



DROPPED STUDENT SURVEY

Prepared for University of Houston

July 2020

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

In the following report, Hanover Research presents the findings of a Dropped Student Survey administered for University of Houston (UH).

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Assess why undergraduate and graduate students choose to leave UH
- Determine perceived strengths and areas for institutional improvement
- Identify possible improvements to the educational/engagement experience
- Determine best communication channels to connect and engage with students

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION & SURVEY SAMPLE

- The survey was administered online in May 2020 using the Qualtrics platform.
- The analysis includes a total of 496 respondents following data cleaning.
- The data supplement includes the following segments: by student type (Undergraduate/Graduate), college of primary major, transfer status (Yes/No), race, gender, first generation status, full-time/part-time (FT/PT) status, and residency status.

RESPONDENT QUALIFICATIONS

- Must be recently dropped undergraduate and graduate UH students

INTRODUCTION

METHODOLOGY

- Sample sizes vary across questions as some questions only pertain to a subset of respondents.
- Conclusions drawn from a small sample size ($n < 20$) should be interpreted with caution.
- For full aggregate and results segmented by student type (Undergraduate/Graduate), college of primary major, transfer status (Yes/No), race, first generation status, FT/PT status, and residency status, please see the **accompanying data supplement**.
- Statistically significant difference (95% confidence level) between groups are noted with an asterisk (*).
- After data collection, Hanover identified and removed low-quality respondents.
- “Don’t Know or Not Applicable” responses (and equivalent) are excluded from the figures and analysis in order to focus on respondents who did express an opinion.
- Throughout the report, visualizations often show only the “top five” most common responses. Question text and answer options marked with † are truncated for clarity and brevity. For the full text and response data, please consult the **accompanying data supplement**.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS



UH should further increase efforts to connect undergraduate students to appropriate financial aid resources. Financial factors are the most common reason for undergraduate respondents' decision to stop enrollment. As such, UH should evaluate financial aid office services, provide additional training for financial aid officers, proactively offer guidance/advice to students, and revamp financial resources websites to help connect students with existing or new financial resources to reduce debt burden.



UH should also increase academic support for students and promote positive interactions between faculty members and students. Following financial factors, respondents cite their own academic performances and lack of faculty interest in their academic progress to be major academic reasons for leaving UH. Respondents also entered UH with varying levels of perceived preparedness. Therefore, UH should focus on improving academic support services (e.g., time management, tutoring, writing, study skills, etc.) for students and offering professional development (e.g., mentorship programs) to help faculty members engage more effectively with their students at the departmental level.



UH should facilitate and organize programs to promote student-to-student interactions. Respondents indicate an overall lack of connectedness with UH while enrolled, and that more involvement with extracurricular activities and having more friends would have helped them to feel connected. To increase student connections, UH could expand programs such as learning communities, peer mentoring programs, and orientation events.



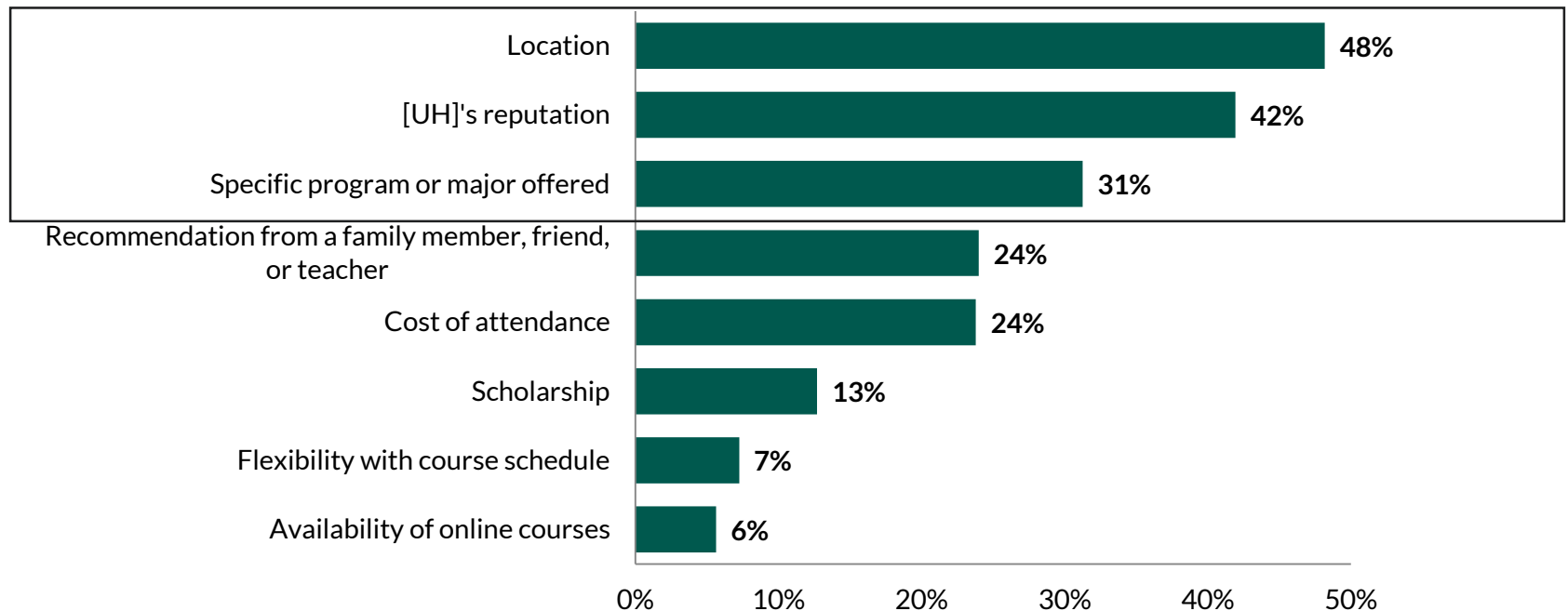
For future communication/marketing purposes, UH should reach out to students via email and promote events/content on Instagram. Respondents generally prefer email for communicating with higher education institutions. Of those who prefer social media, Instagram is the most preferred platform. UH should prioritize these channels for reaching out to dropped students.

REASONS FOR ENROLLING AND PREPAREDNESS

KEY FINDINGS: ORIGINAL MOTIVATION TO ENROLL

The top five original motivations to enroll at UH are location (48%), reputation (42%), and specific program offering (31%). When looking by respondents' college of primary major, those in the College of Technology most often cite UH's reputation to be their original motivation (51%). Students in this college are the only group that indicates that reputation is a more common motivating factor for enrollment than location.

Originally, what motivated you to enroll at UH? Please select all that apply. (n=496)

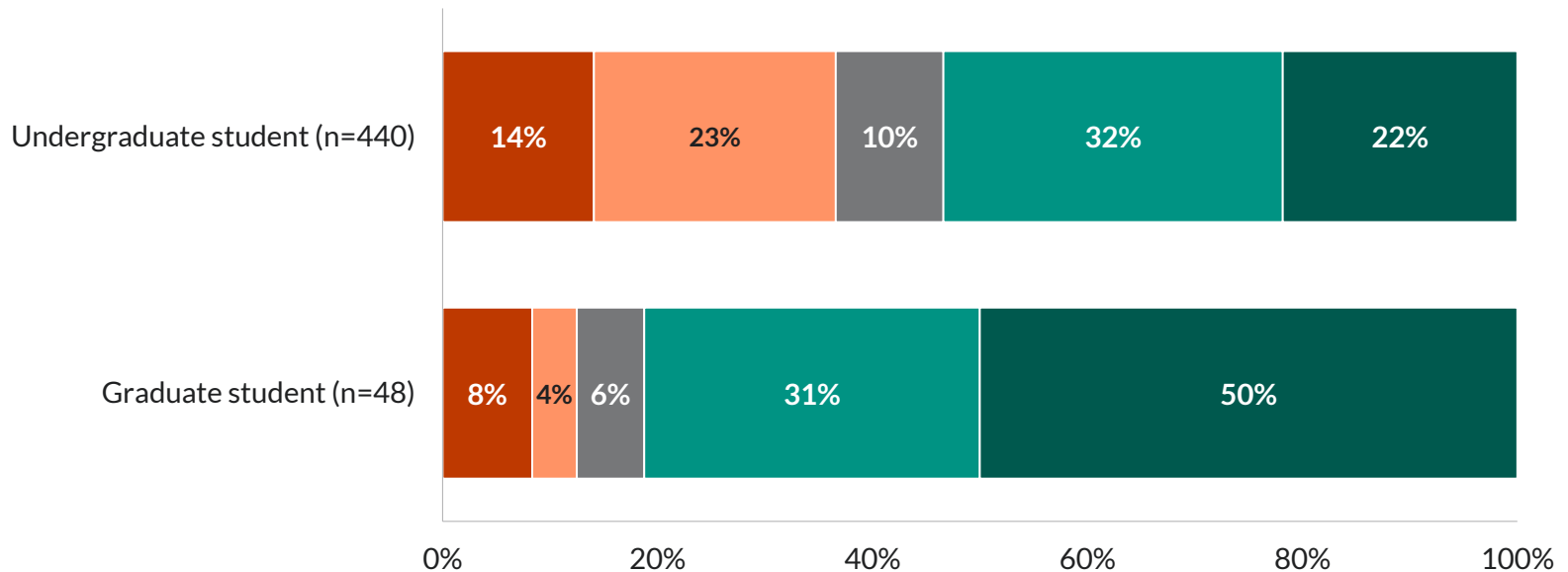


KEY FINDINGS: PERCEIVED PREPAREDNESS

Undergraduate respondents came to UH with varying degrees of perceived preparedness. Graduate respondents are statistically significantly more likely than undergraduate respondents to self-report being “very prepared” to succeed in their classes.

