

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SHOWCASE

## Career-Focused Experiential Learning: Academic Internships & Enhanced Pedagogy Jaime Jackson and Chong Choe-Smith



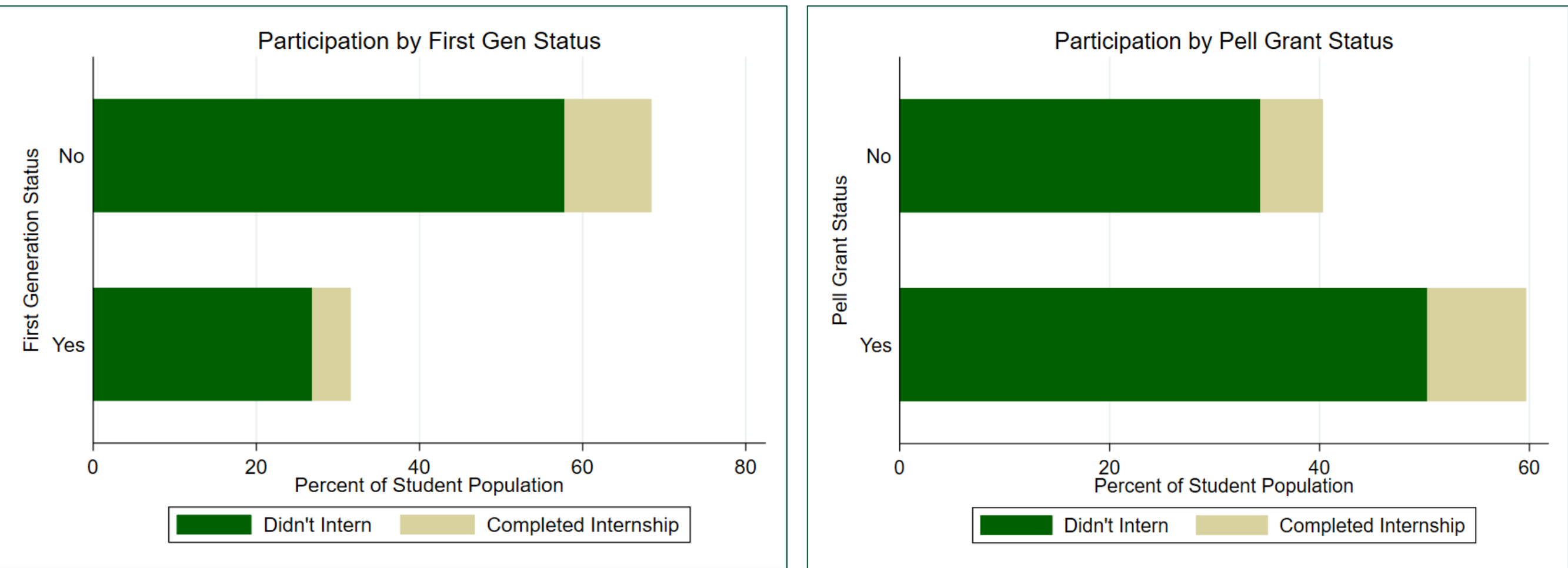
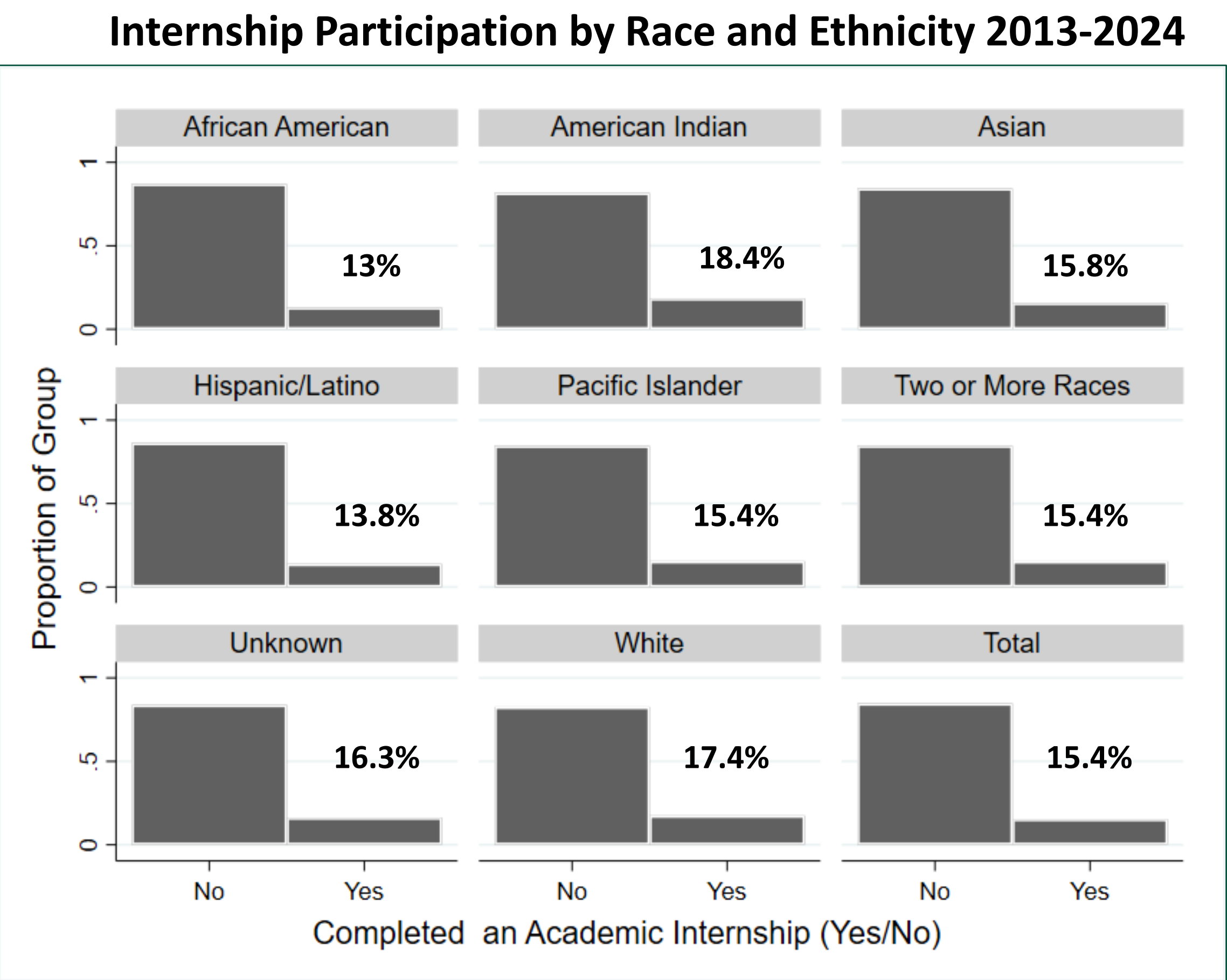
### Project Description

