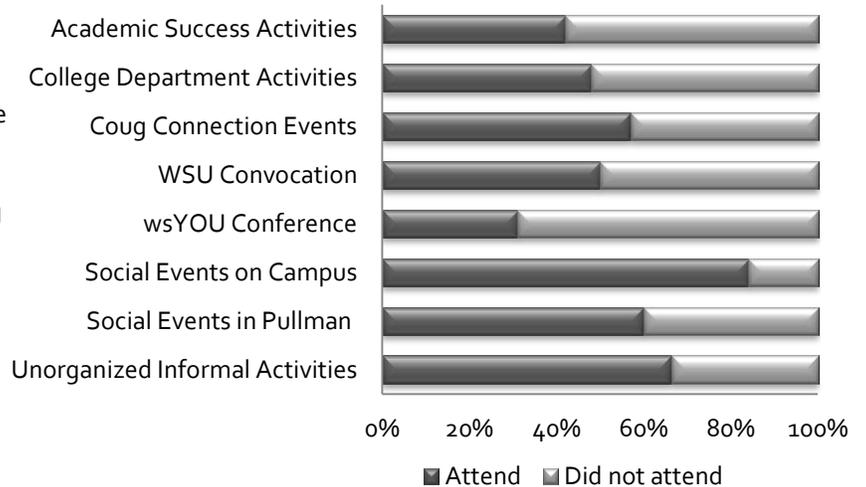


Figure 2. WOW Activity Attendance

"I didn't hear about any events, so I wasn't able to attend anything. More advertising for events in places other than the guidebook app would make it easier to participate in events."

How did the participants feel at the beginning of the fall 2014 semester?

Overall, students reported moderate to high scores on the outcomes measured (see Figure 4). Students reported moderately high positive affect ($M = 3.39, SD = .73$) and relatively low negative affect ($M = 1.89, SD = .62$), which represent an overall sense of general wellbeing on average. Students also reported moderately high academic integration at WSU so far ($M = 3.75, SD = .53$), high institutional and goal commitment ($M = 4.41, SD = .59$), and moderately high sense of social integration ($M = 3.64, SD = .70$) at WSU and sense of belonging ($M = 2.97, SD = .56$). Students also reported moderately high academic self-efficacy in terms of coursework ($M = 7.10, SD = 1.66$), social aspects of academics ($M = 6.60, SD = 2.01$), and peer self-efficacy ($M = 6.26, SD = 1.96$).

