

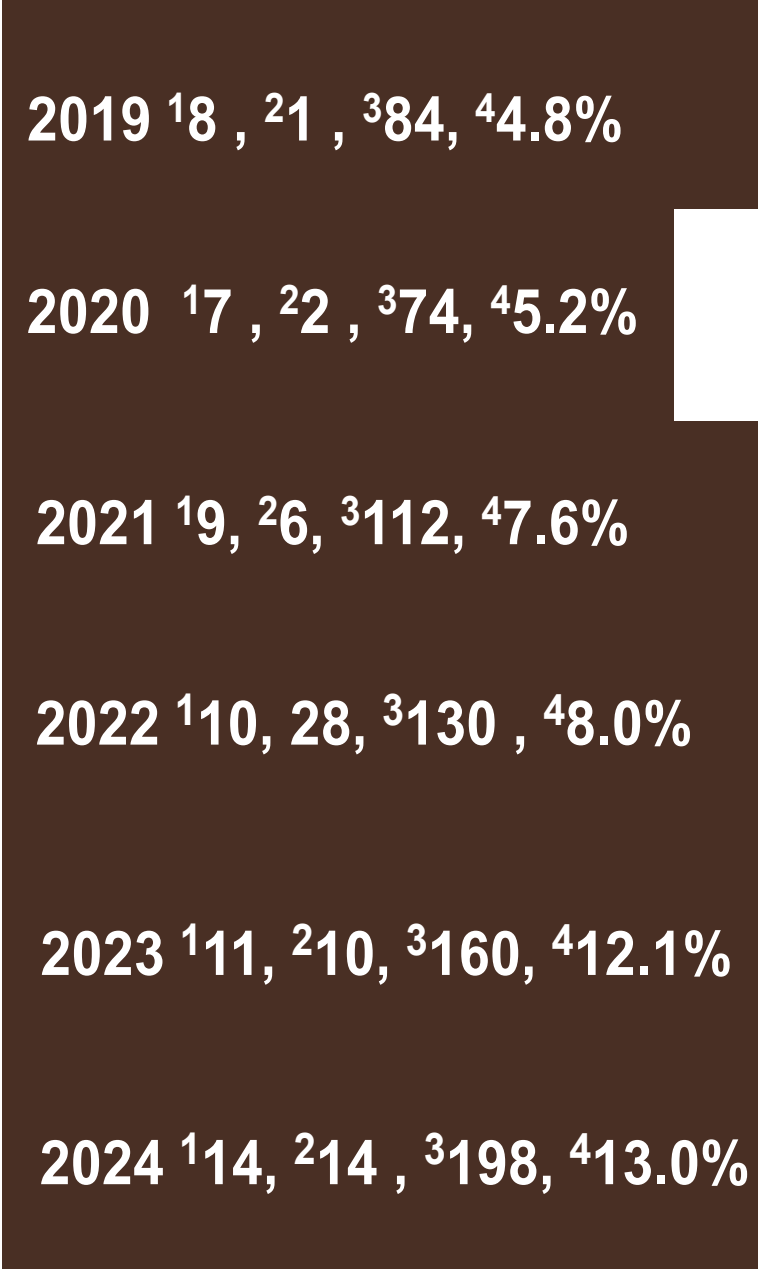
# Evolution of an FYE Course

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## Background

Figure 1. Enrollment Growth 19-24



STEP 1102, the UW 1-credit optional 12-week biweekly course, introduces students to self-exploration, campus resources, and tools for academic and wellness support. *Figure 1* shows enrollment growth by <sup>1</sup>sections offered, <sup>2</sup>sections connected to Living Learning Communities (LLCs), <sup>3</sup>total students enrolled, and <sup>4</sup>percentage students per freshmen class enrollment.

This course is taught mainly by professional staff, including advisors and student affairs staff. Some sections are tailored to certain groups and tied to LLCs, such as Exploring Health Careers, Exploratory Studies, or Outdoor

Recreation. The campus knowledge that professional staff can offer provides students with more dedicated focus on resources and UW-specific knowledge.

Annual course evaluations guided changes to the course and instructor training. In 2019, the semester schedule was busy and confusing, so it was replaced with more flexible boardgame. With requests for more hands-on learning, the colloquium sessions included more training in this area. Another big change is now 100% of the courses are connected to LLCs (see research for justification of changes).

## Data Collection & Analysis

Alongside the course evaluation, this 2024 IRB study provides further feedback about the course. Out of the 198 students enrolled in STEP 1102, 131 completed the survey (73.6%). Both quantitative and qualitative responses were collected and analyzed, and themes were generated.

