

Community Learning Initiatives: Awareness & Opinions of the University of Winnipeg Population

Dr. Nathan Hall
Department of Kinesiology
and Applied Health

Background

- Many universities have increased support for partnership development and community-relevant forms of scholarship^{1,2}
- Building partnerships between universities and marginalized inner-city populations helps generate ongoing opportunities for public scholarship and teaching social justice^{3,4}
- In 2009 the University of Winnipeg (UW) released a position paper focused on engaging community
- Community-engagement efforts at the UW need to be continually assessed through various methods to ensure that community engagement efforts are maintained⁵ and that policy is fully implemented
- The purpose of this study is to examine current knowledge and perceptions regarding the UW's community-learning initiatives

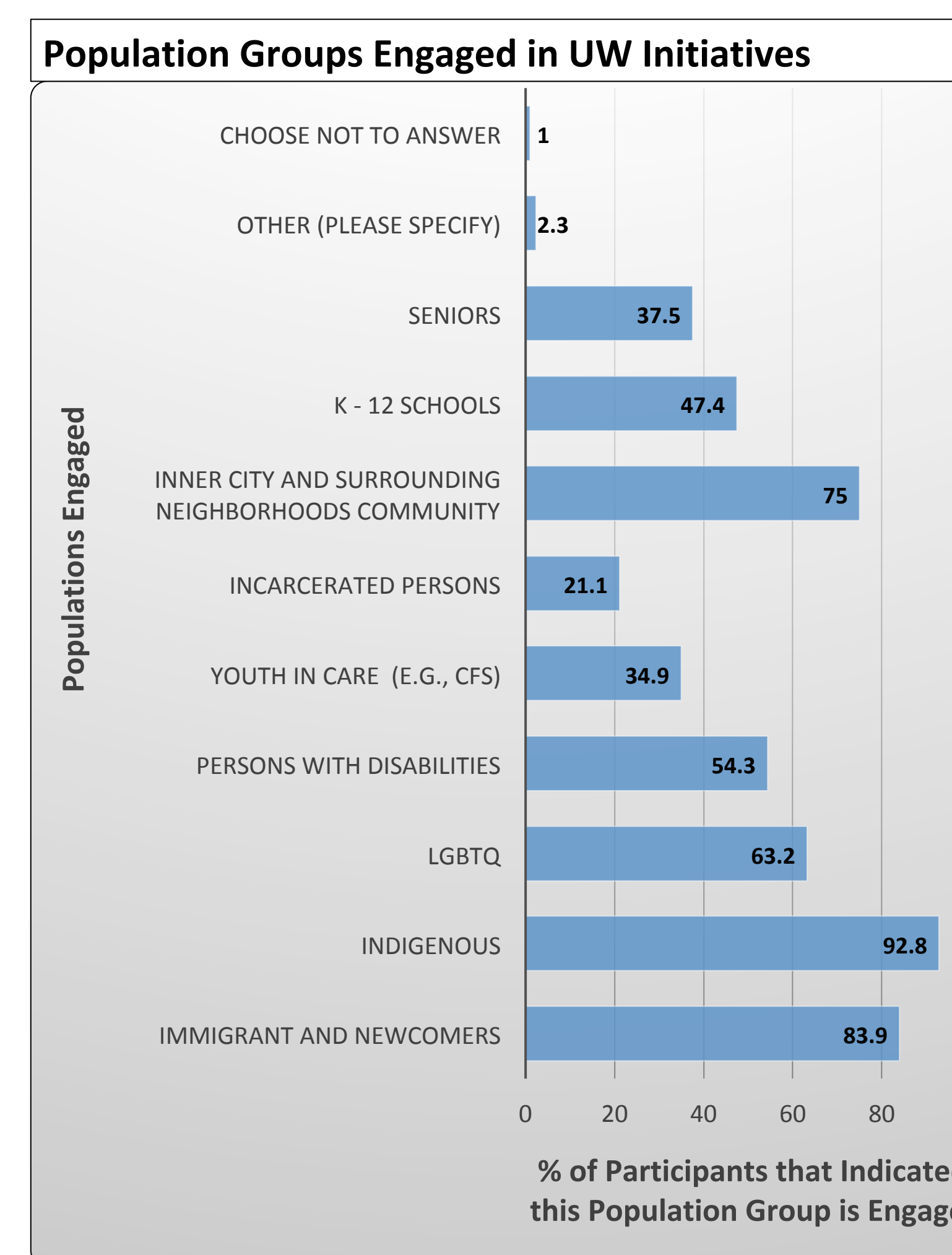
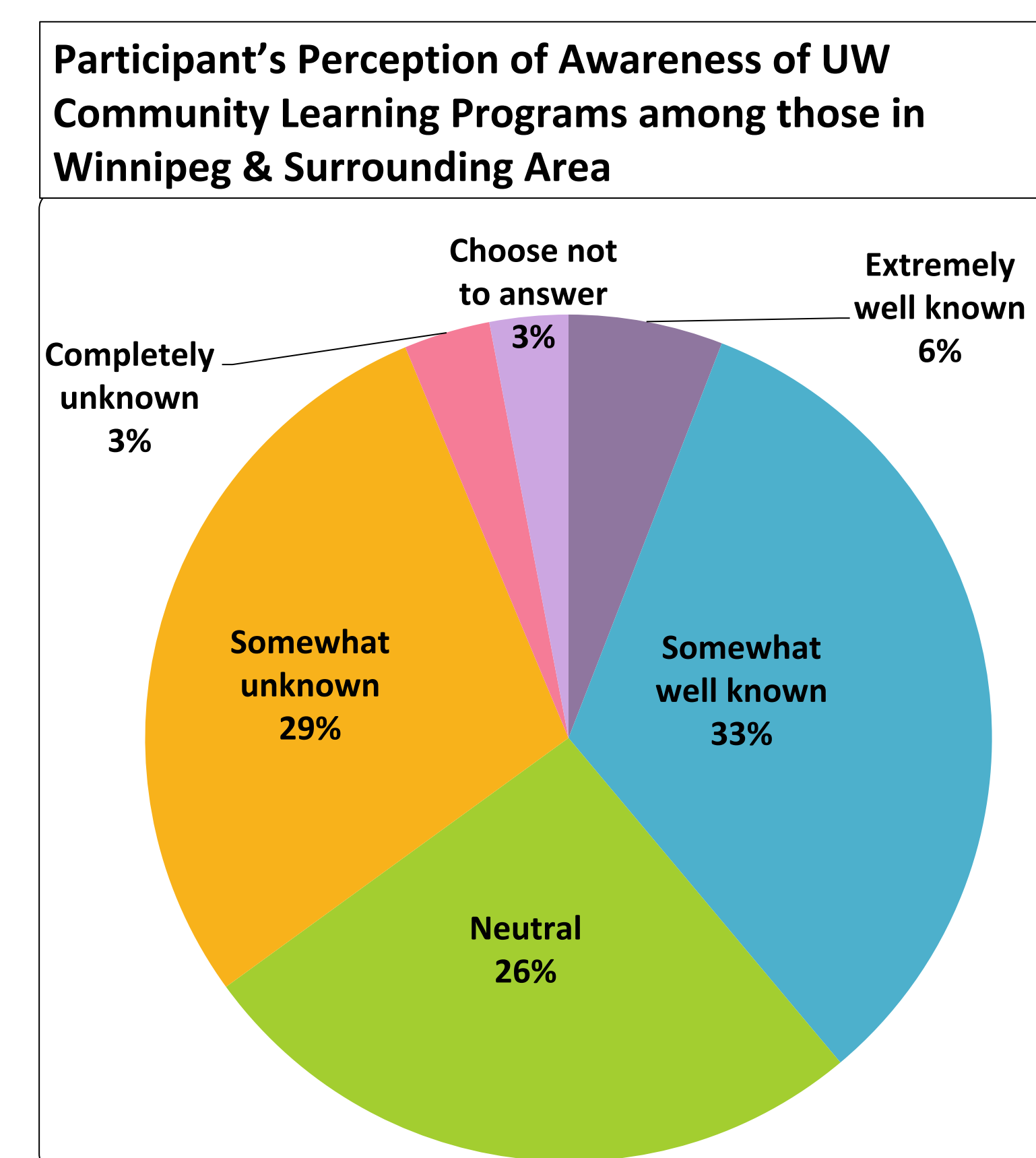
Methods and Sample

- 22 item on-line survey specifically created for this research was used to collect data
- 274 members of the UW population completed the survey
 - Students = 94; Faculty = 85; Staff/Admin = 95
 - 69% female; 30% male; and 1% another gender

