


# Sense of Belonging

Before we begin, we ask you to be thinking about these three questions.

What does the phrase “sense of belonging” mean to you?

Think about a time when you experienced a sense of belonging in a group. How did you know you belonged?

Think about a time when you struggled to feel that you belonged in a group. What happened?



Sense of Belonging  
New Deac Week  
Wake Forest University

Betsy Chapman, Executive Director of Family Communications  
Brad Shugoll, Director of Service and Leadership  
Tim Wilkinson, Executive Director of Student Engagement

# Introductions



Tim Wilkinson



Betsy Chapman  
(aka Daily Deac)



Brad Shugoll

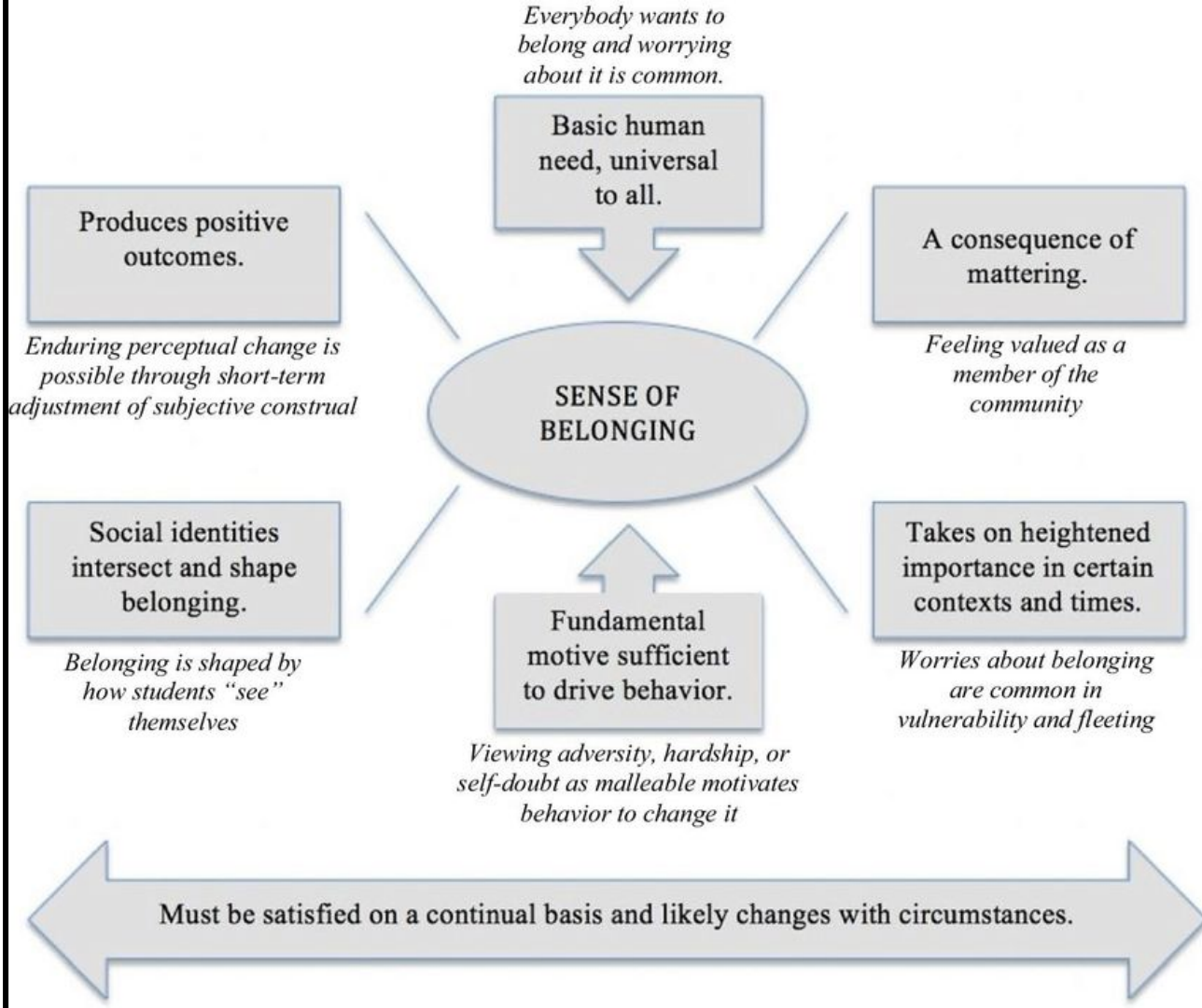


*"Don't worry, Mom and Dad. I promise to only make mistakes you never made."*

# Roadmap for this Session

- Overview of Sense of Belonging
- Belonging at Wake Forest: How this Manifests with Students
- What Can Families Do to Help their Student?
