

Spring 2021

---

# RISC Survey Results

## Institutional Summary

### RISC Survey Description

The Revealing Institutional Strengths and Challenges (RISC) Survey was conducted in Spring 2021, with a total of 1,643 respondents. The survey provides data about student success and the obstacles they face in reaching their goals. RISC Survey is comprised of three main sections: student challenges, student-office interactions, and their views on the college.

First, the survey asked students about the obstacles they faced in five broad areas: academic support services, campus environment, finances, and financial aid, succeeding in their courses, and work and personal issues. Each of the five areas had unique challenges that students could select.

Next, students were asked about their interactions with offices on campus. AVC selected the specific offices that appeared in the survey.

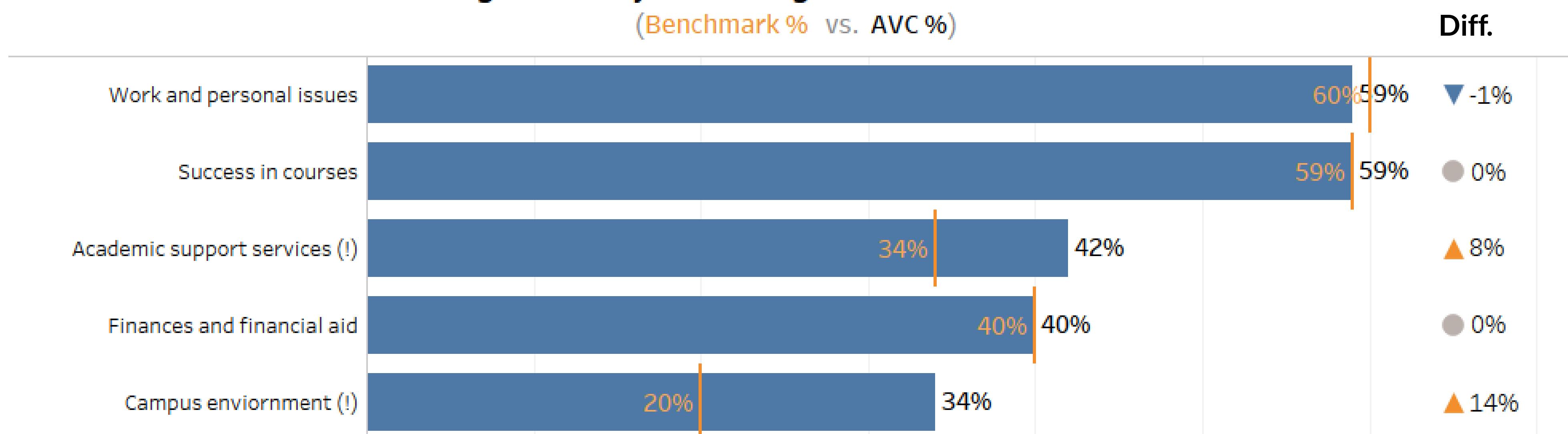
Last, students were asked about their overall views of the college. Students were asked if they would recommend AVC to a friend, if AVC is a good value, and whether AVC was helping them meet their educational goals. Furthermore, students were asked two open-ended questions about AVC's greatest strengths and to identify one thing AVC could change to help them succeed as a student.

# Main Challenges

RISC survey asked students about the unique challenges they face during college. Students could indicate more than one challenge in their responses. Students were asked if they faced challenges in any of the above areas. They were then asked specific questions depending on how they responded.

Figure 1 shows AVC students' major challenges to student success with benchmark comparisons. These benchmarks are based on students' responses at other colleges that took the survey. A positive difference indicates that more students reported challenges in that area than the benchmark group.

**Figure 1. Major challenges to student success**  
(Benchmark % vs. AVC %)



Tables 1 to 5 provide a more detailed response to their major challenges. The major categories have been ranked from most prevalent challenge to least. The tables below show only the most common subcategory within major categories. For example, students found 'family' (major category) to be the most challenging with their work and personal life. They found 'balancing demands of family and college' (subcategory) the most difficult within 'family.'

**Table 1. Challenges with Work and Personal Life**

	% of students	n
Family	41%	679
Difficulty balancing demands of family and college	30%	486
Work	32%	527
Work hours do not leave me enough time to study	17%	280
Health and disability issues	24%	387
Emotional/mental health issues	17%	281
Transportation to campus	12%	198
Car or carpool not reliable	6%	96

Notes: Students' top choice is shown for each major category. Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within topic area. Denominator for percentages is total number of survey respondents (N=1,643).

## Main Challenges (Continued)

Students' responses revealed that online learning is the primary challenge affecting their success in courses—twenty-eight percent of students who selected online classes as a challenge identified difficulty learning the material on their own as an obstacle to their success.

**Table 2. Challenges with Success in Courses**

	% of students	n
Online classes	40%	654
Difficulty learning the material on my own	28%	460
Developmental courses (math, reading, or, writing)	23%	380
Courses were too hard	8%	133
Doing college-level work	19%	304
Poor planning and time management skills	10%	163
Faculty	18%	299
Did not teach well	11%	181

Notes: Students' top choice is shown for each major category. Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within topic area. Denominator for percentages is total number of survey respondents (N=1,643).

Twenty-two percent of respondents from the total survey selected academic advising as a significant challenge in academic support services. Of those students who identified academic advising as a challenge, fifteen percent said it was difficult to meet with, speak to, or email an advisor.

**Table 3. Challenges with Academic Support Services**

	% of students	n
Academic advising	22%	356
Difficult to meet with, speak to, or email advisor	15%	250
Registering for courses	21%	350
Course was offered but full	12%	198
Tutoring	12%	191
Tutoring not available in the subject area I needed	5%	87
Computer and science labs	10%	161
Problems using computers and equipment	3%	49
Library	9%	148
Resources I needed not available online	5%	77

Notes: Students' top choice is shown for each major category. Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within topic area. Denominator for percentages is total number of survey respondents (N=1,643).

