



November 2020

OCUFA 2020 Study: COVID-19 and the Impact on University Life and Education



Key Messages



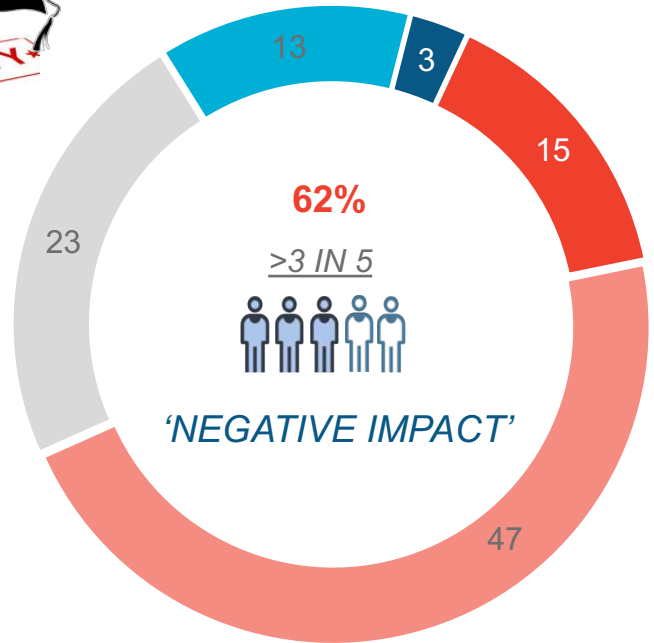
- **Online Learning Has Negatively Impacted the Quality of University Education**

- A large majority of Ontario university students and faculty agree that the adjustments to course delivery and campus life compelled by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic have had an **overall negative impact** on the both quality of education and students' general educational experience. Specifically, 62% of students and 76% of faculty members feel that online learning has negatively impacted the quality of university education in Ontario.

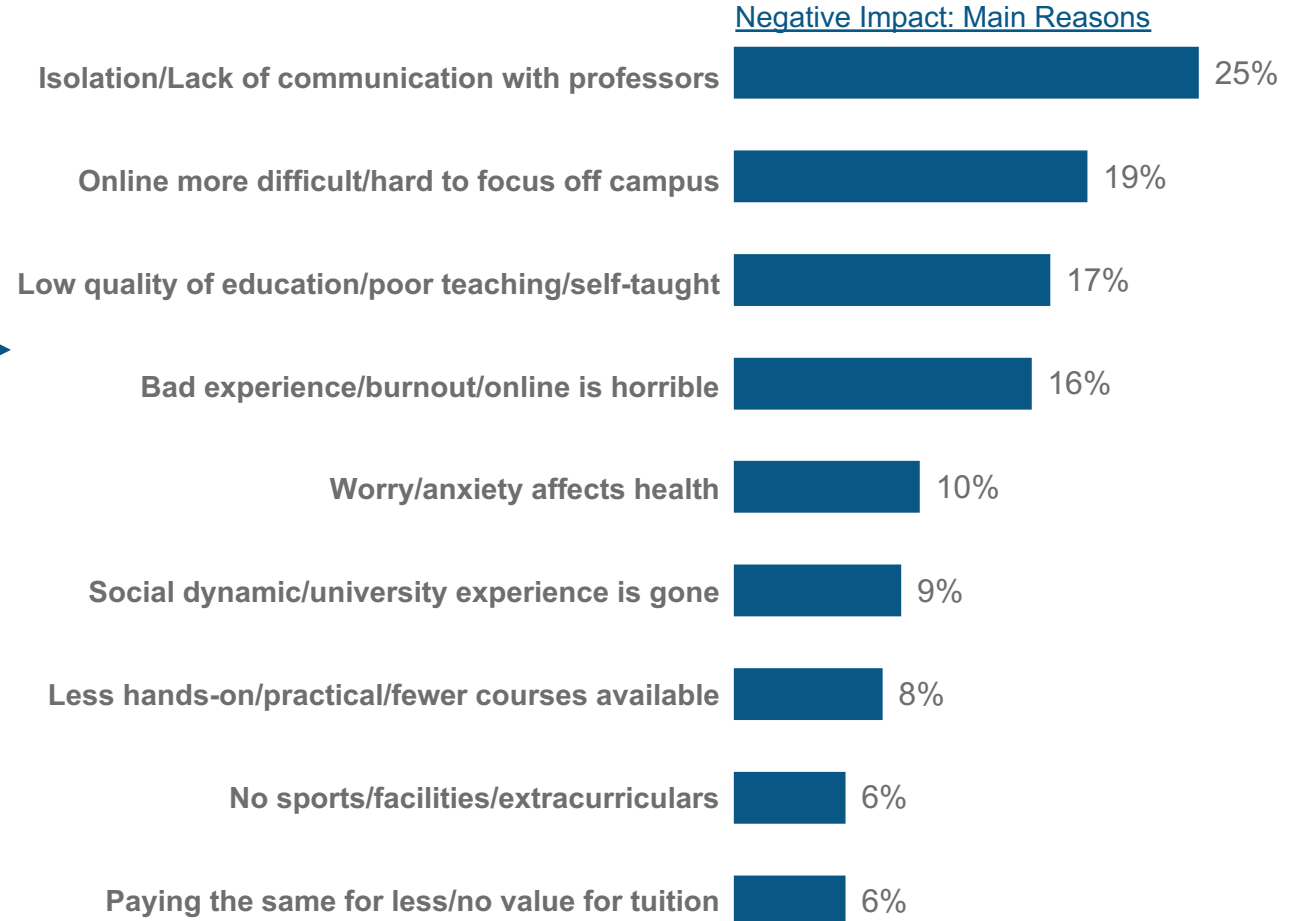


- The main area of dissatisfaction focus on **the lack of interaction and engagement resulting from the migration to online learning/delivery of course material.**
- A major driver of the of the impact on education quality is the shared perception among students and faculty that teaching quality has been diminished due to changes in course delivery and learning formats arising from the pandemic. For many, **“online teaching is a poor substitute... and is challenging for everyone”**.
- Students and faculty are struggling with social isolation, stress, and a lack of institutional support.

Impact, Students' Educational Experience: Main Reasons



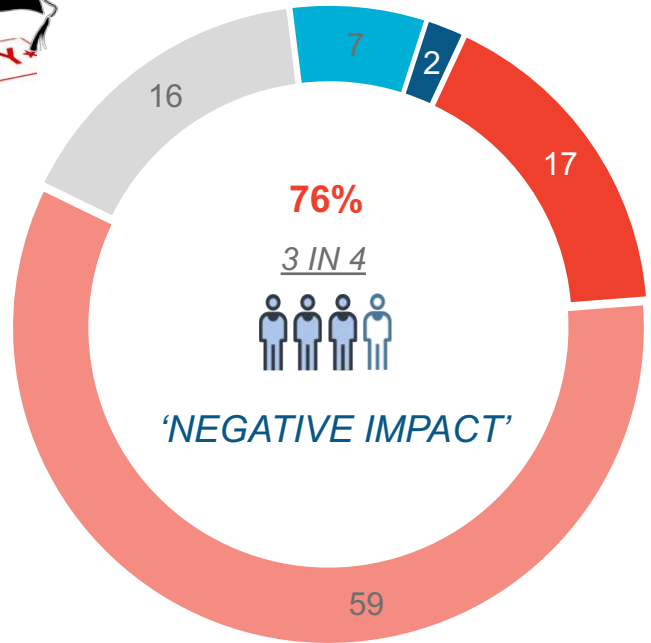
- Highly negative impact
- Moderately negative impact
- No impact
- Moderately positive impact
- Highly positive impact



*Total mentions among =>5% of respondents.

Question: "Thinking about all of the adjustments that your university has made to protect students and staff against the risk of COVID-19, overall how do you think this has impacted the quality of your educational experience?; [IF NEGATIVE IMPACT] You indicated that you believe the adjustments your university has made to protect students and staff against the risk of COVID-19 has had a negative impact on the overall quality of your educational experience...please describe how COVID-19 has affected your experience." [Students n=502/n=310]

Impact, Faculty's Quality of Teaching: Main Reasons



- Highly negative impact
- Moderately negative impact
- No impact
- Moderately positive impact
- Highly positive impact



*Total mentions among =>5% of respondents.

Question: "Thinking about all of the adjustments that your university has made to protect faculty, staff and students and staff against the risk of COVID-19, overall how do you think this has impacted the quality of your teaching?; [IF NEGATIVE IMPACT] You indicated that you believe the adjustments your university has made to protect faculty, staff and students against the risk of COVID-19 has had a negative impact on the overall quality of your teaching...please describe how COVID-19 has affected your experience." [Faculty n=2208/n=1664]

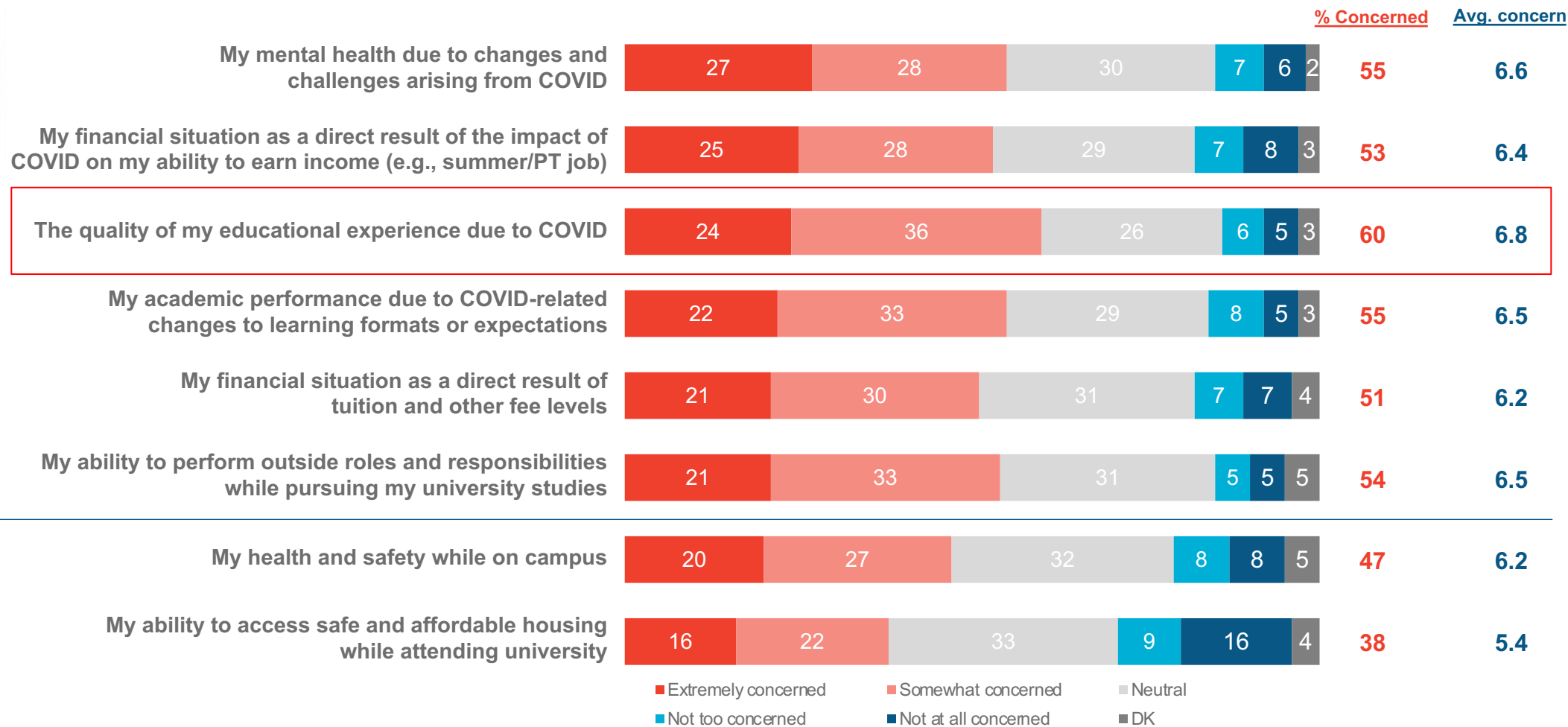
Key Messages



- **Students, faculty, and academic librarians are feeling overwhelmed and looking to their universities to provide additional supports.**
- There is a high level of agreement among students and faculty that the health and safety measures implemented by universities to combat COVID have been generally effective;
- Still, many repercussions of the pandemic have been neglected and need to be addressed.
- For students major areas of concern were: the **overall quality of their educational experience, mental health, financial strain**, and pressures to **keep up with outside roles and responsibilities**.
- Among faculty, areas of highest concern were: **the ability to adequately teach and support students, the ability to sustain their desired level of professional development, their personal mental health**, and their **ability to perform outside roles and responsibilities**.