Results

- The percentage of students who reported UW is somewhat or extremely engaged in a community learning policy was lower than the percentage of admin/staff & faculty (74% vs. 90%)

Awareness of UW Community Learning Programs by Participant Status	Self-Identified Status at the University of Winnipeg		
	Student N=94 n (%)	Faculty N=85 n (%)	Staff/ Admin N=95 n (%)
Innovative Learning Centre	8 (8.5)	22 (25.9)	30 (31.6)
Winnipeg Education Centre	33 (35.1)	49 (57.7)	61 (64.2)
Community-Based Aboriginal Teacher Education Program	35 (37.2)	46 (54.1)	62 (65.3)
International Teacher Education Program (ITEP)	27 (28.7)	35 (41.2)	39 (41.1)
Mentorship Program (Faculty of Education)	38 (40.4)	28 (32.9)	33 (34.7)
Service/Experiential Learning	15 (16.0)	44 (51.8)	52 (54.7)
Campus Climate for LGBTQ Students	19 (20.2)	27 (31.8)	24 (25.3)
RecPlex Community Charter	53 (56.4)	56 (65.9)	75 (79.0)
Global Welcome Centre	32 (34.0)	52 (61.2)	88 (92.6)
Wii Chiiwaakanak Learning Centre	39 (41.5)	65 (76.5)	93 (97.9)
Collegiate Model School	14 (14.9)	44 (51.8)	70 (73.7)
Sun Life Diabetes Awareness and Education Program	26 (27.7)	19 (22.4)	33 (34.7)
Inner City Jr. Wesmen Sports Programs and Camp	42 (44.7)	46 (54.1)	59 (62.1)
Science Kids on Campus	25 (26.6)	50 (58.8)	70 (73.7)
Adventures Summer Camp	13 (13.8)	16 (18.8)	36 (37.9)
Opportunity Fund	14 (14.9)	44 (51.8)	77 (81.1)
English Language Program	39 (41.5)	55 (64.7)	86 (90.5)
Writing Program and Tutoring Center	60 (63.8)	64 (75.3)	66 (69.5)
Aboriginal Student Services Centre	67 (71.3)	72 (84.7)	93 (97.9)
International Student Services	66 (70.2)	67 (78.8)	90 (94.7)
Adult Learner Services	45 (47.9)	25 (29.4)	61 (64.2)
Other	1 (1.1)	7 (8.2)	8 (8.4)

