

OFF TO A GOOD START?

HOW NEW FRESHMEN NAVIGATE
THEIR FIRST SEMESTER AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING CONFERENCE
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ABOUT US

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About IRPA

- Not to be confused with the IRB office...
- We report out data on the University to internal and external constituents for the purposes of academic planning and policy



AGENDA

- **First Semester Experience: Why is this important?**
- **What do we know?**
- **About the data**
- **First Semester Experience**
 - Part 1: Entry
 - Part 2: Enrollment
 - Part 3: Performance
 - Part 4: Perceptions
- **Discussion / Q&A**

FIRST SEMESTER EXPERIENCE: WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- **Ensure students are on the path to success from day one**
- **Provide points of reference about what students are experiencing on campus in their first term**
- **Understand how data can provide a portrait of student experiences, supporting or contextualizing anecdotal evidence**
- **Highlight successes and opportunities within the first-semester experiences of new freshmen**

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT FRESHMEN AND THEIR FIRST TERM EXPERIENCES?

Publicly available data on freshmen are limited and rarely focus on the first term experience

Examples:

- Beloit College: “The Mindset List”
- UC-Berkeley: First Semester Experience testimonials
- UCLA HERI “Your First College Year” Survey
- UMD: IRPA Profiles and OUA Admitted Freshmen Profile

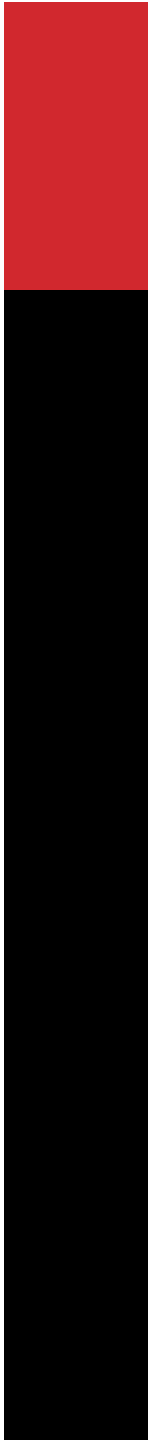


BELOIT COLLEGE'S "MINDSET LIST"

Reviews the “cultural touchstones” that shaped the lives of first-year students

Excerpts from this year's mindset list:

- Ferris Bueller and Sloane Peterson could be their parents
- Refer to LBJ, and they might assume you're talking about LeBron James
- Women have always been kissing women on television



UC-BERKELEY & UCLA HERI



Rhetoric, College of Letters and Science

Course	Description	Units
African American Studies 98	Freshmen Seminar	2
College Writing 1A	Accelerated Reading and Composition	6
Psychology 2	Principles of Psychology	3
Mathematics 16A	Analytic Geometry and Calculus	3
Mathematics 98	Supervised Group Study	1

Coming from a high school that ranked in the bottom-tenth percentile in the state, my lack of resources made my first semester a challenge, as well as a great learning experience. I reached out for tutoring and everything else available, so I could be on top of my coursework.

—Terry, Rhetoric

I chose Cal because it is the number one public university in the world! Growing up in a single-parent, low-socioeconomic home, my family didn't know what college was. With my competitive mindset, it was important to me to be number one. That's why I came to Cal.

Because I have always been an independent person, coming to Cal was nothing new. I was already treated like an adult at home. I've always helped to keep my home together and worked to pay bills, so I felt like my family still needed me even though I was in college. Constantly making phone calls to check on things at home, I would worry about how I could keep my family together. However, I finally put it in God's hands and went on with my own business.

Coming from a high school that ranked in the bottom-tenth percentile in the state, my lack of resources made my first semester a challenge, as well as a great learning experience. I reached out for tutoring and everything else available, so I could be on top of my coursework.

I have always been involved with my community - I like to keep things moving in a positive direction, so I joined a number of clubs and programs on campus. I became engaged in groups that matched my interests: the Black Sociological Alliance, the Gates Millennium Scholars Association, the Black Recruitment and Retention Center, 100 College Black Men, Rally Committee, Wrestling Club, Softball intramural team, Bible study, and the Biology Scholars Program.

I learned so much during my first semester experience. Now, I am motivated to get all As!

—Terry, Rhetoric
Lived in the African American Theme Program during first year at Cal
From Vallejo, California
Previously attended Hogan High School

Close

Student Orientation (CalSO) website provides a glimpse of “First Semester Experiences”

UCLA’s Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) surveys first-year experiences of freshmen at over 400 colleges and universities

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

Currently, only enrollment and admissions data is available to the public

- IRPA Profiles
- Office of Undergraduate Admissions Freshman Profile

Our inquiry aims to look further into the experiences and perceptions of new freshmen, from admission to the end of their first term

ABOUT THE DATA: SOURCES

IRPA DATABASE

- **Aggregated student enrollment data from the Fall 2009, 2010 and 2011 freshman cohorts**
- **Provides information on student demographics, registration, and course attributes**
- **Data includes all new freshmen, including part-time and non-degree seeking students**

BEGINNING STUDENT SURVEY, 2010 & 2011

- **Survey of freshmen taken 8-10 weeks into their first term**
- **2010 survey gauges student perceptions of the academic and social experiences on campus; n = 1869**
- **2011 survey assesses students' degree completion expectations; n = 1498**

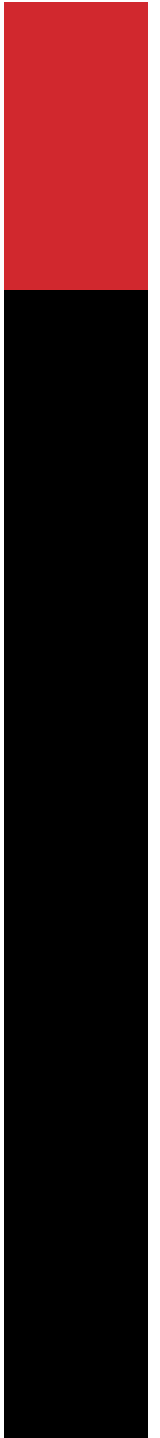
ABOUT THE DATA

Aggregate Data

- Intentionally provides big picture perspective; does not distinguish between student groups by race, gender, college, academic performance, etc.
- Does not show trends

