



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TAB A

October 29, 2021

Voice of the Customer Report (USHE Non-Traditional Students in Utah)

The presentation is a follow up to the research by the Cicero Group on non-traditional students that was shared at the July 2021 Committee of the Whole.

Committee Discussion

The Academic Affairs Committee members can review the presentation findings with the study author from the Cicero Group and discuss possible action steps.

Commissioner's Recommendation

This is a discussion item only; no action is required.

Attachment



Implementing Data-Driven Strategy

USHE

Non-Traditional Students in Utah

July 2021



UTAH SYSTEM OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

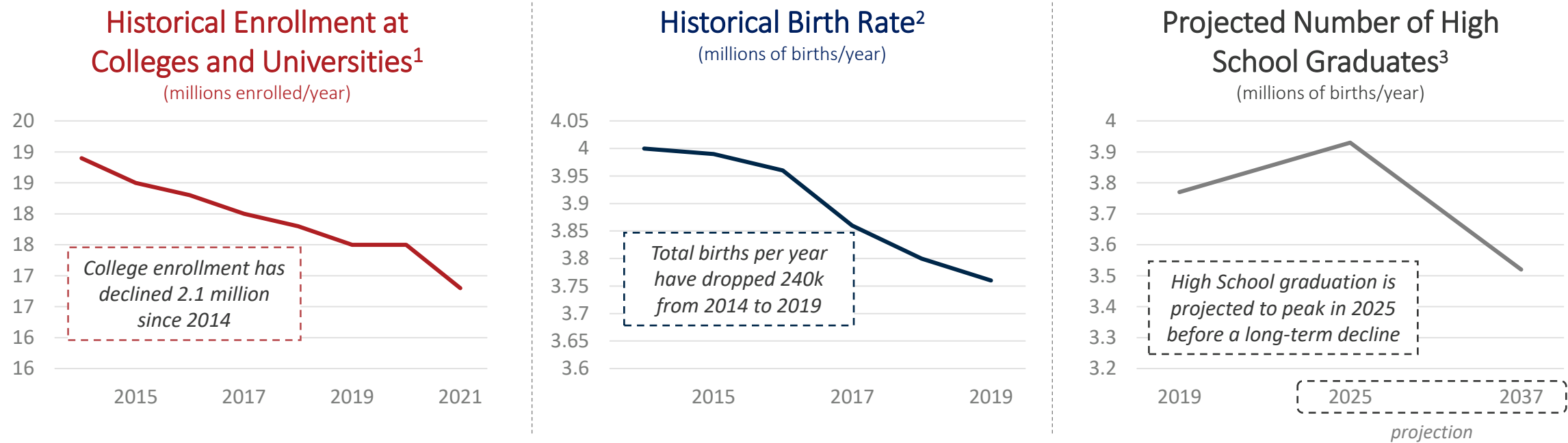


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Background Information and Justification of Need

Anticipated declines in traditional student enrollment are well documented. In the absence of attracting and retaining non-traditional students, Utah institutions of higher education will suffer...



Key Takeaways:

- Current demographics trends, exacerbated by COVID-19 implications, have dramatically impacted current and projected college enrollment rates
- This trend is expected to have long consequences for the education gap as low income and minority students are most significantly affected
- Higher education institutions have already begun to see the impacts of lower enrollment and face critical, long-term decisions

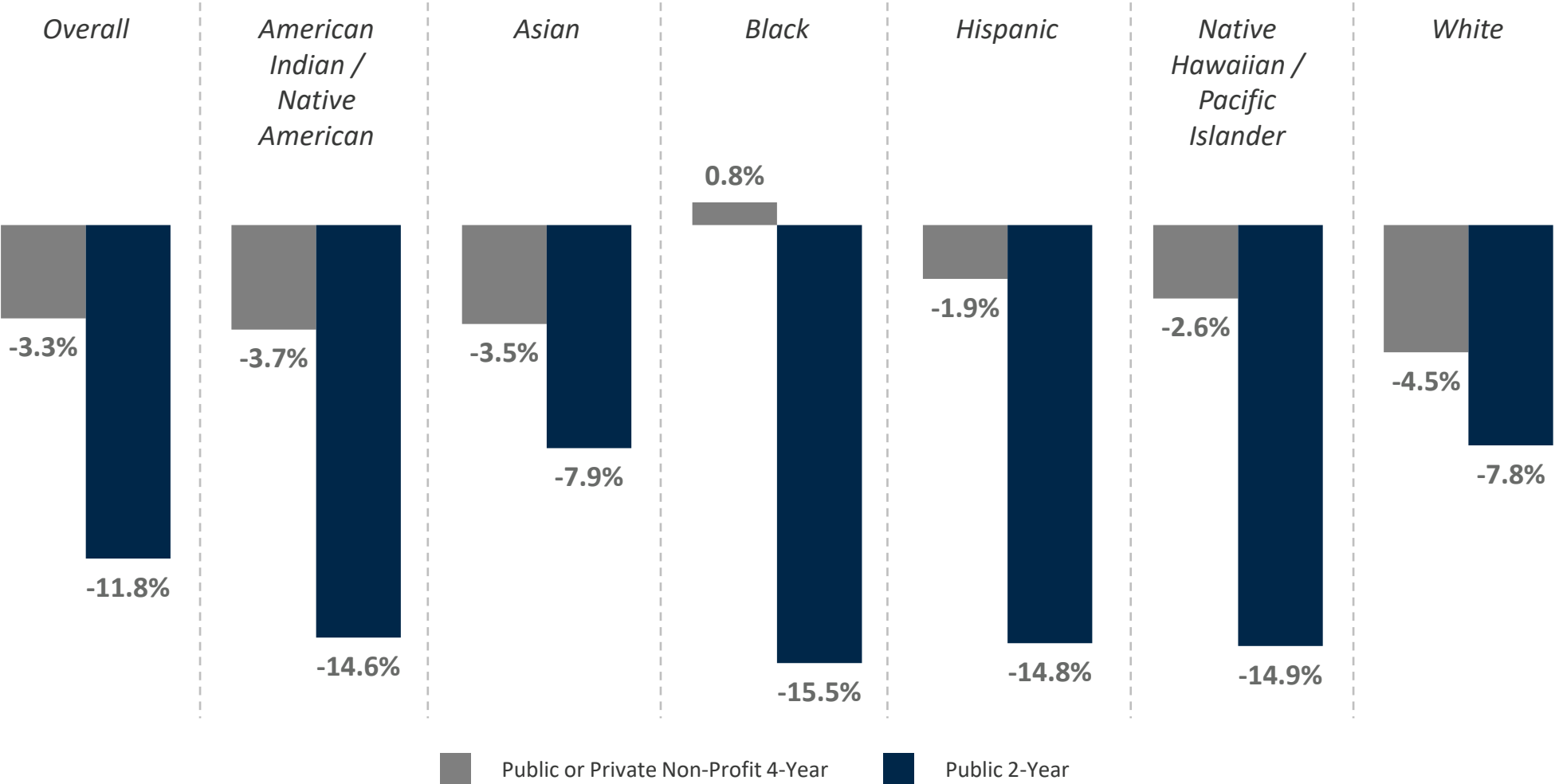
...but attracting non-traditional students is about much more than institutional survival; it is also a social imperative. Successfully serving non-traditional students will accelerate social justice for Utah's women and diverse ethnicities. Below is just one of many examples: 25–35-year-old women...

Utah Women Aged 25-35 in Higher Education

- 40% less likely to be enrolled in post secondary education compared to men
- When married, 79% less likely to be enrolled in post secondary education compared to married men
- With children under 5, 31% less likely to be enrolled in post secondary education compared to men with children under 5

While Utah has relatively similar enrollment and degree completion rates for men and women in the “traditional student” demographic, there is a **significant discrepancy between men and women in the 25-35 age range**. Additional factors such as marriage status widen this gap even further.

...One more example of the social imperative in serving non-traditional students is the fact that nationally, students of color saw a precipitous drop in college enrollment during the last year, particularly at two-year colleges



We know from research conducted for Utah in 2011 that post-secondary degrees and certificates have meaningful positive economic, social and personal / familial impact in Utah...

Economic

- Mean personal **annual compensation** is **75% greater** among those with a degree or certificate.
- Degree or certificate holders are **2.6 times more likely to work in salaried jobs** (rather than hourly).
- One quarter (23%) of those without a postsecondary degree or certificate have experienced more than two years of total post-high school unemployment, compared to 9% of those with a degree or certificate.

Social

- Postsecondary degree or certificate holders are **11% more likely to report happiness with their life** than those without a degree or certificate.
- Individuals who completed degrees or certificates are **9% more likely to indicate that they have great marriages** and are **6% more likely to characterize themselves as having a good family life**.
- Degree or certificate holders are **11% more likely to report good health** than non-degree or certificate holders.
- Individuals without a degree or certificate are more than twice as likely to have utilized Medicaid, WIC, and CHIP in the last five years, and over **three times as likely to have utilized food stamps**.

Personal & Familial

- Individuals with **at least one parent with a degree or certificate** are **50% more likely to complete a degree themselves**.
- If a sibling has completed a degree or certificate, individuals are **twice as likely to complete a degree themselves**.

...and according to research conducted in 2018 we know some of the observable variables that best predict whether a non-traditional student will succeed and complete a degree or certificate

Strong predictors of success are:

Academic Background

- Students who have taken more English, Math and STEM courses
 - The number of credits that will be accepted by the institution
 - Students who have been out of school for longer
-

Attitude and Perceptions

- A higher degree of confidence in their personal abilities and likelihood to succeed academically
 - A belief in the value and brand of the institution
-

Educational Experience

- Interest to actively participate in a learning community or student mentor group
- A clear understanding of their motivations for pursuing a higher education

Finally, research from 2012 is very compelling surrounding the primary process obstacles non-traditional students encounter as they attempt to complete a degree or certificate

Non-Traditional Student Top 5 Pain-Points Not Adequately Addressed by the Institution

Pain points listed chronologically, not in priority order.

- 1 Navigating the application and financial aid process
- 2 Transferability of past credits earned, and competency obtained
- 3 Course scheduling flexibility
- 4 The quality of online courses (student learning vs. cost-savings for the institution)
- 5 Selecting the right major and classes that result in the best possible job

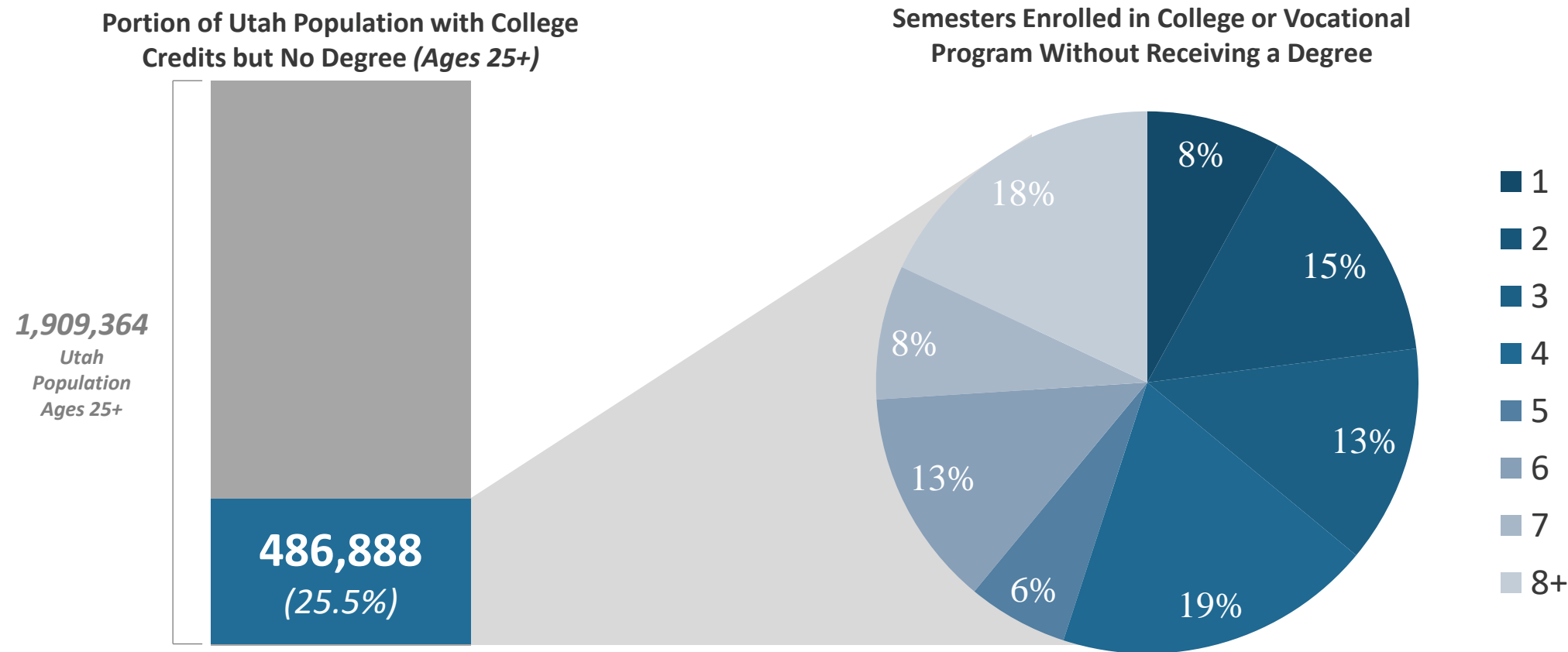
Additional Pain Points Include:

...Academic support and mentoring

...Parking accessibility

Institutions are aware of these priorities. **The discrepancy lies in what students view as adequate vs. what the institutions view as adequate.** The gap in these areas is severe. Significantly more hands-on support and guidance is required.

Overlaying data from the 2019 American Community Survey with findings from the 2011 statewide study, SUGGESTS that there may be ~220,000 individuals in Utah who have five or more semesters completed without a degree or certificate



Key Takeaways:

- Nearly 20% of students with some college and no degree completed four years (eight semesters) of college
- 25% of individuals who attended 8 or more semesters but did not complete a degree or certificate listed balancing work with school as the leading cause for non-completion

Best Practices for Supporting Non-Traditional Students

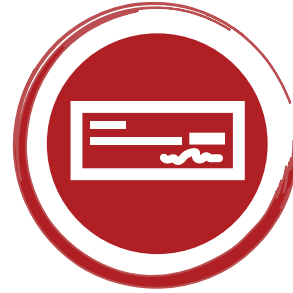
Peer-reviewed studies provide evidence-based practices for how institutions can customize financial aid to propel non-traditional students

Financial Aid Best Practices for Supporting Non-Traditional Students



Affordability Requirements

Require that low-income students not pay more than a predetermined percentage of their discretionary income



Method of Aid

Experiment with providing aid equivalent to 125% of the needed time to finish; accrue funding as courses are completed



Simplify Application

Base the awarding of grants on documents and information more easily obtainable for non-traditional students; three-year average income verified by tax returns; lock in candidate's data for entirety of program with one simplified annual form to update if income has changed in prior year



Incentivize

Experiment with offering students small “bonuses” when they accomplish milestones or goals

“When students see evidence that people at their university care about them, students feel more motivated than when they perceive stakeholders only care about students identified as the majority.”

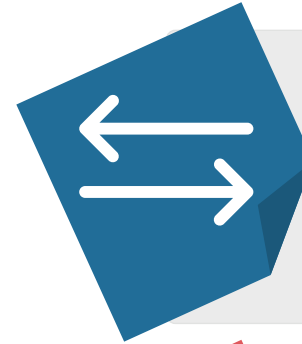
Similarly, peer-reviewed studies provide guidance on process and service-related best practices helping non-traditional students succeed

Process and Service-Related Best Practices for Supporting Non-Traditional Students



Simplify the Path

Create a defined degree plan prior to student's enrollment. Provide a narrower selection of course pathways to eliminate confusion, simplify scheduling, and to improve the quality of classes focused on non-traditional students



Improve Transfer Processes

Improve the ease and personalization of transferring credits, offer competency-based assessments for credit, and liberally expunge negative performance in academic history



Intense Support

Significantly increase support systems and personnel to provide application support, financial aid hand-holding, academic guidance, advocacy, mentorship, and career coaching



Workforce Alignment

Generously credit experiential and workplace-related learning already achieved; illustrate skill and knowledge alignment and stackability with high-demand jobs to demonstrate compelling ROI



Belongingness

Organize non-traditional students into cohorts and sections where they will make up the majority of the classroom; minimize the size of cohorts to engender feelings of belongingness



Equitable Access

Provide non-traditional students privileges for scheduling, parking, transportation, child-friendly study rooms, campus resources, and even day-care facilities

Survey Results & Alignment with USHE Strategic Pillars

To gather more meaningful information about the perceptions of the survey participants, Cicero segmented them into four groups to evaluate different demographics and their specific needs

Background

- Understand the **needs, perceptions**, and **obstacles** of prospective non-traditional students in Utah
- Collect information around the **structural barriers** for these students to **starting or returning** to complete their degree / certificate
- Provide insight to USHE / WGU on how to **best attract and support** non-traditional students

About Survey Respondents

- N=830
- Variety of Education Levels
- Aged 25+
- 60% Female
- 86% White
- Average Income: \$75K



Age

Three segments based on age: Young Adult (25-34 years old), Middle Aged (35-49 years old), and Older Adult (50+ years old)



Education

Segmented into three groups depending on their highest education level achieved: High School / Technical College, College Stopout, and College Degree



Minority

Segmented into two groups based on race: Minority (Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Native Hawaiian) or Non-Minority (White)



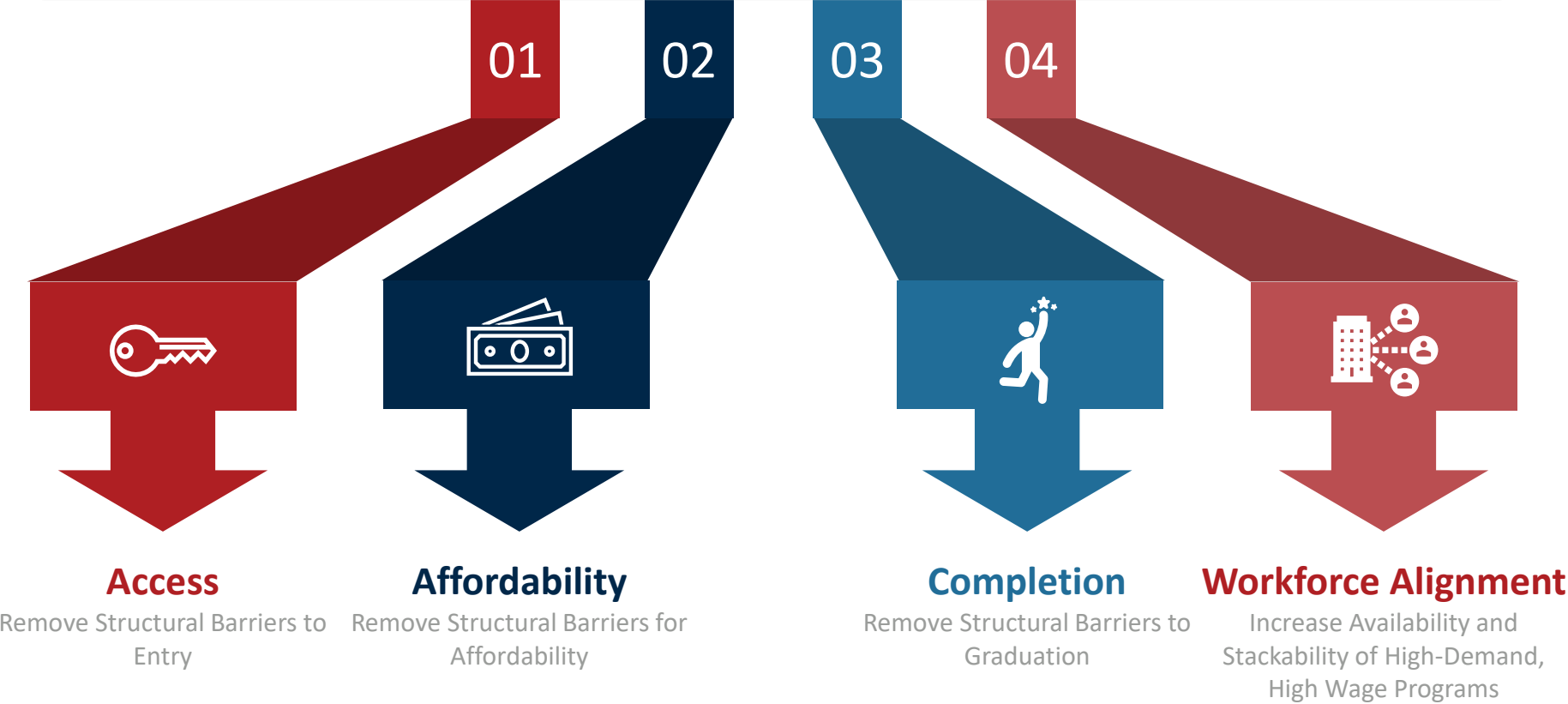
Socioeconomic Status (SES)

Four segments based on SES, which was determined by income level, marital status, and having children under 18 years old

To better understand the implications and outcomes of the research, we have bucketed key findings into the four pillars of the USHE 2021 Strategic Plan

We have all this information.. NOW WHAT?

Aligning with four of USHE’s Pillars from the 2021 Strategic Plan, let’s look through the lens of each of the four demographic segments exploring key takeaways, similarities, differences, and supporting data from the survey.



ACCESS | Remove Structural Barriers to Entry



AGE

1. Cost:

- Nearly 40% of each age group **worries about cost**
- Over 60%** of Young Adults believe cost will be \$20K+

2. Time:

- Middle-Aged adults are the most concerned about **finding time for a degree**

3. Perception of Obstruction:

- Older Adults expressed **least** concern overall—indicating **actual concerns are vague**



EDUCATION

1. Cost:

- ~60% of people think education cost will be <\$20K **yet cost is still primary barrier**
- College Stopouts have **higher perception of cost** than other education backgrounds—likely because of types of degrees pursued

2. Financial Aid Process:

- Those without college experience are **most deterred by financial aid processes**



MINORITY

1. Cost:

- Minority groups are **more likely** to believe the cost is **>\$20K** compared to Non-Minorities

2. Acceptable Grades:

- Notable concern of Minorities: **confidence in maintaining acceptable grades**

3. Language Barrier:

- English **as a non-primary language** impacts 15% of Minority individuals; for 7% of Minority individuals, it is the #1 barrier



SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

1. Knowing Where to Begin:

- Lower SES groups **know less where to begin their journey** (36%) compared to the Upper SES groups (5%)

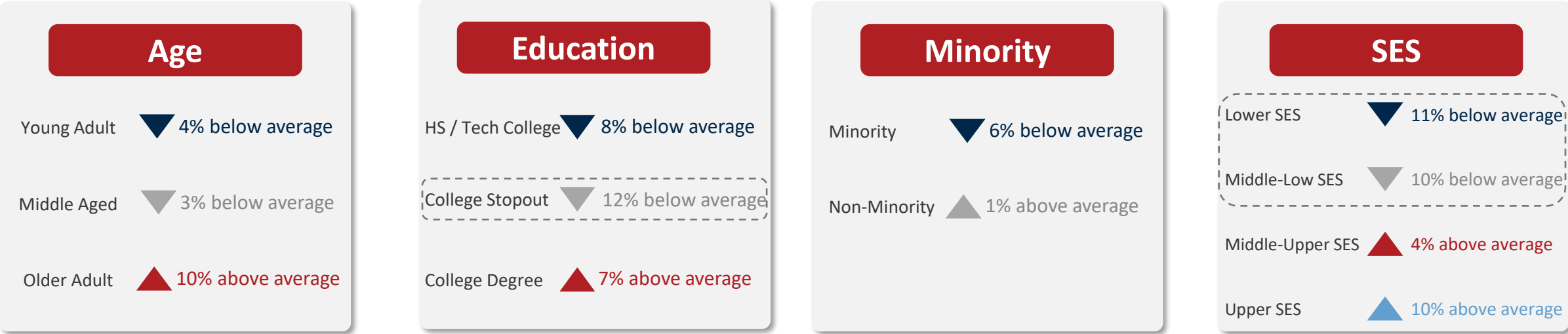
2. Rigor of Program:

- Students in Upper SES have more confidence in their ability to handle the rigor of the program; 16% of Upper SES expressed concern compared to 30% of Lower SES

AFFORDABILITY | Remove Structural Barriers for Affordability

Perception of Value

62% of all respondents said they agree or strongly agree that the value of an education is greater than the cost



Cost

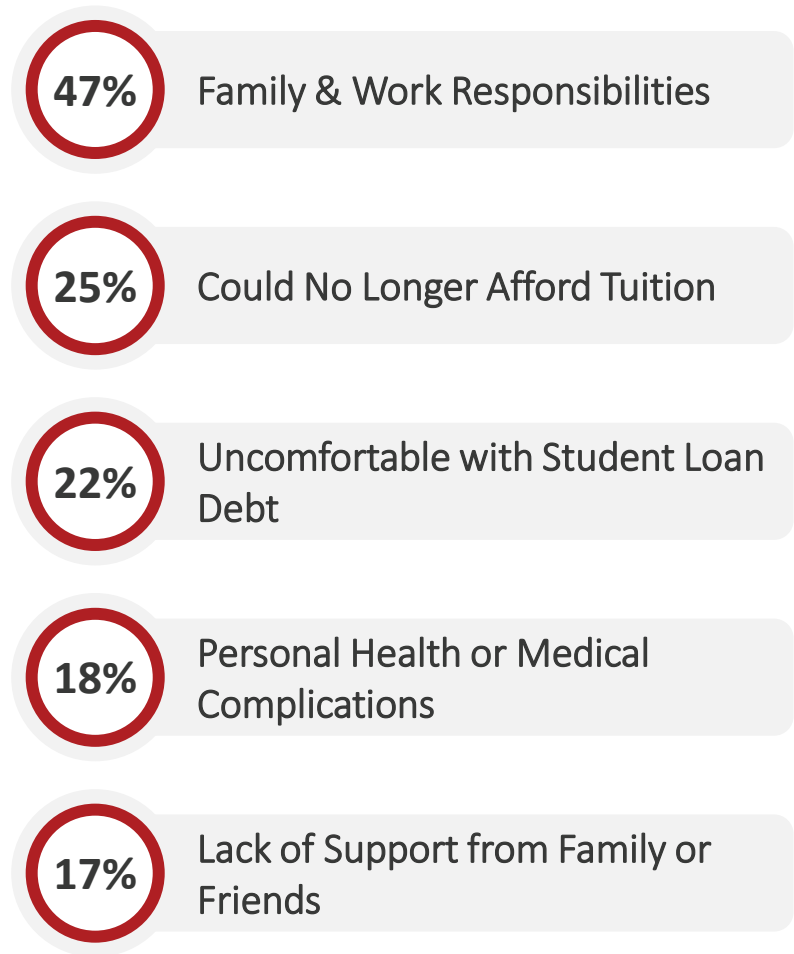
- 89% of College Stopouts say cost is an obstruction to pursuing higher education
- 65% of Older Adults, compared to 38% of Young Adults, believe the cost will be under \$20K
- Individuals in the Middle-Low SES subsection had the highest proportion of respondents who believed the cost of their program would be greater than \$50k