## Results

In a question related to meeting course goals, participants rated “explore self-interests” lowest at 4.64 with “independence skills” such as time management, goal-setting, being rated just slightly higher at 4.84 (see *Figure 3*). The open-ended, qualitative responses from 2024 indicate the instructor or teaching methods to be the biggest benefit at 31%. The perception that building a sense of “belonging” is one of the course’s greatest benefits increased from 8% to 14% (see *Figure 4*).

Figure 3. 2024 Ratings of Course Goals Met

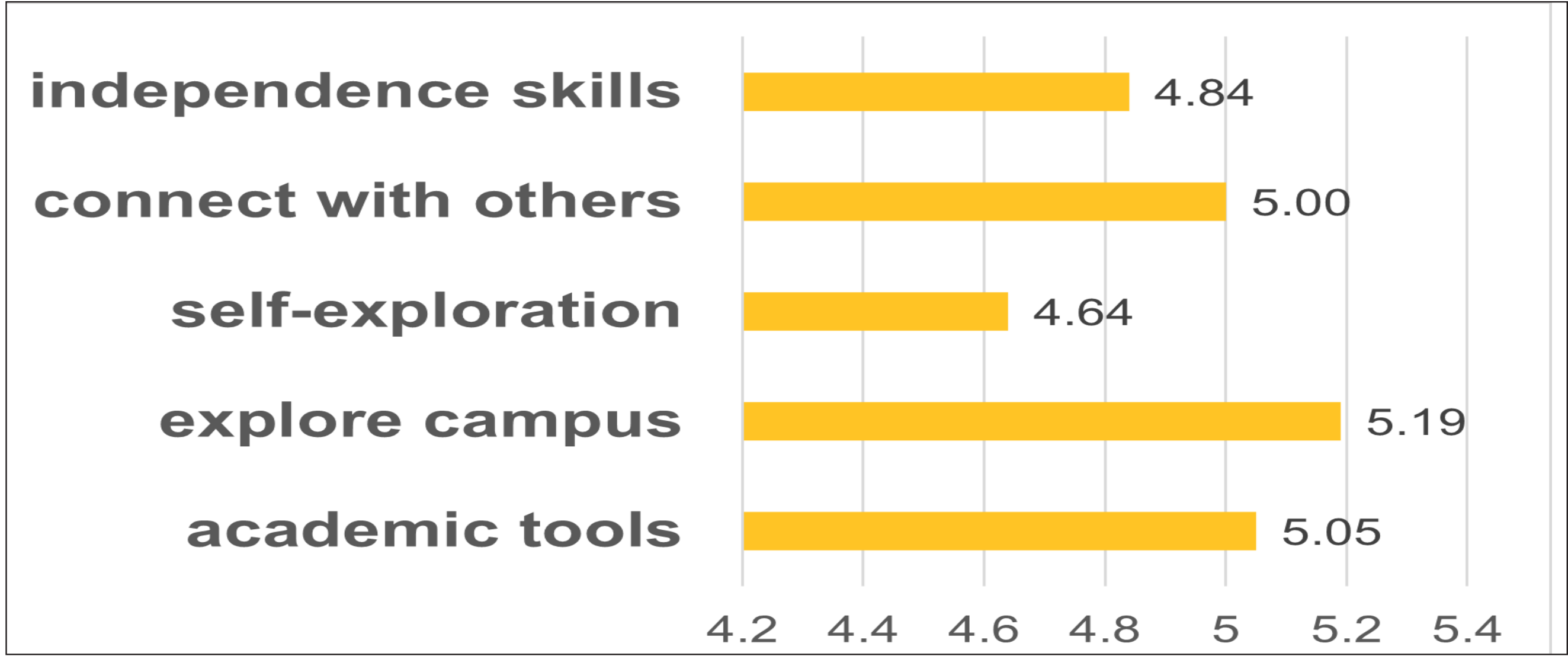


Figure 2. First-year students at the University of Wyoming are welcomed by the Mascot, Cowboy Joe.

