



Presentation on 2025 First-Year Student Survey

Prepared for CUSC-CCREU
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Methodology

- This is the 31st cooperative study undertaken by CUSC-CCREU.
- 2025 survey includes 39 universities from across Canada, down from 44 in 2022.
- Survey included 47,759 students, yielding responses from 11,901.
 - Overall response rate of 25%, ranging from 14% to 56%.
 - Response rate decreased from 31% in 2022.
- Weighting was applied to results to match student populations from all participating universities.

Profile of First-Year Students

Personal profile

3%

Have children



49%

Racialized person



87%

Canadian
citizens



63%



36%

CUSC/CCREU



19.2

Average age



5%

Indigenous



76%

Single

Disabilities and impairments



33%

Disability/impairment

- Mental health most common at 17%.
- However, just 11% say their disability/impairment impacts them daily, with most common being neurodivergence at 6%.

Living arrangements and commuting



50%

Live with family



34%

Rented housing on
campus



12%

Rented housing off campus

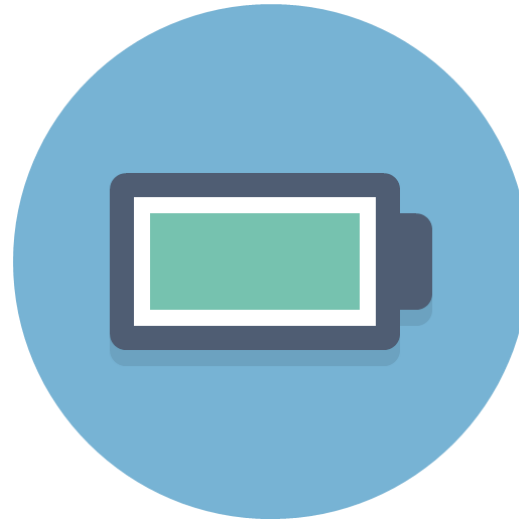