## Main Challenges (Continued)

Students identified paying for college and living expenses as their primary challenge in the category, 'Finances and Financial Aid. Twenty-four percent of those who said paying for college and living expenses was a challenge said they had difficulty paying for books, software, and other supplies.

**Table 4. Challenges with Finances and Financial Aid**

	% of students	n
Paying college and living expenses	31%	511
Books, software, and other supplies	24%	397
Working with financial aid office	19%	316
Difficult to meet with, speak to, or email staff	12%	204
Military and employer tuition benefits	2%	34
Did not know process for obtaining benefits	1%	16

Notes: Students' top choice is shown for each major category. Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within topic area. Denominator for percentages is total number of survey respondents (N=1,643).

Students chose parking as a primary challenge with the campus environment. Of those who identified parking as a challenge, most said they had difficulty finding parking on campus.

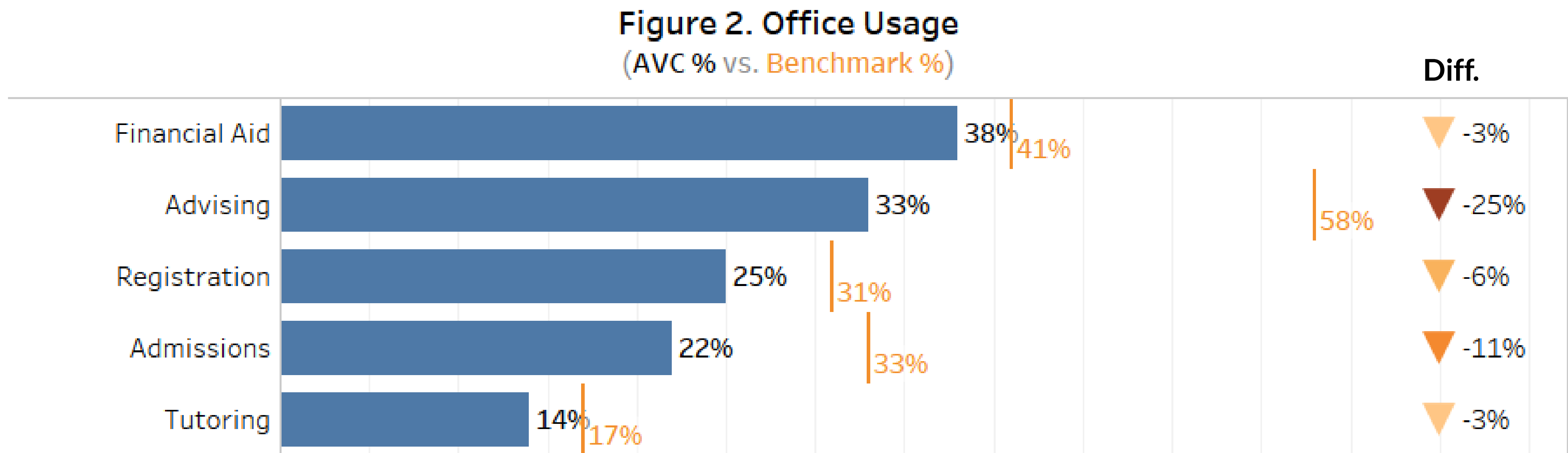
**Table 5. Challenges with the Campus Environment**

	% of students	n
Parking	24%	400
Difficulty finding parking on or near campus	23%	378
Interactions with other students	13%	206
Did not know many other students	9%	145
Safety and crime	8%	126
Parking lots not safe	5%	82

Notes: Students' top choice is shown for each major category. Percentages do not sum to 100 because students could choose multiple challenges within topic area. Denominator for percentages is total number of survey respondents (N=1,643).

# Student-Office Interactions

Figure 2 shows student interactions with the student support offices chosen by AVC for the RISC survey. Overall, AVC students reported lower levels of interaction with student support offices than benchmark group.