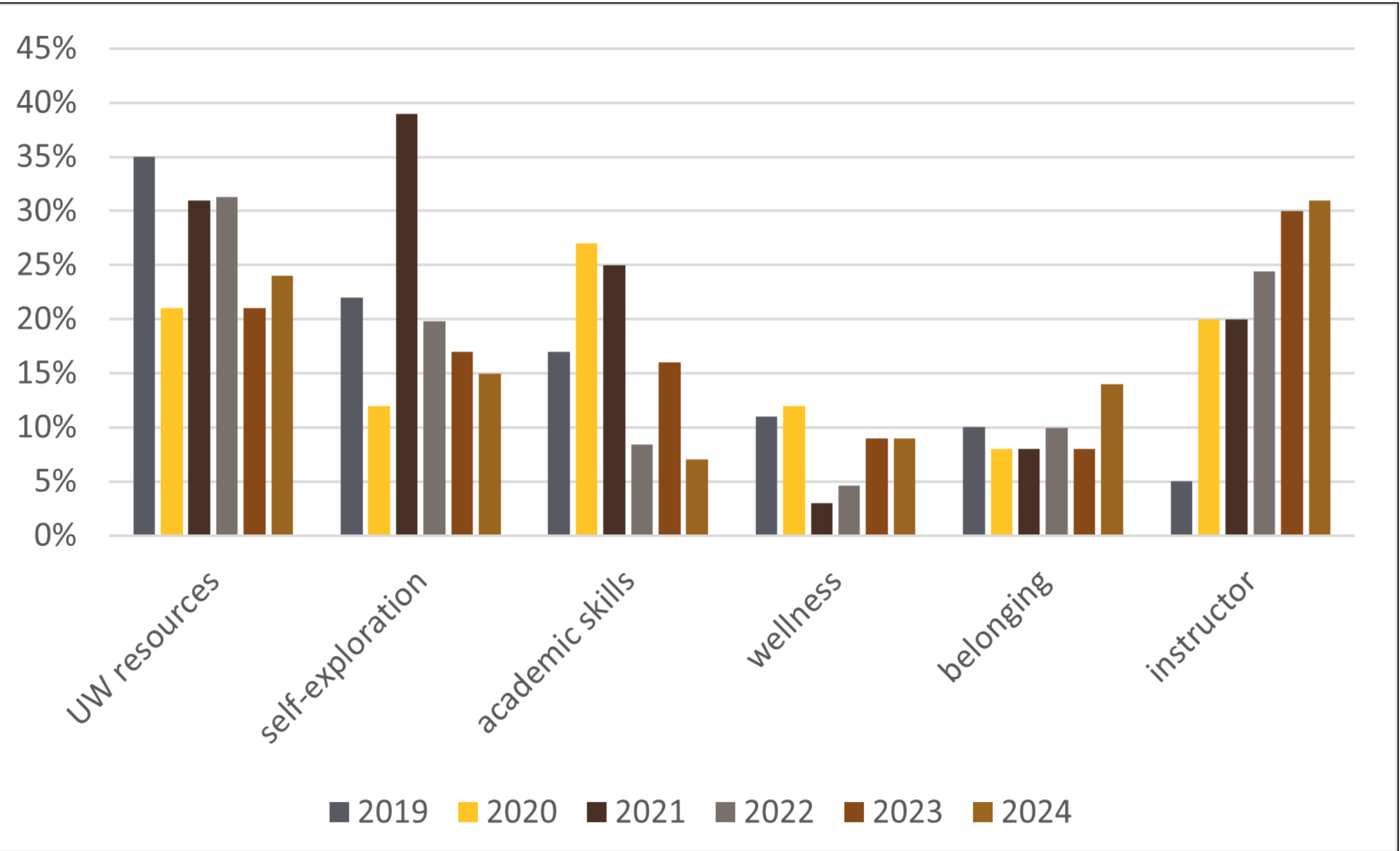
## Future Direction

The new curriculum will be implemented in Fall 2025 across 16 sections of the FYE. There will be follow-up research about student perspectives of *Create Your UW*. The new curriculum includes five student-centered units: Reflect, Explore, Create, Act, and Finish.

Figure 5. Course Semester Plan Before and After Changes



Figure 4. Perception of Course Benefits by Year



## Discussion

In 2024, the participants rated “instructor / teaching methods” the most beneficial aspect of the course. This may be attributed to continued improvement in the 8-hour virtual summer colloquium series for instructors. The increase in value of “belonging” likely correlates to the fact that 100% of the sections are now linked to Living Learning Communities

Students rated “explore self-interests” lowest at 4.64 on a 6-point scale and lower in the open-ended survey. For this reason, a new curriculum, *Create Your UW*, was developed with input from faculty and guidance from the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

## Acknowledgements

I’m grateful to LeaRN Director April Heaney and the course participants and faculty who contributed to its success, especially April French, Jessica Rardin, and Ken Sims. Thanks also to Dilnoza Khasilova for her help with attaining the IRB.

## References

Follow QR code for a digital copy of this poster and more information about the course and to access the references:  
[www.uwyo.edu/fye/step-into-college/](http://www.uwyo.edu/fye/step-into-college/)