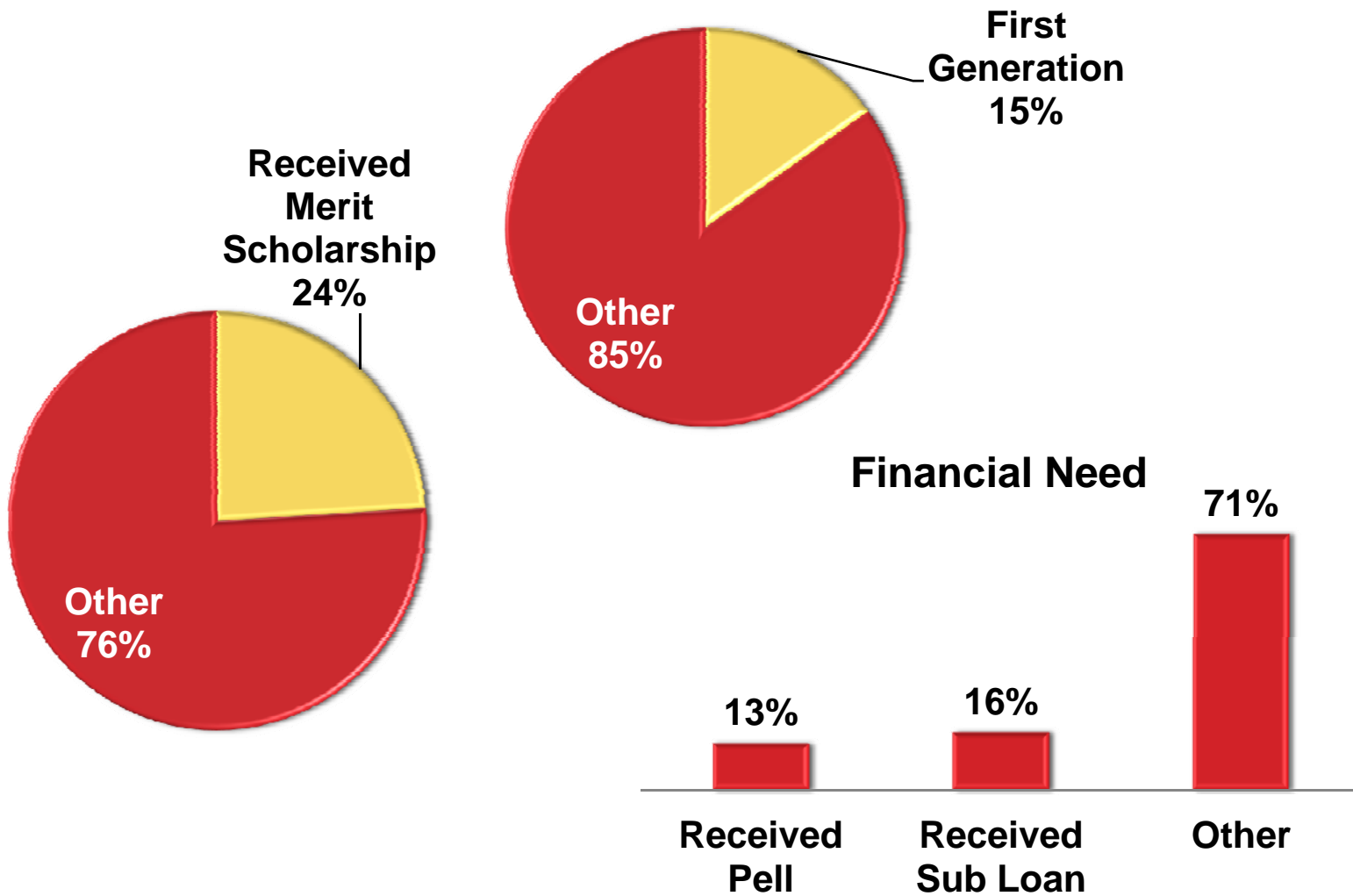
Timing and Method of Data Collection

- In some cases, only data from 2009 and 2010 are provided (e.g., Financial Aid)
- Data on student perceptions are limited to 2010 and 2011 surveys



FIRST SEMESTER EXPERIENCES: ENTRY

A QUICK PROFILE OF FRESHMEN

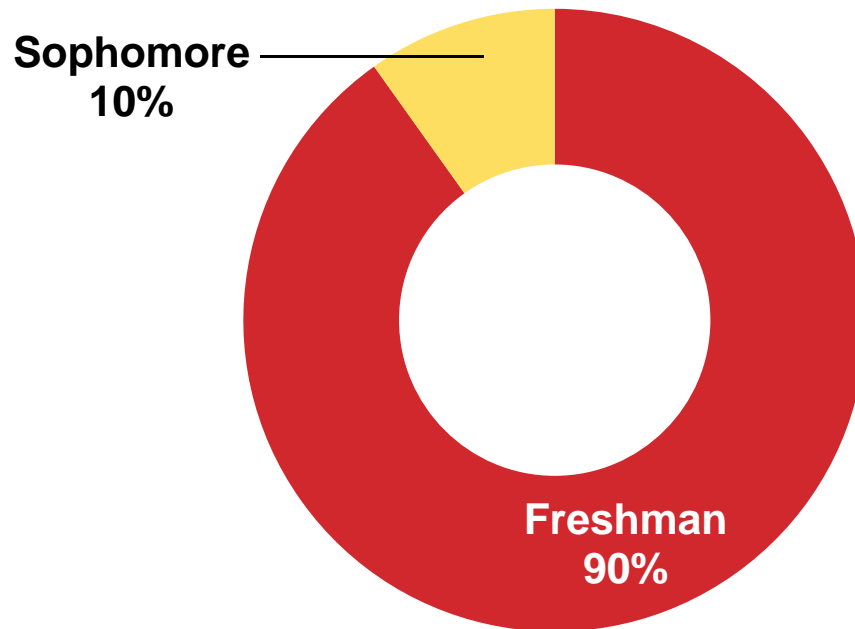


Source: IRPA database

CLASS STANDING

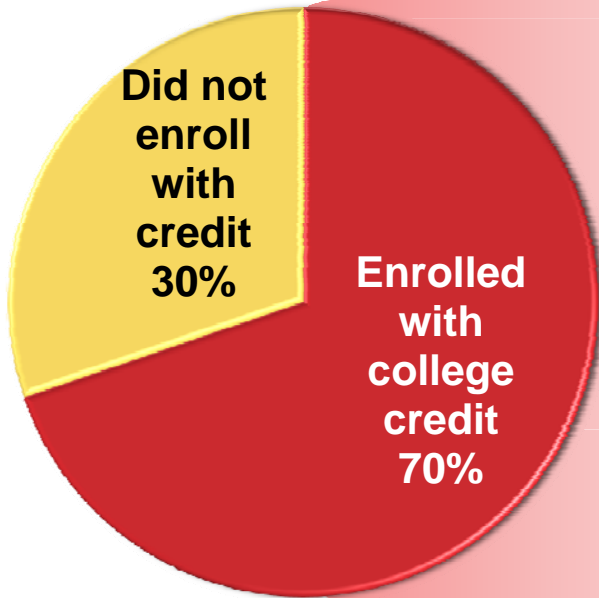
The overwhelming majority of freshmen enter with freshman class standing; however, 10% enter with enough credits to reach sophomore class standing

- Students entering as sophomores have an average of 40 pre-enrollment credits



Source: IRPA database

PRE-ENROLLMENT CREDITS



70% enroll with college credit

- 65% of freshmen enter with AP credit
- 10% of freshmen enter with credit from another institution
- 3% of freshmen enter with IB credit

Average number of accepted pre-college credits is 17

Source: IRPA database

PRE-ENROLLMENT CREDIT: FUNDAMENTAL STUDIES

22% of freshmen satisfied the Fundamental English at entry using pre-enrollment credit



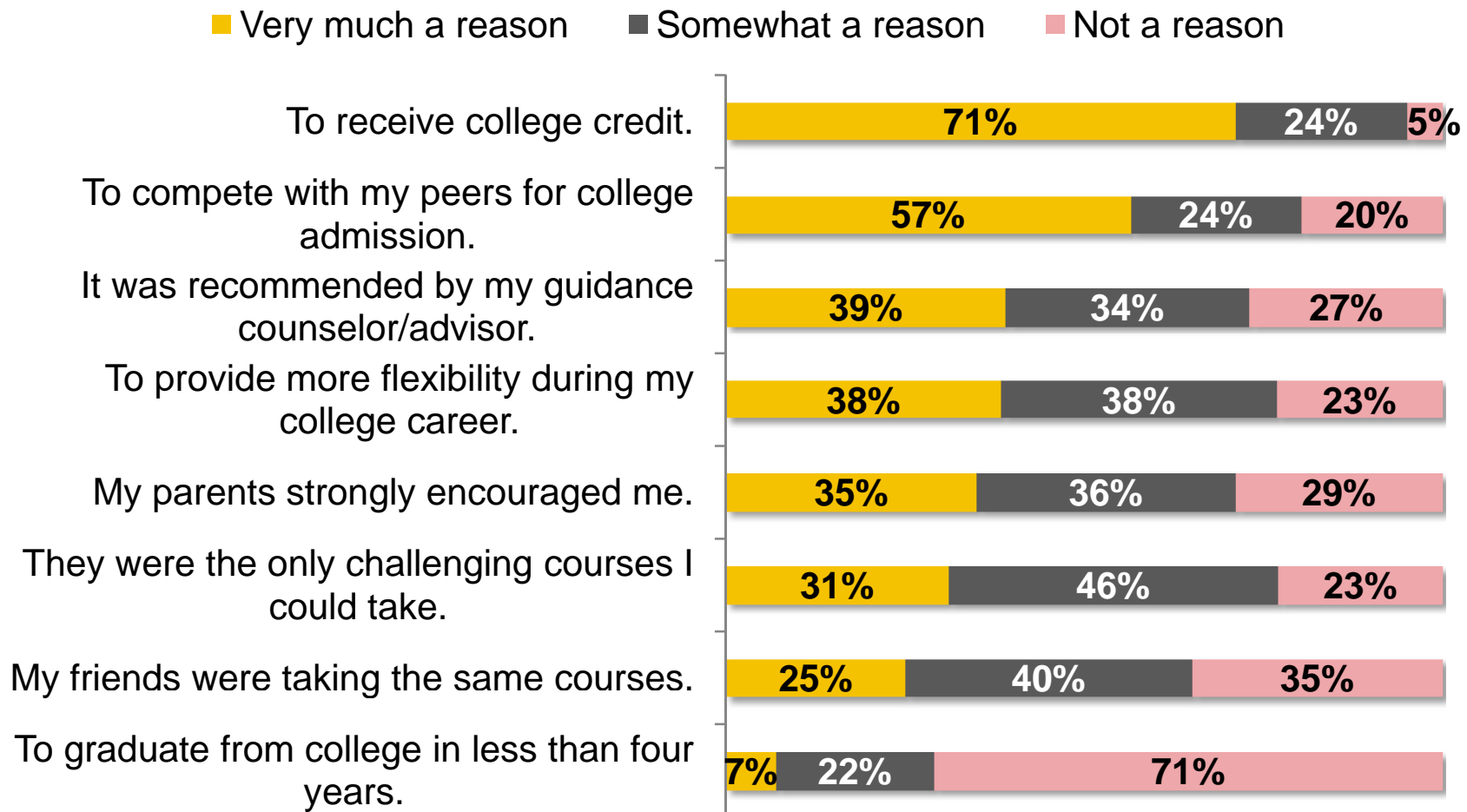
Only 3% satisfied Fundamental Math at entry



Source: IRPA database

PRE-ENROLLMENT CREDITS (CONT.)