- Belonging at Wake Forest: What the Data Tells Us
- Resources, Questions and Answers

# Belonging at Wake Forest: Part One





Everybody wants to belong

Worries about fitting in are common  
(for both students and families!)



Students want to feel valued as a member of the community

Community can be macro or micro





Worries about belonging are common, vulnerable and fleeting



Viewing adversity, hardship, or self-doubt as part of the transition to college can motivate behavioral change



Belonging is shaped by how  
students see themselves



Perceptual change is possible  
through short term adjustment of  
short term beliefs

Students will search for belonging  
again, and again, and again



OK, so how do we prepare you to leave for college?



Art by Hedger Humor

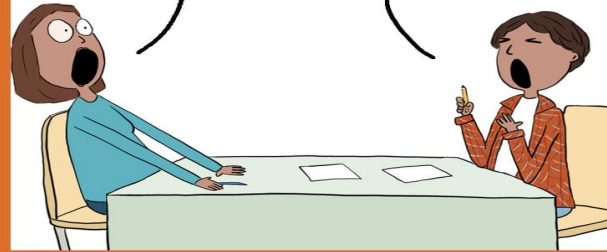
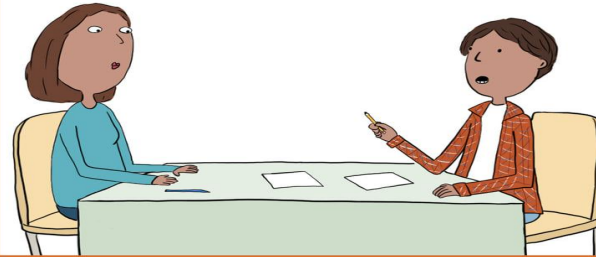
Uh... I thought **you** knew.

I thought **YOU** knew.



AHHHH!!

We know nothing!