In your own opinion, how prepared or unprepared were you to succeed in your classes at UH when you first enrolled?*

■ Very unprepared ■ Somewhat unprepared ■ Neither prepared nor unprepared ■ Somewhat prepared ■ Very prepared



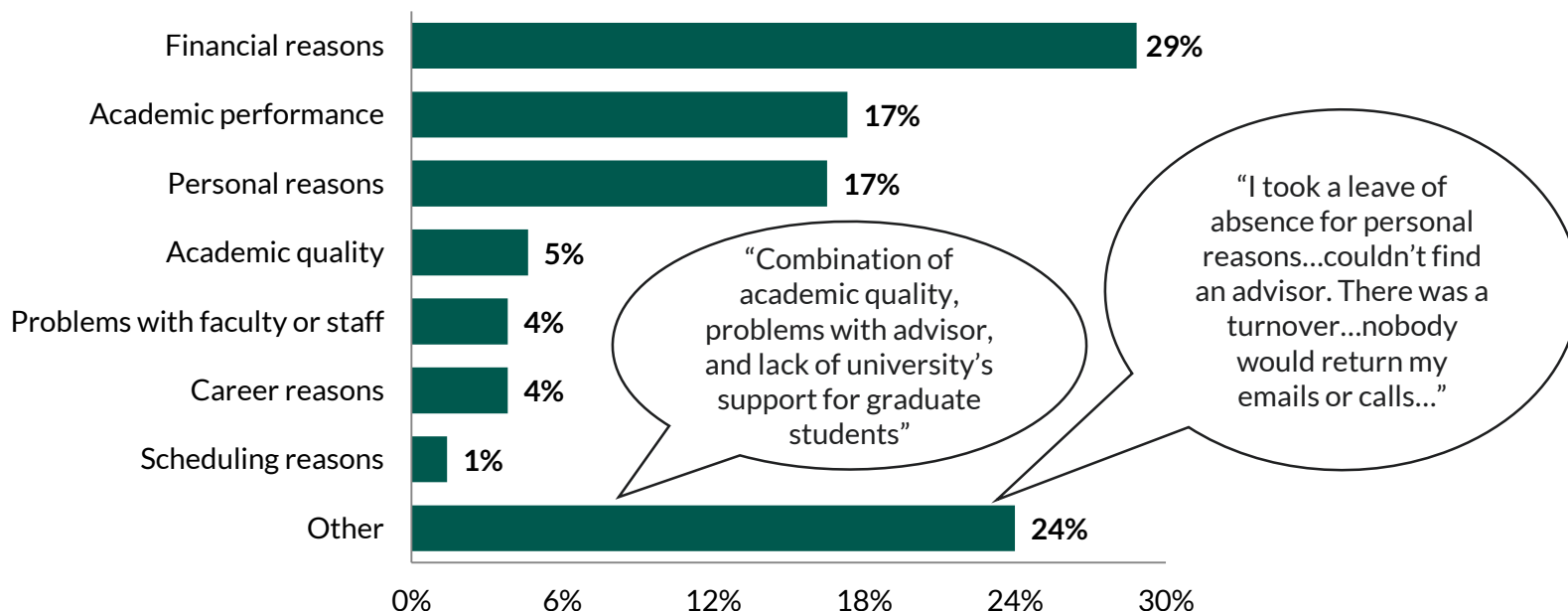
REASONS FOR LEAVING

KEY FINDINGS: PRIMARY REASON FOR STOPPING

Respondents commonly cite financial, academic performance, and personal reasons for stopping their enrollment. When examining results by race, the most commonly cited reason is personal reasons for white respondents (24%), financial reasons for African American respondents (42%), and academic performance for Asian respondents (25%).

Further, although not statistically significant, graduate respondents most commonly selected the “Other” option (31%). These open-ended responses include various, more nuanced reasons for stopping their enrollment.

What was your primary reason for stopping/suspending enrollment at UH? (n=496)

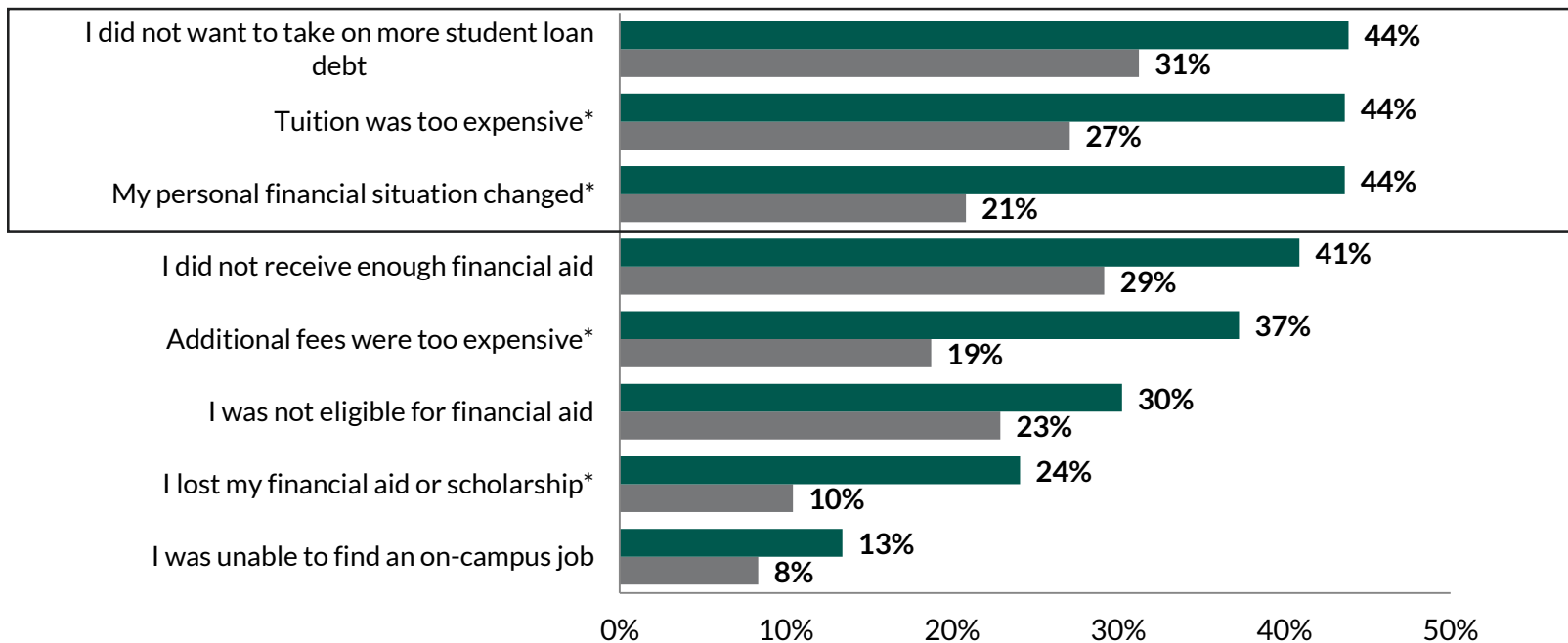


KEY FINDINGS: FINANCIAL FACTORS

The most influential financial factors for stopping enrollment are concern about debt, cost of tuition, and a change in one’s personal financial situation. Further, undergraduate respondents are generally more likely to rate financial factors as “very” or “extremely influential” than graduate respondents.

