

# STUDENT BELONGING THROUGH PROGRAM ORIENTATION

## INTRODUCTION

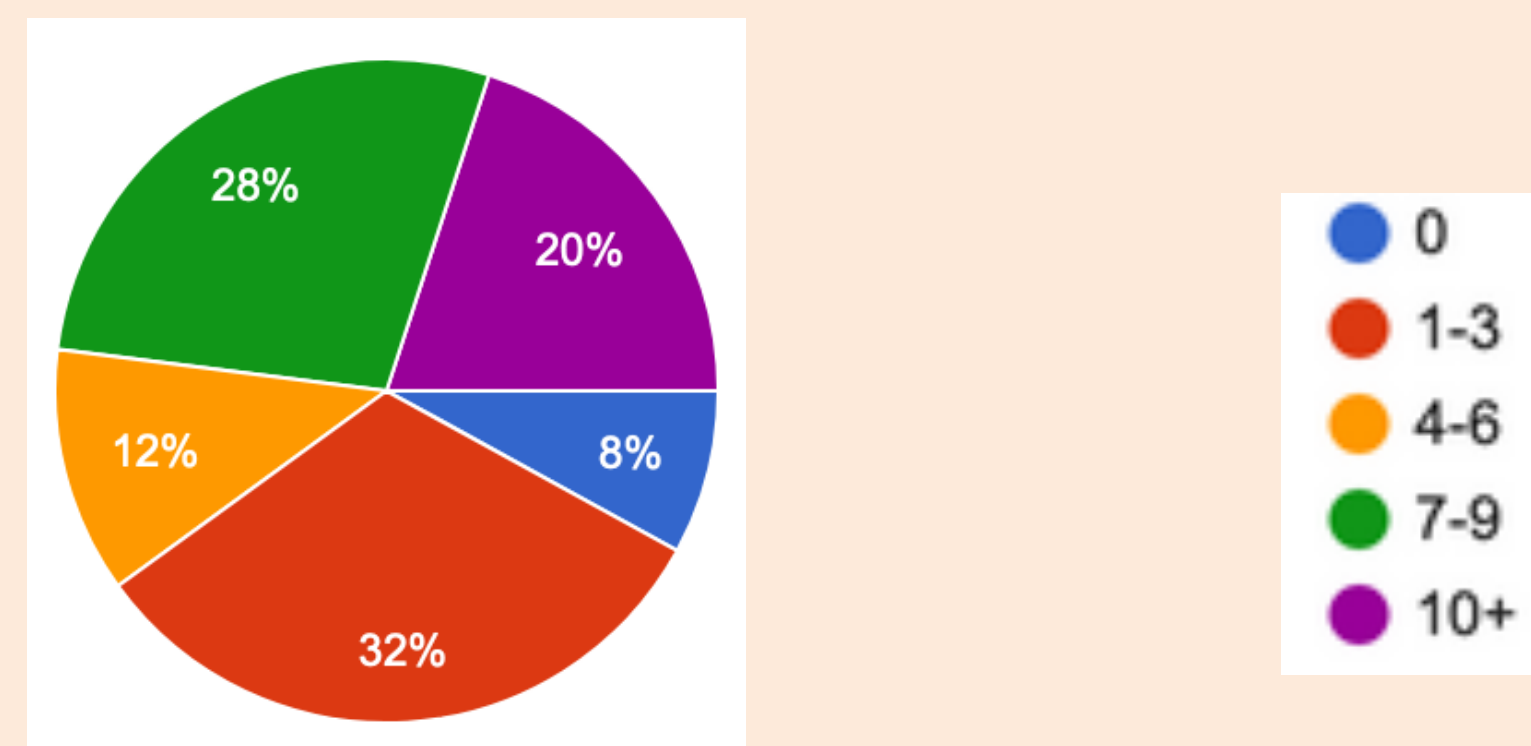
THE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM AT UAF IS ENTIRELY ONLINE AND ASYNCHRONOUS. DUE TO THIS, THERE ARE LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES TO FOSTER CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PEERS AND BETWEEN STUDENTS AND FACULTY. THIS PROJECT FOCUSED ON SURVEYING CURRENT SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS CONCERNING BOTH THEIR SENSE OF ACADEMIC BELONGING AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM. FINDINGS WILL INFORM THE PROGRAM ORIENTATION CANVAS COURSE AND PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PROGRAM ON HOW TO INCREASE SOCIAL WORK STUDENT ENGAGEMENT.