# What Can Families Do to Help?

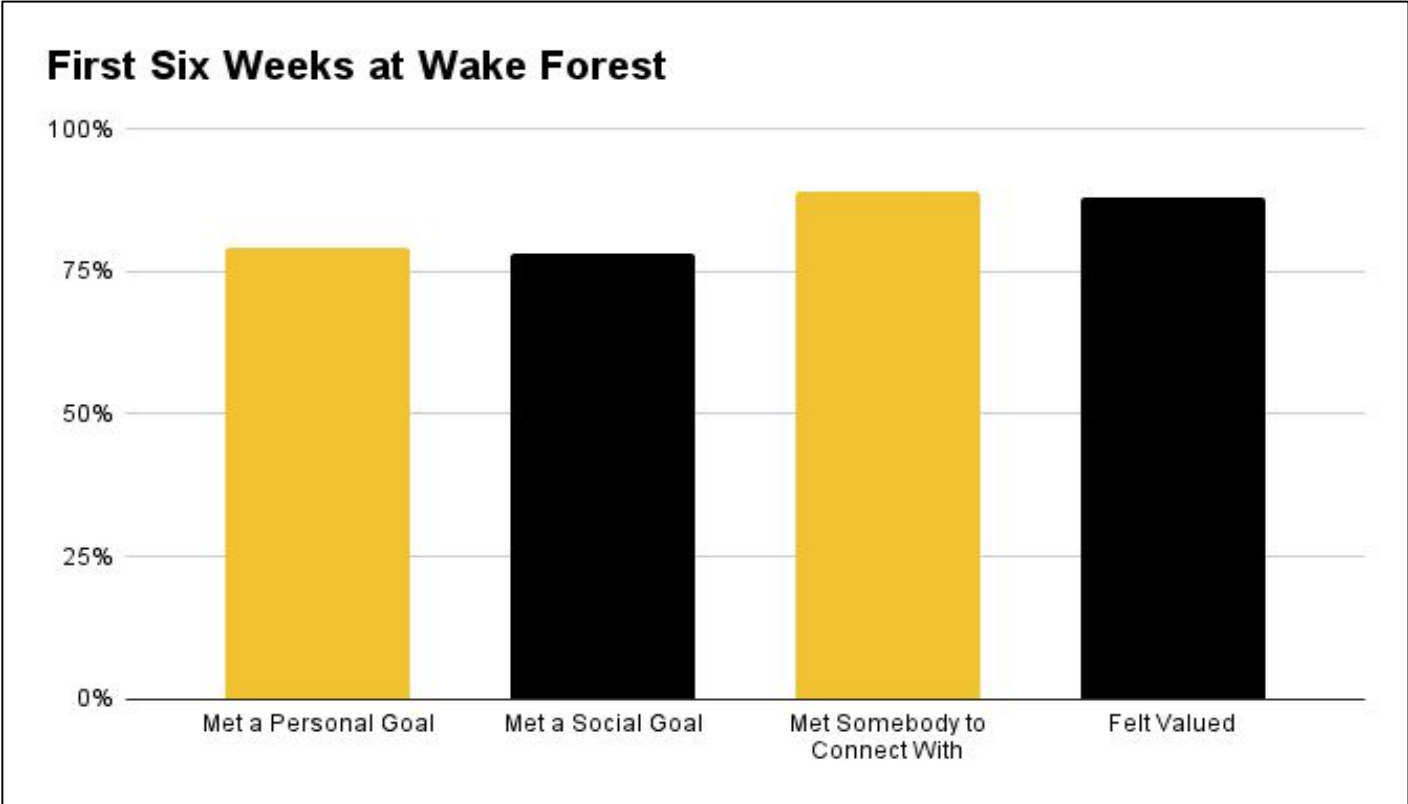
- Have realistic expectations: sense of belonging TAKES TIME. It could be 6 weeks, a semester, or ***more likely a full year***
- Meet your student where they are; their experience does not have to look like your experience. If your student isn't unhappy, *it is not a problem!*
- Get comfortable with your student's discomfort (frantic phone call).

