

WOU
GROW®
Guided Reflection on Work



Introductions

Please share your name, department, student employee supervision, and what you are hoping to gain from today's session.

Agenda

- Enhancing student success through employment and the key role of supervisors
- Overview of WOU GROW® initiative and outcomes
- WOU GROW® conversation tips and resources

Goals of WOU GROW®

- To make student employment a high-impact activity by providing structured opportunities for students to reflect on and integrate what they are learning
- To help students better articulate what they have learned from their job

- WOU GROW® uses brief, structured conversations between student employees and their supervisors to help make the learning that is occurring through student employment more “visible” to the students.
- The conversations focus on 4 key questions about what students are learning and how they are applying their learning.
 - How is this job fitting in with your academics?
 - What are you learning here that’s helping you in school?
 - What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work?
 - Can you give me a couple of examples of things you’ve learned here that you think you’ll use in your chosen profession?

What does WOU GROW[®] involve?

- One brief, structured conversations per term
- Guided by the 4 questions. We offer additional questions you can use over time.
- Conversations can be 1:1 or small group (as many as 8 students)
- An average conversation takes 5 minutes

THE
UNDERGRADUATE
EXPERIENCE

FOCUSING INSTITUTIONS ON
WHAT MATTERS MOST

“Not only does GROW illustrate the power of simple reflective practices, but it also underscores how small interventions can have significant outcomes for the undergraduate experience.”

-Felten, et al (2016)

What is high-impact?

- Kuh: Students are most successful in “seamless environments” where they can make connections between classroom and out of classroom experiences
- High-impact activities are those that allow students to apply learning to real-life, to make connections, to reflect and to integrate learning.
- Campus jobs can be high-impact for our students with some additional structure from us (supervisors).

Making employment high-impact

- Identified outcomes (what we want them to know or be able to do)
- Deliberate reflection
- “Scaffolding” — using prompts that encourage students to connect previous knowledge and experience to new experiences and knowledge

Specialists in student employment

- Typically, student affairs and academic student services are the largest employers of students. We can be leaders in high-impact student employment.
- To do this, we must reframe student employment from **transactional to transformational**, from **supervision to mentoring**, from **cost to investment**.

Supervisors' role

- Supervisors are educators.
- As supervisors, you help students learn real-world skills.
- Many supervisors are already having conversations with their student employees.
- Through WOU GROW® supervisors can help make even deeper connections between work and academics.