3%

Own a home

Academic profile

Academic profile



89%

Full-time



7%

Transferred from
other institution



83%

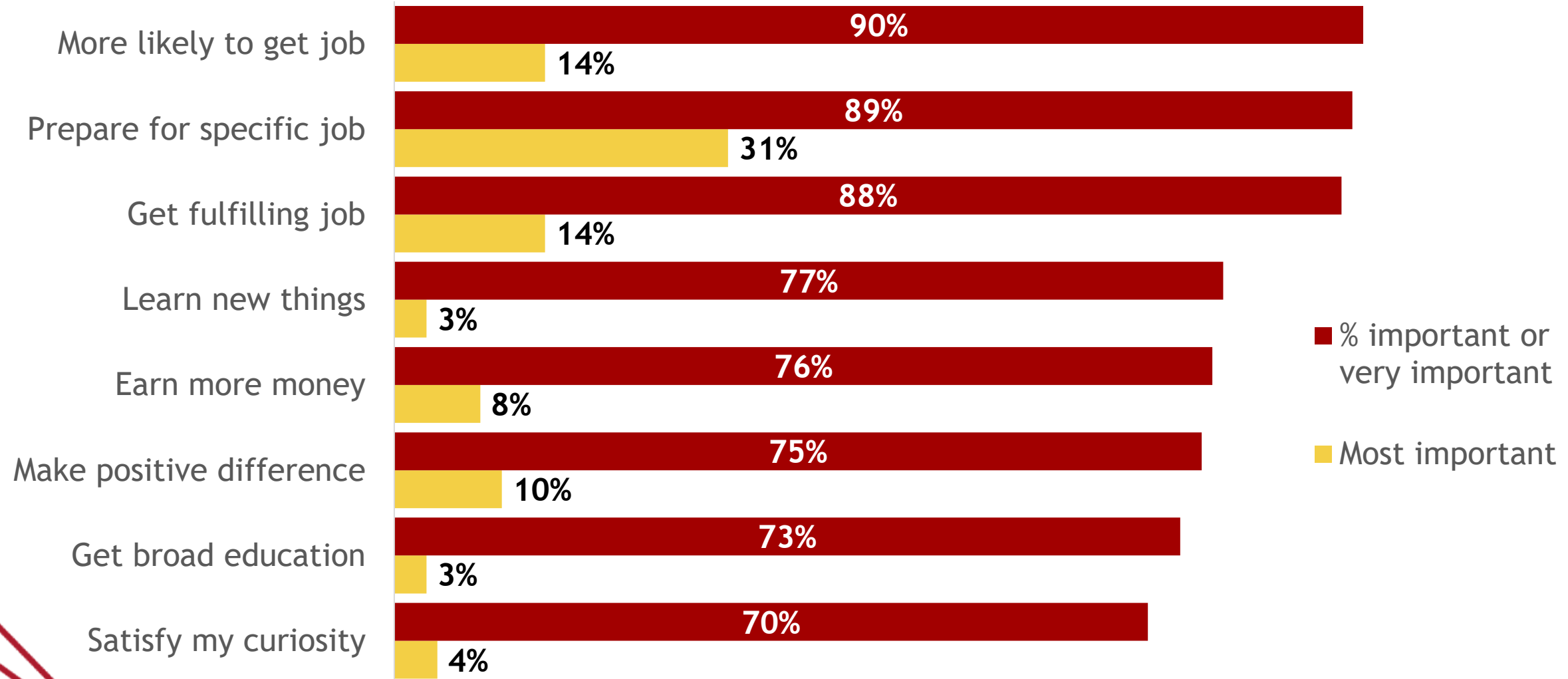
B- or higher
average

39%

A- or higher average

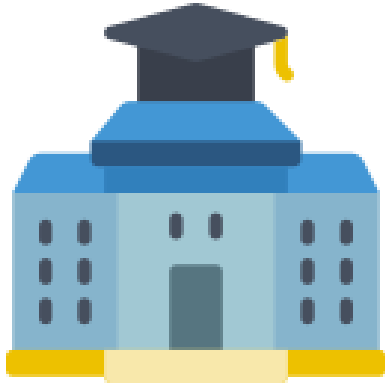
Motivation for attending

Top motivators for attending university



Choosing a university

Applications



77%

Applied to other
universities



16%

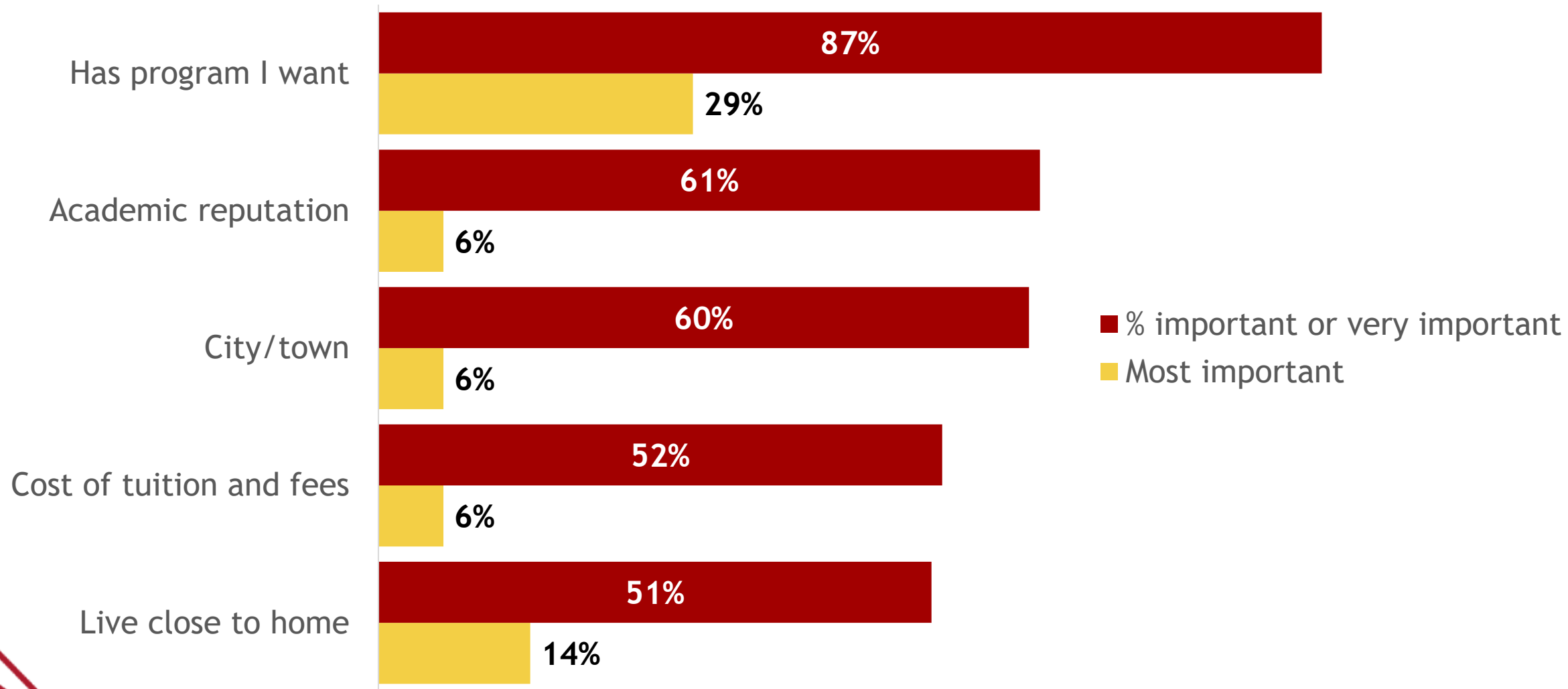
Applied to a
college or CEGEP



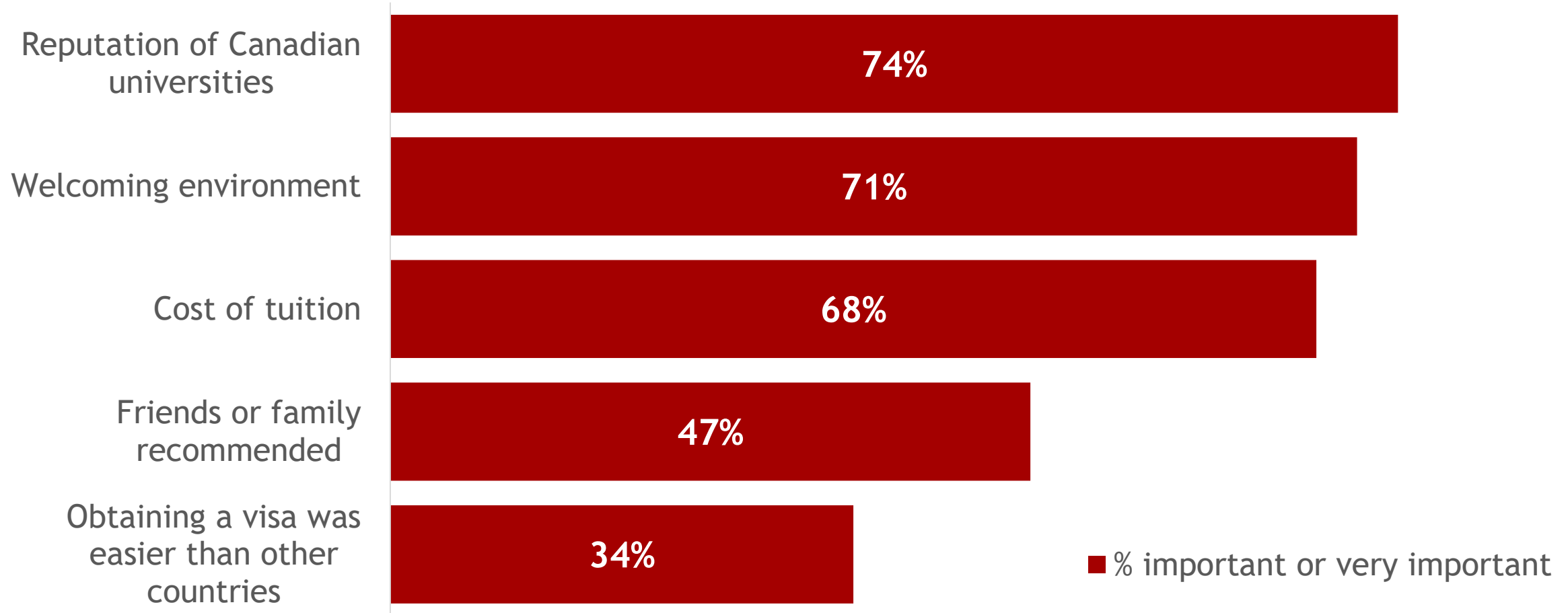
79%

Are attending
their first choice

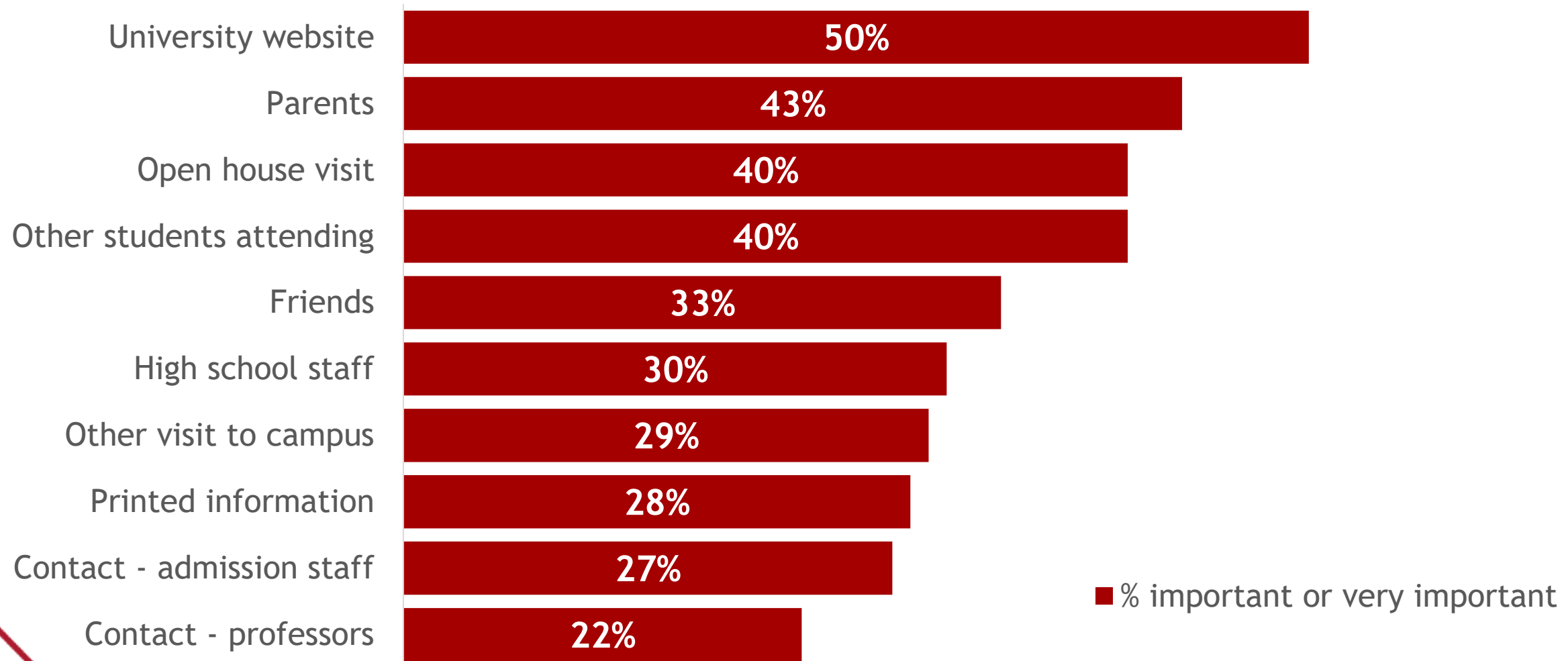
Top motivators for selecting university



Motivators for international students



Most important sources of information



Orientation

Orientation



62%

Attended
orientation

Feeling welcome

89%

Providing info about
student services

87%

Providing info about
campus life

84%

Helping understand
academic
expectations

80%

Building confidence

80%

Helping transition

80%

■ % very or somewhat satisfied

Registration

Registration



86%

Satisfied with
getting into all the
courses they
wanted



81%

Satisfied with
registration