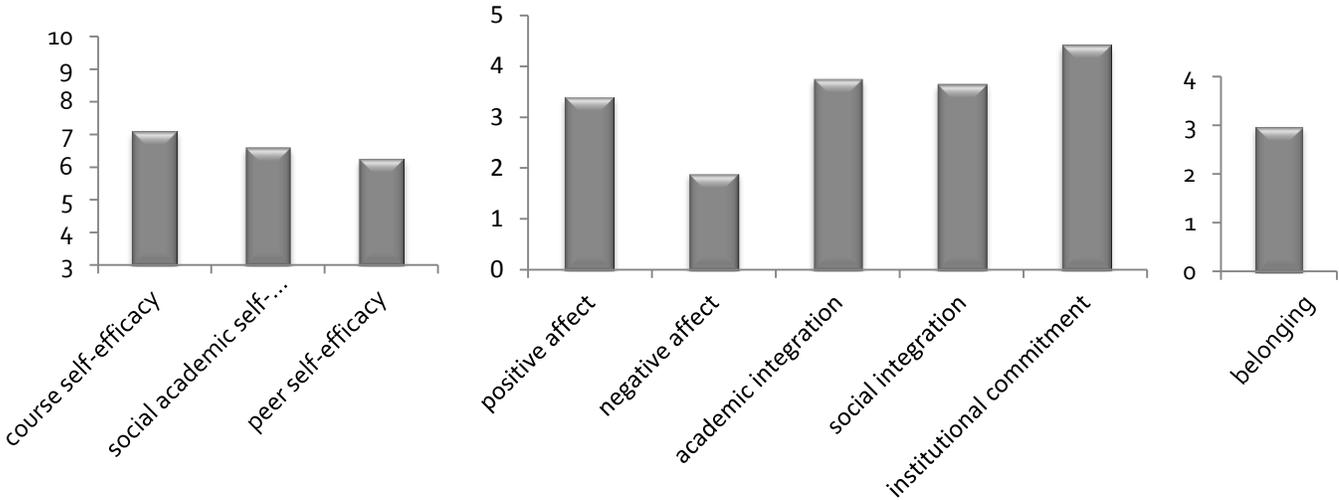
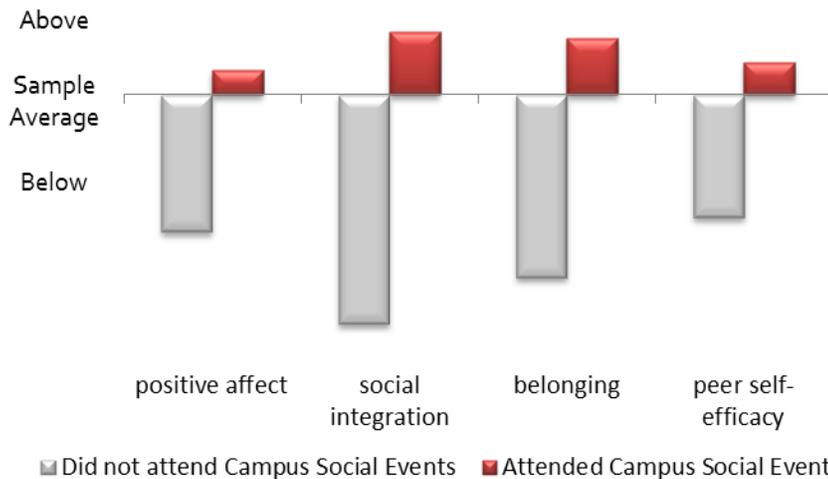


Figure4. Sample Mean Scores on Outcome Scores

Are student outcomes different for those that attended WOW activities?

To answer this question a series of Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) tests were conducted to examine if those that attended the different types of WOW activities had different outcomes compared to those that did not attend for each type of activity. An overall test of significance was supported in all MANOVA analyses ($p < .01$). The graphs reported below represent results from follow-up analyses to determine which outcomes were different based on attendance in each type of WOW activity.

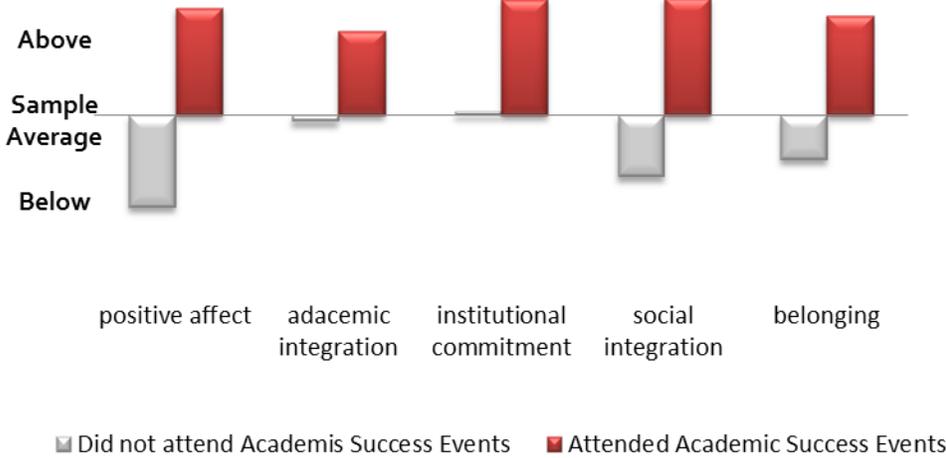
Graphs depict the outcomes for attenders (in crimson/dark) and non-attenders (grey/light) that were significantly different. The line in the middle of each graph represents the overall sample average, with scores above that line representing higher than average scores for a particular group and scores below that line representing lower than average scores for a particular group. **All scores presented in graphs are significantly different with attenders reporting higher and non-attenders lower scores.**