Please rate how influential each of the following financial factors was on your decision to stop/suspend enrollment at UH.
%Very + Extremely Influential

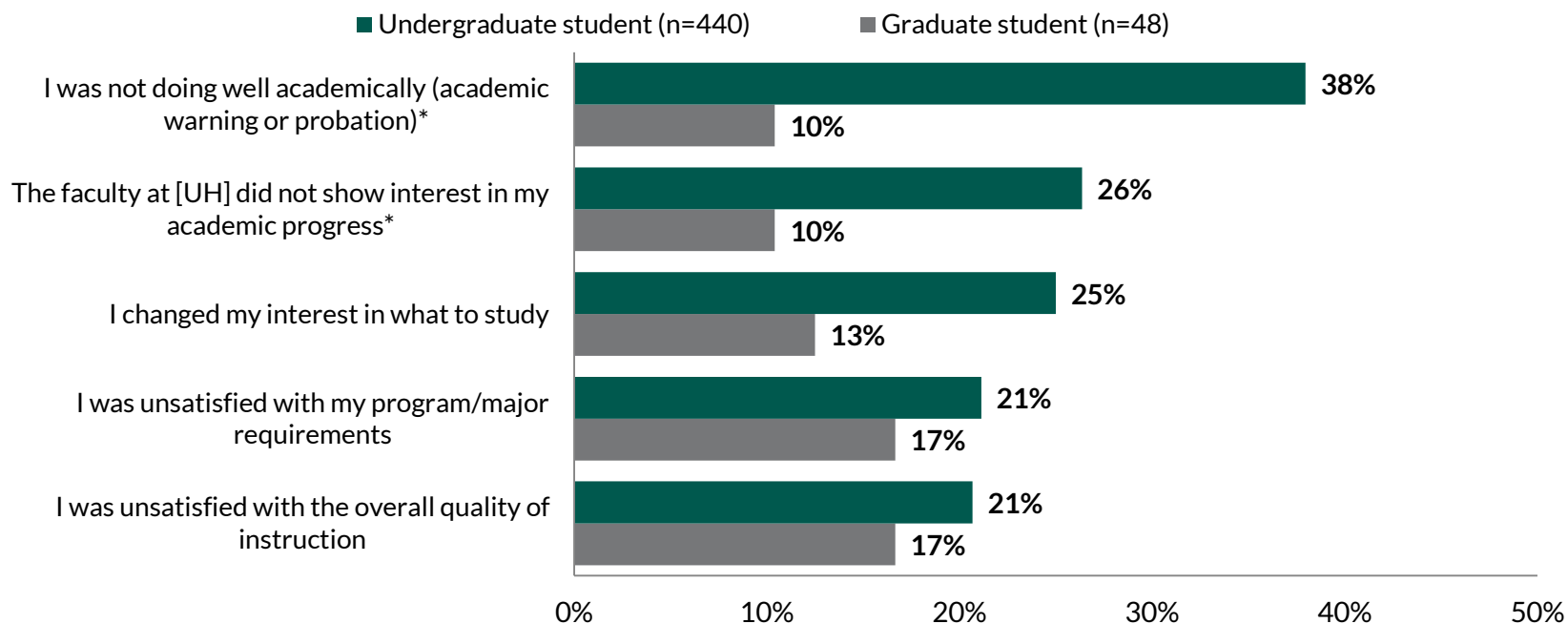
■ Undergraduate student (n=440) ■ Graduate student (n=48)



KEY FINDINGS: ACADEMIC FACTORS

Among undergraduate respondents, the most common academic reasons for stopping enrollment are academic performance (38%), a perceived lack of interest from faculty in their progress (26%), and a changed interest in what to study (25%). Additionally, 48 to 65% of graduate respondents report “not at all influential” to the surveyed academic factors. This finding further supports the complex combination of reasons for why this group of respondents left UH.

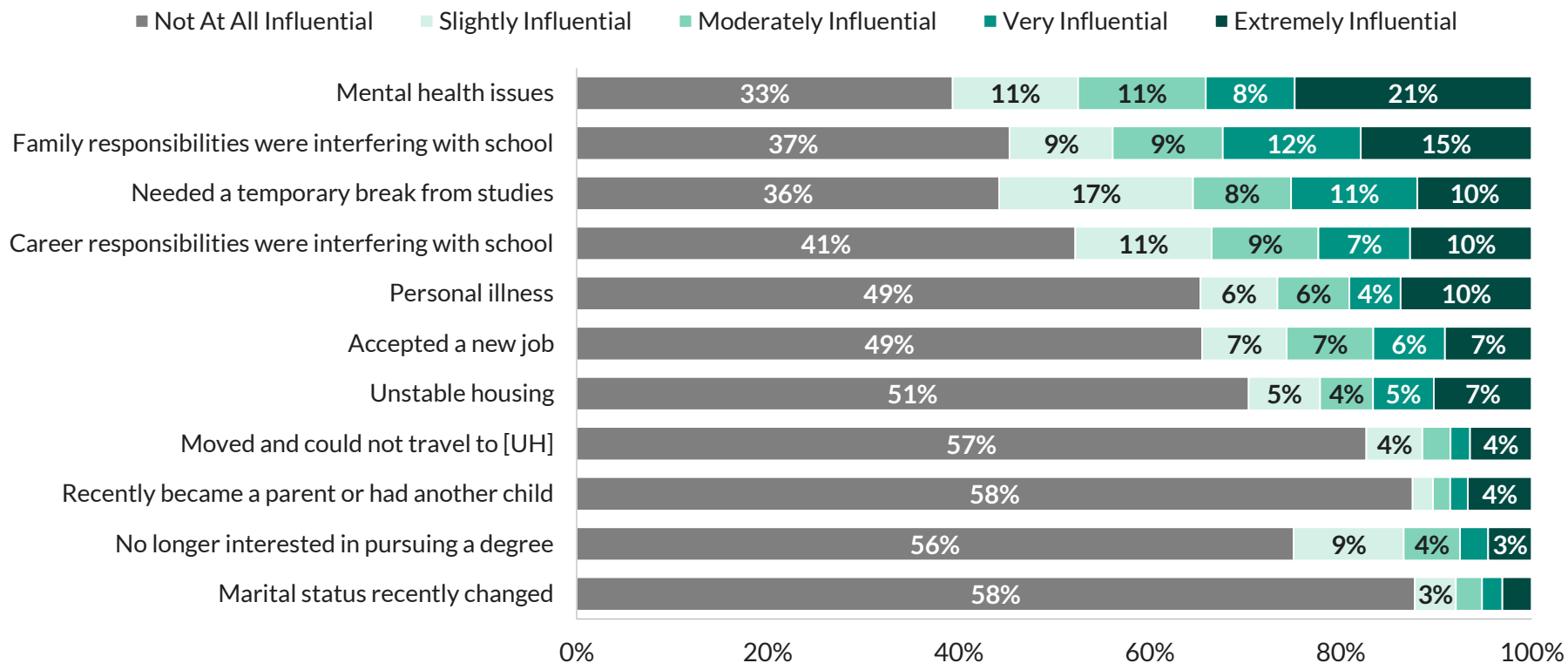
Please rate how influential each of the following academic factors was on your decision to stop/suspend enrollment at UH.
%Very + Extremely Influential



KEY FINDINGS: PERSONAL FACTORS

Mental health issues and family responsibilities are the two most common personal reasons for stopping enrollment. Additionally, female respondents are more likely than male respondents to indicate mental health and family responsibilities to be influential factors in their decision.