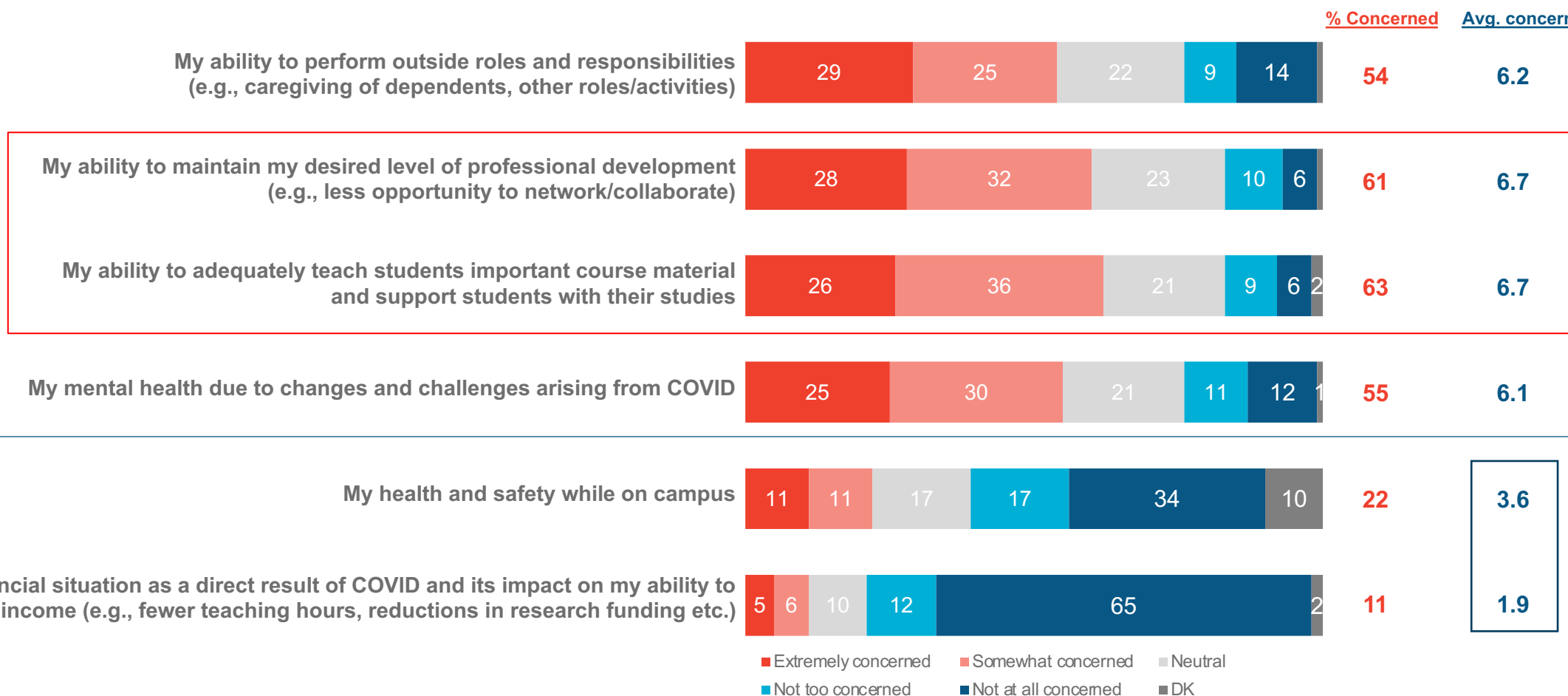
Elements of Education Quality: Students' Level of Concern



MAJORITY

Question: On a scale where 0 is 'not at all concerned' and 10 is 'extremely concerned,' please indicate how concerned you are about each of the following...? [Students n=502]

Elements of Education Quality: Faculty Level of Concern



Question: On a scale where 0 is 'not at all concerned' and 10 is 'extremely concerned,' please indicate how concerned you are about each of the following...? [Faculty n=2208]

Key Messages



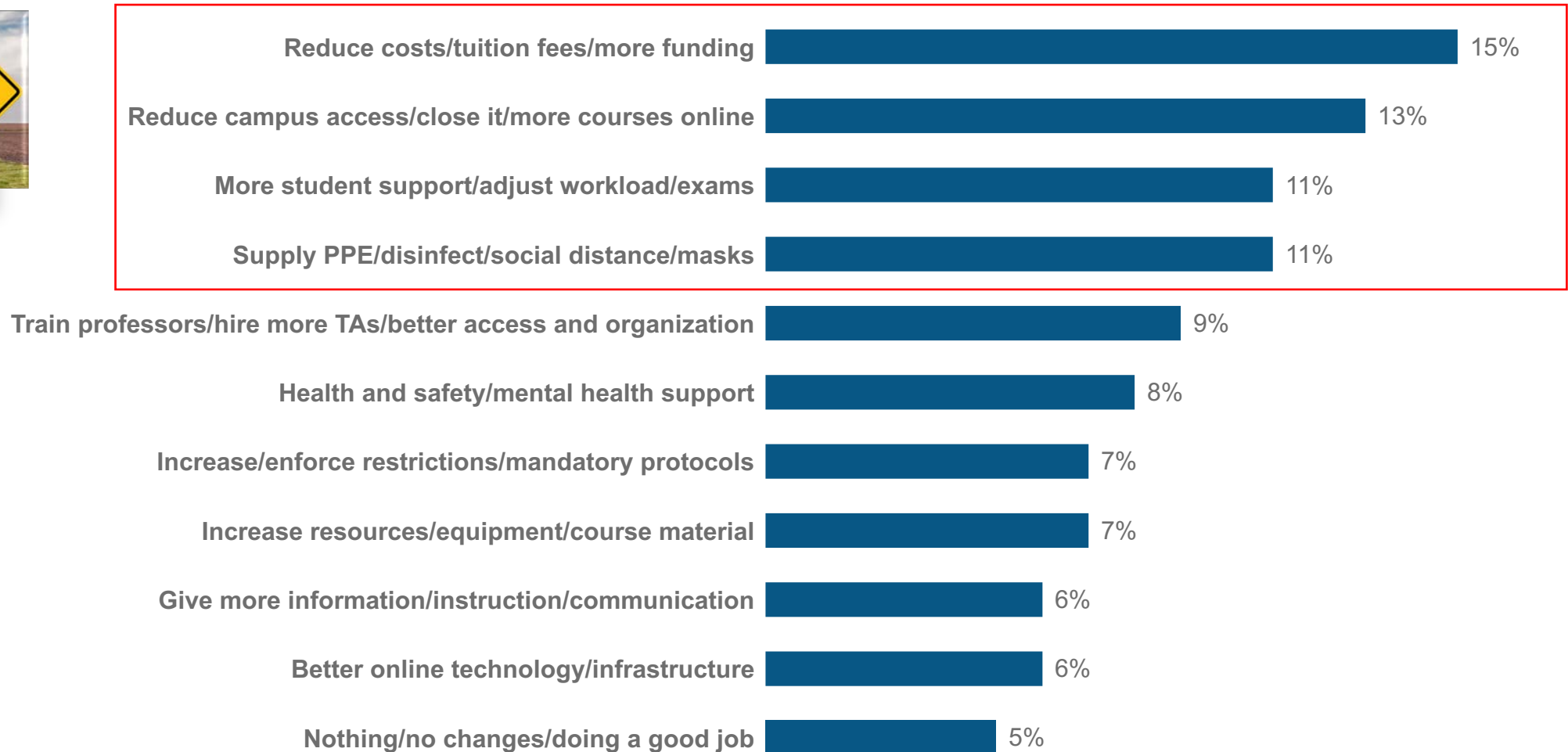
- **Changes are needed as the online reality persists.**

- Looking ahead, students are focusing on four elements as recommended changes namely, **reducing tuition fees, provide more course options as long as campus access is reduced, adjust workload and provide student support as well as supplying PPE.**



- For their part, faculty members suggest **more resources especially technology support** to help with teaching, **recognizing the changing nature of faculty workload** and move to **smaller class sizes.**

Recommended Changes Post-COVID: Students

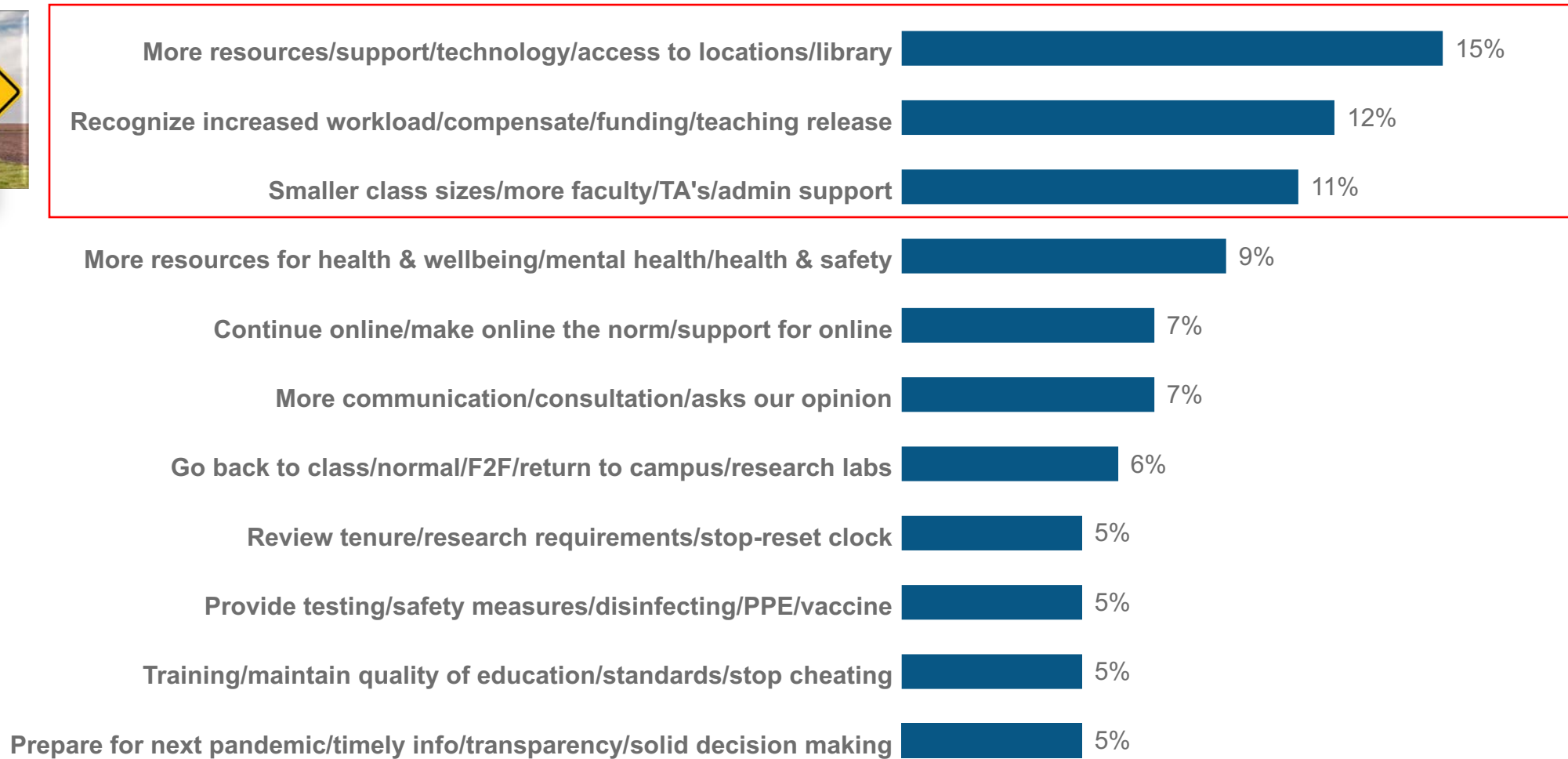


TOP 4

*Total mentions among =>5% of respondents.

