



# 2022 DROPPED STUDENT SURVEY

Prepared for Southwestern College

August 2022

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# INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

## OVERVIEW

### KEY OBJECTIVES

- Understand why students choose to leave Southwestern College, and their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the college.
- Identify characteristics of the educational/engagement experience for students that can be altered to better meet students' needs.
- Assess the effectiveness of existing resources in assisting student persistence and identify opportunities for improvement.

### SURVEY ADMINISTRATION & SURVEY SAMPLE

- The survey was administered online in July-August 2022 using the Qualtrics platform with distribution via text message and email.
- The analysis includes a total of 834 respondents following data cleaning.
- Respondents are segmented by reason for dropping, program enrolled in while at Southwestern College, race/ethnicity, traditional vs. older adult students (up to 24 vs. 25+), first-generation status, and drop year (pre-COVID vs. during COVID).

### RESPONDENT QUALIFICATIONS

- Respondents have previously enrolled at Southwestern College.
- Respondents have withdrawn from Southwestern College and are not currently enrolled.

# INTRODUCTION

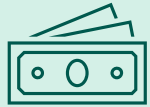
# METHODOLOGY

- 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, segmented, and verbatim results, please consult 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 often excluded from the figures and analysis in order to focus on respondents who did express an opinion.
- Percentages may sum to over 100% for questions where respondents could select more than one answer option.
- Data labels for values less than 5% may be removed from some figures to improve legibility.
- Question text and answer options marked with † are truncated for clarity and brevity.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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Based on analysis of this survey, Hanover recommends that Southwestern Community College:



- **Examine financial aid distribution and opportunities to better meet the financial needs of students while exploring other opportunities to lower costs.** As the top area of improvement mentioned by students was additional financial support, this area of concern is essential in increasing student persistence, particularly among students that were not able to continue at the college, even with the desire to do so. This group indicated at significantly higher that they dropped out because that they did not want to take on more student loan and did not receive enough financial aid. These students also expressed a high need for additional financial aid/grants if they were to re-enroll at Southwestern College.



- **Provide greater support for students by improving the quality and access to departments that are not adequately meeting students' needs.** While the majority of Southwestern College students reported feeling prepared for success and a high degree of satisfaction with Southwestern College, respondents indicated low levels of satisfaction with some departments, and the second highest cited area of improvement of student experience was an improvement in student support services. Departments that were described as having the lowest levels of satisfaction include Career Services, the Disability Support Services, EOPS/CalWORKs, Transfer Center, and learning communities. Students also indicated that access and quality of academic counseling and advising were among the top reasons for leaving Southwestern College, and that program mapping would be needed if they were to re-enroll at the college, and so investment in these areas may be beneficial as well.



- **Adjust future course offerings and schedules to better meet students' needs. This includes increasing the number of online course offerings, which provide increased scheduling flexibility for students.** As three of the top five areas of improvement related to online course offerings, it is important that students are able to enroll in their necessary coursework as it fits their schedule. Since respondents indicated that they preferred asynchronous courses, and these courses provide the greatest scheduling flexibility to students, we recommend that Southwestern College prioritize the inclusion of more asynchronous courses to meet student needs.

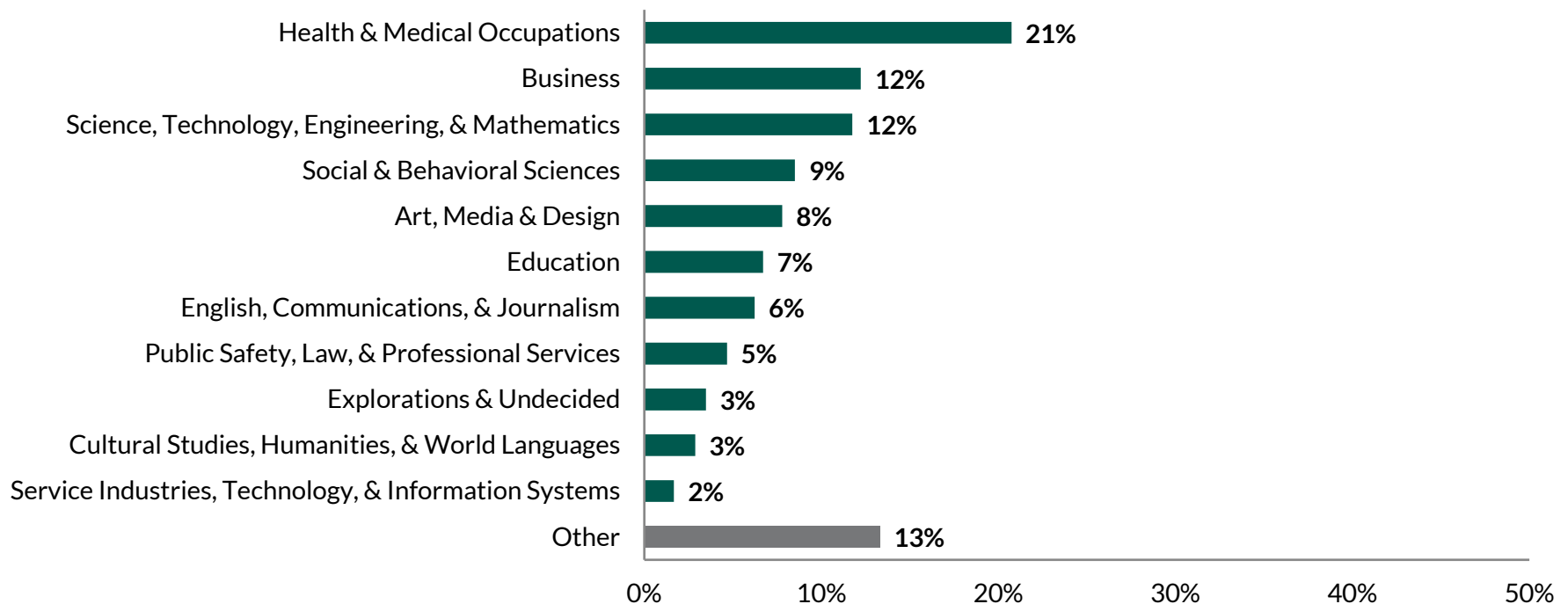
# KEY FINDINGS



# RESPONDENT BACKGROUND (1/2)

- The most represented major among surveyed dropped students is Health & Medical Occupations, which was the primary field of study for 21% of respondents. The next two majors by percentage were Business and STEM, with 12% of respondents primarily studying each.
  - Significantly, more respondents who transferred to another two-year institution (30%) than who transferred to a four-year institution (17%) studied Health & Medical Occupations.

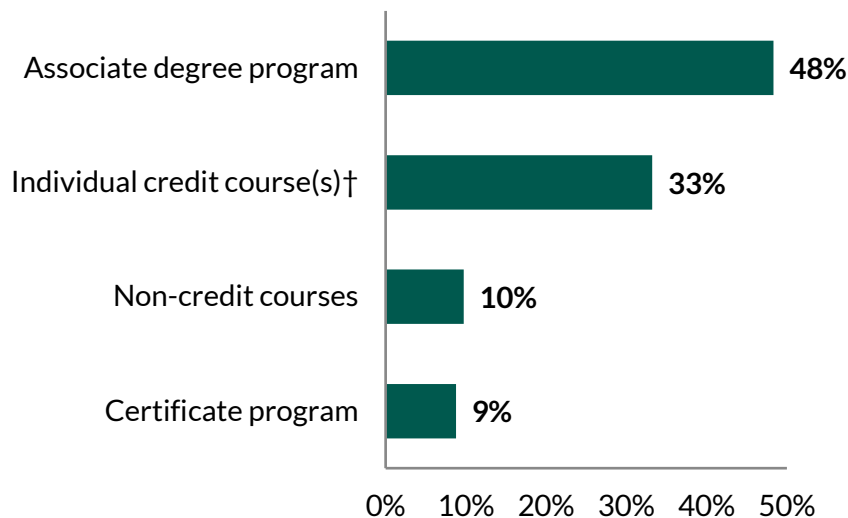
**What was your primary field of study? Please choose the area under which your major would best fit. (n=834)**