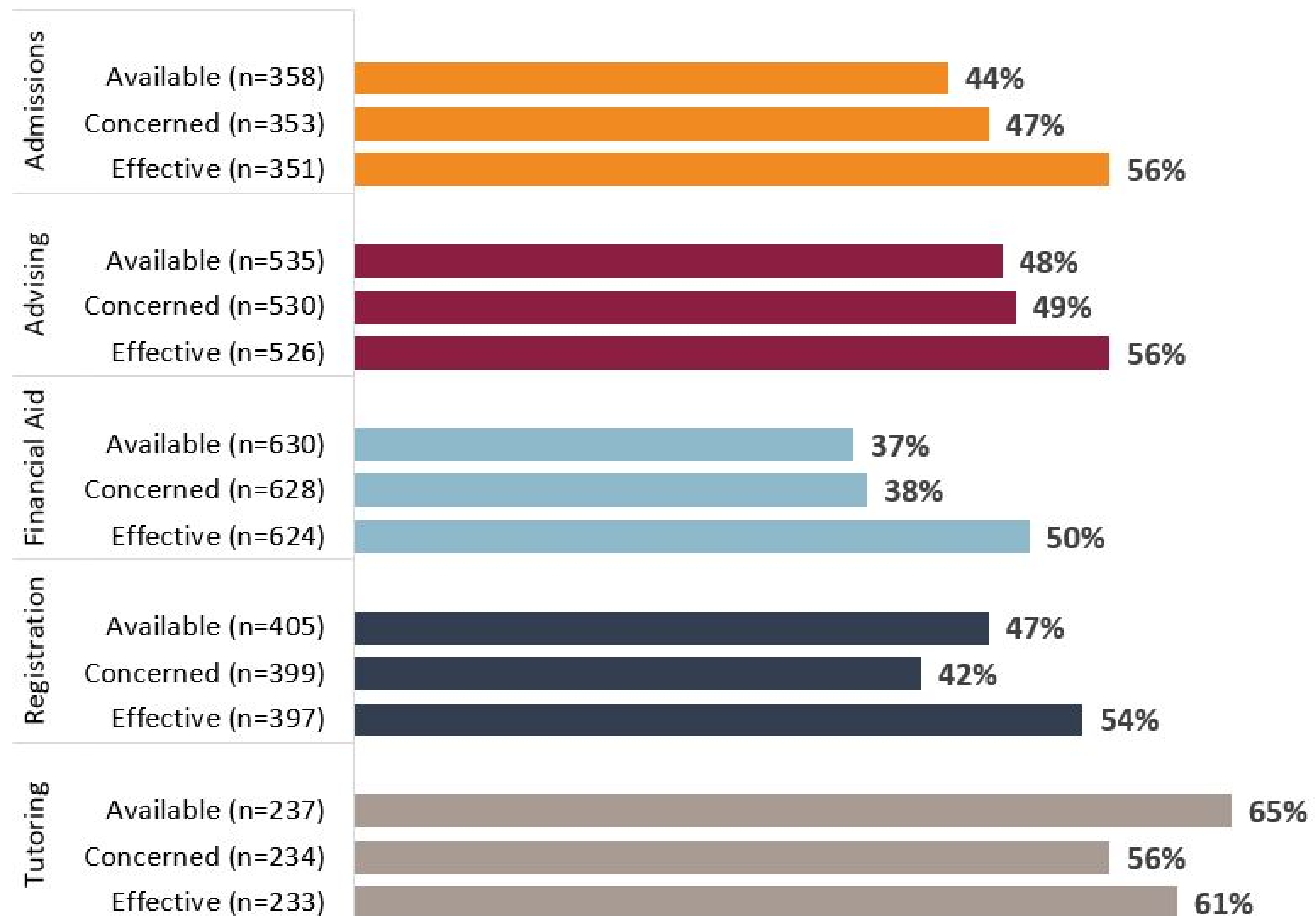


If students indicated they had interacted with an office during the Spring 2021 semester, they were asked three questions about interactions with staff:

- **"How available were [office] staff when you interacted with them?"** ('Very available' to 'Very unavailable')
- **"How concerned were [office] staff about addressing your issue?"** ('Very concerned' to 'Very unconcerned')
- **"How effective were [office] staff when addressing your issue?"** ('Very effective' to 'Very ineffective')

Figure 3 shows the percentage of students choosing the top category.

**Figure 3. Student-Administration Interactions**  
(percentage of respondents choosing top category)



# Views of the Institution

Students were asked a few questions about their overall views of AVC.

First, students were asked, "Based on your experiences, how likely are you to recommend AVC to a friend?" Ninety-two percent of respondents would somewhat likely or very likely recommend AVC to a friend.

**Figure 4. Would You Recommend AVC to a Friend?**



Next, students were asked to rate the overall value of their education at AVC. Ninety-five percent of students felt their education was worth what they paid (or more than what they paid).

**Figure 5. Overall Value of Education**

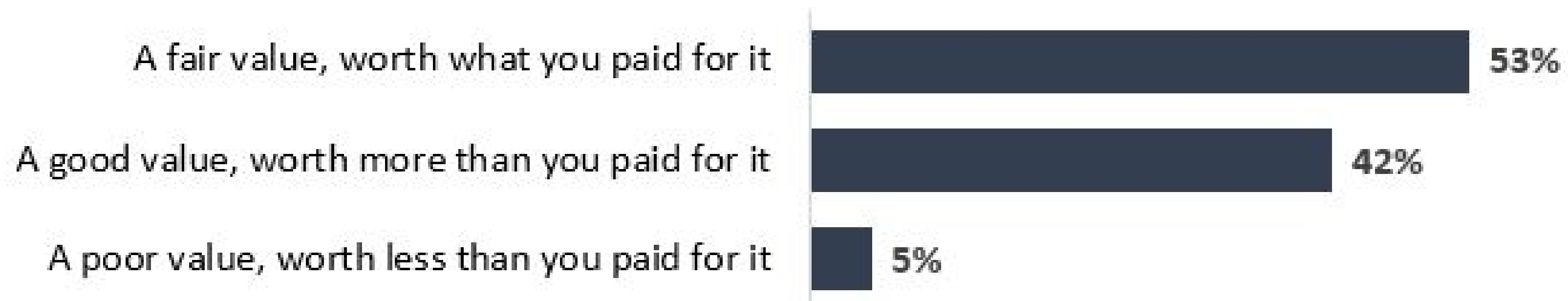
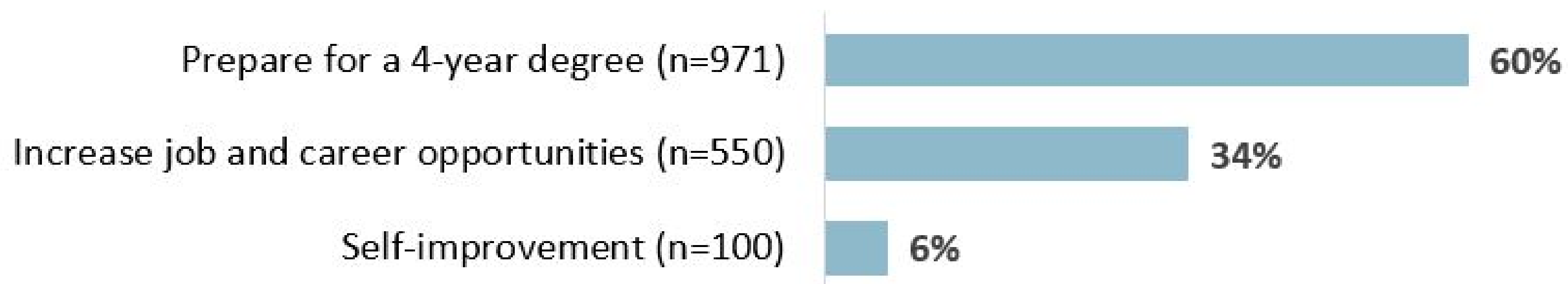


Figure 6 shows students' primary reason for attending AVC. Sixty percent of respondents indicated their primary reason for attending AVC was to prepare for a 4-year degree.