Financial Aid

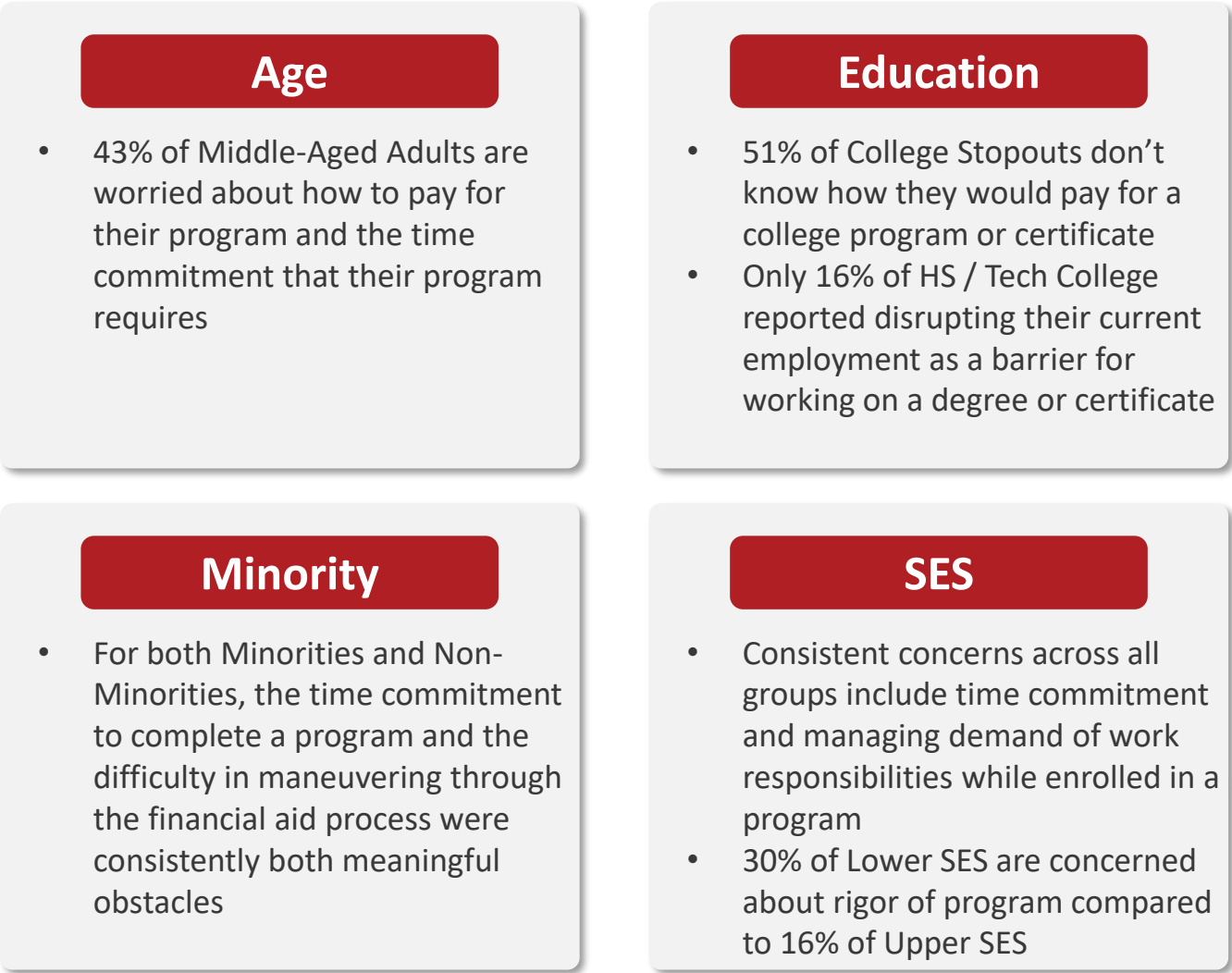
- 72% of Minority individuals listed navigating the financial aid process as a primary barrier in pursuing their program
- 73% of individuals with High School / Technical College experience also listed navigating the financial aid process as a primary barrier in pursuing their program

COMPLETION | Remove Structural Barriers to Graduation

College Stopouts say the following prevented them from completing their degree / certificate



Other Barriers



WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT | Increase Availability and Stackability of High-Demand, High Wage Programs



Important Factors in Choosing a School

- Older and Middle-Aged Adults expressed the importance of an education with a **customizable pace** and **online coursework**
- **59% of College Stopouts** reported a college's **ability to customize the pace** of their degree as important
- **Minority students** rank **reputation** as most important factor when selecting a school
- Flexibility with pace and platform is most important factor for Lower SES when selecting a school



Degree/Certificate Preference

- 55% of **Middle-Aged candidates** prefer to attend an **online college** or university, while **49% of Young Adults** want a **4-year university**
- 47% of **Minority** students prefer to attend an **online college or university**
- 46% of **Lower SES** students prefer to attend school at a **traditional 4-year university**



Type of Program & Mode of Study

- Young, Middle-Aged, and Older Adults **all prefer schooling that is part time with hybrid learning**
- Those with **High School / Technical College** prefer **online school** compared to hybrid
- Non-Minorities are not as concerned about having the option to choose between online and in-person options as minorities
- Members of each **socioeconomic status** prefer **part-time and hybrid modes of study**



Preferred Program/Major

- **Business and Computer & Information Sciences** majors are the most popular across age groups and SES statuses
- Those with a High School / Technical College degree or certificate are likely to pursue certificates for personal services (nail artist, esthetician, etc.)
- **Minorities** prefer to study **healthcare** and medicine compared to **Non-Minorities** who are more likely to go into **education**

A Voice of the Customer study encompassing postsecondary students of all ages, with focus on institutions and students specific to Weber and Davis counties, has been commissioned by Alan Hall and will be presented at a future USHE meeting.

Preliminary findings on specific ways to better serve non-traditional students from this study include:

Schedule Flexibility

- Schools that offer a **variety of class times and formats** can better serve the range of needs expressed by non-traditional students
- This is a key consideration for students identifying and **selecting a program** that works for them

*“As a non-traditional student, I chose Weber State because of the **flexible schedule**. The available class times allowed me to complete my studies and **be there for my kids** at home.”*

Admissions

- Non-traditional students with relevant work experience would benefit from **modified admission criteria** and processes
- Employers cite **prior work experience** as very helpful for both graduates and prospective students who may benefit from additional education

*“I have a lot of caregivers (employees) that would make excellent nurses but have **lower grades**. Schools are very competitive, and **if they’d consider relevant work experience** it’d really help these students.”*

Application through Enrollment

- The application through enrollment process can be complex and having a **single point of contact** is helpful
- **Reducing anxiety** and providing proactive assistance is important for non-traditional students who are unsure about navigating an unfamiliar system

*“Davis Tech had a **pre-admission advisor** who walked me through everything I needed to do before school started – it was so nice. I **didn’t feel any anxiety** that I was going to miss something.”*

Mentorship

- Professors and other school personnel who take a **mentorship** role with students can have a big impact
- This is especially true for non-traditional students navigating challenges outside the classroom

*“I talked with my instructor about **family issues** I was facing, but he didn’t work with me. If he’d helped me better **understand the school’s system**, I wouldn’t have had to pause my studies.”*




Cicero

Thank you!

Questions?

Age Segmentation


AGE GROUPS | The following three groups are segmented based on age to better understand non-traditional students’ preferences and challenges depending on how old they are



Young Adults

Young Adults are most interested in a traditional, 4-year program. They are the least likely to say there are too many obstacles to getting an education, but struggle most with learning about scholarships and grants. They could use help knowing where to start and discovering what they want to ‘be’.


Ages 25 to 34
260 Respondents



Middle Aged

Middle Aged Adults are most impacted by work and personal commitments. College Stopouts in this age group were more likely due to family responsibilities than other groups. While they are less likely to start their education, those that do are more likely to follow through. They could use the flexibility to go at their own pace to enable them to keep commitments to work and family life.

Ages 35 to 49
357 Respondents



Older Adults

Older Adults are mostly seeking education to gain new skills and feel personal satisfaction. Roughly half have started the process of looking for a program but are less likely to actually apply than other age groups. This group is the least likely to have student debt. They could use help getting motivated to take their aspirations from just a dream to tangible action.

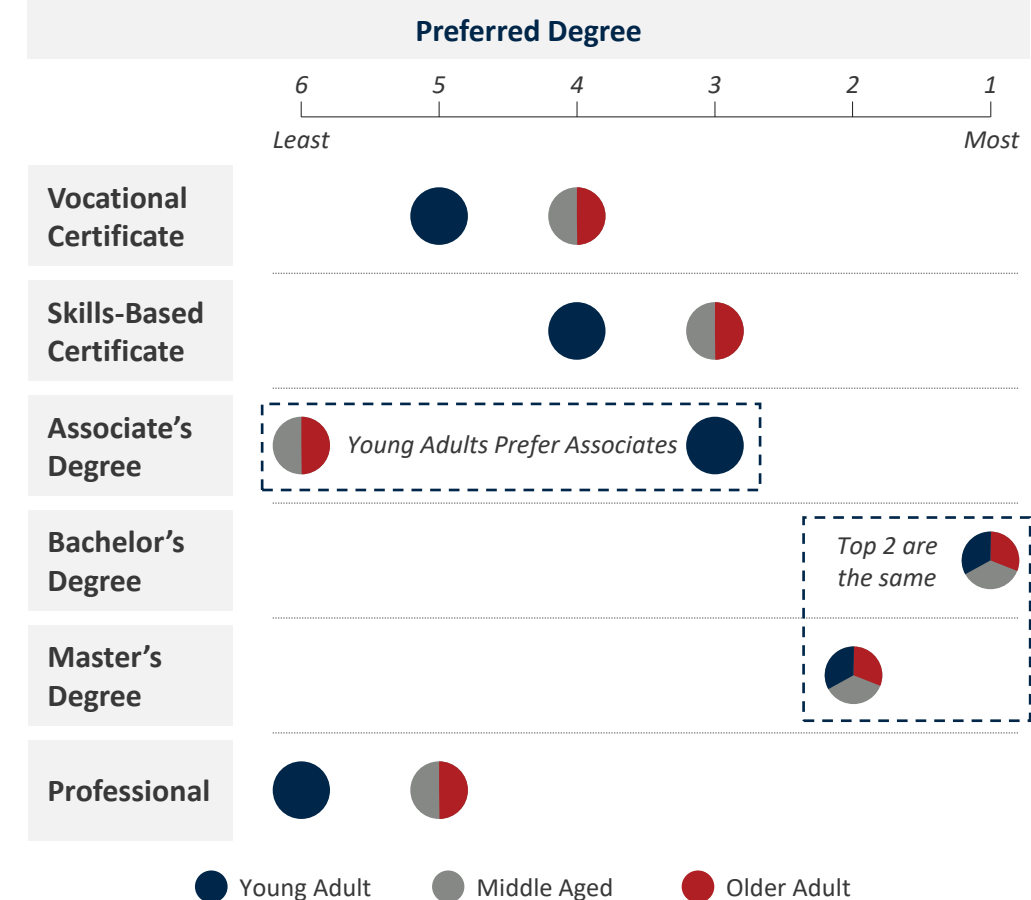
Ages 50+
213 Respondents

Groups segmented based on age alone. Differences called out for this segmentation are significant to a 95% confidence interval.

MOTIVATIONS | Young Adults and Middle Aged are focused on creating a better life by pursuing further education, while Older Adults are more focused on personal satisfaction through earning a degree

Key Takeaways:

- Bachelor's and Master's are most preferred for all groups, with YA preferring Associate's much more than MA/OA
- Gaining new skills is a top motivator for all students
- Over 50% of students have researched, but have not completed an application for their program of choice



Top Motivations for Pursuing Further Education

- Young Adult**
- ① Create a Better Life (26%)
 - ② Develop New Skills (13%)

- Middle Aged**
- ① Create a Better Life (17%)
 - ② Develop New Skills (15%)

- Older Adult**
- ① Develop New Skills (26%)
 - ② Personal Satisfaction (25%)

Differentiating Perspective on the Value of Pursuing Education

- 58% believe the value of school is higher than the cost

▼ 4% below average

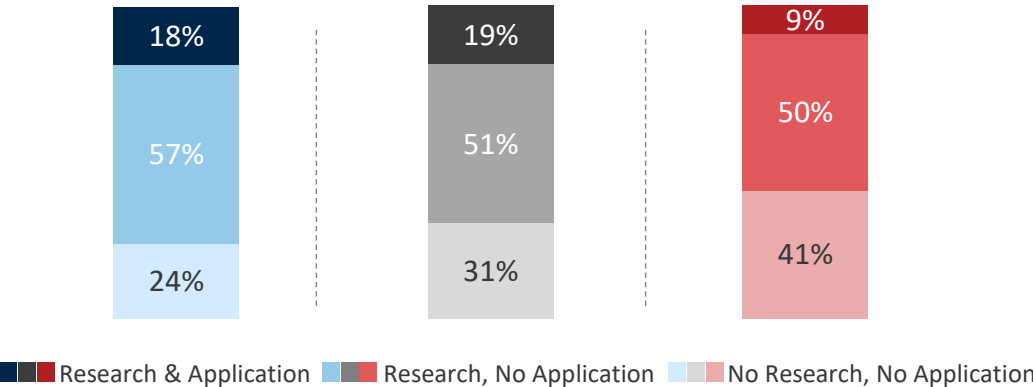
- 59% believe the value of school is higher than the cost

▼ 3% below average

- 72% believe the value of school is higher than the cost

▲ 10% above average

Progress Towards Application



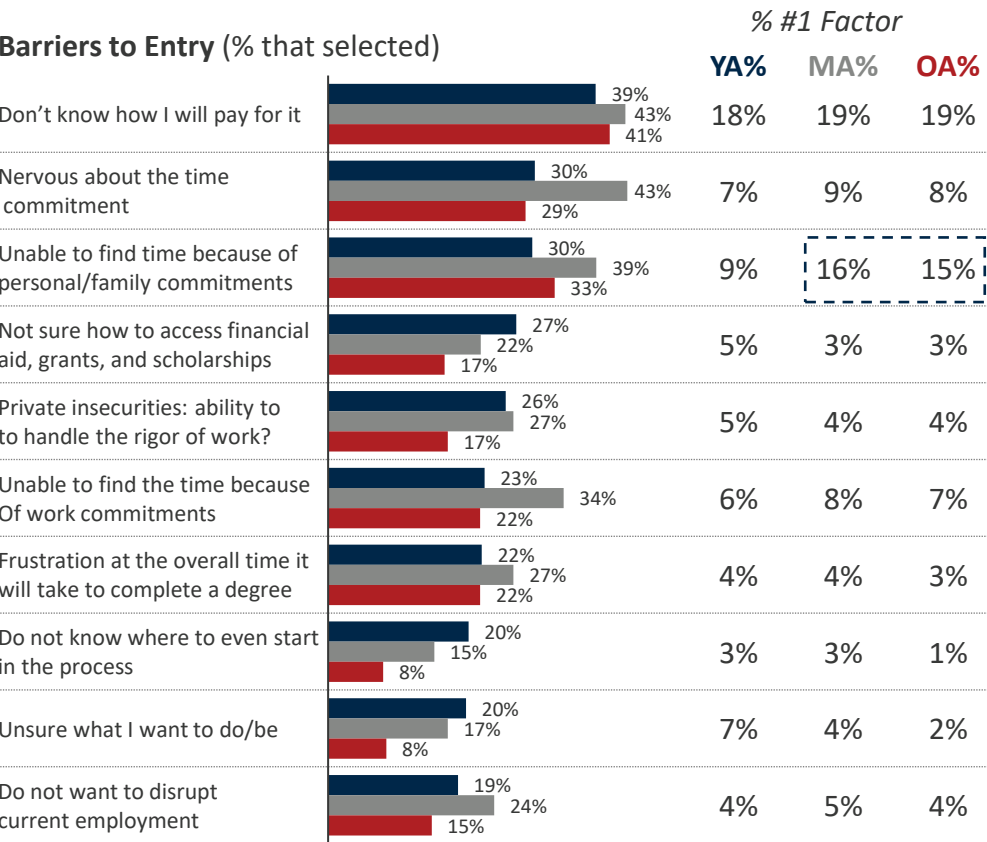
Consistent Factors

- Bachelor's is the most sought-after degree
- Belief that anyone can complete a degree or certification (65%)
- Belief that one needs a degree for their dream job (75%)

BARRIERS | All age groups are concerned with how they will pay for their education, but Young Adults (YA)/Middle Aged (MA) believe the program will cost more than Older Adults (OA)

Key Takeaways:

- Nearly 20% of each age group is concerned about how they will pay for their degree or certification
- YA have a higher perception of the cost of their program relative to MA/OA
- MA is the most concerned about finding the time for their education
- OA have lower ratings for most obstructions showing their fears are vague



■ Young Adult ■ Middle Aged ■ Older Adult

Cost Expectations

Young Adult

Middle Aged

Older Adult

Estimated Cost

<20k

\$20k - \$50k

\$50k+

38%

47%

15%

<20k

\$20k - \$50k

\$50k+

47%

39%

14%

<20k

\$20k - \$50k

\$50k+

65%

28%

7%

Differentiating Perspective on the Obstructions to Pursuing Higher Education

- Struggles the most with deciding on a program (61%) and navigating the financial aid process (74%)

- Struggles the most to manage work demands while enrolled (80%) and personal commitments (83%)

- Least worried about ability to maintain acceptable grades (40% concerned)
- Least concerned about language barriers (6%)

Consistent Factors

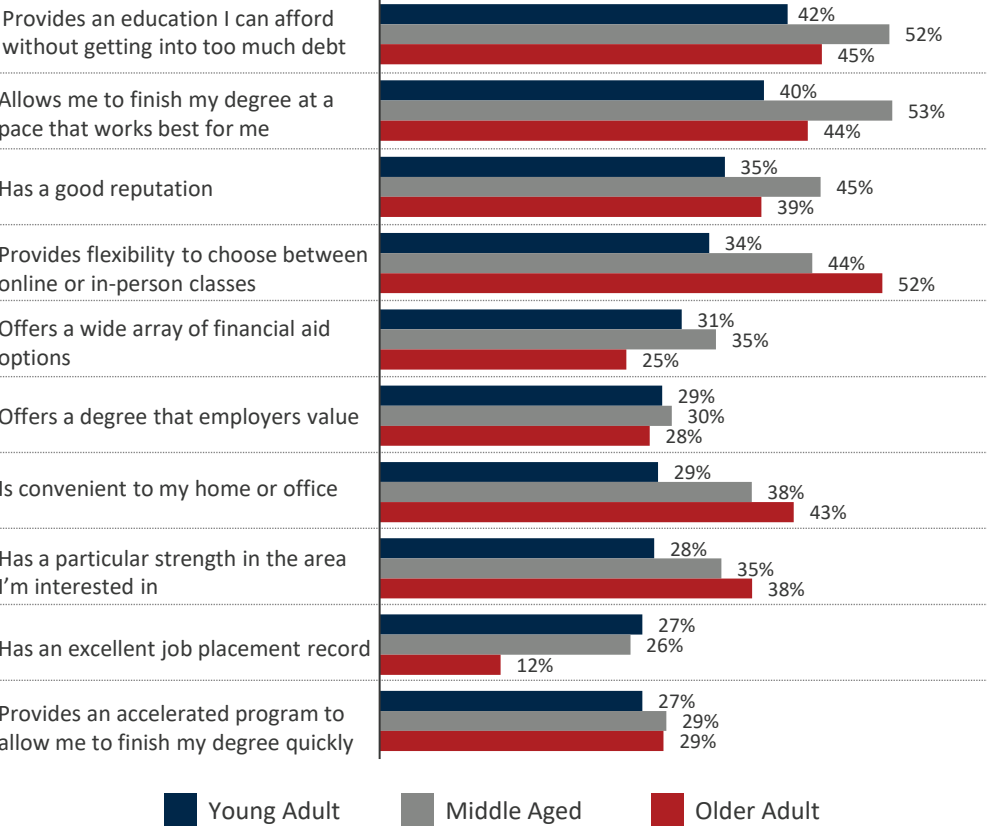
- All groups are concerned with the ability to pay for their education

SOLUTIONS | Finding a school or program that allows the student to go at a self-selected pace and not incur too much in debt is preferred by each age group, with over 50% of Middle Aged focused on finding this

Key Takeaways:

- YA are interested in healthcare as an area of study, while MA/Oa are more interested in studying education
- MA/OA prefer an online experience, while YA want the traditional, 4-year program
- All groups prefer part-time programs that are hybrid

Important Factors when Selecting a School



Top Areas of Study / Interest

Young Adult	Middle Aged	Older Adult
① Business (35%)	① Business (31%)	① Business (25%)
② Computer & Information Sciences (20%)	② Computer & Information Sciences (18%)	② Computer & Information Sciences (15%)
③ Healthcare/ Medicine General (16%)	③ Education (18%)	③ Education (13%)

Type of School Preference

Young Adult	Middle Aged	Older Adult
49% Traditional 4- year university	55% Online college or university	46% Online college or university

Mode of Study

Young Adult	Middle Aged	Older Adult
• 50% Hybrid • 50% Part-Time	• 55% Hybrid • 61% Part-time	• 55% Hybrid • 75% Part-Time

Consistent Factors

- Most popular degrees are business and computer/information sciences
- Similar expectations for time to complete
- Personal income/savings and federal student loans are most common source of payment for all groups

Education Segmentation

EDUCATION GROUPS | All individuals want to pursue a degree or certificate to gain more skills; College Stopouts care deeply about personal satisfaction, whereas the others focus on bettering their life



**High School /
Technical College**

Even though these individuals don't currently have a university degree, they overwhelmingly selected a Bachelor's to be their first choice. They are not as interested in pursuing a Masters or Professional degree. This group struggles more than others with language barriers and cost. They want help understanding the available financial options.

High School Diploma, or has started or completed a vocational / technical / skill-based certificate

166 Respondents



**College
Stopout**

College Stopouts likely gained some skills while in school they find valuable, making their desire to pursue a degree more about personal satisfaction and creating a better life. For many, life has gotten in the way of them completing their degree, whether that be personal reasons, work, or health. They could use help learning what is required of them to go back to school.

Has completed some college, but had no degree

165 Respondents



**College
Degree**

Individuals who have college degrees see a greater value in education than the expense. They are not as concerned about their ability to succeed in the program nor getting into their preferred program. They could use help finding programs that are part-time and would result in tangible new skills gained.

Has an Associate's, Bachelor's Master's or Professional Degree

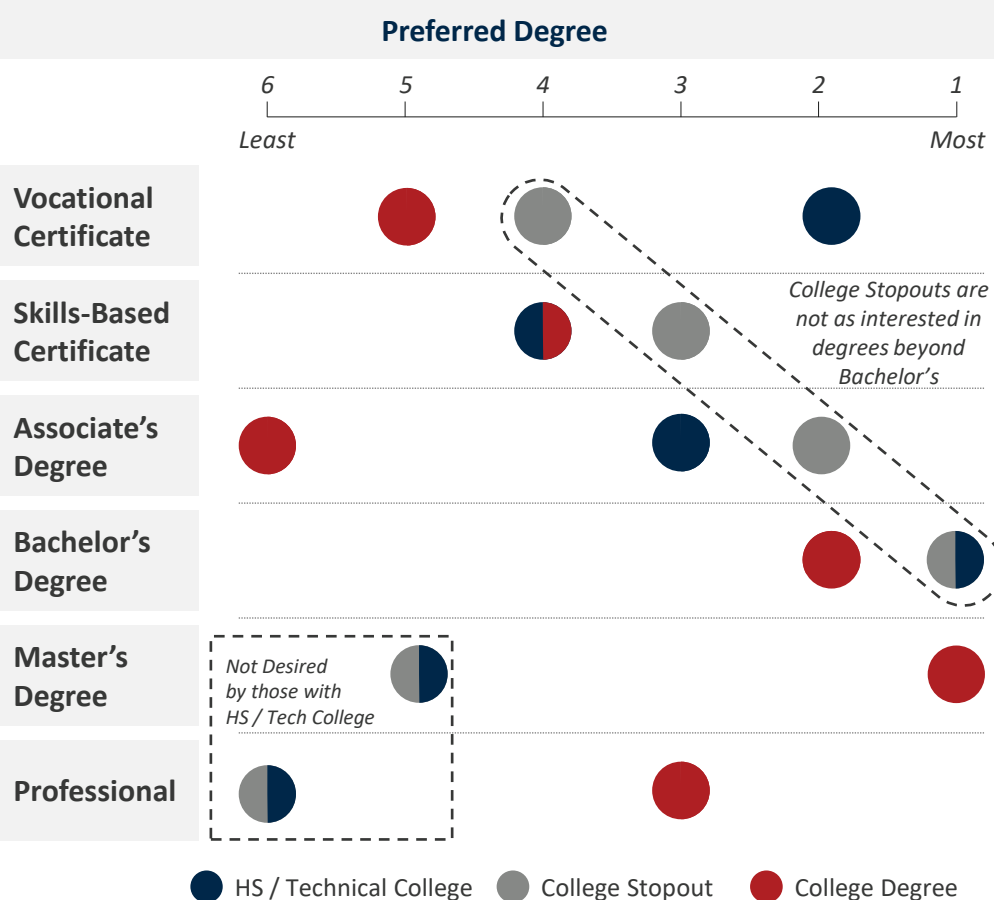
499 Respondents

Groups segmented based on age alone. Differences called out for this segmentation are significant to a 95% confidence interval.

