

# **The Residential First-Year Experience**

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# Overview of Presentation

- History
- Mission and Goals
- Themes
- RAPs
- Highlighted Initiatives
- Assessment
- Questions

# History of the Residential First-Year Experience

- Started in 2 residence halls – “Epoch”
- 4 year expansion plan
- Evolution to Residential First-Year Experience (RFYE)
- Collaboration with Academic Affairs
- Creation of Themes

# Mission of RFYE

- **Mission:** The Residential First Year Experience (RFYE) is a year-long, structured, residentially-based program for first year students, designed to smooth the **transition** to UMass Amherst. Participation in RFYE builds **connections** with the campus and **pride** for the University community. We encourage our students to be **involved** and participate in campus events and activities, while preparing students to take ownership for their **academic** and personal development.
  - UMass Amherst Connections
  - Transitions
  - Academic, Career, and Life Planning
  - Civic and Community Engagement
  - Leadership Skills and Involvement

# First Year Themes (Southwest)

- Enterprise and Action (Melville/Thoreau)
- Global Thought and Action (Pierpont/Moore)
- Fitness & Recreation (James/Emerson)
- Health, Science, & Humanity (Kennedy)
- Pop Culture (Cance)
- Our Society, Our World (John Adams)

# **First Year Themes**

## **(Orchard Hill/Central & Northeast)**

- **Writing and Literature** (Butterfield)
- **Culture and the Arts** (Van Meter)
- **Science, Innovation, & Leadership**  
(Dickinson)
- **Society and Leadership** (Webster)
- **Discovery** (Crabtree/Mary Lyon/Knowlton)

# RFYE Staff

## ■ Professional Staff

- Residence Directors (RD)
- **First Year Experience Specialists (FYES)**

## ■ Graduate Staff

- Assistant Residence Directors (ARD)
- **Residential Learning Graduates (RLGs)**

## ■ Student Staff

- Resident Assistants (RA)
- **Peer Mentors (PM)**
- Cluster Office Staff

# Residential Academic Programs

- RAPs – Linked courses
  - Declared
  - Undeclared
  - Honors
  - Isenberg
- 45% of our students are enrolled in RAPs that are tied to the themes

# Highlighted Initiatives

- Peer Mentors and Academic Mentoring
- Residential Academic Success Center (RASC)
- RASC Workshops (example: SPIRE, SPARK, OWLS, Learning Styles, etc.)
- Faculty/Instructor Chats and RAP Socials
  - Dr. Wilmore C Webley – Biology of Cancer and AIDS
  - Dr. Tomaskovic-Devey – Sociology of Love
  - Dr. Tatishe Nteta – Does Racism Still Exist?
- Off-Campus Trips
  - Six Flags
  - Salem
  - Stephen King at Mt. Holyoke
  - NYC – December 6th

# Highlighted Initiatives (Cont.)

## ■ Theme-Based Initiatives

- Webster and John Adams – Pizza and Politics
- Butterfield – First-Year Student Journal
- Van Meter – Steph Taylor and the State of Show

## ■ Study Groups

## ■ RFYE Incentives and Awards

- Trivia (we had 5 faculty/instructors play as well!)
- Student Choice and Academic Achievement Awards

## ■ Career Services – First-Year student geared presentations

# **RFYE Assessment**

Prepared by  
Dr. Elizabeth Williams  
SAREO

# Demographic Differences First Year – RFYE versus Not

- 61.1% of RFYE are female vs. 54.8% of Non-RFYE
- 5.6% of RFYE self-identified as Asian/Middle Eastern/Pacific Islander vs. 13.5% of Non-RFYE
- 84.0% of RFYE self-identified as White/Caucasian vs. 75.5% of Non-RFYE