Please rate how influential each of the following personal factors was on your decision to stop/suspend enrollment at UH. (n=496)



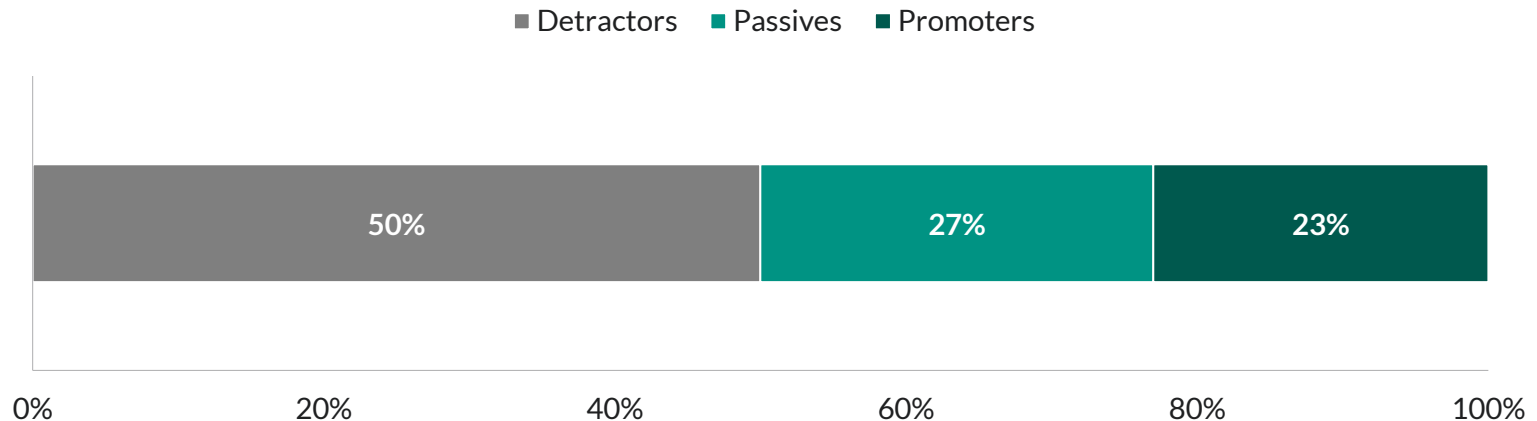
SATISFACTION AND EXPERIENCE WITH UH

KEY FINDINGS: OVERALL PERCEPTION OF UH

Generally, respondents have mixed levels of satisfaction with their overall experience at UH. Specifically, 48% of respondents are satisfied and 39% are dissatisfied.

Additionally, more respondents are detractors (those less likely to recommend UH to others) than promoters (those likely to recommend UH to others). This finding is true across segmentations apart from residency status. Out-of-state respondents (50%) are statistically significantly more likely to recommend/promote UH to other people than in-state (23%) or international respondents (14%).

On a scale from 0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend UH to a friend, family member, or colleague? (n=496)

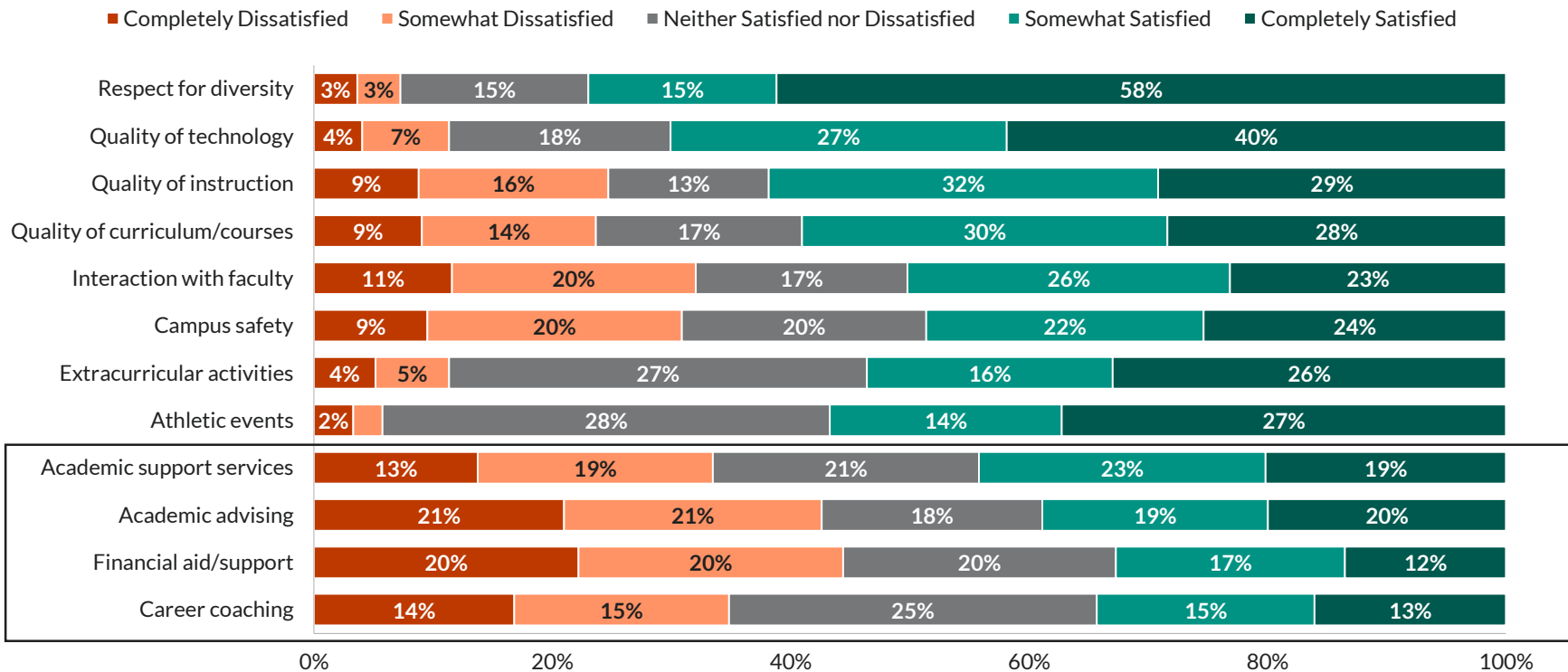


Note: Respondents who rate UH a 9 or 10 are considered "Promoters." Respondents who rate UH a 7 or 8 are considered "Passives." Respondents who rate UH a 6 or below are considered "Detractors."

KEY FINDINGS: SATISFACTION WITH ASPECTS OF UH

In general, respondents are most satisfied with UH's respect for diversity (73% somewhat/completely satisfied), quality of technology (67%), and quality of instruction (61%). That said, academic support services, academic advising, financial aid, and career coaching are potential areas for improvement as respondents reported being least satisfied with these aspects of their UH experience.

Please rate your satisfaction level with the following aspects of UH: (n=496)

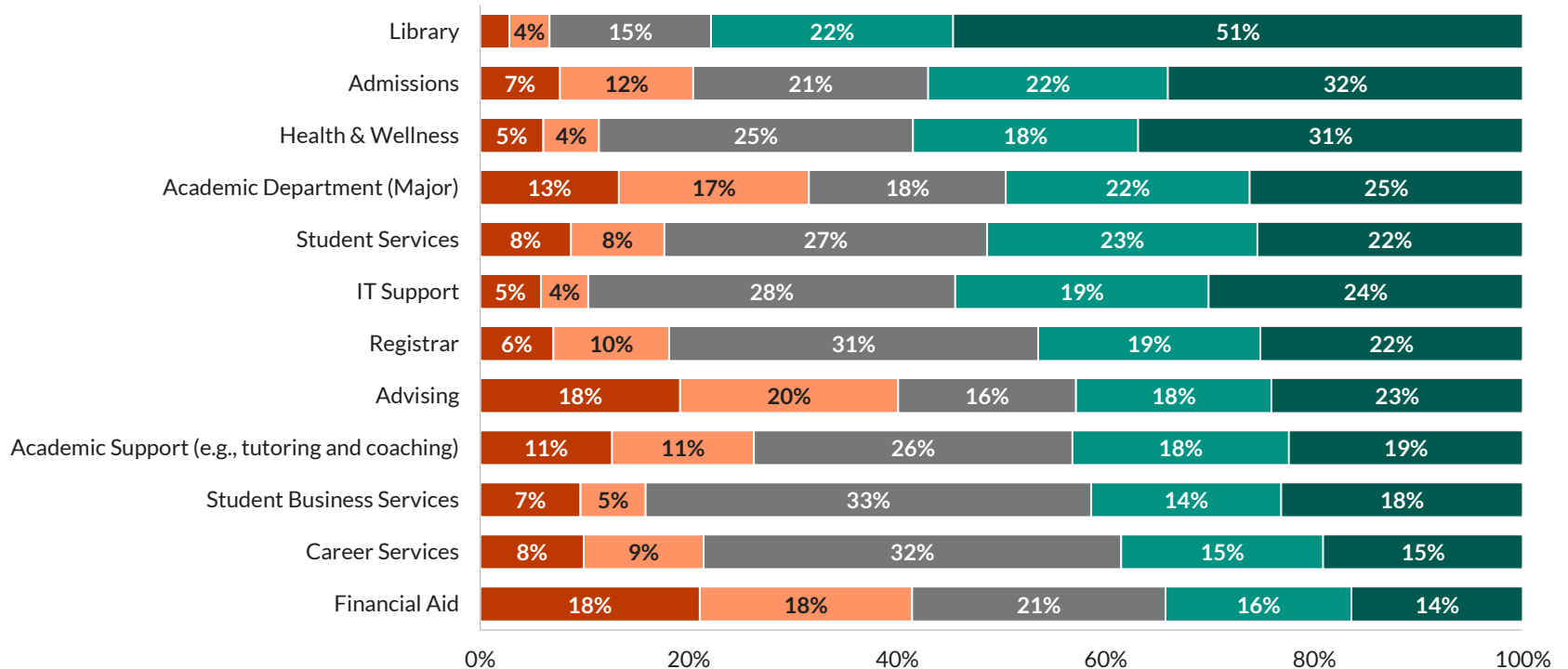


KEY FINDINGS: SATISFACTION WITH UH OFFICES

Respondents indicated the highest levels of satisfaction with the **Library (73% somewhat/completely satisfied)**, **Admissions (54%)**, and **Health & Wellness offices (48%)**. On the other hand, offices that may need more attention or support include the Financial Aid, Career Services, and Advising offices.