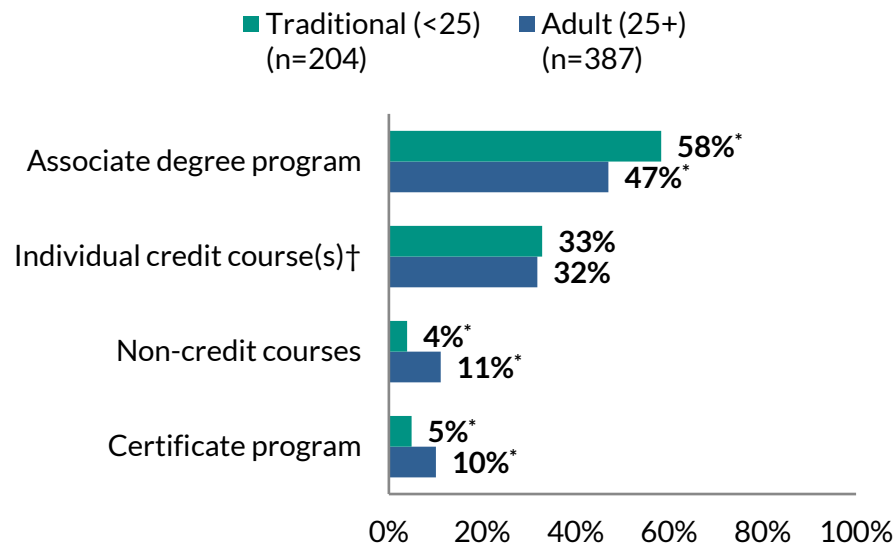
# RESPONDENT BACKGROUND (2/2)

- The greatest percentage of respondents (48%) enrolled in Associate degree programs at Southwestern College. Respondents taking individual credit course(s) were the second largest contingency of students, making up 33% of the sample.
  - Student age had a significant impact on program choice, as traditional students (Age < 25) (58%) enrolled in Associate degree programs at higher rates than students 25 or older (47%), and at lower rates in non-credit courses and certificate programs compared to students 25 or older.
  - Students who dropped out during the pandemic are significantly more likely to have been taking individual courses (37%) than those who dropped out prior to the pandemic (29%).

Which of the following best describes the program in which you were enrolled while at Southwestern College? (n=834)



Which of the following best describes the program in which you were enrolled while at Southwestern College?

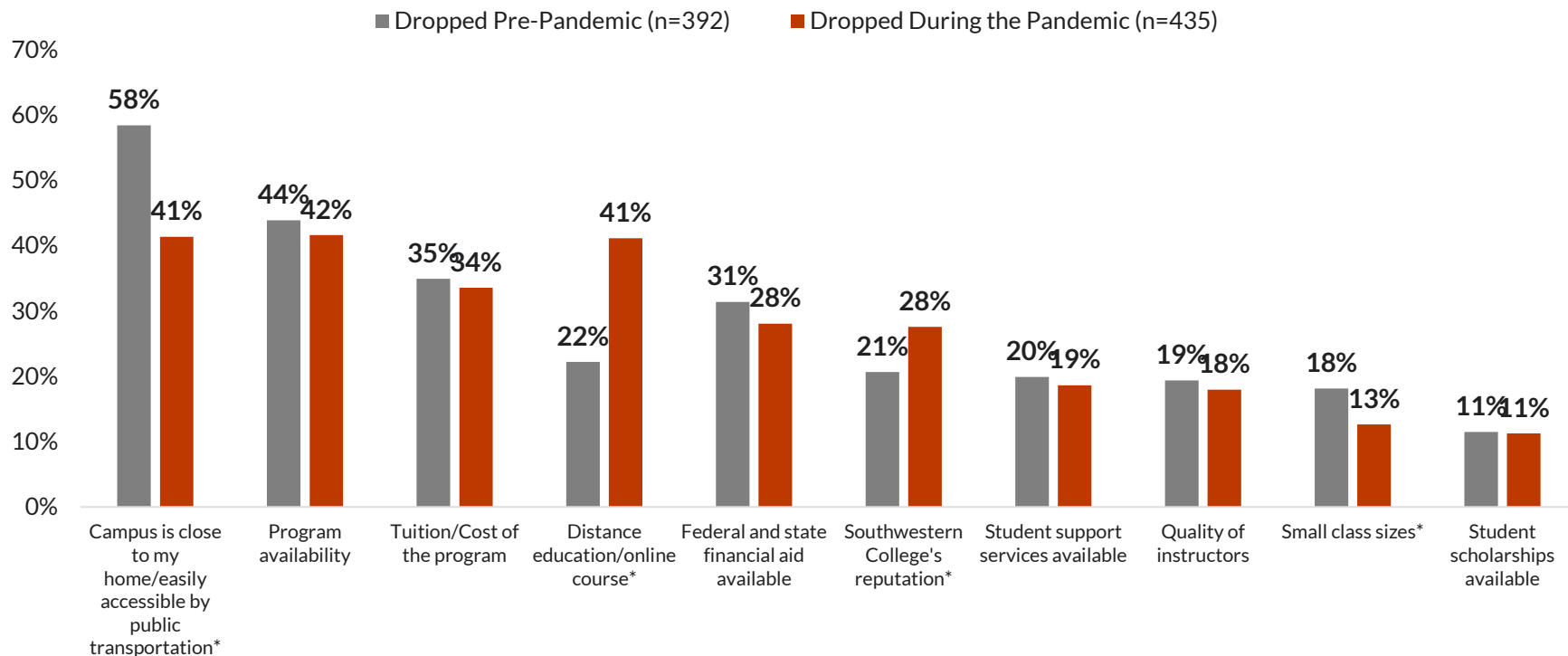


N.b.: Question text and answer options marked with † are truncated for clarity and brevity.  
 N.b.: Options with a statistically significant difference (95% confidence level) between groups are noted with an asterisk (\*).

# MOTIVATIONS FOR ENROLLMENT

- Significantly more students that dropped during Covid (41%) were motivated to enroll because of distance education/online courses and Southwestern College's reputation (28%), compared to those that dropped pre-Covid (22% and 21%, respectively). Meanwhile, significantly fewer students that dropped during Covid were motivated to enroll because of the closeness of campus (41% vs. 58%) and small class sizes (13% vs. 18%).

Originally, what motivated you to enroll at Southwestern College? *Please select all that apply.*

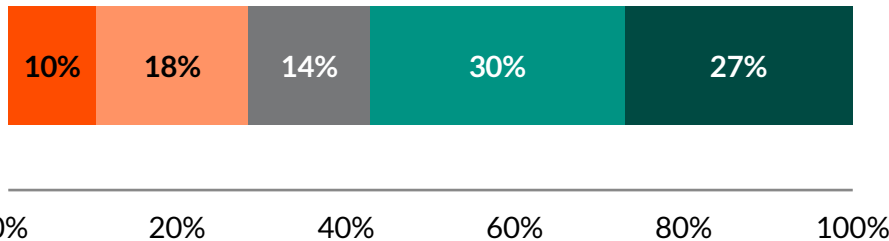


# SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE EXPERIENCE (1/4)

- Only a little more than half of respondents report that they were prepared to succeed in classes as Southwestern College when they first enrolled, though more indicate that they were satisfied with their experience at the institution. 57% of respondents indicate that they felt somewhat or very prepared, while 70% indicate being somewhat or completely satisfied with the institution.
  - Responses to the preparation question differed significantly across a number of segments analyzed in this survey. In terms of preparation, first-generation respondents felt significantly less prepared than their non-first-generation counterparts, traditional students felt less prepared than the older adult respondents, and Hispanic/Latin(o/a/x) and multi-racial respondents felt less prepared than White and Filipino students.