process

Meeting expectations

Expectations



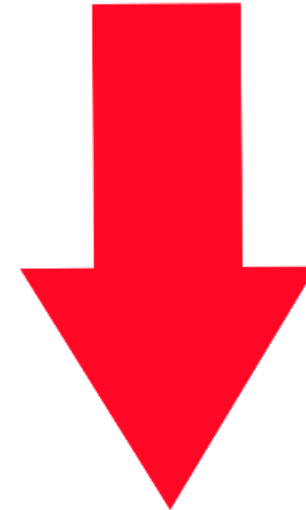
19%

Expectations were
exceeded



68%

Expectations were
met



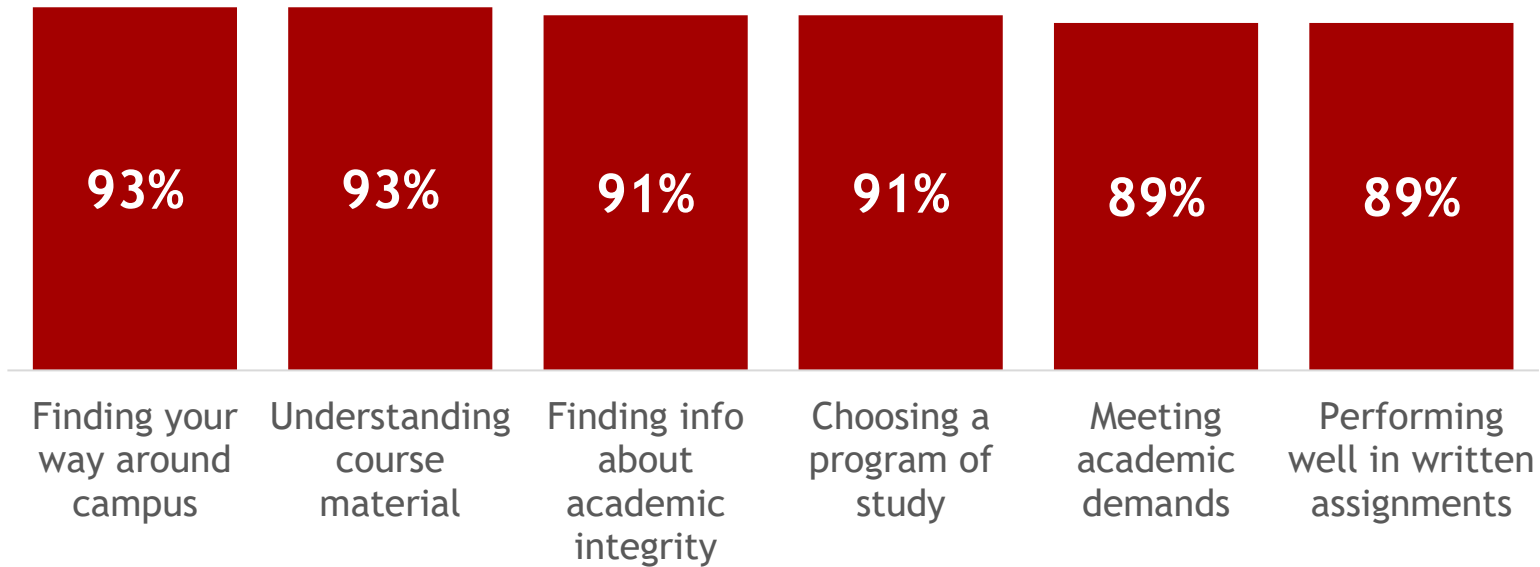
13%

Expectations
fell short

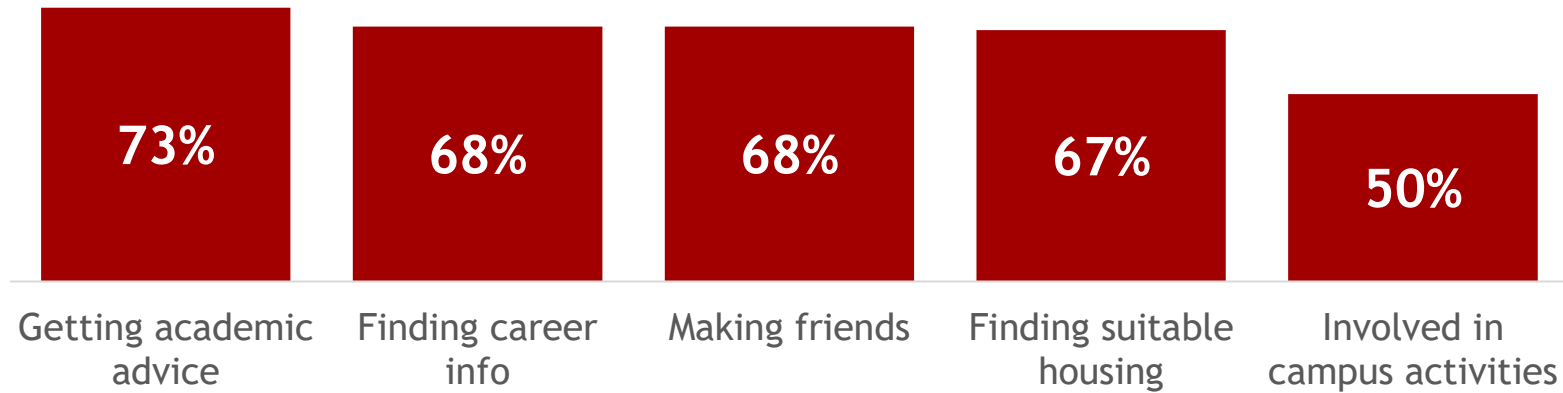
Transition to university

Success transitioning

Top 5 areas



Bottom 5 areas



■ % some or very much

Educational experiences

Perceptions of professors

TOP 5 PERFORMANCE

Treat races the same

Treat genders the same

Seem knowledgeable

Accessible outside of class

Encourage class discussions

TOP 5 MOST IMPORTANT

Communicate well → 9th

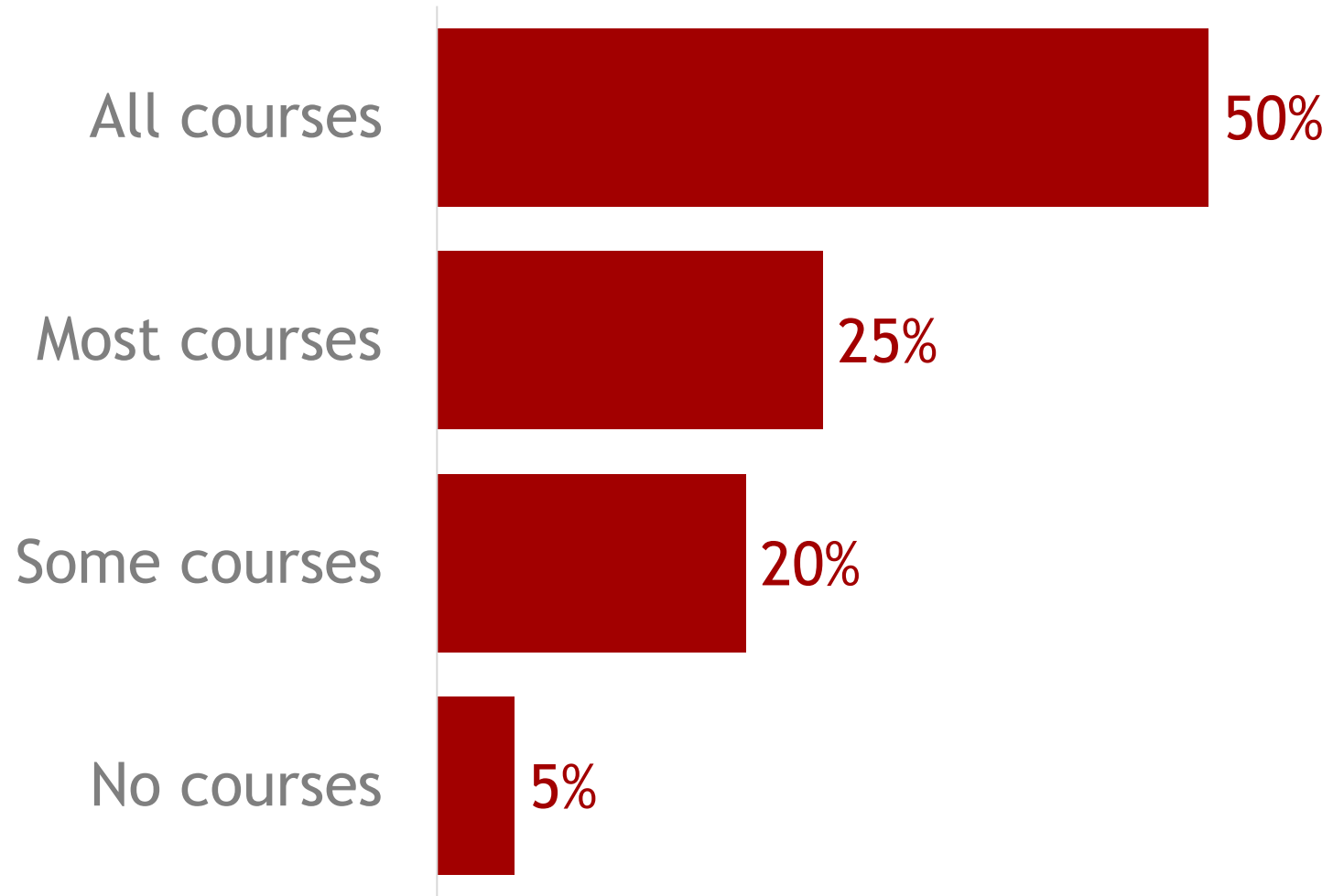
Well organized → 6th

Seem knowledgeable → 3rd

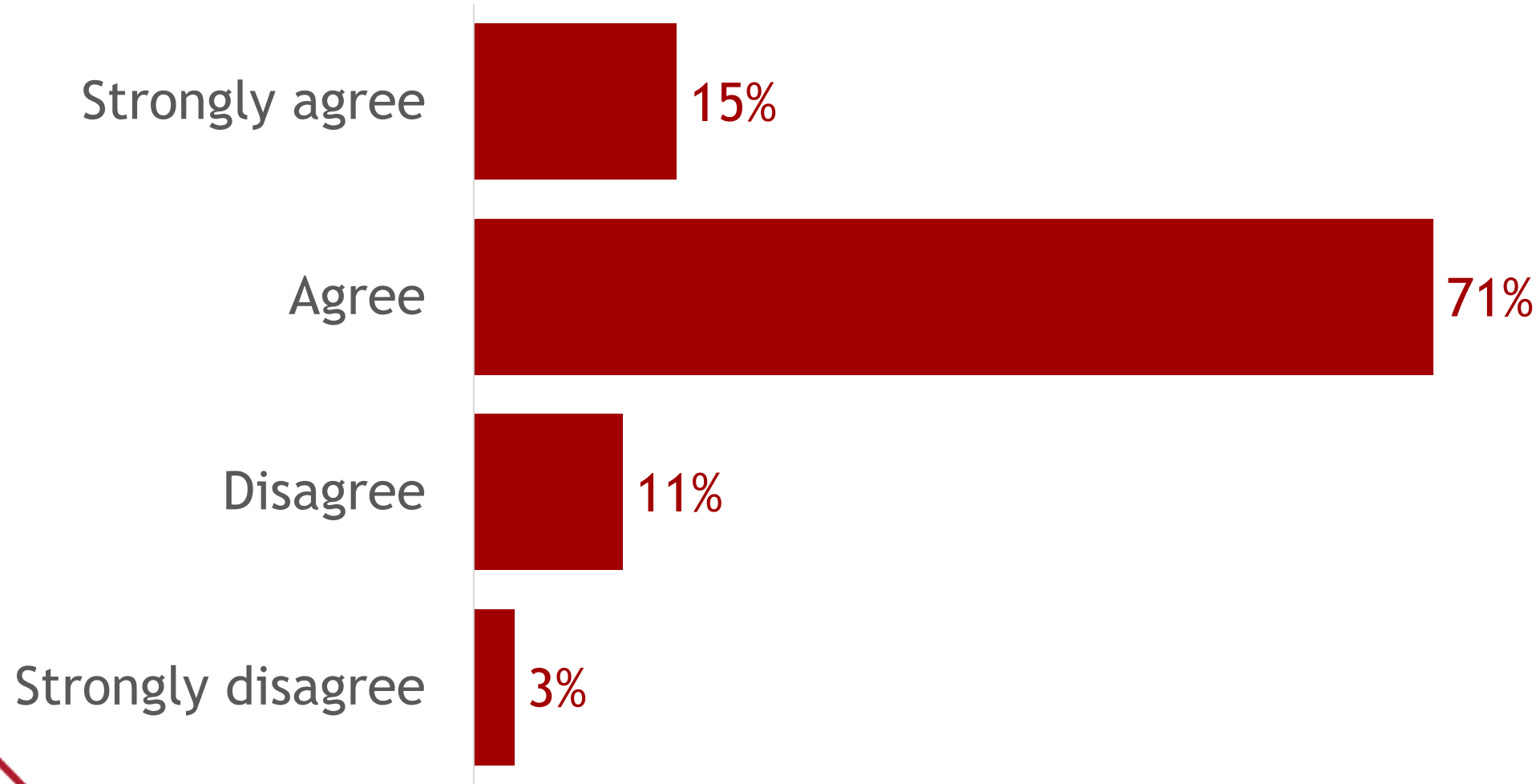
Useful feedback → 11th

Intellectually stimulating → 10th

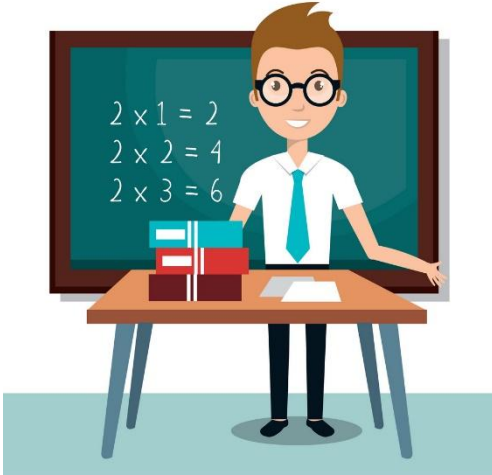
Opportunity to evaluate teaching



Satisfied with quality of teaching



Perceptions of staff



Teaching assistants are helpful



84%



Support staff are helpful

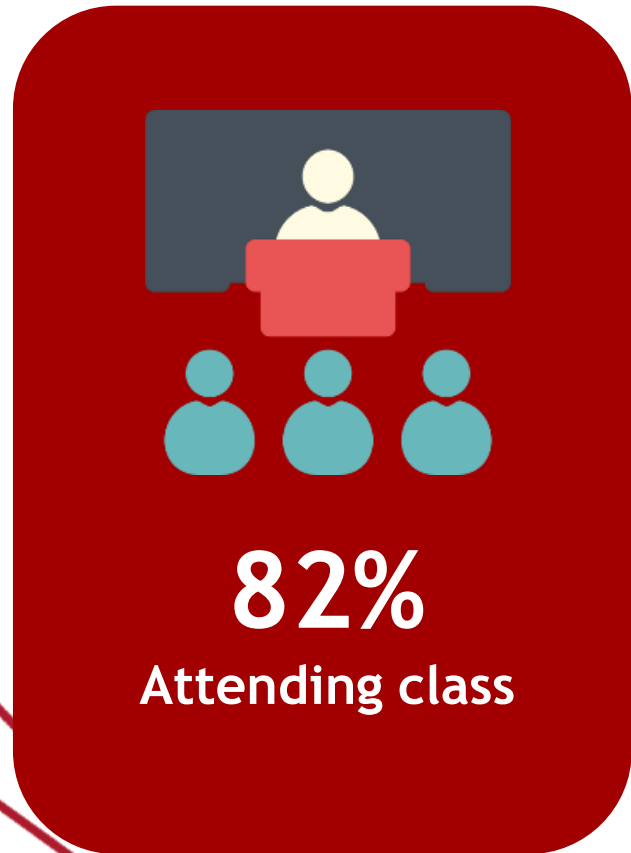


91%

% strongly agree/agree

Inclusivity

Inclusivity (% quite a bit or very much)