Please rate your satisfaction level with the following offices at UH: (n=496)

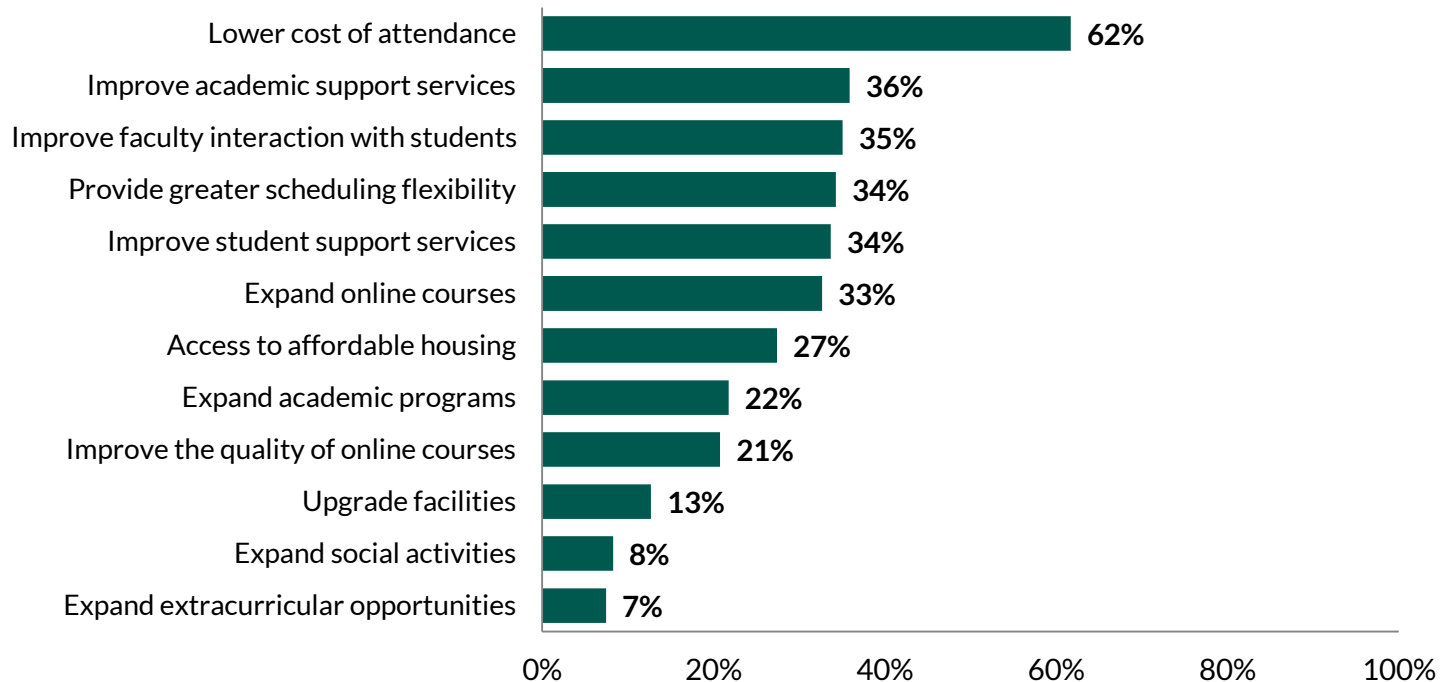
■ Completely Dissatisfied
 ■ Somewhat Dissatisfied
 ■ Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
 ■ Somewhat Satisfied
 ■ Completely Satisfied



KEY FINDINGS: IMPROVING STUDENT EXPERIENCE

More than half of the respondents report that a lower cost of attendance (62%) would improve their experience. Other ways in which UH might improve respondents' experience include improving academic support services (36%), improving faculty interaction with students (35%), providing greater scheduling flexibility (34%), and improving student support services (34%). Overall, this finding is consistent with previous findings on respondents' reasons for stopping enrollment and satisfaction with UH offices.

How could UH have improved your student experience? Please select all that apply. (n=496)



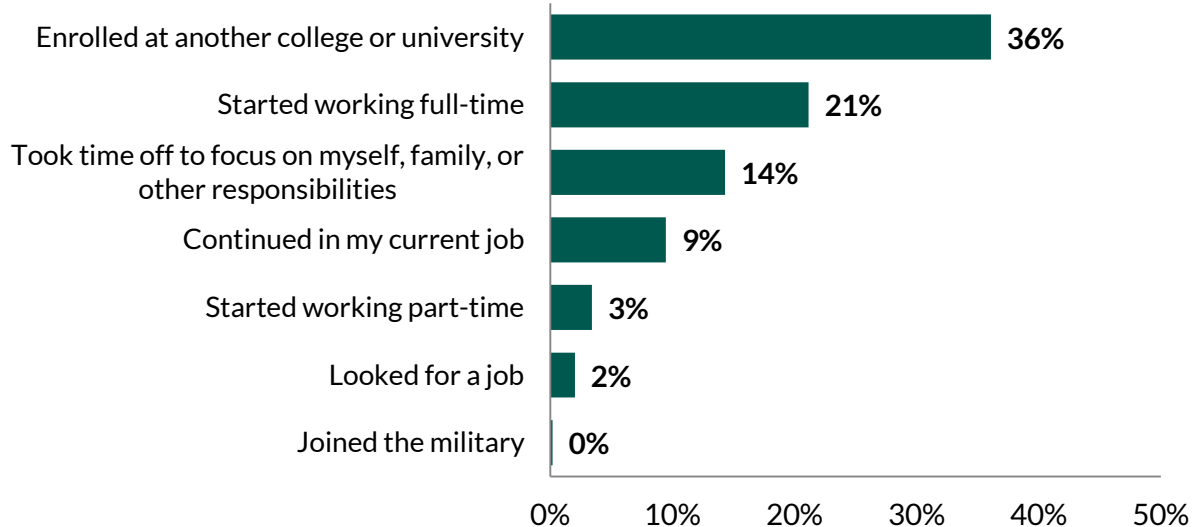
PLAN AFTER LEAVING

KEY FINDINGS: ACTIONS AFTER LEAVING

After leaving UH, respondents typically enrolled at another institution (36%) or started working full-time (21%).

Respondents have varying plans regarding enrolling in another institution in the near future. Graduate respondents are statistically more likely to report no plans to enroll than undergraduate respondents (40% vs. 23%), first generation respondents are more likely to report not being sure about future enrollment than non-first generation respondents (35% vs. 17%), and Hispanic respondents are more likely to report not being sure about future enrollment than White and African American respondents (37% vs. 23%, vs. 18%).