Question: "Lastly, going forward, what are two or three changes that your university could make that you think would be effective in helping university students adjust to a post-pandemic world." [Students n=502]

Recommended Changes Post-COVID: Faculty



TOP 3

*Total mentions among =>5% of respondents.

Question: "Lastly, going forward, what are two or three changes that your university could make that you think would be effective in helping faculty and students adjust to a post-pandemic world." [Faculty n=2208]



Executive Summary

Impact on Education (1)



- A large majority of both students and faculty view the pandemic – specifically the adjustments made by universities in response – as having a “*negative impact*” on the quality of students’ general educational experience; for faculty this belief arises, in part, from a perception that the collective adjustments made by their university to protect against the risk of COVID (e.g. migration to online learning/course delivery, more time devoted to following health and safety measures) has adversely affected their teaching and/or their ability to adequately support students in their studies.

- Furthermore, an evaluation of student and faculty perceptions of several major indicators of education quality finds that significant majorities *agree* that each of these indicators have been adversely impacted by the pandemic. Among students, for example, over three in four (77%) agree that their university’s response to the pandemic has had a “*negative impact on my ability to learn course material*”; likewise, among faculty, a full four in five agree that the university’s pandemic response has had a “*negative impact on my teaching ability or ability to convey important learning material to students.*”



- A key aspect of the impact on faculty’s ability to teach students important course material appears to stem from the fact that more than three in four (77%) report a reduction in “*the amount of time I am able to engage with or directly mentor students.*” In turn, over four in five (83%) faculty report an *increase* in their workload compared to prior to the pandemic.

Impact on Education (2)



- Regarding students' current level of concern toward several key aspects of education quality, fully three in five report feeling a general concern toward the *"quality of my educational experience due to COVID."* Other key findings show that more than half of students are concerned about their *academic performance, mental health ("due to changes and challenges arising from COVID")* and their *financial situation* as a direct result COVID's impact on their ability to earn income (e.g., through part-time employment).

- Faculty demonstrate a similar level of concern toward students' learning/academic performance due in part to a perception of their own compromised ability to adequately *"teach students important learning material"* and *"support students with their studies."* Workload changes coupled with a lack of resources to adequately support students' learning may contribute to the fact that over half of faculty (55%) report some level of concern toward their mental health at present.



Health and Safety Response



- There is near unanimity among students and faculty that the health and safety protocols implemented by their university – including online learning, mask wearing, student cohorting, and physical distancing – have been effective in helping to protect the health and safety of the university community against the risk of COVID-19. Importantly, roughly nine in ten students and a similar proportion of faculty agree that each of students, staff and faculty have been “*adequately following the health and safety protocols implemented by the university while on campus.*”

- At the same time, however, there is a gap between faculty and students’ level of satisfaction with the health and safety protection provided by the university is significant. Whereas faculty indicate they are largely satisfied with the university’s efforts regarding health and safety protections (8.5/10), students appear to hold some level of reservation as to their overall effectiveness (7.1/10).

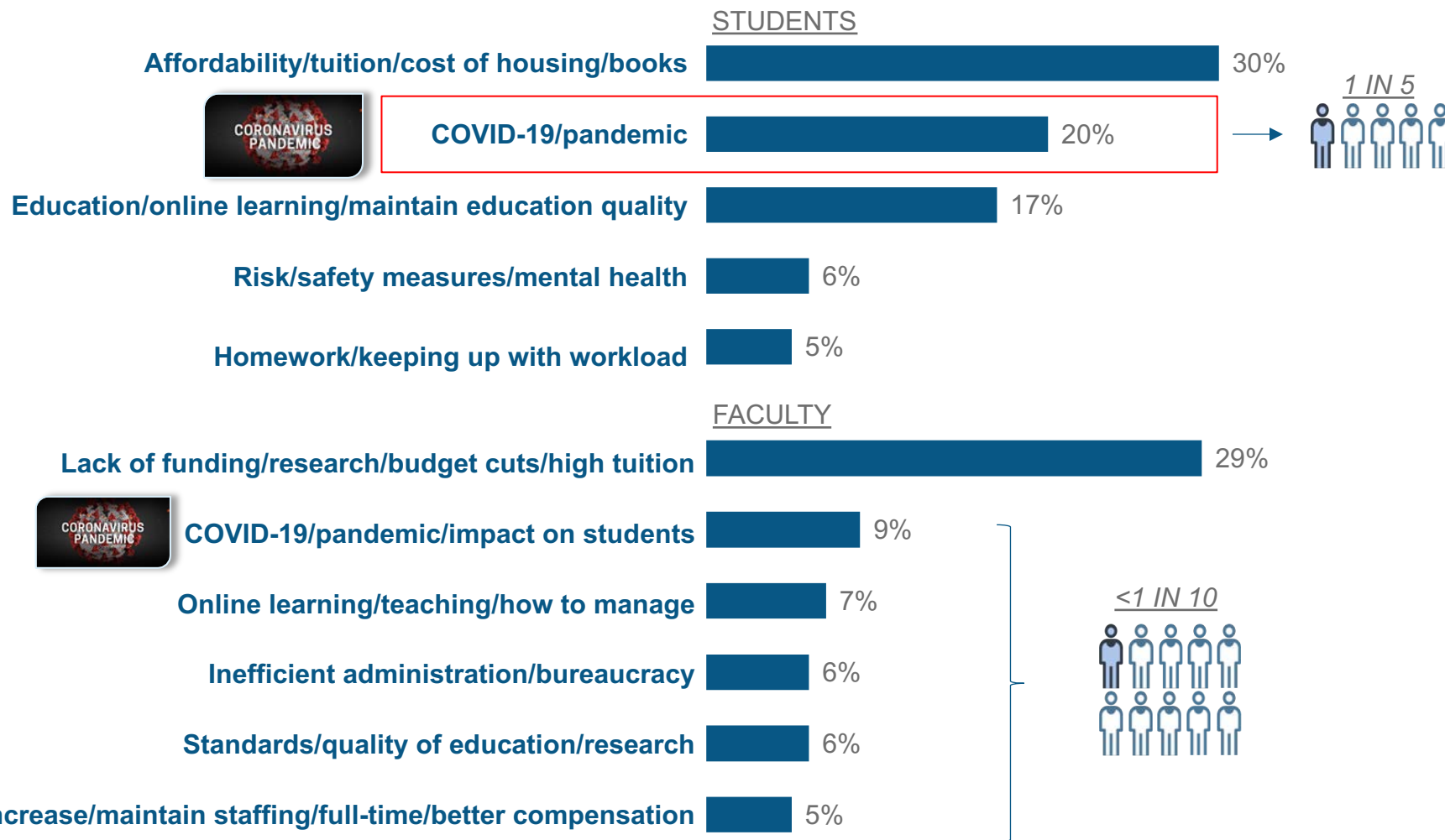


- One explanation for the student-faculty gap on this metric could be the fact that, of the one in five students who have contracted – or know someone who has contracted – COVID-19, fully one-third say that the case was transmitted “on campus.” This compares to just seven percent of faculty who say they know of an incident of on-campus transmission.



COVID-19: Impact on Education

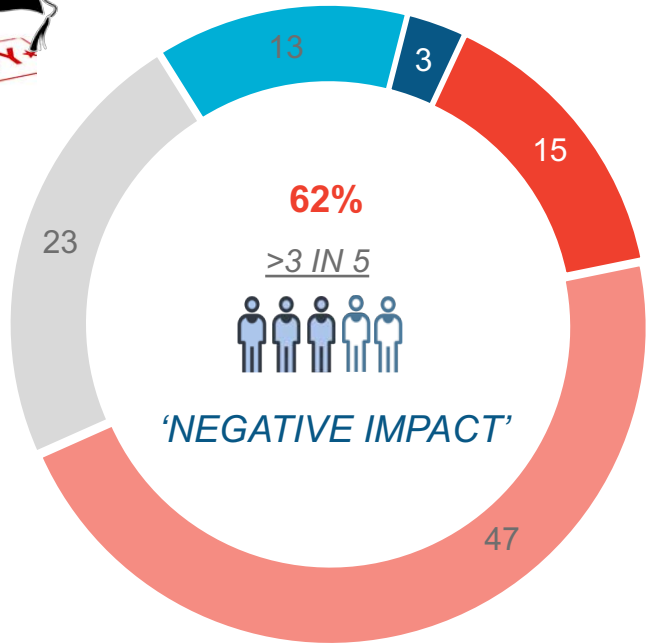
Most Important Issue Currently Facing Universities