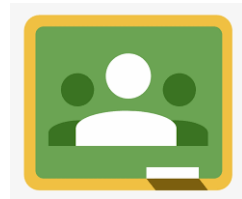
76%

Interacting with friends on campus



62%

Interacting with instructors/professors



60%

Participating in class activities



59%

Interacting with university staff



48%

Interacting with students you don't know well



47%

Participating in extracurricular activities



46%

Attending campus social events



46%

Actively participating in campus social activities

Commitment to completion

Perceptions of effort (% agree or strongly agree)



95%

Willing to put
effort into
university



73%

Can deal with
stress



87%

Normally go to
all classes



63%

Good study
habits

Perceptions of education (% agree or strongly agree)



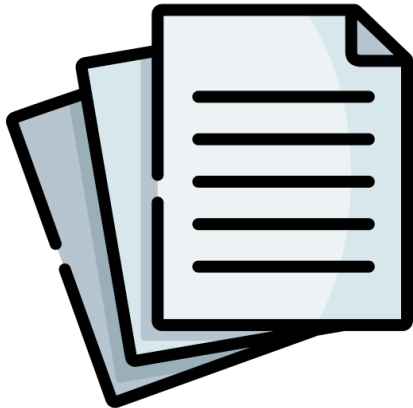
83%

Most courses are
interesting



78%

In the right
program



82%

Course load is
manageable



78%

Had adequate
information about
program before
enrolling

Perceptions of finances (% agree or strongly agree)



74%

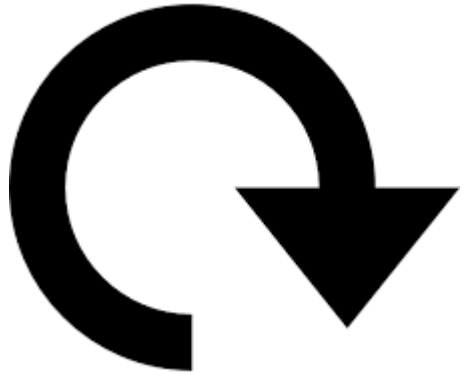
Have financial
resources to
complete program



68%

University degree
is worth the cost

Perceptions of persistence (% agree or strongly agree)