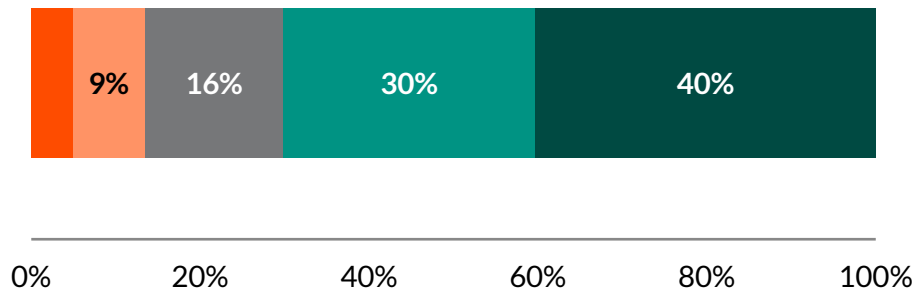
**In your own opinion, how prepared or unprepared were you to succeed in your classes at Southwestern College when you first enrolled? (n=819)**

- Very unprepared
- Somewhat unprepared
- Neither prepared nor unprepared
- Somewhat prepared
- Very prepared



**Please rate your overall level of satisfaction with your experience at Southwestern College. (n=658)**

- Completely dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Completely satisfied

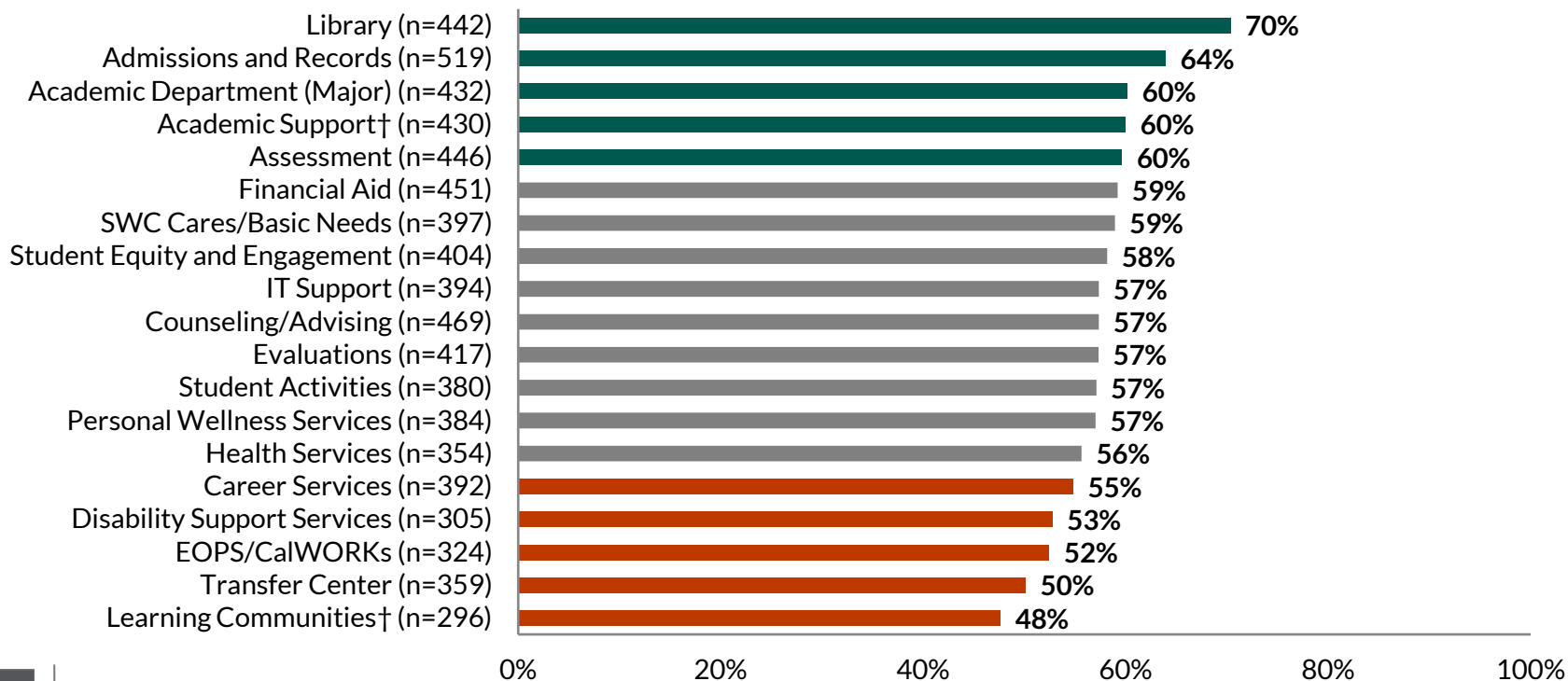


# SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE EXPERIENCE (2/4)

- The offices with the highest level of satisfaction at Southwestern College are: the library (70% very or extremely satisfied), admissions & records (64%), academic department for their major (60%), academic support (60%), and assessment (60%). Offices with room to improve in terms of respondent satisfaction are the learning communities (48%), Transfer Center (50%), EOPS/CalWORKs, Disability Support Services (53%), and Career Services (55%).

Please rate your satisfaction level with the following offices at Southwestern College:

% Very Satisfied + % Extremely Satisfied

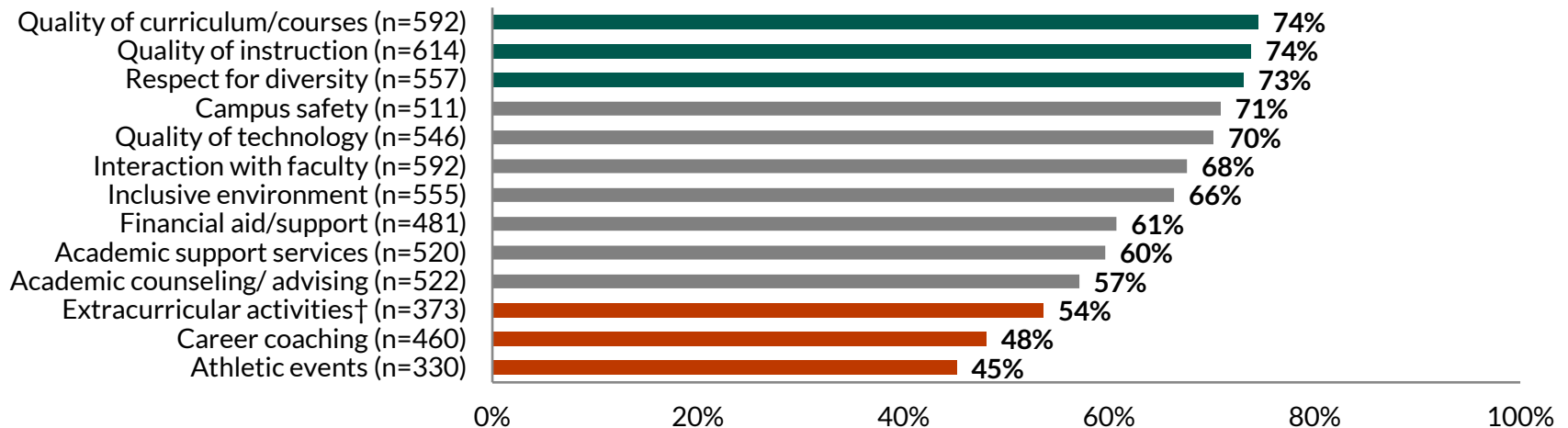


# SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE EXPERIENCE (3/4)

- Respondents are most satisfied with Southwestern College’s academic quality and respect for diversity. When asked about aspects of the college that they are satisfied (or dissatisfied) with, the quality of the curriculum/courses (74% very satisfied or extremely satisfied), the quality of instruction (74%), and respect for diversity (73%) are mentioned as the areas with the highest levels of satisfaction. On the other hand, the extracurricular activities (45%), career coaching (48%), and athletic events (54%) are rated as the aspects with the lowest level of satisfaction.
  - While most respondents are satisfied with the institution’s respect for diversity, open-ended responses suggest that some students that left the college were unhappy with aspects of their treatment on the basis of their race and political beliefs. However, Hispanic/Latin(o/a/x) students reported the highest level of satisfaction for respect for diversity, with 80% responding that they were very or extremely satisfied with this aspect of Southwestern College.