Why freshmen took AB/IB/College-level courses

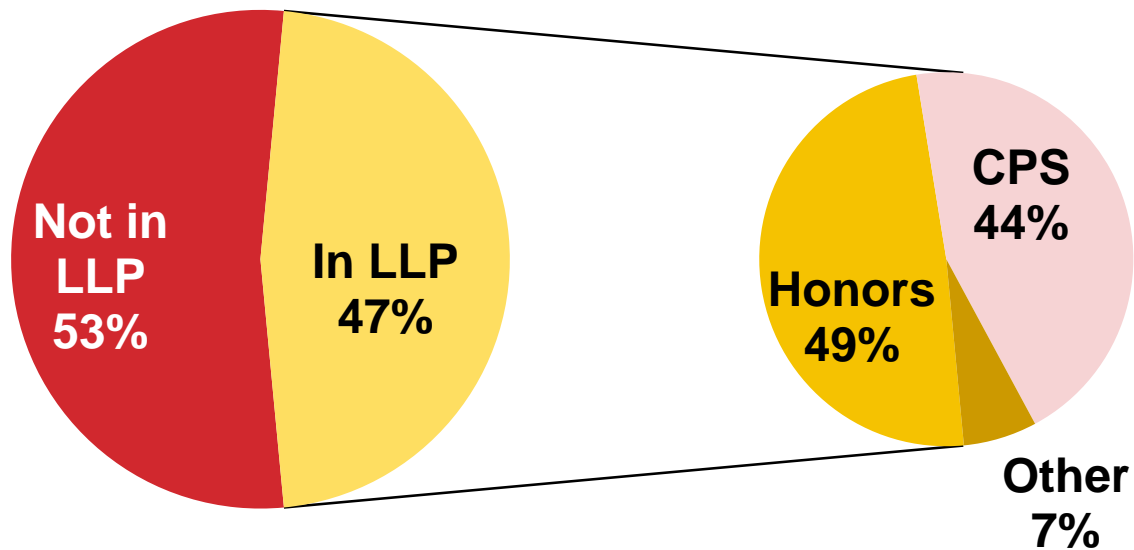


Source: BSS11; responses may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

FIRST SEMESTER EXPERIENCE: ENROLLMENT

PARTICIPATION IN LIVING-LEARNING PROGRAMS

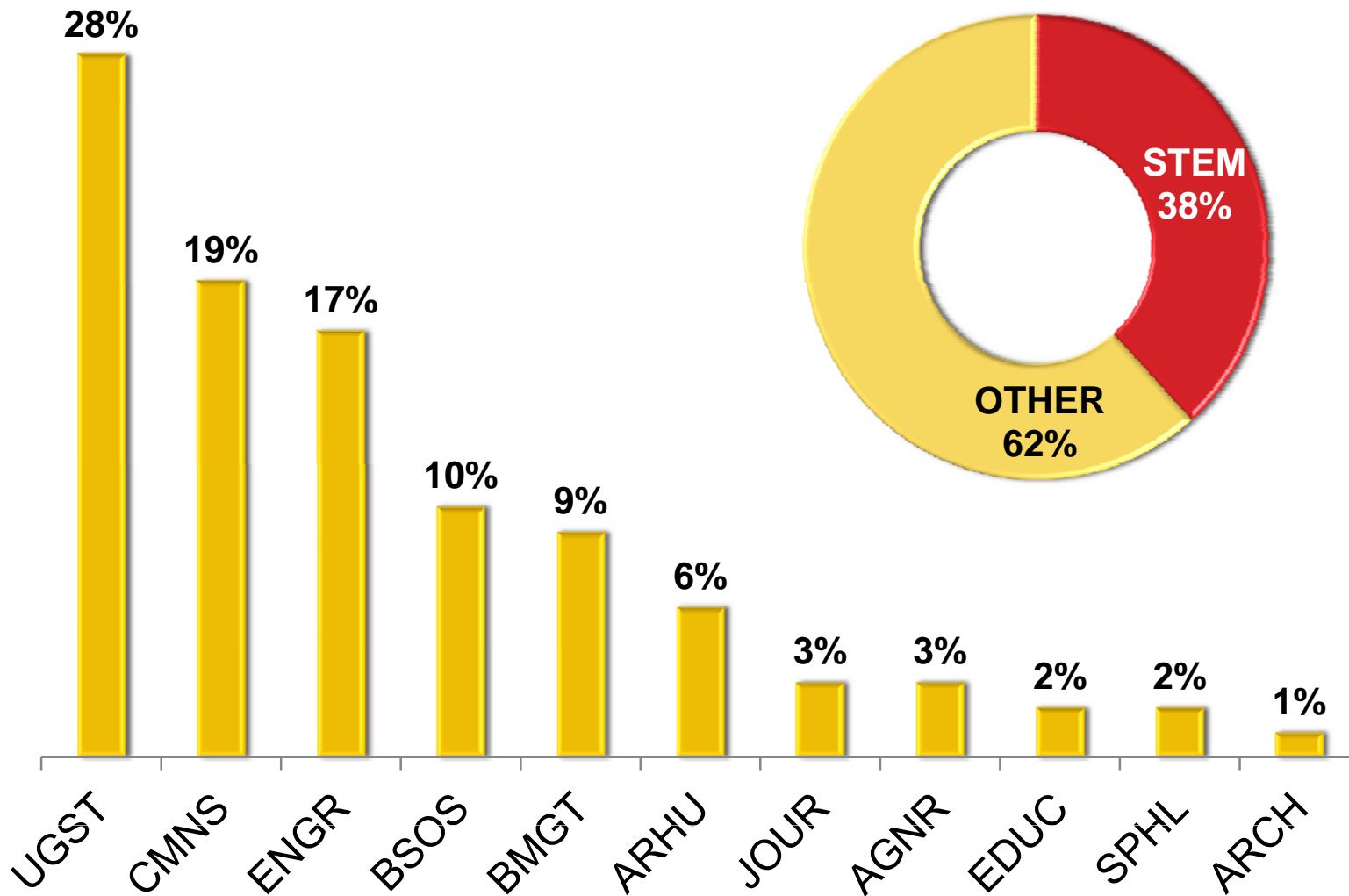
Nearly 50% of freshmen participate in living-learning programs in their first semester