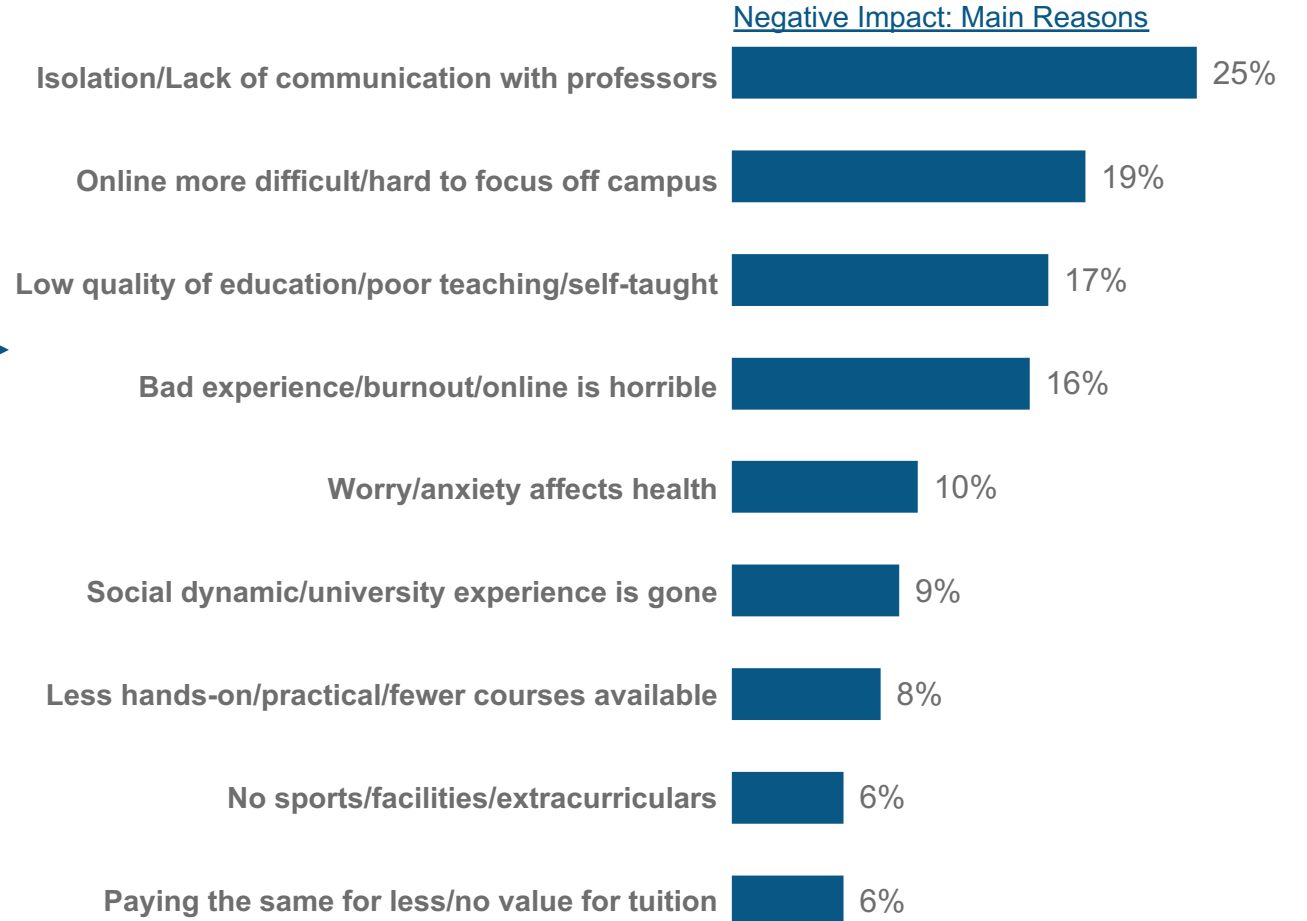
*Total mentions among =>5% of respondents.

Question: "In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing Ontario universities today? [Students n=502; Faculty n=2208]

Impact, Students' Educational Experience: Main Reasons



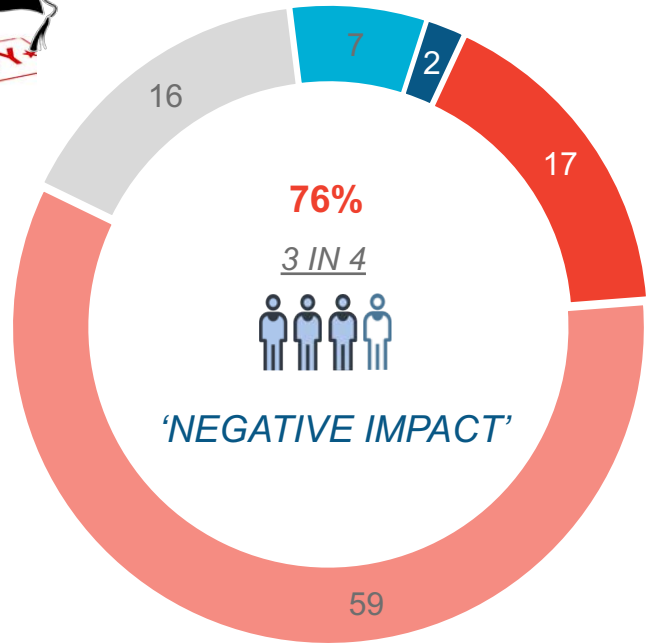
- Highly negative impact
- Moderately negative impact
- No impact
- Moderately positive impact
- Highly positive impact



*Total mentions among =>5% of respondents.

Question: "Thinking about all of the adjustments that your university has made to protect students and staff against the risk of COVID-19, overall how do you think this has impacted the quality of your educational experience?; [IF NEGATIVE IMPACT] You indicated that you believe the adjustments your university has made to protect students and staff against the risk of COVID-19 has had a negative impact on the overall quality of your educational experience...please describe how COVID-19 has affected your experience." [Students n=502/n=310]

Impact, Faculty's Quality of Teaching: Main Reasons



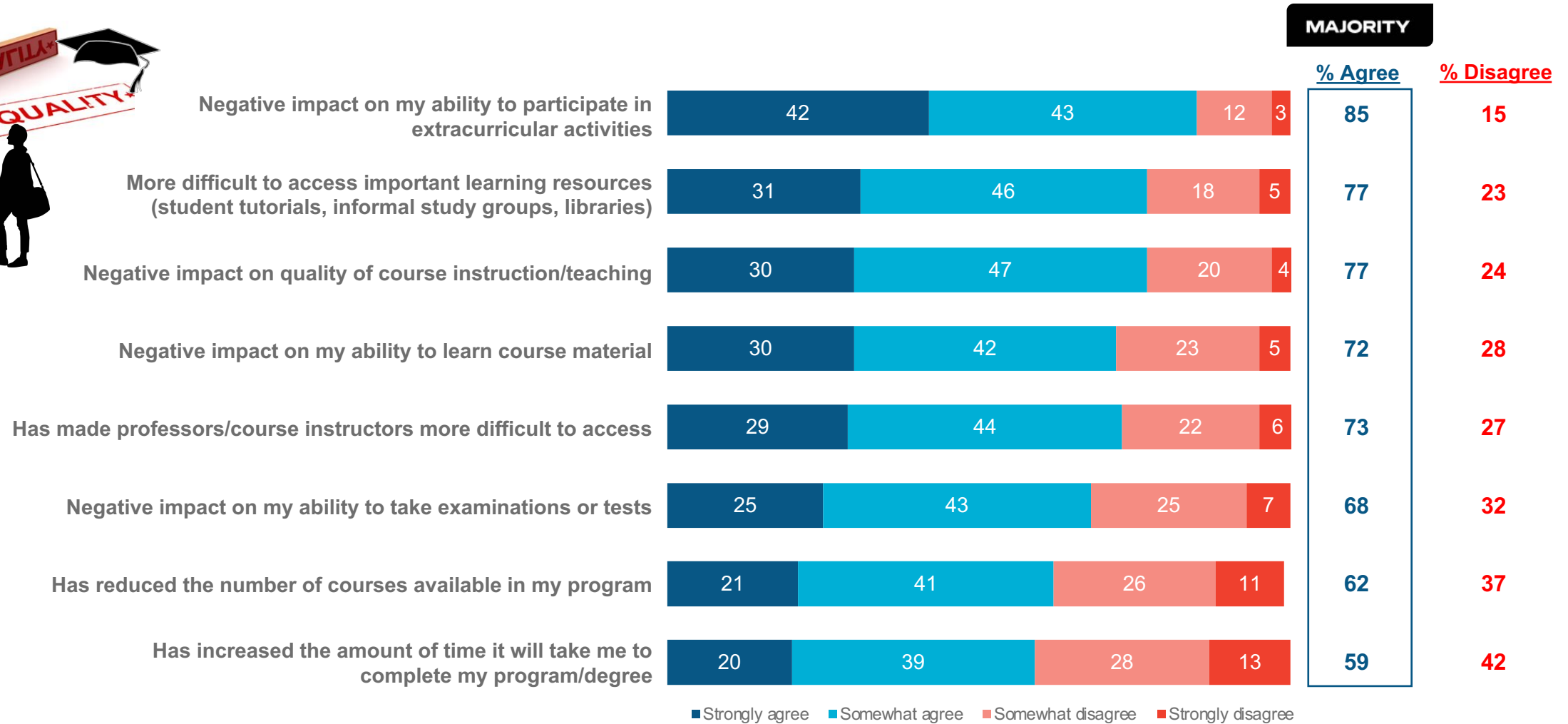
- Highly negative impact
- Moderately negative impact
- No impact
- Moderately positive impact
- Highly positive impact



*Total mentions among =>5% of respondents.

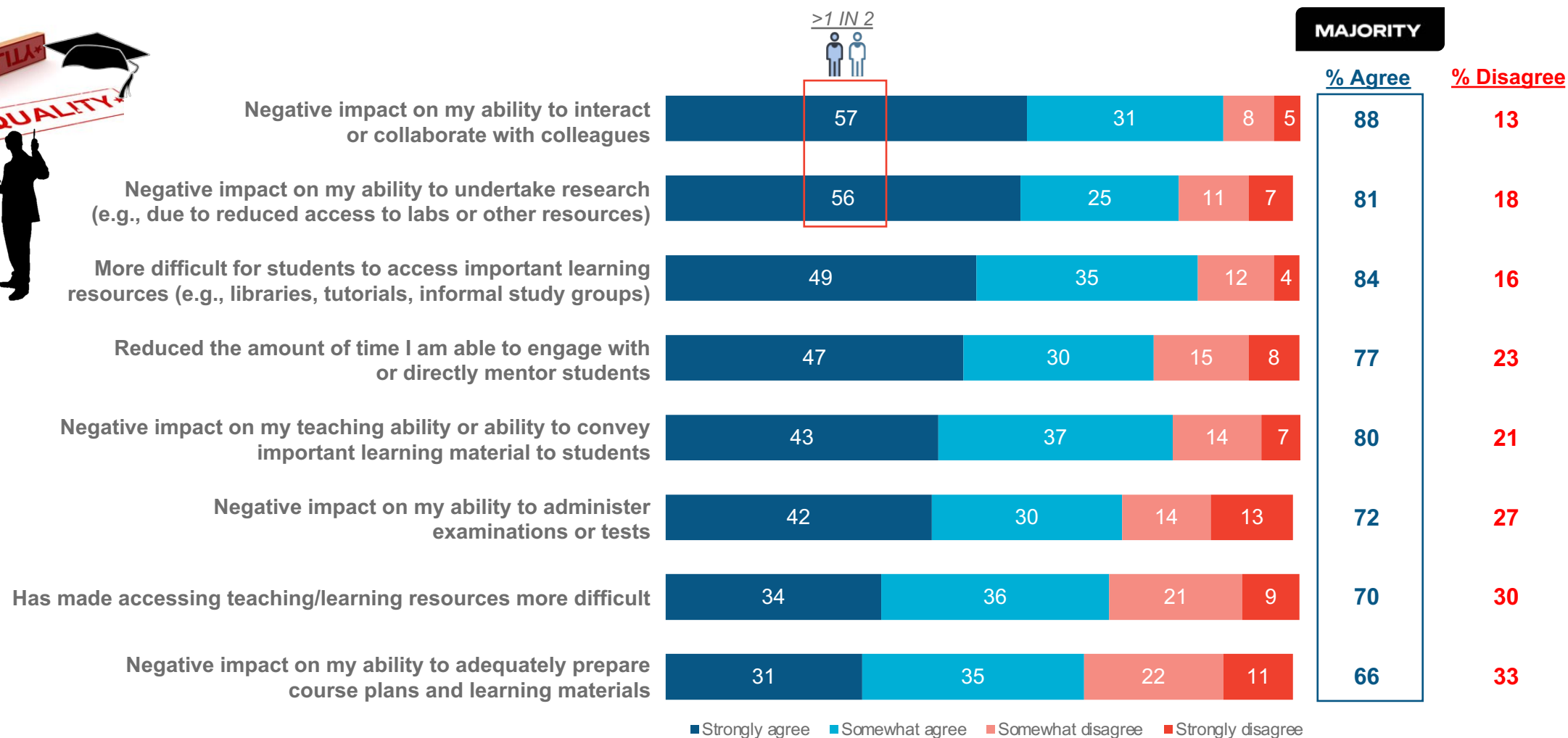
Question: "Thinking about all of the adjustments that your university has made to protect faculty, staff and students and staff against the risk of COVID-19, overall how do you think this has impacted the quality of your teaching?; [IF NEGATIVE IMPACT] You indicated that you believe the adjustments your university has made to protect faculty, staff and students against the risk of COVID-19 has had a negative impact on the overall quality of your teaching...please describe how COVID-19 has affected your experience." [Faculty n=2208/n=1664]