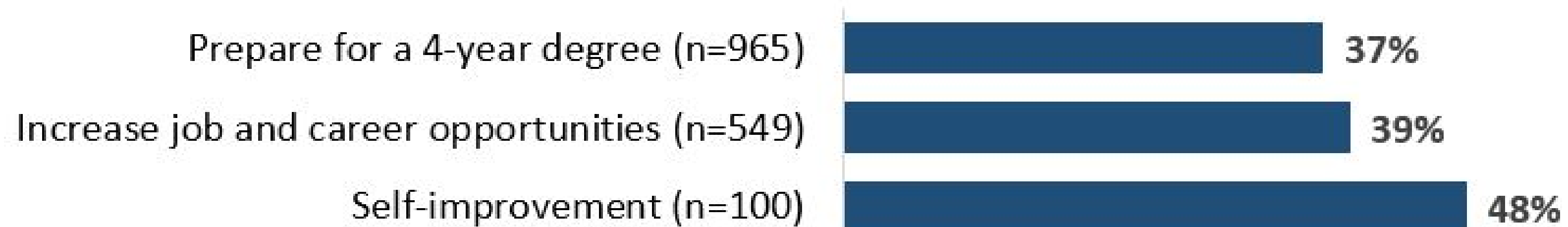
**Figure 6. Purpose of Taking Courses**



The last closed-ended question asked students how well AVC is doing in preparing students for their educational goals. Students could choose from 'very well,' 'fairly well,' 'somewhat,' or 'not at all.' Figure 7 shows the percent of students who chose the top category, 'very well.'

**Figure 7. How Well is Education at AVC...**

(percentage of respondents choosing top category)



# Achieve Educational Goal : Transfer

The RISC survey included several open-ended questions. The first three questions asked students to expand on their response to how well AVC is helping them achieve their goals (Figure 7). The next two questions ask students what AVC's greatest strength is and one thing AVC can change to help students succeed in college. The following pages will highlight the major themes that were identified based on their responses.

When asked, **How well is the education at AVC preparing you for a 4-year university?** (n=628 of the 1,643 respondents to the survey), students responded with the following:

## Advantages

---

### AVC was informative about transfer process

"We also have the transfer center that helps in our transition to a University. AVC has an A-1 Staff rating from me across the board."

---

### Feels prepared to transfer to 4-year

"I believe that I am being prepared very well to transition to a four year university. I am being provided all the resources needed to succeed."

---

### Provided an opportunity for Dual Enrollment

"I am a dual enrollment student so I am still in high school. Ive only taken three courses at AVC this past year and they have helped me settle on my major and give me an idea of what college will be like when I start in fall 2021."

---

### Instructors were supportive of students' educational journey

"I am preparing for a four year degree . I am happy with the professors that I have taken. Some of them go above and beyond to prepare you for success."

## Challenges

---

### Instructor related challenges

"...It feels like I am going though high school here and most of the instructors are not inspiring."

---

### Course related challenges

"A lot of classes that I need for my major are unavailable and I had to change my major. Also, quite a few classes Ive registered for have been cancelled for a few different reasons."

---

### Challenges with student services

"Academic counseling...They pointed me to classes that I didn't need, thus complicating things towards preparing for my 4-year."

"EOPS and Financial aid office seem to send me to other extensions when I have called and inquired about areas in their department concerning my account."

---

### Does not feel prepared for four-year

"I do not feel prepared to succeed at a four year university."

# Achieve Goal : Job and Career

The next question asks students whether they felt AVC was increasing their career opportunities. They were asked, "**How well is the education at AVC increasing job and career opportunities?**" (n=352 of the 1,643 respondents to the survey). The following themes emerged:

## Strengths in career training

---

### Soft skills

"I feel as though that it has increased my job because being able to talk to classmates and professors it helps with my customer service. I feel like it has increased my ways in talking and dealing with situations."

---

### Found job placement

"AVCs AFAB program got me a job at Northrop Grumman."

---

### Felt prepared for the workforce

"In order to enter the career that I want, I need to be proficient and well trained. The courses I have taken thus far have benefited me tremendously and I am confident with my newly acquired knowledge. The faculty has prepared me well for employment in the future, and I have no doubts that I will be a great asset to whichever establishment hires me, thanks to my teachers."

---

### Career paths are clearly defined

"Education and training have been directly tailored to my career path. Training meets the experience requirements for my particular field choice."

---

### Feels prepared for licensure exams

"The courses that I've taken have prepared me for the real estate sales exam."

---

### Able to apply theory to practice

"Am able to learn in both theory and practice and I feel that prepares me better. I have access to actual clients and take care of them, a practice that's within my profession."

---

### Instructors were knowledgeable about the current job market

"Faculty in my computer classes are knowledgeable about subject, currently working in my field of interest and readily offer advice on how best to prepare -which certifications to take, which classes prepare you for which certifications, study resources. They are also in the loop on job openings, frequently giving tips on where to apply when ready."

## Areas of Improvement

---

### More evening class offerings

"I am pursuing a graphic design degree so, for me, I would need more digital media classes in the evenings instead of in the middle of the day. Online classes is preferable because I can take the class with me while I'm driving home or if I need to do light errands at the same time. I need more flexibility with class availability."

---

### Job center is not accessible

"Upon submitting my application to the job placement center, have previously stated that my personal profile hasnt been entered or to no application of existence. Also, unable to get in contact with, job placement center for resume, feedback."