Source: IRPA database



MAJORS: BY COLLEGE AND STEM



Source: IRPA database

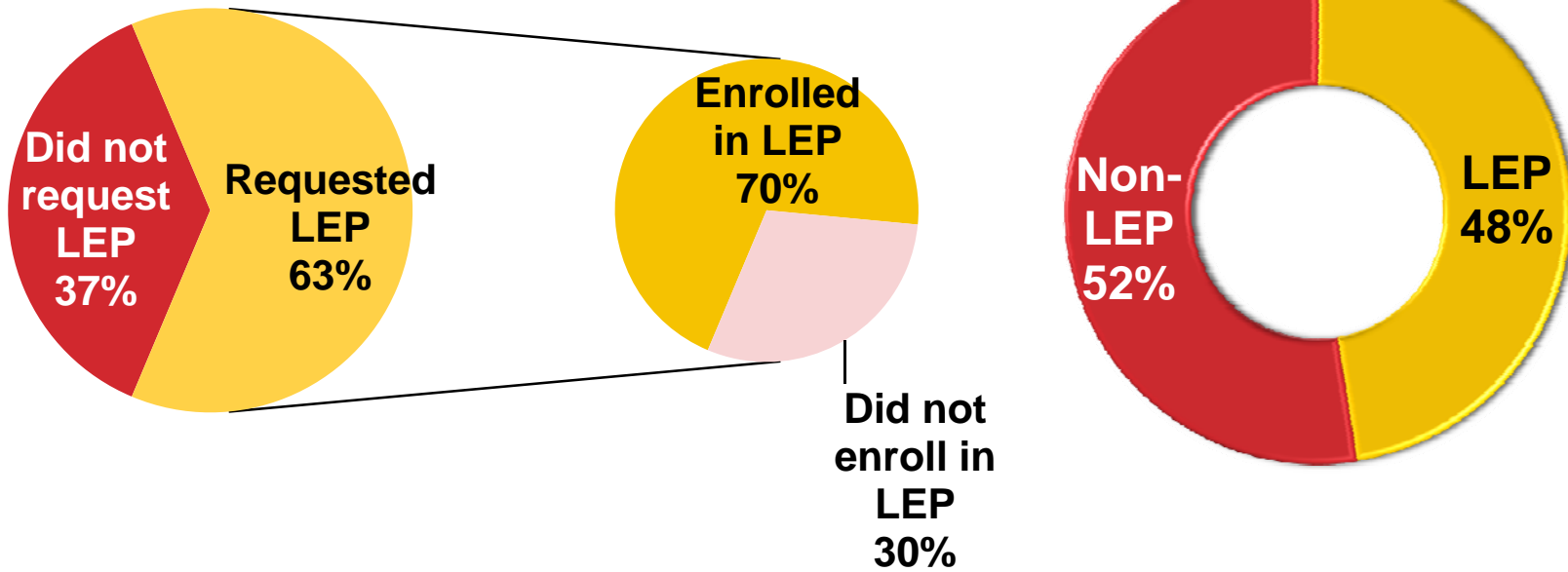
MOST POPULAR MAJORS AMONG FRESHMEN

10. Bioengineering
9. Mechanical Engineering
8. Journalism
7. Physiology/Neurobiology
6. Computer Science
5. Government and Politics
4. Psychology
3. Business-Undecided
2. Engineering-Undecided
1. General Biology

But...25% of freshmen are undecided

Source: IRPA database

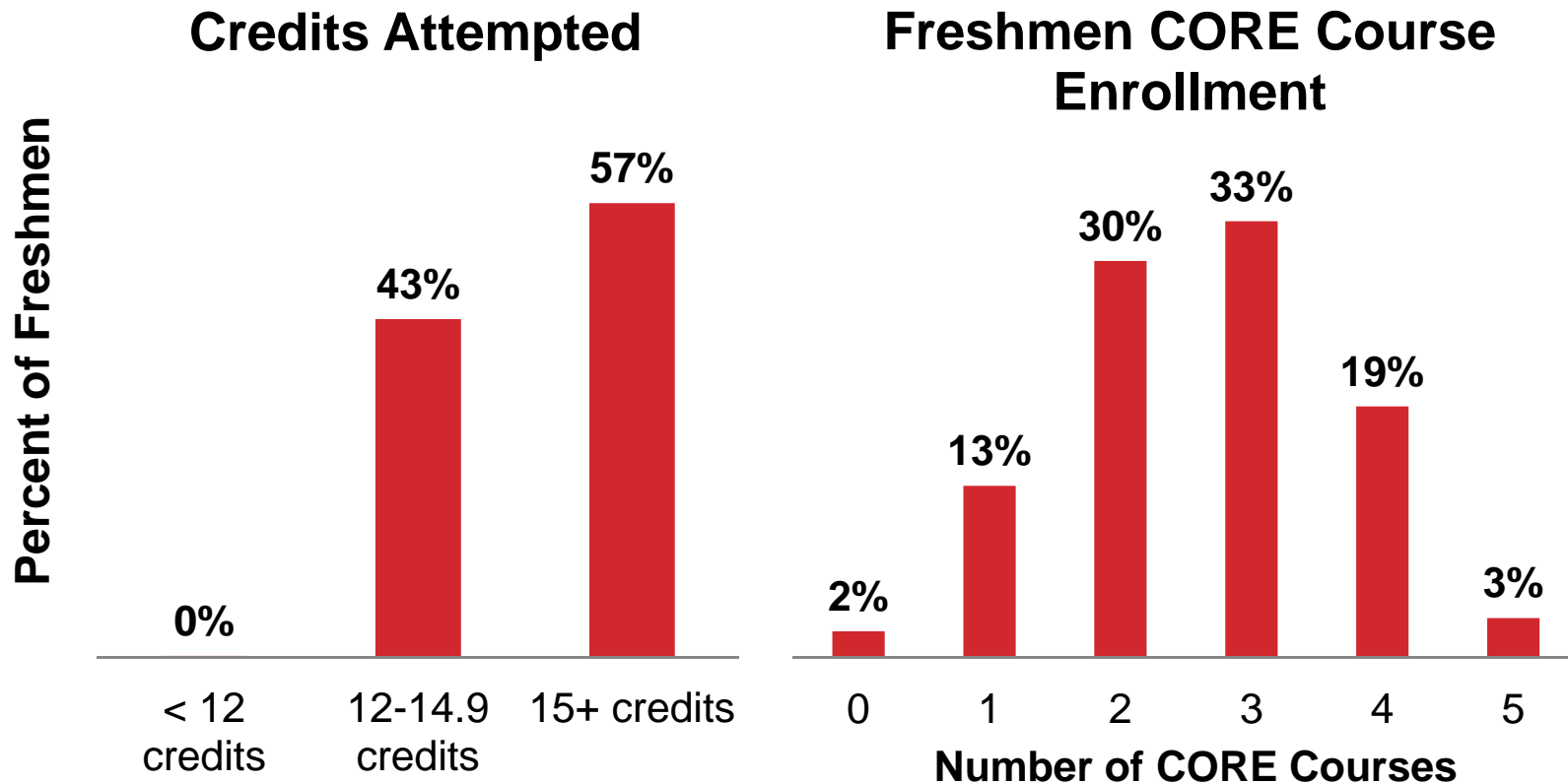
REQUESTED MAJOR / LEP ENROLLMENT



Source: IRPA database

COURSES

Freshmen attempt an average of 15 credits in their first semester; about half of which are CORE

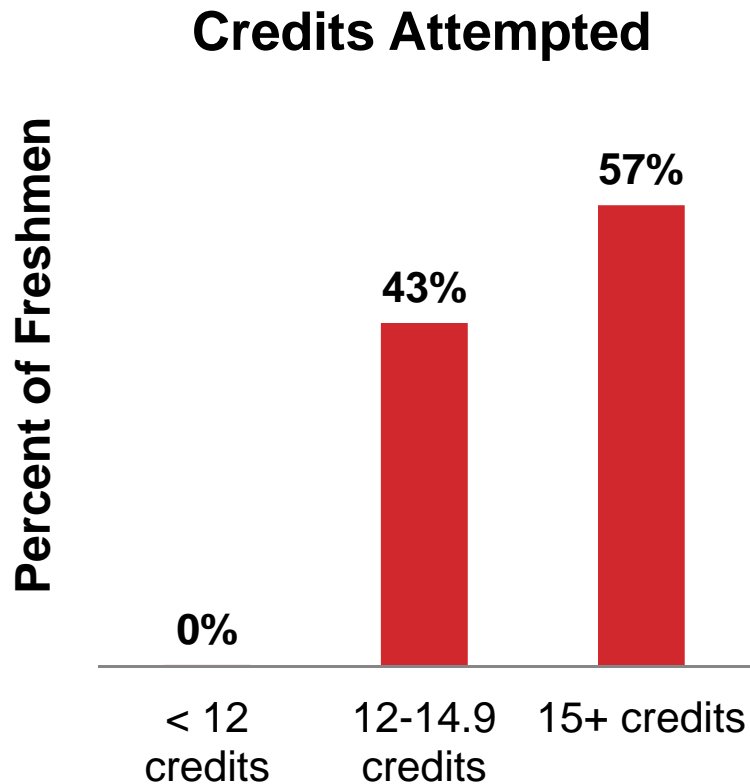


Note: Only data for lead lecture courses is shown.

