Exploring Disability Access Abroad through Smart (City) Programming
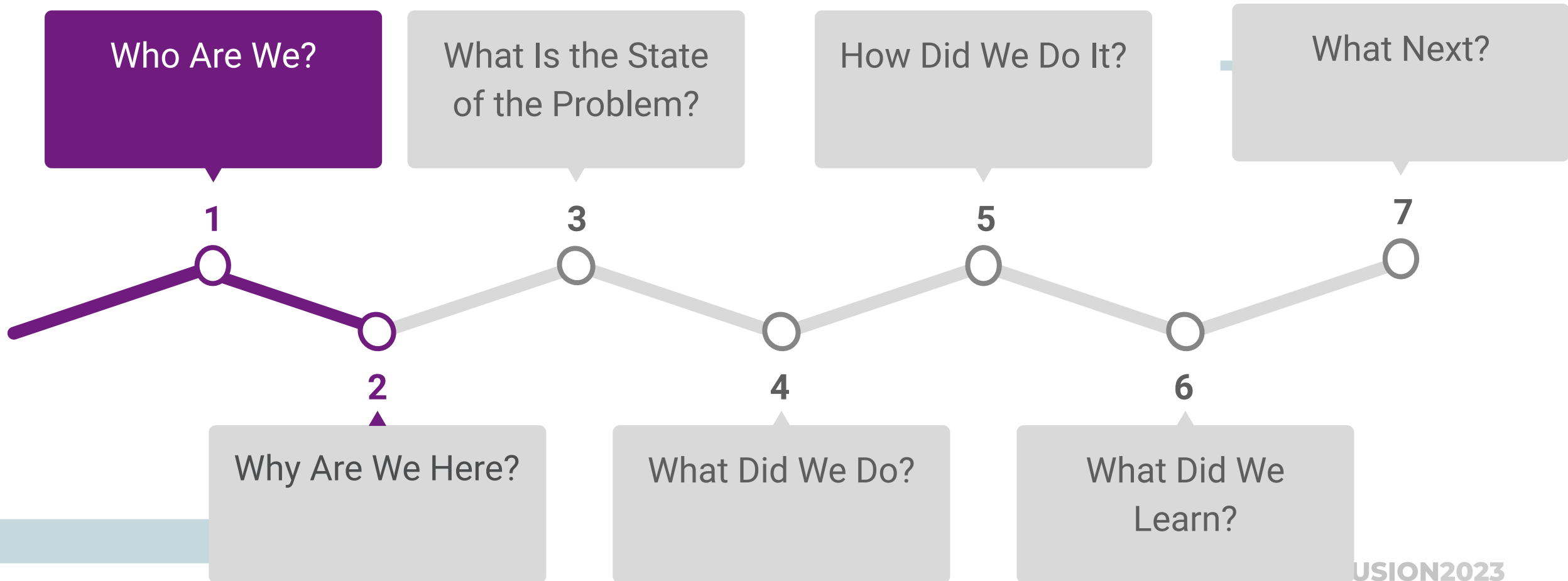
Jenna Gonzalez, Chris Lawlor, Pingchien Neo, Cara Simon

Agenda

Who Are We?

What Is the State of the Problem?

How Did We Do It?

What Next?

1

3

5

7

2

4

6

Why Are We Here?

What Did We Do?

What Did We Learn?

Presenter Introduction

Jenna Gonzalez

Director, Disability Resource Center

University of Florida

Chris Lawlor

Co-Founder and CEO

Learn International

Pingchien Neo

Director, International Engineering Programs

University of Florida

Cara Simon

Co-Founder and COO

Learn International

Learning Objectives

1
Understand
Background of study abroad and disability access

2
Learn
Program development and strategies

3
Identify
Best practices on programming for students with disabilities

4
Examine
Innovative campus collaborations for global engagement

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Audience Survey

What is your primary role?