## Please rate your satisfaction level with the following aspects of Southwestern College:

% Very Satisfied + % Extremely Satisfied

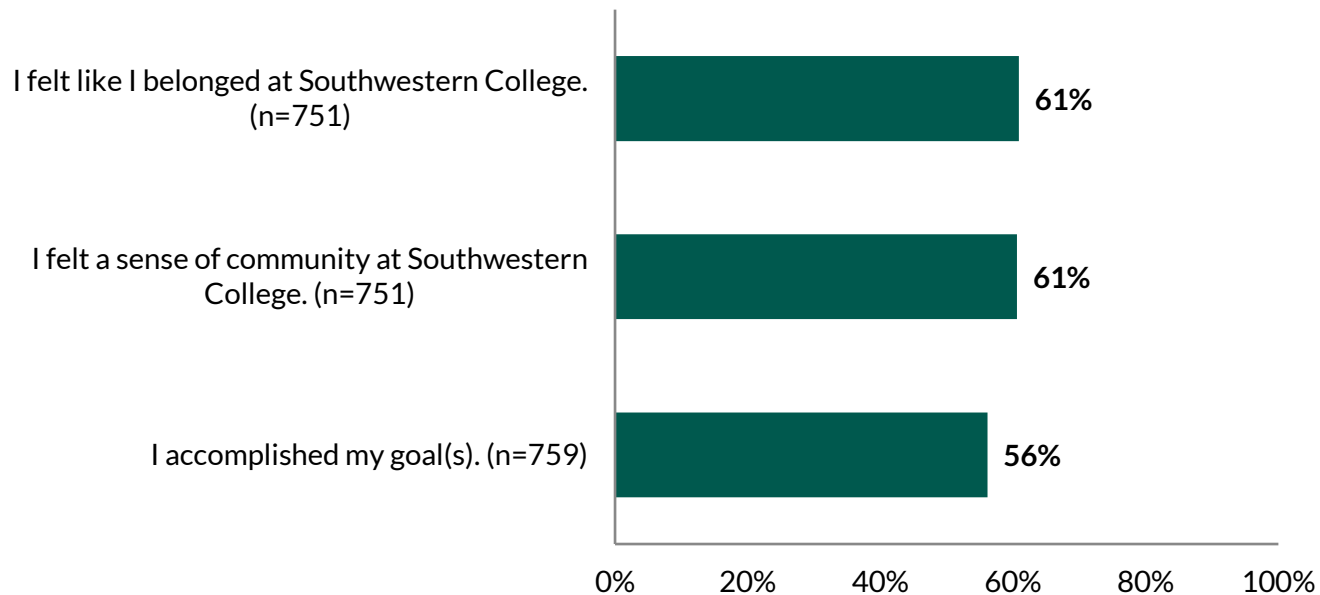


# SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE EXPERIENCE (4/4)

- When asked about their feelings about their time at Southwestern Community College, the majority of respondents felt like they belonged at Southwestern College (61% somewhat or strongly agree), felt a sense of community at Southwestern College (61%), and felt that they accomplished their goal(s) (56%). However, levels of agreement with these statements differed for some groups.
  - Overall, students who transferred agree with all of these statements at higher rates than those who dropped for other reasons, and White students stated that they agree that they accomplished their goals at higher rates than respondents from other racial/ethnic groups.
  - Students who dropped by choice are the least likely somewhat or strongly agree (43%) that they feel like they belonged at Southwestern College.

**Please rate how much you disagree or agree with the following statements about your time at Southwestern College.**

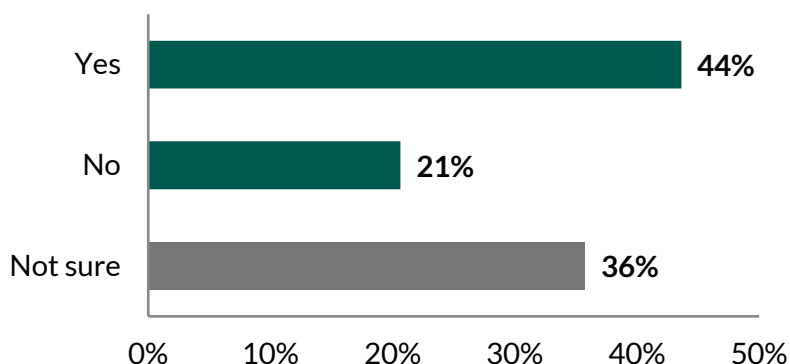
% Somewhat Agree + % Strongly Agree



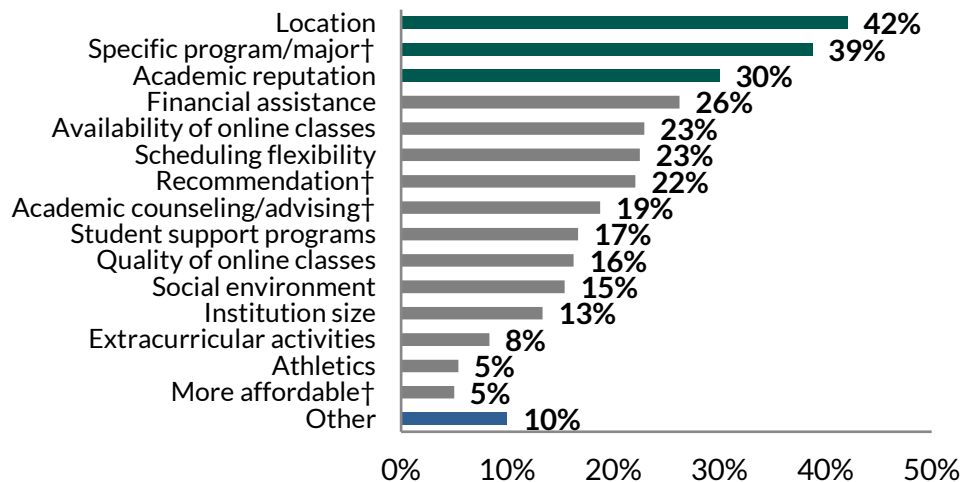
# PLANS FOR FUTURE ENROLLMENT

- Under half of all respondents expressed a desire to return to another college/university in the near future. Of those who had plans to enroll, 47% already knew where they would enroll and 34% indicated that they were very or extremely likely to return to Southwestern College. Of those at least slightly likely to return to Southwestern College, 75% state that they plan on returning on a part-time basis. Other institutions that were commonly cited as potential or current alternatives to Southwestern College include San Diego State University (36), University of California (21 at various campuses), Grossmont College (8), Mesa College (8), and California State University (7). The full list of universities written in by respondents can be found in the data supplement.
  - When choosing an institution to enroll, location is the top factor that attracted respondents to their institution of choice. This is followed by having a specific academic program or major of interest offered (39%), and academic reputation (30%).