MOTIVATIONS | While all students are motivated by the possibility of improved quality of life, College Stopouts are also motivated by the desire to feel satisfied on a personal level

Key Takeaways:

- Stopouts are more likely to be motivated by internal personal satisfaction
- Those who have not yet secured a college degree have little interest in progressing to a Master's or PhD
- Students who have already secured their Associate's degree have a more optimistic view on the value of college



Top Motivations for Pursuing Further Education

Differentiating Perspective on the Value of Pursuing Education

Progress Towards Application

Consistent Factors

HS / Technical College

- 1 Create a Better Life (24%)
- 2 Develop New Skills (13%)

- 54% believe the value of school is higher than the cost

▼ 8% below average

College Stopout

- 1 Create a Better Life (22%)
- 2 Personal Satisfaction (19%)

- 50% believe the value of school is higher than the cost

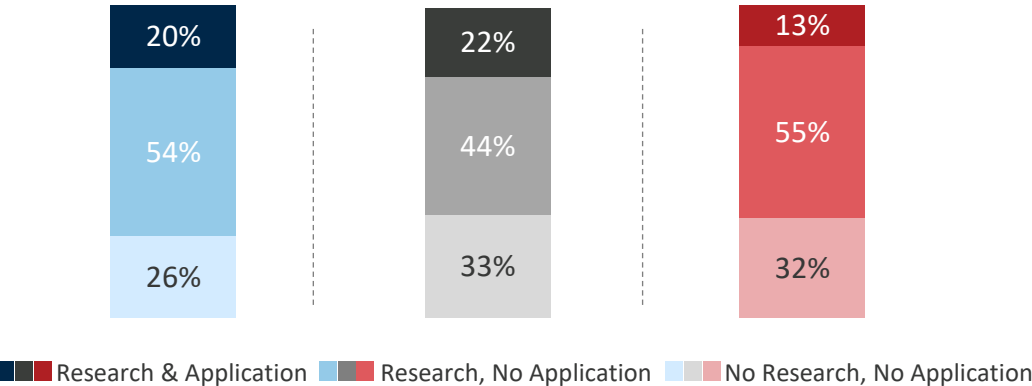
▼ 12% below average

College Degree

- 1 Develop New Skills (20%)
- 2 Create a Better Life (14%)

- 69% believe the value of school is higher than the cost

▲ 7% above average

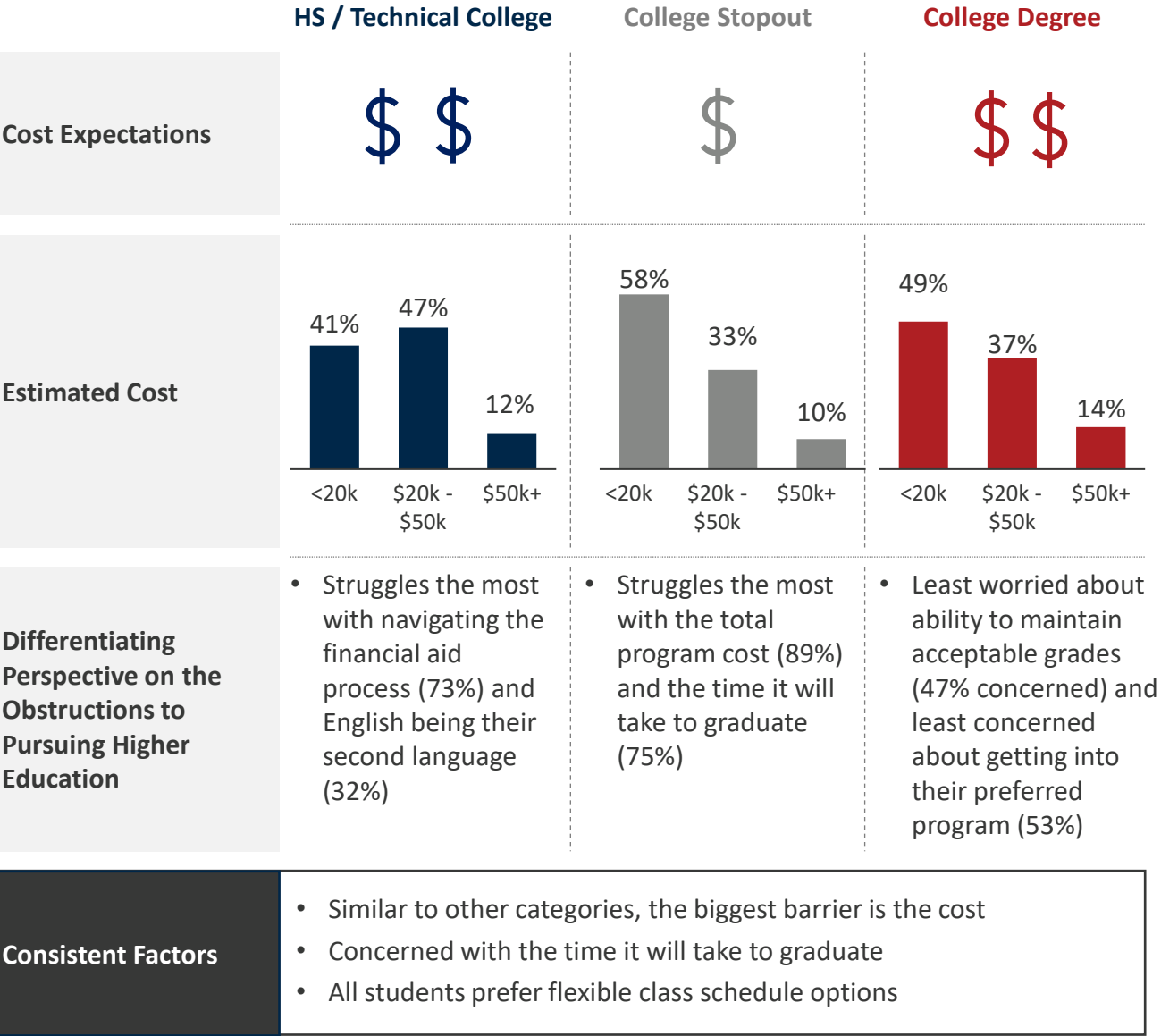
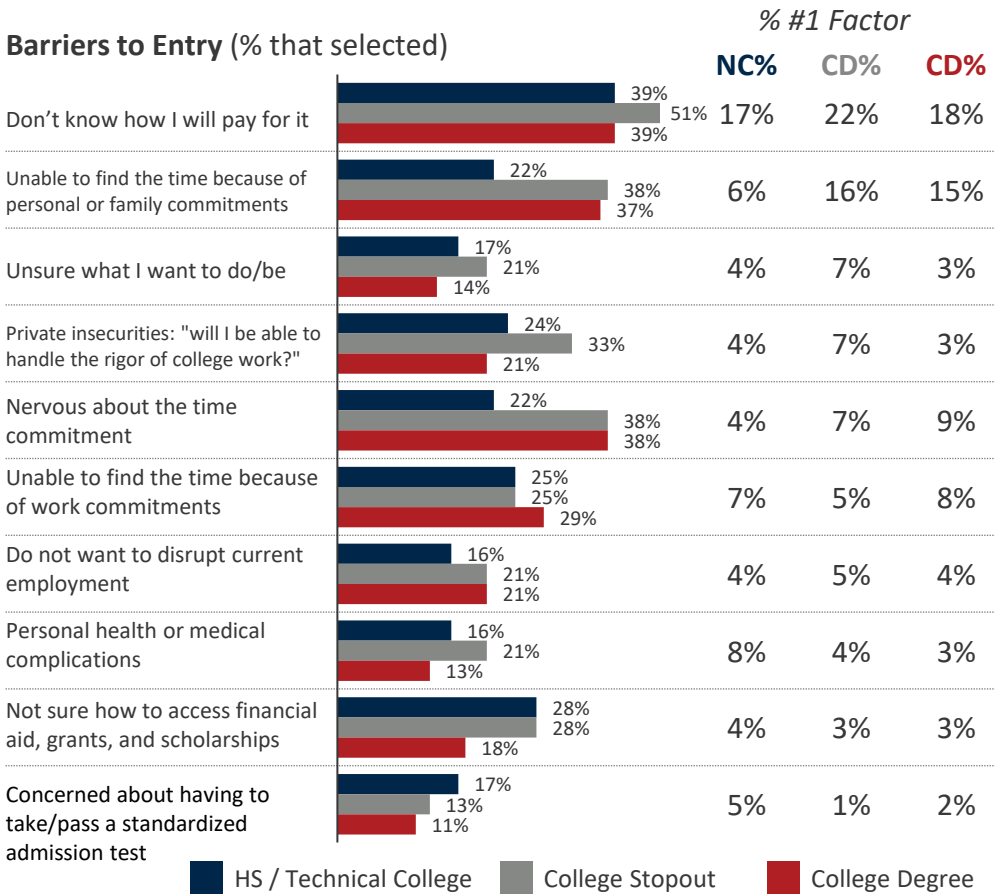


- All groups are looking to better their standing in life through education
- All groups highly value completing their Bachelor's degree

BARRIERS | HS/ Tech College is disproportionately concerned with the barrier of English being their non-primary language and College Stopout and College Degree are much more likely to be concerned with finding time

Key Takeaways:

- HS / Tech College and College Degree both perceive that the cost of their education will be more than the perception of College Stopouts; this is likely because of the types of degrees pursued
- 21% of College Stopouts state that health concerns kept them from completing their degree, which was the biggest barrier for 8% of the group

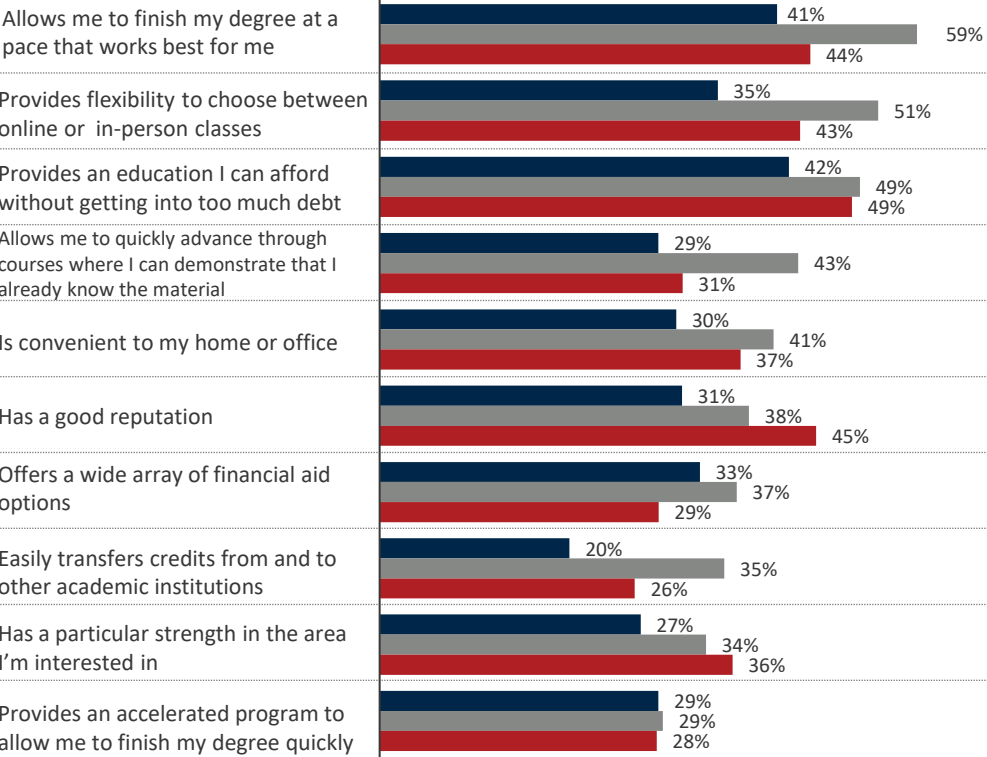


SOLUTIONS | Nearly 60% of College Stopouts are looking for schools that allow flexibility in the pace that the program is completed. 51% value the option to choose between in-person and online classes

Key Takeaways:

- Those with HS / Tech College degree or certificate, are likely to pursue certificates for personal services (nail artist, esthetician, etc.)
- Those who already have a college degree see the importance of a good reputation (45%) compared to HS / Tech College (31%)
- HS/Tech College prefer online school compared to hybrid

Important Factors when Selecting a School



■ HS / Technical College ■ College Stopout ■ College Degree

Top Areas of Study / Interest

HS / Technical College

- 1 Business (34%)
- 2 Computer & Information Sciences (23%)
- 3 Personal Services (17%)

College Stopout

- 1 Business (39%)
- 2 Computer & Information Sciences (16%)
- 3 Psychology (15%)

College Degree

- 1 Business (27%)
- 2 Computer & Information Sciences (17%)
- 3 Education (17%)

Type of School Preference

55%

Online college or university

46%

Online college or university

51%

Online college or university

Mode of Study

- 48% Online
- 46% Part-Time

- 52% Hybrid
- 60% Part-time

- 56% Hybrid
- 67% Part-Time

Consistent Factors

- Part-time school schedule
- Business and Computer & Information Sciences are the top degree choices

Minority Segmentation

MINORITY GROUPS | Minorities are not as likely as Non-Minorities to believe that the value of an education trumps the cost of the degree




Minority

Minorities indicate many have researched (and some have applied) to programs and schools. Reasons holding them back from going for it include the cost, English being a second language, and concerns about maintaining strong grades. They are more confident in their abilities to succeed in a program than Non-Minorities. They could use help from a program by allowing them to finish their degree quickly.

Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, Native Hawaiian

113 Respondents



Non-Minority

The most important factor to Non-Minorities is getting an education they can afford without getting into too much debt. They see the value an education can bring to their life, and they believe it outweighs the cost. They could use help with understanding the best option to balance their other commitments and pursue a degree at the same time.

White

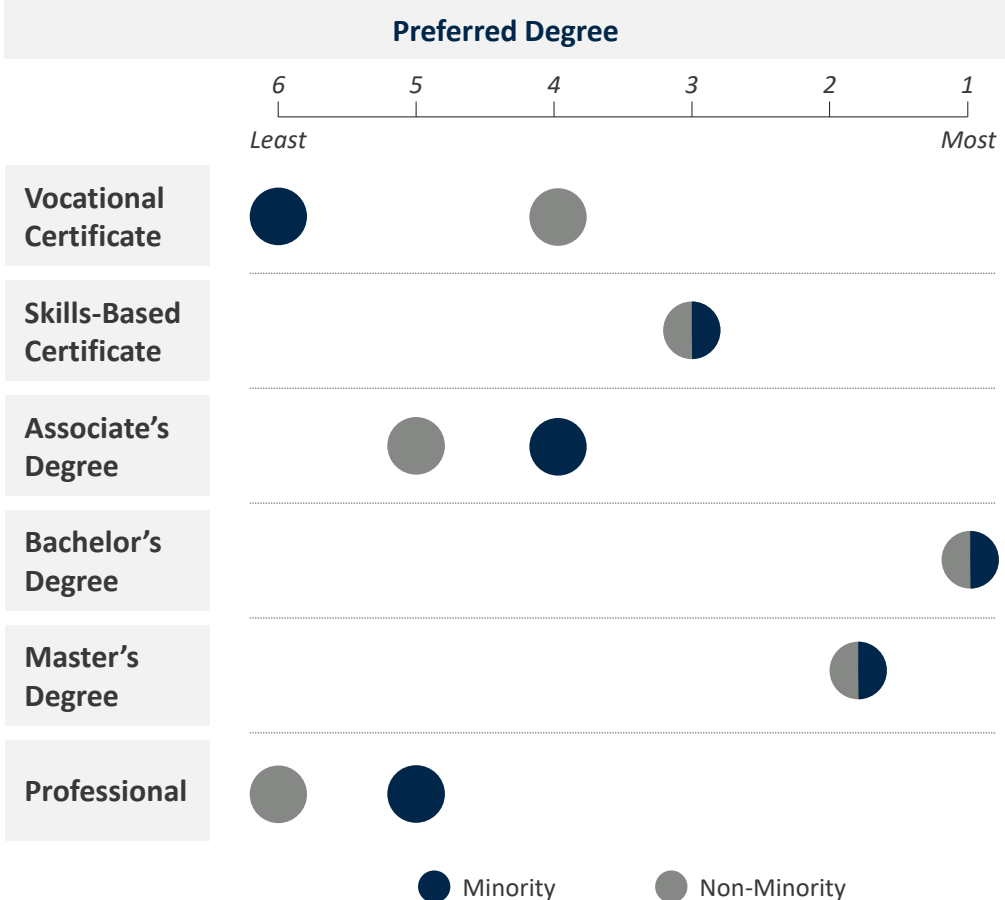
717 Respondents

Groups segmented based on age alone. Differences called out for this segmentation are significant to a 95% confidence interval.

MOTIVATIONS | Despite feelings of skepticism around the value of further education, Minorities are more likely to make progress in their application process than are Non-Minorities

Key Takeaways:

- Minorities are more likely to begin researching and actually apply for their program of choice
- Minorities have more doubts about the value of further education
- The top three degree choices are the same, but differ on others



Top Motivations for Pursuing Further Education

- Minority**
- ① Create a Better Life (19%)
 - ② Develop New Skills (17%)

- Non-Minority**
- ① Create a Better Life (17%)
 - ② Develop New Skills (17%)

Differentiating Perspective on the Value of Pursuing Education

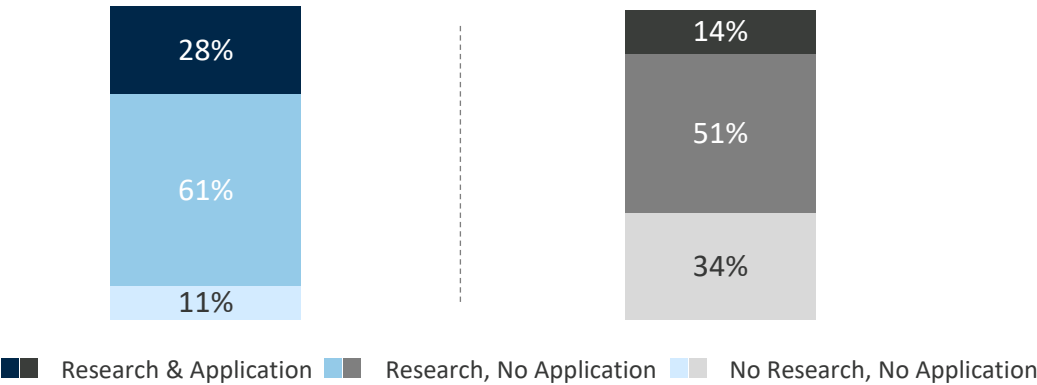
- 56% believe the value of school is higher than the cost

▼ 6% below average

- 63% believe the value of school is higher than the cost

▲ 1% above average

Progress Towards Application



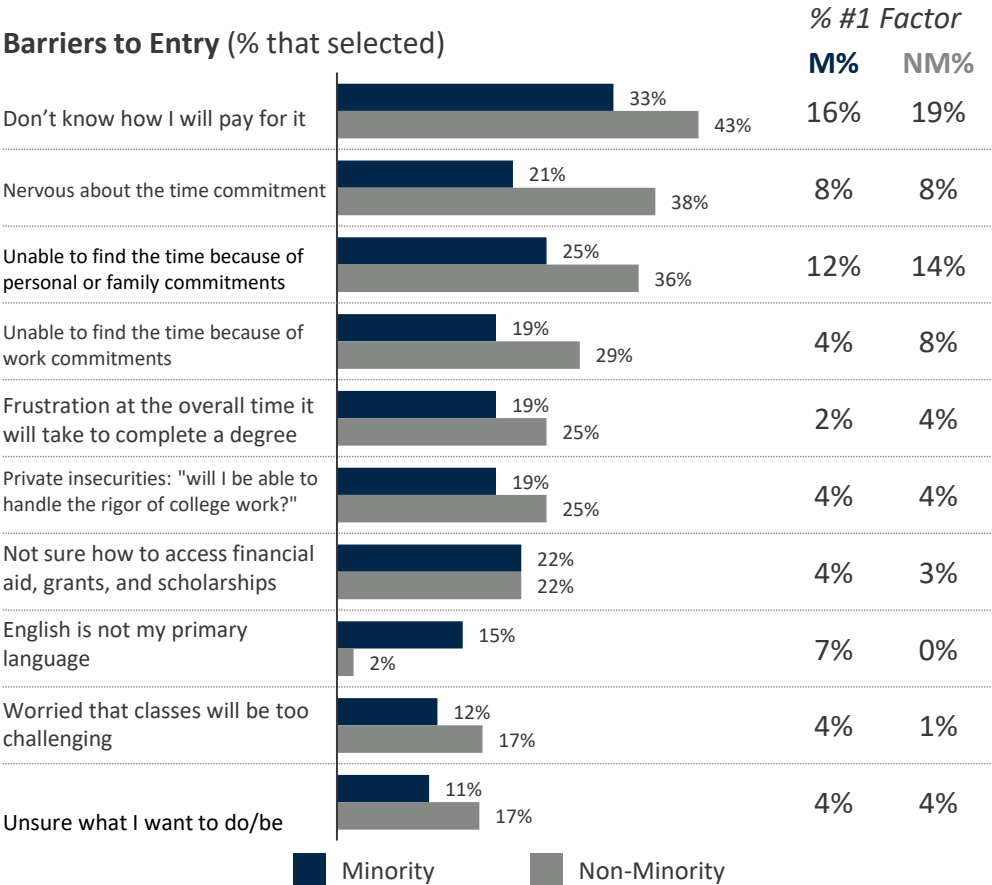
Consistent Factors

- Minorities and Non-Minorities have similar motivations to pursue higher education
- Minorities and Non-Minorities are seeking similar degree types

BARRIERS | Both groups struggle with time management between personal and work commitments, as well as their perceived timeline of how long getting their degree will take

Key Takeaways:

- Minority groups are more likely to believe the cost of their education is over \$20K compared to Non-Minority individuals
- English not being their primary language impacts 15% of Minority individuals and 2% of Non-Minority participants
- Non-Minorities are more likely to see a barrier of private insecurities



Cost Expectations

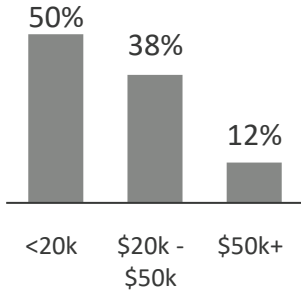
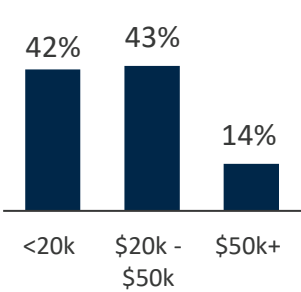
Minority

\$ \$

Non-Minority

\$

Estimated Cost



Differentiating Perspective on the Obstructions to Pursuing Higher Education

- Struggles the most with navigating the financial aid process (72%) and concerned with their ability to maintain acceptable grades (64%)

- Struggles the most with fulfilling personal and family commitments while enrolled (82%) and the least with the language barrier (12%)

Consistent Factors

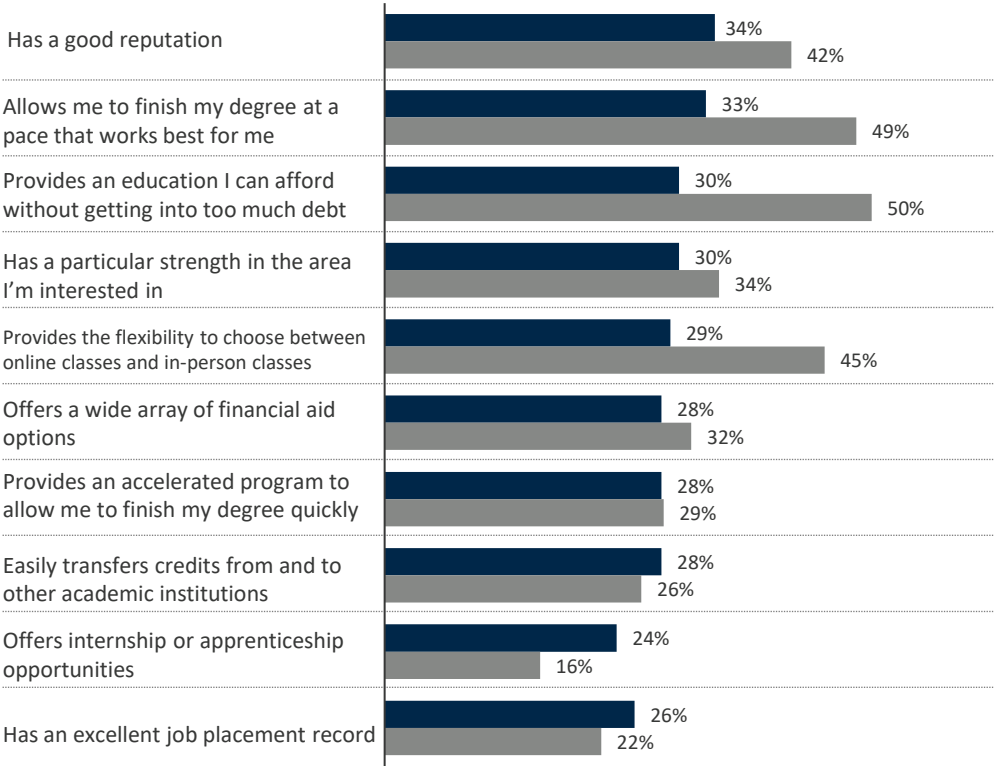
- The time commitment to complete a degree or program
- The difficulty in maneuvering through the financial aid process

SOLUTIONS | Non-Minorities care greatly about the reputation of a school/program, avoiding debt, and completing the program at their own pace compared to their Minority counterpart

Key Takeaways:

- Minorities prefer to study healthcare and medicine compared to Non-Minorities who are more likely to go into education
- Minorities are more concerned with the job placement record (26%)
- Non-Minorities are not as concerned about having the option to choose between online and in-person options

Important Factors when Selecting a School



■ Minority ■ Non-Minority

Top Areas of Study / Interest

- Minority**
- ① Business (28%)
 - ② Computer & Information Sciences (22%)
 - ③ Healthcare/ Medicine General (21%)

- Non-Minority**
- ① Business (31%)
 - ② Computer & Information Sciences (17%)
 - ③ Education (16%)

Type of School Preference

47%

Online college or university

51%

Online college or university

Mode of Study

- 51% Hybrid
- 48% Part-Time

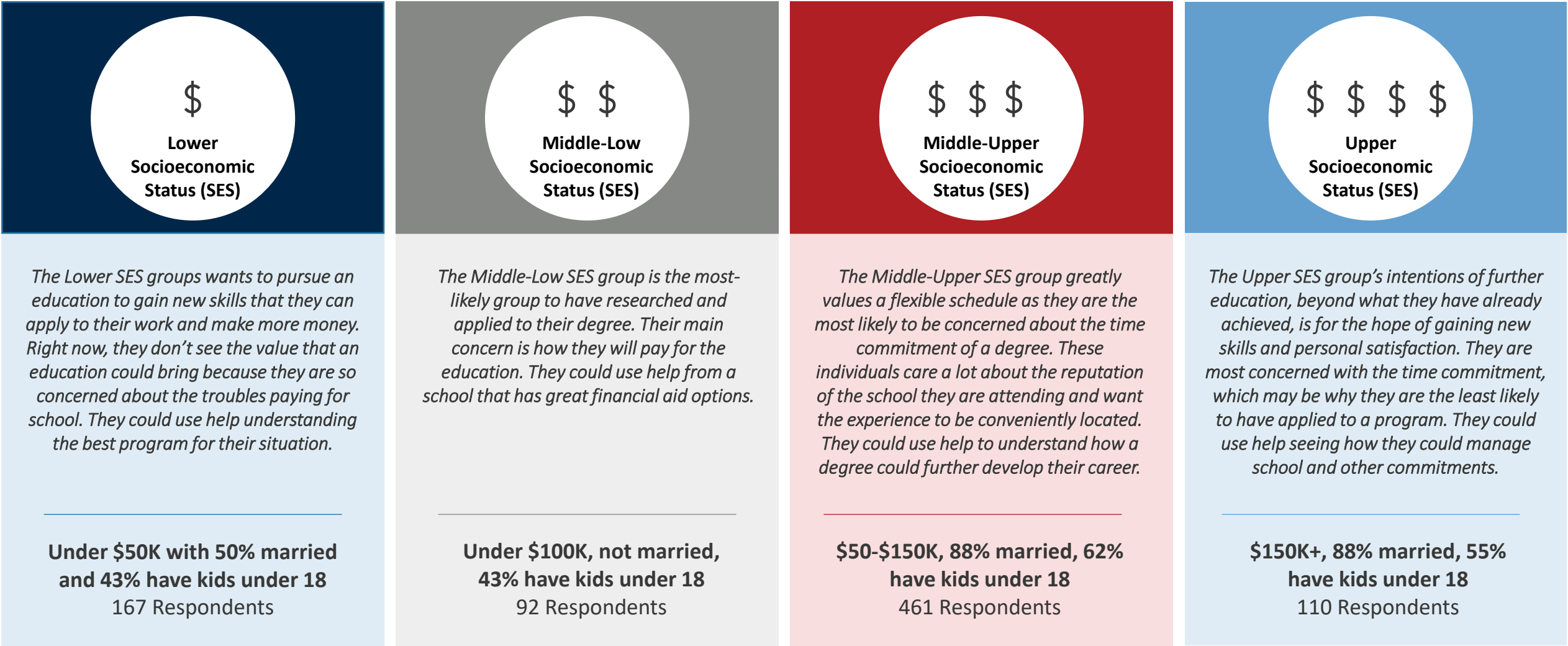
- 54% Hybrid
- 63% Part-time

Consistent Factors

- The second most common type of school preference is a traditional, 4-year university
- Prefer a hybrid and part-time learning model

Socioeconomic Status Segmentation

SOCIOECONOMIC GROUPS | The Lower Socioeconomic groups are more focused on finding the right programs specific to their interest, while the Upper Socioeconomic groups seek programs with great reputations

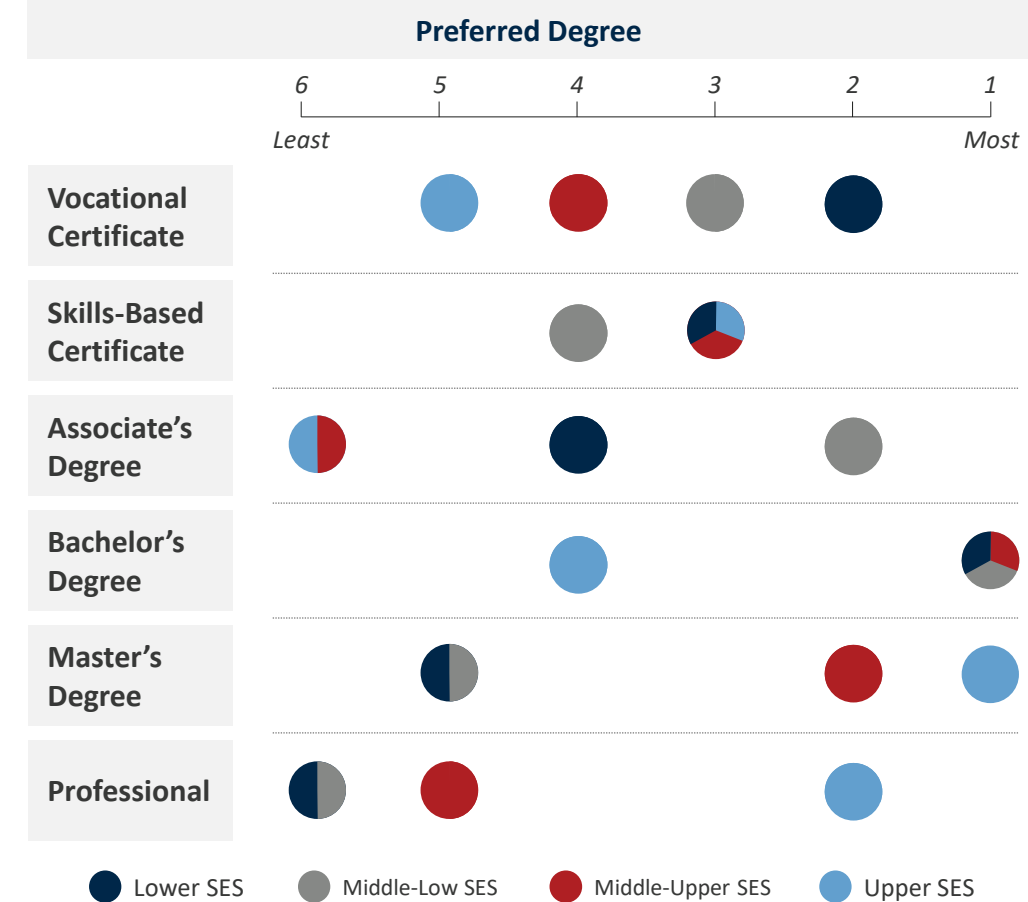


Groups segmented based on age alone. Differences called out for this segmentation are significant to a 95% confidence interval.