## LITERATURE FINDINGS

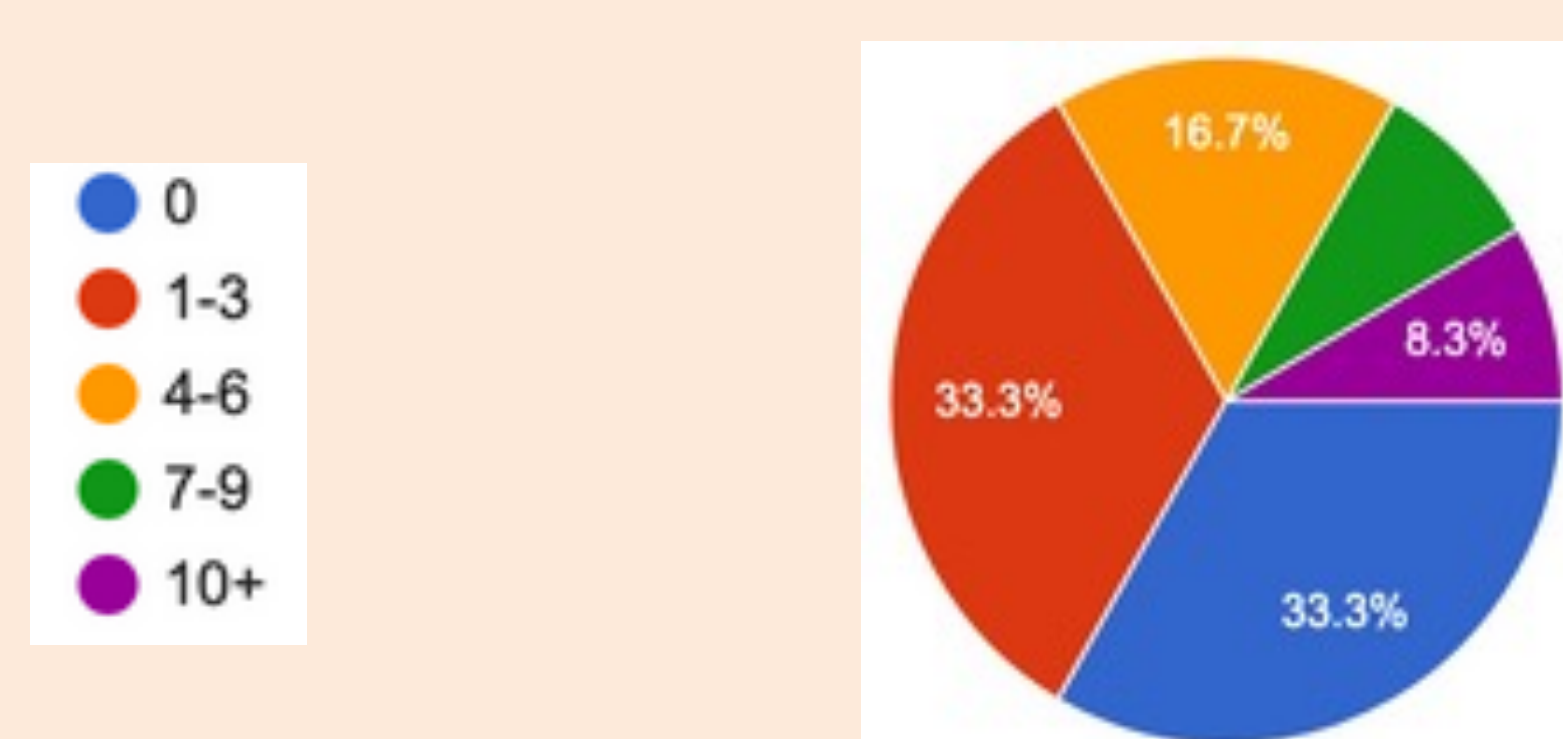
THE TERM *SENSE OF BELONGING* HAS HELD VARIOUS DEFINITIONS IN PREVIOUS RESEARCH. HOWEVER, COMMON THEMES AND KEY WORDS ASSOCIATED WITH SENSE OF BELONGING INCLUDE: ACCEPTANCE, RESPECT, INCLUSION, SUPPORT, AND MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT. TWO MAJOR FACTORS FOUND TO CONTRIBUTE TO STUDENTS' SENSE OF BELONGING INCLUDE QUALITY DISCUSSION (DIGIACOMO, ET AL., 2023; PILLOTI, ET AL., 2017; TICE ET AL., 2021), TEACHER QUALITY AND ENGAGEMENT (DIGIACOMO, ET AL., 2023; MENDOZA & VENABLES, 2023; PILLOTI ET AL., 2017; SMOYER, ET AL., 2020; TICE, ET AL., 2021), EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT (PILLOTI, ET AL., 2017; MENDOZA & VENABLES, 2023) AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEER-TO-PEER ENGAGEMENT (DIGIACOMO, ET AL., 2023; MENDOZA & VENABLES, 2023).