# What Can Families Do To Help?

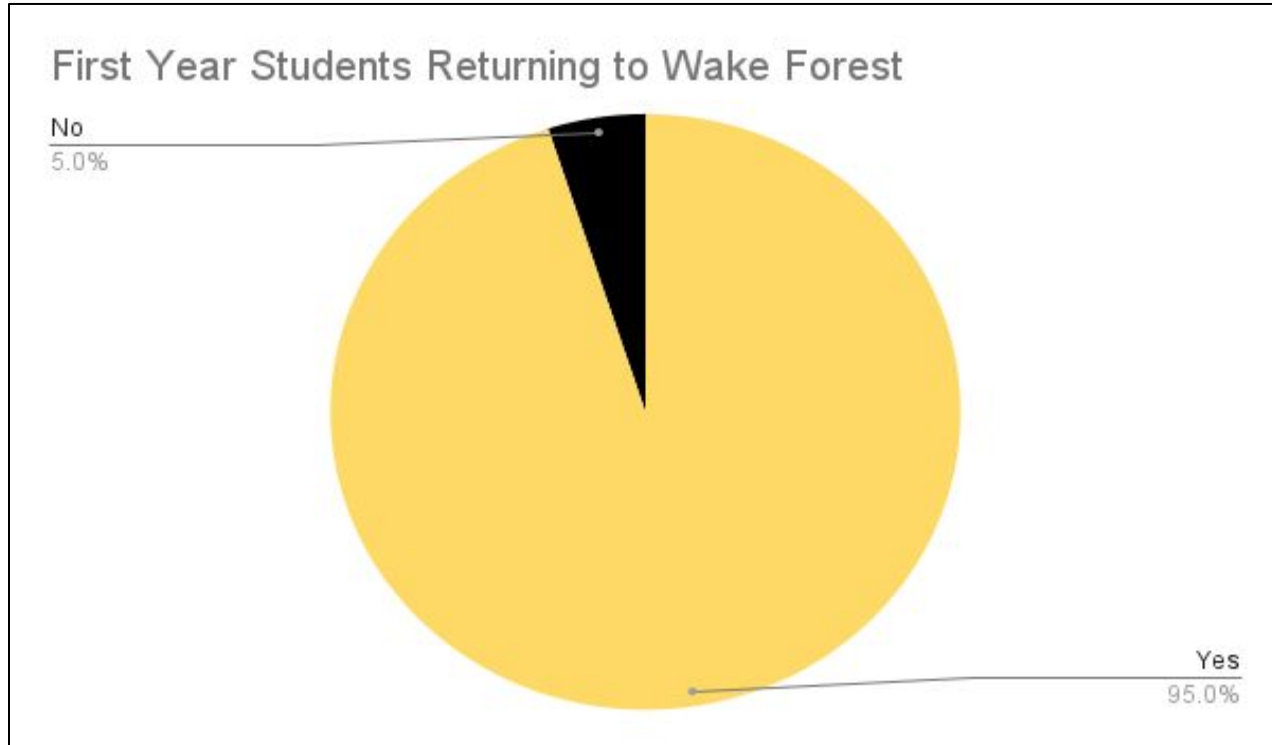
- Push them (gently, in whatever ways work best for your student) to go to events, activities, club meetings, etc. [Encourage your extroverted students to pull us introverts along :)]
- Stress kindness and empathy with your students - a sense of mattering to people can come from tiny micro moments - a please, a thank you, a holding the door, a “*you got this!*” Those things can build on each other.