**Do you have any plans to enroll in another college or university in the near future? (n=470)**



**What attracted you to that institution? Please select all that apply. (n=240)**

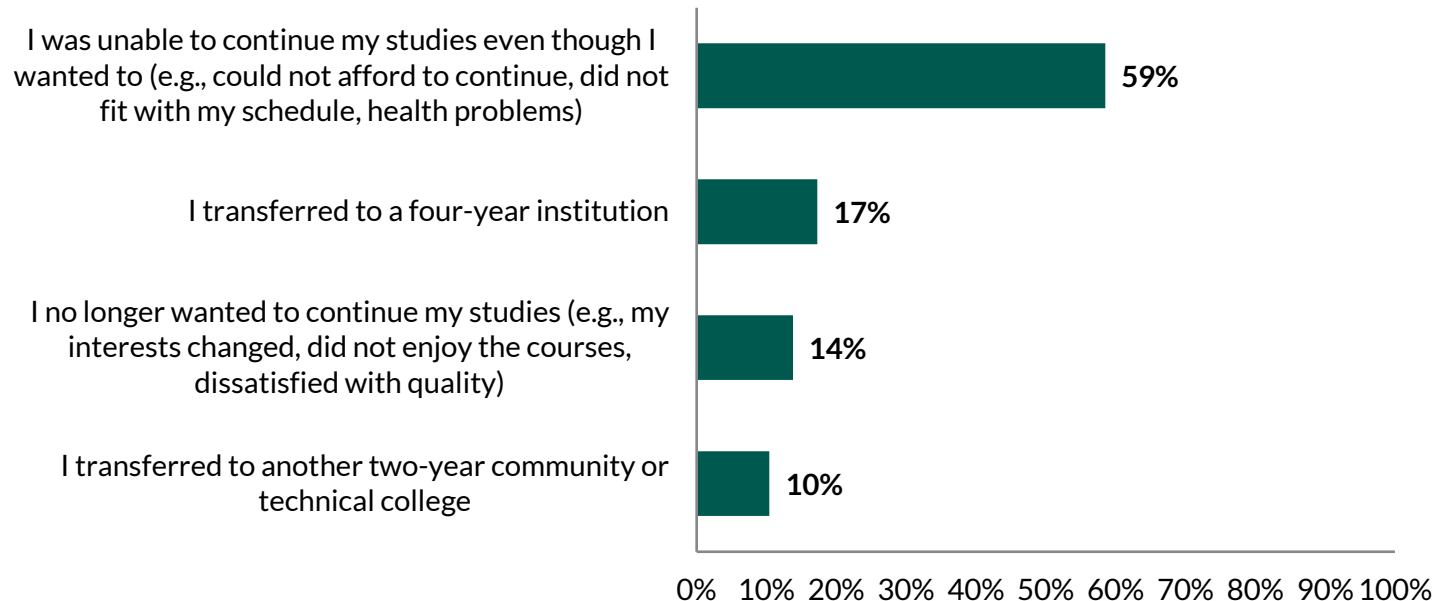




# REASONS FOR LEAVING SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE

- The reason a majority of respondents stopped or suspended studies at Southwestern College was that they were unable to continue their studies due to external factors, even though they wished to continue their studies. Respondents choosing to leave without the ability to do so are often forced to do so due to personal or financial factors, which are explored further later in the analysis. The rest of respondents chose to stop or suspended their studies by choice, either because of a lack of desire to continue for personal reasons (14%), or because they wished to transfer four-year institutions (17%) or two-year institutions (10%) to continue their education elsewhere.
  - Significantly more student who dropped during the pandemic (63%) cited force (unable to continue even though they wanted to) as compared to students who dropped pre-pandemic (53%), and significantly fewer were to transfer to a two-year school (8% vs. 13%).

## Which of the following best describes why you stopped/suspended your studies at Southwestern College? (n=834)



# REASONS FOR LEAVING SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE

- Among those who provided additional details related to leaving Southwestern College, only about 15% cited a negative experience at the college. Other themes among the open-ended responses include the negative impact of the pandemic, needing to deal with personal or family issues, financial concerns, work priorities, and lack of available/flexible scheduling options. Some examples of negative experiences are included below while all verbatim responses are included in the data supplement.

Not able to communicate with counselors to drop classes so now I cannot enroll.

No freedom of speech or thought in predominantly liberal progressive space.

Terrible enrollment system. Wait time is unreasonable. Ineptitude. Went to a different community college

Keep changing the program for signing up for a class. The technical mechanics of signing up is frustrating especially for older students.

So many issues regarding registration and financial aid. It was hard to get answers.

Medical Professional for 39 years. Did not feel that my needs age was given consideration for experience and credit. Felt that they were only interested in new high school grads. I could never schedule even General Courses that worked with my dayshift schedule. Wanted evening's and weekends, and could never get in a class. Was always full.

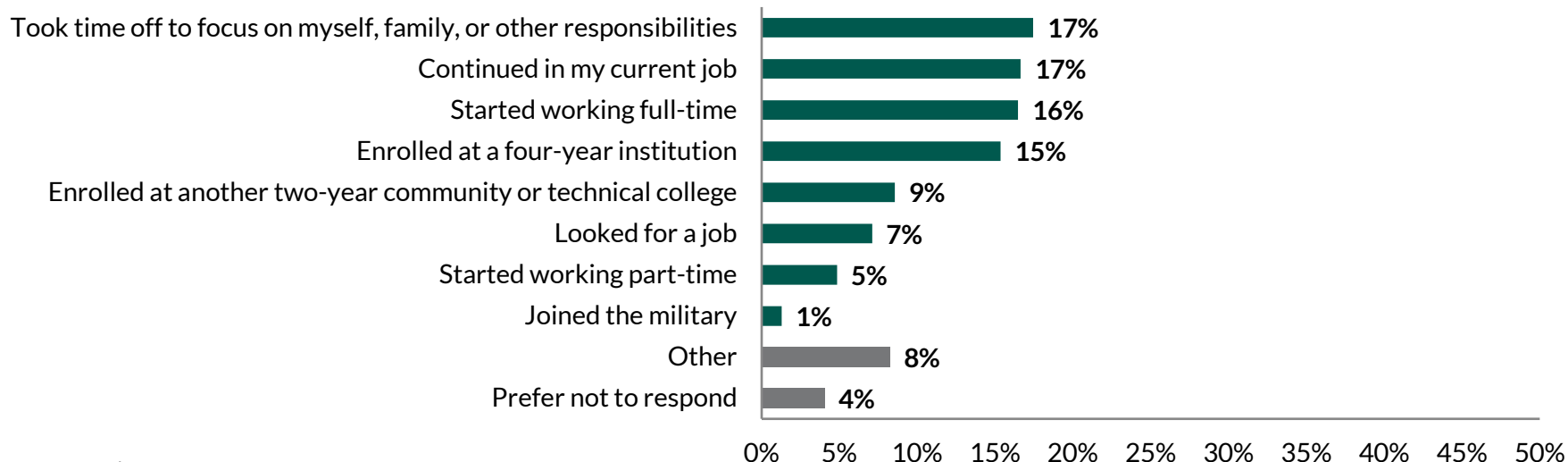
The personal are not trained well to give information or to be supportive, there is lack of interest I really helping students to succeed. In the program I took for child development there is no one to guide you, or to follow up wether you get you degree or not.

One my professors said something racist during class and the dean and other staff of Southwestern College handled it very poorly. There was no follow up in how I was affected by the racist actions of the professor and the incidence was swept under the rug as if it never happened.

# PLANS AFTER SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE

- **The top reasons that respondents left Southwestern College were to:** take time to focus on other responsibilities (17%), to continue to work (17%), to start a new full-time job (16%), and to enroll at other institutions (15% for four-year institutions, and 9% for two-year institutions).
  - Responses differed by group in some cases: There are significant difference between traditional students under 25 years of age and older adult students 25 or older, as traditional students left at higher rates for transfer to a 4-year institution (23% vs. 12%) or to work part-time (9% vs. 3%), and at lower rates to go back to work at an existing job (6% vs. 22%). There are also some differences by race/ethnicity. For example, White respondents continued to work at existing jobs at higher rates (28%) than respondents of all other races/ethnicities.
  - Respondents who dropped during the pandemic are more likely to have taken time off to focus on themselves, family or other responsibilities (21% vs. 14%).