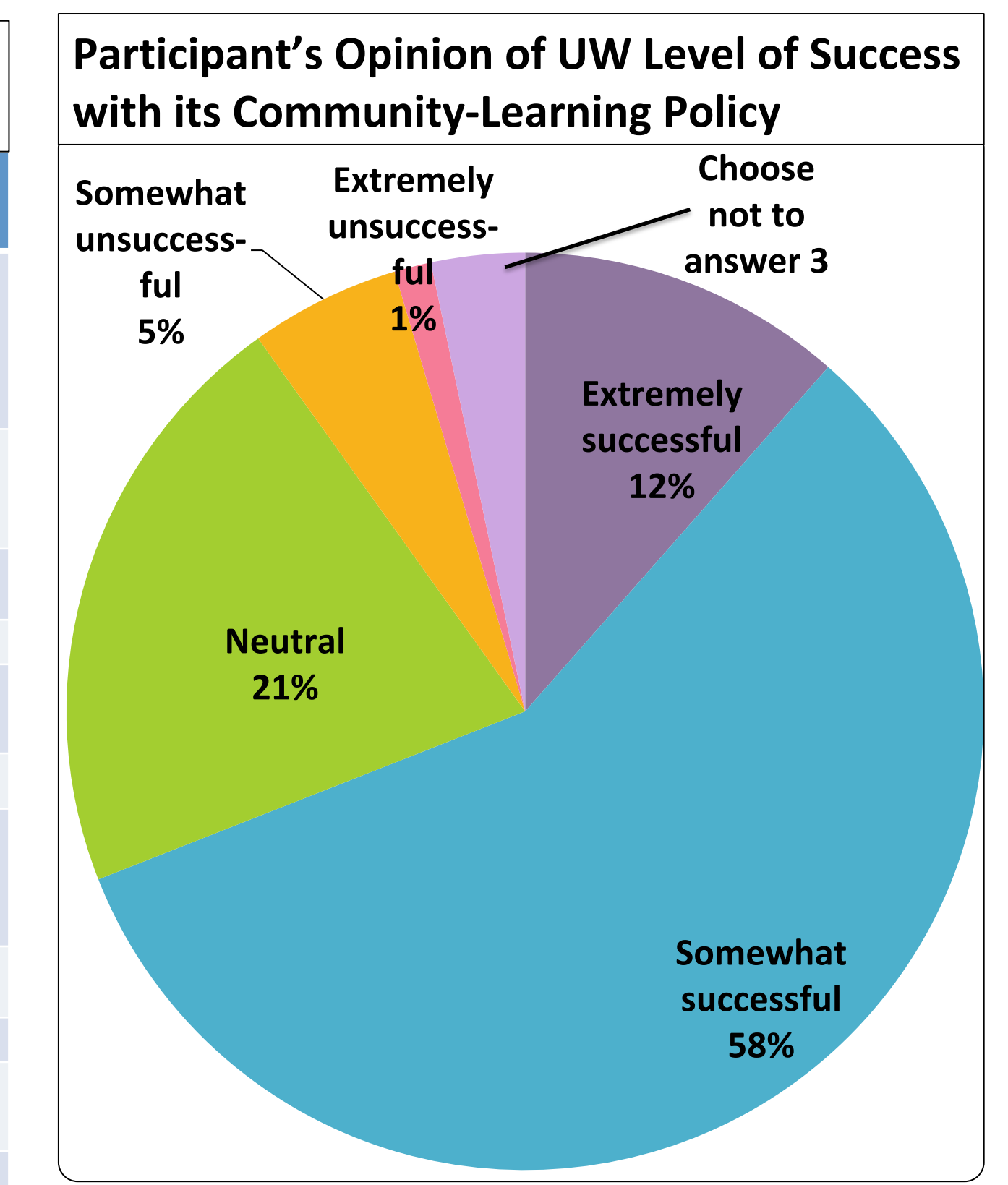


Highlights of the Findings

- Perceptions of UW's commitment to community-learning programs
 - 14% Too much commitment
 - 49% Right amount of commitment
 - 7% Not enough commitment
 - 28% Unsure

Perception of the Importance of Community Learning by Participant Status

Perception of the Importance of Community Learning by Participant Status	Self-Identified Status at the University of Winnipeg		
	Student N=93 n (%)	Faculty N=84 n (%)	Staff/ Admin N=95 n (%)
Community learning is important			
Somewhat/Completely Agree	77 (83.7)	78 (92.8)	92 (96.8)
Neutral	13 (14.1)	2 (2.4)	2 (1.2)
Somewhat/Completely Disagree	2 (2.2)	3 (3.6)	1 (1.0)
Not Sure	0 (0.0)	1 (1.2)	0 (0.0)
Community learning supports academic excellence			
Somewhat/Completely Agree	74 (79.6)	61 (72.6)	75 (79.0)
Neutral	15 (16.1)	10 (11.9)	15 (15.8)
Somewhat/Completely Disagree	3 (3.2)	9 (10.7)	5 (5.2)
Not Sure	1 (1.1)	4 (4.8)	0 (0.0)



Conclusions

- The majority of participants reported that community learning is important
- The majority reported that UW has been largely successful with their community learning initiatives
- Participant awareness of engagement with different communities varies a great deal
- Increasing awareness in the UW population of these community-engagement initiatives could increase support and involvement

References

1. Brisbin, R., & Hunter, S. (2003). Community leaders' perceptions of university and college efforts to encourage civic engagement. *The Review of Higher Education*, 26(4), 467-486.
2. Muirhead, B., & Woolcock, G. (2008). Doing what we know we should: Engaged scholarship and community development. *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement*, 1(1), 9-30.
3. Cohen, J., & Yapa, L. (2003). Introduction: What is public scholarship. In J. Cohen & L. Yapa (Eds.), *A Blueprint for Public Scholarship at Penn State* (pp. 5-7). University Park: Pennsylvania State University.
4. Merrett, C. (2000). Teaching social justice: Revising geography's neglected tradition. *Journal of Geography*, 99(7), 207-218.
5. Axworthy, L. (2009). *The University and Community Learning: An Evolving Mission*. Policy Paper.