# Achieve Goal: Self Improvement

The survey asked students, "**How well is the education at AVC helping with self-improvement?**" (n=74 of the 1,643 respondents to the survey), they responded with the following:

## Education / learning

---

### Well-rounded education

"AVC college has managed to help me learn more about animation and graphic design in both the real world and the digital world. With the use of Mathematics and Science, it can actually be an interesting experience not only just computer but also on the world around us. Finally, with the combination of English Literature and Theatre, we can create endless stories that is in our imagination."

---

### Learned new ways of studying

"Taking college courses has helped me find new way to study, it has also helped me with personal benefits, and lastly, it has helped me with self-improvement."

---

### Had an overall positive learning experience

"AVC provides a well-established learning environment, and the staff is professional and genuine. Plus I have learned a lot of skills from the classes I've taken, my experience has been good overall."

## Personal growth

---

### Is a more informed individual

"Regardless of whether or not I go into a career that pertains to my degree, the degree itself still possesses some value, and what is more valuable yet is the education I have received. This education has allowed me to become a more responsible, and more informed as a citizen."

---

### Increased self-confidence

"I never thought I'd make it to college, this term I'm taking my first two classes. It's given me self-confidence..."

---

### Learned school-life or work-life balance

"AVC has helped me balance the pressures of school and real life. The challenges I have overcome at AVC have prepared me for handling hard situations in the future."

---

### Improved mindset and attitude

"I can navigate through life's experiences with a more positive attitude and I learned to be more respectful to myself and others and show compassion to other. Its helps me a lot to function and better and I learned to be more independent."

---

### Learned self-motivation skills

"Using method to get myself motivated to do work. And trying out new things I would never have. I guess enjoying the experiences."

# AVC's Greatest Strengths

When asked, **Thinking about your experience so far, please tell us what you think AVC's greatest strength is?** (n=1034 of the 1,643 respondents to the survey), students identified several strengths related to student resources or services, campus culture, and educational accessibility.

## Student resources / services

---

### Food Distribution

"AVC assist students in need of food or with education needs. The experience has been great during hard times."

---

### Health Services

"AVC's greatest strength is the resources they provide such as...mental health resources and physical health resources..."

---

### Counseling (Guidance on pathways)

"AVCs greatest strength is the support and guidance of their counselors. From my experience, they are very helpful and easy to talk to."

---

### Library services

"So, I have never actually been to the AVC campus or dealt with many of the services they have to offer. However, I've had to deal with the library to work on my research papers and it is extremely useful."

---

### Tutoring services

"AVC has a great tutoring group, always available when needed in all major subjects."

---

### Books Help

"AVC is amazing at helping students who are struggling with different resources. They have Books Help that is very helpful."

---

### Student programs

" AVC's greatest strength lies in the programs that it has to help students achieve their goals (First Years Experience, Student Equity, Umoja, etc.)."

---

### Fast and efficient services

'AVC's greatest strength is their main offices like the Admission and Records, Financial Aid, etc are quick (in a good way) but effective. They all have helped me with problems I've had in a fast and effective way so I don't have to worry about the problem anymore."

# AVC's Greatest Strengths (Continued)

## Campus Culture

---

### Caring environment and staff

"I really get a sense of care and concern from AVC for its students not just academically but holistically."

"The instructors who actually care...those who do actually make a huge difference/impact."

---

### Adaptable and accommodating to student needs

"Adaptability. With what we have all faced with the current pandemic, I think AVC as a whole has done a great job adapting schedules, curriculum, and class times to best fit the needs of most."

---

### Staff are student-centered

"I believe that AVC's greatest strength is in its people. Every staff member that I've interacted with has been kind and helpful...the environment at AVC is what keeps me there."

---

### Communication

"I think one thing I like about AVC is the communication and advertising. There is no way someone can not know something with how AVC advertises it or announces it through email."

---

### Skilled and knowledgeable instructors

"Instructors at AVC are fantastic." Every single professor that I've had the opportunity to meet, is truly specialized in their field. When you are receiving instruction from someone with knowledge and experience, learning is inevitable."

## Accessibility

---

### Course schedules

"Flexible schedule variety of classes that fit in our busy schedules."

"Having night classes is a plus. Work during the day and cannot afford to take days off work. Professors know what they are doing."

---

### Course modality options

"The wide variety of online available courses (even though we are in a pandemic) greatly helps as I do not have a lot of time between different jobs to be able to take classes on campus."

"Having both online and on-campus classes that suits best for students who learn best either way..."

---

### Types of course / program offerings

"I think one of AVC's greatest strengths is that it's a very diverse college that gives you a lot of classes and career choices to choose from."

---

### Affordability

"...giving students many resources that were free/low cost because I struggle with money a lot. I wouldn't have been able to afford school otherwise."

# Areas of Improvement: Student Voices

When asked, **If AVC could change one thing to help students succeed in college, what should change?** (n=996 of the 1,643 respondents to the survey). They revealed issues with communication, student services, instruction, and course schedules. Students responded with the following:

## Communication

---

### Improve communication

"Create a more intuitive and user-friendly website so that everyone can understand easily where and how to find help online at AVC."

"AVC's emails are so vague and boring. One can never tell what the event is going to be about unless you attend and people with busy schedules need to know what its about before they open up their schedules..."

### Understand and listen to student's needs (use of surveys, questionnaires, etc.)

"AVC should make sure they are more aware of the thoughts and desires of the students. Surveys such as this one are a good step in the right direction, but overall AVC should consider evaluating how much students want to see particular decisions be made..."

## Resources

---

### No or low cost textbooks / learning material

"Textbook prices. My textbook is more expensive than the amount of tuition I am paying. I usually do not even end up reading the book but it is required."

### Have more career advising / job fairs

"Have students check in with...career advisors...Internships, career exploration per semester... open house to companies in the AV."