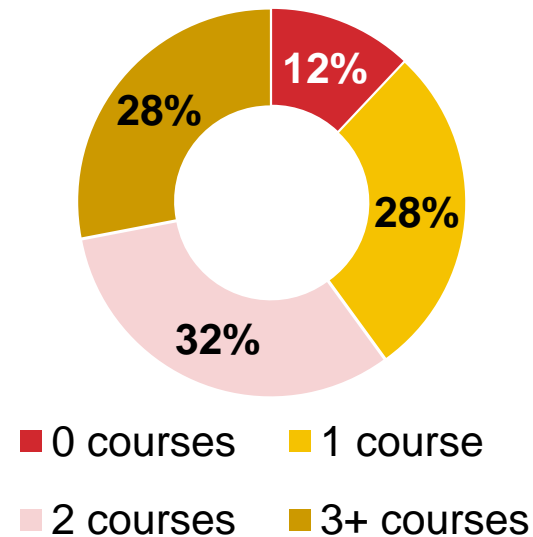
Source: IRPA database

COURSES

Most freshmen have at least 2 courses taught by a tenured/tenure-track faculty member



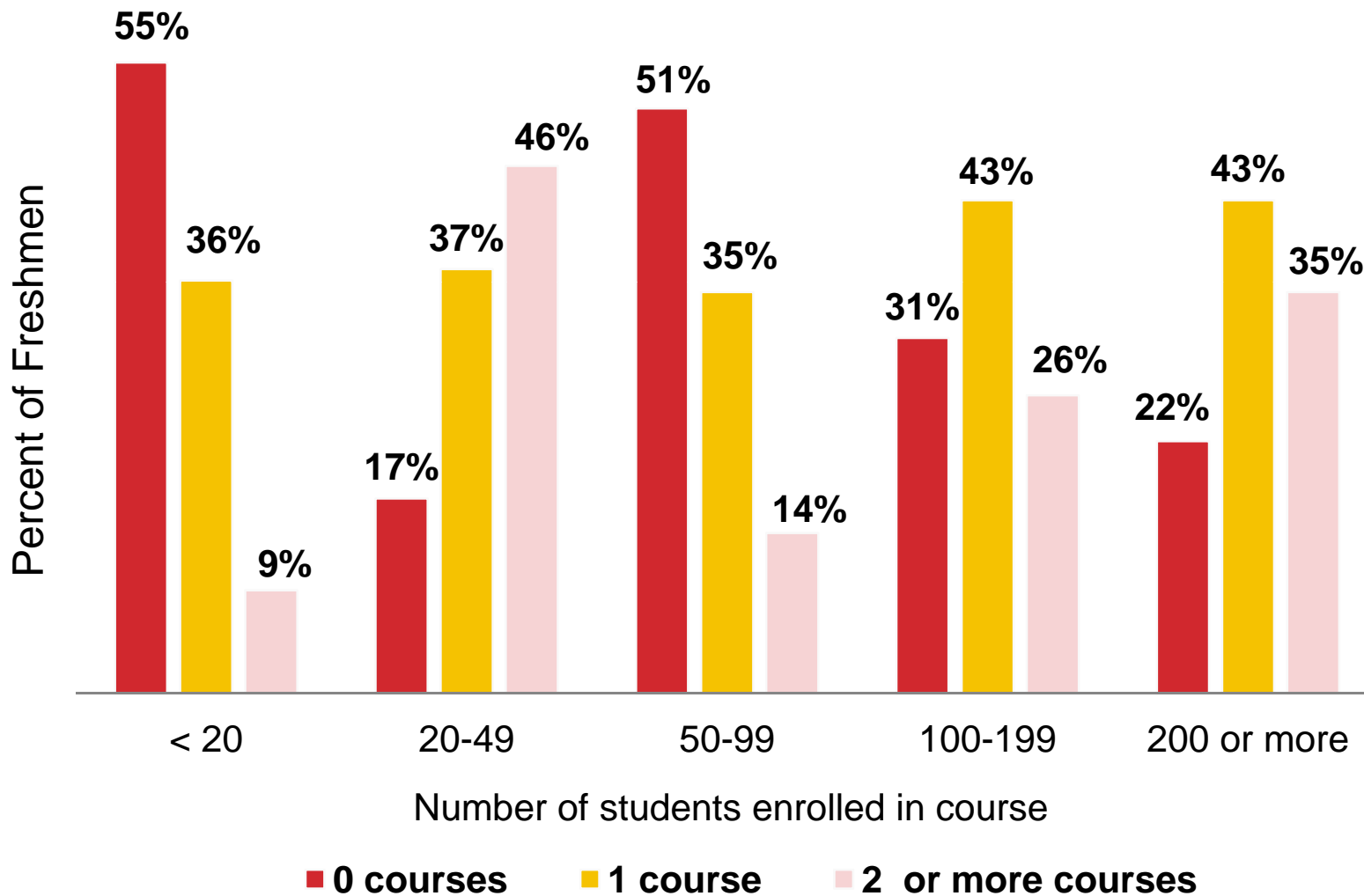
Freshmen Taught by T/TTK Faculty



Note: Only data for lead lecture courses is shown.

Source: IRPA database

COURSES: CLASS SIZE

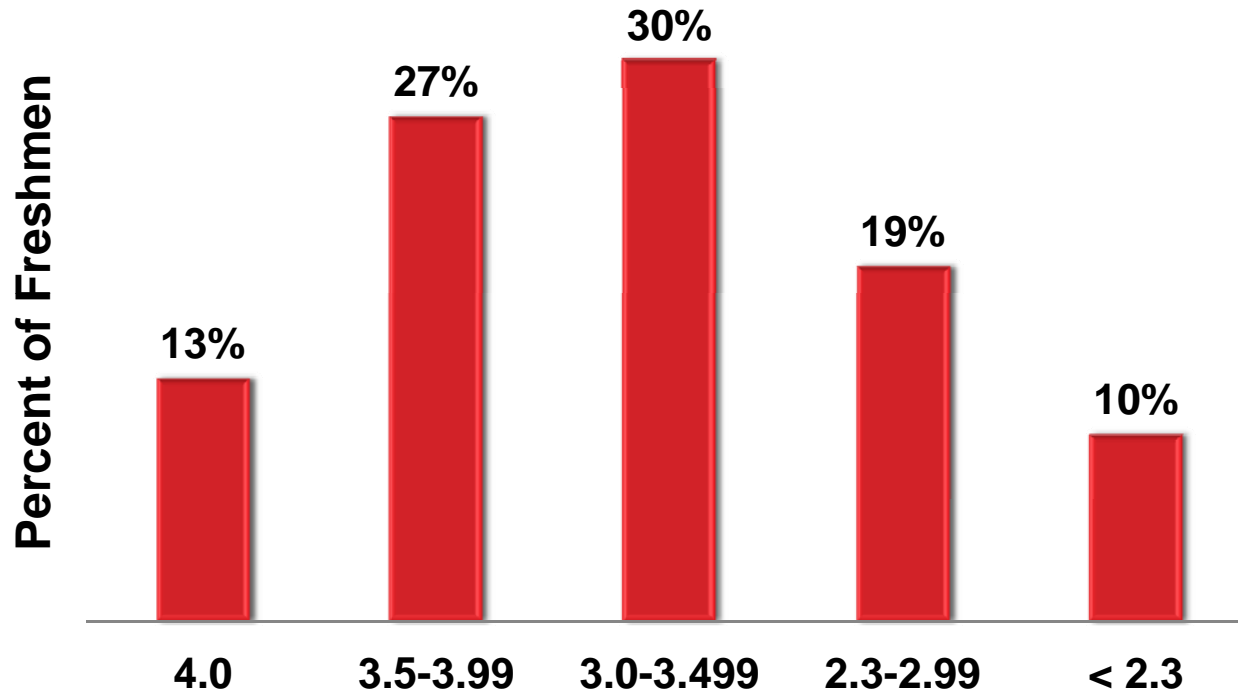


Note: Only data for lead lecture courses is shown.

Source: IRPA database

FIRST SEMESTER EXPERIENCE: PERFORMANCE

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE



On average, freshmen earn 14 credits and a 3.1 GPA in their first semester

5% of freshmen are placed on academic probation at the end of their first term

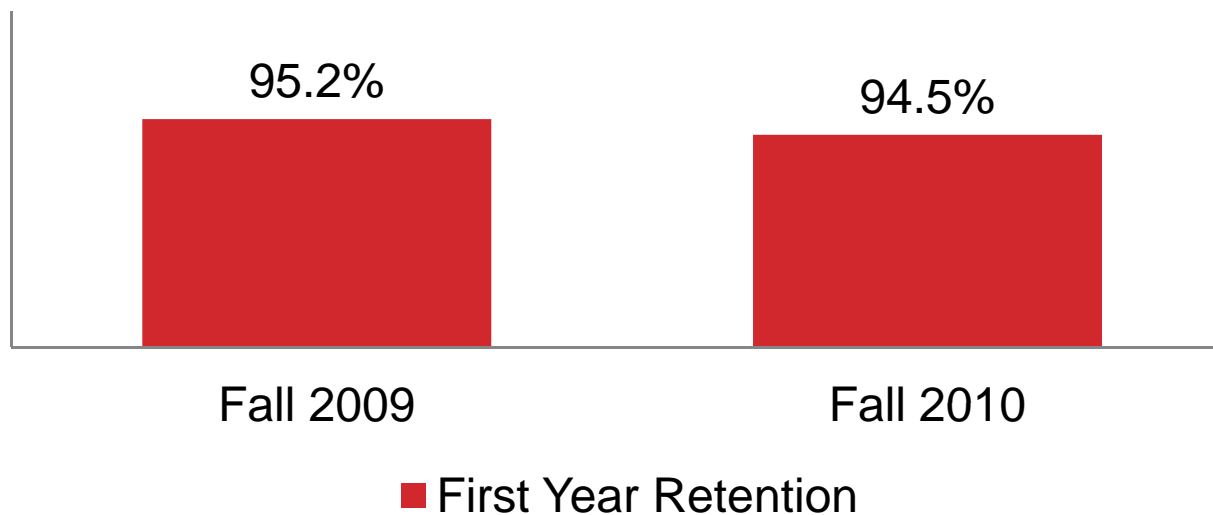
Source: IRPA database

RETENTION

Less than 1% of freshmen withdraw in their first term

99% of BSS11 respondents expected to enroll full-time at the University of Maryland (College Park) during their second semester.