MOTIVATIONS | The Lower SES Group is less likely to believe that the value of an education is worth the cost that it requires to complete and shows a 20-percentage point gap compared to the Upper SES Group

Key Takeaways:

- Lower SES Group values Vocational Certificates and Associates Degrees more than the Upper SES groups, which values Master's Degrees
- Upper SES is the most likely to have researched and not applied to their preferred programs compared to Lower SES, who has a greater percentage that have not researched, nor applied



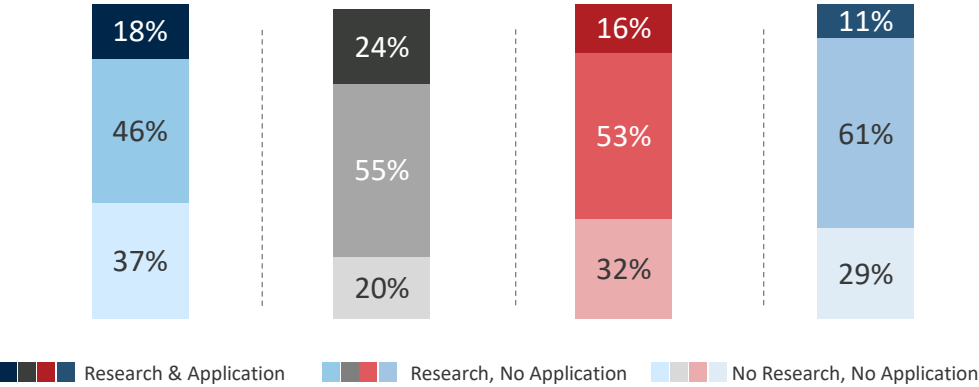
Top Motivations for Pursuing Further Education

- | Lower SES | Middle-Low SES | Middle-Upper SES | Upper SES |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ① Create a Better Life (31%) | ① Create a Better Life (26%) | ① Develop New Skills (16%) | ① Develop New Skills (28%) |
| ② Earn More Money (16%) | ② Develop New Skills (17%) | ② Create a Better Life (13%) | ② Personal Satisfaction (23%) |

Differentiating Perspective on the Value of Pursuing Education

- | Lower SES | Middle-Low SES | Middle-Upper SES | Upper SES |
|---|---|---|---|
| • 51% believe the value of school is higher than the cost | • 52% believe the value of school is higher than the cost | • 66% believe the value of school is higher than the cost | • 72% believe the value of school is higher than the cost |
| ▼ 11% below average | ▼ 10% below average | ▲ 4% above average | ▲ 10% above average |

Progress Towards Application



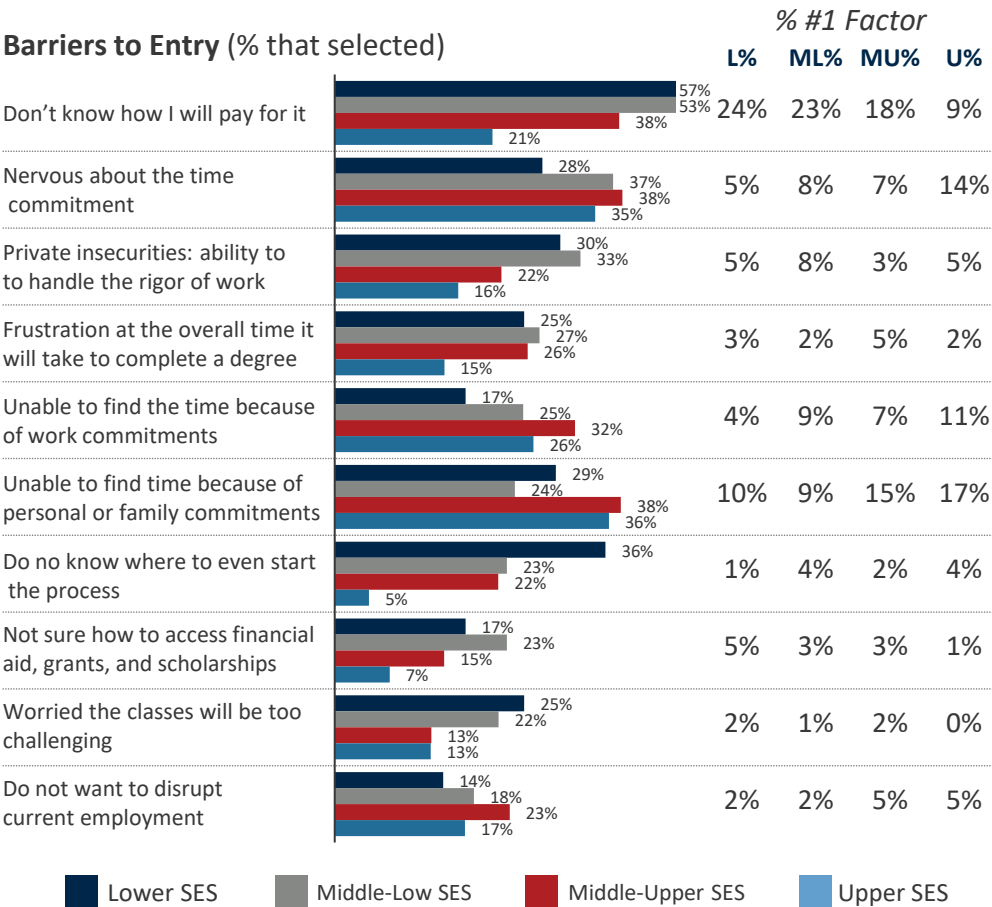
Consistent Factors

- Desire to create a better life
- Desire to develop new skills
- Bachelor's and Master's are most sought-after

BARRIERS | Those in the Lower SES groups experience a large barrier of knowing where to begin their journey (36%) compared to the Upper SES groups (5%)

Key Takeaways:

- Being accepted to a preferred program is more of an obstruction for the Lower SES groups (65%) compared to the Upper SES groups (49%)
- Maintaining acceptable grades is less of a challenge for the Upper SES group (39%) compared to the Lower SES Group (66%)



Cost Expectations

Lower SES

\$

Middle-Low SES

\$ \$

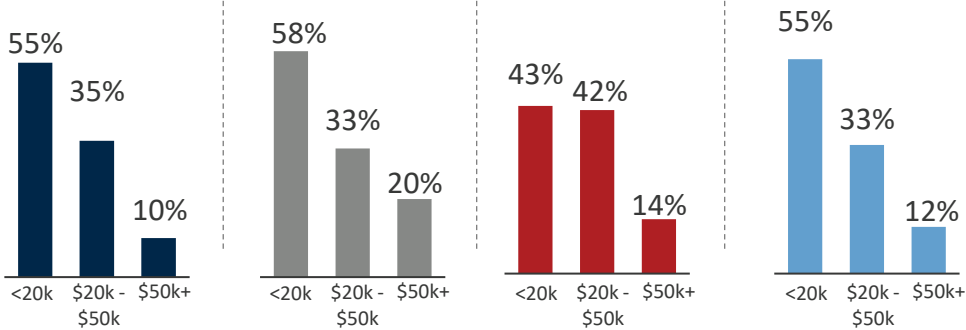
Middle-Upper SES

\$ \$

Upper SES

\$

Estimated Cost



Differentiating Perspective on the Obstructions to Pursuing Higher Education

- Struggles the most with deciding on a program (65%) and navigating the financial aid process (78%)
- Struggles the commute time and distance (60%) and most worried about program cost (92%)
- Most likely to want flexible class schedule options (69%)
- Most worried about fulfilling personal or family commitments while enrolled (85%)

Consistent Factors

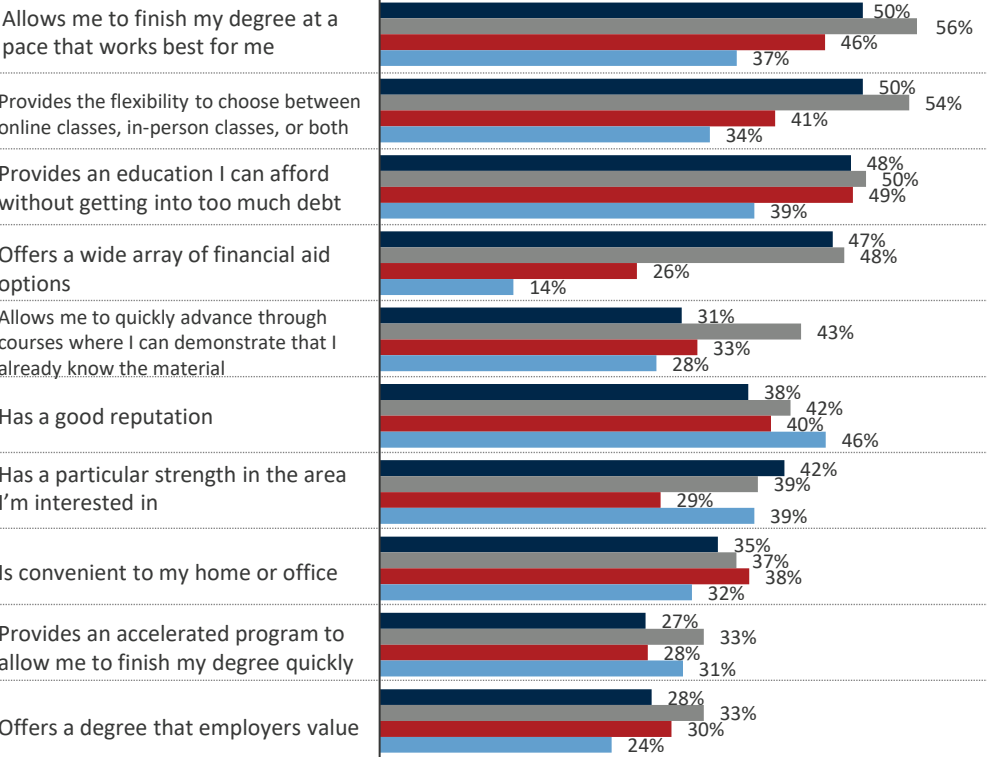
- Time commitment
- Affording their program of choice
- Managing demands of work while enrolled

SOLUTIONS | All SES groups truly prefer a flexible, part-time and hybrid learning schedule that allows them to complete their degrees at their own pace

Key Takeaways:

- The Lower SES group prefers a traditional four-year program and looks for a degree that allows them to finish a degree at their own pace, differing from the Upper SES group, who prefers online and is not as concerned with time
- The Upper SES group cares most about the reputation of the program, while the Lower SES group is more focused on the strength of the specific program

Important Factors when Selecting a School



Lower SES Middle-Low SES Middle-Upper SES Upper SES

Top Areas of Study / Interest

Lower SES	Middle-Low SES	Middle-Upper SES	Upper SES
1 Business (32%)	1 Business (32%)	1 Business (31%)	1 Business (29%)
2 Computer & Information Sciences (20%)	2 Psychology (23%)	2 Computer & Information Sciences (18%)	2 Healthcare/ Medicine General (15%)
3 Healthcare/ Medicine General (16%)	3 Computer & Information Sciences (18%)	3 Education (18%)	3 Computer & Information Sciences (14%)

Type of School Preference

Lower SES	Middle-Low SES	Middle-Upper SES	Upper SES
46%	54%	53%	52%
Traditional 4- year university	Online college or university	Online college or university	Online college or university

Mode of Study

Lower SES	Middle-Low SES	Middle-Upper SES	Upper SES
54% Hybrid 48% Part-Time	54% Hybrid 54% Part-time	53% Hybrid 64% Part-Time	54% Hybrid 73% Part-Time

Consistent Factors

- Prefer a hybrid learning model
- Part-time school versus full-time
- Avoid going into too much debt

Best Practices for Supporting Non-Traditional Students

Multiple peer-reviewed studies provide helpful guidance for empowering non-traditional students to navigate situational and dispositional barriers

Best Practices for Supporting Non-Traditional Students



Affordability Requirements

Require that low-income students not pay more than a predetermined percentage of their discretionary income



Improve Confidence

Organize non-traditional students into cohorts and sections where they will make up the majority of the classroom



Method of Aid

Experiment with providing aid or grants in the form of an account with all funding determined prior to enrollment



Make Aid Accessible

Base the awarding of grants process off easily obtainable documents and information and the averages of yearly income



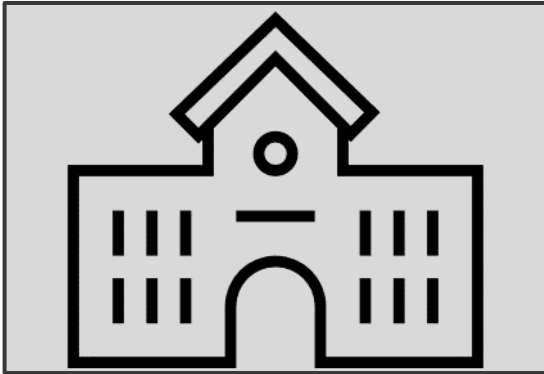
Incentivize

Experiment with offering students small “bonuses” when they accomplish milestones or goals

“When students see evidence that people at their university care about them, students feel more motivated than when they perceive stakeholders only care about students identified as the majority.” – Holy Family University

Multiple peer-reviewed studies provide helpful guidance for empowering non-traditional students to navigate situational, institutional, and dispositional barriers

Best Practices for Supporting Non-Traditional Students

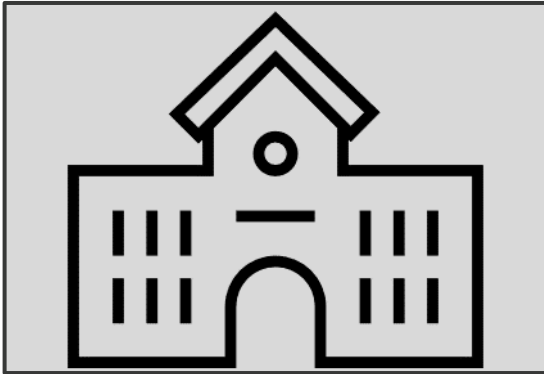


- **Improve Confidence:** Organize non-traditional students into cohorts and sections where they will make up the majority of the classroom
- **Simplify:** Improve the ease of transferring credits in based on past courses completed and on competency-based assessments; when students start with a base of credits, they are more likely to complete the program
- **Organize:** Provide students with a narrow selection of course pathways to eliminate confusion and simplify the scheduling/enrollment process
- **Pace:** Allow students to progress through courses at a **customizable pace** wherever possible
- **Incentivize:** Experiment with offering students small “bonuses” when they accomplish milestones or goals

“When students see evidence that people at their university care about them, students feel more motivated than when they perceive stakeholders only care about students identified as the majority.” – Holy Family University

These same peer-reviewed studies provide guidance on best practices helping non-traditional students navigate institutional barriers

Best Practices for Supporting Non-Traditional Students



- **Prioritize:** Grant non-traditional students **priority or privileges** for scheduling, parking, transportation, and wherever else appropriate
- **Cater to Unique Needs:** Develop support systems/personnel that cater specifically to non-traditional students
- **Make Financial Aid Accessible:** Base the **awarding of grants process** off easily obtainable documents and information
- **Assist in Planning:** Create a binding degree plan prior to each student's enrollment so that students can visualize a charted path forwards
- **Build Affordability Requirements:** Require that low-income students not pay more than a predetermined percentage of their discretionary income

“There is a difference between a coherent set of options and an overwhelming number of choices.”

In a recently published, peer-review study, three categories of non-traditional student barriers were defined: situational, institutional, and dispositional barriers



Situational Barriers

Barriers arising from one's situation in life at any given time

Examples:

- Costs
- Home responsibilities
- Job responsibilities
- Childcare
- Transportation
- Lack of support from family or friends
- Limited time



Institutional Barriers

Practices and procedures that exclude or discourage working adults from participating in educational activities

Examples:

- Credit transfer difficulties
- Required seat-time vs. competence assessments
- Inconvenient schedules and locations
- Full-time fees for part-time study
- Inappropriate courses of study
- Lack of information about course offerings
- Arduous enrollment processes
- Lack of clear pathway to earn credits or degree



Dispositional Barriers

Ever-present barriers left to the individual to address in isolation

Examples:

- Motivation
- Ageist attitudes
- Lack of self-esteem
- Fear of failure

According to the same study there are four primary pillars to best support the success of non-traditional students

The Four Pillars Theoretical Framework



Personal Motivation



Institutional Support



Family Support



Community Support



Personal Motivation

Students' self-beliefs about academic capabilities play a vital role in their motivation to achieve.



Family Support

Decisions for non-traditional students to enter college programs are largely based on support from family.



Institutional Support

When institutional support is poorly provided, students are likely to quit, leave, or never enroll in courses.



Community Support

Being a part of a harmonious and welcoming community is integral to student success.

Of these four pillars, universities and state systems are best equipped to directly strengthen institutional support

Best Practices for Creating Institutional Support



- Improve the **ease of transferring credits** in based on past courses completed and on competency-based assessments; when students start with a base of credits, they are more likely to complete the program
- Organize non-traditional students into cohorts and sections where they will make **up the majority of the classroom**
- Minimize the size of these cohorts as to engender a **feeling of belongingness**
- Provide students with a narrow selection of course pathways to eliminate confusion and **simplify the scheduling/enrollment process**
- Allow students to participate in the organization of classes and curriculum so that resources are **efficiently allocated to underdeveloped skills**
- Allow students to progress through courses at a **customizable pace** wherever possible
- Grant non-traditional students **priority or privileges** for scheduling, parking, transportation, and wherever else appropriate
- **Develop support systems/personnel** that cater specifically to non-traditional students
- Base the **awarding of grants process** off easily obtainable documents and information

Quote: “When students see evidence that people at their university care about them, students feel more motivated than when they perceive stakeholders only care about students identified as the majority.” – Holy Family University

Multiple peer-reviewed studies provide helpful guidance for empowering non-traditional students to navigate situational, institutional, and dispositional barriers

Best Practices for Creating Institutional Support

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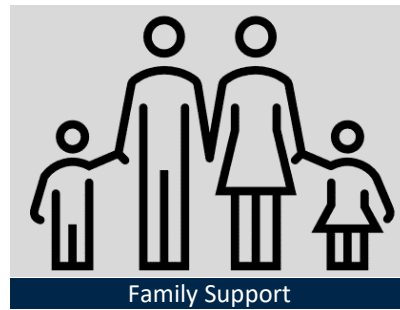
Quote: “When students see evidence that people at their university care about them, students feel more motivated than when they perceive stakeholders only care about students identified as the majority.” – Holy Family University

Similarly, universities and state systems can play a passive role in strengthening personal motivation, family support, and community support

Best Practices for Supporting Motivation, Families, and Communities



- Workforce – institute alignment to demonstrate the ROI of the program
 - Create an infrastructure of support and resources that will **affirm confidence and supply help** to students throughout their coursework
 - **Establish a system** where instructors provided **one-on-one feedback and consultation** throughout coursework
-



- Validate the **deep experiential and workplace-related learning** that non-traditional students bring to the classroom
 - Construct a **family-friendly environment** to help parents support children in the form of libraries, study rooms, or even day-care facilities
 - Host events that give family members the chance to **interact with and experience life on campus**
-



- Construct a positive outlook on institutions by **undertaking partnership initiatives** such as students **volunteering in neighborhood schools** and faculty **conducting research** to support local evaluation efforts
- **Partner with local corporations** to build skillsets and networks specific to local industries
- Share resources with local government agencies to **promote overall welfare within the community**

Another primary obstacle for non-traditional students is financial aid. In 2015, Lumina Foundation conducted a national study on the changes necessary to better serve non-traditional students...

State-Level Recommendations for Financial Aid to Cater Education to Non-Traditional Students

Improve Application and Awarding of Aid

- Rewarding of financial aid leans on formulas to gauge the amount of resources needed by individuals or families for postsecondary education
 - Current formulas err by requiring lots of information that may not be accessible to non-traditional students and yet fails to sift out fraudulent applicants
-

Change Institutional Behavior

- Holding enrollment slots for non-traditional students does not sufficiently provide those students with access to the institution
 - Offering students too many choices for course studies is often more overwhelming than helpful
-

Improve Personal Responsibility

- Non-traditional students frequently lack the incentive to take their education seriously during the beginning of their education

...At the institution level, Lumina recommended standardizing affordability requirements, creating degree plans prior to enrollment, and creating competency-based remedial programs...

Require Colleges to Meet Affordability Requirements

Practices:

- For at least low-income individuals, colleges should determine tuition **based off needs**
- Require that low-income students **not pay more** than a predetermined percentage of their discretionary income

Goal:

- Paying for college is **not financially burdensome** to the point of driving away non-traditional students

Create a Binding Degree Plan for Each Student Prior to Enrollment

Practices:

- As colleges, offer students the choice between a **selection of programs** or paths rather than courses
- Work with incoming students to structure a **degree plan** before the student officially enrolls at the institution

Goal:

- Students are not **overwhelmed** and **efficiently accomplish** their education because of an organized path

Allow for Competency-Based Remedial Programs

Practices:

- **Remove barriers** to competency-based education for remedial coursework and development
- **Establish programs** tailored to students' needs that allow students to progress quickly through courses

Goal:

- Ensure students have **the skills necessary** to be successful at the college level

QUOTE: "There is a difference between a coherent set of options and an overwhelming number of choices."

...Further recommendations include financial aid based on multi-year income averages and the idea of experimenting with grants awarded in the form of an account...

Base Aid on Multi-Year Income Average

Practices:

- In financial aid applications, request information based on a **three-year average** verified by tax returns from the previous year
 - Send **renewal form annually** to see if student income has significantly changed
- Lock in the candidate's data for the **entirety of the program** they are planning to complete
- Base decisions **off information and documents** that are likely to be accessible to students of all backgrounds and circumstances

Goals:

- Students have a consistent understanding of their **grant amounts** the whole time they work in their programs
- Redirect resource allocation towards a **case-by-case process** and away from **formulaic measurements**

Experiment with Awarding Grant in Form of Account

Practices:

- Experiment with grants by awarding students financial aid equivalent to **125% of the needed time** to finish their program
- Accounts should be **school- or state-controlled** rather than student-controlled
- Accrue the needed funding to the student account **as they complete their courses**
- Scrutinize and **tweak experiment** as needed throughout its course

QUOTE: "The varied life circumstances of non-traditional students mean that they may not follow a typical enrollment pattern."

Goals:

- Incentivize students to complete their educations **promptly and effectively**
- **Eliminate confusion** around when/how students will receive financial aid

...Lumina's financial aid areas of improvement also included “bonuses” for students who hit certain progress milestones...

Experiment with “Bonuses” for Students Passing Through Certain Progress Milestones

Practices:

- **Supply aid** to students who hit their federal grant ceiling in the later semesters of their education
- Experiment with offering students **small “bonuses”** for attaining different milestones along their educational journey
 - Students who complete X credits could receive a **one-time award** of \$XXX
 - **Assign** students to different experimental groups and **study how students respond** to being awarded different amounts at different momentum points

Goals:

- Incentivize non-traditional students to **diligently complete their programs** while helping assuage financial burdens
- **Gather data** on incentivizing non-traditional students with grants

...Finally, at the federal level, Lumina recommended improving access to FAFSA and altering legislation concerned with grants

Base FAFSA on Multi-Year Income Average

Practices:

- Instead of requiring students in need of FAFSA to reapply annually, require **only one form** at the start of the student's postsecondary career
- Request information based on a **three-year average** verified by tax returns from the previous year.
 - **Send renewal form annually** to see if student income has significantly changed
- Lock in the candidate's data for the **entirety of the program** they are planning to complete

Goals:

- Students have a **consistent understanding** of their FAFSA amounts the whole time they work in their programs
- Students are **less likely to be delayed or turned away** due to inaccessible or missing documents

Best practices for the federal government are provided for information purposes only.

Experiment with Emergency Fund for Non-Traditional Pell Grant Recipients

Practices:

- Experiment with providing a **small pot of emergency funds** to colleges with significant non-traditional student enrollment and studying its effects on enrollment periods and number of credits taken
- If successful, **revisit financial aid formulas** to incorporate additional funding per-Pell-student that colleges already receive for administrative purposes

Goals:

- **Efficiently allocate dollars** to persons and programs who would otherwise be poorly catered to due to rigid formulas and calculations
- Study effects of **increased administration budget** based on number of students

Appendix

Frequency Analysis: all the survey responses in aggregate

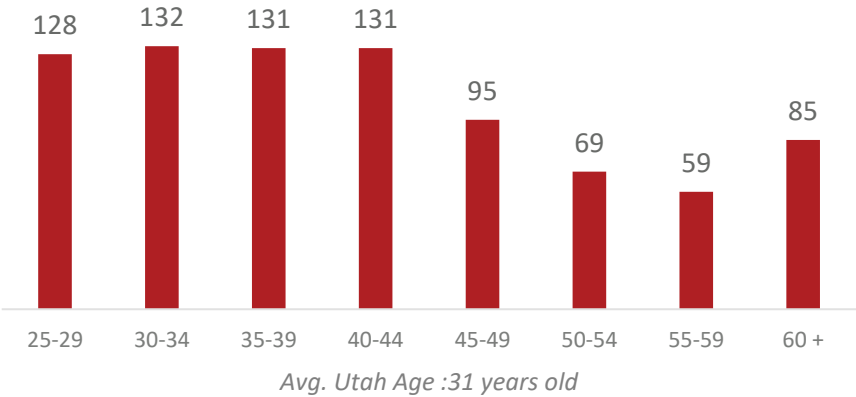
The study captured information from representative individuals ranging in age, income, and education level, as well as race, which align closely with Utah's averages

830 total
survey completes

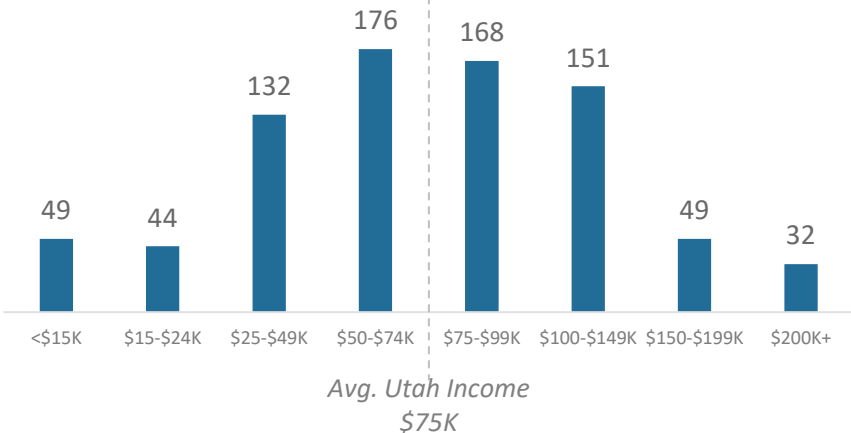
Levels of Education Including...