On-Campus Social Events

Students who participated in **social events on campus** reported significantly (Wilks' Lambda = .96, $F(9, 573) = 2.99, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .05$) more positive well-being (positive affect; $F = 5.87, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .01$), higher social integration ($F = 20.51, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .03$), belonging at WSU ($F = 12.53, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .02$), and peer self-efficacy ($F = 5.03, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .01$) compared to those who did not attend. See Figure 5a.

Figure5a. Significant Differences for Attendance at Campus Social Events



Academic Success Events

Students who attended **academic success events** reported significantly (Wilks' Lambda = .95, $F(9, 574) = 3.10, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .05$) more positive well-being (affect; $F = 14.79, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .03$), greater academic integration ($F = 3.69, p = .05, \eta_p^2 = .01$), institutional and goal commitment ($F = 5.49, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .01$), social integration ($F = 12.66, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .02$), and belonging ($F = 7.39, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .01$) compared to those who did not attend. See Figure 5b.

Figure 5b. Significant Differences for Attendance at Academic Success Events

"Week of Welcome was very helpful for easing the transition into WSU, especially the optional meetings regarding academic success in college, etc. It would've been much worse to go straight into classes right off the bat."

College / Department Events

Students who attended **college or department events** reported significantly (Wilks' Lambda = .93, $F(9, 572) = 4.74, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .07$) more positive well-being (affect; $F = 15.37, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .03$), greater academic integration ($F = 6.43, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .01$), institutional and goal commitment ($F = 7.88, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .01$), social integration ($F = 27.05, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .05$), belonging ($F = 15.04, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .03$) and social academic self-efficacy ($F = 5.96, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .01$) and peer self-efficacy ($F = 14.06, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .02$) compared to those who did not attend. See Figure 5c below.

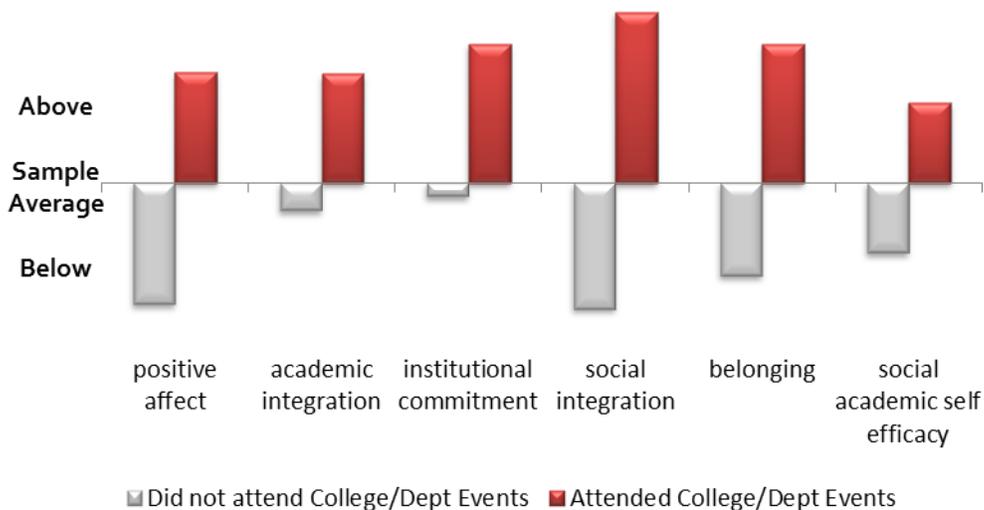


Figure 5c. Significant Differences for Attendance at College or Department Events

Coug Connection Events

Students who participated in **Coug Connection events** reported significantly (Wilks' Lambda = .94, $F(9, 571) = 3.75, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .06$) more positive well-being (affect; $F = 8.28, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .01$), greater academic integration ($F = 4.72, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .01$), social integration ($F = 22.64, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .04$), institutional commitment ($F = 5.34, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .01$), greater sense of belonging at WSU ($F = 8.61, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .02$), and peer self-efficacy ($F = 5.92, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .01$) compared to those who did not attend. See Figure 5d to the left.