Join at
slido.com
#2612 750

U.S. Study Abroad and Disability

Percentage of study abroad students with disability and without disability

Legend: ● Disability ● No Disability

Data (Disability line): 2014/15: 5.3, 2015/16: 8.8, 2016/17: 8.5, 2017/18: 9.2, 2018/19: 10.5, 2019/20: 12.4, 2020/21: 11.2

Source: Institute of International Education. (2022). "Profile of U.S. Study Abroad Students 2006/07–2020/21." *Open Doors Report on International Education Exchange*
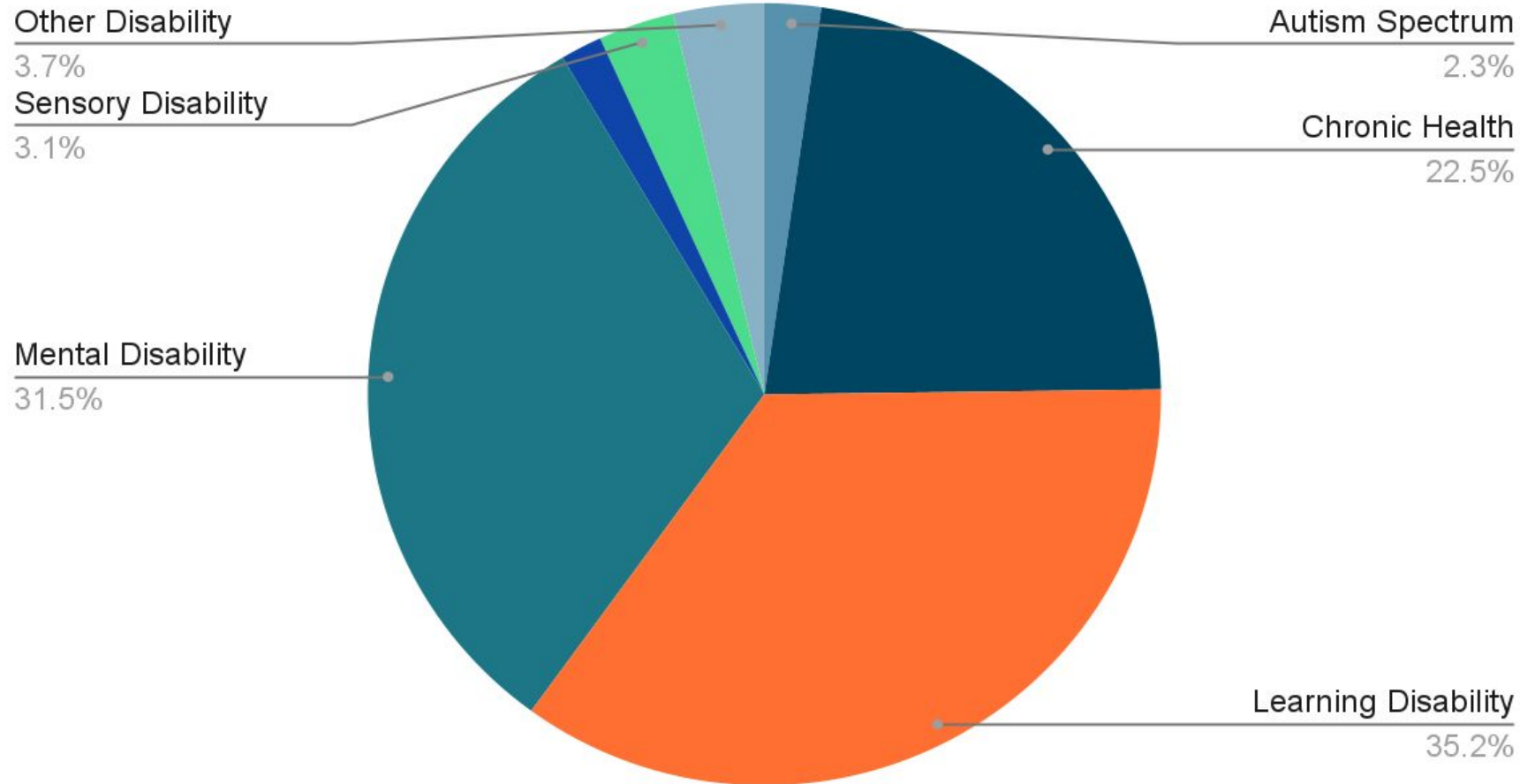
UF Study Abroad and Disability