## Which of the following best describes what you did after leaving Southwestern College? (n=619)

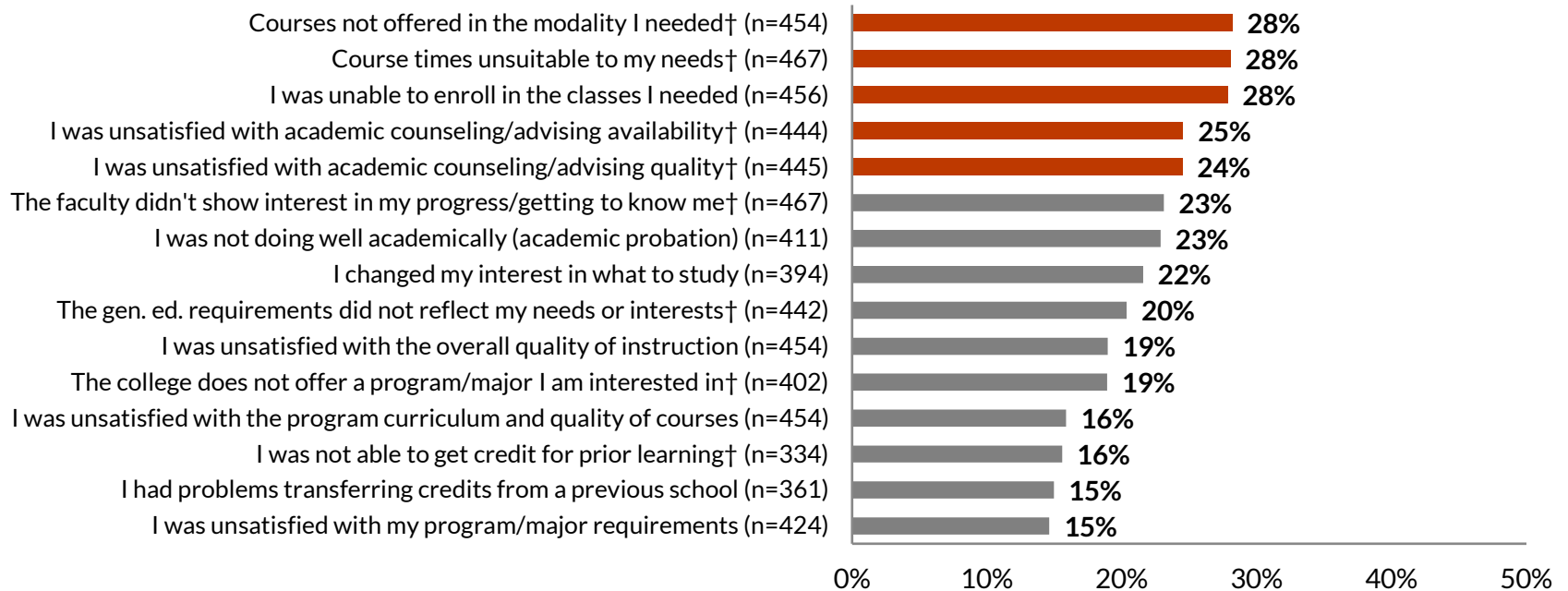


# ACADEMIC FACTORS INFLUENCING PERSISTENCE

- The areas that were most influential in students' decisions around stopping or suspecting their enrollment at Southwest College are related to course offerings/times, and the availability/quality of academic counseling/advising. These findings suggest that these two areas (course schedules and academic counseling) both present opportunities for improvement if the adjustments are made to better meet students' needs
  - Students who dropped during the pandemic are significantly more likely to cite courses not being offered in the modality needed as being very or extremely influential in their decision not to continue (32% vs. 24%).

**Please rate how influential each of the following academic factors was on your decision to stop/suspend enrollment at Southwestern College.**

% Very Influential + % Extremely Influential

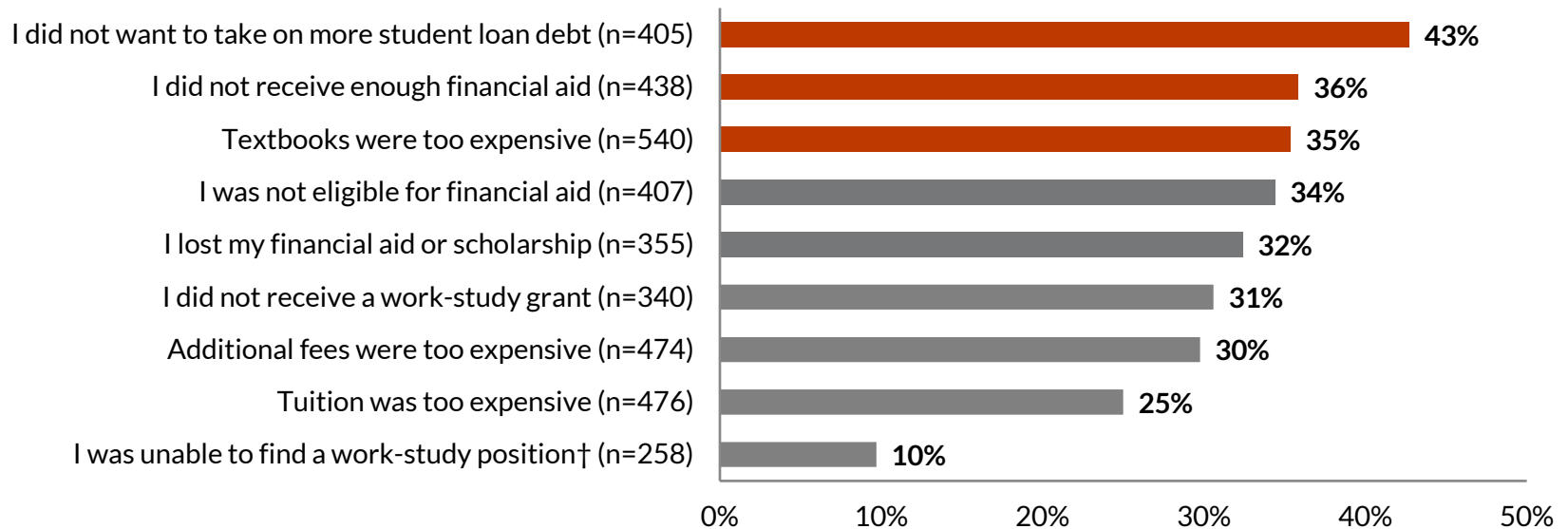


# FINANCIAL FACTORS INFLUENCING PERSISTENCE

- The financial factors that were most influential in respondents' decision to stop/suspend enrollment at Southwestern College include a desire to not take on more student loan debt (rated by 43% of respondents as very or extremely influential), not receiving enough financial aid (36%), and textbooks being too expensive (35%).
  - Personal earning/savings (used by 34% of respondents) and working while attending school (31%) are the most used source of funding outside of federal financial aid (35%).
  - Significantly more students that dropped during the pandemic (24%) funded their education using the California College Promise Grant, compared to those who dropped pre-pandemic (18%), and significantly fewer that dropped during the pandemic funded their education by working (28% vs. 36%) and student loans (4% vs. 10%).

**Please rate how influential each of the following financial factors was on your decision to stop/suspend enrollment at Southwestern College.**