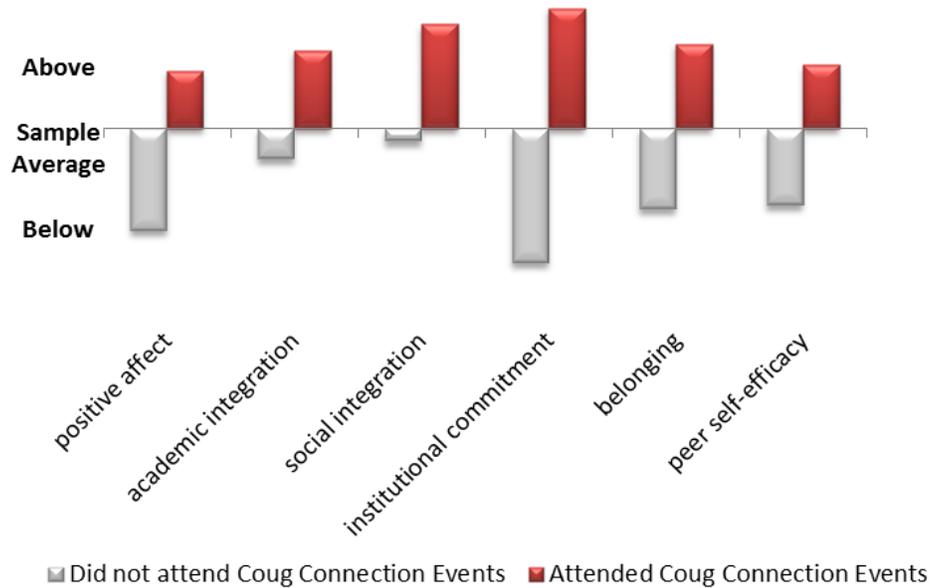


Figure 5d. Significant Differences for Attendance at Coug Connection Events

"[WOW] was great! I'm still hanging out with people that I met and feel as if I have a good group of friends who help me work through classes when I'm having a tough time."

wsYou Conference Events

Students who attended **wsYou conference events** reported significantly (Wilks' Lambda = .95, $F(9, 565) = 3.15, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .05$) more positive well-being (affect; $F = 3.91, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .01$), greater, social integration ($F = 13.72, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .02$), belonging ($F = 5.38, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .01$), and social academic self-efficacy ($F = 5.60, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .01$), and peer self-efficacy ($F = 8.14, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .01$) compared to those who did not attend. See Figure 5e below.