Percentage of UF Study Abroad Students Needing Accommodation

Legend: ● No Reported Disability   ● Reported Disability

Reported Disability values: Fall 2022: 2.9, Spring 2023: 4.7, Summer 2023: 3.1, Academic Year 2022-23: 7.7, Grand Total: 3.4
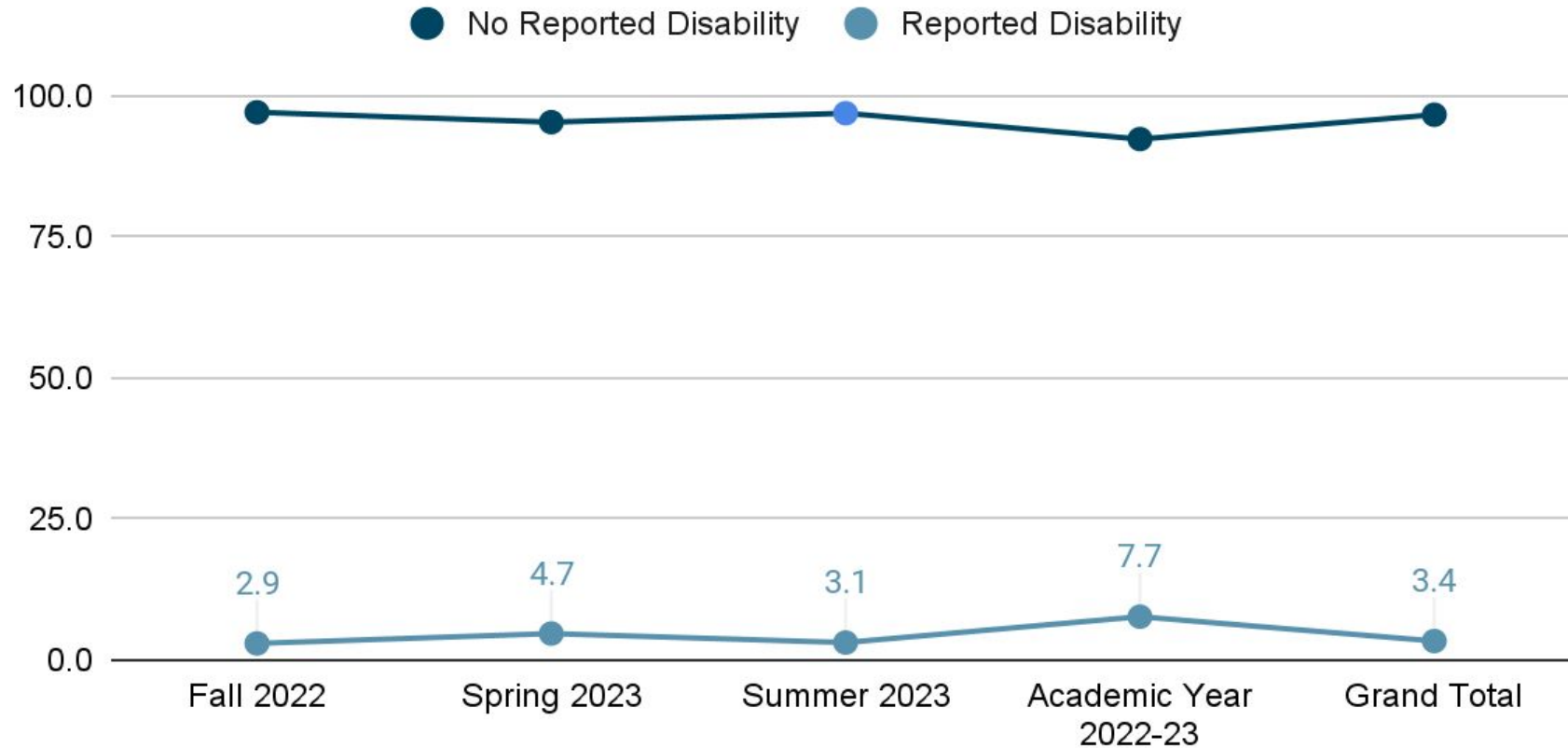
Who goes abroad?