# RFYE Halls – 2007/2008

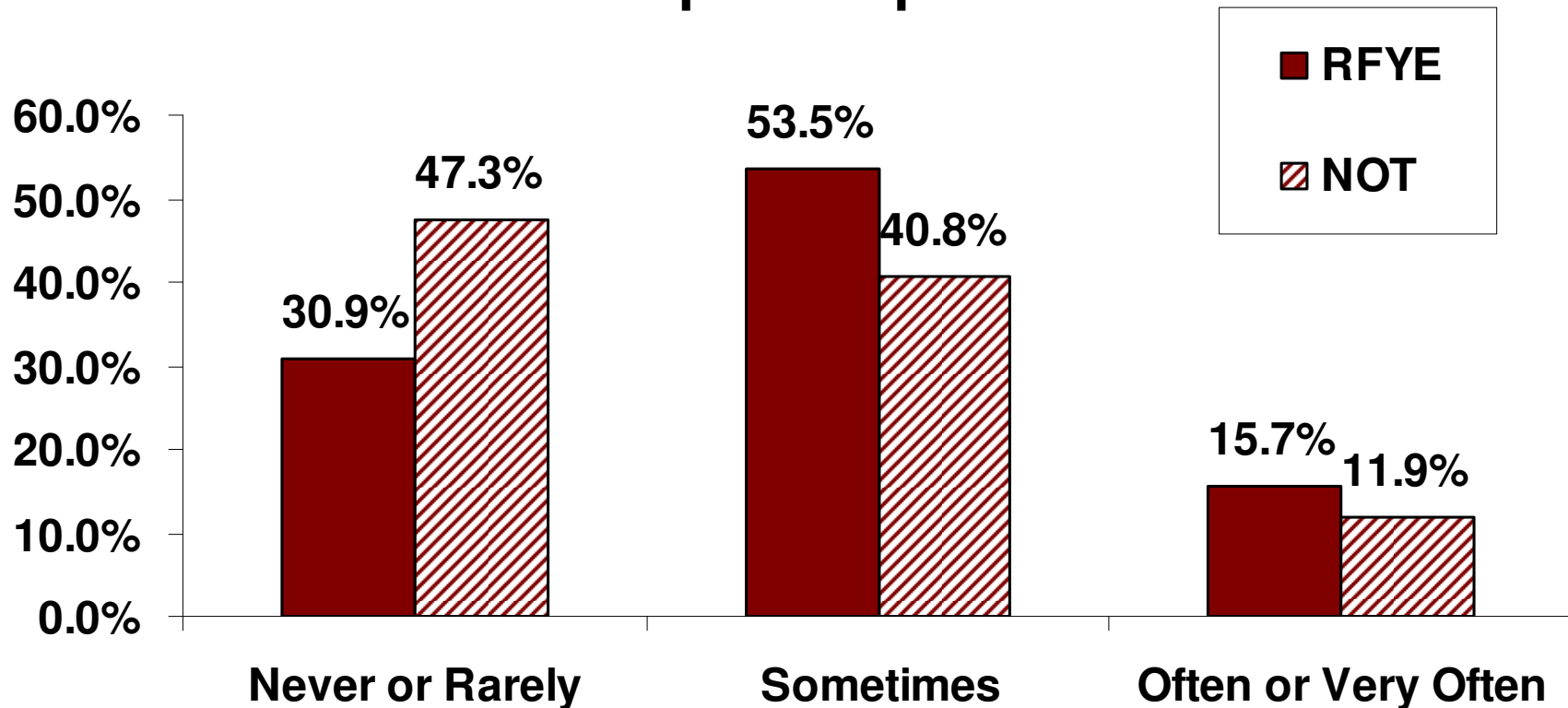
## ID Hall of RYFE First-Years

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	17 Dickinson	162	12.0	12.0	12.0
	20 Webster	180	13.3	13.3	25.3
	26 Emerson	70	5.2	5.2	30.5
	27 James	76	5.6	5.6	36.1
	29 Melville	80	5.9	5.9	42.1
	30 Moore	98	7.3	7.3	49.3
	32 Pierpont	116	8.6	8.6	57.9
	34 Thoreau	70	5.2	5.2	63.1
	35 JF Kennedy	238	17.6	17.6	80.7
	39 Butterfield	74	5.5	5.5	86.2
	44 Van Meter	186	13.8	13.8	100.0
	Total	1350	100.0	100.0	

# Results

## Residence Hall Programs

How often do you participate in programs/activities sponsored by your hall/apt. complex?