## SURVEY RESULTS

On average, how many times have you had one-on-one interaction with your social work instructor(s) in one semester? Examples of one-on-one interactions are emails, Zoom, phone or in-person contact with instructors that is specific to your experience in the class.

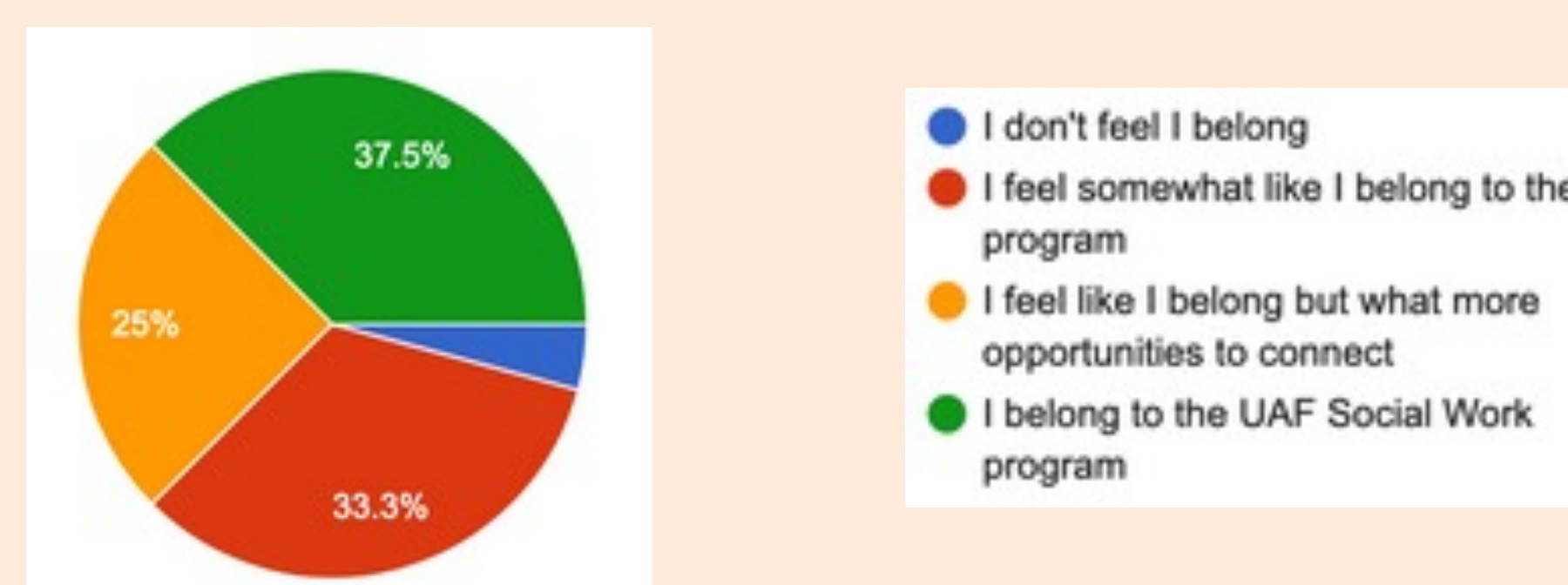


On average, how many times have you had one-on-one interaction with your social work peers outside of course-related activities in one semester?



“I THINK IT’S AS SIMPLE AS FEELING LIKE, NO MATTER YOUR CIRCUMSTANCE, THERE’S A PLACE FOR YOU TO COME AND LEARN”

How is your sense of academic belonging to the UAF Social Work program.



What elements of your courses increase your likelihood of engagement?



## IMPLICATIONS

TO INCREASE SENSE OF ACADEMIC BELONGING AND ENGAGEMENT:

- INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEER CONNECTION
- CREATE ONLINE COMMUNITY HUB FOR SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS
  - INCREASE INSTRUCTOR INTERACTION WITH INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS, VIDEOS

## STUDENT DESIGNED MODULES

HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL AS AN ONLINE STUDENT

- CANVAS USER GUIDES
- EFFECTIVE STUDY TIPS
- HOW TO MAKE CONNECTIONS
- SOCIAL WORK STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITY
  - ORGANIZATION OF STUDENT SOCIAL WORKERS (OSSW)
  - PHI ALPHA HONOR SOCIETY
  - ALASKA NATIVE SOCIAL WORKERS ASSOCIATION (ANSWA)

## EXPERIENCE GAINED

- IRB APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS EXPOSURE
- CANVAS MODULE BUILDING
- PARTICIPATION RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES
- CITI RESEARCH ETHICS TRAINING
  - SURVEY CONSTRUCTION
- QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH RESULTS ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION
- USE AND TRANSLATE RESEARCH EVIDENCE TO INFORM AND IMPROVE PRACTICE, POLICY AND SERVICE DELIVERY