Type of Disability 2020/21

Other Disability
3.7%

Sensory Disability
3.1%

Autism Spectrum
2.3%

Chronic Health
22.5%

Mental Disability
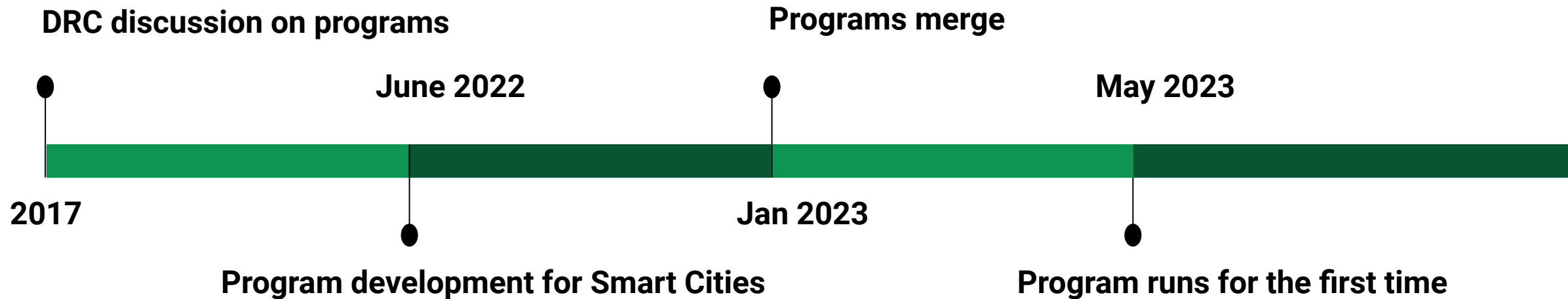31.5%

Learning Disability
35.2%

Source: Institute of International Education. (2022). "Profile of U.S. Study Abroad Students 2006/07–2020/21." *Open Doors Report on International Education Exchange*

Barriers

- Fear of discrimination
- Application process
- Study abroad accommodations
- Faculty knowledge
- Different systems, different philosophies

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UF in London: Smart Cities and Disability Access

DRC discussion on programs

Programs merge

June 2022

May 2023

2017

Jan 2023

Program development for Smart Cities

**Program runs for the first time**

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Design

How can smart city technologies be used to improve accessibility for people with disabilities and improve their quality of life through the lenses of culture and policies
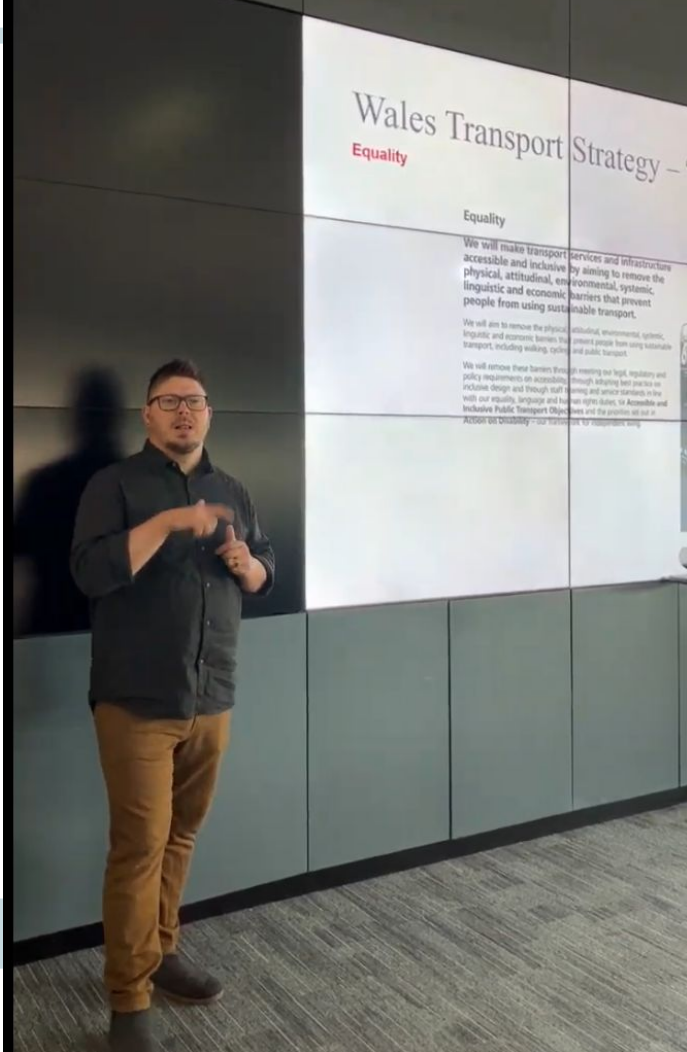
Smart Cities