In this project, we expand on prior research regarding barriers to internship participation by providing an analysis of the following:

- Social, economic, and institutional barriers to participation in institutional data from 2013-2024
- A student lived-experience survey including their experiences with career-related pedagogy
- Campus department-level survey data on resources and programming

Our campus data suggests that the main problem is one of capacity. For various reasons, there are insufficient opportunities for the students seeking them. Our recommendations offer cost-effective and innovative strategies for integrating career-focused experiential learning into existing courses, along with expanding paid and for-credit internships.

### Institutional and Department Data

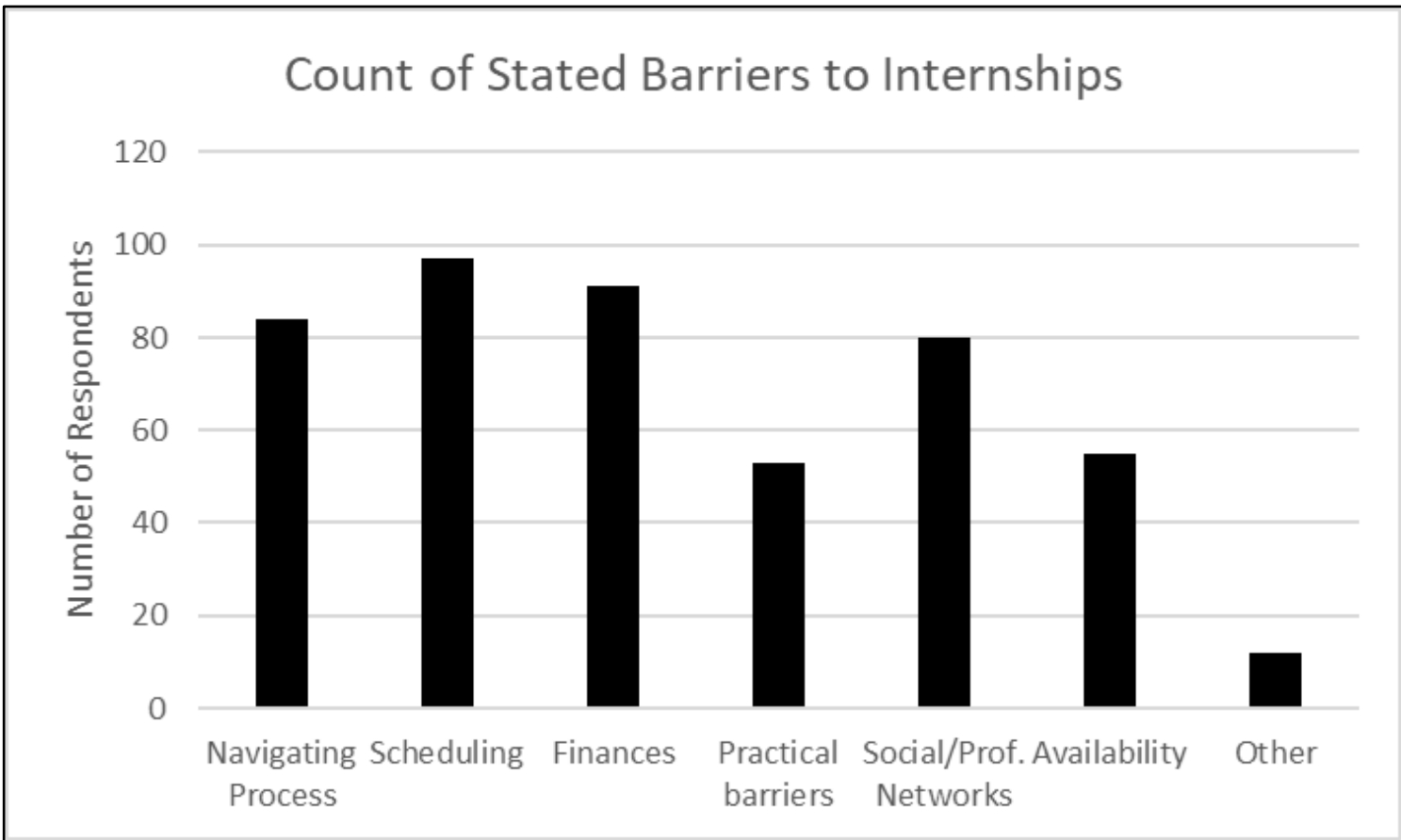


#### Department Internship Programming Support 2017 & 2024

Year	% Depts. Requiring AINs	% Depts. With Intern Directors
2017	32%	39%
2024	24%	27%
Total Change	-8%	-12%

### Student Survey Highlights

- Out of 200+ students, 19% indicated they participated in an academic internship.
- Faculty & advisors are the primary source of information on internship opportunities.
- Paid opportunities for internships are on the rise with 15 of 23 students indicating either hourly pay or a paid stipend.
- Most students find internships to be an important part of developing meaningful career skills.
- Most students, however, indicate having some trouble with accessing internships.



### Career-Focused Experiential Learning

Internships and similar forms of experiential learning are high-impact practices, which are correlated with higher grades, retention rates, graduation rates, and, for paid internships, higher employment rates after college (Zilvinskis et al., 2022; Zilvinskis, Gillis, & Smith, 2020; Kuh, 2008; Finley & McNair, 2013; Silva et al., 2018).

However, opportunities are not equally available. Hora, Wolfram, Chen, and Lee (2021) conducted a mixed methods study at five colleges/universities and found these common barriers: other paid work (60%), heavy course load (56%), a lack of internships in their discipline or field (45%), insufficient pay (33%), limited transportation (19%), and limited childcare (64%).

### Key Findings and Recommendations

- Across most indicators, the percent of students doing internships between 2013-2024 is capped at 15%
- The common barriers affecting our students are:
  - Scheduling obstacles with work and school
  - Employment & financial obligations
  - Care-taking responsibilities
  - Lack of information about how to find an internship
  - Imposter syndrome "Worried I'm not qualified"

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Enhance opportunities for for-credit and paid internships.
- Provide other career-based experiential learning in classes (e.g., skills training; interaction with professionals; job shadowing; guest speaker events; etc.).
- Increase collaboration across departments to make the most of opportunities developed by those with dedicated faculty/staff.