- High School Diploma or GED (65)
- Some College, but No Degree (165)
- Started a Vocational / Technical / Skill-Based Certificate, but Never Finished (22)
- Vocational / Technical / Skill-Based Certificate or Diploma (79)
- Associates Degree (113)
- Bachelor's Degree (264)
- Master's Degree (107)
- Professional Degree or Doctorate (15)

From individuals ranging from ages 25 to 60+



With total household incomes ranging from <\$15K to \$200K+

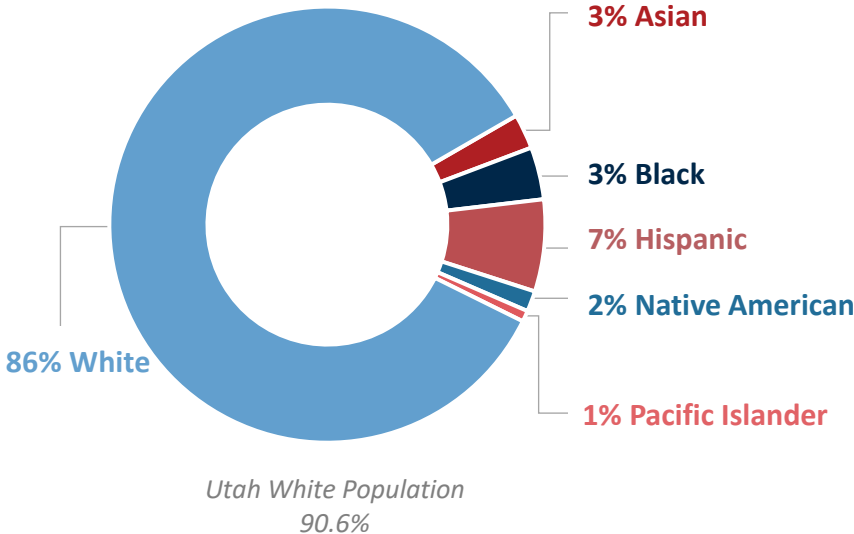


Gender Identity

59% Female
40% Male
1% Non-Binary

Utah Gender Breakdown: 49.6% Female

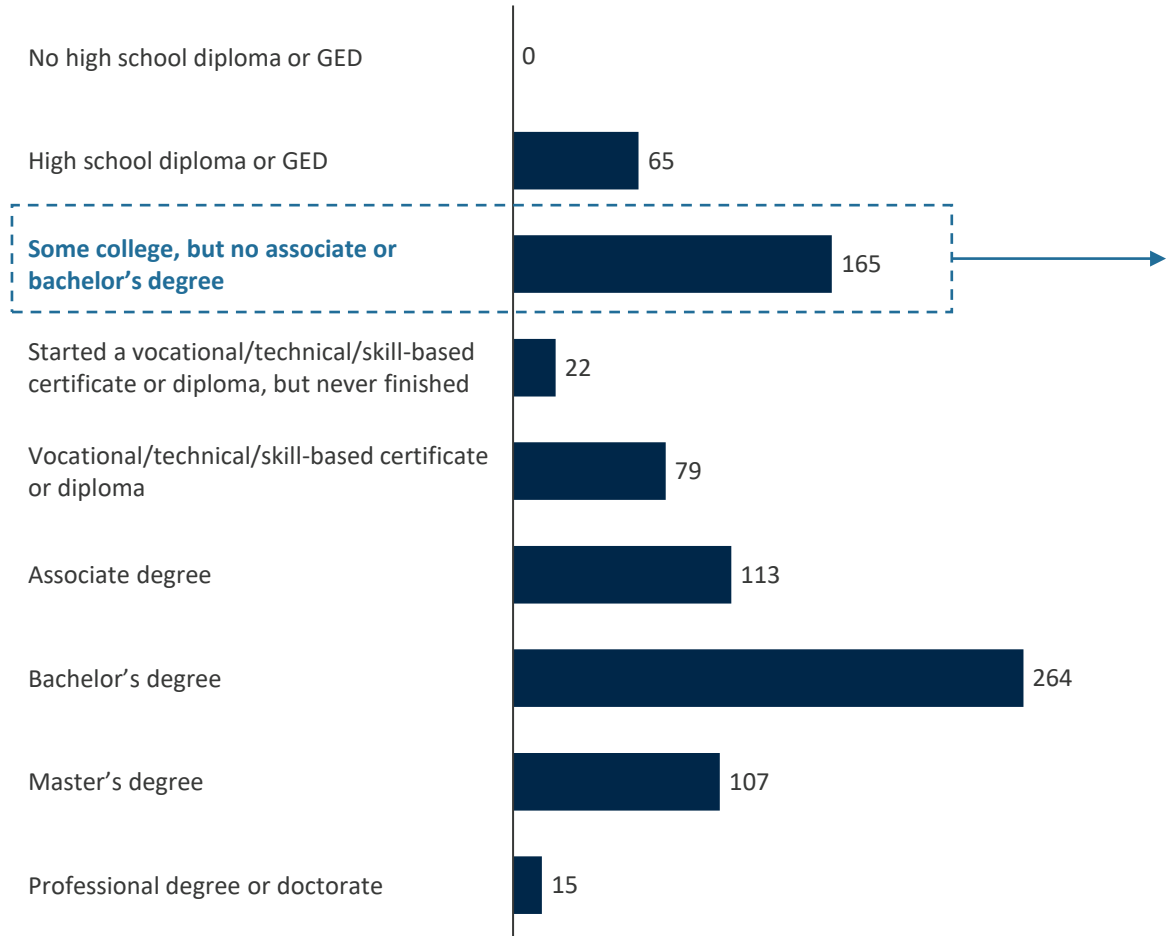
Race



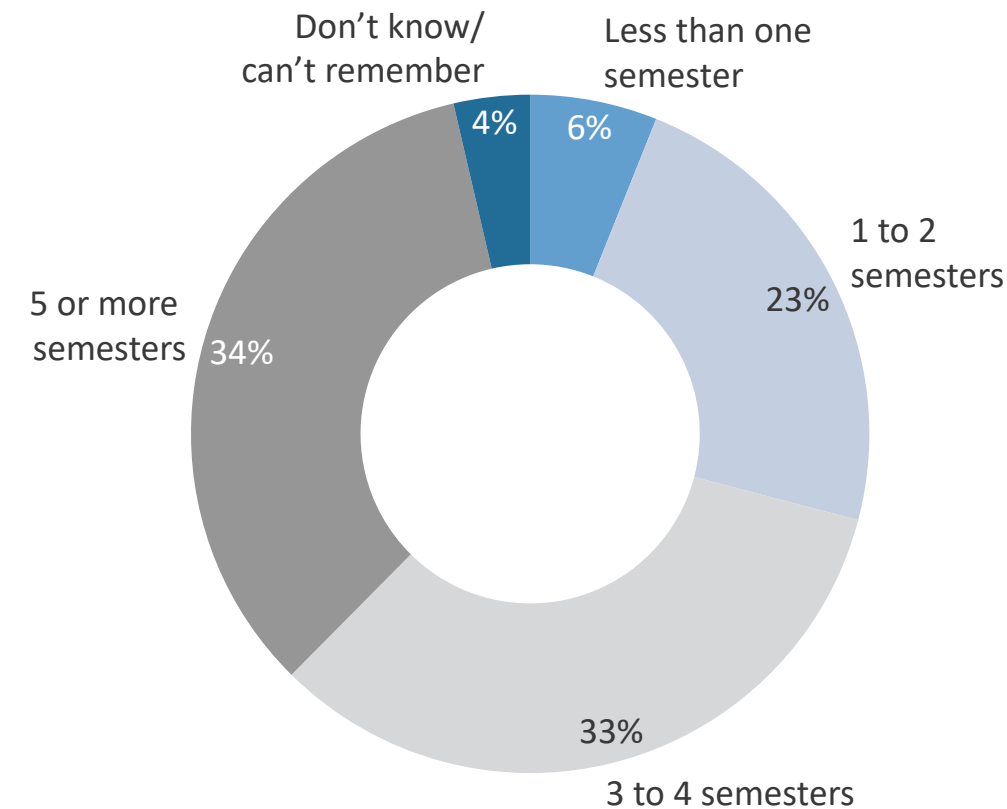
EDUCATION HISTORY | Highest Level of School Previously Completed

Highest level of school previously completed

N=830



Some college, but no associate or bachelor's degree: Semesters of college previously completed N=165



EDUCATION HISTORY | Personal Goals for Education

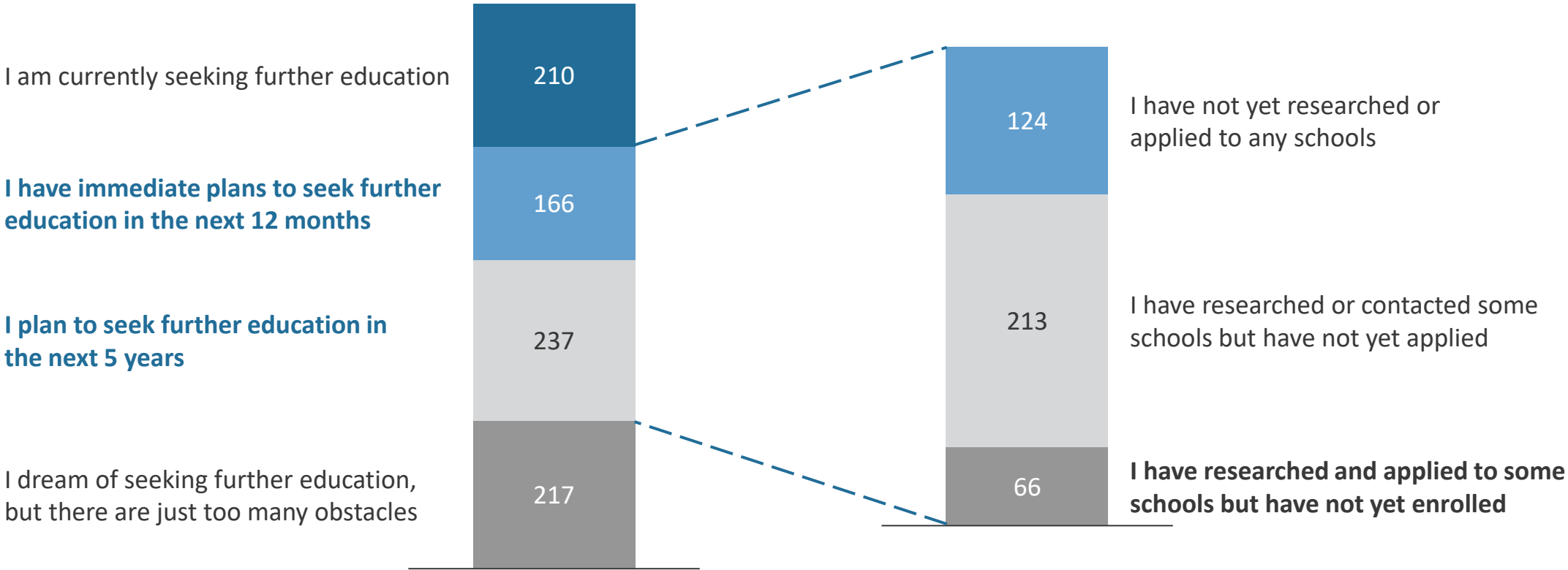
Personal educational goals (technical/vocational school, college, or university)

N=830

→

Educational Plan Progress

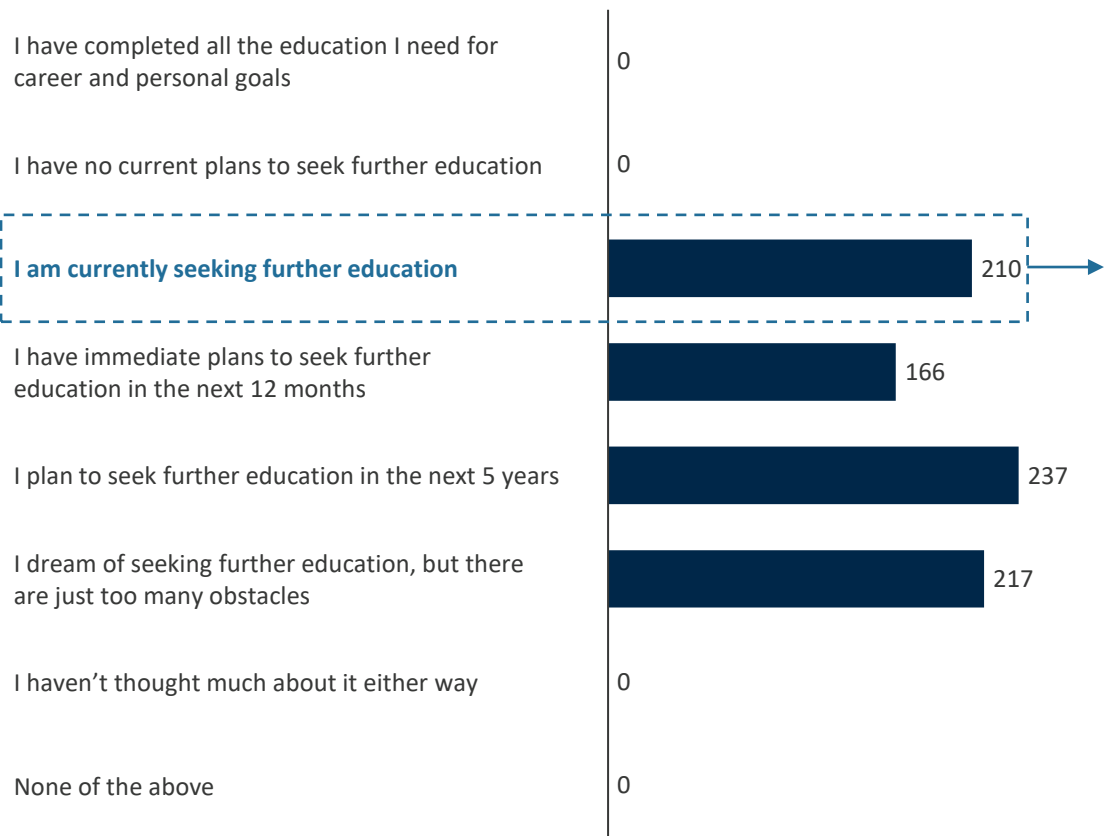
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EDUCATION HISTORY | Personal Goals for Education

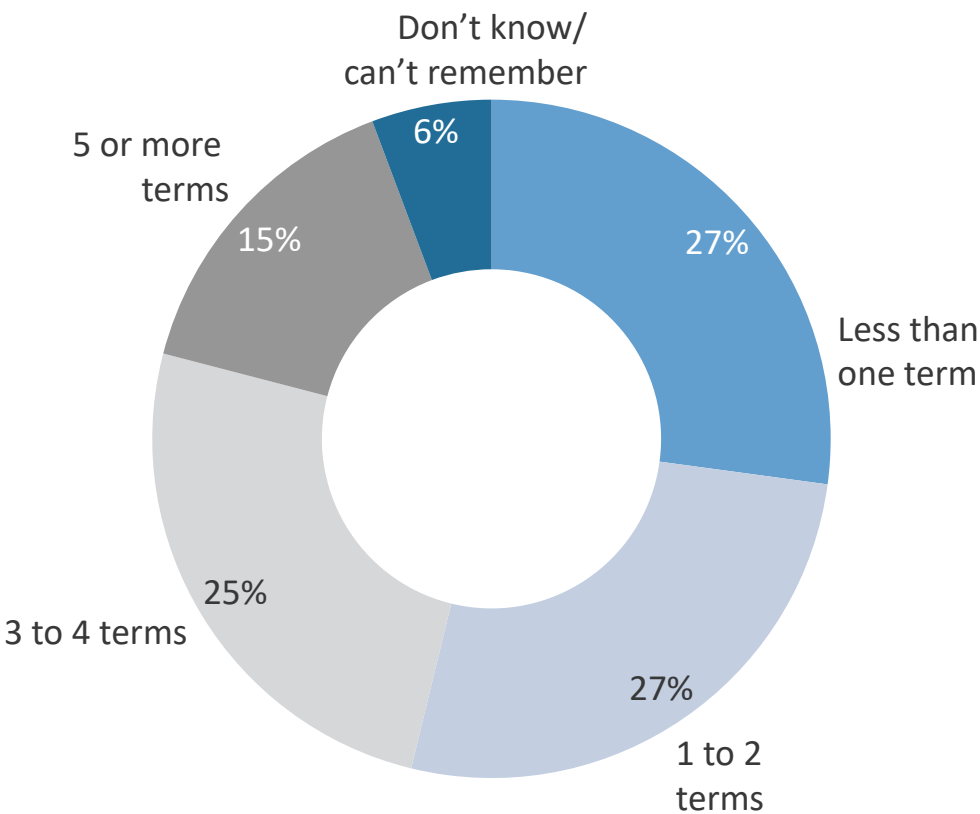
Personal goals for education (technical/vocational school, college, or university)

N=830



Current Program Completion Progress

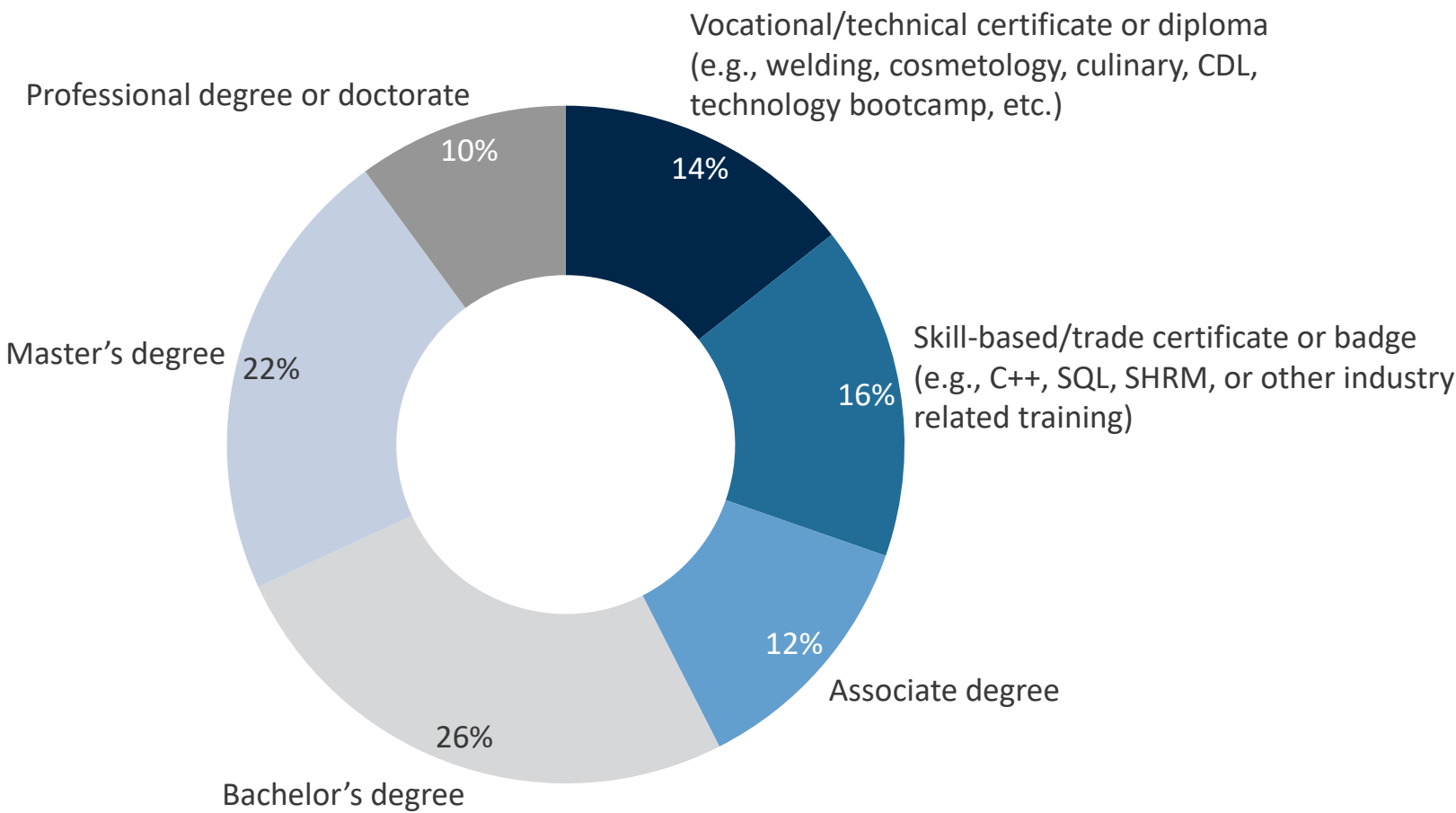
N=210



EDUCATION HISTORY | Pursued Type of Education

Type of education or training certification considering or seeking

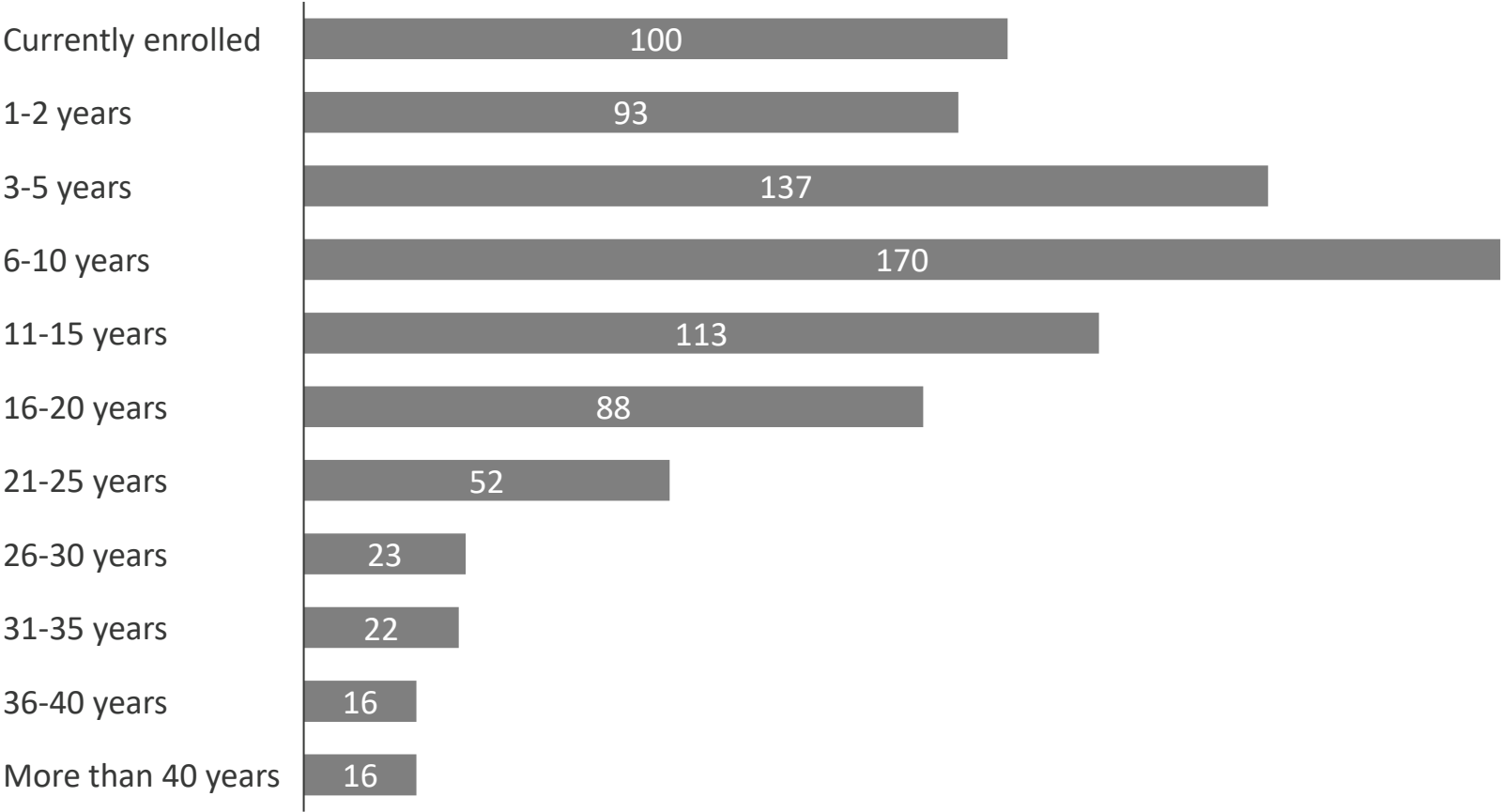
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EDUCATION HISTORY | Length of Time Since Last Enrolled in Post-High School Education

Approximate time since enrollment in post high school education

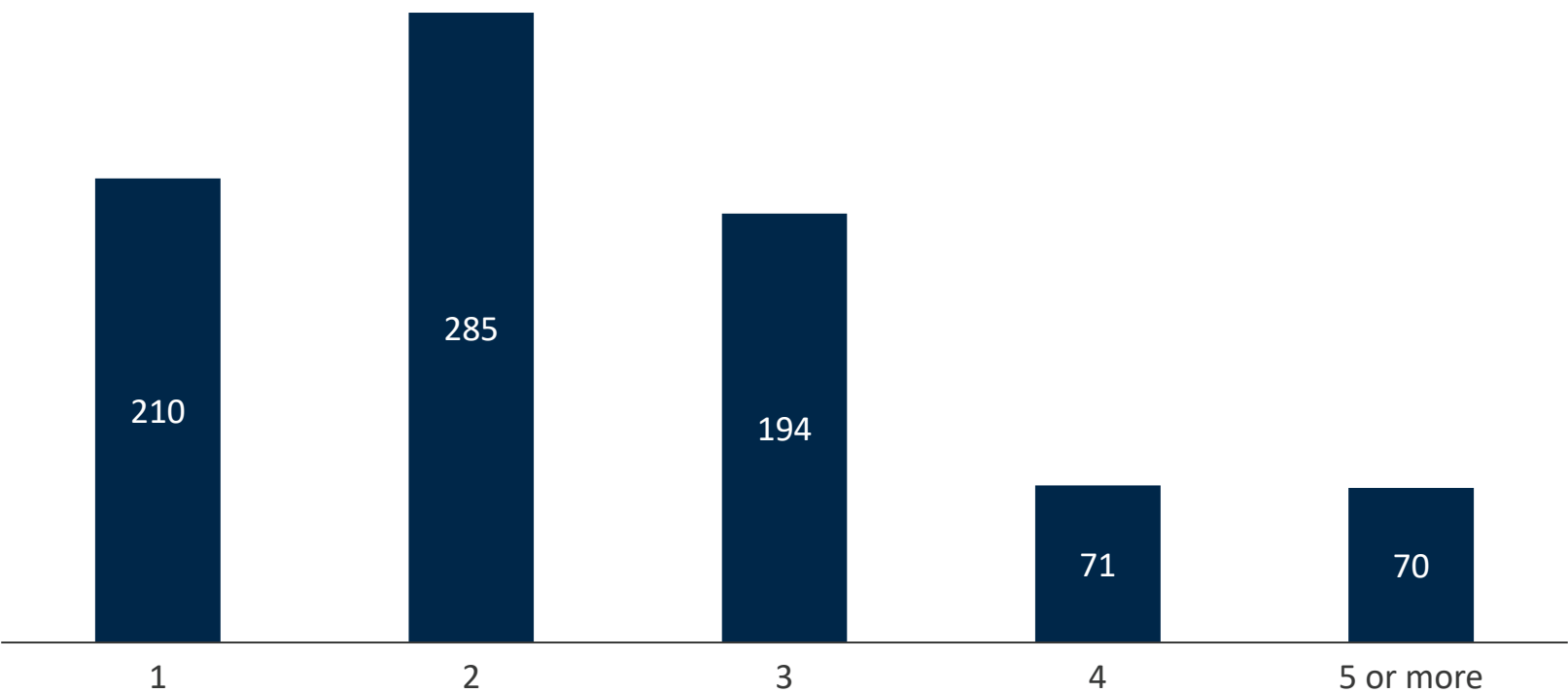
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EDUCATION HISTORY | Number of Attempts to Enroll in School

Number of enrollments since completing high school to seek additional education or training?