HOWEVER...

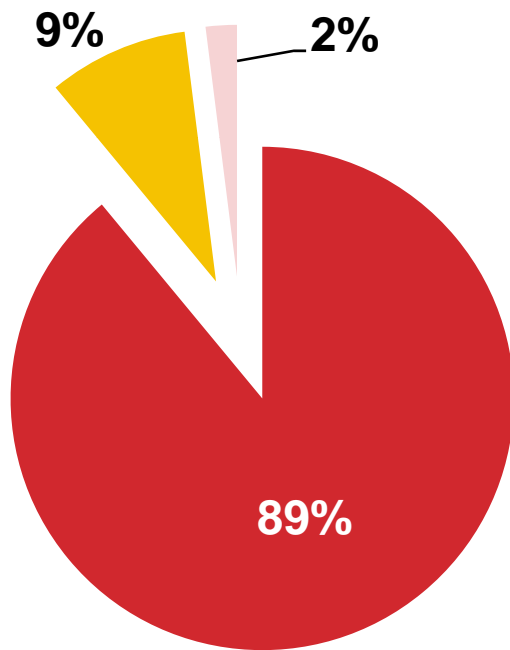


Source: IRPA database

FIRST SEMESTER EXPERIENCE: PERCEPTIONS

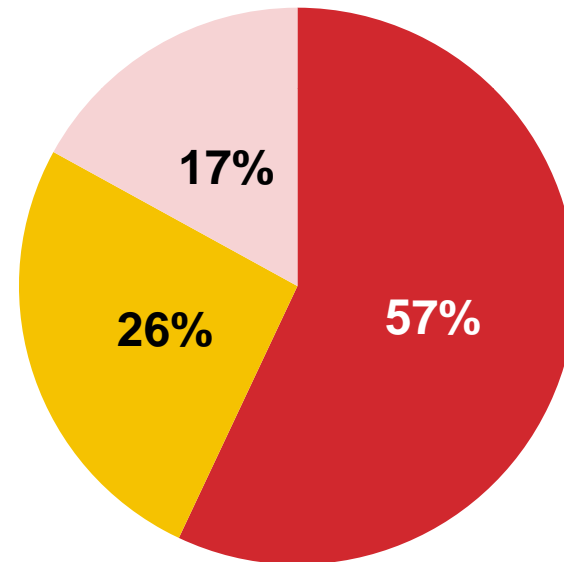
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

At present, my general attitude towards the University of Maryland is:



- Positive or Very Positive
- Neutral
- Negative or Very Negative

When I entered this institution, it was my:

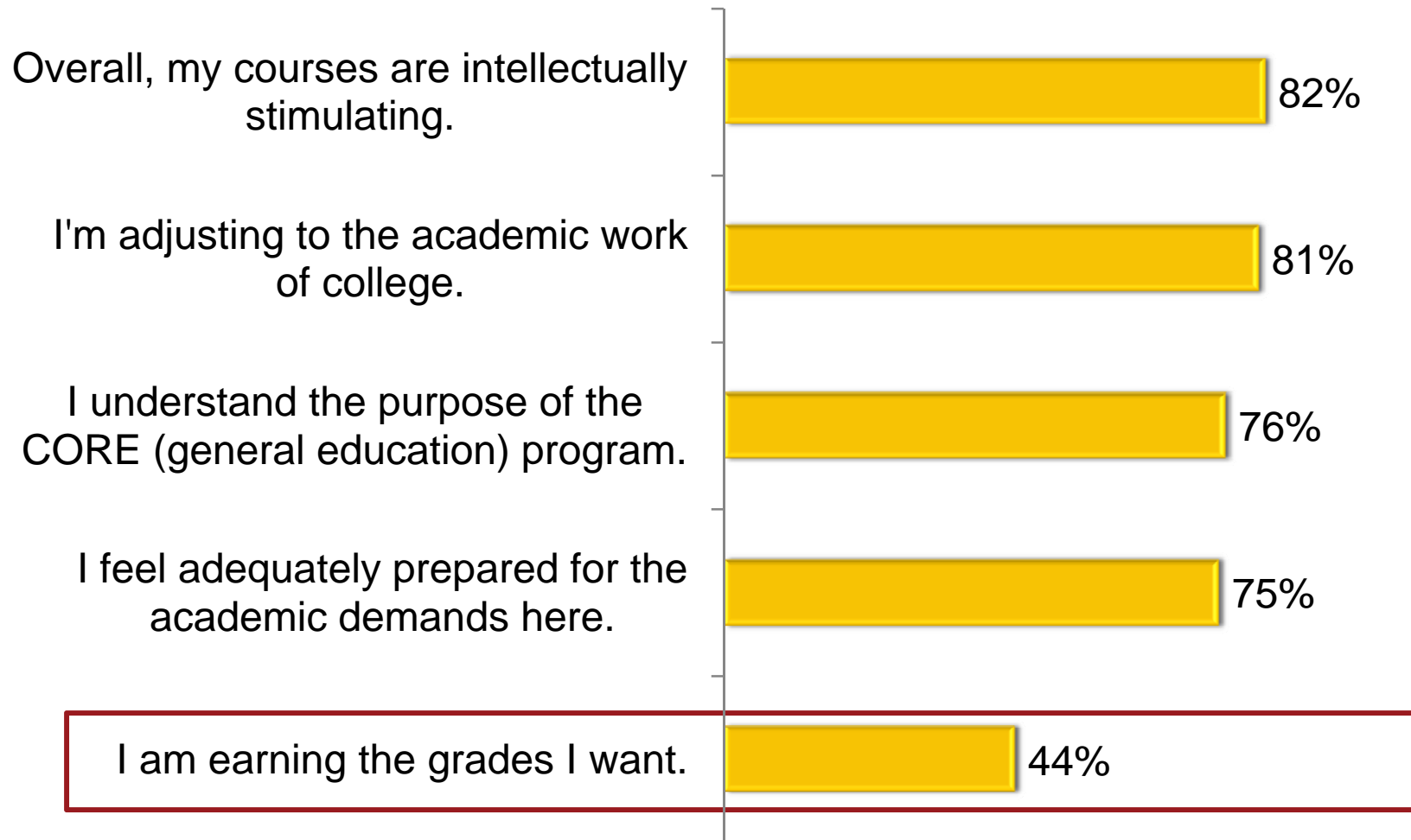


- 1st choice
- 2nd choice
- 3rd choice or lower

Source: BSS10

ACADEMIC LIFE

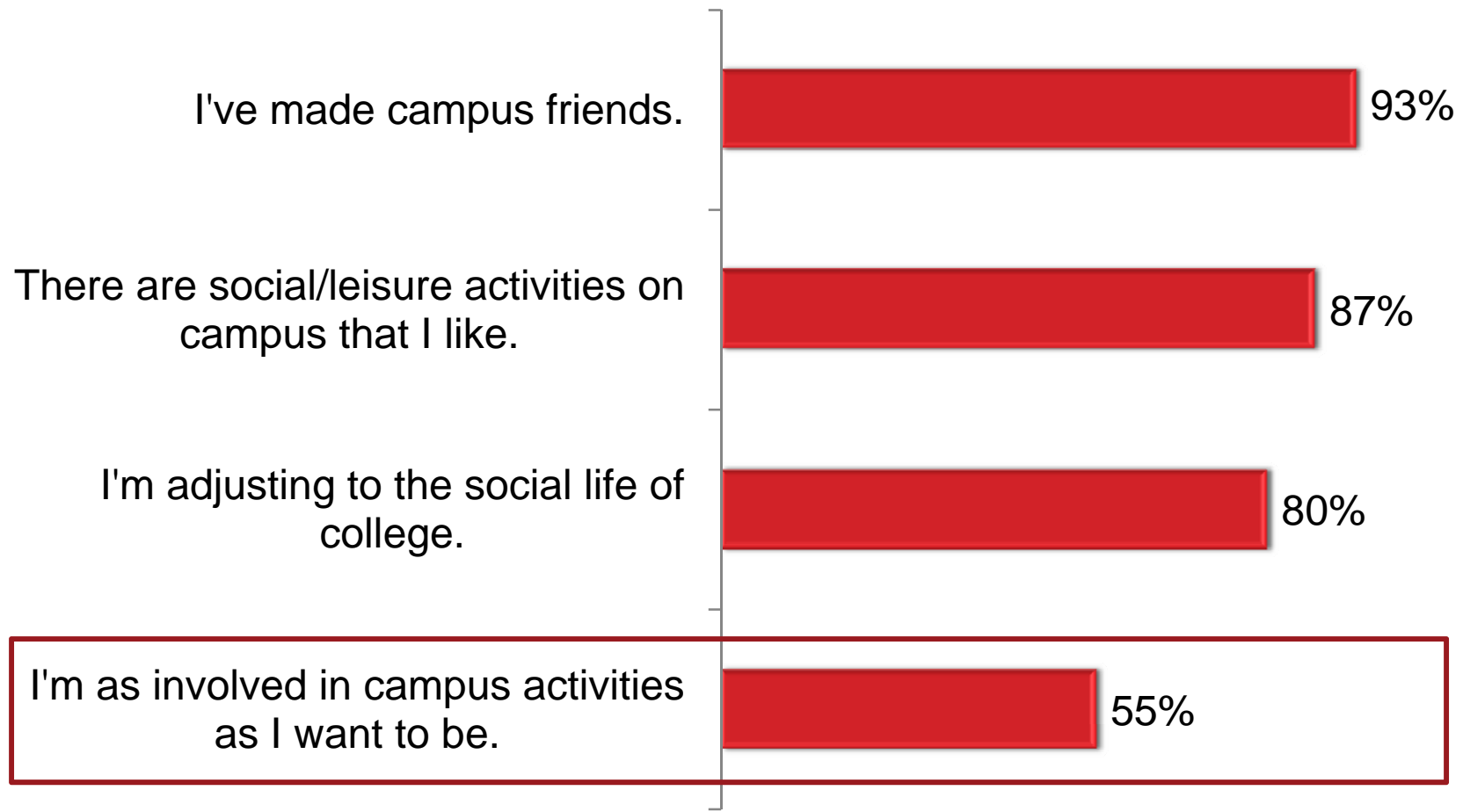
Percentage of freshmen who “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” ...



Source: BSS10

SOCIAL LIFE

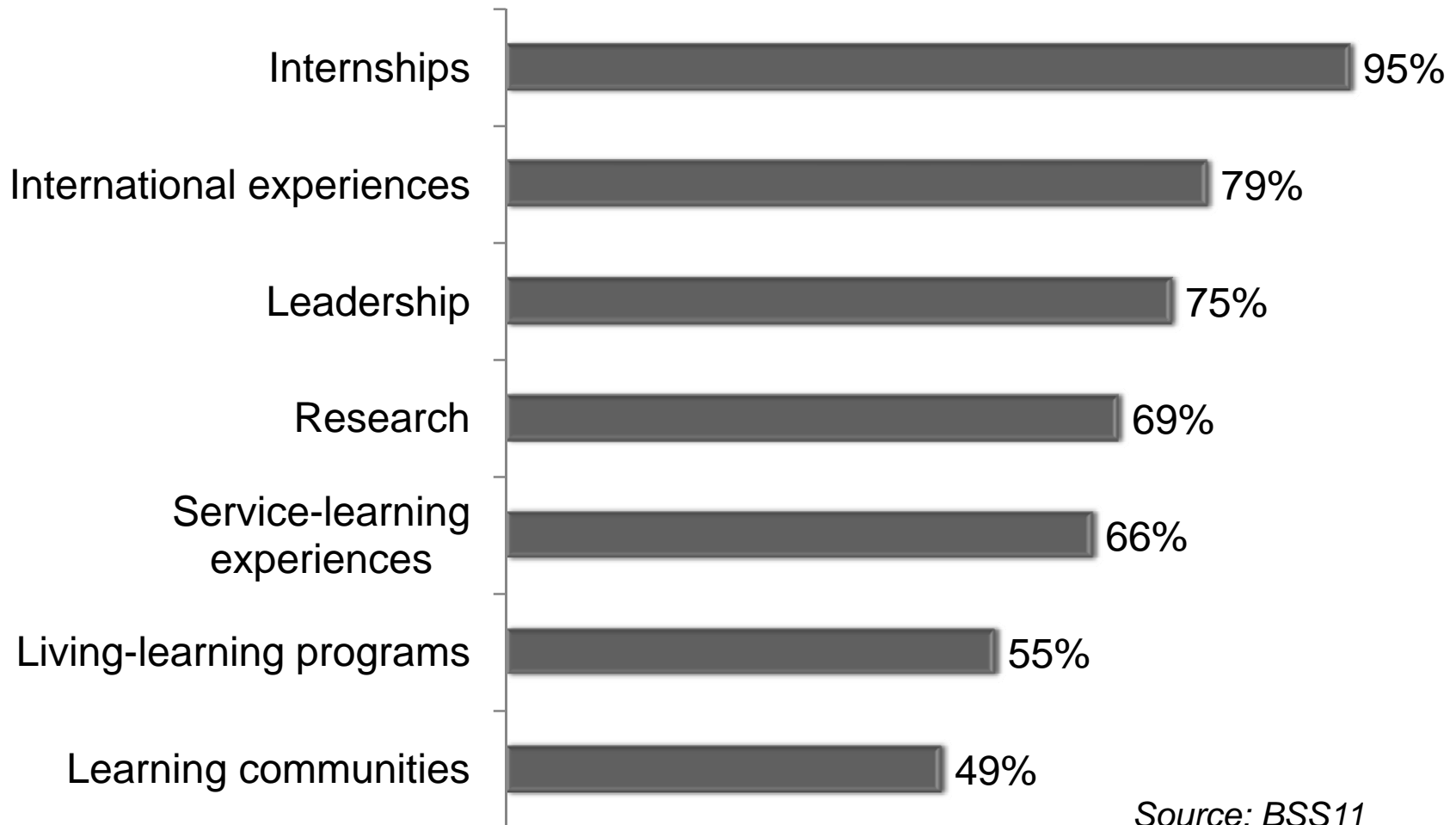
Percentage of freshmen who “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” ...