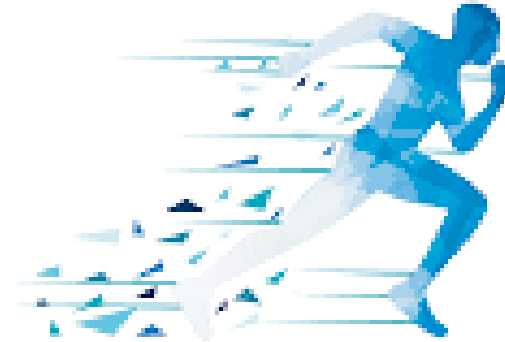
89%

Plan to come back
to this university
next year



84%

Plan to complete
their degree at
this university



10%

Plan to transfer to
another university
next year

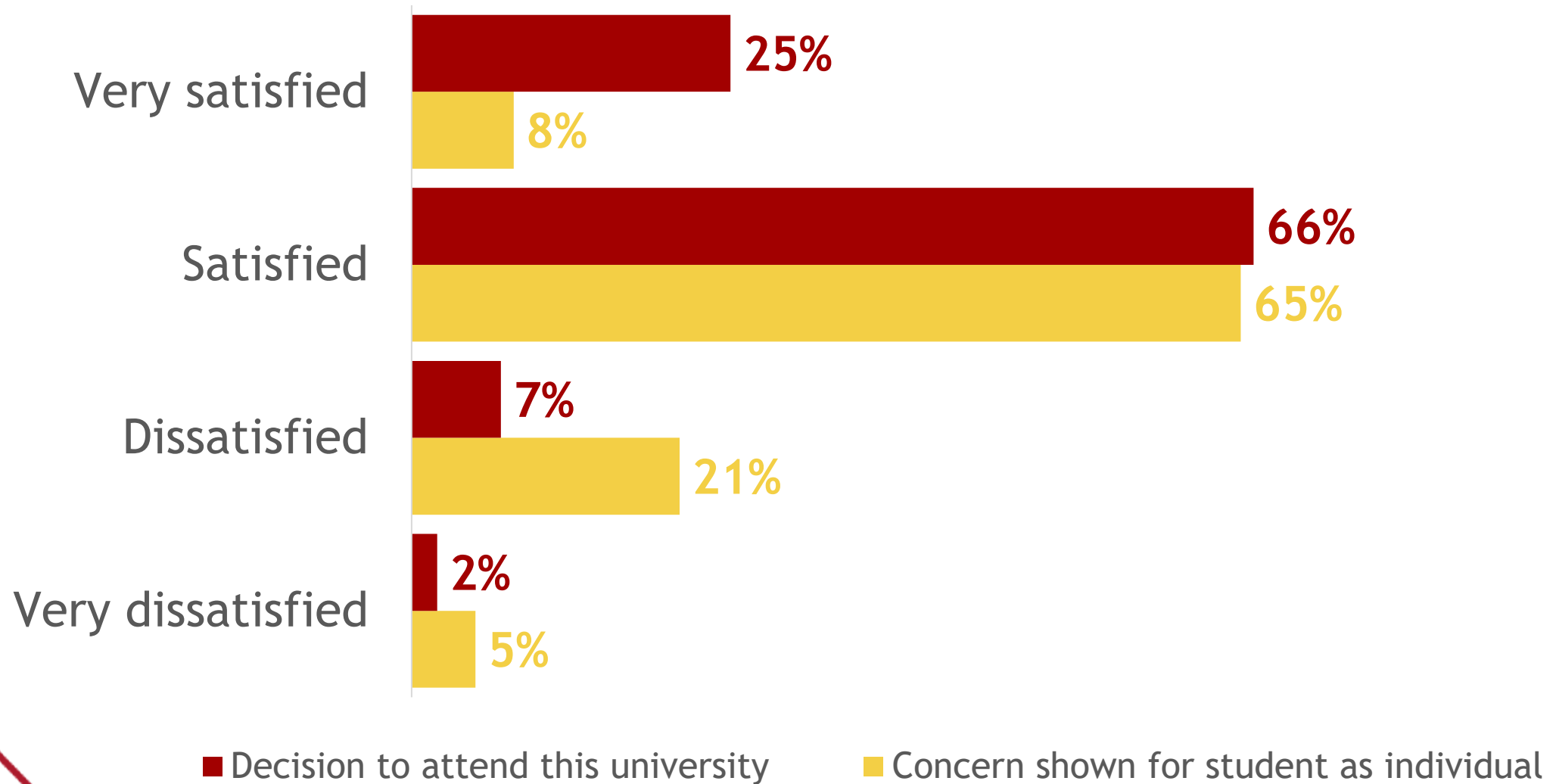


9%

Plan to transfer
to college/CEGEP
next year

Overall evaluations

Satisfaction with university



Recommend university

- Question asked is the 'Net Promoter Score' (NPS) question.
- Asked on an 11-point scale from 0 to 10.
- Grouped into three categories to assess commitment to brand/organization.



27%
Promoters



49%
Passives



24%
Detractors

Goal development

Goal development



79%

Chosen their major



36%

Specific career in mind
32% several possible careers



29%

Apply to professional program



21%

Know career options very well



31%

Apply to grad school

Facilities and services

Most used services on campus

- Survey asks about use and satisfaction with 26 different services.



46%

On-campus
bookstores



46%

Food services



43%

Online bookstore



41%

Library e-resources



35%

Academic advising

Satisfaction with services

- Amongst those who use, satisfaction is typically 80% or higher, with a few exceptions:



70%

Food
services



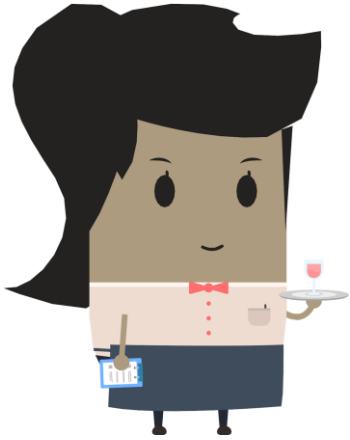
55%

Parking

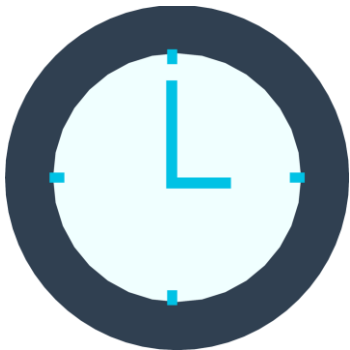
% satisfied or very satisfied

Current employment

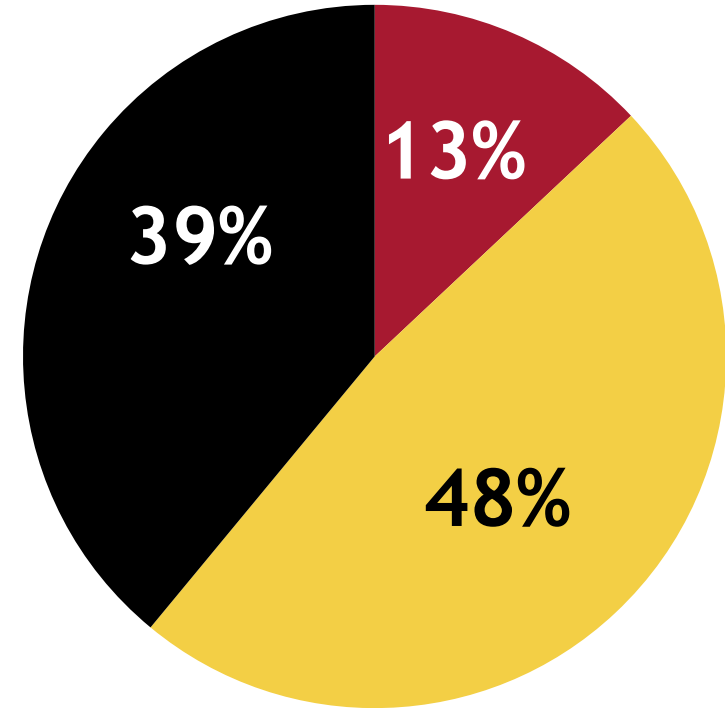
Employment



36%
Employed



15.6
Hours per week



■ Positive impact
■ No impact
■ Negative impact

Finances

Credit cards



53%

Have at least one credit card

\$0

85%

Do not carry a monthly balance



\$3,829

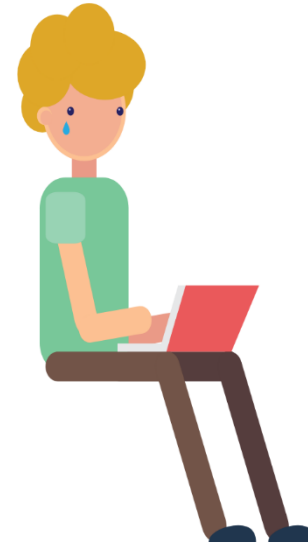
Average debt for those carrying a balance