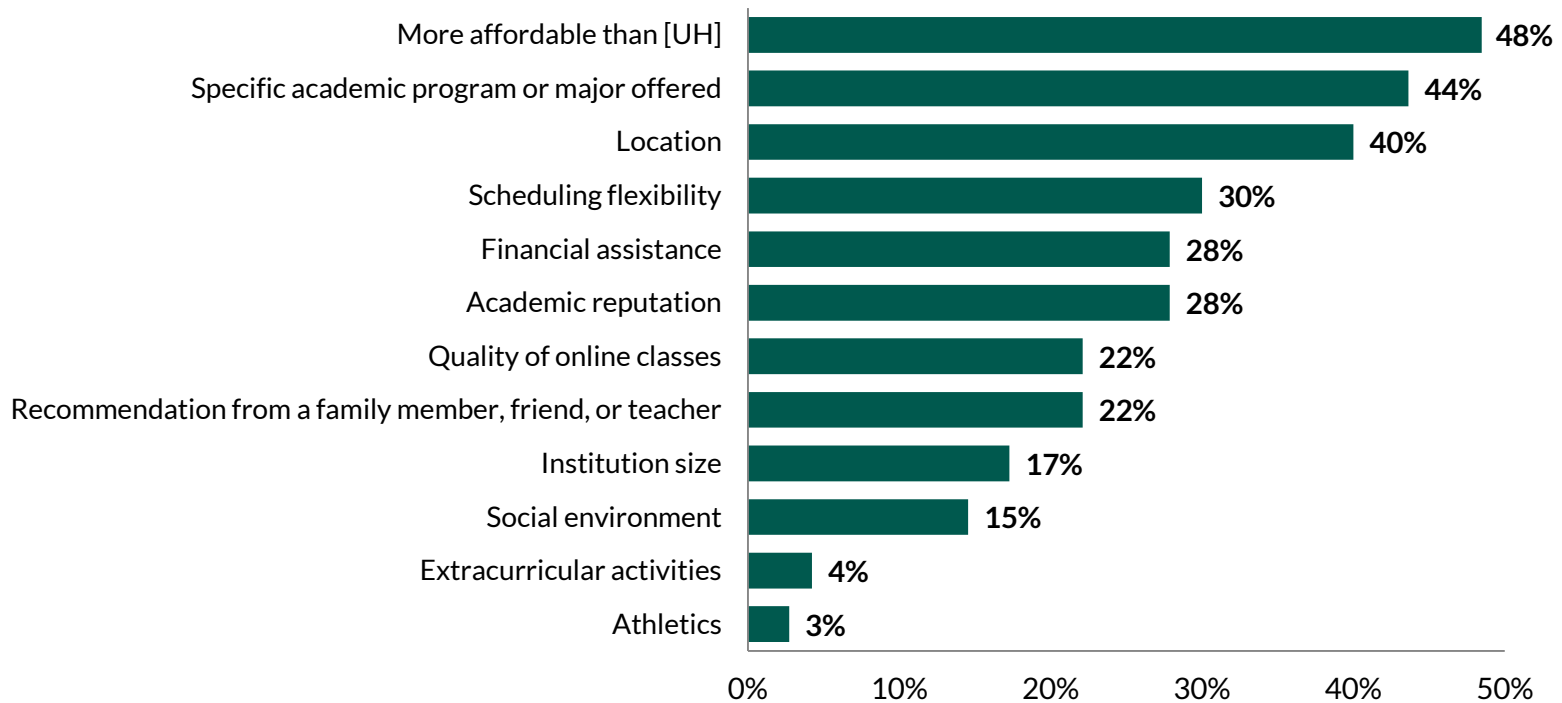
Which of the following best describes what you did after leaving UH? (n=496)



KEY FINDINGS: FACTORS IN CHOOSING OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Top factors in choosing to enroll in other institutions include affordability (48%), specific program offering (44%), and location (40%). This finding somewhat aligns with respondents' top original motivations for enrolling at UH.

What factors influenced you to choose that institution? Please select all that apply. (n=330)

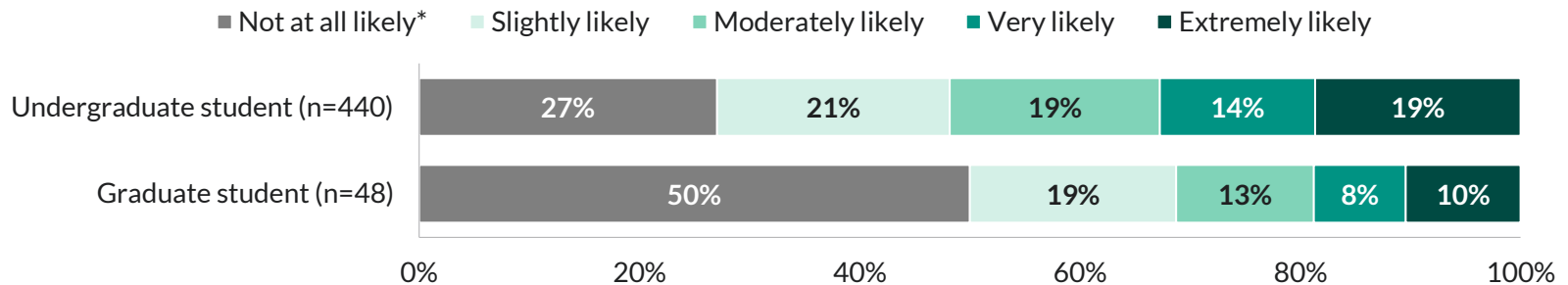


Note: Only respondents who are enrolled or have plans to enrolled in another institution answered this question.

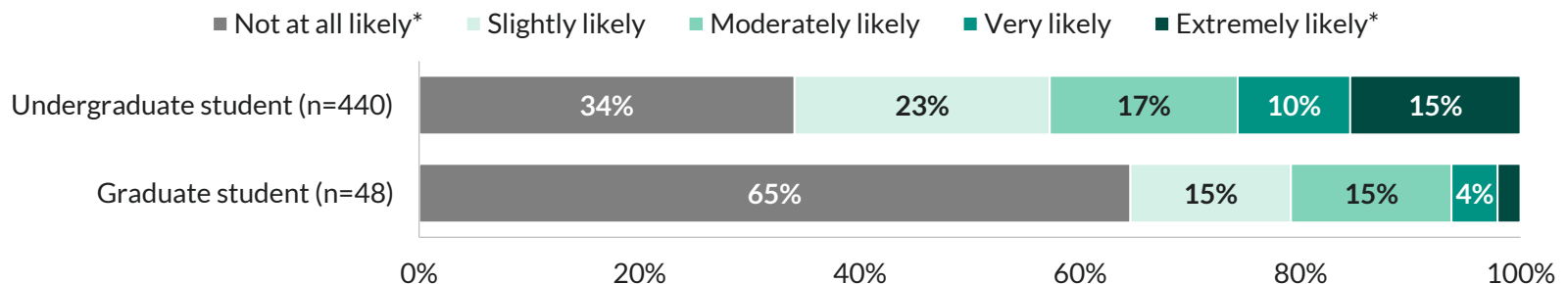
KEY FINDINGS: LIKELIHOOD TO RETURN TO UH

Graduate respondents are statistically more likely than undergraduate respondents to select “not at all likely” regarding their intention to re-enroll at UH. Further, both groups are even less likely to return to UH now than when they decided to stop/suspend their enrollment. If respondents do return, they are more likely to enroll full-time than part-time (53% vs. 47%) and in the same academic program than a different program (60% vs. 40%).

When you made your decision to stop/suspend your enrollment at UH, how likely did you think it would be that you would resume enrollment at UH in the future?



How likely is it now that you will return to UH to continue your studies?

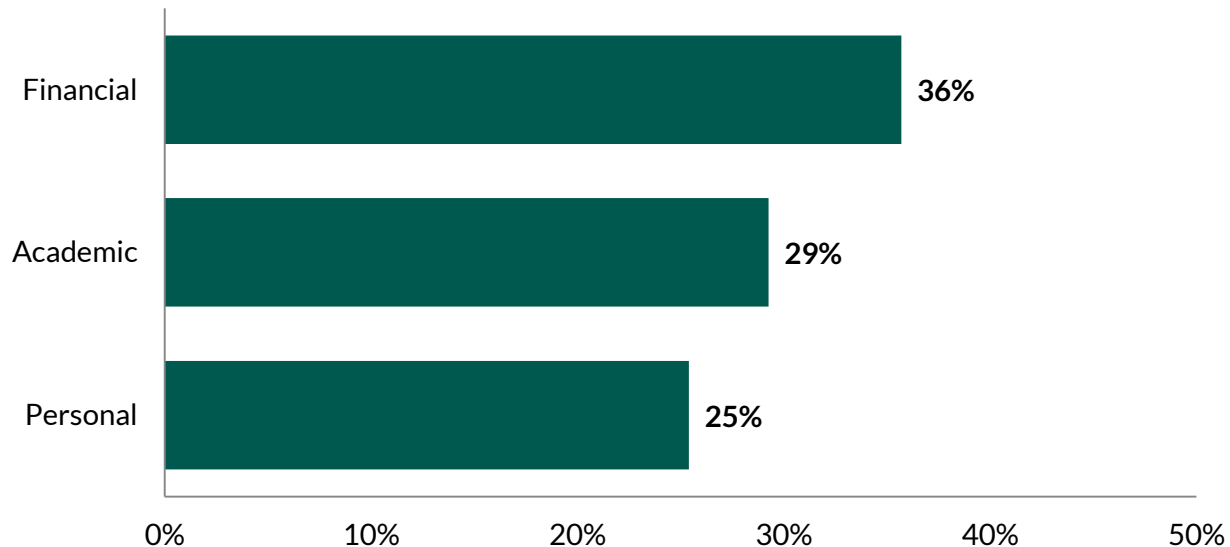


KEY FINDINGS: FACTORS INFLUENCING RE-ENROLLMENT

Most often, respondents report financial factors as the primary factor influencing their likelihood to re-enroll at UH. This finding is particularly salient for transfer and first-generation students.