Elements of Educational Experience: Impact of COVID-19



Question: "As you know, universities have made a number of adjustments to their operations following the onset of COVID-19. For each of the following, how much do you agree or disagree that this has directly affected your educational experience...?" [Students n=502]

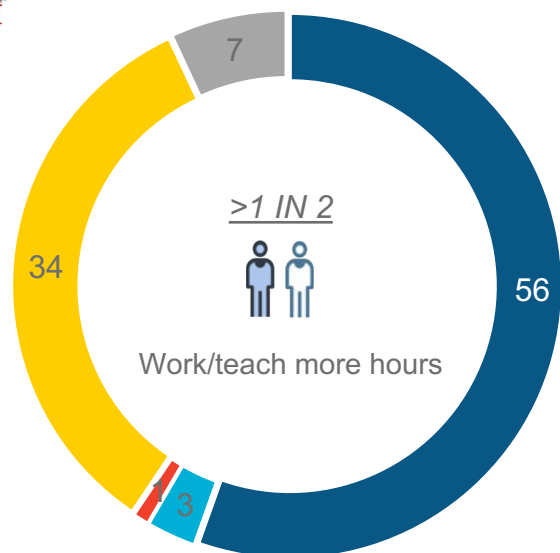
Elements of Teaching Quality: Impact of COVID-19



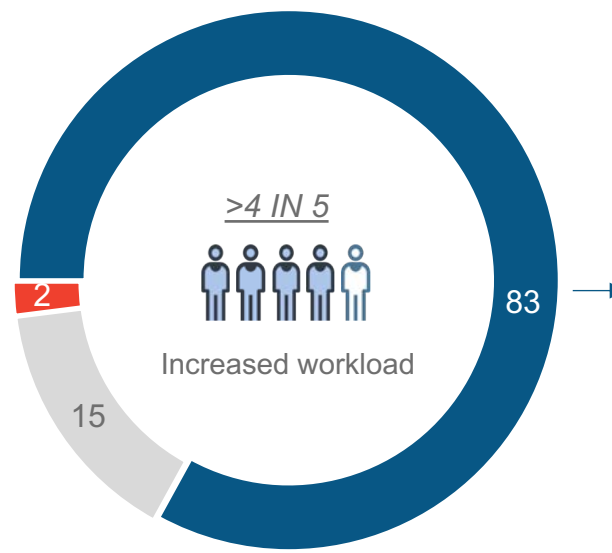
Question: "As you know, universities have made a number of adjustments to their operations following the onset of COVID-19. For each of the following, how much do you agree or disagree that this has directly affected your experience as an educator...?" [Faculty n=2208]



Drivers of Impact, Focus: Changes to Faculty Workload

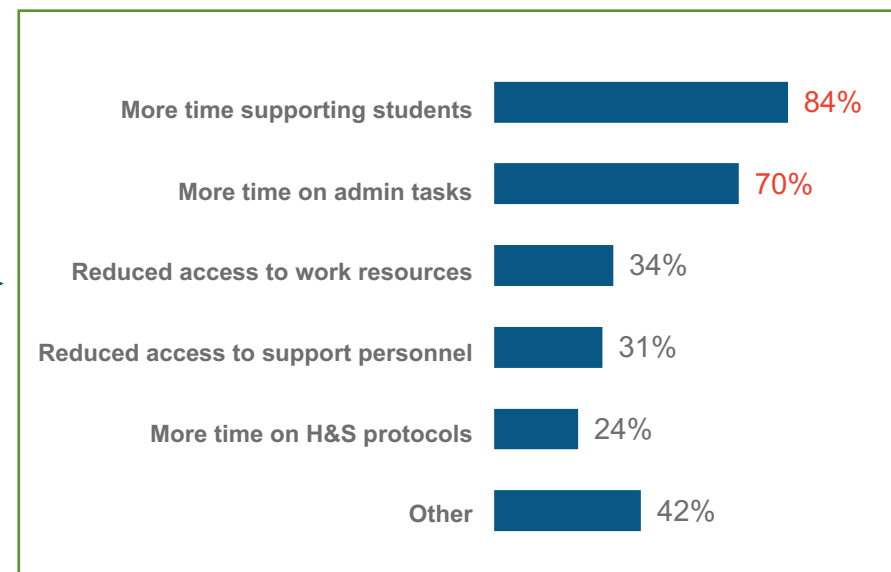


- Work more hours/teach more courses
- Work fewer hours/teach fewer courses
- Not been given a contract this fall
- No change to work arrangement
- Other



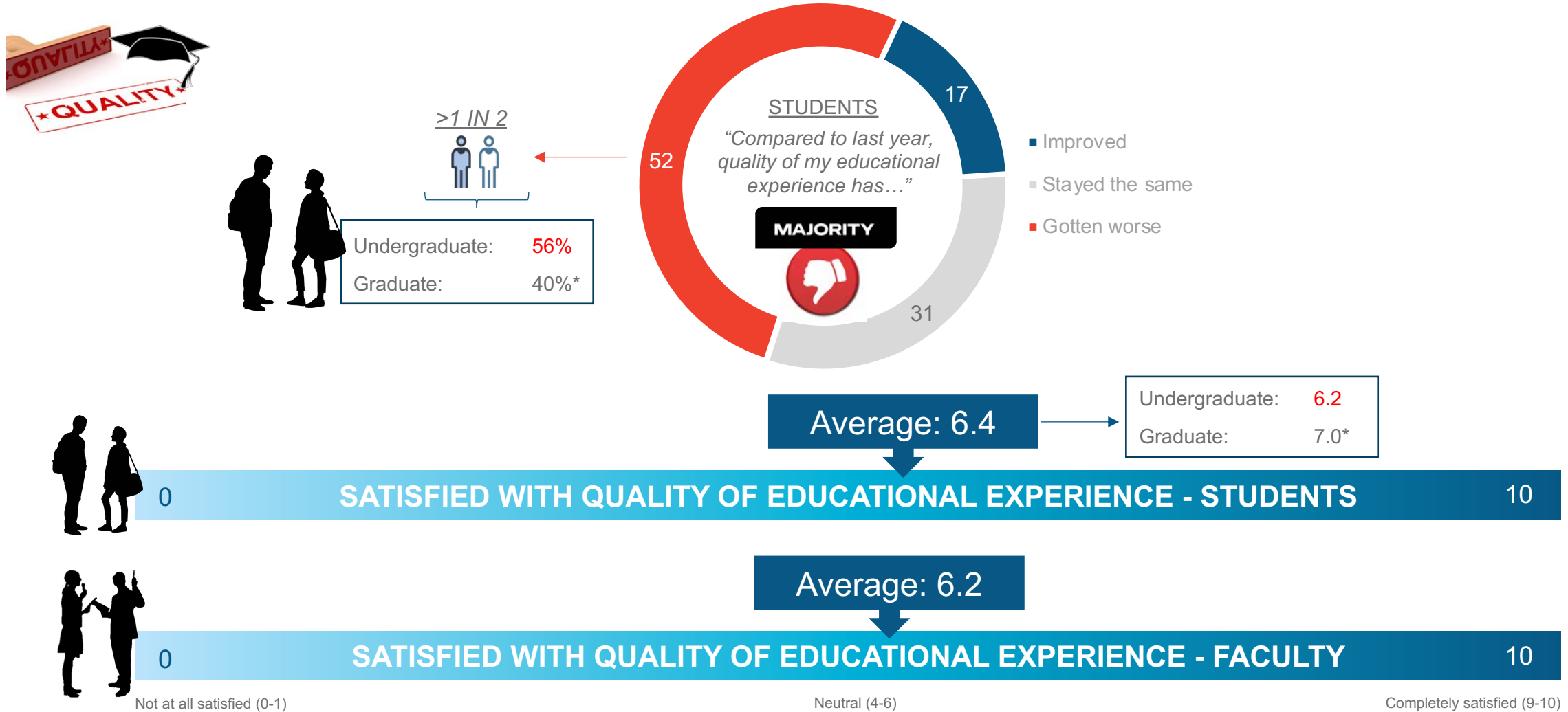
- Increased
- Stayed the same
- Decreased

Main reasons for increased workload



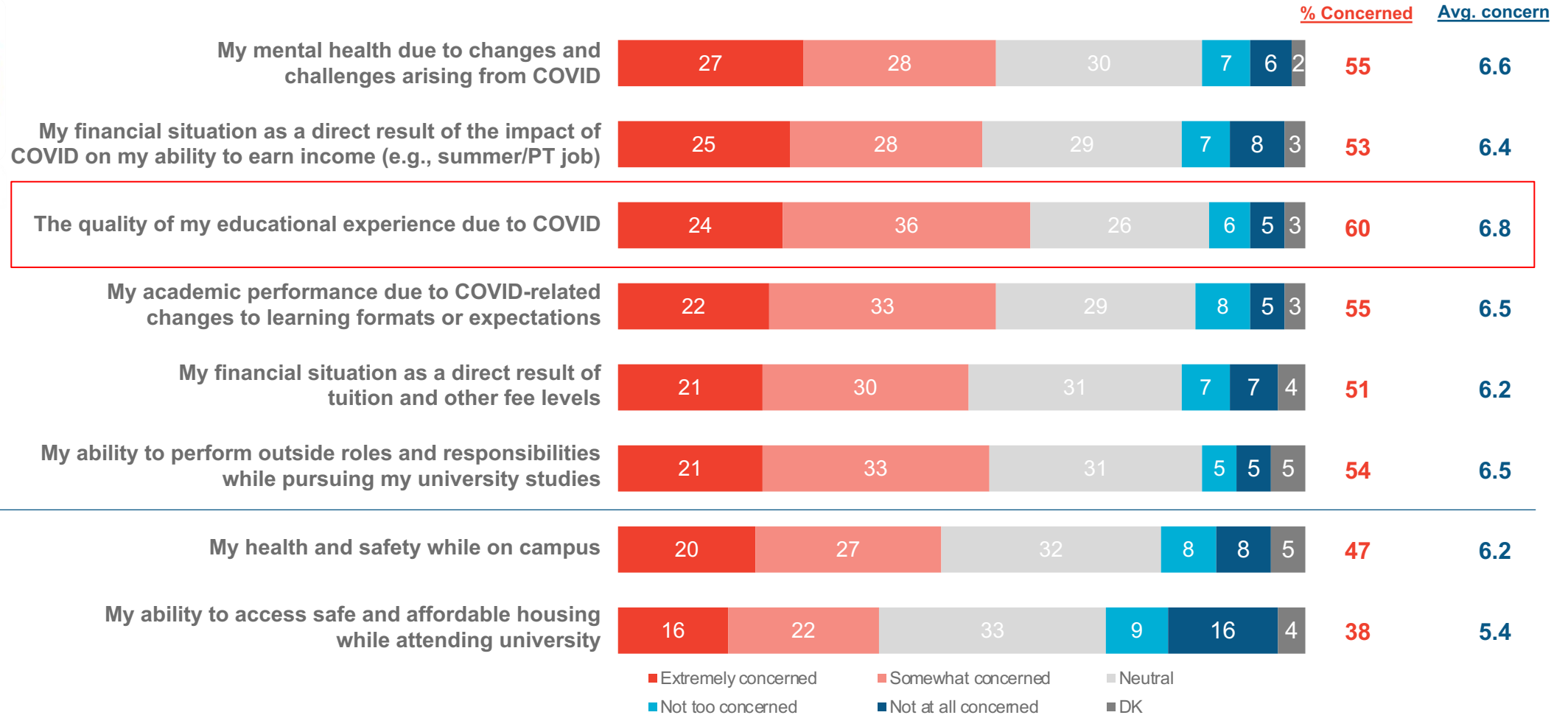
Question: "Notwithstanding any planned leaves or sabbaticals you may have had for the 2020 fall term, compared to last fall has your work arrangement with the university changed in any one of the following ways that you directly attribute to the pandemic?; Compared to this time last year – prior to the COVID-19 pandemic – would you say that your overall workload has increased, decreased or stayed about the same? [IF INDICATED INCREASED OR DECREASED] Which of the following do you think have contributed to the [increase/decrease] in your workload?" [Faculty n=2208/n=2208/n=1829/n=55]