### Tutoring services

"More resources to help them classes. Major specific classes."

### Outreach to struggling students

"I think that AVC should help those students that are actually struggling and being left behind and care for them first..."

## Course times / schedule

---

### Add course times that accommodate student's schedules

"Course times need to have a rotation through the academic year. If summer instruction is to remain 12-weeks, then at the very least, morning courses should be offered in the afternoon and evening at a more appropriate time for working student that is juggling full-time employment, full-time coursework, and full-time family life."

### Add sections for higher demand classes

"Add more classes that are high priority, such as prerequisite."

### Intersession

"Bring back intersession because it gave students the opportunity to get ahead in their classes. It was an easy way to learn and get through classes quickly."

# Areas of improvement: Student Voices (Continued)

## Services

---

### Would like to see improved counseling services

"I have met with multiple counselors who have kept giving me different answers on what I should take. This confused me and when I met with one who actually helped me, now I can't make an appointment with her."

---

### Information about transfer process

"I think a clear understanding and guides of the transferring process and a better explanation of what classes are UC/CSU transferrable. I along with my peers had trouble this semester dealing with that..."

---

### Better response time / communication

"Main office, counseling and DEFINITELY financial aid office staff. Never answer phone, or return calls, rude when you actually get through. Very difficult process for someone who may be knew to whole college experience."

---

### Improve customer service

"I've had a few experiences where staff was unhelpful and even rude when asking questions about forms and applications..."

---

### Smoother registration process

"Make class registration more streamline as to give everyone an equal opportunity to register for classes."

## Instruction

---

### Instructors

"...creating a more encouraging oppose to discouraging teaching style and environment that will allow student/s to engage with more confidence and retain information better."

---

### Check-in with students regarding instructor feedback

"Checking in with students more often for feedback on instructors."

---

### Intermediary between student and instructor when there are issues

"An advocate in their corner [\*student] when their instructors are abusing classroom authority and or behaving illogical and unprofessional." (\*added for clarification)

---

### Improved communication with students

"Assure that teachers are interactive and organized for their classes. Some professors when emailed and they answer in less than one sentence is very disappointing."

---

### Would like to see improved curriculum

"Hold the students to a higher standard in classes that should be rigorous. Various engineering and math classes are too easy to pass through rote memorization, and do not require the students to attain or demonstrate substantial understanding of the course material."

---

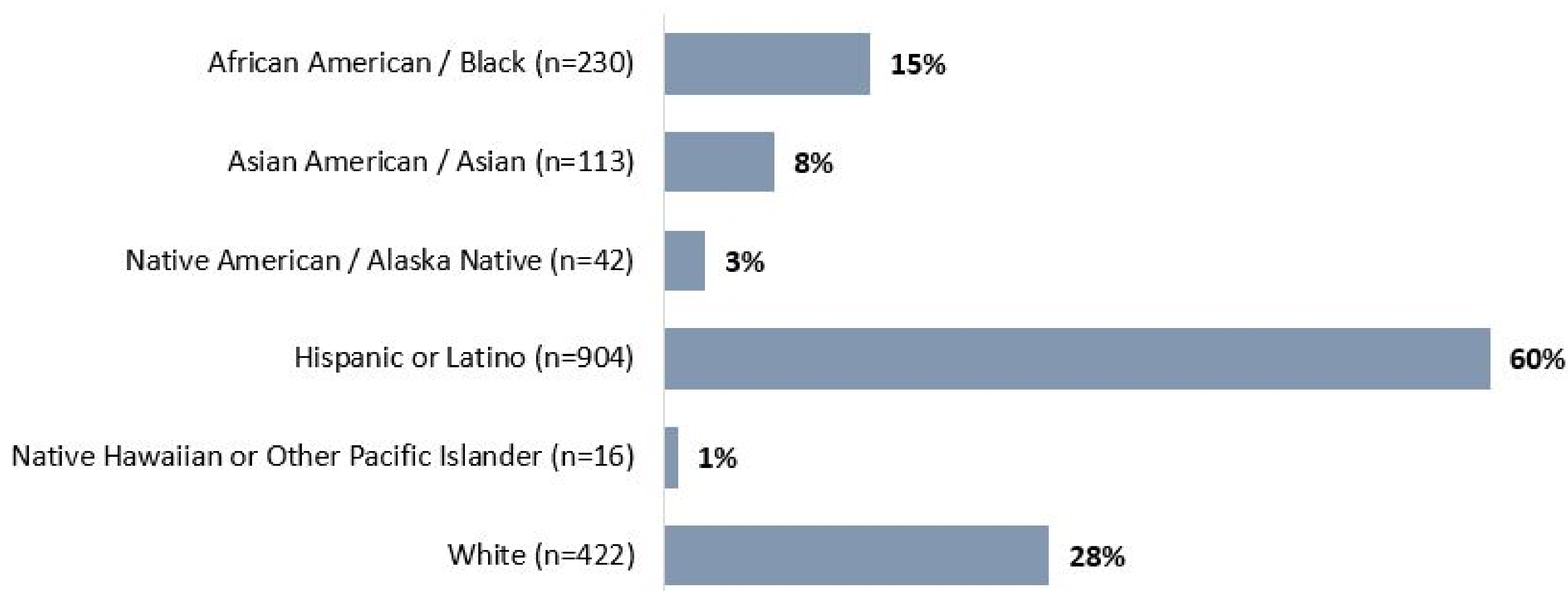
### Offer classes in the diversity or ethnic studies area

"Although I have seen change throughout the years, I would still recommend more classes centered on diverse subjects. Other cultural courses that are offered at other colleges."