Financial awards from university



56%

Received a financial
award



34%

Would not have been
able to attend without
their award

Equity and diversity

Gender identity

60%

Woman

34%

Man

3%

Non-binary

2%

Gender
Non-
conforming

2%

Trans

<1%

Questioning

<1%

Two-spirit

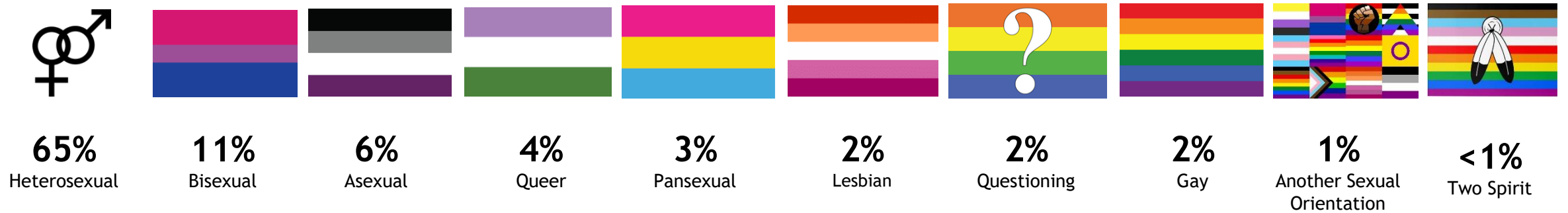
<1%

Agender

<1%

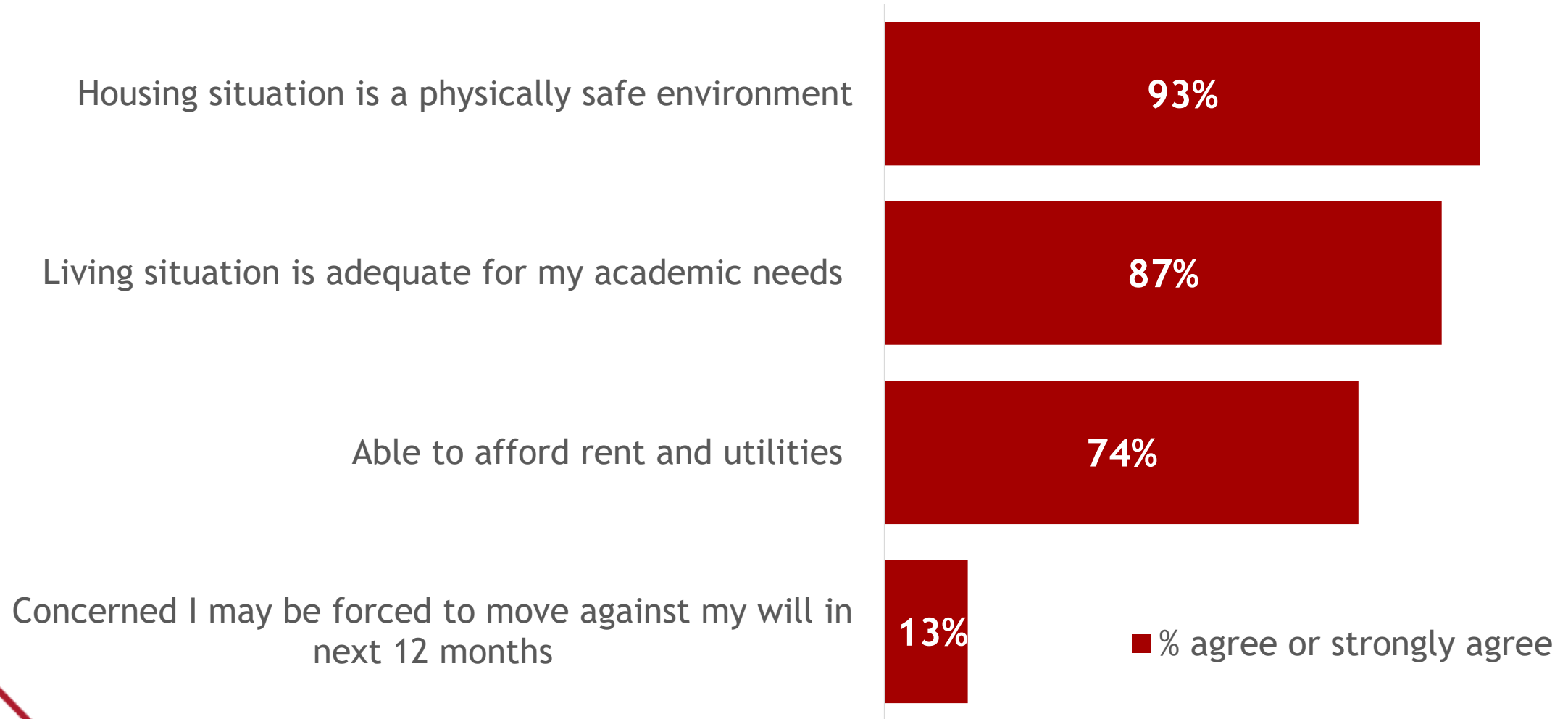
Another
Gender
Identity

Sexual orientation

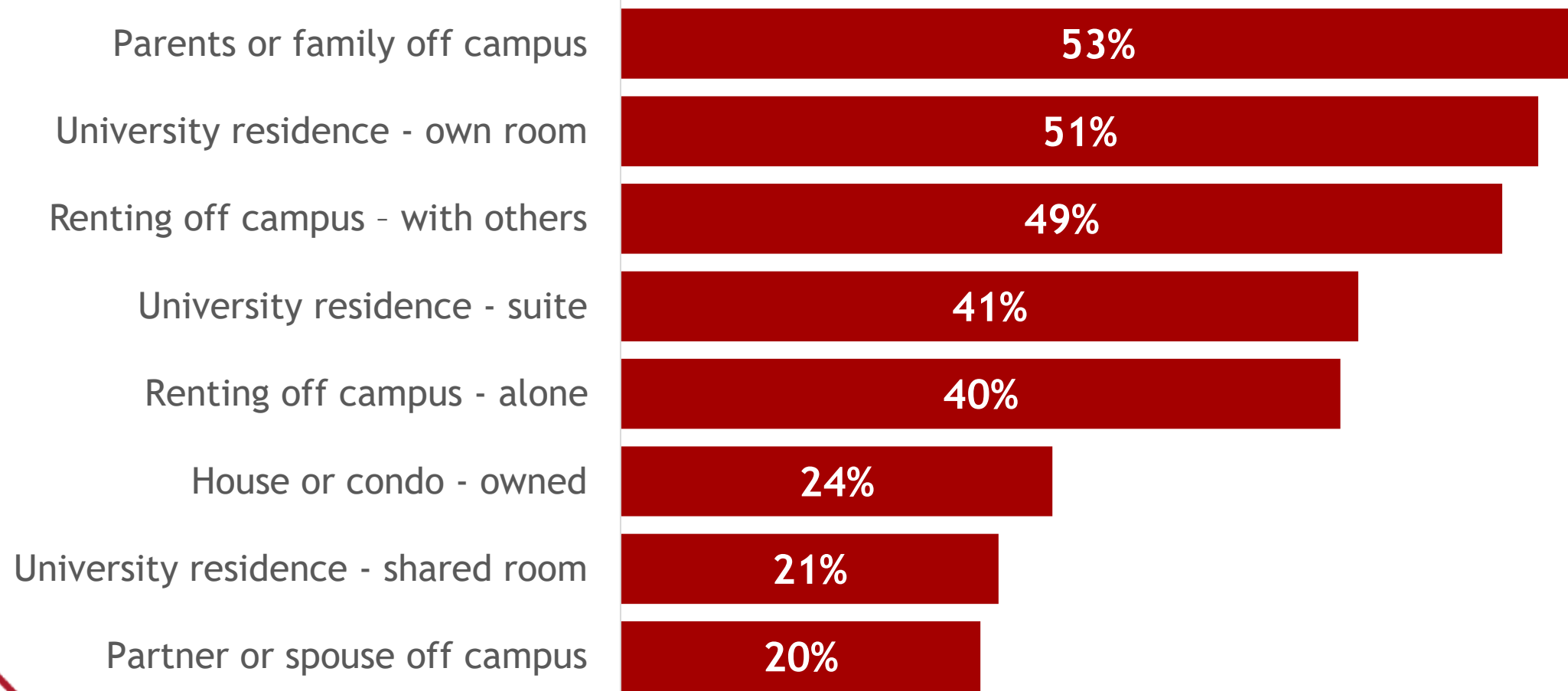


Housing module

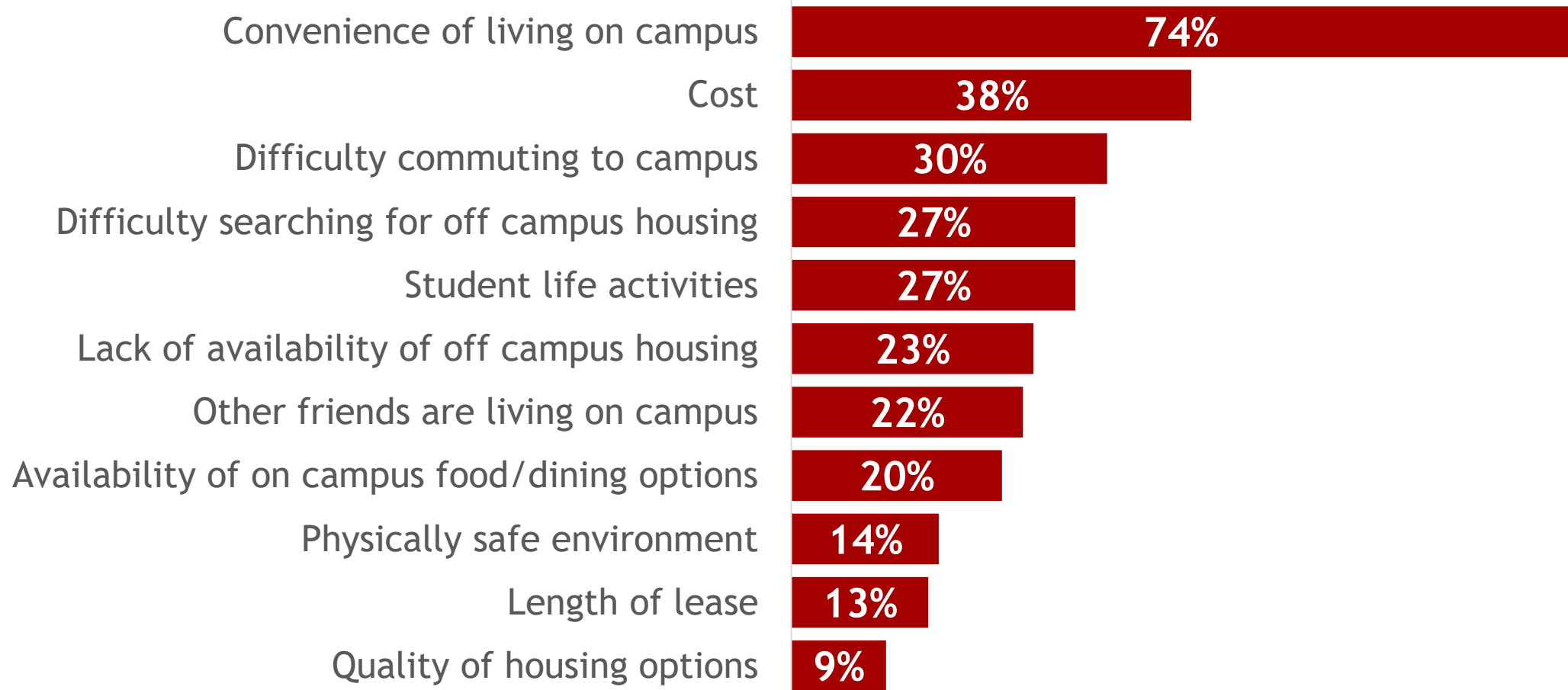
Perceptions of housing situation



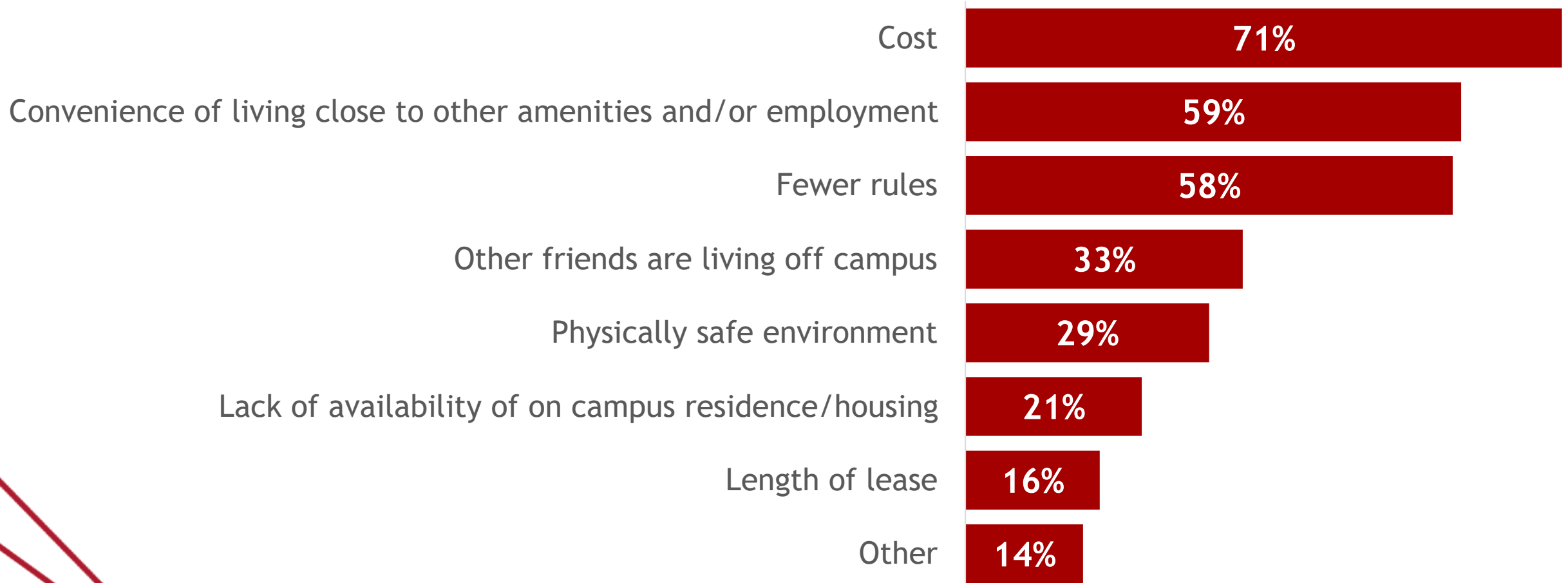
Preference for living accommodations for 2025-26 academic year