Comparative Quality & Satisfaction, Students & Faculty



Question: [STUDENTS: IF SECOND YEAR OF STUDY OR GREATER] "Compared to last year – prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., Fall 2019 to Winter 2020) – would you say that the quality of your educational experience has improved, gotten worse, or stayed about the same?; Given all of the adjustments [your university and professors or instructors/you as faculty] have had to make due to COVID-19, on a scale where 0 is 'not at all satisfied' and 10 is 'completely satisfied,' overall how satisfied are you with the [quality of your educational experience/quality of the educational experience you have been able to provide students] so far this year?" [Students, n=383/n=502; Faculty n=2208] *Denotes statistically significant difference between comparison groups (p<0.05).

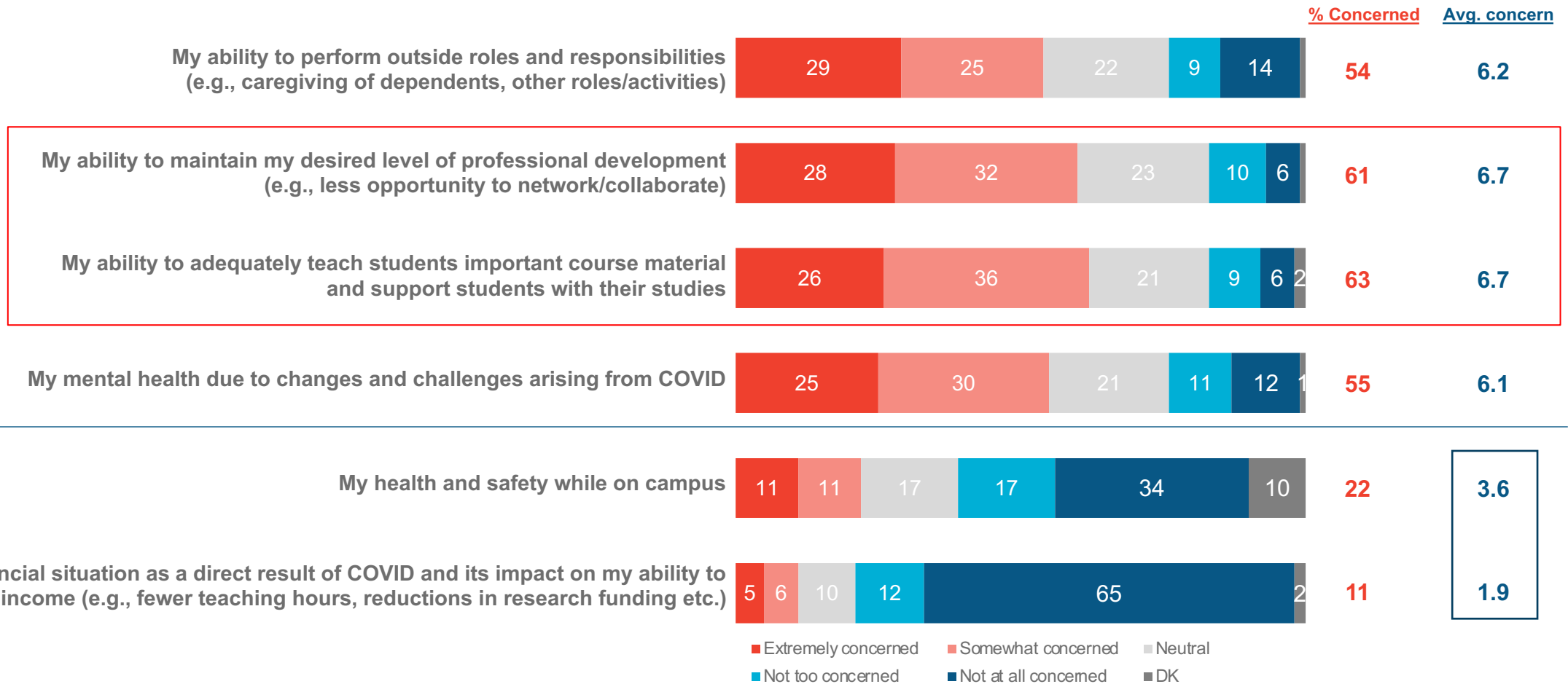
Elements of Education Quality: Students' Level of Concern



MAJORITY

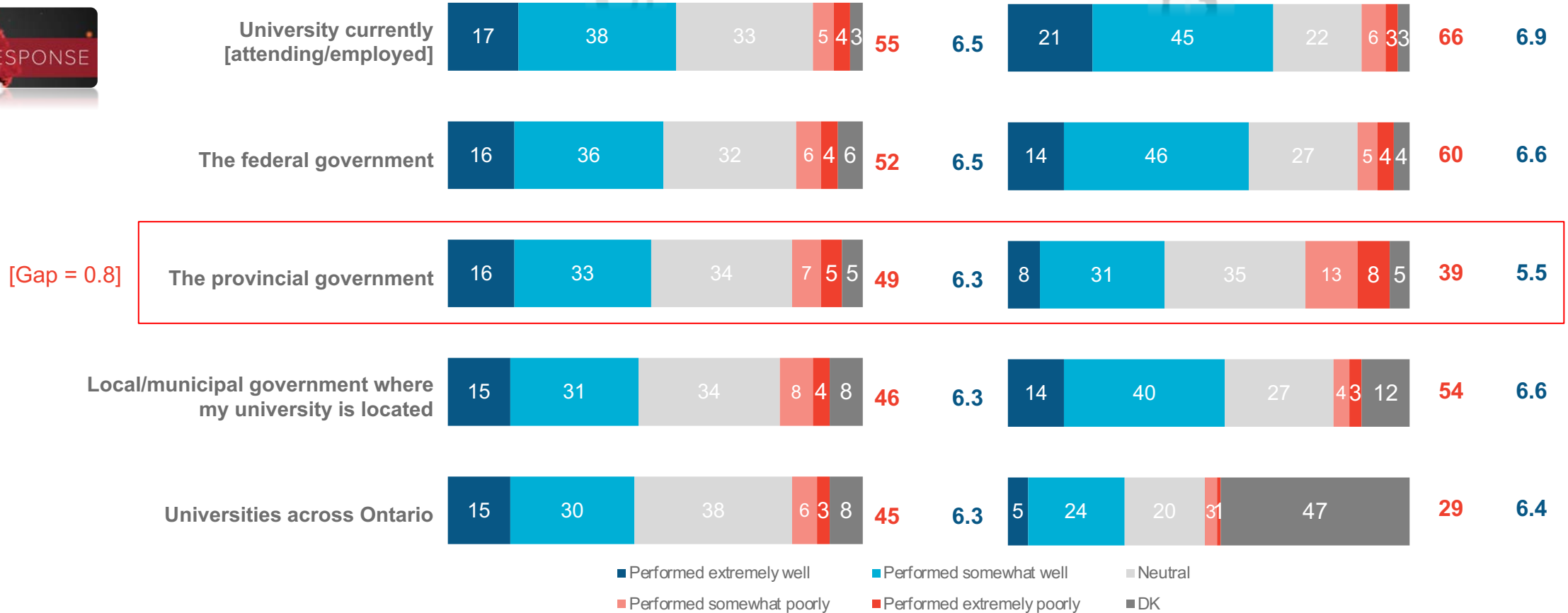
Question: On a scale where 0 is 'not at all concerned' and 10 is 'extremely concerned,' please indicate how concerned you are about each of the following...? [Students n=502]

Elements of Education Quality: Faculty Level of Concern



Question: On a scale where 0 is 'not at all concerned' and 10 is 'extremely concerned,' please indicate how concerned you are about each of the following...? [Faculty n=2208]

Comparative Pandemic Performance

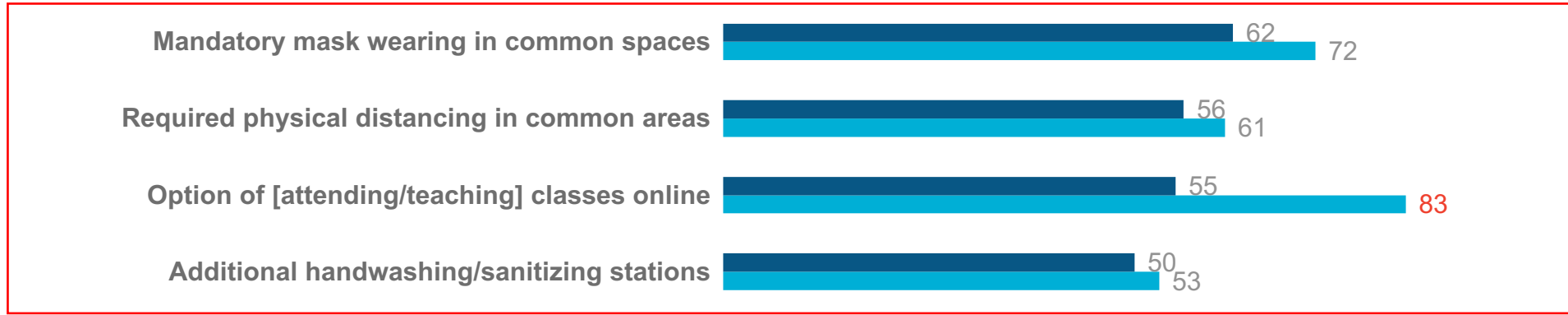
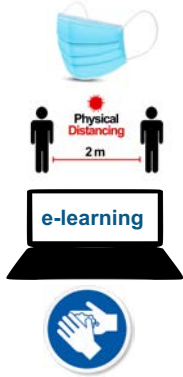


Question: "In terms of overall performance in the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, on a scale where 0 means 'has performed extremely poorly' and 10 means 'has performed extremely well,' how would you rate the performance of each of the following...?" [Students n=502; Faculty n=2208]