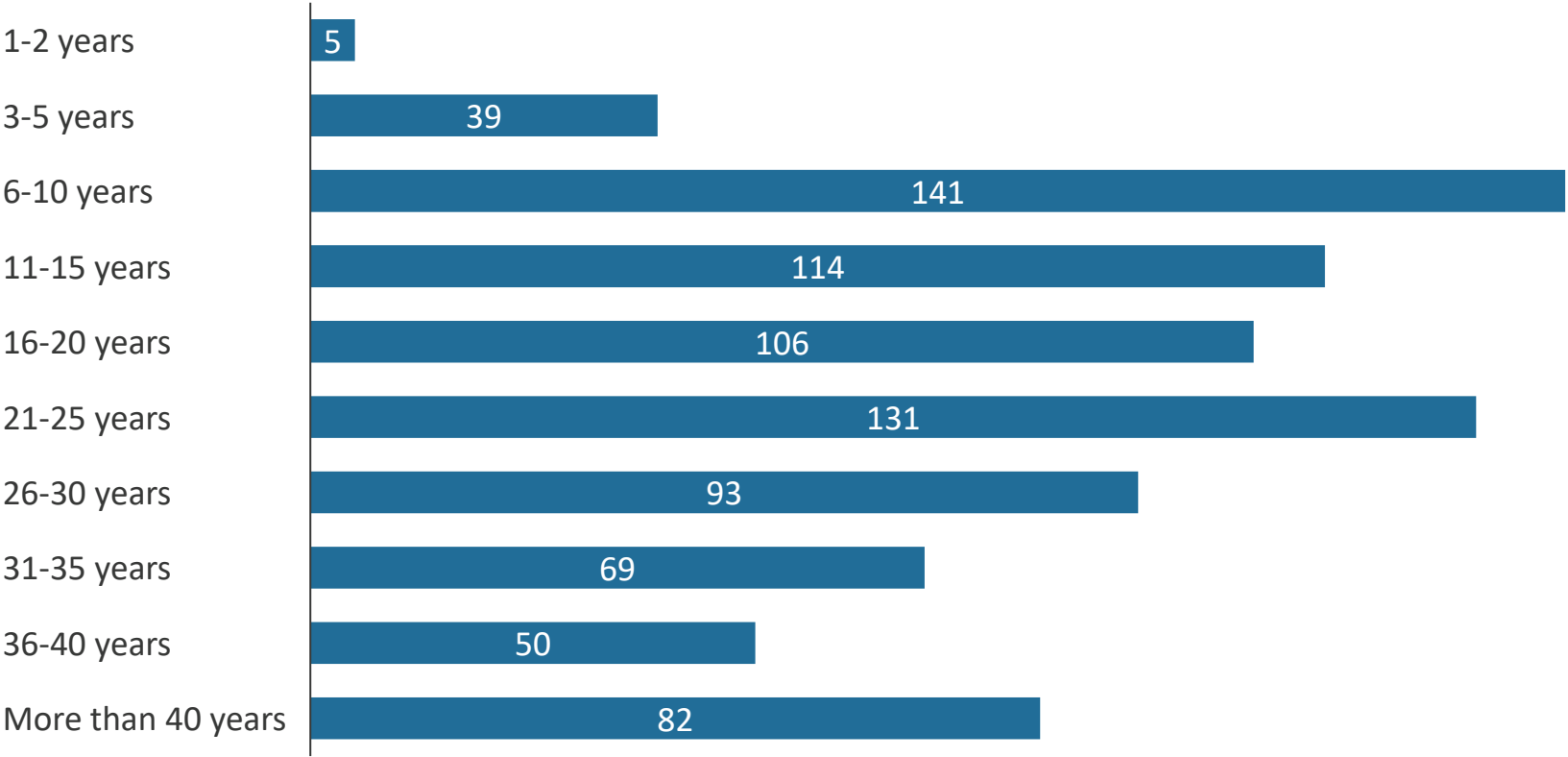
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EDUCATION HISTORY | Length of Time Since High School or GED Completion

Approximate time since completing high school or GED

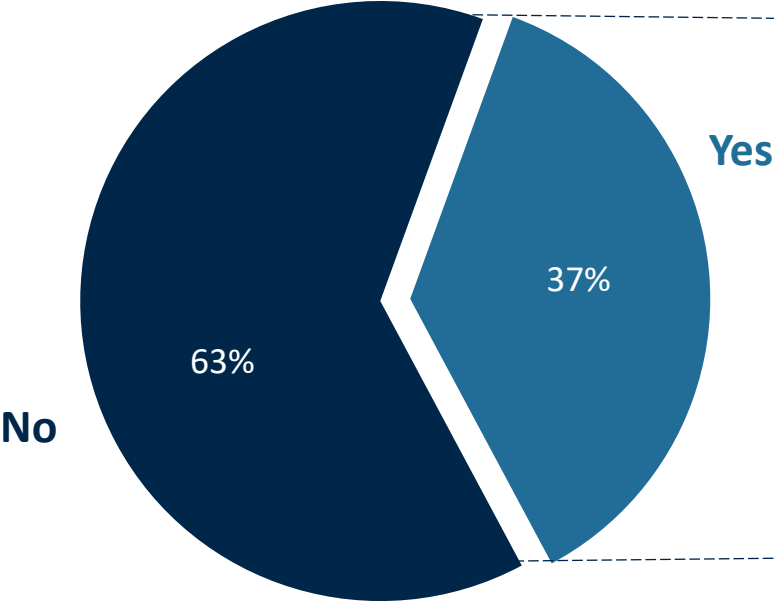
N=830



EDUCATION HISTORY | Participation in Military, Religious, & Humanitarian Service Under Age 25

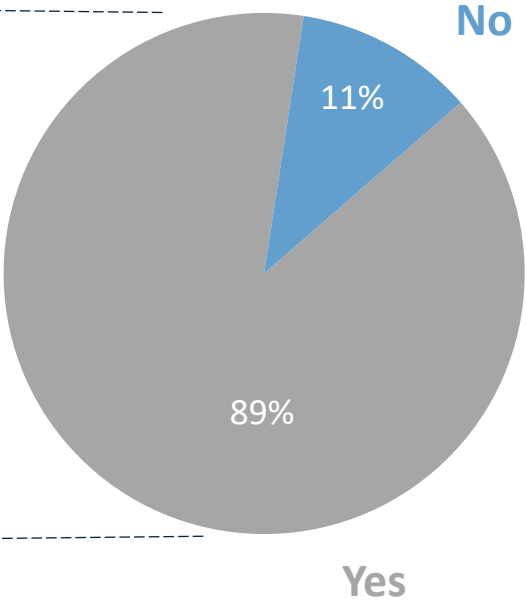
Participation in full-time military, religious, or humanitarian service *(between high school and the age of 25)*

N=830



Attempted to enroll at a school for additional education after completing religious, military, or humanitarian service

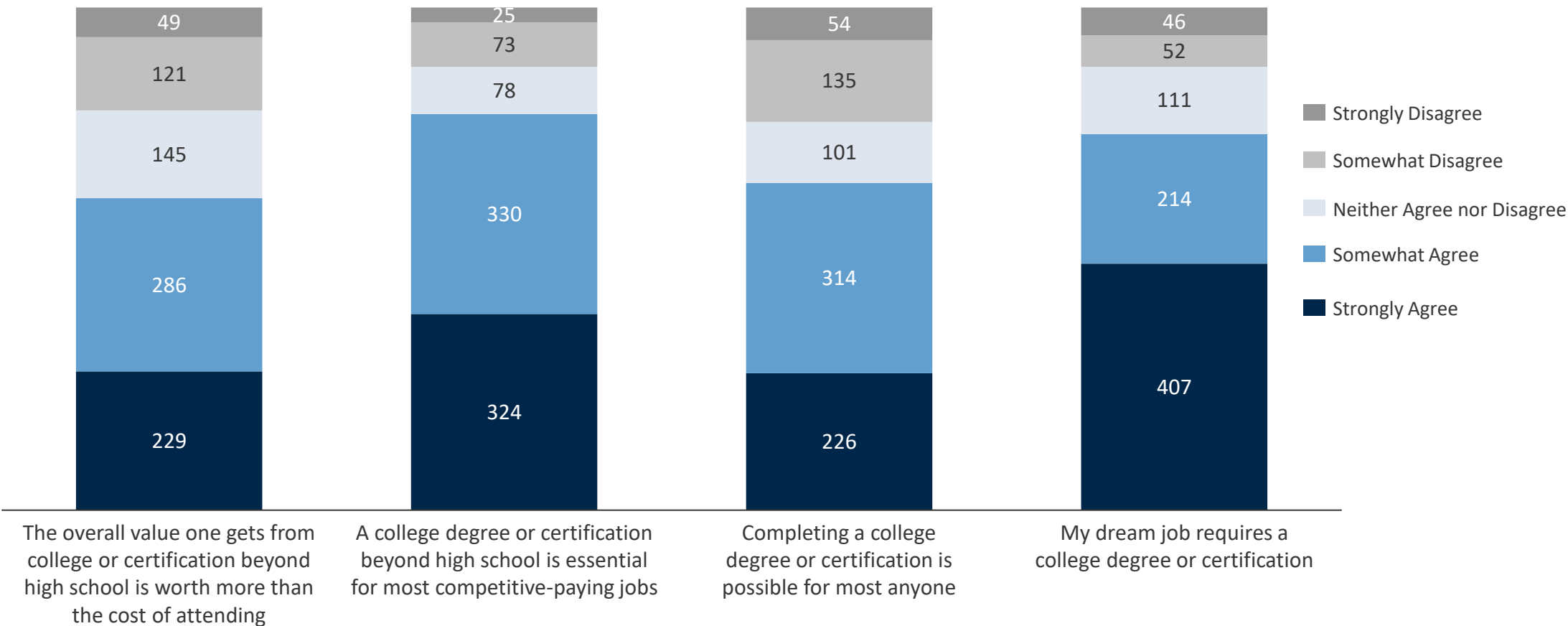
N=304



MOTIVATIONS| Valuing Higher Education

Perceptions on the value and importance of college

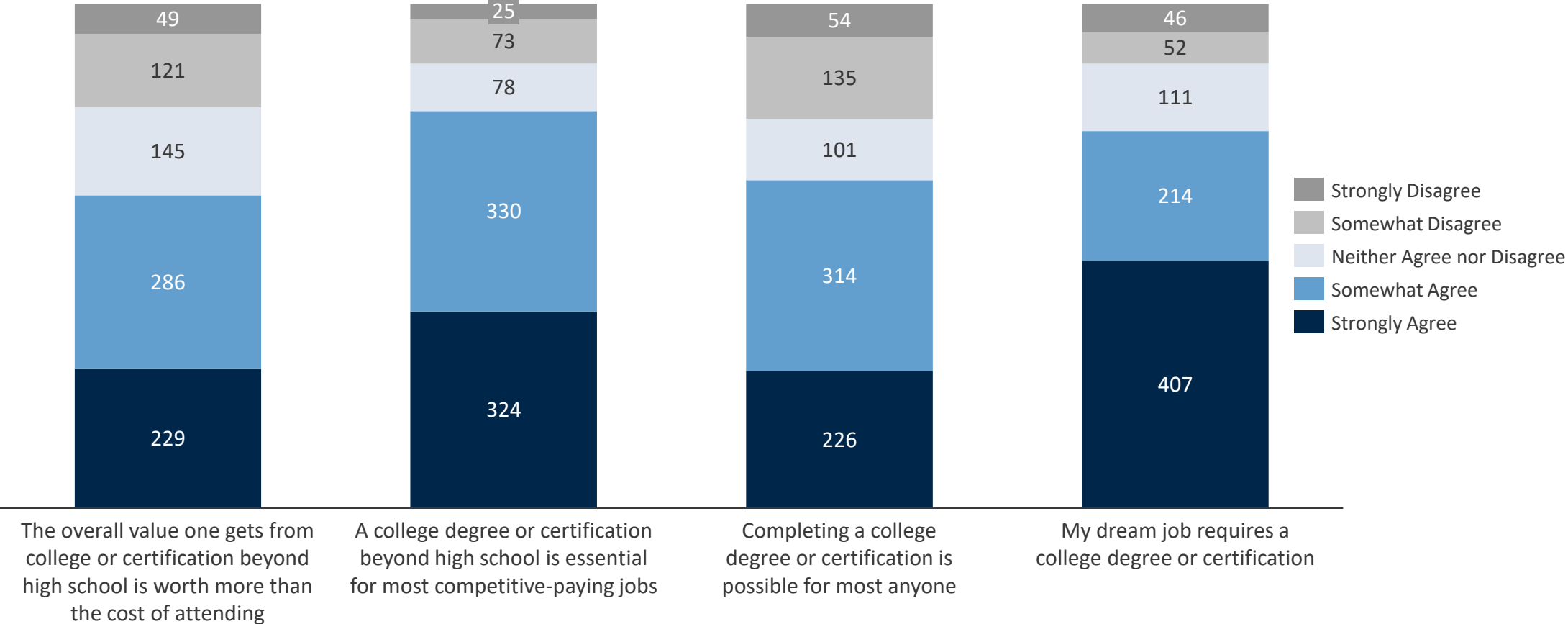
N=830



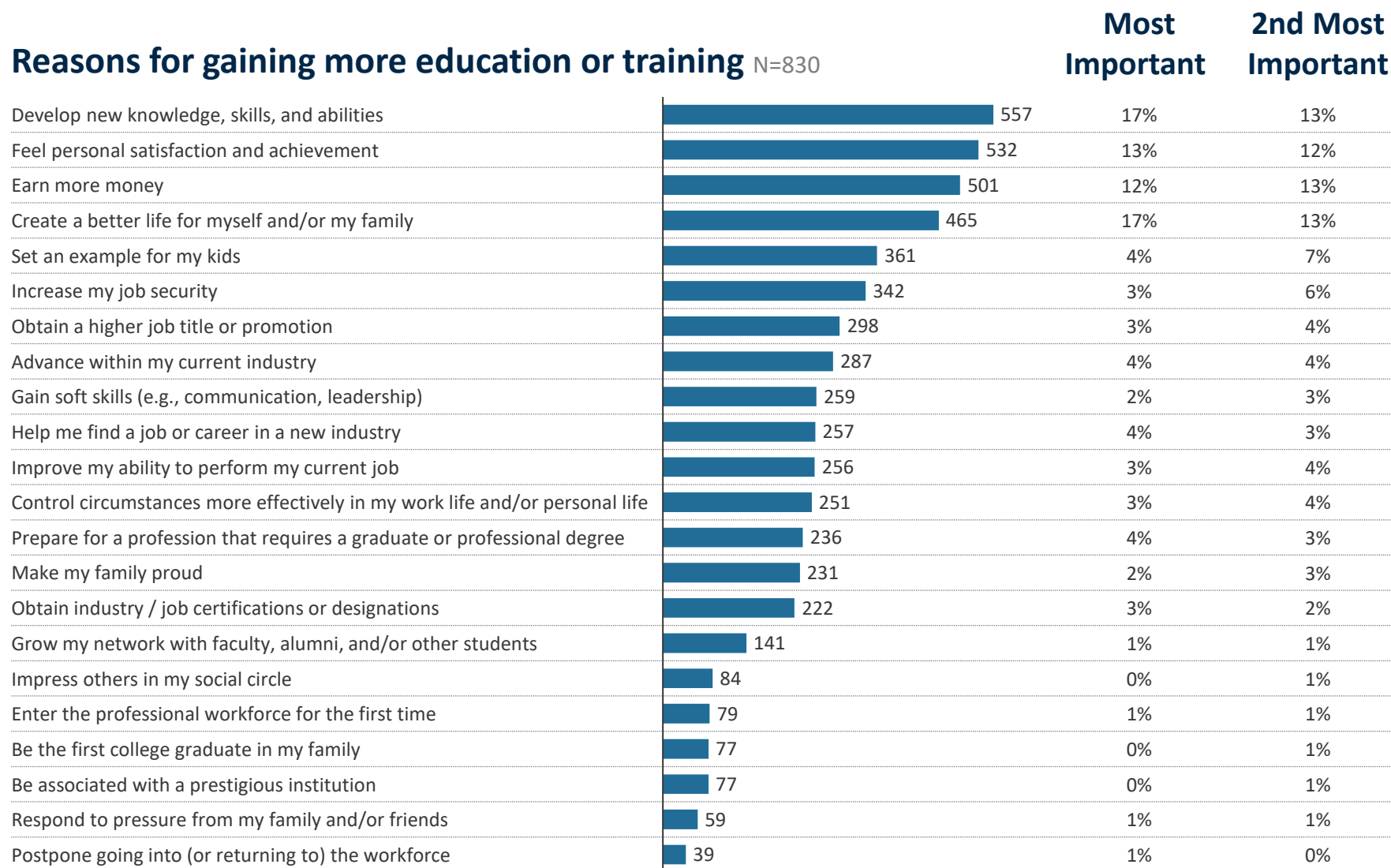
MOTIVATIONS| Valuing Higher Education

Perceptions on the value and importance of college

N=830



MOTIVATIONS| Personal Goals for Pursuing Additional Education



BARRIERS| Challenges and Concerns

Concerns or challenges relative to personal educational journey

N=830

		Most Important	2nd Most Important
Don't know how I will pay for it	342	19%	12%
Nervous about the time commitment	294	8%	9%
Unable to find the time because of personal or family commitments	286	13%	10%
Unable to find the time because of work commitments	228	7%	7%
Frustration at the overall time it will take to complete a degree	201	4%	5%
Private insecurities: "will I be able to handle the rigor of college work?"	200	4%	5%
Not sure how to access financial aid, grants, and scholarships	186	3%	4%
Do not want to disrupt current employment	167	4%	5%
Unsure what I want to do/be	132	4%	3%
Personal health or medical complications	127	4%	5%
Do not know where to even start in the process	125	2%	3%
Comfortable with overall financial situation	123	3%	4%
Not sure which school or schools to consider	114	2%	2%
Concerned about learning online	107	1%	2%
Concerned about having to take/pass a standardized admission test	102	2%	2%
Have poor or inadequate grades from the past	81	1%	2%
Bad experience with school previously	79	1%	1%
Transportation or distance issues	75	2%	2%
Concerned about learning in-person	66	2%	2%
Lack of support from family or friends	63	1%	2%
Work does not require it for promotion	59	1%	1%
Other, please specify:	41	3%	2%
None of the above	34	4%	4%
English is not my primary language	32	1%	1%
Worried that classes will be too challenging	14	2%	3%

Q15 - Which of the following factors, if any, are concerns or challenges for you personally, relative to your personal educational journey?

Q16 - Which of the following from the items you previously selected is the SINGLE MOST impactful challenge relative to your educational journey?

Q16a - Which of the following from the items you previously selected is the SECOND MOST impactful challenge relative to your educational journey?

BARRIERS| Obstructing Factors

Obstructing factors from finishing an already started program

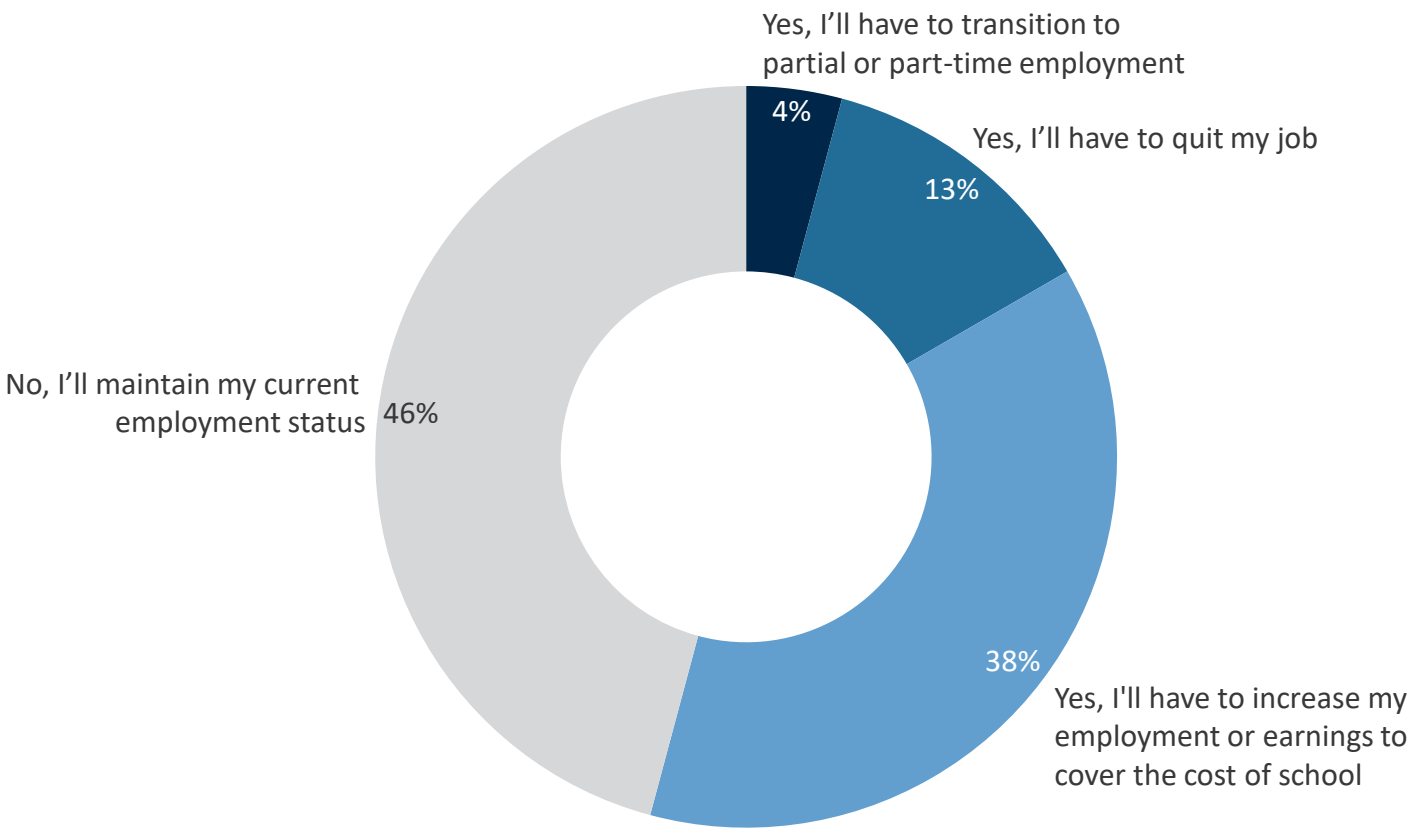
N=187

		Most Important	2nd Most Important
Family responsibilities	88	20%	14%
Could no longer afford the tuition cost	46	7%	10%
Could not participate fully due to family or work obligations	46	6%	8%
Wasn't comfortable with student loan debt	41	2%	5%
Work responsibilities were too demanding	35	8%	5%
Personal health or medical complications	34	8%	8%
Lack of support from family or friends	32	4%	2%
Transitioned to being a stay-at-home parent	32	6%	4%
Moved to new city or state	31	5%	5%
Frustration at the overall time it would take to complete the program	29	3%	4%
Difficulty finding classes that fit my schedule	22	1%	2%
Couldn't decide on the right degree or program	22	2%	4%
Had unexpected expenses after starting school	21	1%	2%
Assumed caregiver responsibilities for a loved one	19	2%	5%
Lost financial aid and/or scholarships	19	3%	1%
Could not access financial aid and/or scholarships	18	1%	2%
Transitioned to a new job that did not require a degree or certificate	17	4%	3%
Transportation or distance issues	16	1%	3%
General lack of academic interest	16	5%	4%
Poor experience with faculty and/or staff	11	2%	1%
Poor grades	11	2%	1%
Poor experience with school policies or processes	10	1%	3%
Other, please specify:	10	5%	2%
Voluntary service (military, religious, etc.) and I did not return afterwards	6	1%	2%
Did not fit in with other students	5	10%	1%
None of the above	2	1%	1%

BARRIERS| Impact to Employment Status

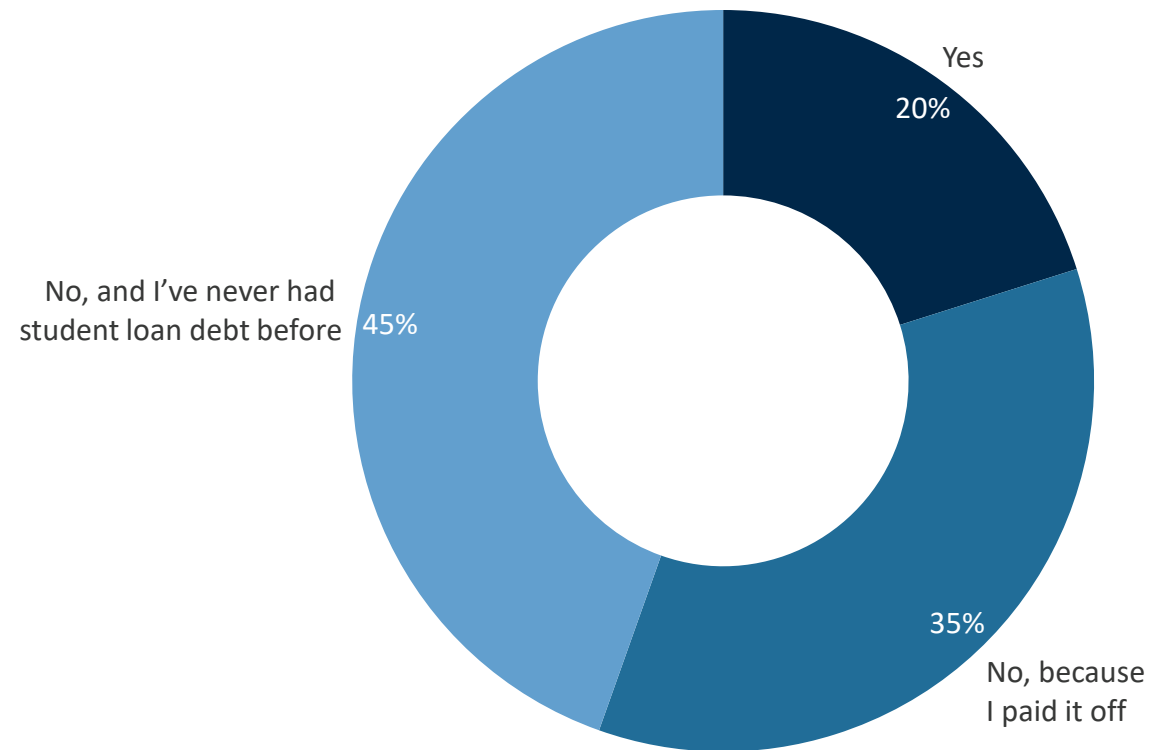
Impact of returning to school on employment status