% Very Influential + % Extremely Influential

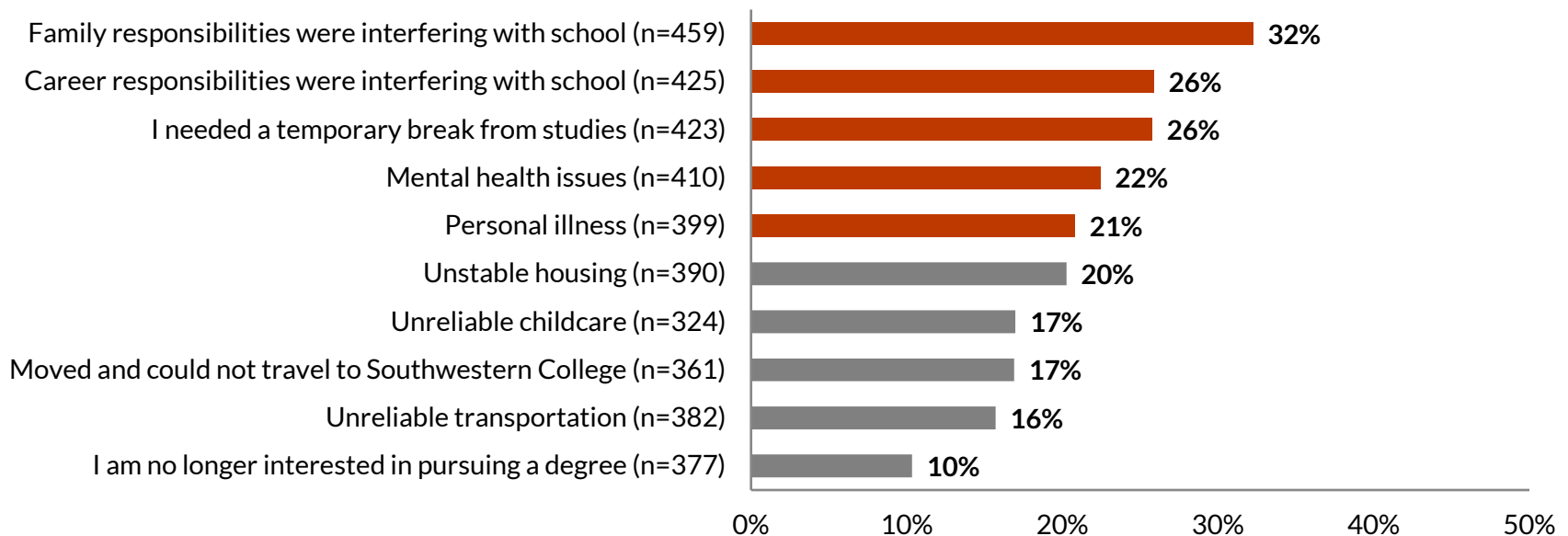


# PERSONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING PERSISTENCE

- Respondents indicate that the most influential person reasons they stopped or suspended enrollment at Southwest College had to do with family responsibilities (32%), career responsibilities (26%), and the need for a temporary break from studies (26%). The fourth and fifth most highly selected options are mental health issues (22%) and personal illnesses (21%). Only 10% of respondents indicate that they stopped or suspended their enrollment at Southwestern College because they were no longer interested in pursuing a degree.
  - Students who dropped during the pandemic are significantly more likely to cite mental health issues as very or extremely influential (27% vs 18%) in their inability to continue.

Please rate how influential each of the following personal factors was on your decision to stop/suspend enrollment at Southwestern College.

% Very Influential + % Extremely Influential

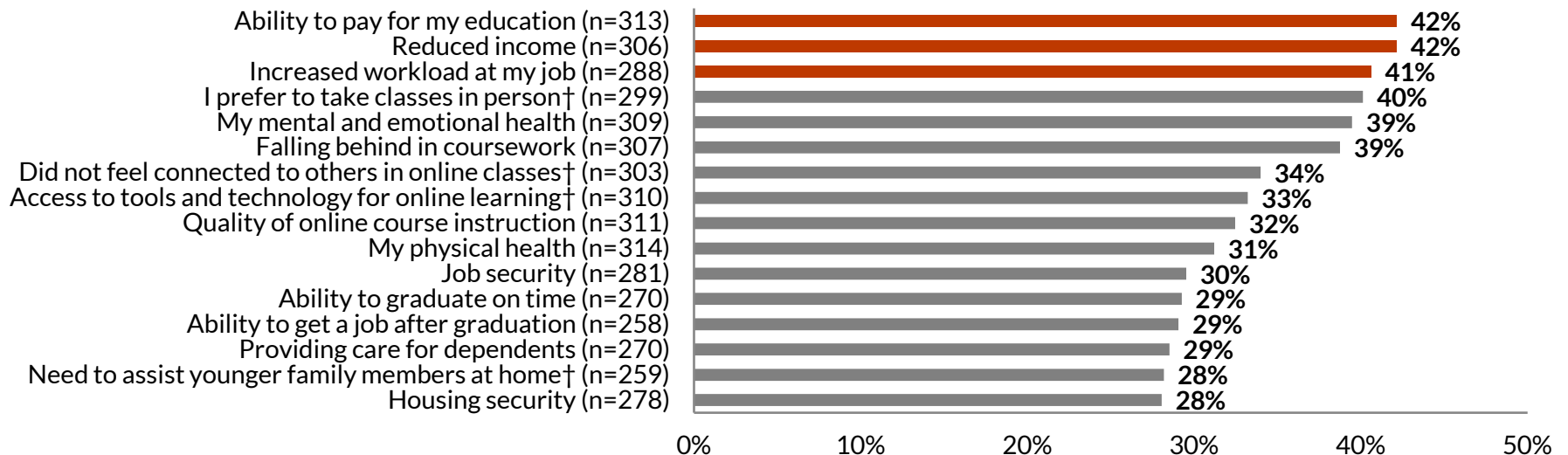


# COVID-19 FACTORS INFLUENCING PERSISTENCE

- **About a third of respondents (35%) indicated that COVID-19 impacted their decision not to return to school.** The factors that are described as most influential to respondents' decisions are ability to pay for their education (42% very or extremely influential), reduced income (42%), and increased workload at their jobs (41%).
  - Hispanic and Latin(o/a/x) and Multi-Racial students indicate at higher rates that the inability to pay for their education (44% each) and falling behind in coursework (40% for Hispanic/Latin(o/a/x) and 44% for Multi-Racial) were very or extremely influential to their decisions than peers of other racial/ethnic groups.
  - The ability to pay was also significantly more influential for students who were forced to drop out without desiring to do so (47%) and transfer to two-year institutions (39%) compared to those who chose to drop for personal reasons (16%) or to transfer to four-year institutions (17%).

**Please rate how influential each of the following Covid-19 related factors was on your decision to stop/suspend enrollment at Southwestern College.**

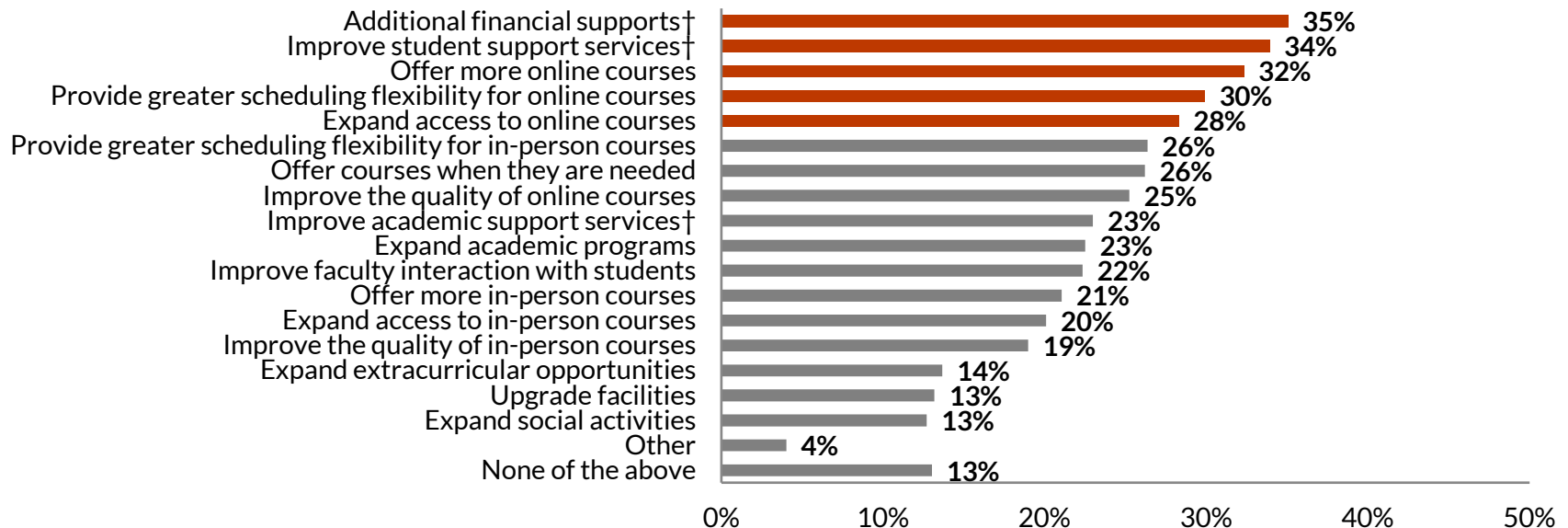
% Very Influential + % Extremely Influential



# AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

- Respondents indicate that some ways Southwestern College could have improved their experience as students are providing additional financial supports (35%) and improving student support services (34%), The desire for additional financial support differs across segmented groups, with more first-generation students (40%) indicating that this could have improved their experience than non-first-generation students (30%).
  - The other top areas of improvement related to online course offerings, including the courses offered, access to the courses, the flexibility within the schedule for these courses.
  - Students who dropped during the pandemic are significantly more likely to indicate that Southwestern would have improved the student experience by offering more online courses (40% vs. 25%), providing greater scheduling flexibility for online courses (36% vs. 24%), and expanding access to online courses (33% vs. 24%).