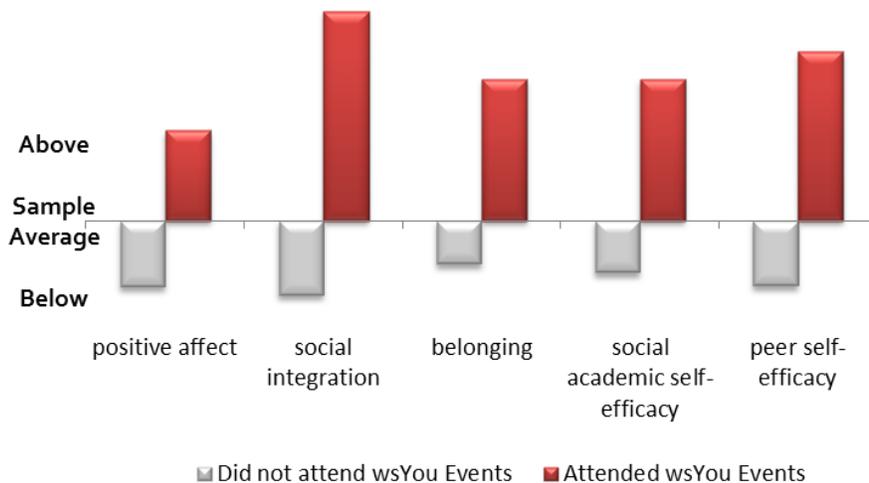


Figure 5e. Significant Differences for Attendance at wsYou Events

WSU Convocation

Students who attended **WSU Convocation** reported significantly (Wilks' Lambda = .92, $F(9, 569) = 5.17, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .08$) more institutional commitment ($F 9.21, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .02$), social integration ($F 30.03, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .05$), belonging ($F 12.62, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .02$) and peer self-efficacy ($F 8.36, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .01$) compared to those who did not attend. See Figure 5f Below.

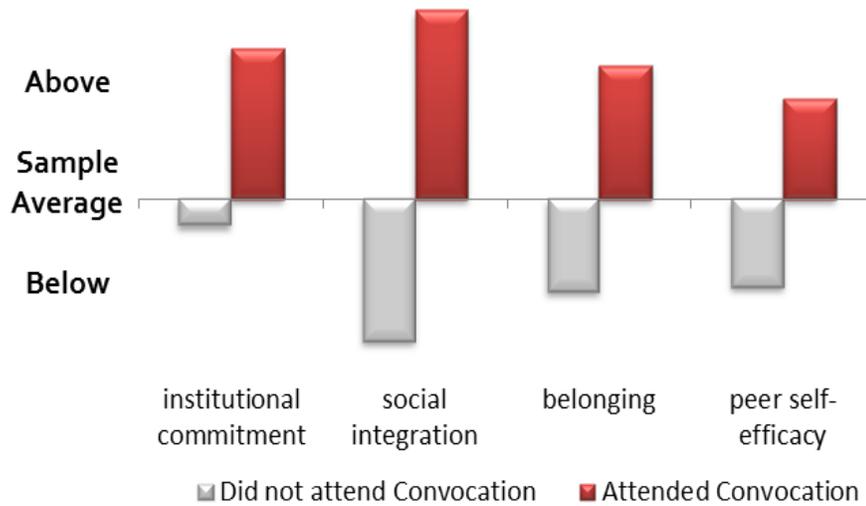


Figure5f. Significant Differences for Attendance at WSU Convocation

Students who attended Convocation reported high agreement about whether Convocation was educational, engaging, and inspiring. See Figure 6 below.



Figure6. Perceptions of WSU Convocation

“The week of welcome was an awesome way to get the year started.”

“My experience during Week of Welcome and meeting new people and creating good friendships and staying determined to do well in school has made me very excited and happy and satisfied to be at WSU.”

Summary of Attendance Results

- Wellbeing (positive affect) was higher for those who participated in campus social events, academic success, college/department events, Cougar connection events, and the wsYou conference.
- Academic integration was higher for those who participated in academic success, college/department events, and Cougar connection events.
- WSU commitment was higher for those who participated in academic success, college/department events, Cougar connection events, and Convocation.
- Social integration and Belonging was higher for those who participated in all types of events during WOW.
- Academic – course self-efficacy was not different for those who attended or did not attend WOW events.
- Academic – social self-efficacy was higher for those who attended college/department events, and wsYou conference events.
- Peer self-efficacy was higher for those who participated in Cougar connection, wsYou conference, and Convocation events.