N=29



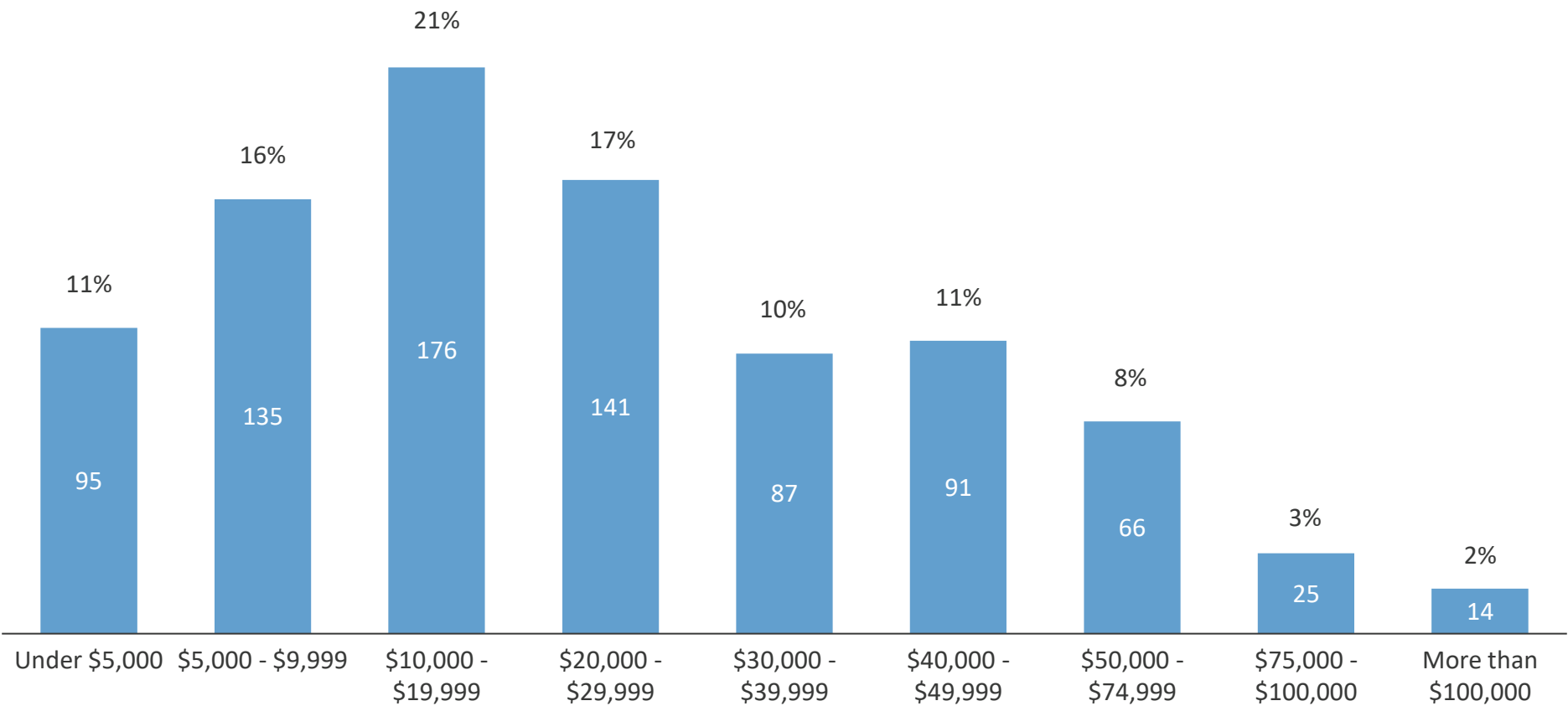
BARRIERS| Outstanding Student Debt

Amount of outstanding student loan debt originating from past education efforts N=810



BARRIERS| Cost to Complete Certificate or Degree

Anticipated cost to complete the specific sought-after certificate or degree N=830



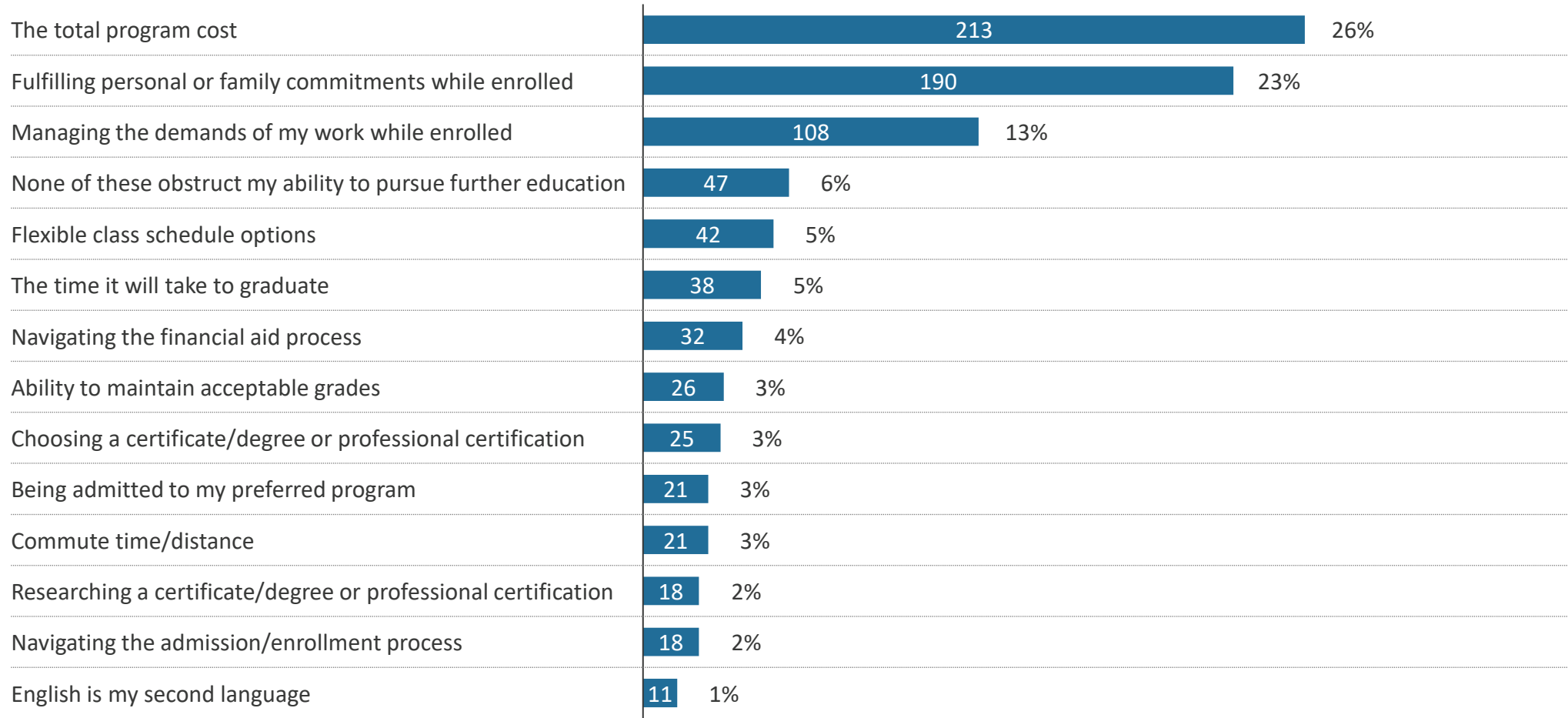
BARRIERS| Degree of Obstruction

	Impact on Obstructing Ability to Further Education (N=810)			
	Significant	Some	Modest	None
<i>Knowing what is the right program for me to seek</i>	7%	17%	36%	40%
<i>Navigating the admission/enrollment process</i>	4%	12%	37%	46%
<i>Being admitted to my preferred program</i>	5%	13%	38%	44%
<i>The total program cost</i>	27%	26%	30%	17%
<i>Navigating the financial aid process</i>	11%	19%	33%	36%
<i>The time it will take to graduate</i>	10%	22%	40%	28%
<i>Ability to maintain acceptable grades</i>	4%	13%	38%	46%
<i>Flexible class schedule options</i>	8%	18%	41%	32%
<i>Managing the demands of my work while enrolled</i>	17%	23%	35%	25%
<i>Fulfilling personal or family commitments while enrolled</i>	19%	27%	34%	20%
<i>Commute time/distance</i>	6%	15%	34%	46%
<i>English is not my primary language</i>	2%	6%	7%	84%

BARRIERS| Obstruction Factors

Obstructing factors of pursuing further education

N=830

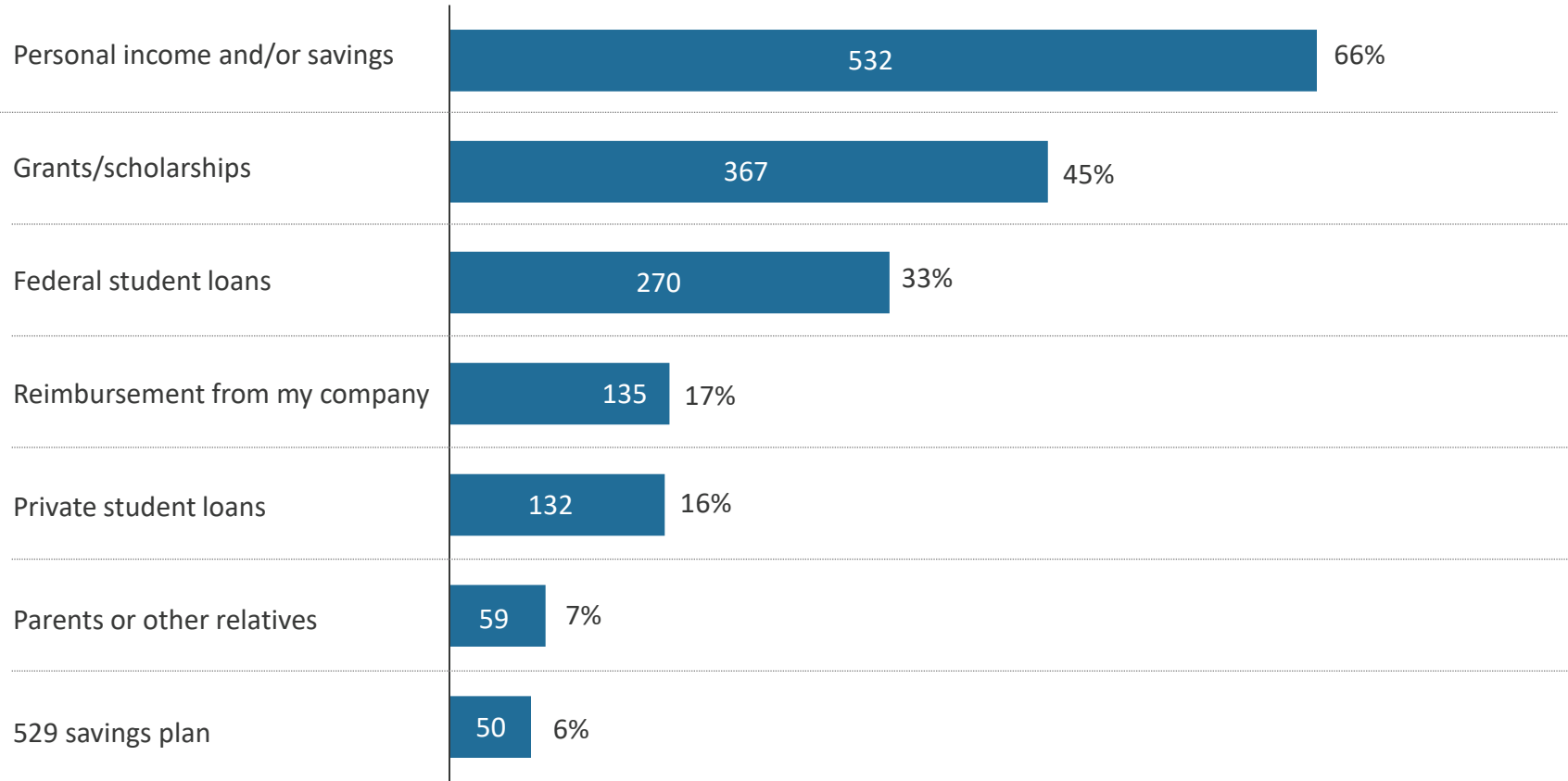


BARRIERS| Confidence in Overcoming Obstacles

	Confidence Level (N=810)			
	NOT Confident	Unsure	Confident	Not an Obstacle
<i>The total program cost</i>	14%	36%	33%	18%
<i>Navigating the financial aid process</i>	4%	21%	42%	33%
<i>The time it will take to graduate</i>	3%	22%	49%	26%
<i>Ability to maintain acceptable grades</i>	2%	15%	47%	35%
<i>Flexible class schedule options</i>	3%	20%	47%	30%
<i>Identifying and enrolling in courses I need</i>	2%	11%	50%	37%
<i>Navigating school policies and requirements</i>	2%	9%	37%	52%
<i>Managing the demands of my work while enrolled</i>	6%	27%	43%	23%
<i>Fulfilling personal or family commitments while enrolled</i>	7%	30%	46%	17%
<i>Solving issues as they arise while being able to continue to attend school</i>	3%	22%	56%	19%
<i>Commute time/distance</i>	3%	15%	38%	44%

Sources planned to use to pay for education

N=810



SOLUTIONS| Important Factors when Choosing a School

Most significant factors when deciding on a school or program

N=810

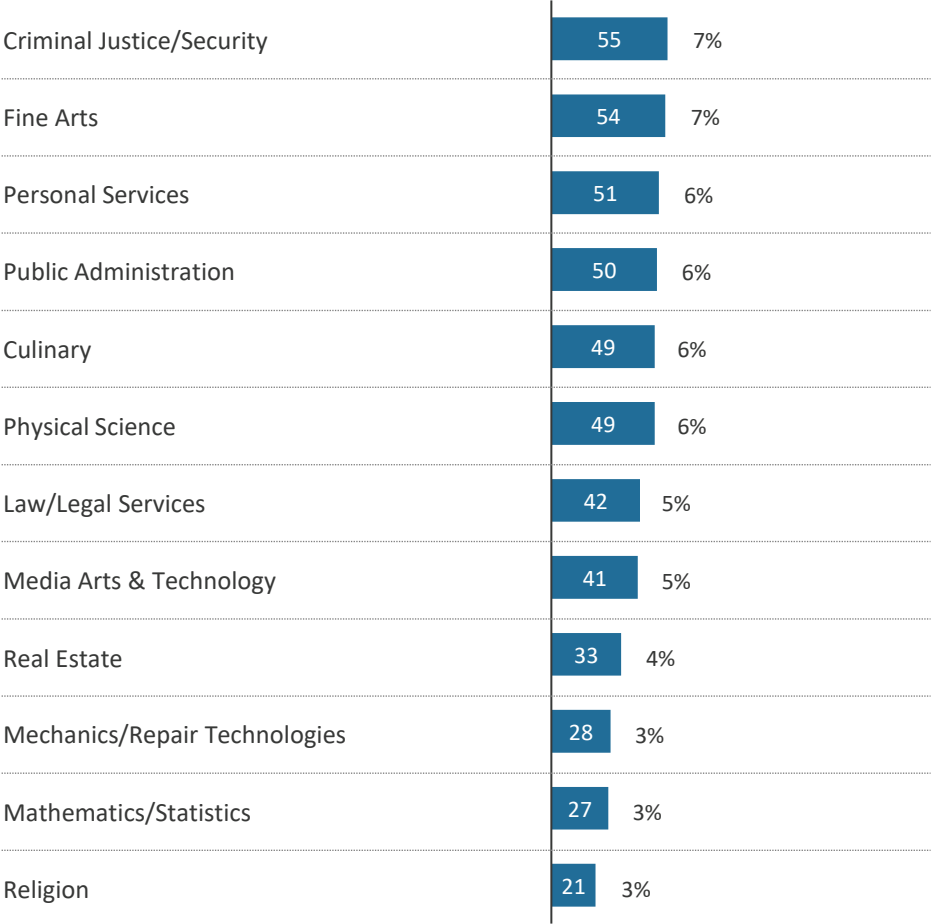
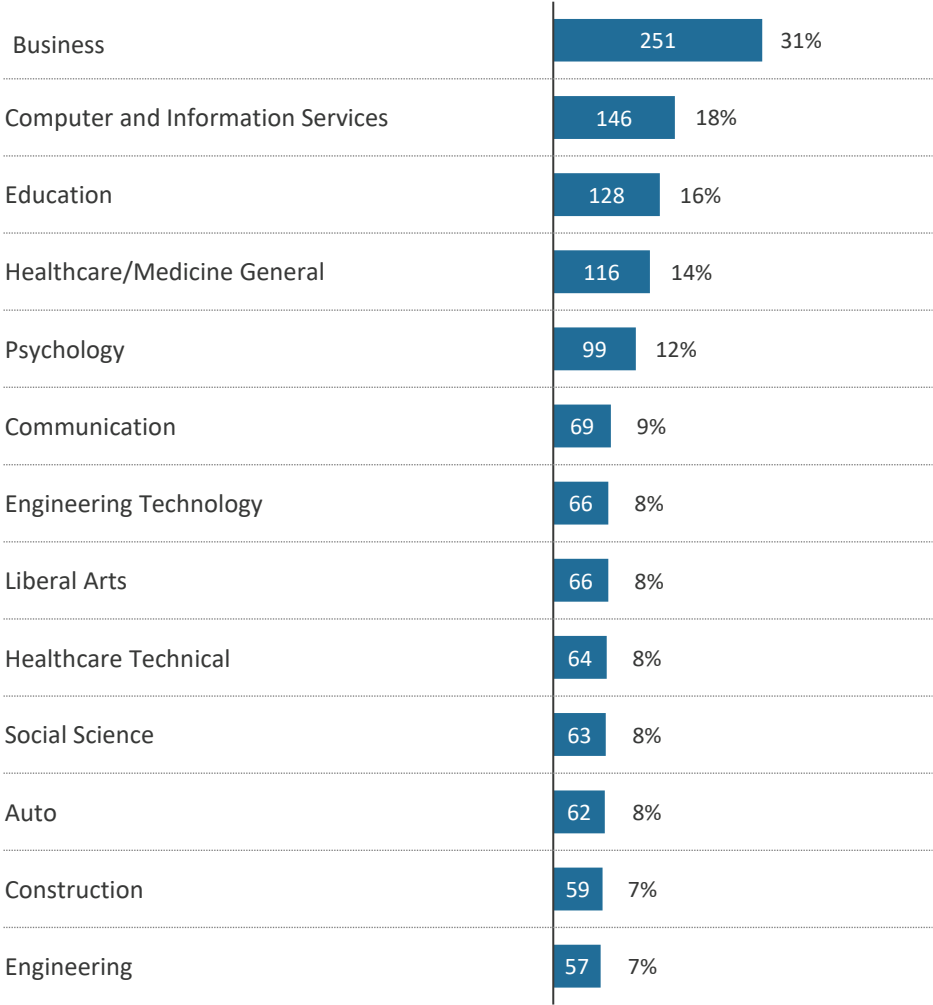
Provides an education I can afford without getting into too much debt	384	47%
Allows me to finish my degree at a pace that works best for me	376	46%
Provides the flexibility to choose between online classes, in-person classes, or both	349	43%
Has a good reputation	330	41%
Is convenient to my home or office	295	36%
Has a particular strength in the area I'm interested in	274	34%
Allows me to quickly advance through courses where I can demonstrate that I already know the material	267	33%
Offers a wide array of financial aid options	252	31%
Offers a degree that employer's value	236	29%
Provides an accelerated program to allow me to finish my degree quickly	232	29%
Easily transfers credits from and to other academic institutions	216	27%
Faculty have real-world experience	195	24%
Provides personal attention and support from when I enroll to when I graduate	189	23%
Has an excellent job placement record	184	23%
Is a school I would be proud to go to	180	22%
Gives academic credit for my on-the-job training	164	20%

Offers a number of subject-matter options for study	160	20%
Has well-respected professors	157	19%
Will help me quickly begin a new career	153	19%
Offers internship or apprenticeship opportunities	138	17%
Helps me network with others in my intended career field	132	16%
Has a long history of providing education	129	16%
Is an innovator in education, using cutting edge teaching techniques and institutional processes	125	15%
Could lead to quick advancement within my current career	120	15%
Provides ongoing career services for students and alumni	110	14%
Has a low student-to-faculty ratio	106	13%
Courses take into account current global market and cultural trends	94	12%
Partners with top companies to design degree programs that are meaningful to today's employers	91	11%
Is respected by my friends or associates	83	10%
Offers a traditional 4-year college campus experience	69	9%
Offers daycare for students with children	60	7%

SOLUTIONS| Sought After Degrees/ Certificates

Type of educational areas

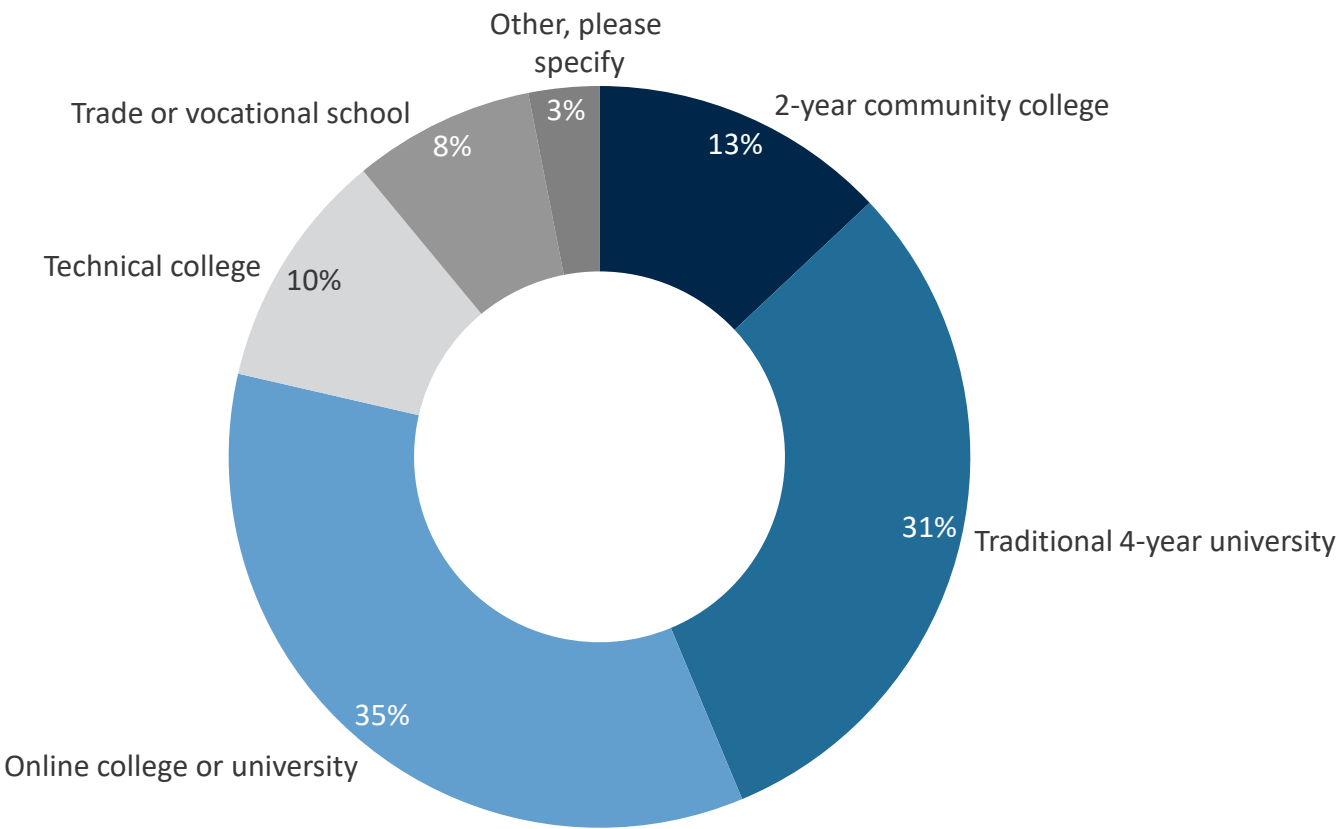
N=810



SOLUTIONS| Type of School

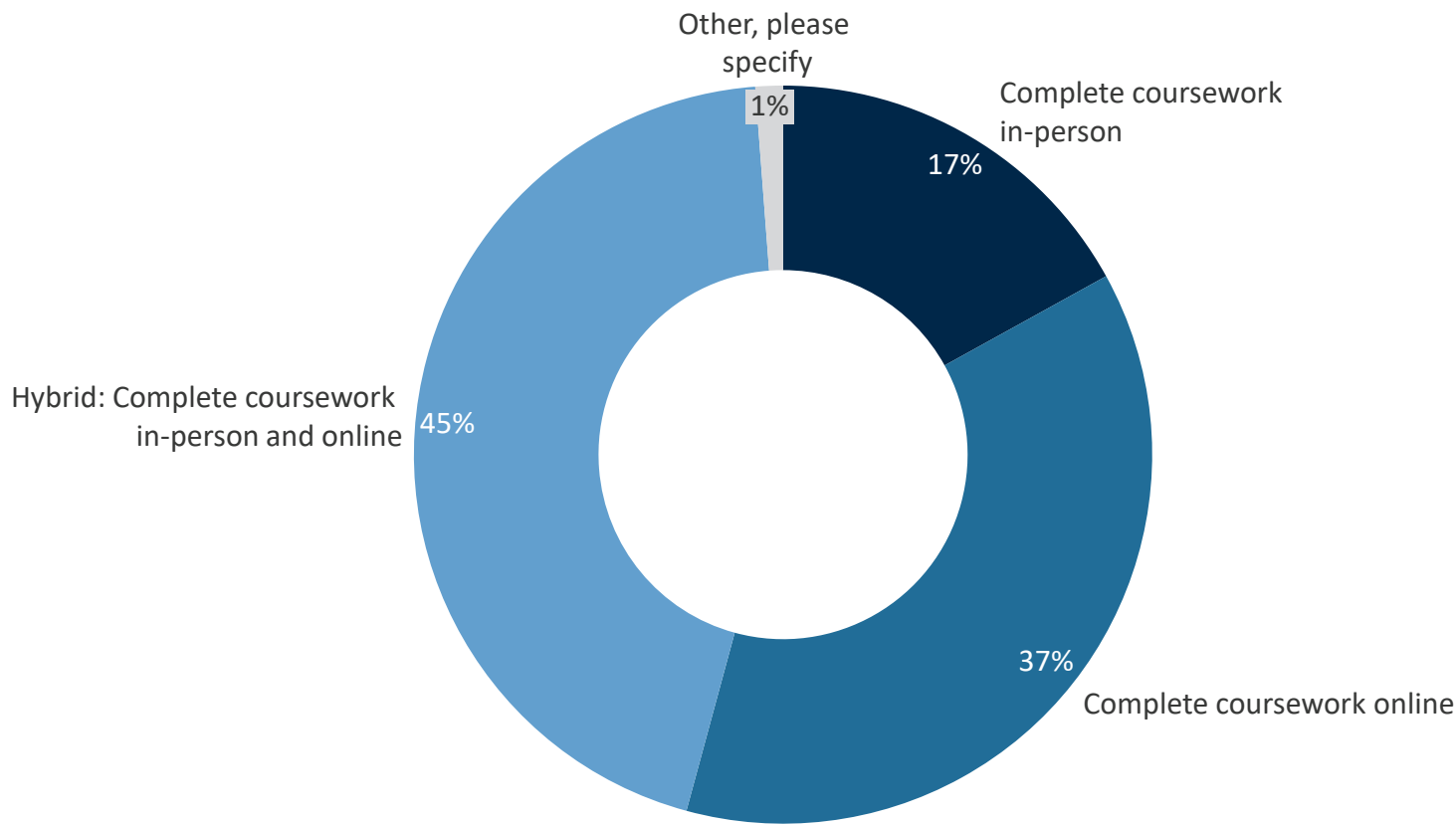
Type of School

N=830



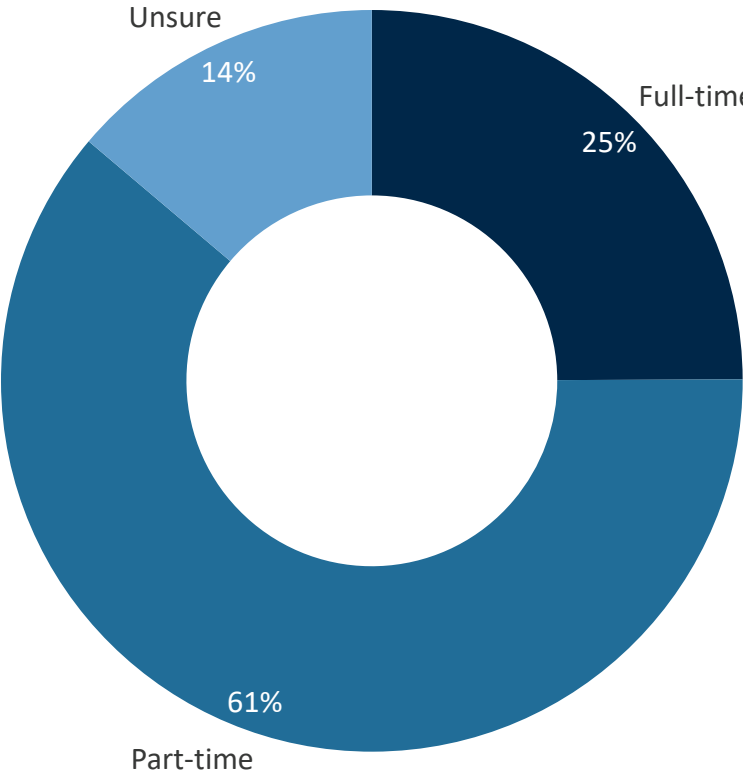
Preference on type of learning/engagement