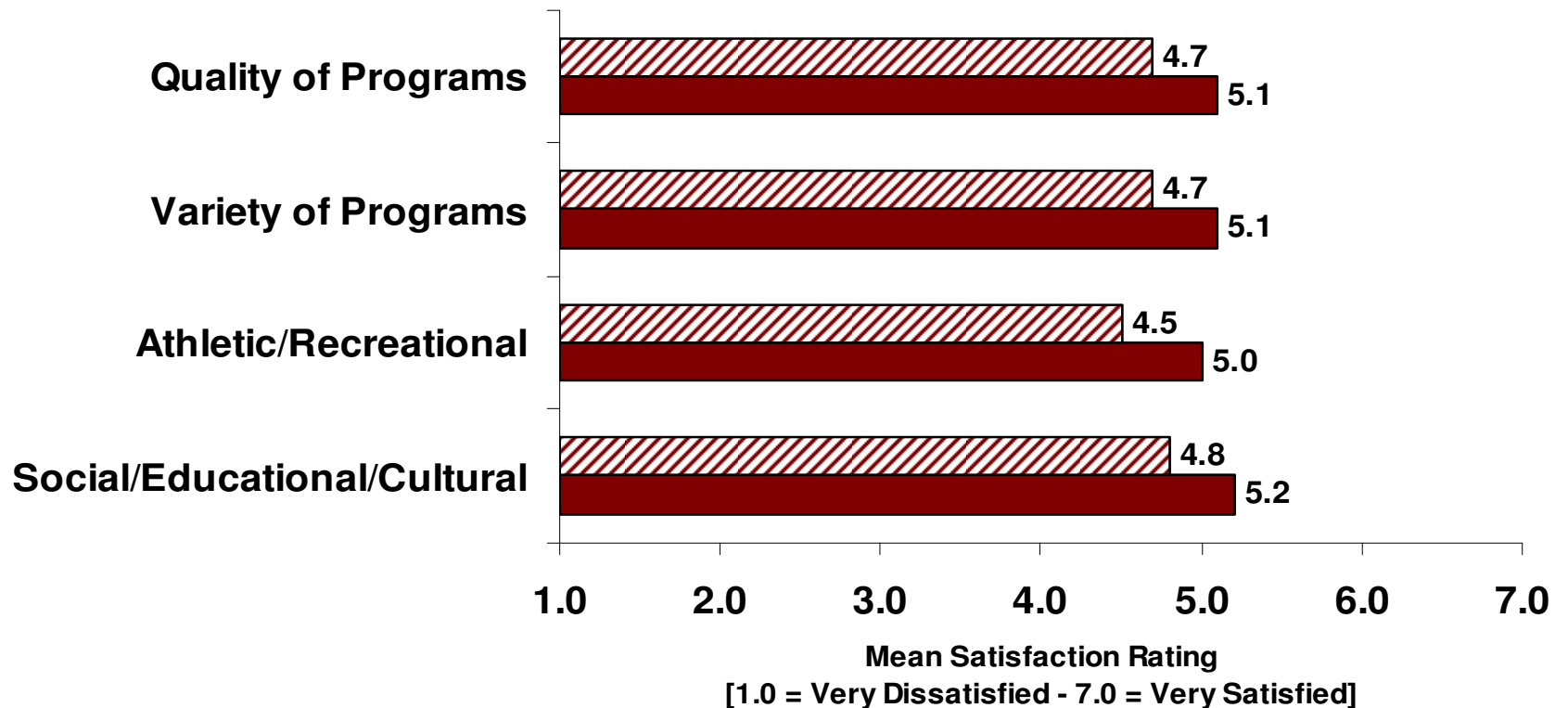
# Results

## Residence Hall Programs

How satisfied are you with programs sponsored by your hall regarding:

▨ NOT

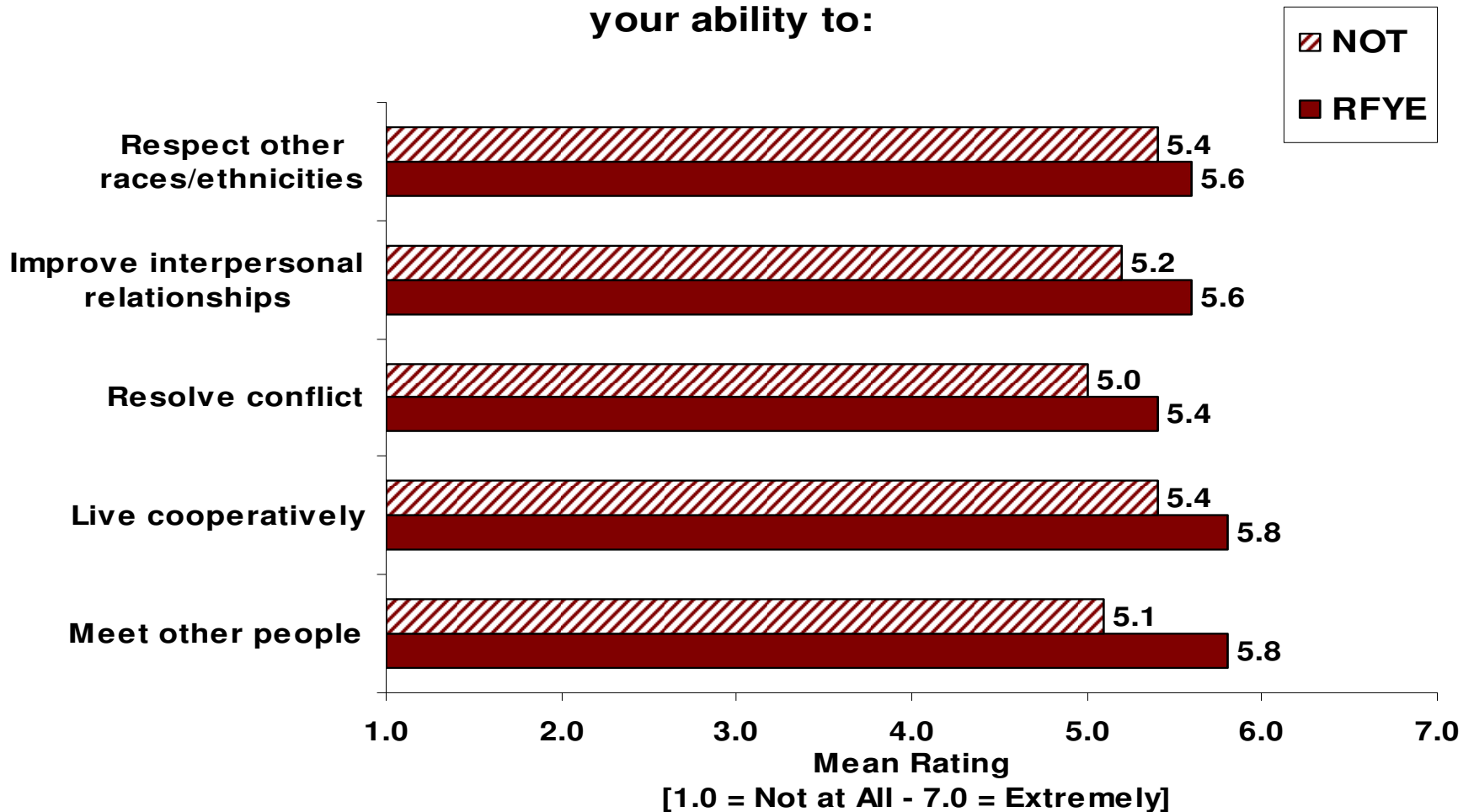
■ RFYE



# Results

## Learning Outcomes - Social