Source: BSS10

FUTURE INVOLVEMENT

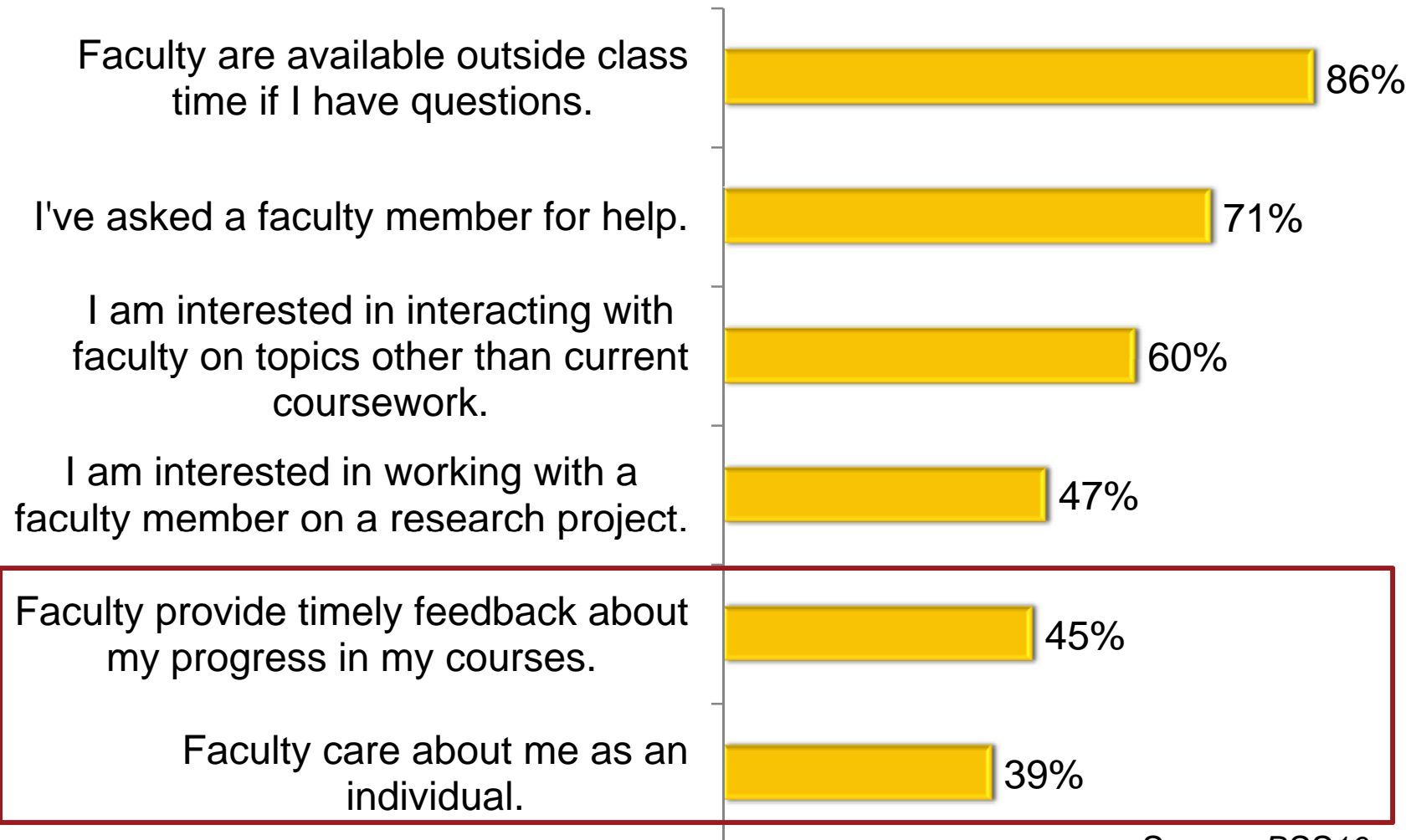
Percentage of freshmen who reported they are currently participating in or would like to participate in the following experiences:



Source: BSS11

FACULTY

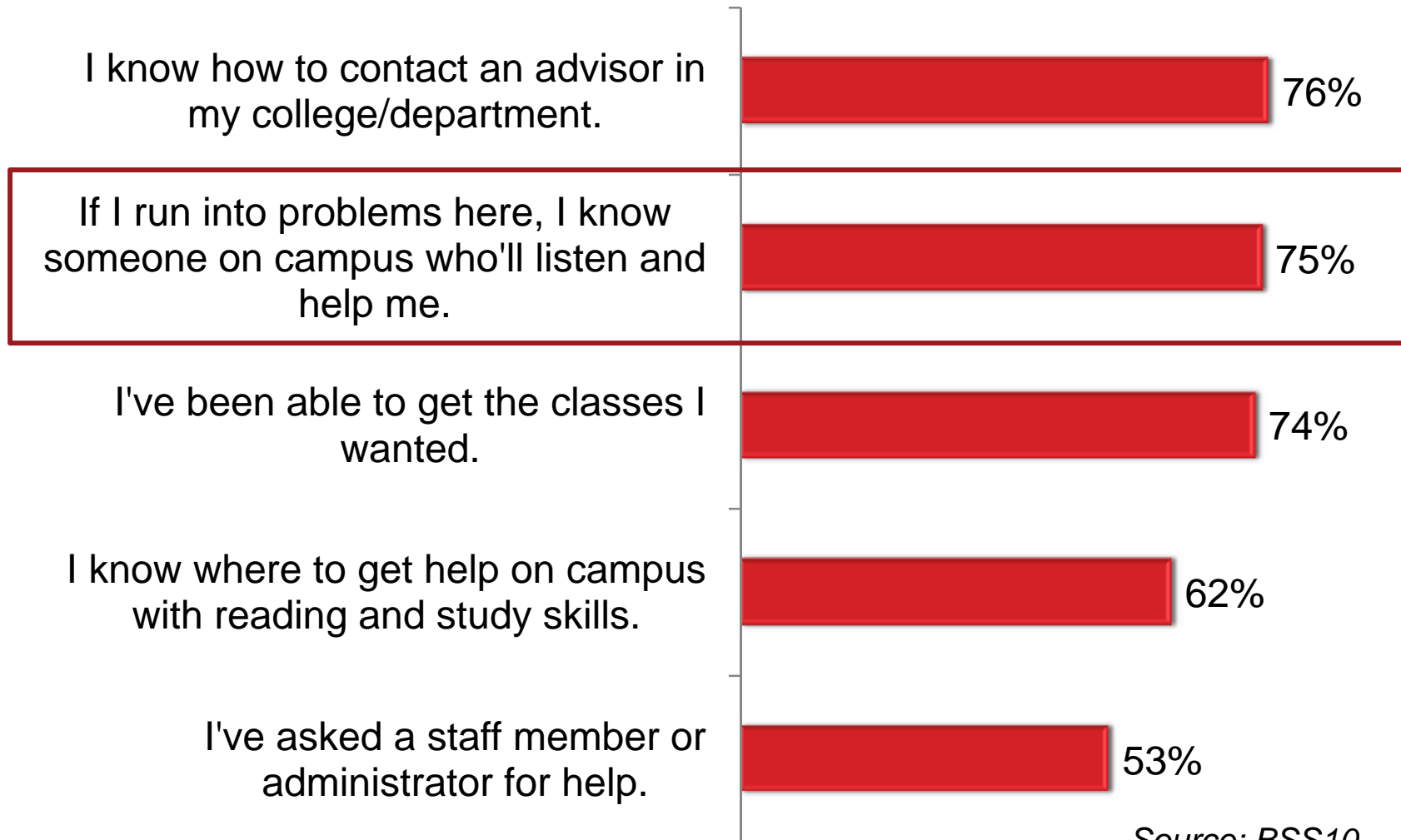
Percentage of freshmen who “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” ...



Source: BSS10

ADVISING

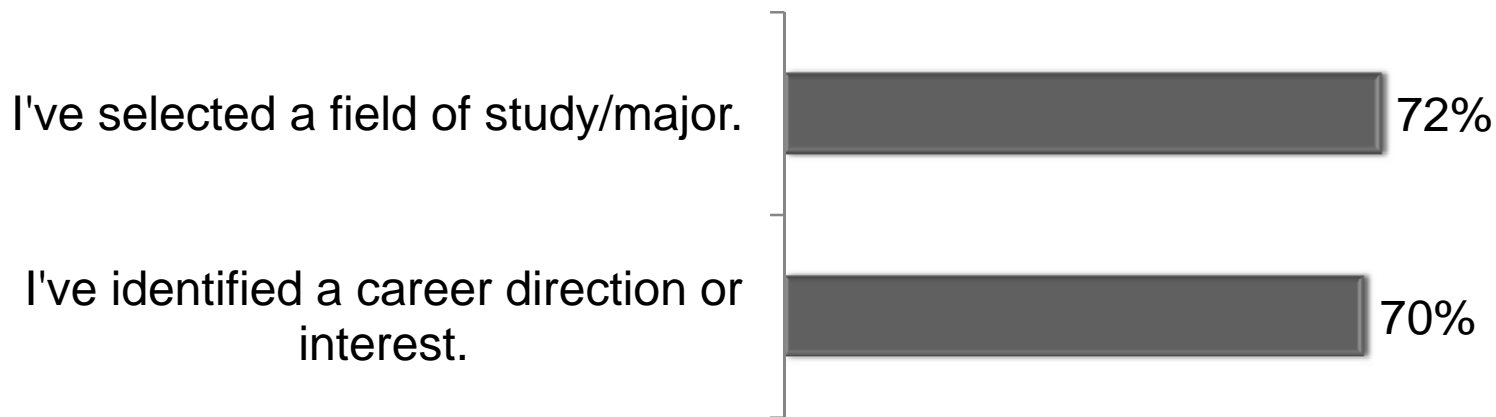
Percentage of freshmen who “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” ...



Source: BSS10

GRADUATION AND CAREER PLANNING

Percentage of freshmen who “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” ...



Source: BSS10

- Over 97% of respondents expected to receive their bachelor's degree in 4 or fewer years.
- Over 90% also planned to complete their degree at the University of Maryland; 6% were unsure where they would complete their degree.

Source: BSS11

QUESTIONS?

Contact Us

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