Further, factors driving likelihood to re-enroll vary by race. For Hispanic, African American, and international respondents, the most common primary factor is financial. For white and Asian respondents, the most common primary factor is academic reasons. Taken together, this finding suggests that dropped students from different racial groups employ different decision-making process when considering re-enrollment.

What is the primary factor that is likely to influence your decision to re-enroll at UH? (n=311)



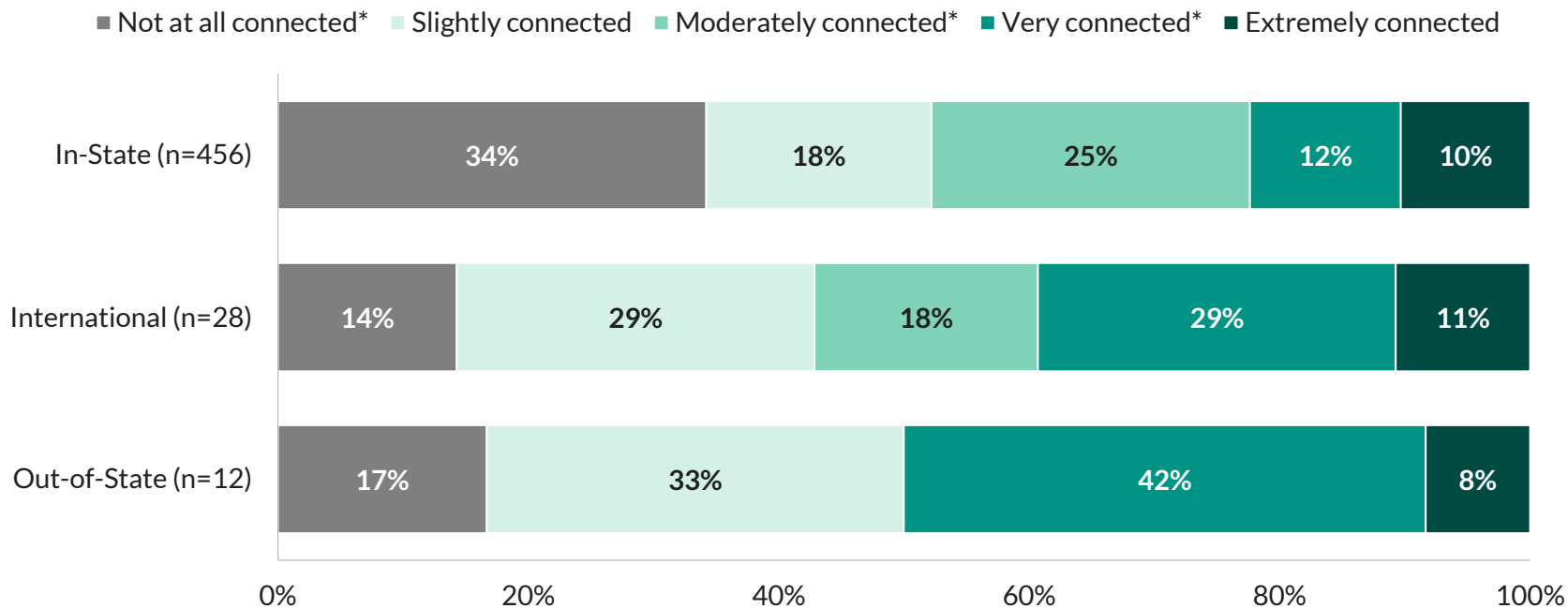
Note: Only respondents who indicated a likeliness to re-enroll at UH answered this question.

CONNECTION TO UH AND COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

KEY FINDINGS: CONNECTEDNESS

In general, respondents did not feel connected with UH while enrolled. Only 24% report feeling very/extremely connected while enrolled, while 33% were not at all connected. Interestingly, out-of-state and international respondents are significantly more likely to report being very/extremely connected with UH while enrolled than in-state respondents.

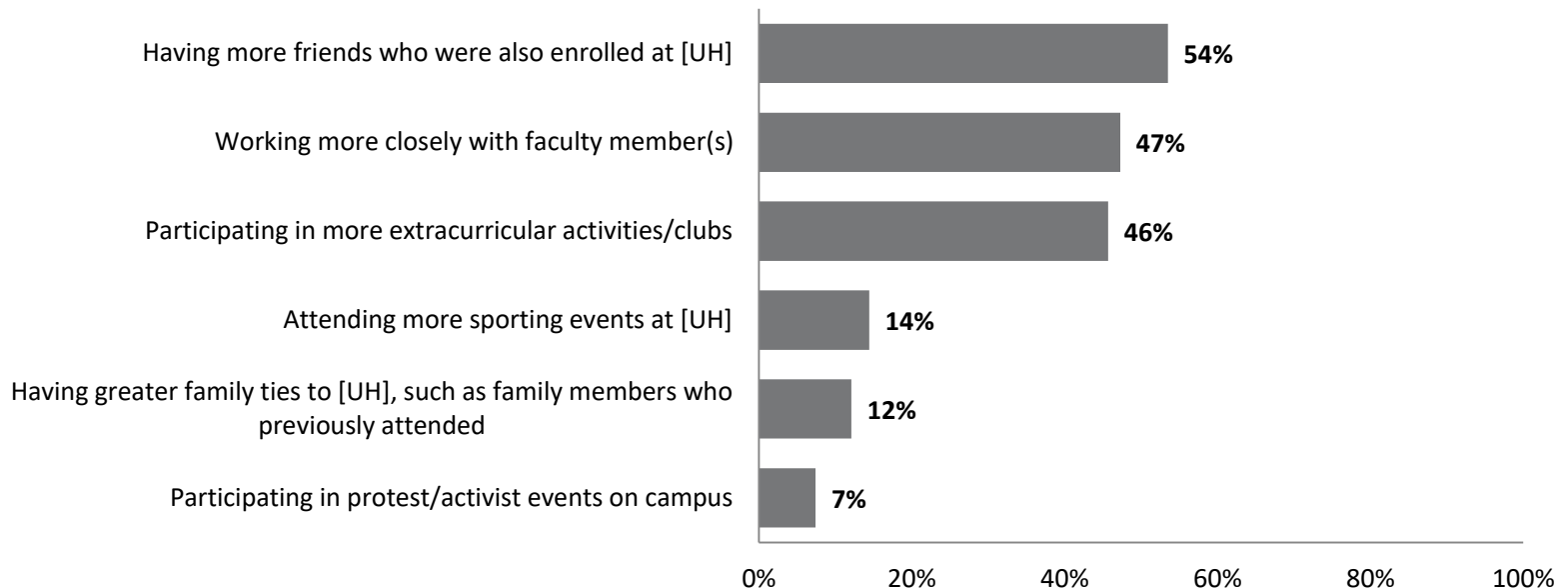
How connected did you feel to UH while enrolled (due to a connection with friends, a faculty member, an extracurricular club, etc.)?



KEY FINDINGS: CONNECTION OPPORTUNITIES

Nearly half of respondents report that having friends, working more closely with faculty members, and participating in more extracurricular activities would have helped them feel more connected to UH. UH should consider ways to promote connections among students and extracurricular activities (e.g., an extended freshman orientation, fairs for club and extracurricular activity recruitment). UH should also consider ways to proactively foster connections between students and faculty (e.g., encourage student participation in research laboratories).