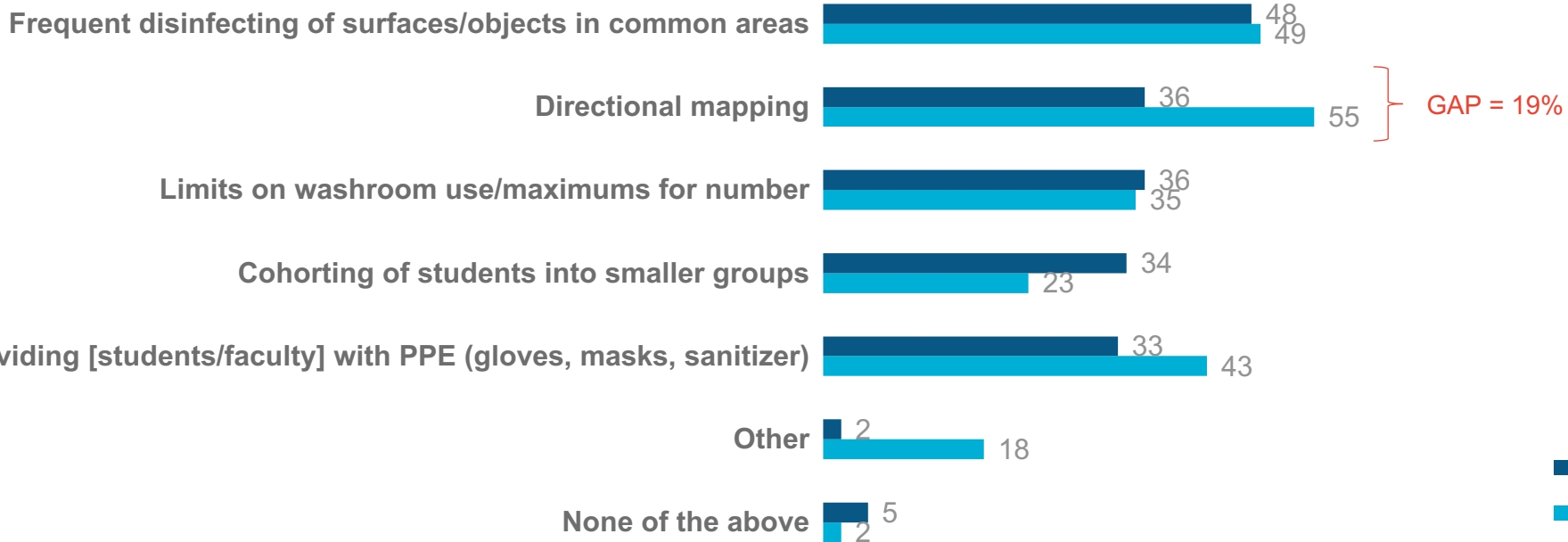


COVID-19: Health & Safety Response

Health & Safety Protocols Implemented by the University



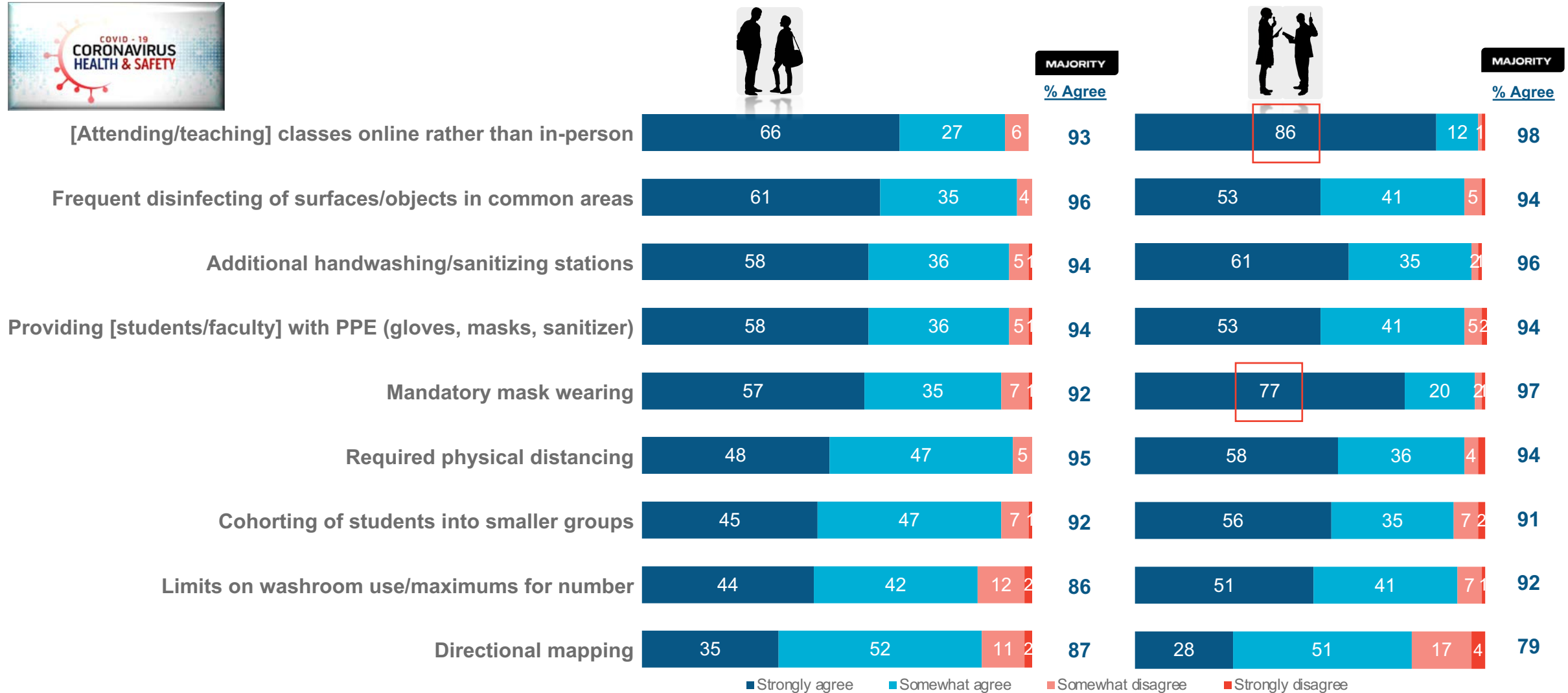
=>50%



GAP = 19%

Question: "Which of the following health and safety protocols were implemented by your university in preparation for the 2020/2021 academic year? Please select only those health and safety protocols that you have seen or experienced directly." [Students n=502; Faculty n=2208]

Perceived Effectiveness of Health & Safety Protocols

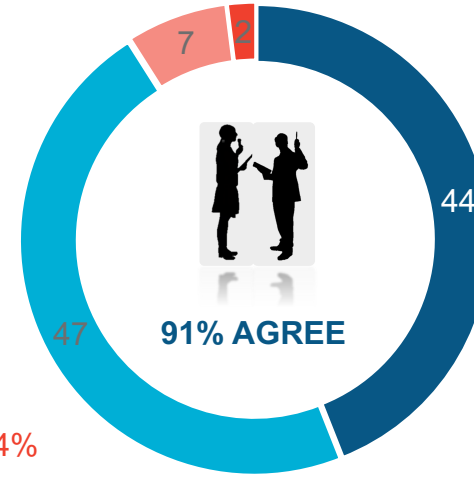
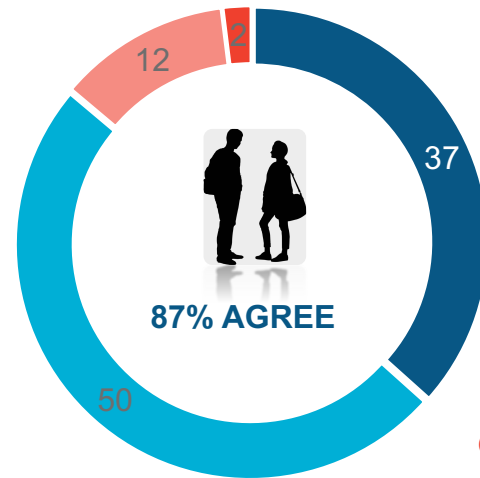


Question: [IF HAVE SEEN OR EXPERIENCED HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOL DIRECTLY] "How much do you agree or disagree that [HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOL] has been effective in helping to protect the health and safety of you and others while on campus?" [Students n=166 to n=478; Faculty n=509 to n=1842]

Adherence to Health & Safety Protocols



Adequate adherence



Gap = 4%

Students

Average: 7.1

Faculty

Average: 8.5

Gap = 1.4



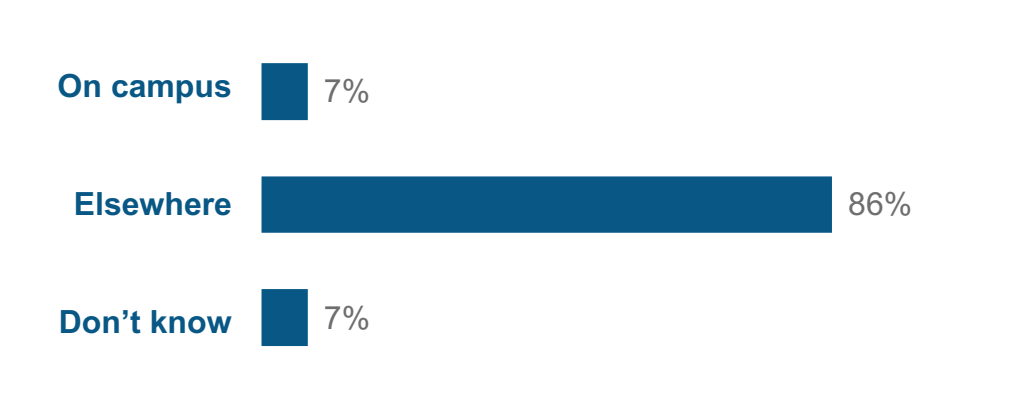
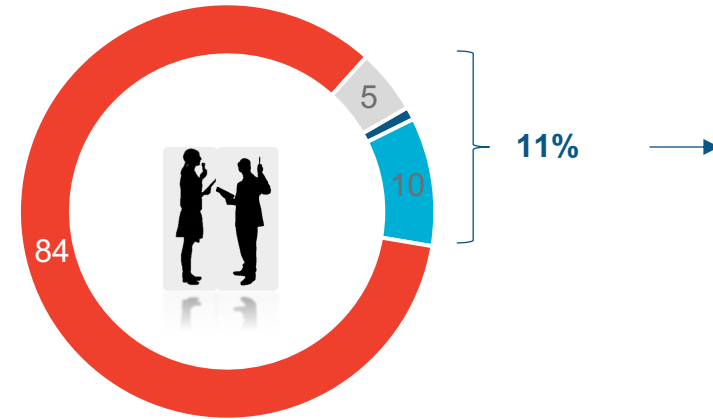
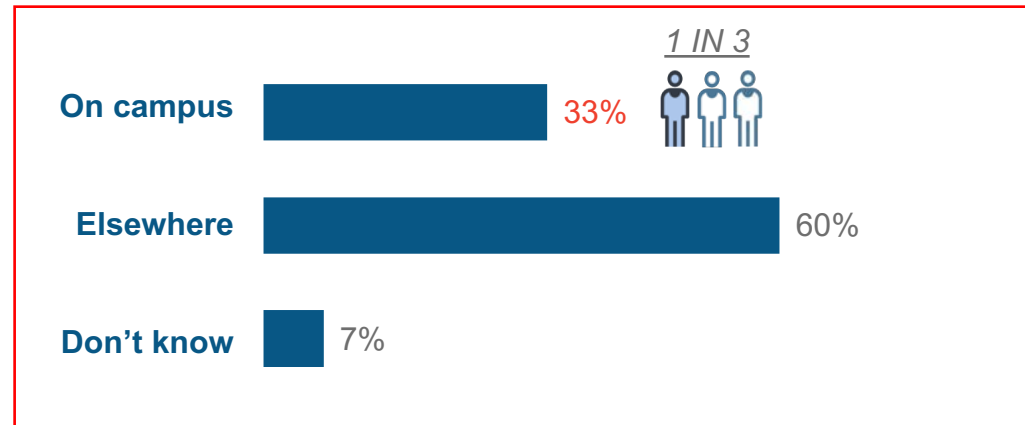
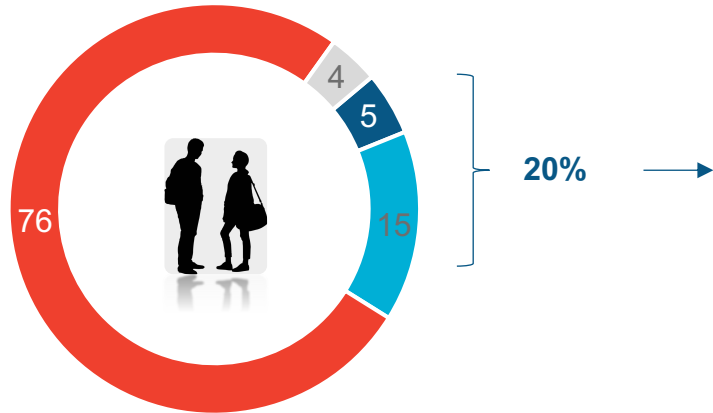
Not at all satisfied (0-1)