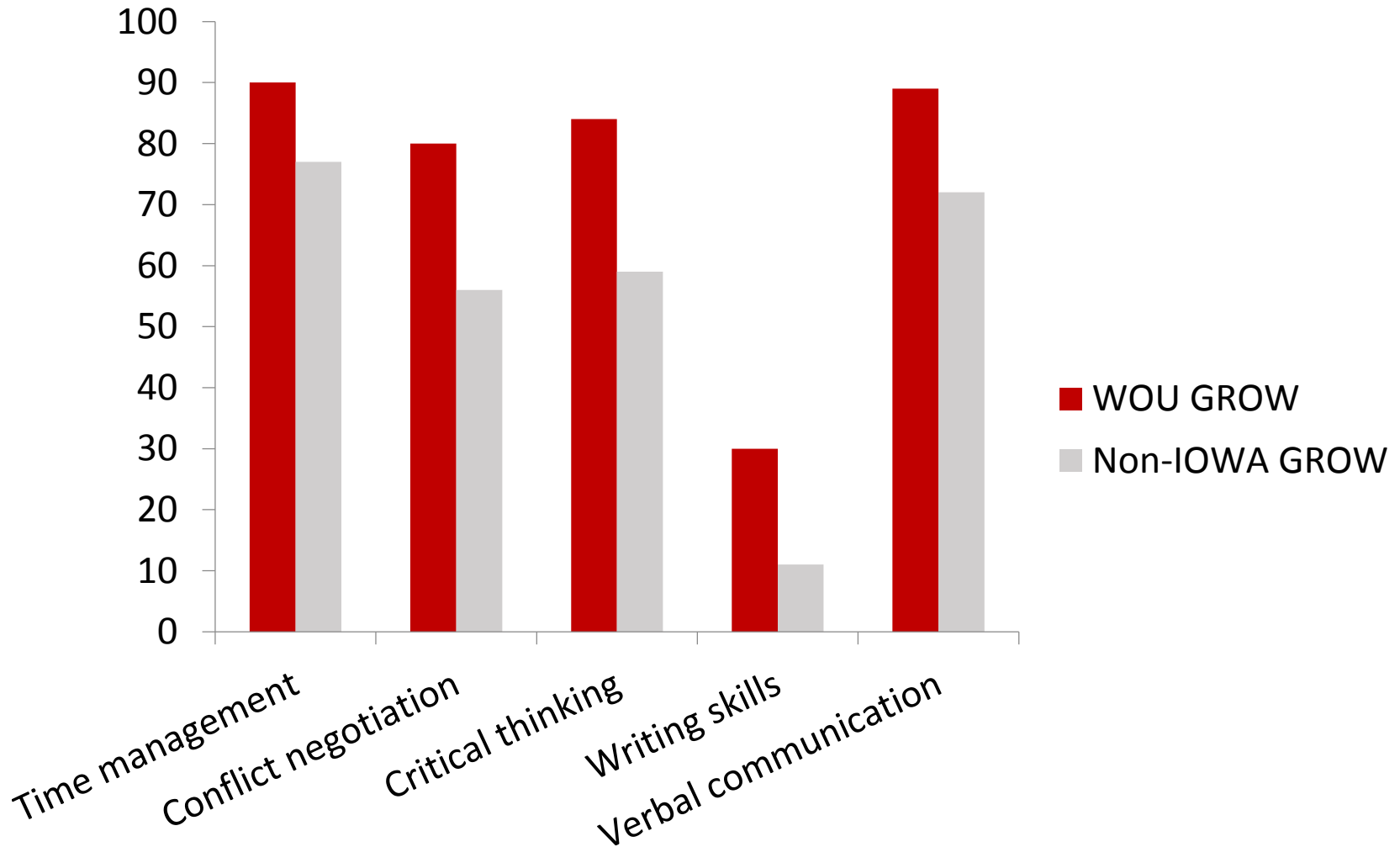
WOU GROW® Outcomes

- Division of Student Affairs Employment Survey is conducted every spring.
- At IOWA, Spring 2017 Survey – 714 responses (38% response rate).
- WOU GROW® participants were determined based on their answer to the following question:
 - “How often during the spring term have you had conversations with your supervisor about connections between your job and your academics? Your supervisor may refer to these as WOU GROW conversations”

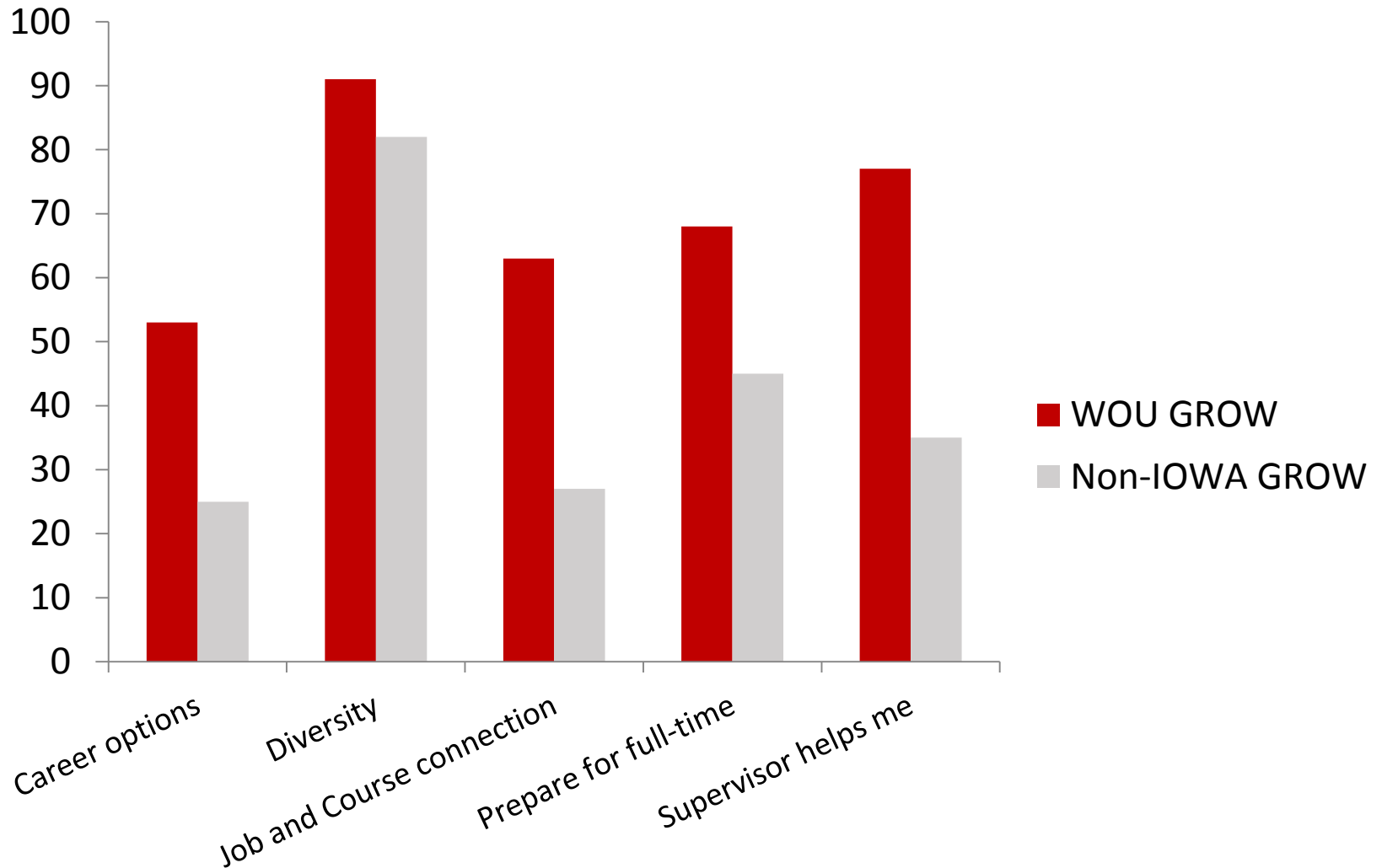
WOU GROW® participants were significantly more likely ($p < .01$) to agree/strongly agree that their job was helping them attain the following 10 outcomes of student employment:

- 1** My supervisor helps me make connections between my work and my life as a student.
- 2** My job has helped prepare me for the world of full-time employment.
- 3** I can see connections between my job and major/coursework.
- 4** My job has helped me learn about career options.
- 5** My job has helped me improve my writing skills.
- 6** My job has helped me develop more effective time management skills.
- 7** My job has helped me improve my verbal communication skills.
- 8** My job has helped me develop conflict negotiation skills.
- 9** My job has helped me use critical thinking skills to form opinions and solve problems.
- 10** Because of my job, I am able to work effectively with individuals with a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and cultures.

WOU GROW[®] Outcomes



WOU GROW[®] Outcomes



“My job with the university has helped me learn the importance of effective communication and time management.”



“My job provided me with a sense of belonging. It gave me a place where I was needed, a place where I was accepted, and a place I was expected to be.”



Student Employment as a Retention Strategy

Ultimately, retention is relational work. It's about our relationship with students, their relationships with each other, and their relationship with the institution.

- **Retention:** Students employed on campus are retained at higher rates.
- **Graduation (4-year & 6-year):** Students employed on campus graduate at higher rates.

Benefits for Supervisors

- When students make connections to the workplace, they are more invested.
- Invested employees do better work and feel more committed and responsible to you.
- These conversations also open the line of communication between you and your employees.

Benefits for Supervisors

“The conversations gave me instant feedback on how the students were coping with balancing both work duties and classes and gave me valuable information on how to help students with any issues they were having. I also found it helpful to see how the students were learning their jobs and relating to other employees in the workplace.”

Benefits for Supervisors

“WOU GROW® provides a [medium] for developing a deeper relationship with students beyond the workplace. It allows for supervisors to gain an insight into the difficulties and enjoyments that an average student has as part of the college experience.”

Before the conversation

- Think about what you want your student employees to gain from their work.
- “By May, I hope the students I supervise are able to....” (do more, do better, know more, know better).

Discussion

- What skills would you like your student employees to gain from their work?

Before the conversation

- Decide on one-on-one or group conversations.
- Send out questions ahead of time and let students know you will discuss their responses at your meeting.
- Think about how you can integrate your conversation into any check-ins or one-on-ones with students.

Having the conversation

- Remind students this is a WOU GROW® conversation and restate the purpose.
- Use the four questions to guide the conversation.
- Take notes to refer to during the next conversation.
- Familiarize yourself with resources, included in your folder, in case students need referrals.

Conversation tips

- Put the questions into your own words.
- Weave the questions into your conversation.
- Use your notes to revisit topics of interest in later conversations.

Example conversation



<https://vp.studentlife.uiowa.edu/priorities/grow/implementation/>

Continuing the conversation

- Prompt students regarding the skills you have determined they should be learning.
- Incorporate other questions in addition to the four.
- Ask students to reflect on their experiences since your last conversation.
- Mention at the end of the conversation that you will be discussing this again later in the term.

Facilitating group meetings

- Keep groups at eight students or fewer so that everyone has a chance to speak.
- Make sure to provide questions beforehand so that students come ready to discuss.
- Encourage students to share with a partner what they are learning at work and how it connects with academics.
- After partners have shared, have them report back to the group on what they talked about.

Making Referrals

- When a student confides in you about a personal concern, this means they trust you.
- As a supervisor, you don't have to solve the problem for them, but just listen and connect them to a resource that can help.
- Familiarize yourself with the list of resources in your folder.

Anticipating challenges

- What challenges do you anticipate with incorporating WOU GROW® into your work?
- What strategies might you use to overcome these challenges?

Practice with a partner

- Conversation Introduction
- 4 Guiding Questions
 - How is this job fitting in with your academics?
 - What are you learning here that's helping you in school?
 - What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work?
 - Can you give me a couple of examples of things you've learned here that you think you'll use in your chosen profession?
- Conversation Closing

A “learning-centric” environment

- Use learning language in position listings.
- Add learning-based interview questions.
- Talk about learning and WOU GROW® during onboarding.
- Remind students about the purpose of WOU GROW® during each conversation.
- Ask students to set a learning goal each term.

- Supervisor folders
- WOU GROW[®] website:

WOU GROW[®]

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