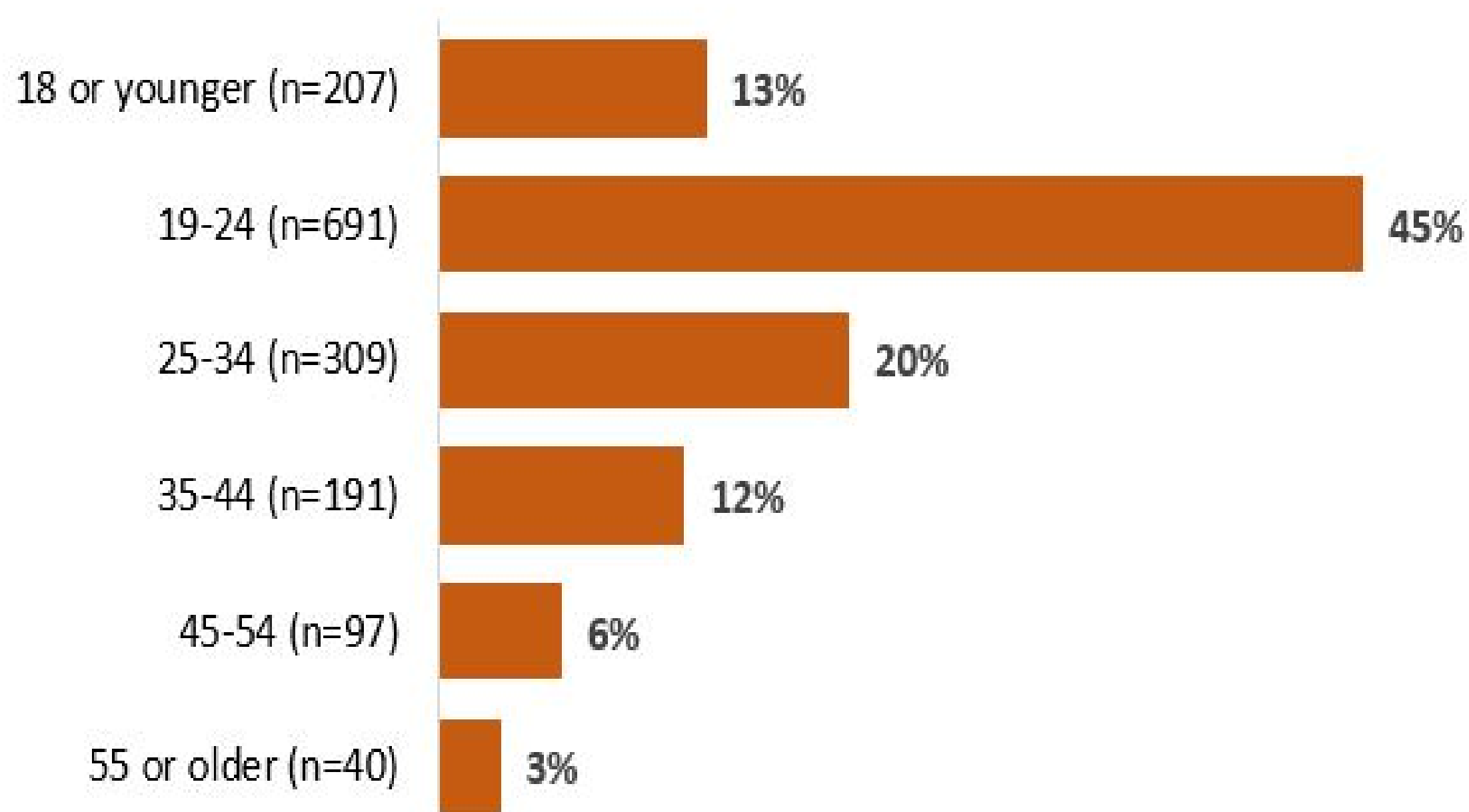
# Respondent Demographics and Characteristics

The following charts display respondent demographics and characteristics.