## How could Southwestern College have improved your student experience? Please select all that apply. (n=622)

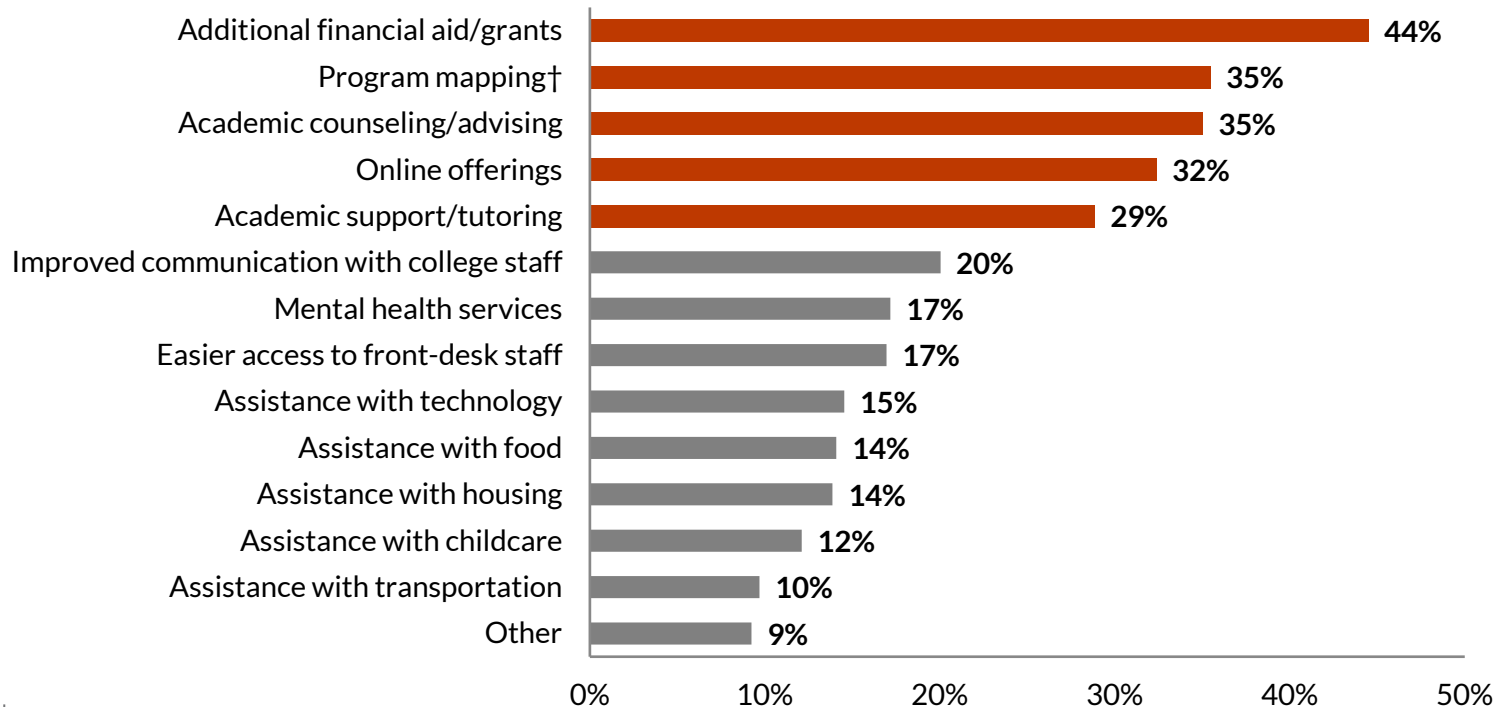




# SERVICES REQUIRED FOR RE-ENROLLMENT

- Respondents indicate that the programs and services they most need to re-enroll at Southwestern College are: additional financial aid/grants (44%), program mapping (35%), academic counseling/advising (35%), online offerings (32%), and academic support/tutoring (29%). These programs and services are important to consider going forward, as improvements in these areas may help both in retaining existing students as well as encouraging students who are looking to return to Southwestern College to make the decision to re-enroll.

## What programs and/or services do you need to re-enroll at Southwestern College? Please select all that apply. (n=454)



# RE-ENROLLMENT PREFERENCES

- Respondents that dropped during the pandemic are significantly more probable to be very or extremely likely to return to Southwestern College to continue their studies as compared to those who dropped pre-pandemic (38% vs. 30%).
  - Other differences in re-enrollment preferences between those dropping during the pandemic and pre-pandemic include the desire to return part-time vs. full time (pre-pandemic 82% vs. 18%; during the pandemic 69% vs. 31%) as well as the plan to enroll online vs. on-campus (pre pandemic 20% online, 30% on-campus, 50% mixed; during the pandemic 36% online, 30% on-campus, 44% mixed).

If you return to Southwestern College, do you plan to enroll full-time or part-time?

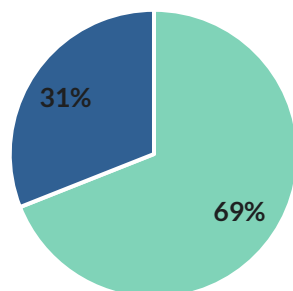
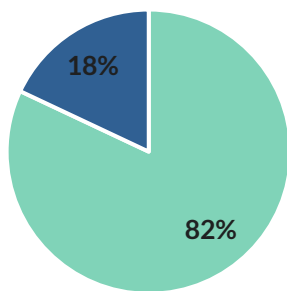
If you return to Southwestern College, do you plan to enroll in courses that are online or on-campus?

Pre-Pandemic  
(n=205)

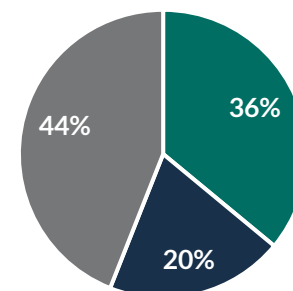
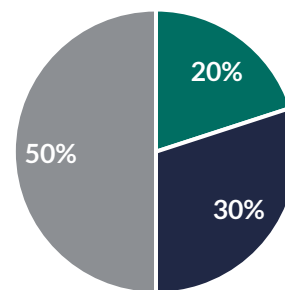
During the Pandemic  
(n=251)

Pre-Pandemic  
(n=205)

During the Pandemic  
(n=251)



■ Part-time ■ Full-time



■ Online ■ On-campus ■ Mixed

# RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS



## Race/Ethnicity (n=606)

Hispanic or Latin(o/a/x)	62%
White	23%
Asian	8%
Filipino	8%
Black or African-American	7%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	3%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2%
Not listed/Prefer to self-describe	2%
Prefer not to respond	5%



## Age (n=608)

19 or less	9%
20 to 24	25%
25 to 29	13%
30 to 34	12%
35 to 39	6%
40 to 59	17%
50 or above	15%
Prefer not to respond	3%



## Program Enrolled In (n=834)

Associate degree program	48%
Individual credit course(s)	33%
Non-credit courses	10%
Certificate program	9%



## Grade Point Average (n=609)

4.0 or above	16%
3.5 - 3.99	22%
3.0 - 3.49	27%
2.5 - 2.99	12%
Below 2.5	4%
Prefer not to respond	19%



## Last Year of Attendance (n=834)

2022	3%
2021	26%
2020	23%
2019	18%
2018	12%
2017	18%



## Gender Identity (n=608)

Female	64%
Male	31%
Gender variant/Non-conforming/Non-binary	2%
Transgender male	0%
Transgender female	0%
Not listed/Prefer to self-describe	0%
Prefer not to respond	3%



Thank you.

## CONTACT

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