Reason for living in university residence



Reason for living off-campus



Anticipated costs for off-campus housing



\$903.42

Average monthly rent
\$750.00 median monthly rent



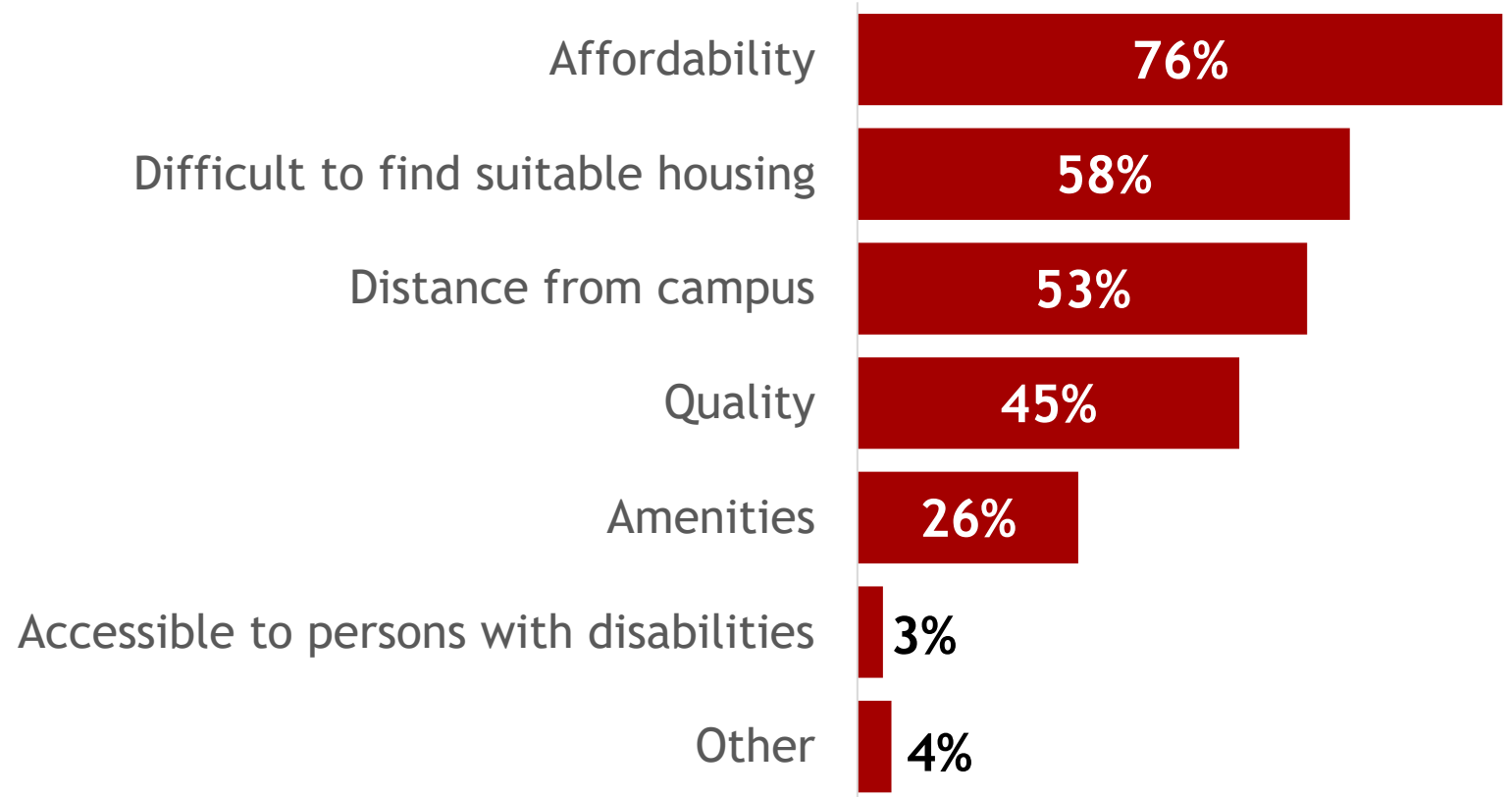
\$205.87

Average monthly utilities
\$100.00 median monthly utilities

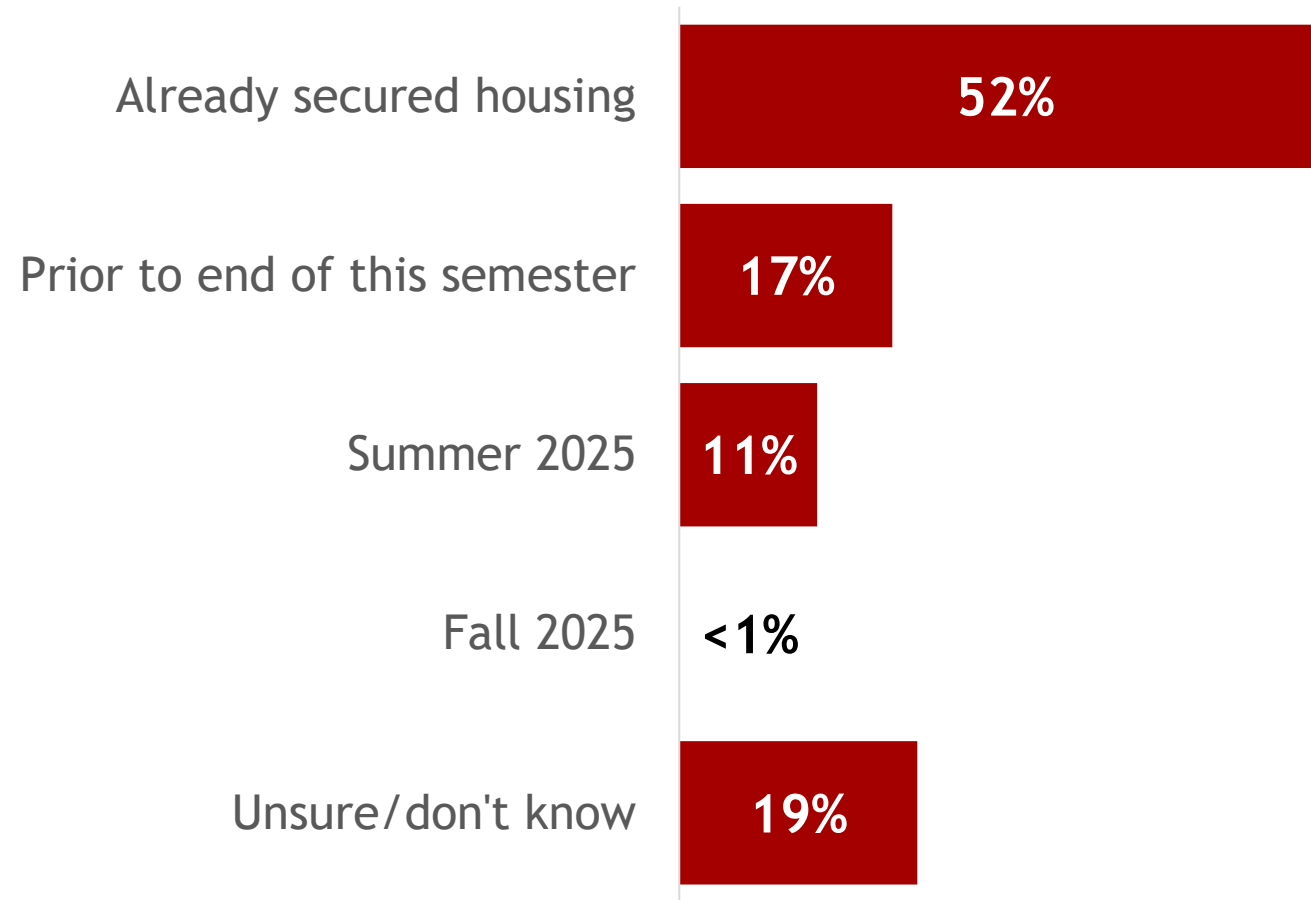
Concern for finding housing



Reasons for concern



Anticipated timeline for finalizing housing for 2025-26



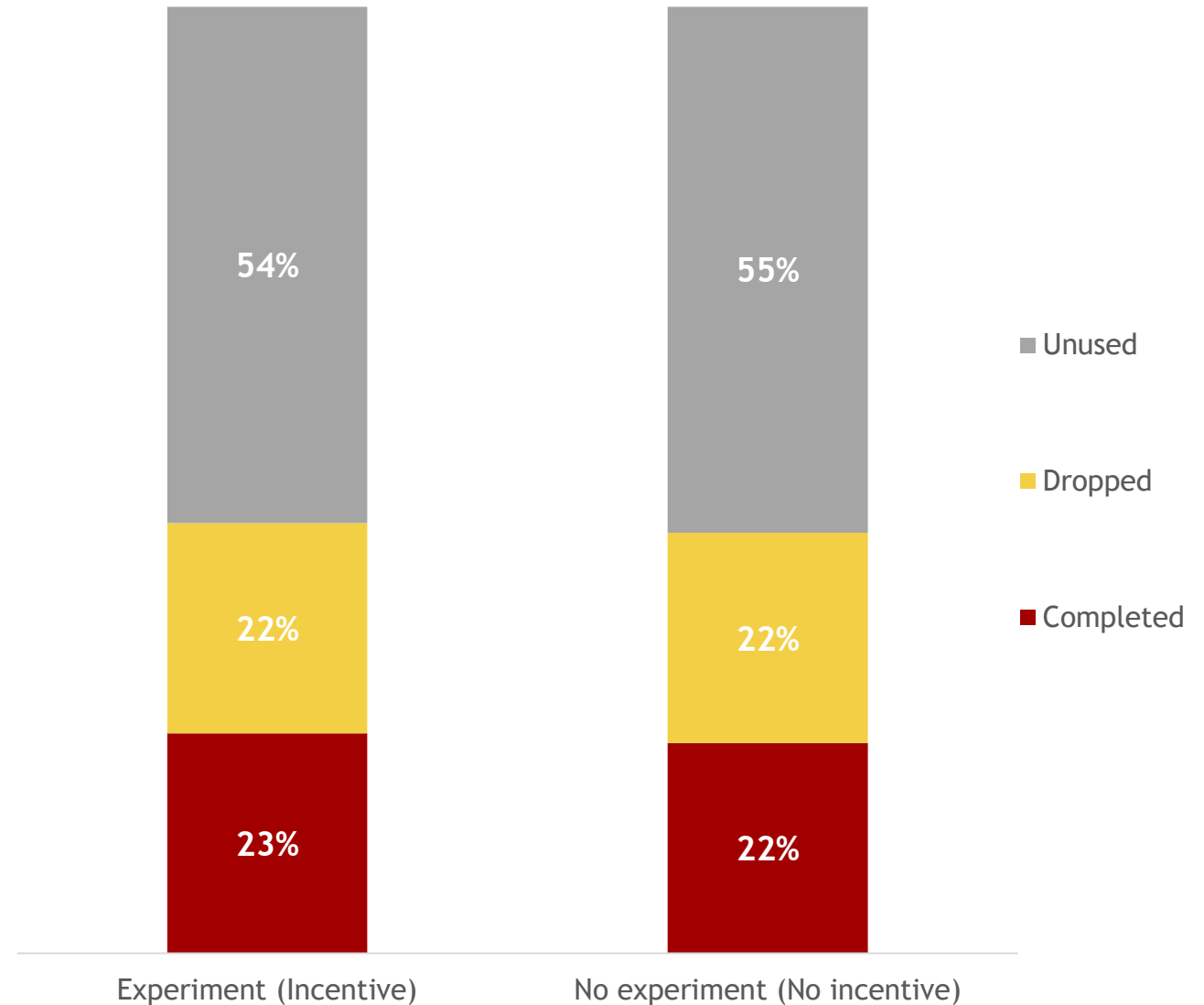
2025 Experiment results

Experiment overview

- CUSC-CCREU conducted an experiment for the 2025 First-Year Student Survey to test the hypothesis that offering large national incentives improves survey response rates.
- Universities that opted into the experiment had 50% of students in their sample randomly assigned to the experiment, where students were told (in email) that they would be entered into a draw for 1 of 2 national prizes of \$600.
- Students randomly assigned to the experiment had the following sentence added to each email they received from CUSC.
 - By completing the questionnaire, you will also automatically be entered into a draw for one of two CUSC national prizes of \$600 each.
- In total, 39 institutions opted into the 2025 experiment.

Experiment results - National

- The experiment group saw a one-percentage point increase in the overall response rate, accounting for approximately 330 additional completed surveys from about 24,500 students.
- The experiment did not seem to impact students accessing the surveying, as 45% of experiment students accessed the survey compared to 44% of non-experiment students.



Experiment results - Institutional

- Experiment results by institution show a different pattern.
- Table is ordered from smallest to largest sample size.
- Nine of the 39 saw higher completion rates for no experiment. Six of those nine had the smallest sample sizes.
 - 300 or fewer, with 150 or fewer assigned to each experiment.
- Three institutions that did not offer an incentive to students at the institutional level saw significant and practical increases in their response rates.

No experiment	Experiment	Difference
51.9%	59.3%	7.4%
21.9%	25.0%	3.1%
51.1%	46.8%	-4.3%
37.0%	45.5%	8.4%