What would have helped you to feel more connected to UH? Please select all that apply. (n=256)



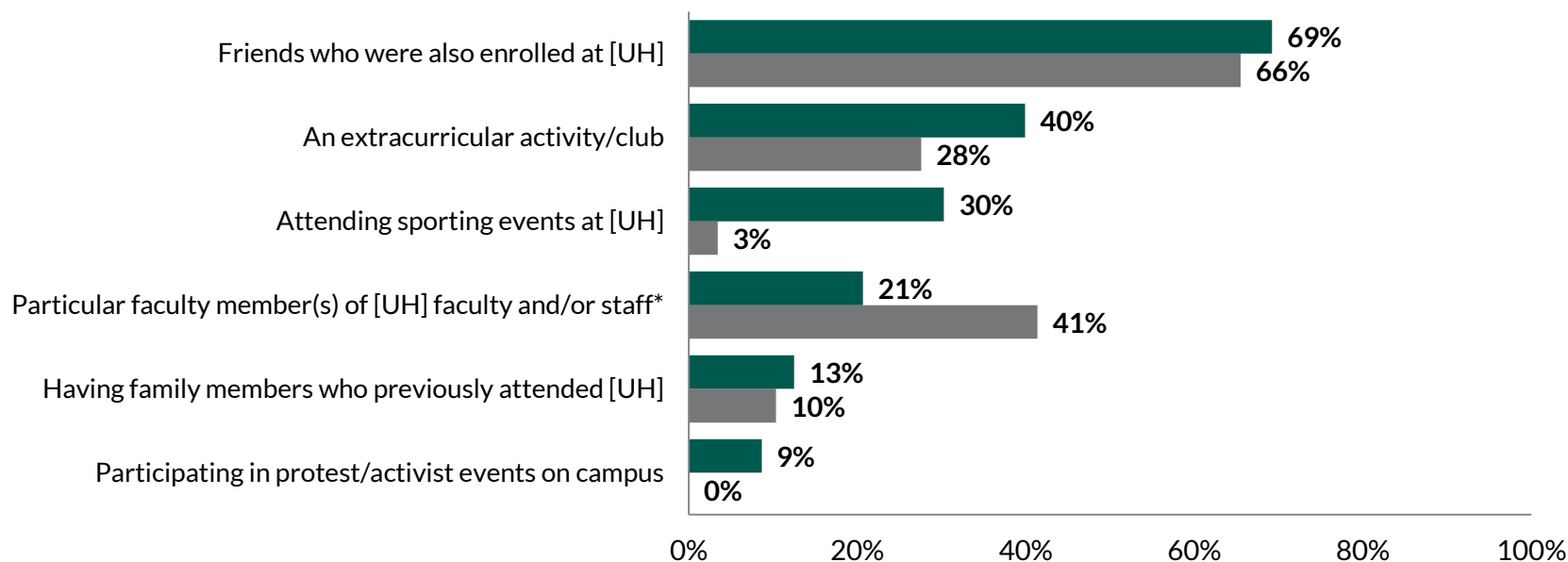
Note: Only respondents who were not at all or slightly connected to UH answered this question.

KEY FINDINGS: CONNECTION AID

Respondents report that having friends who also enrolled at UH helped them feel connected to the institution (69%), along with extracurricular activities (38%), attending sporting events (27%), and particular faculty members or staff (23%). These options are commonly the top selected options across all segmentations. These findings suggest that emphasizing positive social engagement among students and with faculty members should promote feelings of connectedness to UH.

What helped you to feel connected to UH? Please select all that apply.

■ Undergraduate student (n=208) ■ Graduate student (n=29)

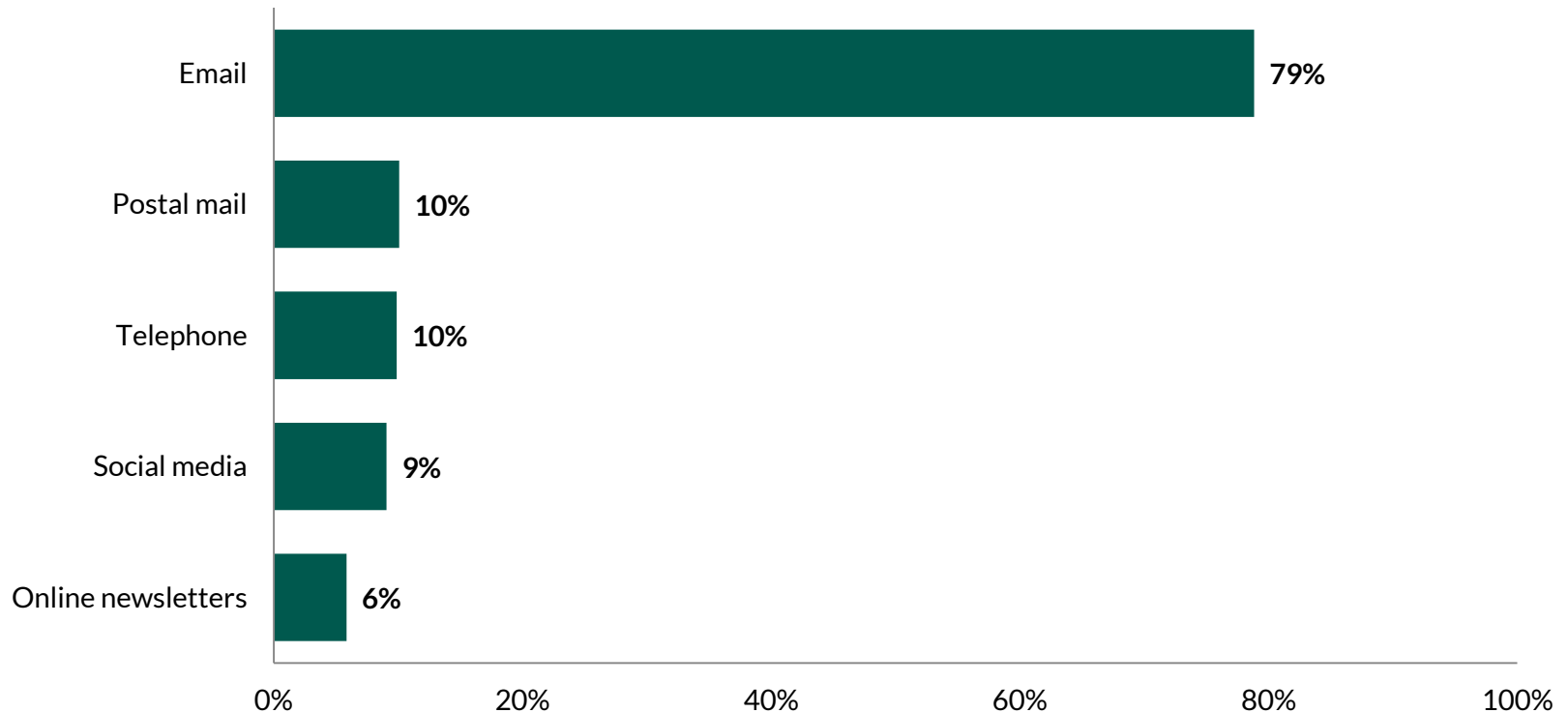


Note: Only respondents who were moderately/very/extremely connected to UH answered this question.

KEY FINDINGS: PREFERRED COMMUNICATION CHANNEL

Respondents prefer email for receiving communication from higher education institutions. Moreover, for those that prefer social media, most (56%) prefer Instagram.

In which of the following ways would you prefer to receive communication from higher education institutions? Please select all that apply. (n=496)



RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Gender (n=496)

| | |
|--------|-----|
| Female | 56% |
| Male | 44% |

First Generation Status (n=496)

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Yes | 55% |
| No | 42% |
| Prefer not to respond | 3% |

Full-Time/Part-Time Status (n=496)

| | |
|-----------|-----|
| Full-time | 63% |
| Part-time | 37% |

Residency Status (n=496)

| | |
|---------------|-----|
| In-State | 92% |
| Out-of-State | 2% |
| International | 6% |

Highest Level of Education (n=496)

| | |
|--|-----|
| Some high school | 11% |
| High school diploma | 17% |
| Some college | 20% |
| 2-year degree | 6% |
| 4-year degree | 24% |
| Professional degree (e.g., MD, JD, DVM, DDS) | 13% |
| Doctorate (e.g., PhD, EdD) | 4% |
| Prefer not to respond | 6% |

Annual Household Income (n=496)

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| \$0 to \$24,999 | 21% |
| \$25,000 to \$49,999 | 27% |
| \$50,000 to \$74,999 | 13% |
| \$75,000 to \$99,999 | 9% |
| \$100,000 to \$124,999 | 6% |
| \$125,000 to \$149,999 | 3% |
| \$150,000 or above | 6% |
| Prefer not to respond | 16% |

Race/Ethnicity (n=496)

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Hispanic | 34% |
| White | 27% |
| African American | 17% |
| Asian | 13% |
| American Indian | <1% |
| International | 6% |
| Multiracial | 2% |
| Unknown | 1% |



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