Disability Access
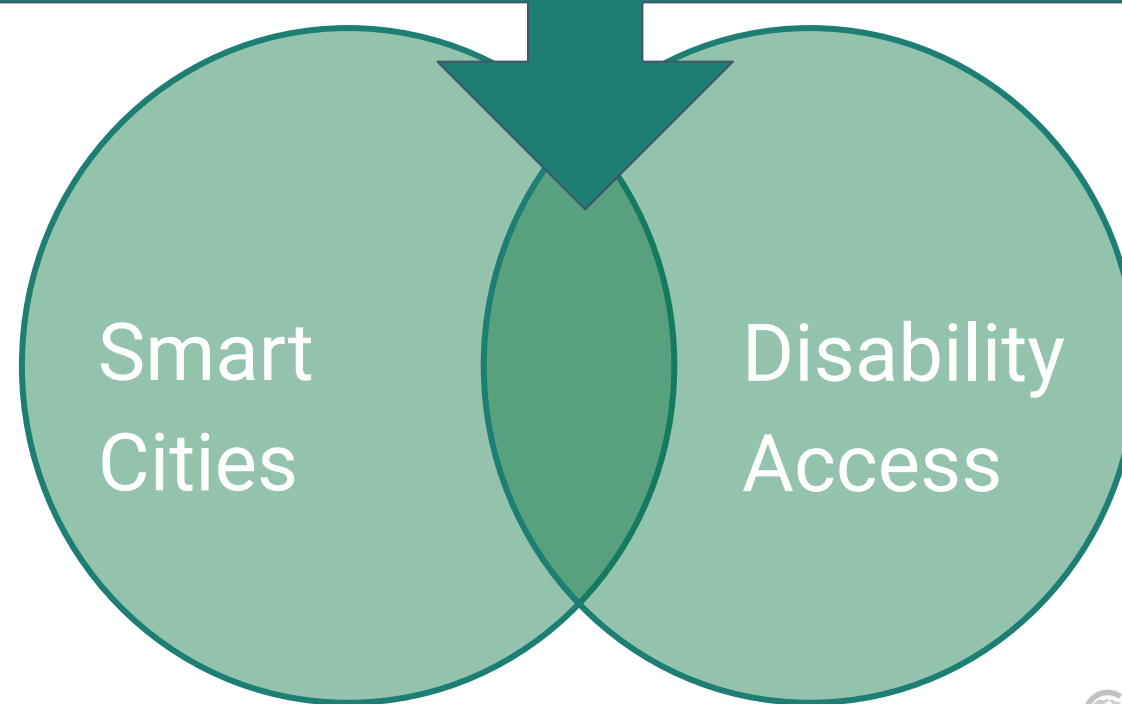
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Student Demographics – Disciplines