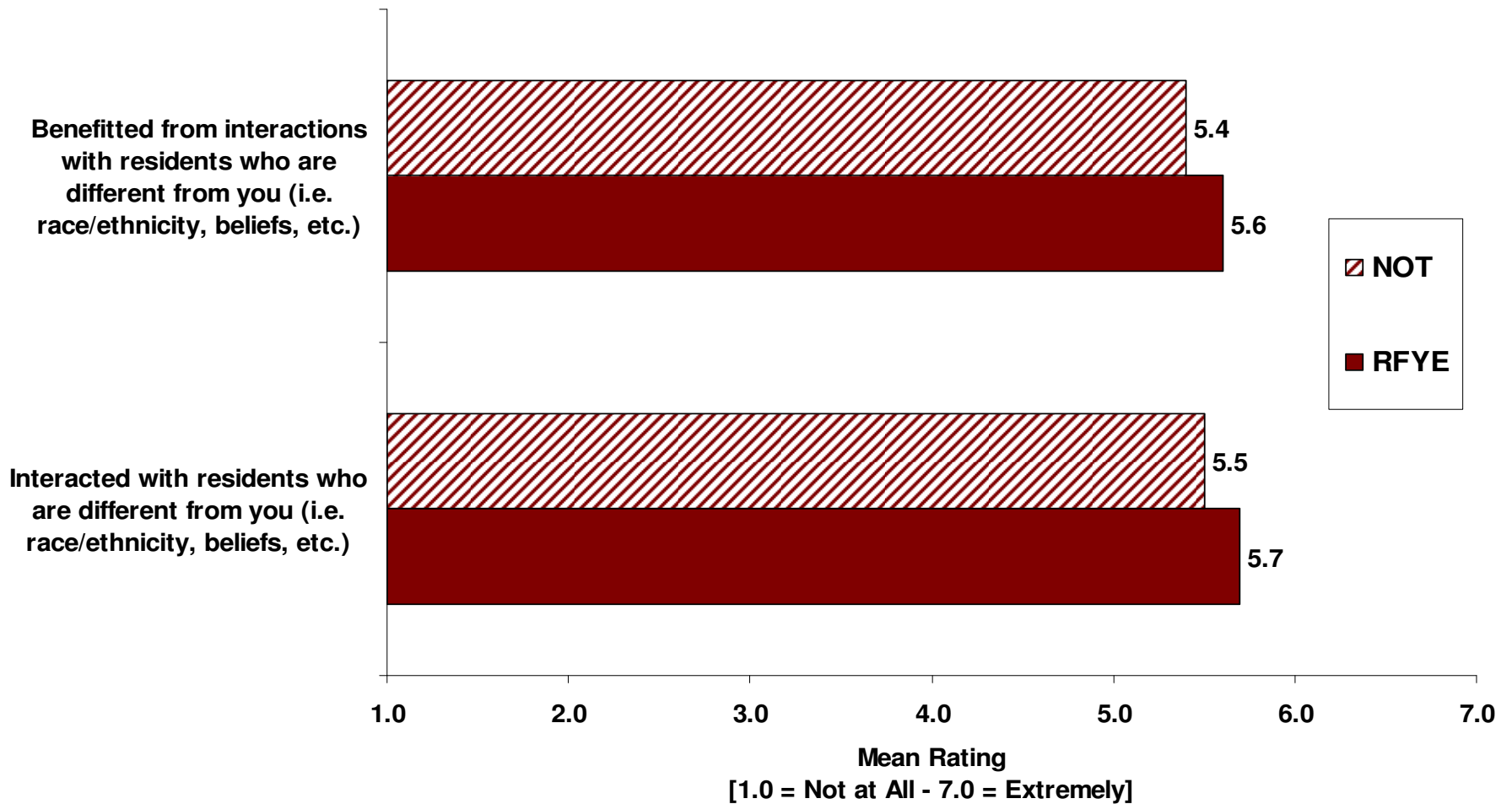
To what extent has living in on-campus housing enhanced your ability to:



# Results

## Diverse Interactions

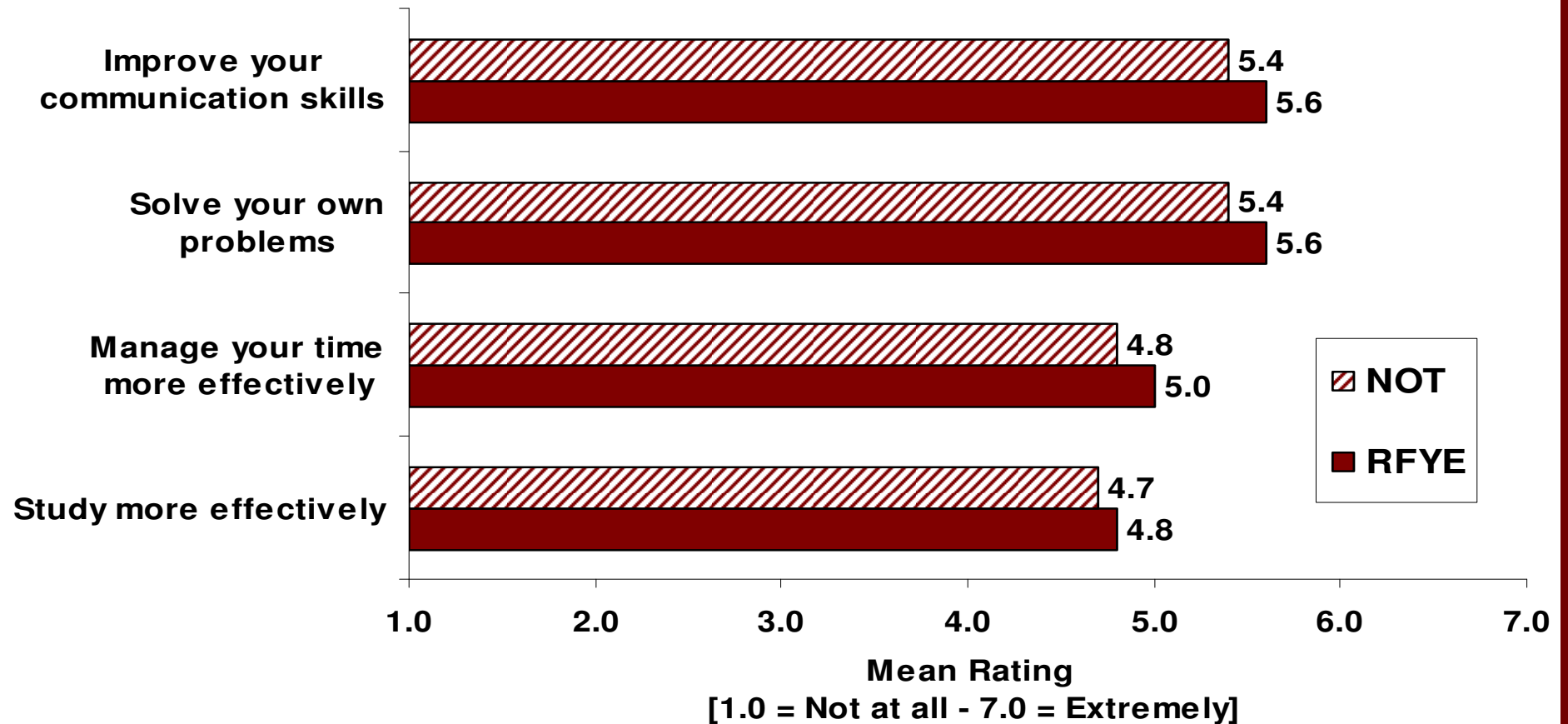
To what degree have you:



# Results

## Learning Outcomes - Academic

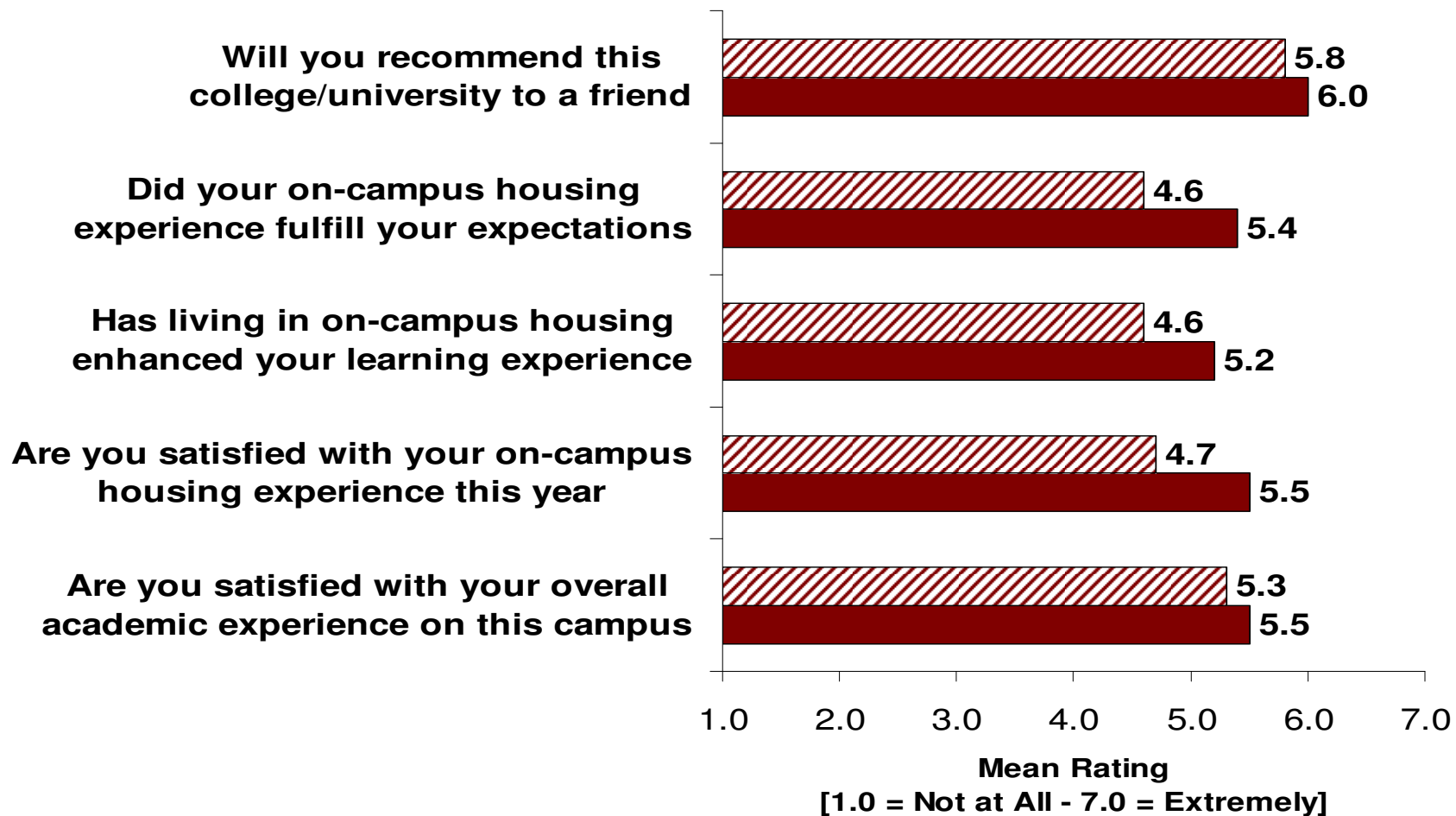
To what extent has living in on-campus housing enhanced your ability to:



# Results

## Overall Experience

To what degree:



# Assessment & Evaluation Plan Spring 2009

- February – 2008/2009 EBI
- March – Van Meter/Butterfield Focus Groups
- April – RFYE Web Survey (conducted by SAREO)
- April – RFYE Student Staff Focus Groups
- Peer Mentor Exit Evaluation

**Thank You!**

Questions

or

Thoughts