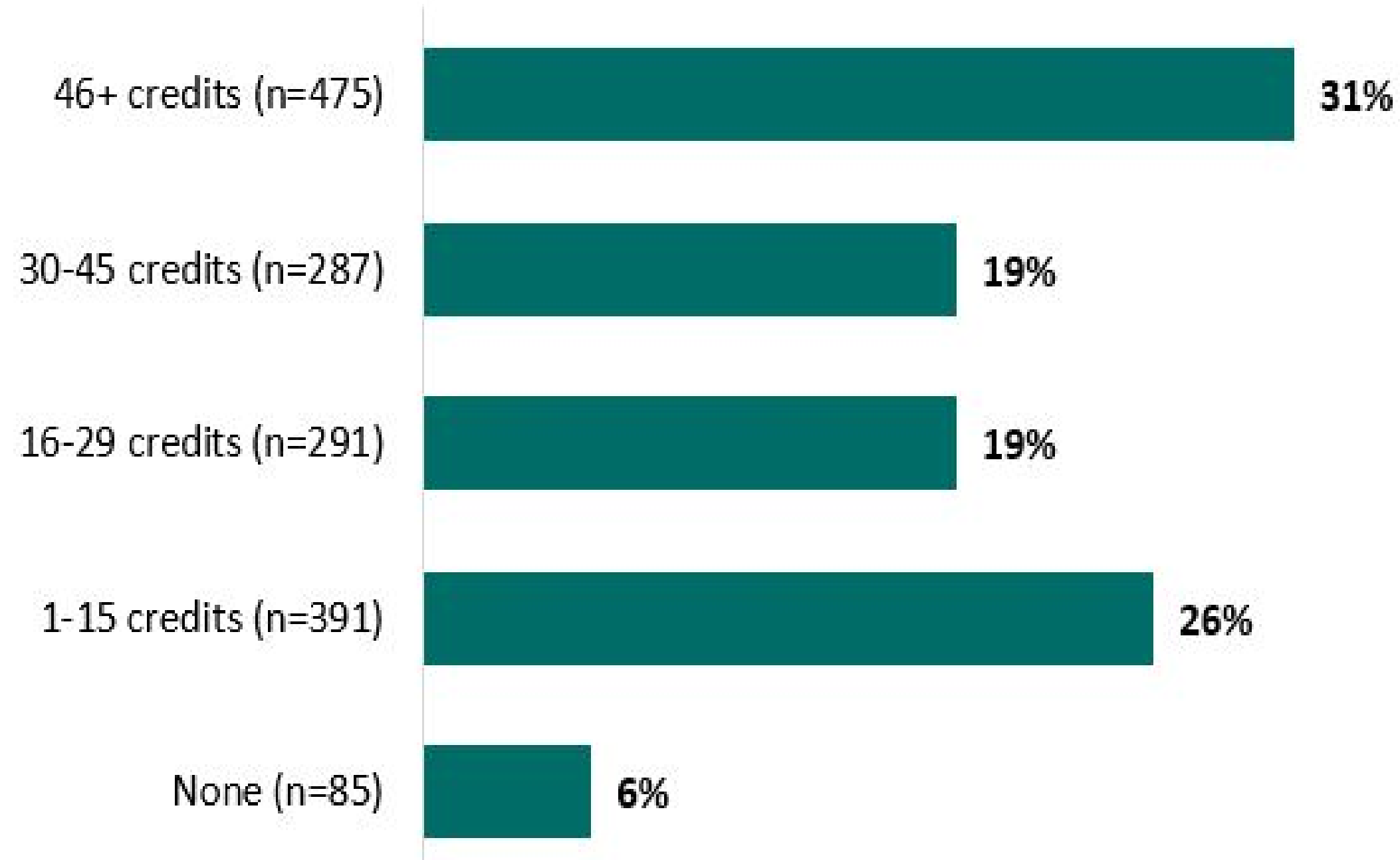
## Race / Ethnicity



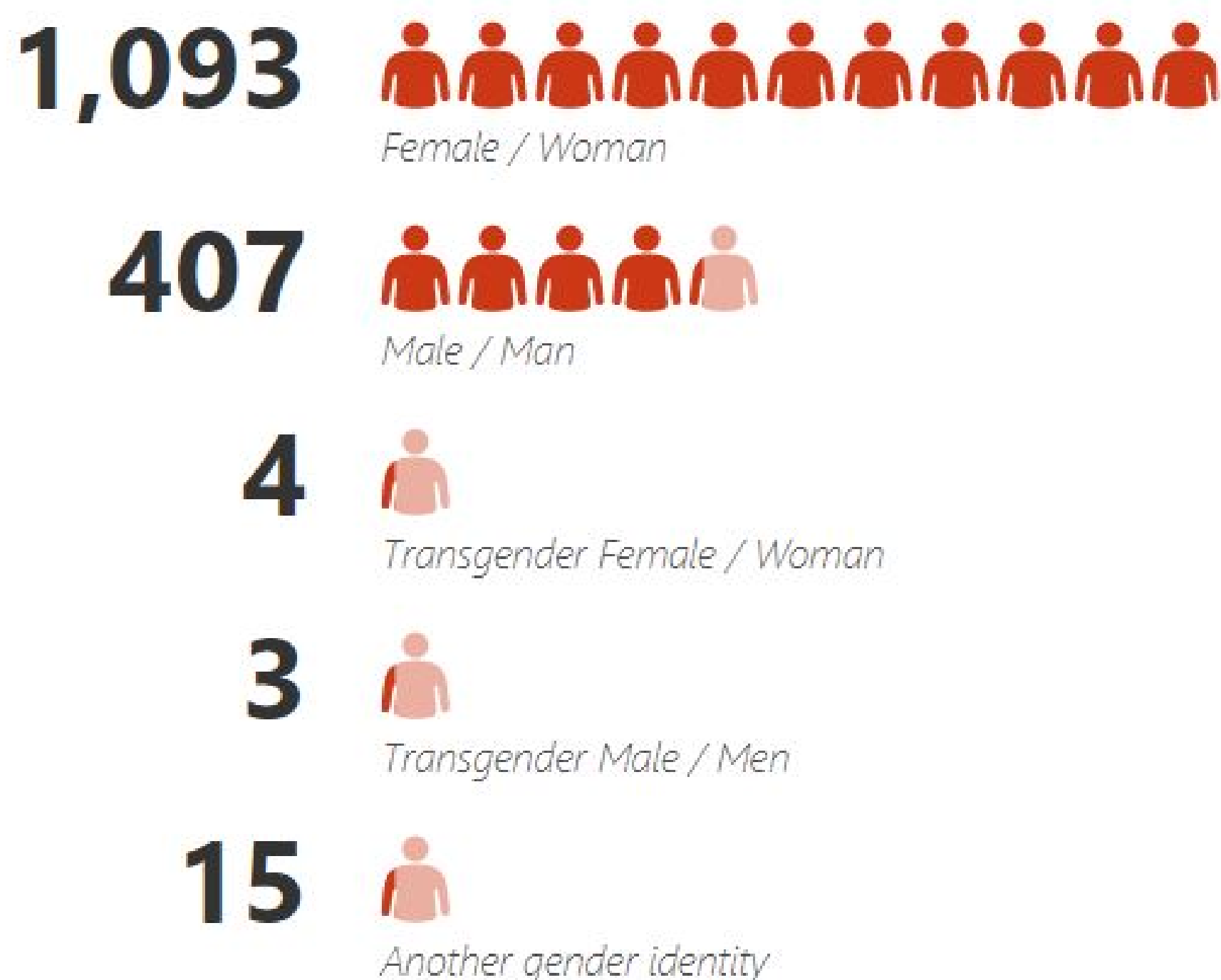
## Age Groups



## Total Credit Hours Earned at AVC



## Gender Identity



## Part-time / Full-time Status