UF in London 2023 Student Disciplines

n=18

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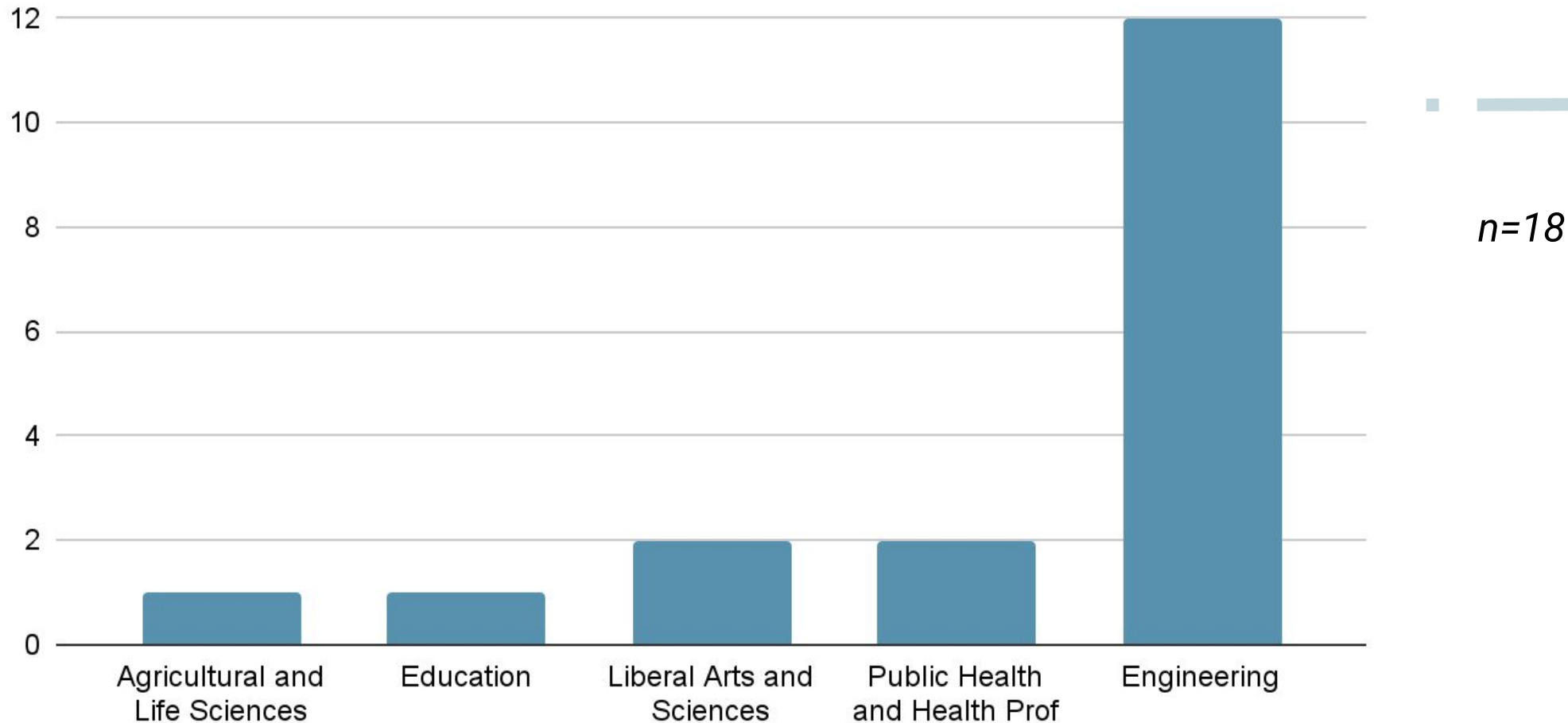
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Supporting Participants

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Planning for the Program

Faculty who are passionate and subject matter experts
- Not necessarily study abroad experts

Provider partner who share the same passion and values

Program Setup - Provider

- Prep work
- Itinerary and visits
- Mapping out transportation and various modes
- Someone who is very familiar with London
- Accessibility needs, beyond physical needs
- Small groups
- Murphy's Law - Plan B/C/D

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Program Setup - Faculty

- Manage students' expectations
- Pre-Departure info sessions
- Accommodations
- Funding

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On the Ground

- Being able to pivot and think quickly
- Being able to rely on different modes of transportation
- Mini teams led by faculty
- Briefing meeting every morning
- Minimize surprises and changes

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Long-term Impact on Students

- Destigmatize resources at DRC

- Waymap meeting with DRC to bring services to UF

- Student internships at DRC

- Student becoming a PCA

- Awareness of the challenges, policies, and practices for people with disabilities