48.4%	41.3%	-7.1%
43.0%	33.6%	-9.4%
33.8%	27.5%	-6.4%
27.0%	26.3%	-0.7%
44.0%	40.4%	-3.6%
33.7%	38.2%	4.5%
41.9%	44.6%	2.7%
21.0%	29.8%	8.8%
25.3%	28.5%	3.3%
25.6%	21.9%	-3.7%
16.8%	19.4%	2.6%
26.8%	27.7%	0.9%
31.7%	32.9%	1.2%
24.0%	24.0%	0.0%
19.8%	22.0%	2.2%
24.8%	27.3%	2.5%
8.6%	16.8%	8.2%
16.0%	19.4%	3.4%
35.6%	37.0%	1.4%
20.6%	23.4%	2.8%
18.6%	22.1%	3.5%
23.9%	25.5%	1.5%
15.5%	19.8%	4.2%
33.6%	33.5%	-0.1%
18.5%	23.2%	4.7%
16.1%	16.3%	0.1%
33.2%	33.6%	0.5%
29.3%	29.3%	0.0%
21.1%	22.0%	0.9%
23.6%	25.4%	1.8%
24.8%	24.9%	0.0%
17.9%	18.9%	0.9%
14.1%	16.0%	1.9%
16.8%	17.0%	0.2%
21.7%	21.4%	-0.2%

Experiment conclusion

- Nationally, the experiment did not yield statistically significant results; however, the experiment seems to identify areas where it strengthens responses rates and may hinder response rates.
- **Institution size.** For smaller institutions, the additional incentive offered at a national level appears to have a negative impact on response rates. This may be due to random-error associated with institutions with smaller sample sizes, but could also impact response rates as students view the national-level incentive as a disincentive.
- **Institutions without an incentive.** It is clear that the addition of any incentive drastically improved response rates, as those institutions without an incentive saw significant and practical increases in their response rates. When institutions already offer their own incentive, the addition of a secondary (national) incentive does not seem to have much additional impact.

Closing

Join us for 2026

- 2026 Survey of Middle Year Students
- Focuses on items such as:
 - Participation in campus activities
 - Satisfaction with facilities, services, professors
 - Perceptions of growth and development
 - Commitment to completing program
 - Student finances and debt
 - Future plans - employment or education
 - Evaluation of overall educational experience
- Recording of this presentation will be posted to CUSC-CCREU's YouTube channel in September
- 2025 Annual General Meeting will held virtually on Thursday, November 13 at 12 pm Eastern



CUSC CCREU

Student insights with a different perspective.

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