Table 2. Outcomes significantly higher for those that attended WOW events (by event type)

% Attended	WOW Event	Positive Affect	Neg. Affect	Academic Integrat.	WSU Commit.	Social Integrat.	Belong.	Academ. Course Self- Efficacy	Academ.Social Self-Efficacy	Peer Self- Efficacy
84%	Campus Social	Shaded				Shaded				
57%	Cougar Connection	Shaded		Shaded		Shaded				Shaded
50%	Convocation			Shaded		Shaded				Shaded
48%	College/Dept			Shaded		Shaded		Shaded		
42%	Academic Success			Shaded		Shaded				
31%	wsYou					Shaded		Shaded		Shaded

Note. Shaded = Significantly higher for those that attended the WOW events.

Did students make connections during WOW that align with their values or what is important to them?

Students were asked to think about how Week of Welcome may have impacted their experience at WSU so far. They responded to the following question regarding making social connections with individuals, groups, living communities, and academic connections: *Did you make any connections during WOW that align with your values or what is important to you?* Students responded with the most agreement to making social connections with individuals (e.g., friends) (70%) based on WOW. See Figure 7.

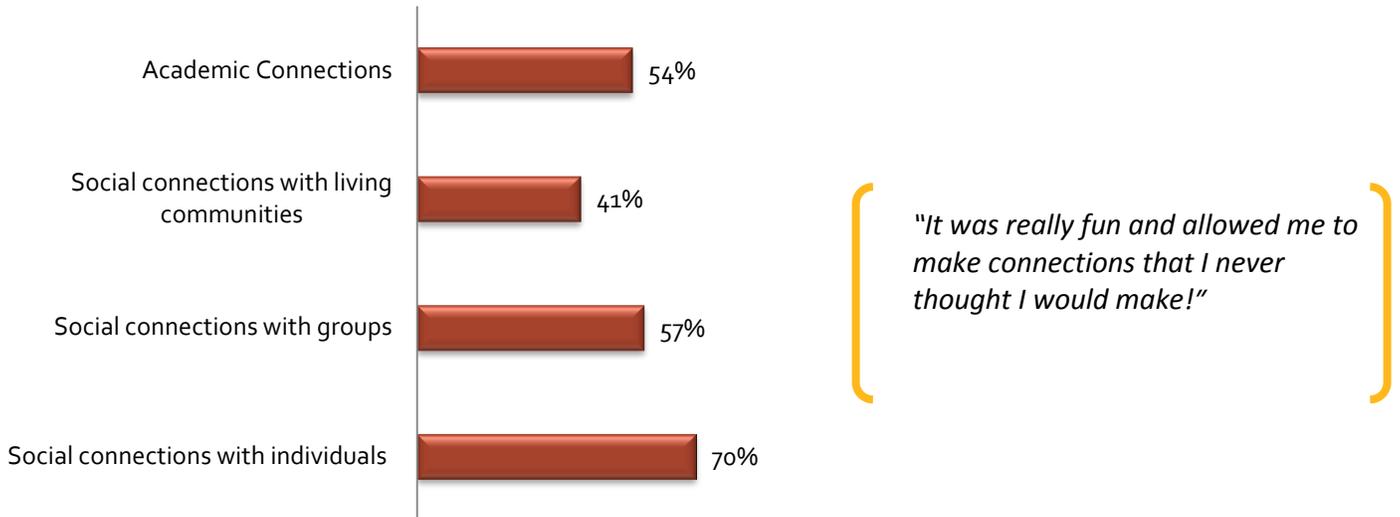


Figure 7. Percent Agreement with Social Connections made during WOW

Was the Guidebook App used?

Only 58% of participants reported downloading the Guidebook App for WOW, and 40% reported using the App for WOW events "Somewhat or A Lot" and 47% reported the App was "Useful or Very Useful". See Figure 8. This indicates that use of the Guidebook App was low to moderate, which could explain why between 3 and 17% of students reported not knowing about different types of events. **Increasing knowledge of events through apps or other forms of media is recommended.**

"Although most people have smart phones, I think it would be great to have an email or something every day describing the events of the week/day."