- Team building, problem solving, empathy
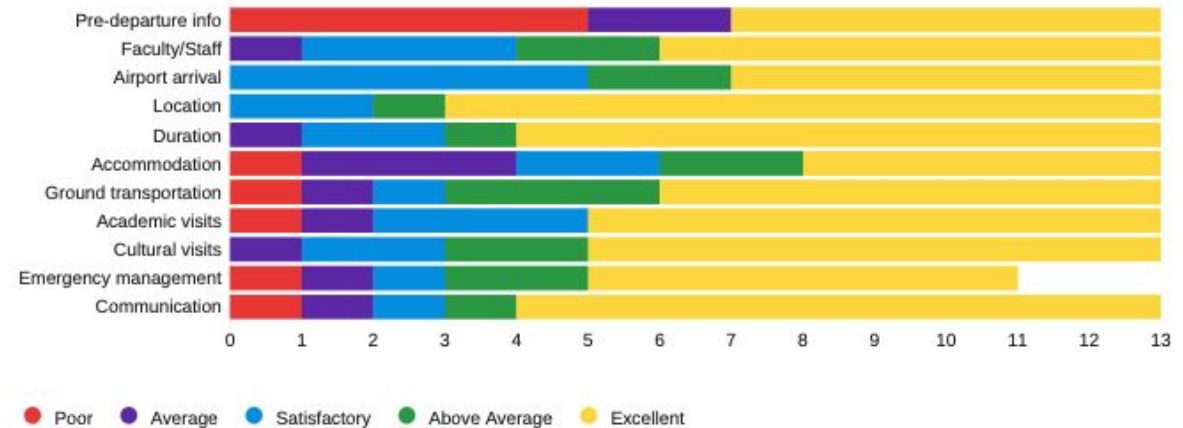
- Human centered approach to engineering