Neutral (4-6)

Completely satisfied (9-10)

{IF HAVE SEEN/EXPERIENCED HEALTH & SAFETY PROTOCOLS} Overall, how much do you agree or disagree that students, faculty and staff have been adequately following the health and safety protocols implemented by your university to protect individuals from the risk of COVID-19 while on campus?; Specifically regarding the risk of contracting COVID-19, on a scale where 0 is 'not at all satisfied' and 10 is 'completely satisfied,' overall how satisfied are you with the level of health and safety protection provided to you by your university during the 2020 fall term? [Students n=502/n=478/n=502; Faculty n=2208/n=2165/n=2208].

Contracted COVID-19?: On-Campus or Elsewhere



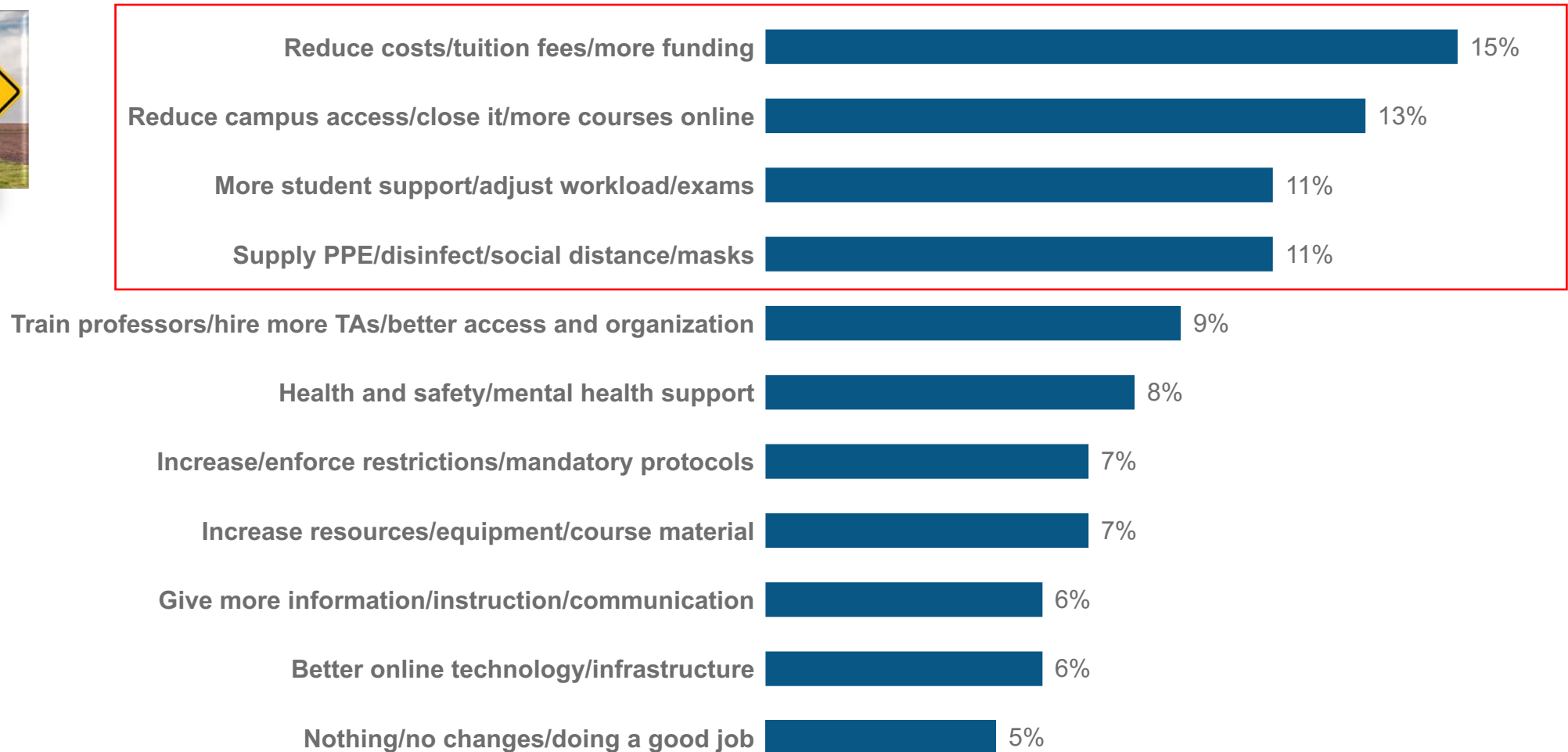
- Yes, I have contracted COVID-19
- Yes, someone close to me has contracted COVID-19
- Neither myself nor someone I know has contracted COVID-19
- Don't know

Question: "Have you or has someone close to you contracted COVID-19?"; [IF YES] As far as you know, was the COVID-19 case contracted on campus or from elsewhere?" [Students n=502/n=101; Faculty n=2208/n=240]



COVID-19: Post-Pandemic Planning

Recommended Changes Post-COVID: Students

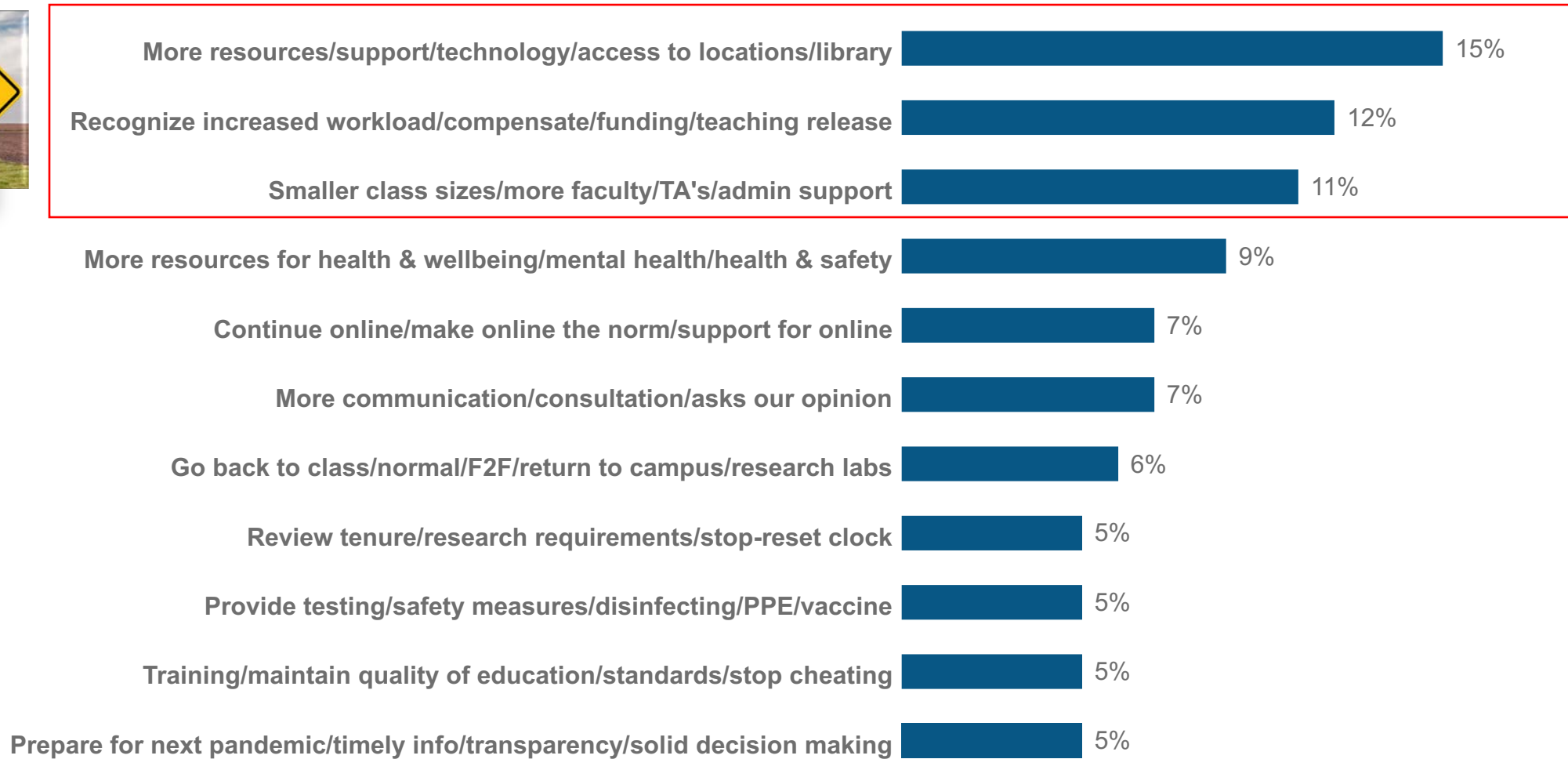


TOP 4

*Total mentions among =>5% of respondents.

Question: "Lastly, going forward, what are two or three changes that your university could make that you think would be effective in helping university students adjust to a post-pandemic world." [Students n=502]

Recommended Changes Post-COVID: Faculty



TOP 3

*Total mentions among =>5% of respondents.

Question: "Lastly, going forward, what are two or three changes that your university could make that you think would be effective in helping faculty and students adjust to a post-pandemic world." [Faculty n=2208]

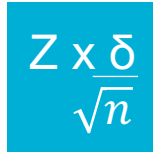


Methodology

Methodology



The present survey was undertaken online with a total of 502 university students and 2208 university faculty and academic librarians aged 18 and older.



Corresponding probability samples of this size would yield a margin of error of **+/- 4.4 and +/-1.9** percentage points, 19 times out of 20, respectively. The margin of error is larger in stratified analyses due to smaller sample sizes.



Student data were collected between October 16 and October 23, 2020 and faculty data were collected between October 20 and November 6, 2020. Data are considered representative of the current population of university students and faculty in Ontario.



Each of the student and faculty surveys took respondents approximately 15 minutes to complete.



Means and percentages are reported as rounded to the nearest whole number; hence, percentages may not always add to 100.