N=810



Ideal School Schedule

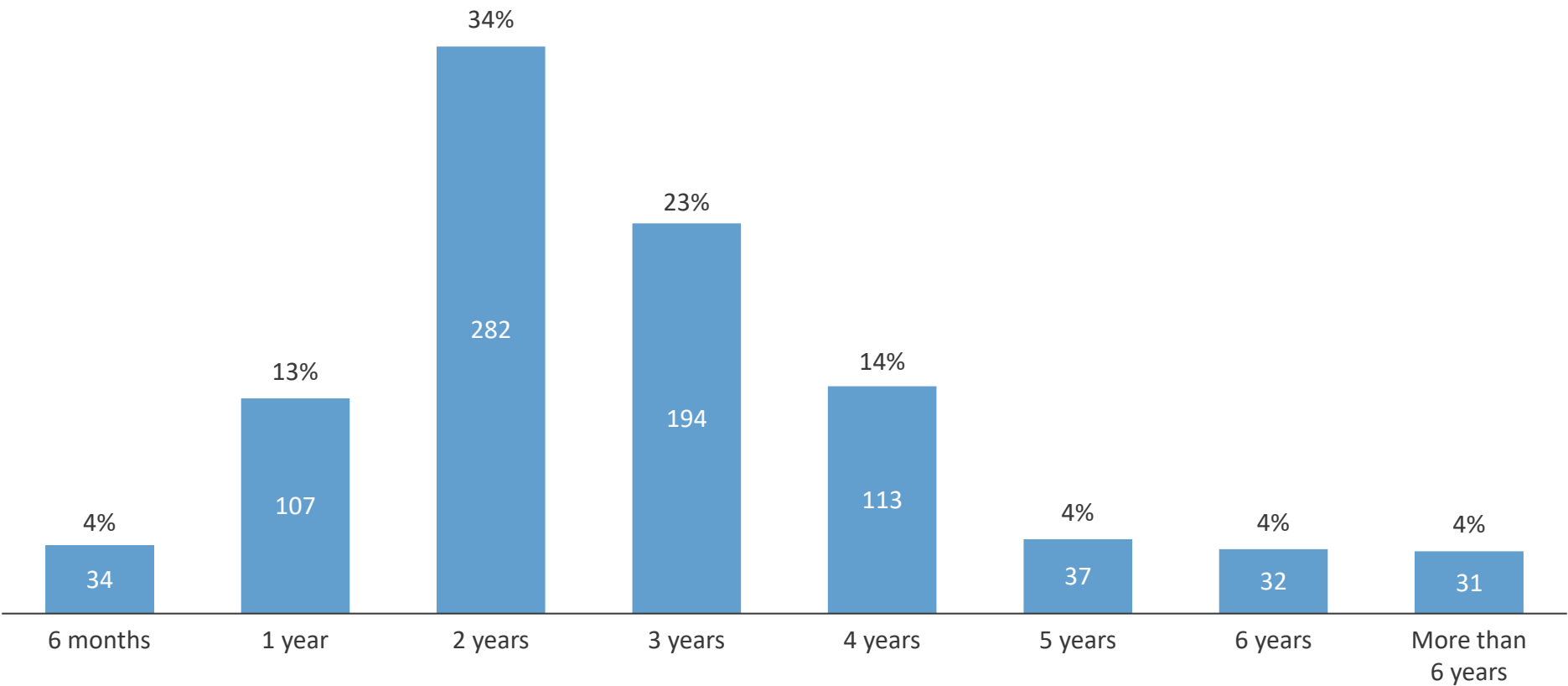
N=810

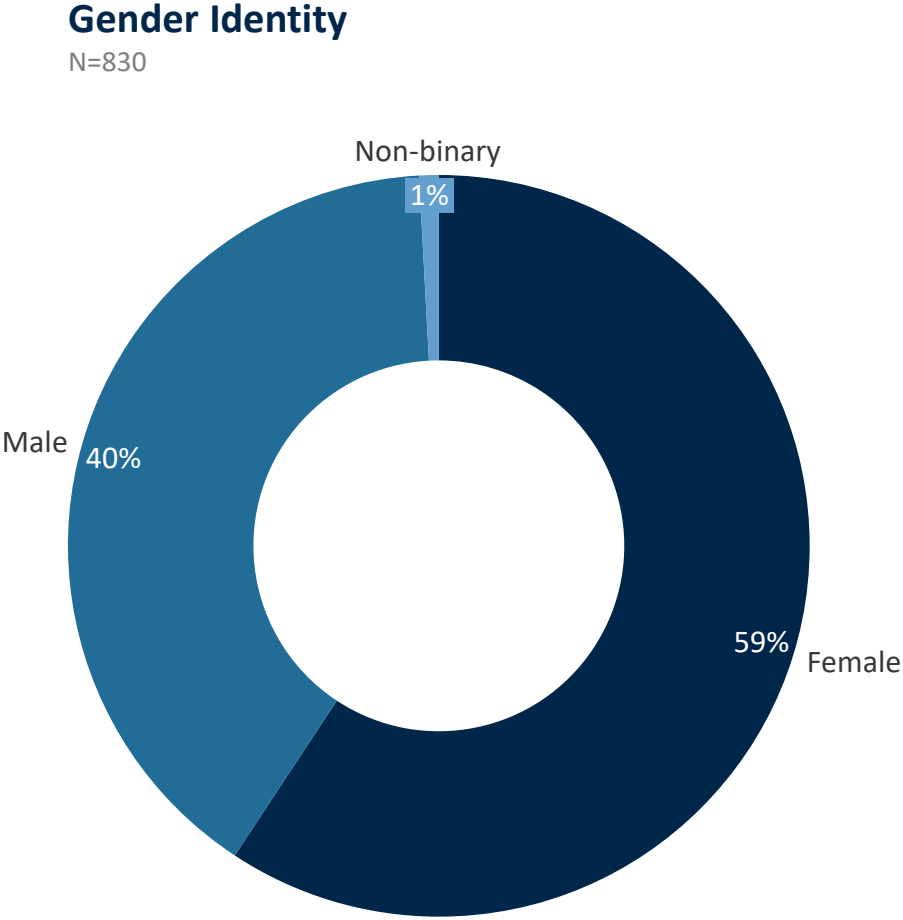


SOLUTIONS| Time to Complete Educational Experience

Expected length to complete educational experience

N=830

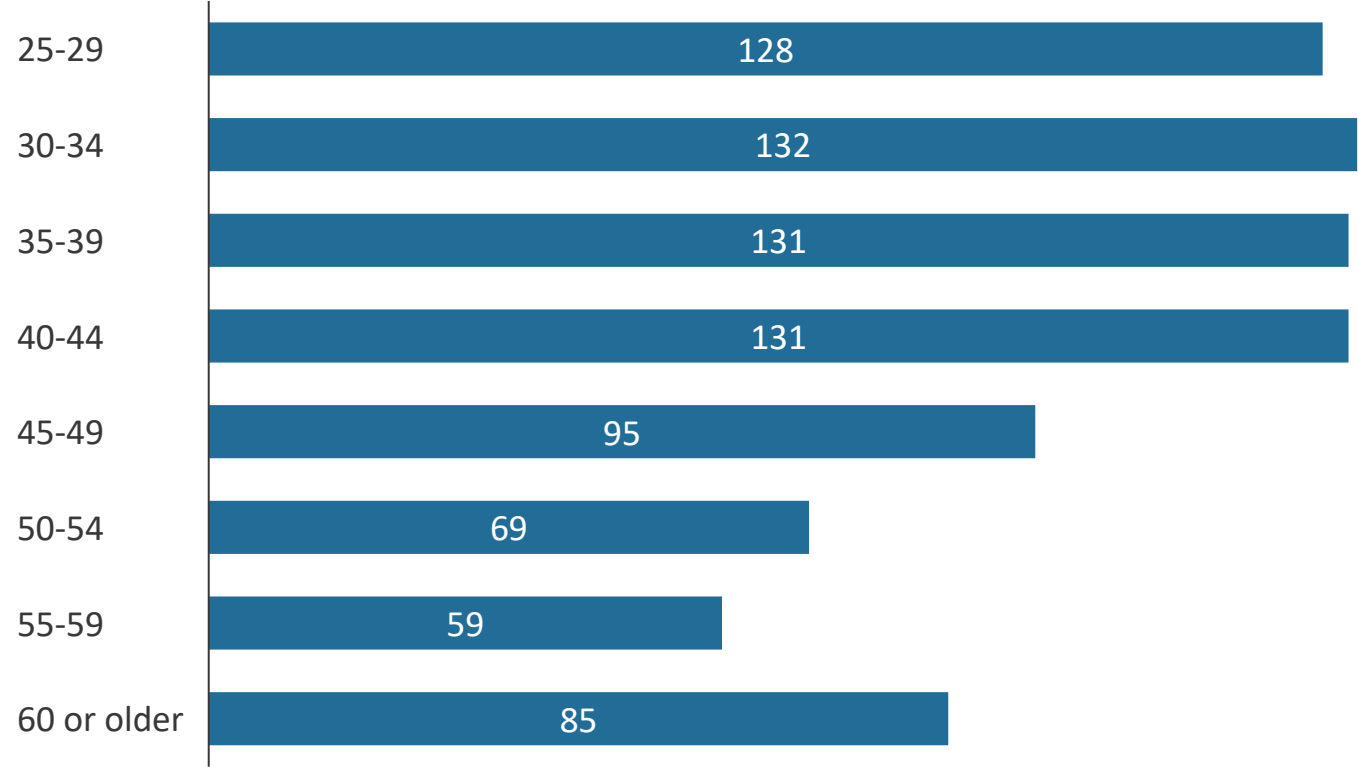




DEMOGRAPHICS | Age

Age category

N=830

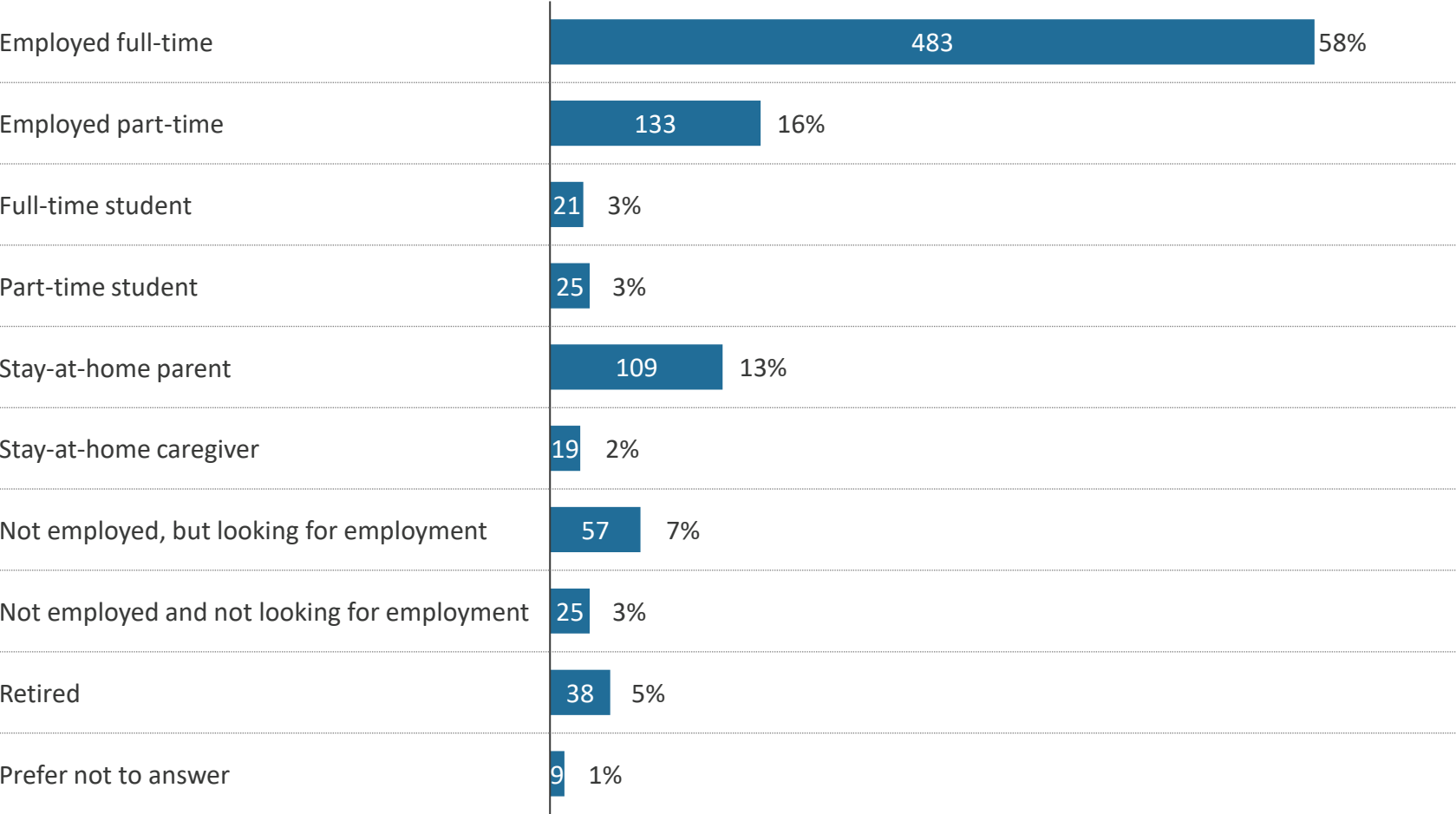


** The survey was focused on individuals over 25, which is why there is no data for ages under.*

DEMOGRAPHICS | Employment Status

Current employment status

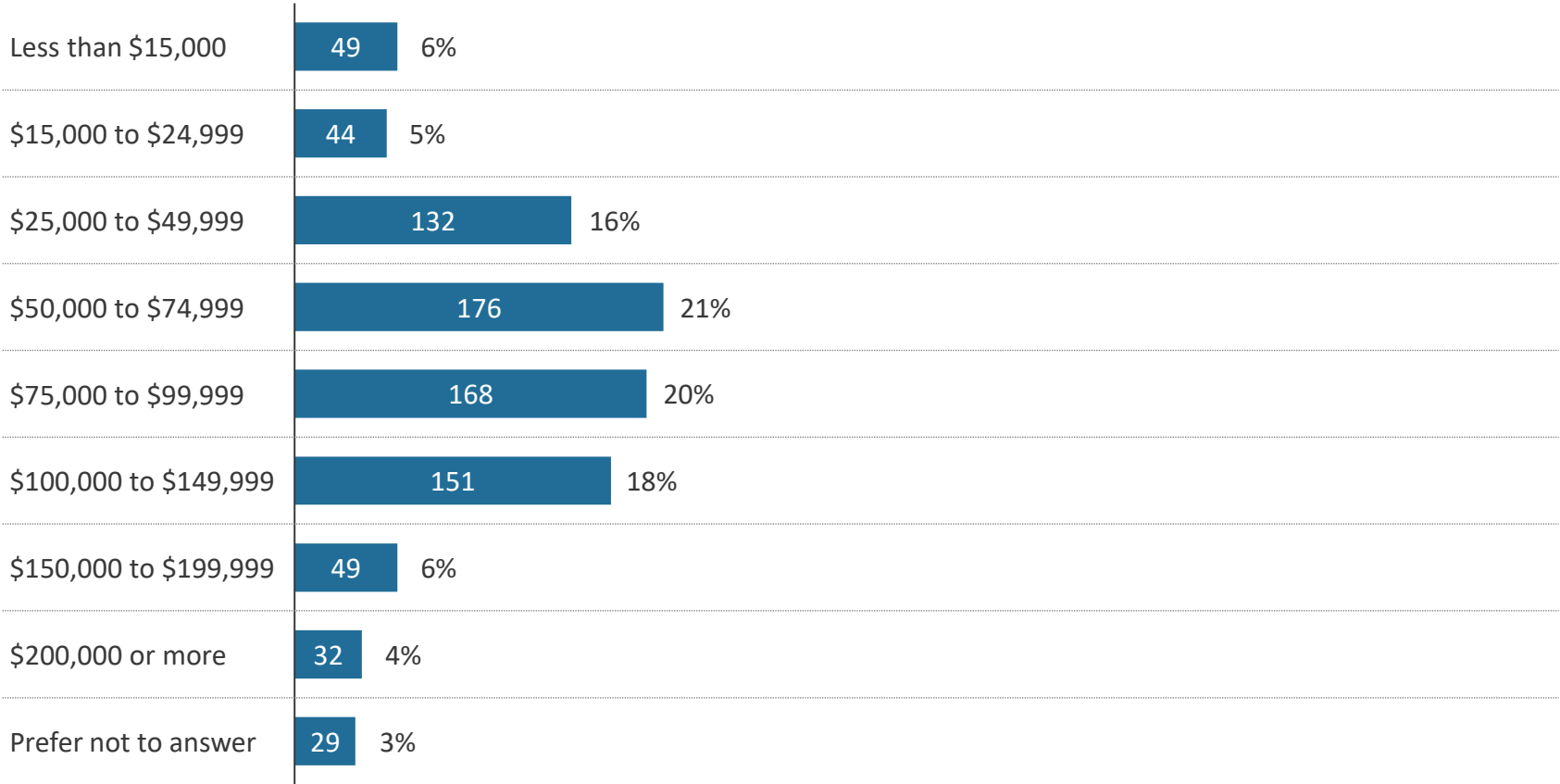
N=830



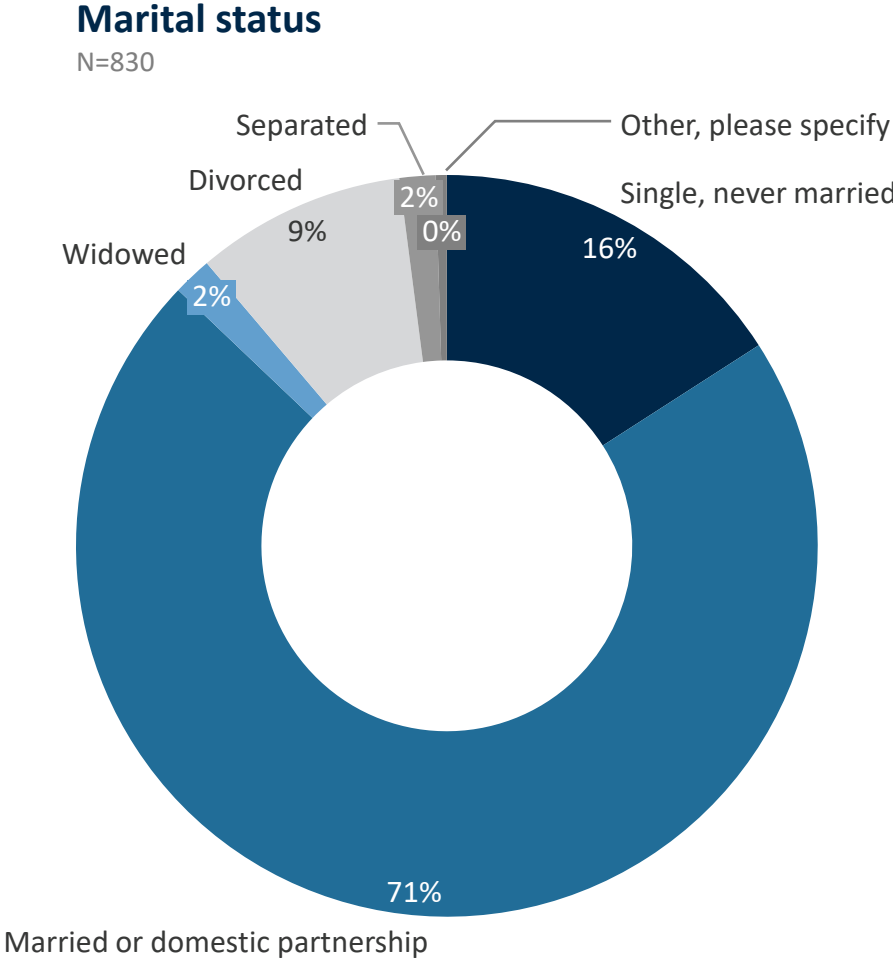
DEMOGRAPHICS | Total Household Income

Total household income

N=830



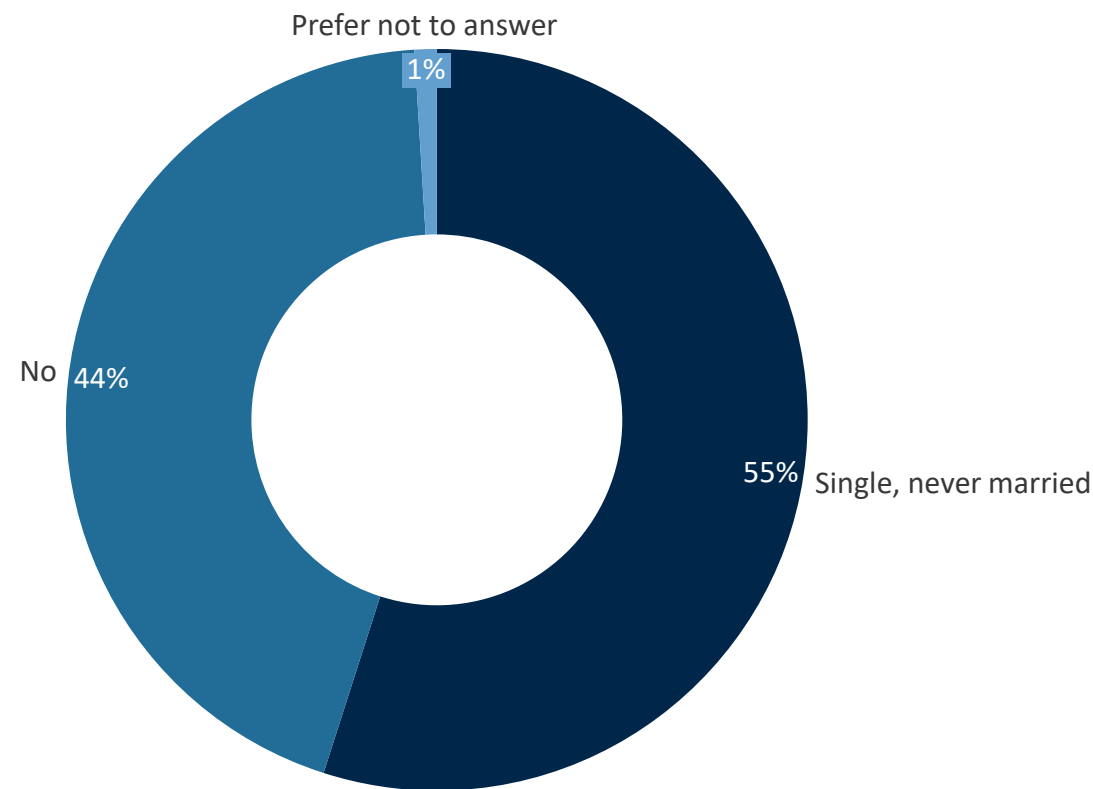
DEMOGRAPHICS | Marital Status



DEMOGRAPHICS | Children Under 18

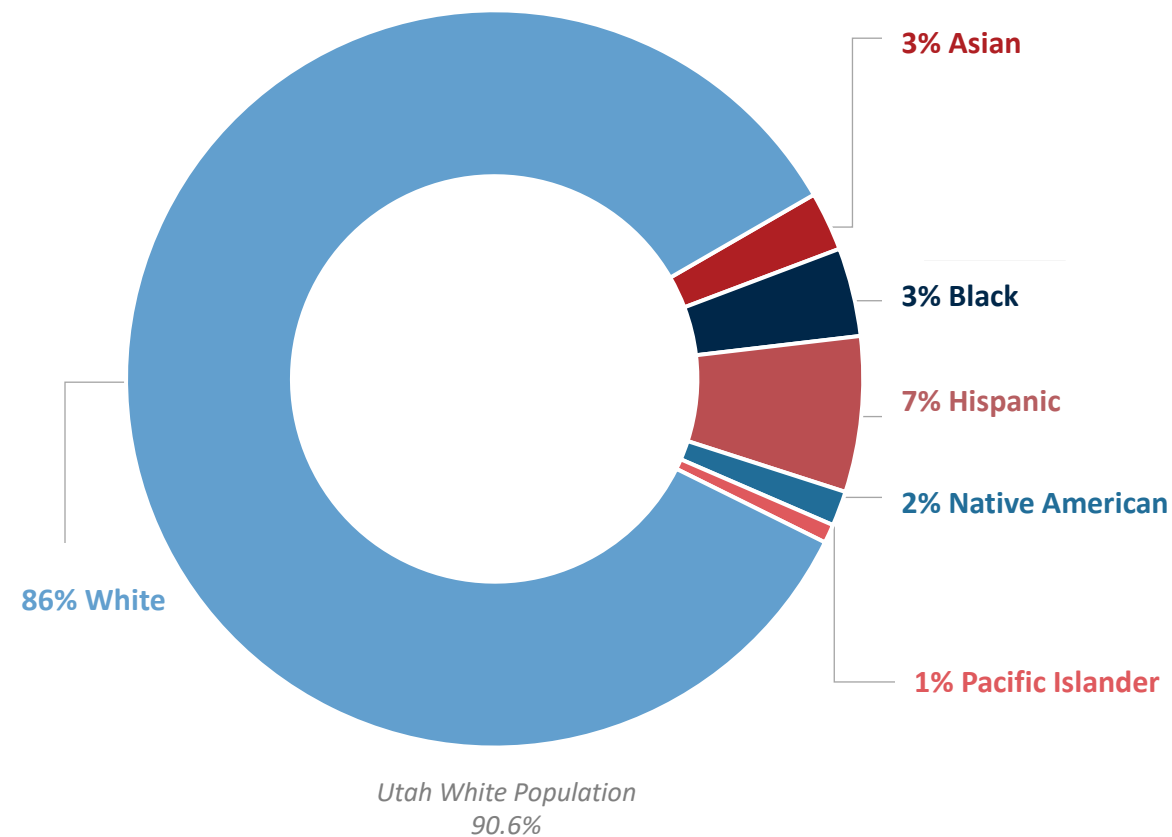
Children under the age of 18 living in household

N=830



DEMOGRAPHICS | Race

Race
N=830



DEMOGRAPHICS | Current Industry

Current industry

N=609