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Post-Program Impact on Students
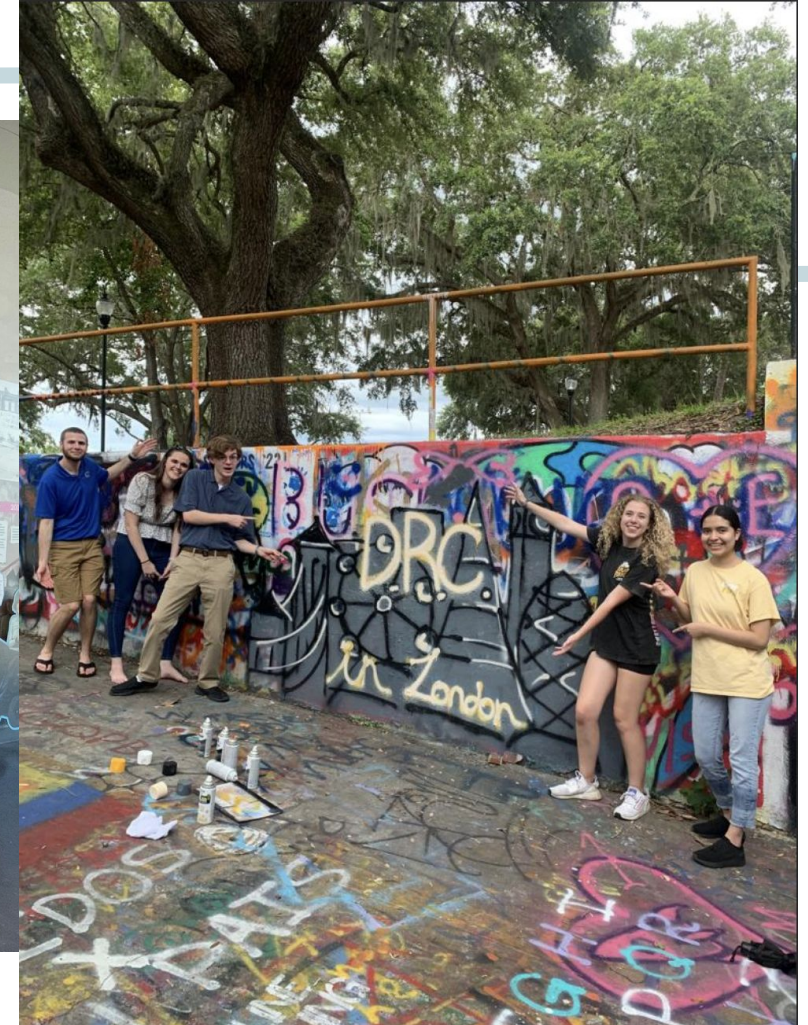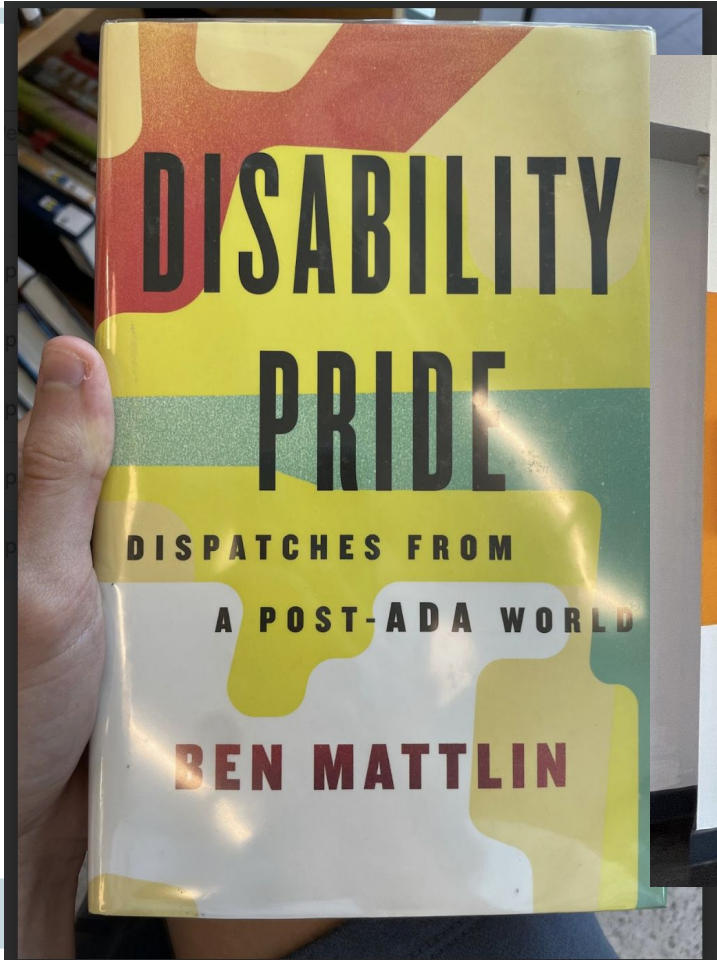
Challenges

- Pre-departure information
- Itinerary and arrival information
- Student expectations
- Accessibility and accommodations

How would you rate the following program elements?

#InclusionIsGlobal

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Student Feedback

Having the smart cities and disability access focus in one program really enlightened my perspective on how these topics intertwine. Strong partnership between disability advocates, engineers, architects, and city planners can make lives more inclusive and accessible for everyone

– Calya D., a 3rd year student in Health Science and an active disability advocate

There is a meaningful overlap between the development of smart cities and expanding disability access as cities grow in order to make sure that everyone has the same opportunity to participate in society

– Arunabh B., a 4th year student in UF Online Computer Science

Improvement

- Collaborate with Center for Instructional Technology and Teaching for Canvas course
  - Intentional communication
  - Set learning goals per visit
- Pre-departure sessions - in person and online
- Active learning activities facilitated by faculty
- Open up program to graduate students (e.g. law)

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Future Plans

Short-Term Program	Transition	Internship

Short-Term Program
- 8 days immersive study tour - faculty led program
- Familiarization of history, current policies and practices, technological advances and implementation, and future state of disability access
- Students and faculty live in hotels

Transition
- Short-term students return home
- Internship students move to apartments/homestays
- 3 days break

Internship
- 2 days of orientation and familiarization with host organizations
- 4 weeks internship with host organizations
- Working on technological applications/policies and advocacy/education and awareness

Resources

- Mobility International USA https://www.miusa.org/

- Diversity Abroad https://www.diversityabroad.com/

- YOUR campus Disability Resource Center

DREAM BIG

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