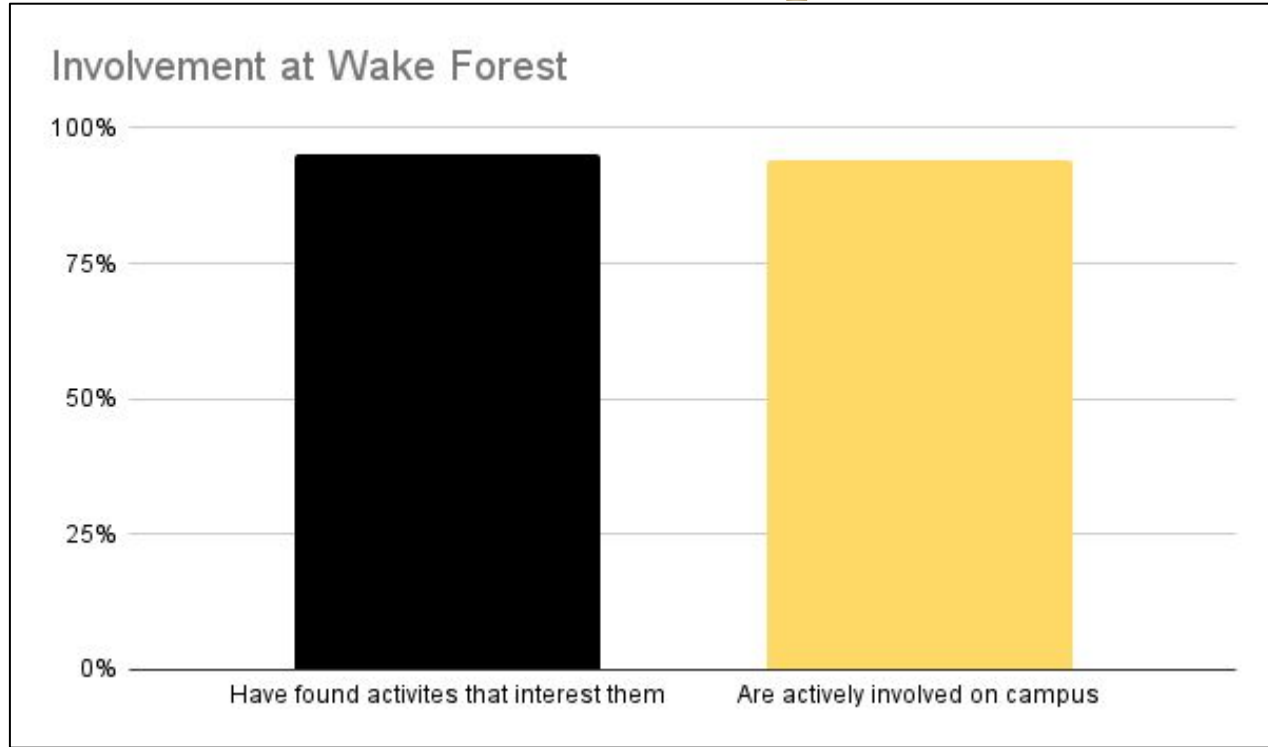
# First Six Weeks at Wake



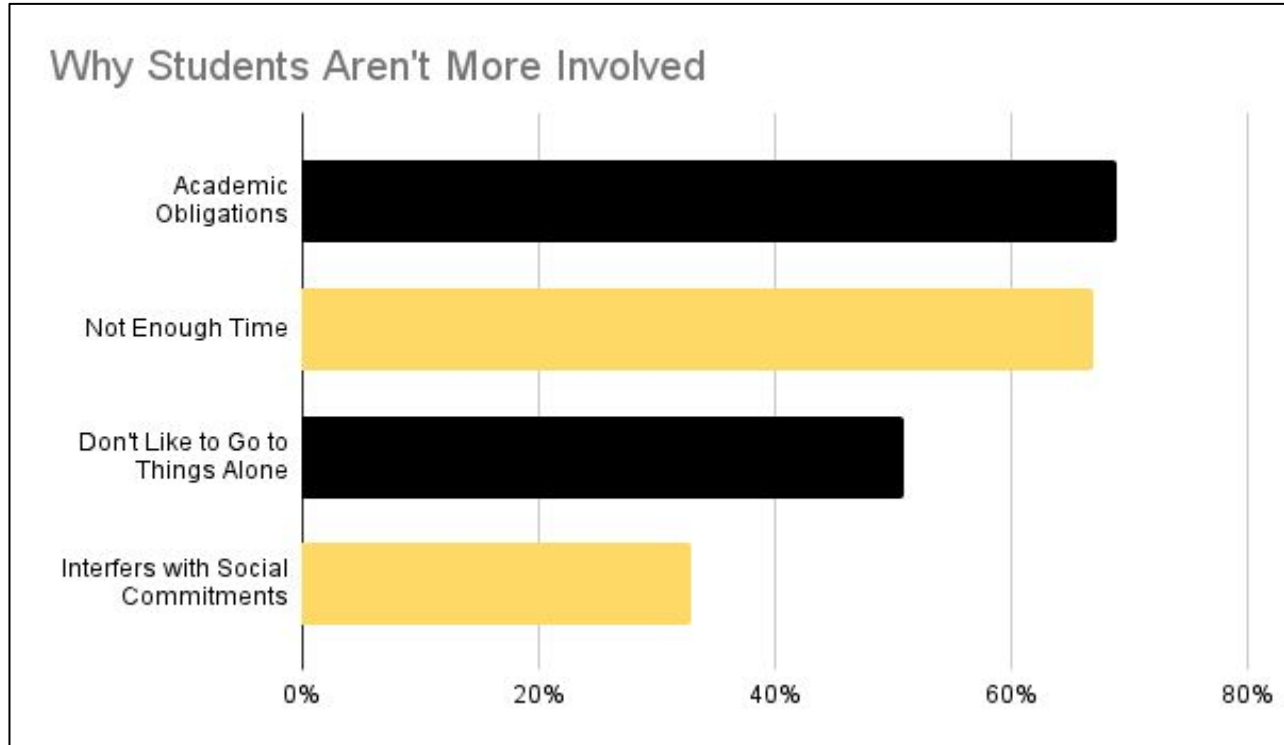
# First Year Students Returning to Wake



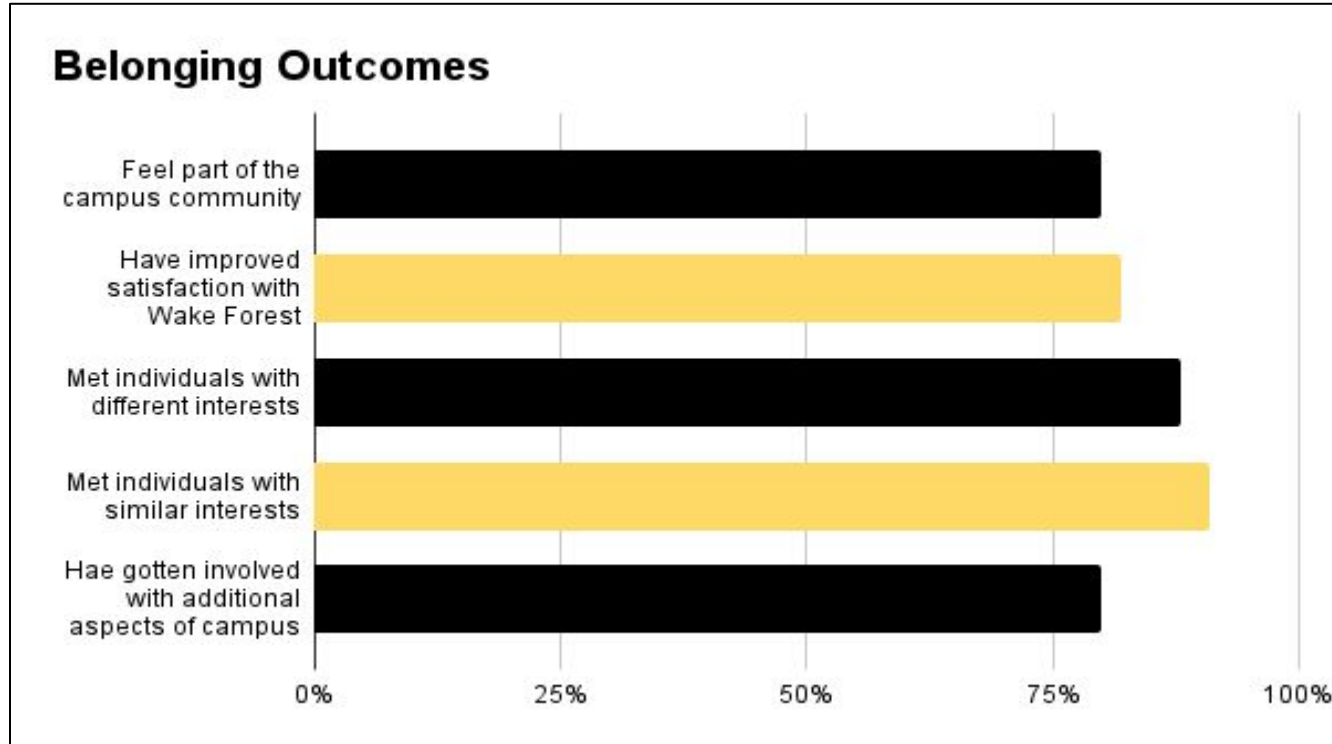
# Involvement at Wake (Sophomores-Seniors)



# Involvement at Wake



# Outcomes of Involvement



# Resources to Remember

- Office of Student Engagement/Tim's department - our job is literally to help every student find their place:  
<https://studentengagement.wfu.edu/>
- We Are Wake: 336.758.WAKE (2273) or <https://we.wfu.edu/>  
- you or your student can use We Are Wake for caring consultation if your student is struggling, and they will connect to campus resources
- Hit 'reply' on any Daily Deac or e-mail [parents@wfu.edu](mailto:parents@wfu.edu). Both go straight to Betsy Chapman.

# Tips from the Experts - For the Parents

- Give Them Space!!!
- Normalize the First Year Challenges
- Encourage Campus Connection
- Get Involved
- Check In

# Tips for the Students - From the Experts

- Get involved (both with the new and the familiar)
- Find connections
- Normalize the discomfort
- Use the resources that are right for you
- Be true to yourself - even if that changes





# Questions and Discussion