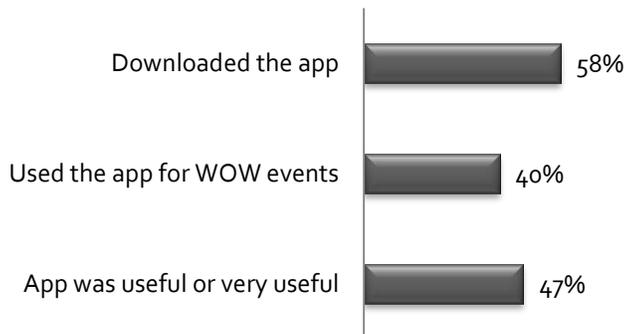


Figure 8. Responses About the Use of the Guidebook App

DISCUSSION

Participation in the WOW evaluation was higher in 2014 ($N = 775$) compared to 2013 ($N = 299$) and provided a good representation of new WSU students. Overall, the findings suggest that participation in WOW activities was associated with positive outcomes for students that reflect overall wellbeing (e.g., positive and negative affect), academic integration /commitment /efficacy, and social connections. We cannot determine whether students who are more positive are more likely to attend or whether attending events resulted in greater positive outcomes in students. **We can conclude that those who report attendance in WOW activities also report more positive outcomes 2-3 weeks into the fall semester.** Also, 35 students were outliers due to extreme scores, largely negative affect and perceptions. These students may represent an at-risk group of students.

The differences reported represent small effect sizes, or a relatively small difference between groups. However, average perceptions were high and leave little room for improvement. Although not reported above, results were similarly positive for attendance in community events and unorganized events with wellbeing, academic, and social outcomes higher for those that participated. This suggests that participation in a variety of events is likely beneficial to fostering overall success in student transition and retention by targeting academic, social, and personal wellbeing.

Support for WOW goals

Social integration and belonging were higher for those that participated in all types of WOW events. ***These findings support the WOW goal of developing relationships with university, college/department, peer, staff, and community.*** The greatest attendance was for social events on campus, at 84%. The purpose of these events is to provide a strong social connection to campus and it appears that participation in these events aligns with this goal. Findings also suggest that these outcomes are also higher for those participating in other types of events (e.g., academic success, college/department, Cougar connection, wsYou).

Academic integration and institutional goals and commitment were all higher for those that participated in Cougar connection, college/department events, and academic success events. ***These findings support the WOW goal of laying the foundation for scholastic and civic engagement throughout college.*** About 42% of students reported participating in academic success events, 48% reported participating in college or department sponsored events, and 57% participated in cougar connection events.

Positive affect (wellbeing) was higher for those participating across all types of WOW events except Convocation, however, students overwhelmingly agreed that Convocation was educational, engaging, and inspiring. ***These findings support the WOW goal of promoting positive attitudes, and stimulating an environment for learning.***

The intentional structure of the 2014 WOW events into thematic days represented academic skills, social identity, interpersonal relationships, personal development, and integrating colleges and departments. ***This intentional structure, along with the above results regarding attendance to these events, supports the WOW goal of providing healthy, active and engaging events for students as they adjust to college life in Pullman.*** For example, 57% of students reported participating in Cougar connection events, which were designed to connect students with groups on campus that could help foster their social identity on campus. Results support this as an effective way to foster positive outcomes for students that include social and academic connections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Future evaluation should consider different methods to increase baseline survey participation in order to better establish evidence of the effects of WOW by documenting change. Future steps include conducting follow-up assessments.
- The intentional and focused structure of WOW activities should be continued with an emphasis on generating increased knowledge and attendance at the academic and other voluntary personal development activities (e.g., wsYou conference).



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Appendix A: Week of Welcome Logic Model

Week of Welcome Mission: Week of Welcome 2014 will build upon the past foundation of strong academic and social programming while adding greater structure and intentionality throughout the week. Programming will begin with a focus on helping students meet basic needs and make connections in living communities then progress to address academic preparedness, social identity, first-year transitional experiences and campus engagement.

